

# QUETTA VOICE

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## US terms Imran Khan's allegations 'mere propaganda'



## Quetta airport road blocked against gas load shedding

### CM Balochistan: free seeds of Rs 2.2 billion provided to farmers

*Restoration of the agriculture sector in the flood-affected districts is the first priority of the Balochistan government, Quddoos Bizenj*

**News Desk**

Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Quddoos Bizenjo said that quality registered seeds worth Rs. 2.2 billion were freely provided to the farmers who were affected by the floods. Restoration of the agriculture sector in the flood-affected districts is the first priority of the Balochistan government, Mr. Bizenjo added.

Chief Minister expressed these views during meetings with farmers and officials at the Chief Minister's Camp Office Hana. Leader of the opposition in the Balochistan Assembly, Malik Sikander Khan advocate, provincial ministers, and members of the assembly were also present on this occasion.

**Encroachment main reason behind recent damages: CM Balochistan**



Regarding the problems faced by farmers, the Chief Minister said that we ourselves are responsible for the disaster caused by the flood. When the rules of nature are ignored, there is a possibility of damage, he noted while referring to massive encroachments in the province. In this regard, action will be taken against those responsible for negligence and encroachment across Balochistan, Mr. Bizenjo stated.

The Chief Minister said that a special campaign is underway to end encroachments and land mafia and the elements involved will be brought to justice.

The Chief Minister expressed his concern over the non-availability of gas and electricity in Quetta and its surroundings. Mr. Bizenjo said that he will register a strong protest with the federal government regarding the performance of the federal institutions responsible for the supply of

electricity and gas.

**PM to be approached to waive off power dues**

The Chief Minister said that a request will be made to the Prime Minister to waive off one year's electricity dues of farmers in the flood-affected districts. The delegation thanked the Chief Minister for the steps taken by the provincial government to restore agriculture and solve the problems of the landlords.

### BHC issues notice to CS Balochistan about delay in formation of IC

*Despite the passage of the Right to Information Act from the Balochistan Assembly, bench*

Syed Ali Shah

QUETTA: Balochistan High Court (BHC) on Thursday issued notices to the Chief Secretary and Secretary Information about the continued delay in the formation of the Information Commission in the province. A division bench of the BHC comprising Mr. Justice Hashim Khan Kakar and Mr. Justice Muhammad Amir Rana directed for issuance of notices on a constitutional petition.

Senior lawyers including Azmatullah Achakzai Advocate and Abdul Jabbar Badezai Advocate had filed a petition seeking the directives of the court for the establishment of the information commission in the province.

**Every citizen has the right to get official information under article 19 of the Constitution**

Every citizen under article 19 of the Constitution has the right to get information about government departments, the petitioners mentioned. They said that despite the passage of the Right to Information Act from the Balochistan Assembly, the provincial government is yet to form a commission. The



provincial assembly adopted the RTI act 2021 in February last year.

The bench directed the concerned quarters to appear before the court on November 29th.

Under the Balochistan RTI Act, 2021, provincial departments are bound to provide the requested information within 15 working days. Section 18 of the Act, stipulates the Balochistan Information Commission shall establish within 120 days of the commencement of the Act.

An RTI activist, Syed Raza Ali, filed information requests to the Secretary, the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, the Principal Secretary to CM Balochistan, and the Inspector General of Balochistan Police. Despite the passage of the prescribed time period, neither a single department provided the information nor responded to the information requests, says Syed Raza Ali.

He further added, unfortunately, the Provincial Assembly itself not complying with the law passed by it. Without an independent Commission, the Act is toothless. It is very unfortunate, that the provincial bureaucracy seems reluctant to give citizens' right to information to their owners due to deep-rooted secrecy and a colonial mindset.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing a special session of the Margalla Dialogue 2022, an interactive and policy-driven discussion on the theme of "Navigating the Great Power Competition: Developing World Perspective".

### US terms Imran Khan's allegations 'mere propaganda'

WASHINGTON: The United States has once again rejected the allegations levelled by former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan, saying Washington will not let propaganda get in the way of bilateral relationship with Pakistan.

US State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel while briefing the newsmen in Washington on Wednesday said that US valued its longstanding cooperation with Pakistan.

Patel said that the United States has always viewed a prosperous and democratic Pakistan as critical to the US interests and that position remained unchanged.

When asked that former prime minister Imran Khan has backed out of his allegations when he (Imran) said he no longer blamed the US administration for removing him from power, Vedant Patel said that as they've previously said, there has - there is not and there has never been a truth to these allegations.

He said that they don't have a position on one political candidate of a party versus another. "We support peaceful upholding of democratic, constitutional, and legal principles. And ultimately, we will not let propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation get in the way of any bilateral relationship, including our valued bilateral partner with Pakistan," he maintained.

He said that the US valued its longstanding cooperation with Pakistan. It has always viewed a prosperous and democratic Pakistan as critical to their interests not just in the region, but also the world more broadly, the spokesman added. INP

### Quetta airport road blocked against gas load shedding

Manan Mandokhail

Protesters blocked the main Quetta airport road against continued gas load shedding in Nawan Killi and other parts of the city. People faced difficulties as a result of the blockade of the road by angry protesters. "No gas supply despite chilly weather", Inayat Kakar, one of the leaders of the protesters lamented.

The protesters chanted full-throated slogans against the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) for its failure to provide a gas supply in dry cold weather in the provincial capital. "This is an injustice. SSGC should make sure provision of gas supply", Mr. Kakar said.

Hundreds of protesters staged a



sit-in. Hundreds of protesters staged a sit-in at the main airport road to vent their anger against the SSGC and the Balochistan government. "This is totally unacceptable where we can go in this cold weather", Wali Afghan, another leader of the protesters stated.

People used alternative routes to reach their destinations. Especially, women, children and aged people remained the worst sufferers of the blockade of the road. Students also used alternative routes to reach their destinations. Long queues of vehicles were witnessed. Long queues of vehicles

were also witnessed because of the blockade of the road linking Quetta with various parts of the province and country. "I have been waiting for the last two hours to reach my destination", Attaullah, a taxi driver lamented.

Finally, the SSGC officials reached the spot and held successful negotiations with the protesters. Subsequently, the protesters reopened the road for traffic. They however threatened to resume their protest if the company failed to make sure provision of uninterrupted gas supply to the Nawan Killi and other areas of the provincial capital. As the winter sets in, Quetta and most of the province have been facing low and no gas supply. This has further compounded the problems of the masses in this cold dry weather.

### Pakistan ideal location for US investors, businesses: Ambassador Masood

WASHINGTON DC: Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, Masood Khan has said that Pakistan an ideal destination for US investors and businesses due to its unique geo-economic position and impressive demographic cohorts.

This was stated by him in an exclusive interaction with the board of Directors of the Pakistan-American Chamber of Commerce (PACC) in Los Angeles. The event was also attended by a select group of businessmen working in textile, banking, logistics, solar and fintech sectors as well as health-care professionals.

