

# QUETTA VOICE

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**Education of 386000 students at risk in Balochistan**



**Afghanistan tendered apology over Chaman border firing: Kh Asif**

## Hut like school turns into a well-furnished school in Khuzdar

**Education Desk**

QUETTA: The plight of bare-footed school children in the rugged mountains of Ornach Khuzdar Balochistan made headlines in recent. A video shared by BBC Urdu prompted the Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Qudus Bizenjo to take notice of the plight of school. Overnight, rooms were constructed and a hut-like school was turned into a well-furnished educational institution located in the most remote area of Balochistan.

"We are committed to improve the plight of schools across Balochistan", CM Bizenjo said in a statement. He said the government was determined to promote education across the province, legging behind other provinces in terms of key social indicators.

Balochistan Education Foundation (BEF) included a school in its list of schools that run on grants, this school was established on the basis of self-help in Killi Akiro Kabari a village in district Khuzdar.

The founder of the school, Muhammad Farooq, was also given a job in the Balochistan Education Foundation in recognition of his valuable services to the development of education in his area.



**Number of students is increasing in the school**

The BBC aired a report on the self-help-built school for boys and girls in a remote and underprivileged area of Khuzdar.

Muhammad Farooq, a person from the area, established this school with his self-help, the non-governmental organization also helped Muhammad Farooq.

Balochistan's Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo directed Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Aqeeli to take the school under government patronage on the BBC report.

**School built through non-organizational support and a local teacher in Khuzdar**

The chief minister has also directed the education department to include the school expansion project in the upcoming PSDP.

The Chief Minister says that the civil society working in the education sector will be encouraged and patronized in every possible way so that other people can also contribute to this good work.

## BEF adopts hut like school established by a local hero in Khuzdar

**Staff Reporter**

QUETTA: Balochistan Education Foundation (BEF) adopted a hut-like school established by a local hero in the Khuzdar district of the province on Sunday. The story of local hero, Farooq Ahmed went viral on BBC Urdu the other day. In the video, the hut housing girls and boys students in the area can be witnessed.

"First we gathered the elders of the area to convince them to the establishment of the school", Mr. Ahmed said. "In the first phase, we decided to establish a hut", he



said. The students walk from 3 kilometers to 5 kilometers to reach the school in the rugged mountains of Khuzdar, Ahmed informed.

Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili had taken notice of the plight of the school. "BEF has adopted a school at Killi Akerro Kabbari in Sub Tehsil Ornach", a letter issued by the foundation said.

The government has also employed local hero, Mr. Farooq through BEF and adopted the school, Chief Secretary Balochistan's official Twitter account mentioned.

The enrolment of this hut-like school reached around one hundred. The Prime Minister's secretariate has also taken notice of the plight of the students studying in this hut-like school in the ornach area of the Khuzdar district.

In Balochistan, government-run schools portray a very bleak picture. Out of around 14000 schools, 6000 thousand schools are operating with one teacher in one room, which contradicts the present government's claims about education emergency and priority. Similarly, the number of non-functional schools across Balochistan is around 3000.

## Education of 386000 students at risk in Balochistan

**Syed Ali Shah Analysis**

The education of 3,86,000 students is at risk in flood-affected areas of Balochistan. Floods and heavy rainfall damaged around 3,000 government-run primary, middle and high schools across the province.

The damage to schools across Balochistan has affected the schooling of 3,86,000 students. This figure is as per the data shared by the Balochistan Secondary Education Department. Although, the independent sources put the number of students and damaged schools higher than what is being quoted by the officials.

**Floods damaged this school in interior Balochistan: Photo provided by UNICEF**

The out-of-school children ratio in Balochistan is already higher than in the rest of the country. The education department admits that still, over 1 million children are out of school in the province, lagging behind other provinces of Pakistan in all key social indicators. Reconstruction of schools a major challenge for the government



The recent monsoon has further compounded the problems of students. The number of government-run primary, middle and high schools in Balochistan is over 15,000. The reconstruction of 3,000 damaged schools is a major challenge for the provincial government, which appears to be least bothered about the state of education in the province.

So far, the data is only shared at the departmental level. The government has not spoken about the reconstruction of damaged schools and resuming educational activities there. UNICEF has only established 22 temporary learning centers (TLCs) with over 2,000 enrollments. This is simply nothing as compared to the number of students deprived of education.