Speaking to the participants, Masood Khan appreciated the work done by the Chamber to promote trade and investment ties between Pakistan and the U.S. He said that while bilateral trade



between the two countries jumped from US\$ 8.5 to 12 billion last year, there was potential to increase it further by enhancing economic cooperation in targeted areas such as technology, IT tourism, extractive industry, oil and gas exploration, manufacturing, healthcare and agriculture.

Ambassador Masood also underscored the need for growing trade ties with the State of California,

which has a GDP of US\$ 3.5 trillion. He said Pakistan and California were important trade partners. In the past year, Pakistan's exports to California were US\$ 457 million, whereas Pakistan's imports were US\$ 138 million, with a surplus of US\$ 319 million in Pakistan's favor. The overall volume of trade between Pakistan and California was US\$ 600 million, which was significant but needed to be scaled up given growing investment in IT and services sectors. He noted that despite being a big market, Pakistan's economy was undervalued and underestimated. He said that 80 U.S. companies and enterprises were successfully doing business in Pakistan for decades and making substantial profits. He urged the members to have confidence in Pakistan's economy and scale up

their businesses in Pakistan as this would encourage others to invest.

While noting their concerns regarding the regulatory regimes in Pakistan, Masood Khan said that the Government of Pakistan had taken a number of steps to enhance ease of doing business. These included streamlining of taxation, enforcing intellectual property rights, liberalization of business visa regime and implementation of cyber laws. As a result, last year out of US\$ 257 million FDI from U.S., a total of US\$ 203 million profits had been repatriated. A number of companies from France, China, Germany, Singapore, South Korea and Japan were investing in Pakistan, particularly in the IT sector. He invited the Pakistani American businesses to become part of this economic transformation taking place in Pakistan. INP

### TCP must assure no imports outside its mandate should be made: Senate Body

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Commerce Committee on Thursday called for assurance from the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) (Pvt.) Limited, that no imports outside of the mandate of the TCP should be made.

The Senate Standing Committee on Commerce met on Thursday under the Chairmanship of Zeeshan Khanzada here at the Parliament House and received a detail briefing on the working of Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) with focus on its role in post flood scenario.

The committee also recommended introducing the bifurcation of procurement plan into regular and emergent so that the items could be procured by minimal rates. The committee was also apprised that the private sector import on commodities imported by the TCP is not banned however due to exemption of taxes and heavy government subsidy, do not make it feasible for the private sector to import the same.

The Chairman TCP apprised the committee that the TCP makes procurement for the food security and industries for urea and mainly deals with the import of wheat, sugar and urea to respond emergencies. The TCP presented proposals for permanent exemption on limitations on splitting tenders, 30 days response time, 15 days hoisting time before approval for inviting



objections, matching bids, limitation on negotiations and 15 pc repeat per cap. The TCP also proposed to introduce lemmatizing the quantity of procurement and time indicators according to harvesting season.

Senator Zeeshan Khanzada briefed the committee that the TCP is fully owned by the government of Pakistan, financially independent i.e. it does not receive any budgetary grant from Federal Government and the Federal Government determines when the TCP should import. The TCP informed the committee that the TCP invests 80 pc with Government securities (T-Bills, Treasury Bills, and PIBs) whereas 20 pc funds are invested in Term Deposit and Daily Products.

The Chairman Committee inquired on the role of NFML to which the TCP replied that the National Fertilizer Marketing Limited (NFML) is a distributive network and do not deal in procurements. It was also informed that the TCP distributes the Utility store and the NFML sugar wheat and urea. The Chairman TCP showed concern over the debtors in 2018 as per subsidy audit and apprised the committee that USC and NFML are the highest debtors by 51,183,000 ml Rs and 24,005.66 ml Rs respectively.

The TCP said that the debtors do not return money which has reached up to a total of 91,756.802 including principal and markup amounts. INP

## QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

## Floods expose construction quality of dams in Balochistan

Flash floods unleashed by torrential rains exposed the construction quality of dams across Balochistan. Heavy rainfall wreaked havoc in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan recently. Floods swept away dozens of small dams and check dams in different parts of the province.

Over the years, the provincial and federal governments constructed hundreds of dams to check the wastage of rainy water. Successive governments merely celebrated the completion of projects rather than focusing on the construction quality of dams. Although, the dams and lakes constructed by British colonial rulers in different parts of Balochistan are still intact even after more than a century.

Breaching of dams puts human lives at peril. Breaching of dams not only failed to save rainy water rather it also put human lives at peril in Pishin, Barkhan, Lasbella, Kohlu, Killa Abdullah, Killa Saifullah and other districts of the province. Rains-related incidents have claimed 65 lives till the filing of this editorial. This is simply disastrous and a failure from all concerned quarters.

Flash floods also swept away poorly constructed roads and standing crops in various parts of the province. This all needs a thorough investigation. Irrigation and Communication Works (C&W) departments are known for commission and corruption.

Commission, corruption a common word in C&W and Irrigation departments

This is a good opportunity for those at the helm of affairs to make sure transparency in the utilization of funds by the two departments. Since word commission is an open secret in the two departments, the Chief Secretary of Balochistan should form a high-powered committee comprising committed and honest retired and serving officers to probe into the breaching of dams.

The quality of construction of roads in Quetta and all districts of Balochistan should also be probed to improve socio-economic conditions. The irony with Balochistan is that first the province has meager resources and second they too are ruthlessly used/ swallowed.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo and his coalition partners must go beyond words and launch an inquiry into the breaching of dams and damage to roads.

Farhan Bokhari

The proponents of Pakistan's search for climate justice must visit an impressive case of the last century that prompted a global change of hearts and minds and led to the dismantling of apartheid – considered a remote possibility not too long before.

When the late Swedish prime minister Olof Palme shortly before his tragic assassination in 1986 famously pronounced apartheid as a "system that can not be reformed, it must be dismantled", the end to white minority rule in South Africa seemed a distant possibility.

By the time of Palme's landmark speech anti-apartheid activists around the world notably Europe had begun organizing regular anti apartheid protests. But Western governments, notably the UK and the US, firmly stood behind South Africa's white supremacist rulers, driven mainly by a combination international business interests along side the fear of leftist ideology taking grasp in that country if the black majority population received

equal democratic rights. Yet, the unexpected release of the late icon Nelson Mandela just four years later and the subsequent peaceful transition to a fully democratic South Africa led to the most celebrated bloodless political change of the 20th century.

Today, as Pakistan grapples with the fallout from this years' climate disaster that led to Islamabad's plea for global financial support, there are lessons to be learnt from the South African case. While towering figures like Olof Palme joined by other Scandinavian governments deserve special praise for stepping up to serve a just cause, it was eventually the change within South Africa that caught global attention. Together, the personas of Palme and notable figures in South Africa led by the late Nelson Mandela led to a powerful change of minds across the world.

As Pakistan grapples with the challenge of catching global imagination, its task ahead must be built upon building ties with global figures and institutions to plead its case alongside bold internal reforms to lead towards

progressive change. It is clear that only a Pakistan which is capable of impressing the world with its ability to change rapidly for the better will lay the foundation for generous global support in dealing with the country's flood related catastrophe.

Pakistan's active engagement with world class players, ranging from the UN secretary-general to attendees at the high-profile COP27 environmental conference in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, have set the stage for a continued international democratic engagement. But within Pakistan, the post-flood recovery, reconstruction and establishment of long-term safeguards are yet to be knitted together in a powerful strategy for the short, medium and long term. Together, the two ends – global interest in tandem with Pakistan's internal reforms – will lay the basis for Pakistan to reap the benefits in the shape of sustained international interest to lift Pakistan from its crisis. The reforms, if undertaken comprehensively, could well arrive in time to avert Pakistan's next balance of payments crisis, already predicted by

some to take the country towards a mayhem laden default on debt repayments. Two intertwined objectives must lead the way towards changing Pakistan permanently to not only impress the world but more vitally to change the country's outlook within. First, Pakistan's failure to reform over time has not only weakened its institutions at the centre of internal governance. The failure has also caused a collapse of the country's economy in fundamentally vital areas. At the tip of the iceberg lies the oft-repeated failure to reform the country's tax and revenue collection system that have turned Pakistan into an economic basket case. In sharp contrast to Pakistan's status as the Islamic world's only country impressively armed with nuclear weapons, its ability to force many more of its people to pay their tax dues has left behind a glaring mismatch.

The choice for Pakistan is very clear. Either the country reforms its economy in tandem with its exclusive membership of the nuclear club or be prepared for relentless global pressure to abandon its strategic

position. In brief, the two – membership of an exclusive strategic club alongside a repeatedly faltering economy can just not go hand in hand.

Second, beyond reforming the country's under performing tax collection system, Pakistan must radically address the many gaps surrounding the sliding living conditions of the poorest of the poor. This year's floods have badly exposed the deep vulnerabilities surrounding the lives of low income communities in many parts of Pakistan. For instance, a large network of rural hospitals across rural Pakistan that were neglected over previous decades suddenly found themselves overwhelmed by a spike in demand for services from flood victims.

A similar case can be made for government provided school networks across Pakistan. And last but not the least, the multiple challenges surrounding the agriculture sector have contributed to worsening food security over time. Pakistan's case for climate justice will remain incomplete unless deprived communities across the country first receive long overdue justice.

## Disaster displacement

By Zahra Niazi

In Pakistan, at least 33 million people have been forced to leave their homes. They are not fleeing any conflicts, but they have been internally displaced by the effects of arguably the biggest global threat of the 21st century – climate change.

Since the beginning of Pakistan's deadly floods in mid-June, at least 7.9 million people have been displaced, which is appalling to say the least. Even this could be a conservative estimate given the colossal damage the floods have caused.

Many of these people have lost everything – their homes, sources of livelihood, and prized belongings. These internally displaced people now face an uncertain future as there is no specific national legislation or policy framework that can guarantee long-term protection and assistance to them.

This is regrettable as recent history in Pakistan is marked by a series of disaster-induced displacement crises. In 2010, massive floods displaced 11 million people, and another four million were displaced following the 2011 floods in

Sindh. A report published by Oxfam in 2019 revealed that the communities who permanently moved to Karachi from Badin, Thatta, and Sajawal after the 2010 floods were forced to settle on the outskirts of Karachi, where they lacked access to utilities. Nearly a decade on, they continue to live under poor and squalid conditions, which exemplifies the consequences of the lack of specific instruments that can offer long-term protection and assistance to people displaced by disasters.

In 2021, the IDMC reported that a third of all disaster-induced displacements in 2020 occurred in the South Asian region, with Pakistan recording the third-highest number of those displacements after India and Afghanistan. Additionally, the World Bank forecasts continued to stress the forthcoming crisis of climate change and internal displacement in South Asia. Hence, we were cognizant that disasters would continue to force millions to dislocate in Pakistan but did not grant legal recognition and rights to those dislocated during disasters or formulate comprehensive

policy frameworks to guide the national response in such situations.

At the international level, the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are covered under the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. These principles serve to ensure that the rights of displacement-affected communities are not violated and guide national and international responses in such situations. However, it does not confer any obligation on the states, with national authorities having the primary duty to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to those in need in times of crisis. A number of states today have incorporated these principles into law or employed them as the basis for policy formulation. Some cases in point are Sri Lanka, Colombia, Georgia, Burundi, Armenia, Angola, Peru, Uganda, and the Philippines.

In Pakistan, however, a legal limbo with regard to the recognition of the rights of disaster-induced IDPs continues to exist. At the same time, no specific policy document

comprehensively addresses internal displacement or disaster-induced internal displacement specifically. Pakistan launched its first National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) in 2012 and its follow-up Framework for Implementation of Climate Change Policy (2014-2030) in 2014 – both of which remain silent about disaster-induced displacement.

In March 2022, the Ministry of Climate Change launched an updated version of the NCCP. However, as welcome as this development was, the policy pays cursory attention to displacement by mentioning 'increased climate change-induced migration' as one of Pakistan's vulnerabilities to climate change threats. It does not specify policies or actions to guide durable solutions, including the return, resettlement, or reintegration of those forced to dislocate due to calamities. This gap is also evident in the country's National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and the National Disaster Risk Management Framework.

One can now hope that the massive humanitarian crisis amid the devastating floods will be a catalyst

for reassessing how we want to move forward and shift away from the status quo. The necessity of implementing innovative and practical resilience-building and risk-reduction strategies, ideally through a community-led approach, is essential.

The government, through collaboration with provincial authorities and civil society, must now also begin work on developing an effective national framework to deal with and protect the rights of those already displaced amid the devastating floods.

This framework should serve as the basis for a more comprehensive policy guide in the long term to respond to displacement – whether due to sudden disasters or 'slow onset' impacts of climate change – to guarantee the rights and dignity of these vulnerable individuals and communities at all times. It is equally important to grant legal recognition to disaster-induced IDPs, which can effectively guarantee their rights. The crisis must serve as a long-forgotten reminder that we can no longer continue with the status quo.

## Climate affairs

By Chloe Atkinson

Scientists have long clamored that human activity on Earth has led to the calamitous weather changes we are witnessing today. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed that climate change makes heatwaves hotter and more frequent. According to the research, greenhouse gas emissions have heated the planet by an estimated 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.16 degrees Fahrenheit) over the last two centuries.

The Nature journal published an article this month detailing what its authors say is proof that heatwaves in Europe have increased three-to-four times faster than in other northern mid-latitude areas such as the United States. The reason for this, according to the article, is due to the fast west-to-east air stream, or atmospheric circulation, which is carrying hot air across the northern atmosphere.

Most scientists appear to agree that temperatures will continue to rise unless humans cease adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. Without a drastic change in the way mankind conducts its business, heatwaves are predicted to worsen. Tackling climate change should be a top priority for every country today. Heatwaves that occurred once every decade are now happen-

ing at three times that rate. The 2015 Paris Agreement and last year's Glasgow climate conference were intended to bring the issue to global attention and generate movement on the ground. But current climate policies are not sufficient to avoid the dangerous effects of global warming. More must be done.

Today, wildfires are raging in Spain, France, Greece, Portugal, Morocco and Italy. Over one thousand people have died so far and many thousands more have been evacuated from their homes out of concern for their safety. Climate change plays a significant role in the cause of wildfires since it increases the hot and dry tinderbox conditions that help fires start and then spread quickly. Less precipitation means dry land and vegetation. This means that when a fire starts, it burns faster and more intensely. Hot and dry conditions are a perfect recipe for a massive inferno.

However, it is important to note that not every fire is caused by climate change. Forest management programs, which deal with how forests are maintained specifically to prevent massive infernos, are often insufficient. In addition, it is often careless people who ignite fires through arson or simply by barbecuing. Human fire starters aside, they don't cause the actual heatwave. Individuals are not responsible necessarily but since mankind is col-

lectively composed of individuals, it does fall on each and every one of us to take steps to minimize our carbon footprint. There is a reason why famed reality star Kylie Jenner was slammed on social media for posting a photo of her private jet parked next to boyfriend Travis Scott's plane, asking "You wanna take mine or yours?" And she was slammed again for taking her jet in the end for what turned out to be a paltry 12-minute flight.

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## Global energy security

By Maximilian Hess

Not since World War II has the threat to global energy security been as severe as it is today.

Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine and the consequent geo-economic war between the Kremlin and the West disrupted global gas markets at a scale unprecedented in recent history. The Kremlin's use of its power over energy markets as leverage – and Europe's efforts to wean itself off of Russian natural gas and avoid a massive shortage this winter – are triggering price hikes and rerouting flows around the world.

No one is left unaffected, even those who thought they had prepared for every eventuality. For example, Pakistan, which had secured several long-term natural gas import contracts to increase its energy security in recent years, has seen partners break those deals to send their gas to new clients offering to pay more. The coffers of both the developed and developing world are being drained. Meanwhile, the Kremlin is using the global energy crisis it created to sustain its economy in the face of severe international sanctions. Moreover, it is weaponising Europe's dependency on Russian natural gas to try and break Western resistance to its ambitions in Ukraine. Earlier this week, Moscow tried to tighten its squeeze on

Europe further, saying it plans to reduce gas supplies through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany to just 20 percent capacity.

In response, European Union energy ministers swiftly announced an agreement for the bloc's members to gut gas usage by 15 percent this winter. This was an attempt by Europe to show it would not give in to Russian pressure and abandon Ukraine in order to fill up its gas reserves. Such conflict-driven demand reduction, however, means that an already likely recession is now all but guaranteed. Following Gazprom's latest cuts, analysts already predict the EU will not be able to reach its own target of refilling gas storage to 80 percent capacity by winter. Now that Europe made it clear that it is finally – and perhaps much belatedly – ready to take the steps to cut its need for Russian gas at any cost, the Kremlin will do everything it can to inflict maximum pain on Europe in the short term, while the dependency remains.

A recent German poll found that at the moment, 58 percent of the population is supporting sanctions against Russia despite potential negative impacts for Germany. Russian President Vladimir Putin is working to bring that number down – down to the point that it becomes

untenable for Germany's leaders to push for policies to support Ukraine and help the West win its confrontation with Russia. The waning of public support for the sanctions regime in the face of economic difficulties is an equally significant risk for other European governments.

Europe's leaders are now facing the herculean task of simultaneously helping their industries survive on a reduced energy supply, supporting Ukraine's war effort and maintaining public support for the sanctions regime amid a cost-of-living crisis largely manufactured by Russia that seems to have no real end in sight.

Energy is perhaps the most consequential front in the ongoing geo-economic battle between Russia and the West, and thus Europe needs to strengthen its hand there first. After moving to address the demand side of the equation, now it needs to address the supply side of the problem to be able to shore up its economy to the furthest extent possible, and insulate public support for Kyiv and the sanctions regime against Russia.

There are some obvious steps that European governments can take – but have been reluctant to in fear of domestic backlash – to resolve the supply issue swiftly. The Netherlands, for

example, can pump billions of cubic metres of extra natural gas across Europe by increasing production at the Groningen gas field. Bewilderingly, however, it is still planning to take the entire operation offline next year over the risk of minor earthquakes in the surrounding area and some pushback from environmentalists. Germany can also increase its future capacity to supply energy simply by extending the lifespan of its nuclear power plants that are meant to come offline at the end of the year. The governing coalition said it is now considering this option, but the Greens – including Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock – continue to resist the move. The party's stance on this issue is somewhat understandable – after all, Germany's Green Party was in large part borne out of Germany's Cold War-era anti-nuclear movement.

Nevertheless, by blocking a relatively straightforward and low-risk solution to a major problem facing the nation, it risks failing the test of being a responsible government partner at a time of war, less than a year after its best-ever election result. Beyond increasing their own production capacity by any means possible, European nations should of course also work on forming new

partnerships with suppliers outside their region. The global gas crisis and its impacts are by no means limited to Europe. It is therefore imperative that Europe seeks to bring together the international community to coordinate global supply.

When the world last faced such a major energy crisis, the Allies had significant control over the world's oil supplies. British Petroleum and its predecessors, and the forefathers of the modern United States energy majors, controlled most of the Middle East's petroleum at the dawn of World War II. Britain established the Petroleum Warfare Department and the Petroleum Board – which brought together all allied energy firms, including US ones even before Pearl Harbor brought the US into the conflict directly – to coordinate supplies for the war. Today, ownership of global energy supplies is far more diversified. And while the US has pledged to use its role as a liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter to support Europe, a fire this June at its flagship liquefaction plant in Freeport, Texas has seen export capacity fall by some 17 percent. Thus addressing global gas shortages will require a coming together of key public and private players from across the world to develop a strategy for this winter.

## 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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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.

## PPP to hold consultations over political situation, key appointment

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party will hold high-level consultations over the political situation and the key appointment, in a party session here.

According to sources, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto is expected to leave Karachi for Islamabad, while the party's co-chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari has already been in the federal capital city.

"A party session has

been summoned at Zardari House in Islamabad for consultation with the senior leadership of People's Party," sources said.

The party session will also decide the PPP candidate for the Senate seat vacant after resignation of Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, sources added.

President Dr Arif Alvi yesterday said that efforts are underway to bring calm to the political situation in the

country. He urged that the key appointment should be made in accordance with the Constitution and the law.

While talking to journalists in Islamabad, President Arif Alvi said that efforts are underway to bring political parties and stakeholders to the dialogue table.

He added that the key appointment should be made in accordance with the Constitution and the law. INP

## Pakistan breaks Afghan pine nuts sales in China

BEIJING: The price of half a kilogram of Pakistani pine nuts in China can be as high as RMB 140 (about Rs 4,360), which is at the upper end of the so-called "chain of contempt" of nuts in China, China Economic Net (CEN) reported it on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Pakistani people can buy 40 kilograms of flour with this sum of money, which is enough for a family of five for nearly a month.

According to the report, Pakistani pine forests grow in valleys at an altitude of 2,000-3,350 meters in the mountainous areas of western Pakistan on the border with Afghanistan.

Sulaiman range of Balochistan, Sherani and Chitral in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Diامر in Gilgit-Baltistan are Pakistan's main production regions for pine nuts.

People work on pine nut related work at the foot of Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain on Earth, photographed in Chilas, Pakistan.

A farmer in Diامر said that 200,000 to 250,000 people are engaged in the pine nut business here and every household earns income from pine nuts.

According to the official data of the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC), in the first nine months of 2022,

Pakistan's exports of pine nuts in shell (HS: 08029100) to China amounted to USD 47.69 million, over five times the USD 9.5 million export of fresh or dried nuts (HS: 0802 - fresh or dried nuts) to China in 2018.

"Pakistani pine nut exports have huge potential for locals to earn a living and get rich," said Faisal Ahsan Pirzada, Secretary of Forest, Wildlife and Environment Department, Gilgit-Baltistan, in an interview with CEN.

Haji Ghulam Mehmood from Chilas Pine Nut Market agreed and said, "Pakistan has gone into crisis. The money earned by pine nuts export is settled in US dollars, which is beneficial for Pakistan."

As for the reason behind cutting down the "money tree", which is a gift of nature, Raja Zakirya Khan Maqsood, Senior Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, told CEN that cutting down pine trees must be stopped in underdeveloped areas like Diامر, as forests are their only source of income.

"There must be a strict ban on cutting down pine trees. Instead of being poor, the locals who are blessed with natural resources can feed their children if they are trained with appropriate professional skills," Faisal Ahsan Pirzada added.

"Ninety percent of the people here are unemployed. The Chilas region has a revenue of Rs 5-6 billion (about RMB 160 million)," said Saif ullaah, a pine nut dealer and exporter from Chilas.

There is another reason for cutting down pine trees. Seth Azeem Shah, from Chilas, one of Pakistan's main production areas of pine nuts, has been trading in pine nuts since the year 2,000, more than 20 years ago.

According to him, in 2017, there were still 2,000 tons of pine nuts being produced in Chilas. Then some elite Pakistanis spotted the business opportunity and started hiring laborers from other areas to pick them. Due to the high workload, the workers were willing to cut down the entire tree to get the job done quickly. These workers are not from Chilas, so they only care about their own income, not tree protection. Currently, less than 1,000 tons are produced in Chilas. "In addition, how to pick pine cones also affects the production of pine nuts. Faisal Ahsan Pirzada said that if people collect pine cones by hand improperly, it can harm the yield of next year. Pine forest protection has started in some regions. "The UN FAO project in Diامر will increase the area of pine forests. INP



HYDERABAD: ACE officials presents DC Matiari who was arrested in over Rs2bn embezzlement in land acquisition matter of M6 motorway in Anti-Corruption court.

## ATC issues arrest warrants for fugitives in KU attack case

KARACHI: In an important development in the case of the suicide attack on Chinese teachers at Karachi University, the anti-terrorism court (ATC) Thursday issued arrest warrants for six fugitive accused.

As per details, the court issued arrest warrants for six fugitive suspects including Hebtan Baloch, husband of suicide bomber Shari Baloch, Bashirzeb, Rahman Gul, Khalil. The police said that the spokesman of the banned BLA Mir Safer is also among the absconding accused in the KU attack case.

The police said that an accused Dad Bux has already

been arrested in the case, the accused made revelations about targeting Chinese citizens along with his partner Nasir.

Earlier, Information Minister Sindh Sharjeel Inaam Memon said that the mastermind of the attack on Chinese citizens in Karachi University (KU) entered Pakistan via a neighbouring country. The KU attack was a collaboration between Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), Sharjeel said.

The suicide attack killed at least four people including three Chinese teachers who were working for the Confucius Institute at the University of

Karachi. The blast was carried out by a female suicide bomber of a banned terror organisation.

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## Govt's vision of energy sector is to energise whole sector: Musaddiq Malik

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State Ministry of Energy, Petroleum Division Senator Dr. Musaddiq Masood Malik has said that the government's vision of the energy sector is to energise the whole sector. Energise the poor and create the infrastructure that allows them upward social mobility.

He was addressing the Thought Leaders Forum (TLF) organized by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad in Islamabad on Thursday under the title, "Pakistan's Energy Vision: A Harbinger for Economic Development." Senator Dr. Musaddiq Masood

Malik, was the keynote speaker.

He said that the subsidies have hindered the growth of energy sector infrastructure. Productivity needs to be increased in both the public and private sectors through innovation and technology infusion. The major problems of the energy sector include availability, affordability, and fiscal sustainability.

He further stated that Pakistan is soon aiming to announce its refining policy and is expected to attract an investment of 12 billion US dollars to setup a world-class

refinery in the country.

His address was followed by a Question & Answer session on a wide range of topics including energy security, circular debt, and self-sustainability in the energy market.

Towards the end, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BOG ISSI, presented ISSI's souvenir to the keynote speaker. The event was received well across the board.

Earlier, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Centre, in his introductory remarks apprised the audience about the significance of TLF. INP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik presenting a souvenir to Lt. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Commanding General of US Army Central.

## DC Matiari arrested over graft charges in motorway funds

MATIARI: Anti-Corruption officials of Hyderabad on Thursday arrested deputy commissioner Matiari over corruption in funds for Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway project.

A team of Hyderabad anti-corruption department officials arrested Matiari DC Adnan Rashid over graft charges and conducted search operation in DC House of the district. Anti-corruption officials taken key papers in their custody during the search.

Adnan Rashid was removed hours ago from his office over corruption charges in funds for Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway (M-6) project. "He has been detained and will be produced in a court today to seek his physical remand,"

sources at the anti-corruption department has said. According to a government notification, DC Matiari Adnan Rashid has been terminated from service over corruption charges. He had allegedly misappropriated 1.75 billion rupees from the motorway funds. Deputy Commissioner Benazirabad, Shaharyar Memon, has been given additional charge of DC Matiari. Assistant Commissioner New Saeedabad, Mansoor Abbasi, has also been notified to be suspended from his office. Chief Secretary Sindh had initiated inquiry into the corruption scam related to land procurement for the motorway project.

Instead of payment to landowners by cross cheques, the amount was drawn in cash by the accused in their own names, according to the inquiry report. Sindh government has constituted a committee for further probe in the corruption scandal. "The committee comprises of Additional Secretary Finance and Secretary Sindh Public Service Commission". The committee will submit its report to the government within three days. According to documents, the National Highway Authority (NHA) had released an amount of Rs. 4.09 billion to DC Matiari for purchase of the land for the motorway. The accused drawn Rs 1.82 billion cash from bank for procurement of land for 70 kilometers of the road, according to INP

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## FBR freezes bank accounts of Evacuee Trust Property Board

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Thursday frozen the accounts of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) in three different banks for its failure to pay Rs142.7 million withholding tax in the year 2019.

According to details, the amount was recovered after the bank accounts were frozen by the FBR Corporate Tax Office team, who worked under the supervision of Sadia Sadaf Gilani, Chief Commissioner of the Corporate Tax Office.

Additionally, the accounts of the Board were frozen under the chairmanship of Commissioner Enforcement II Naeem Babar.

The recovery team was consisted of Additional Commissioner Atif Bashir, Deputy Commissioner Yasir Mansoor Butt, Inspector Syed Waqas Ahmed, and Inspector Sardar Ahmed.

It is pertinent to note here that the Board was required to pay back withholding tax with arrears. INP

## Nooriabad: Three labourers die in road crash

KARACHI: Three labourers died in a horrible road crash near Nooriabad, on Thursday, rescue sources.

The bodies have been moved to a nearby hospital by the rescue sources.

Meanwhile, Sindh chief minister Syed Murad Ali Shah expressing grief on the tragic road accident extended his condolences to the heirs of the deceased labourers.

Earlier, two brothers died when the road they were digging for a water connection caved in and they were buried alive under the debris in Karachi's North Nazimabad area.

The sorrowful incident took place in North Nazimabad's Block S neighbourhood during digging for laying a water pipeline in a street.

After the road caved in, two brothers were buried alive under the debris. Locals along with the rescue officials pulled out the bodies of the labourers. INP



KARACHI: Pakistani military paratrooper take part in a drill during the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2022 at the beach.

## Over 26 kanal costly land from retrieved illegal occupants

LAHORE: On orders of Ombudsman Punjab Maj (r) Azam Suleman Khan, the Vehari administration, while taking action on public complaints, has retrieved 26 kanal land from illegal occupants, while another 15 acres of government land has been auctioned to fetch 30 million rupees to government kitty.

This was stated by the spokesman of the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab in a statement issued on Thursday. The spokesman noted that the involvement of the ombudsman's office in public complaints resulted in the retrieval of a total of 47 kanal state land in Bahawalnagar and the amount of the crop has also been deposited in the treasury.

In a similar development, a 4.17 kanal piece of land has been recovered by the administration in Gujranwala after the ombudsman's office interceded on a public complaint. Likewise, illegal encroachments, worth one million rupees, have been cleared in Mianwali to

restore public passage after the ombudsman's office interacted in the public interest, the spokesman mentioned. Following the instructions of the ombudsman's office on a separate application, the administration in Taunsa Sharif has restored possession of 100 kanal of government land to the complainant under the agricultural graduate land scheme.

The ombudsman's office also interacted to give possession of 16.17 kanal of land back to its rightful owner Sultan Ahmad Khan, an overseas Pakistani of Toba Tek Singh, the spokesman reported.

The total market value of the retrieved lands in different districts is 61.54 million rupees, the spokesman mentioned.

Alongside this, the administration in Kasur has settled 2938 cases of mutation of lands after an own-motion notice of the provincial ombudsman Azam Suleman Khan on a news item and this has relieved the local land owners. INP



ISLAMABAD: Students of different schools hold a banner during a rally in favor of Pak Army at F-9 Park in Federal Capital.

## Supreme Court disposes of plea against PTI's long march

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court Thursday declared the petition against the long march of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) ineffective and disposed of it.

"If the situation deteriorates, a new petition can be filed," the apex court said.

Senator Kamran Murtaza argued before the court that Imran Khan's long march was continued for two weeks.

"According to Fawad Chaudhry, the long march will reach Islamabad on Friday or Saturday," he told the court.

"The life in Islamabad may be affected due to

the long march. The long march is the right of the PTI, but the rights of the common man should not be affected," he emphasized.

"Has the government created any mechanism to regulate protests?" Justice Ayesha Malik questioned.

"Do you think that the administration has become so weak that it cannot control the long march? This matter belongs to the executive. You should approach them," Justice Athar Minallah remarked.

"The judiciary can intervene only in exceptional circumstances.

When the administration has extensive powers to control such a situation, why should the court interfere?" he added.

"The matter has gone too far. One person lost life in the PTI's long march which continues for many days," Kamran Murtaza contended.

"Have you approached the administration? Why is so hurry in the case of the long march and what is the negligence of the administration?" Justice Ayesha Malik questioned.

"You have mentioned past violations in the petition. The long march is a political problem that can

be solved politically," Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial said to Kamran Murtaza.

"Interference in these kinds of issues creates a strange situation for the court. You have mentioned an audio in your application. This audio mentions the bringing of arms. The audio can be true or false, but it can spoil the law and order situation," the chief justice remarked.

"Did people have weapons in the long march of May 25? The right to protest is not unlimited but subject to the constitutional limits," he pointed out.

"You are saying that the long march is now within the boundaries of Punjab. Have you contacted the Punjab government? If the connection between the province and the federation is severed, can the court intervene?" the chief justice raised a question. "You are a senator. Strengthen the parliament," he said to Senator Kamran Murtaza. "I have come to the court in a personal capacity," Kamran Murtaza replied. "How can you believe that you are also a part of the government and have come in a personal capacity?" Justice Athar Minallah questioned. INP

# Gwadar to send 8000 tons of fertiliser to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: As a fresh impetus to the Gwadar transshipment drive, a consignment of 8000 tonnes of DAP fertilisers is all set to be shipped via road to Afghanistan marking a first Afghanistan-bound fertiliser shipment during the ongoing current year.

According to Gwadar Pro on Thursday, during the last 10 months and 13 days in 2022, Gwadar did not handle or ship any Afghanistan-bound fertiliser stuff.

It processed and shipped hundreds of tonnes of DAP for Afghanistan trade in 2021. Eventually, the operation resumed after a mega vessel owned by AP Sveti Vlaho that carried 8000 tons of DAP fertilisers, docked on November 14 at

Gwadar Port.

Since its operation, the port has begun to play a new role as an efficient transit stop and time-saving trade port for landlocked Afghanistan. Its shipments of fertiliser started in January 2020.

Gwadar International Terminal Limited (GITL) operator official said that after offloading process is completed and the fertiliser will be loaded on trucks and then will be sent to Afghanistan as per the stipulated programme and schedule.

AP Sveti Vlaho is the first company that has been engaged with the Gwadar Port Authority. This new interaction has prompted a deep sense of confidence shown by international companies in

Gwadar port observing its rising reputation to handle enormous consignments as per international standardisation.

It is imperative here to mention that a fertiliser factory is under construction which will start its production by February 2023. With this development, a number of fertiliser producers and importers have expressed their desire to utilise Gwadar port and Free Zone for this purpose.

In 2021, a total of 500 tons of fertilisers were shipped out of the port's warehouse by a fleet of Pakistani trucks.

In April, 2020, the federal government allowed the import of fertilisers at the Gwadar Port and onward transit to Afghanistan through bonded carriers-

insured and sealable trucks having a tracking device.

The Ministry of Commerce (MoC), on the request of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), the Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), the Gwadar International Terminals Limited and other stakeholders, has issued an Office Memorandum (MO) titled 'Implementation of the import and export policy orders through shipping procedure and instructions for operationalisation of the Gwadar Port'.

The petitions of all stakeholders were examined in the light of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), 2010 Article 21(1)(c) of the

APTTA, 2010 that allows the transit of "bulk cargo (not imported in containers — like shipload) in open trucks or other transport units."

Economist Shahid Hussain told Gwadar Pro that Pakistan can reach its true potential for transshipment when China, Afghanistan and other Central Asian economies are connected with Gwadar through land routes.

"A trickle of Chinese products continues to flow into Afghanistan through Pakistan, improved by CPEC infrastructure, though trade has been mostly done through the Port of Karachi, one of South Asia's largest and busiest deep-water seaports that handles about 60 per cent of Pakistan's cargo," he added. INP



KARACHI: A Pak Army officer brief about Pakistani heavy sniper rifle and other ammunition to Italy Army Officials during International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2022 at the Expo Centre in Provincial Capital.

## Donation from CPEC energy enterprises exceeds Rs.115m

ISLAMABAD: Millions of people in Pakistan are still deeply affected by the aftermath of flooding which "is not going anywhere". In the time of need, the CPEC energy enterprises have stepped forward to assist the local people and provided relief worth Rs.115 million (including food and supplies).

According to Gwadar Pro on Thursday, China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute shared details about the CPEC energy enterprises' support for Pakistan in flood relief.

Zonergy extended support of Rs.12 million, Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Rs.1.06 million.

State Grid of China donated about Rs.44 million, and Matiari Lahore Transmission Company Rs.3.72 million. China Power Hub Generation Company provided Rs.1.7 million, China Gezhouba Group International Engineering Rs.9.36 million, and UEP Wind Power Rs.100,000.

PowerChina contributed Rs.30.21 million containing seven batches of donations. Shanghai Electric Rs.8.16 million, three batches. China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) Rs.4.37 million, five batches.

Some enterprises have transferred the donations to local governments, relief funds, and NGOs in Pakistan, who then dispatched them to the forefront of disaster-hit areas.

Some are distributing rations on-ground. For example, Zonergy, China's renewable energy solutions conglomerate, provided portable solar energy equipment and food to areas deprived of electricity and life necessities.

Shanghai Electric sent tents, medicine, and drinking water to the families of employees affect-

ed by the flood. Matiari Lahore Transmission Company, alert to diseases caused by the flood, delivered 2500 relief packages and medical services to residents near the Matiari Converter Station.

PowerChina HuaDong purchased food for individuals around the sites of their project. In fact, whenever Pakistan faces a major challenge, the Chinese government, enterprises, and people step forward to provide support. This is quite true in the case of flood circumstances.

Near the PowerChina Diamer Basha Dam Project, main roads linking villages to town were destroyed by torrential floods, cutting access to relief materials essential to the local residents.

In this difficult time, the Chinese company, after surveying the disaster site, sent rescue teams with excavators and other large mechanical equipment to clear collapsed sections of the roads and backfill the foundation of irrigation canals.

After four days of all-out repair, the team cleared the 8-kilometer road and repaired the "paralyzed" irrigation canals, protecting the villagers from a secondary disaster.

"The more difficult it is, the more responsibilities we must take," said an employee of PowerChina Diamer Basha Project. "Our ability might be limited, but we are striving to do something for this country. A brother in need is a friend indeed." Such stories of timely help for locals are innumerable at CPEC projects. In Kaghan Valley, Mansehra District where SK Hydropower Project is located, several parts of the Karakoram highway, a vital communication line in northern Pakistan, were cut off due to rockfall from concessional torrential rains and mud-rock flows, leaving local people stuck in the inner land. INP

## 2 died, 1 injured in road accident

PESHAWAR: Two persons died and another two injured when trucks coming from opposite direction collided head on at Mathani area here on Thursday, police said.

The tragic incident occurred at Zangali village near Kohat Road due to wrong overtaking by the drivers.

As result of which Umar Gul (30) and Javed Khan (36) died on the spot while Jamil Khan and another person sustained critical injuries. The injured were shifted to Lady Reading Hospital. Police have registered the case and started investigation. INP

## IRSA releases 94,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 94,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 63,300 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1518.87 feet and was 120.87 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 26,700 cusecs while outflow as 48,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1145.55 feet, which was 95.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 13,600 cusecs and 23,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 58,500, 39,100, 33,900 and 13,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 13,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala. INP

## Over 300 clinics, hospitals run by quacks sealed

ISLAMABAD: After receiving several complaints, Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) sealed more than 300 clinics and hospitals where people were pretending to be medical practitioners.

A raid was conducted in various areas located on the outskirts of the capital under the supervision of IHRA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Qaid Saeed. At least 318 private clinics have been sealed, including laboratories and pharmacies.

As many as 205 laboratories and private hospitals' services have also been suspended after the operation. FIRs against fake medical practitioners have also been registered, IHRA CEO said.

He said some unlicensed doctors were treating patients without being licensed by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC). He vowed that nobody will be allowed to play with human lives. "Piracy is a serious problem in Pakistan," he added.

He urged Islamabad residents to be cautious while visiting medical practitioners to save their money and health. The official said that even in the future, the law would take its course if someone is found involved in this heinous practice. INP

## Sindh cabinet approves new, bigger graveyards in Karachi

KARACHI: Karachi Administrator Murtaza Wahab said that Sindh cabinet has approved new and bigger cemeteries in Karachi after it emerged that there was an acute shortage of burial space.

He said that lack of burial space in 38 graveyards of Karachi is a serious problem. Earlier, a report revealed that all graveyards in the megacity under Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) are filled to the brim. KMC Senior Director Municipal Services Mazhar Khan said that they had approached the Sindh government for acquiring land for new graveyards.

Murtaza Wahab said that lands for the new cemeteries have been identified while action had been taken against elements who were fleeing bereaved citizens finding a space to bury their loved ones. INP

## Pakistan ranked world's third most polluted country

LAHORE: Pakistan was the world's third most polluted country after Bangladesh and Chad, said IQAir, a Swiss group that measures air quality levels based on the concentration of lung-damaging airborne particles known as PM2.5, said on Thursday.

As per report, two major cities of Pakistan are included among 10 most polluted cities of the world.

South Asia is the most polluted region in the world with Bangladesh, India and Pakistan sharing 42 of the 50 most polluted cities worldwide, IQAir said in its 2020 World Air Quality Report, with data gathered from 106 countries.

Karachi stands fourth among the most polluted cities of the world, said the report of IQAir. "The most polluted countries in the region have numerous cities that average US AQI measurements of 'Unhealthy' (> 55.5 µg/m3) or worse," the report said. "Bangladesh: 80%

of cities; Pakistan: 67% of cities; India: 32% of cities."

The report said key drivers of air pollution in Pakistan included urbanization, rapid economic development, and industrialization.

"Major sources of Pakistan's air pollution include road transport emissions (both vehicle exhausts and road dust), domestic biomass burning, and industrial activity," IQAir said. "Pakistan also experiences air pollution from agricultural burning and shares transboundary pollution from this activity with India."

Alarmingly, the report noted that more than 20% of deaths in Pakistan were "attributable to the negative health impacts of air pollution exposure."

IQAir also ranked Lahore as the world's 18th most polluted city during 2020 and second most polluted megacity, after New Delhi, exposing its over 11 million residents to hazardous PM2.5 levels. INP

## Pakistan ideal destination for businesses due to its unique geo-economic position: Masood Khan

WASHINGTON: "Pakistan an ideal destination for U.S. investors and businesses due to its unique geo-economic position and impressive demographic cohorts," Ambassador Masood Khan noted this in an exclusive interaction with the board of Directors of the Pakistan-American Chamber of Commerce (PACC) in Los Angeles. The event was also attended by a select group of businessmen working in textile, banking, logistics, solar and fintech sectors as well as healthcare professionals. Speaking to the participants, the Ambassador appreciated the work done by the Chamber to promote trade and investment ties between Pakistan and the U.S. He said that while bilateral trade between the two countries jumped from US\$ 8.5 to

12 billion last year, there was potential to increase it further by enhancing economic cooperation in targeted areas such as technology, IT tourism, extractive industry, oil and gas exploration, manufacturing, healthcare and agriculture.

The Ambassador also underscored the need for growing trade ties with the State of California, which has a GDP of US\$ 3.5 trillion. He said Pakistan and California were important trade partners. In the past year, Pakistan's exports to California were US\$ 457 million, whereas Pakistan's imports were US\$ 138 million, with a surplus of US\$ 319 million in Pakistan's favor. The overall volume of trade between Pakistan and California was US\$ 600 million, which was significant but needed to be scaled. INP

## Smuggling, illicit trade in counterfeit products needs to be curbed without further delay: UBG

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's United Business Group (UBG) Thursday demanded the government that smuggling and illicit trade in counterfeit products needs to be curbed without further delay to protect the organized industry and consumers.

Taking to a delegation of industrialists and traders led by Chaudhary Ghulam Mujtaba MD Vital Tea, UBG Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik, Sitar-I-Imtiaz said every country in the world is grappling with the issue of parallel economy; Pakistan is not all alone in this scenario.

Hence, the size of Pakistan's

shadow economy is estimated to be in range of 30-50pc of the nation's total reported GDP by various studies using different methodologies.

He said the shadow or informal economy refers to economic activities taking place outside the tax and regulatory system and may or may not have any backward or forward linkages with the organized sector.

He said the problem with Pakistan is that the size of the unreported economy has grown so high that it is now bearing down on formal sectors, penalising tax payers, undermining tax collection, intensifying market distortions and creating an uneven field for organized businesses. INP

## FIA arrests another for running hundi, hawala business in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Commercial Banking Circle Islamabad arrested a person involved in hundi/hawala business on Thursday.

According to the FIA sources, the accused was arrested during an operation on a tip-off in Blue Area of Islamabad. He was identified as Muhammad Zahid.

During search, 23,500 Saudi riyals and 2.8 million Pakistani rupees were recovered from the vehicle of the accused.

During interrogation, he failed to justify holding the currency recovered.

A case was registered against him. INP

## Another Karachi man lynched over suspicion of kidnapping child

KARACHI: Another man succumbed to the torture by people in Karachi on the accusation of kidnapping a child on Thursday.

According to police, the incident took place in Hawke's Bay near Abdul Rehman Goth.

The deceased threw stones at people which left a youth injured. They threw the stones back at him in retaliation which caused his death.

The deceased was identified as Hatim. A four years old child was also injured in the incident. The police arrested a person named Sher Khan alias Shero for being involved in throwing stones at the deceased.

Search for others involved in the incident was underway.

"The deceased was a drug-addict," police maintained. INP

## Chinot: Two killed as dumper runs over motorcycle

CHINIOT: At least two persons were killed after the motorcycle they were riding was run over by a speeding dumper in Chinot on Wednesday night.

According to details, the accident took place at the Sargodha Road near River Chenab where a rashly driven dumper ran over a motorcycle, killing two persons on the spot.

Police and rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead bodies to hospital. INP

## Sheikh Rasheed vows to accord warm welcome to Imran despite threats

RAWALPINDI: Despite a "threatening call", Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed on Thursday vowed to accord a warm welcome to PTI chief Imran Khan upon his arrival in Rawalpindi to lead Haqeeqi Azadi March towards Islamabad.

The Rawalpindi police received a threatening call on Central Police Office (CPO) official number, informing them about a possible attack on Sheikh Rasheed. The caller identified himself as Irshad Ansari.

Talking to a private Tv channel, Sheikh Rasheed said, following the "threatening call", he has been asked

to limit political activities.

Rasheed claimed a drone from Islamabad often comes for surveillance of Lal Haveli. "I have asked the shooter to take it down if it comes again."

On Wednesday, Rashid Shafiq, in a statement, said that a case of threatening call for former interior minister and AML chief was being registered at Civil Lines police station. Meanwhile, the police also launched an investigation into the matter. Earlier in September, Awami Muslim League (AML) Chief claimed that he received a "threatening call" on his residence Lal Haveli's landline number. INP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NADRA Tariq Malik called on Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Engineer Ameer Muqam.

## ECP writes to Punjab govt to remove EVM requirement for LG polls

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has asked the Punjab government to amend its election laws and to remove the requirement for using electronic voting machines in the upcoming local government elections.

The move has been endorsed by the provincial local government department and will likely add pressure on the provincial government to make the amendment.

In this regard, the ECP wrote to the Punjab chief secretary and the Punjab Local Government and Community Development Department secretary from October 26, 2022, came to light on Thursday. In the letter, the ECP referred to conducting local government elections in the province following a hearing on the matter in the commission. The commission directed the Punjab government to provide it with demarcation notification of local areas in each district, the number of union councils to be demarcated, notified delimitation rules, authenticated maps of urban areas as per the demarcation and including census block and circles. Further, the ECP demanded separate authenticated maps of rural areas showing district and tehsil boundaries and notification regarding the number of seats of councillors in metropolitan corporations and district councils. In the letter, the ECP referred to conducting local government elections in the province following a hearing on the matter in the commission. The commission directed the Punjab government to provide it with demarcation notification of local

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## South African National Defence Force chief meets Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman

RAWALPINDI: General Rudzani Maphanya, Chief of South African National Defence Force, who is on official visit to Pakistan, called on General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi, on Thursday.

During the meeting, both sides deliberated upon various areas of interest, bilateral cooperation, including security, counter-terrorism and prevailing regional environment. The dignitaries dilated upon measures to enhance the level and scope of military engagements between both countries and reaffirmed to continue to forge deeper ties. Chairman JCSC said that Pakistan is keen to expand its existing bilateral military to military cooperation with South Africa. The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their sacrifices in fight against terrorism. INP

acknowledged their sacrifices in fight against terrorism. Earlier, upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, a smartly turned out tri-services contingent presented 'Guard of Honour' to the visiting dignitary. During the meeting, both sides deliberated upon various areas of interest, bilateral cooperation, including security, counter-terrorism and prevailing regional environment. The dignitaries dilated upon measures to enhance the level and scope of military engagements between both countries and reaffirmed to continue to forge deeper ties. Chairman JCSC said that Pakistan is keen to expand its existing bilateral military to military cooperation with South Africa. The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their sacrifices in fight against terrorism. INP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Syed Amin Ul Haque chairing a meeting to discuss issues of telecom industry.