**Govt, opposition solely focusing on PSDP**

The provincial coalition government and the 'friendly' opposition have solely focused on their schemes in the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) 2022-23. They want to get the schemes completed and implemented by hook and crook and uttered not a single word about the reconstruction of damaged schools. The reconstruction of schools and ensuring the availability of basic facilities would require billions of rupees. The lives of students should not be put at peril to study in damaged classrooms as anytime the damaged rooms and walls can collapse. So no risk should be taken in this regard.

The Balochistan government, UNICEF and other non-governmental organizations on national and inter-

national levels working for the promotion of education should take notice of the situation and ensure the reconstruction of damaged schools. Then, the students should be allowed to keep continue their stalled studies.



## Govt to soon abolish digital divide among urban & rural areas: Minister

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque has said that the government is committed to soon abolish the digital divide between the urban and rural areas of the country. He said that effective measures are being taken for digitalization for which the Ministry of IT is taking all possible steps.

This was stated by the federal minister while addressing the inaugural ceremony of Pakistan-ITU Digital Inclusion Week, 2022 here on Monday. The two-day event is aimed at to raise awareness about the importance of mainstreaming digital inclusion in Pakistan in addressing the digital divide particularly among people in vulnerable situations such as girls, children, and person with disabilities. Syed Amin Ul Haque said that the government of Pakistan offered thanks to International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for their splendid support for all the countries of the world in general and for Pakistan in particular, in the areas of women



empowerment, ICT Accessibility and for Child Online protection. It is the topmost priority of the government to empower women and steps are being taken to equip youth with digital skills, he said and noted that the digital revolution characterized by artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing and mobile robotics and many more

such areas which were previously considered the technologies of the future, have now become the need of the time. The Minister IT & Telecommunication said that ICT For Girls Project of the Ministry was important initiative to empower women. He said that work on number of projects is going on for provision of telecom services in far-flung areas of the country. He said that Ministry of IT has formulated National ICT Council for Persons with disabilities with the aim to support the special people with assistive technologies and make them the earning members. Syed Amin Ul Haque said that cooperation between ITU member countries regarding digital transformation is vital. It is pertinent to mention here that the event of Pakistan-ITU digital Inclusion Week is highlighting three main initiatives including Girls in ICT Day Pakistan, Accessible Cybercafe for all, and child online protection. Additional Secretary (Incharge), MoITT Mohsin Mushtaq INP

## Death toll in Afghan forces firing at Chaman border rises to 7

**Sardar M.Khondai**

CHAMAN: The death toll in the Afghan forces firing rose to 7 as another injured person succumbed to injuries on Monday evening Dr Abdul Malik Achakzai, the Superintendent of Chaman civil hospital confirmed the death of the injured. Over two dozen civilians were injured when the Afghan forces fired rockets on the civilian population at Killi Sheikh Alam and other



villages located at the Afghan border. The Pakistani forces gave a befitting albeit measured response to avoid civilian casualties on the Afghan side, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. The condition of the three injured is serious to be serious in the trauma center of civil hospital Quetta. The martyred civilians were laid to rest in the presence of thousands of people at the border villages.

## QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

## Balochistan facing dire financial crisis

Balochistan continues to face a dire financial crisis currently. By any definition, the province's current financial crisis is dire since the government has hinted to stop the salaries of employees. Chief Minister Mir Qudus Bizenjo decided to meet Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with all parliamentary leaders of the political parties in the Balochistan Assembly to apprise the premier about the financial crisis.

As per the statistics shared by the Balochistan government, so far, the Planning and Development (P&D) department has released Rs.70bs out of a total of around Rs.200bs under the Public Sector Development Program for the financial year 2022-23. This simply proves bad governance coupled with the serious financial crisis.

Almost half a year passed. Harsh winter has already begun and construction work in most parts of Balochistan comes to halt for around two months. The question arises that how the government would execute development projects worth Rs.130bs within three or four months under the PSDP. Definitely, the government would not be able to complete projects relating to education, health, water, roads, etc.

Such a serious financial crisis surfaced almost after a decade in Balochistan since the province's share in the National Finance Commission (NFC) award was doubled in 2009. This is irony of the fate that successive governments failed to ensure strict financial discipline to develop this most backward province of the country.

Non-development expenditures of the province continue to rise and the volume of development funds falls fast. This subsequently has the worst impact on the socio-economic condition of Balochistan.

For the prevailing financial crisis, both the government and the opposition are responsible since today's opposition is the de-facto government in Balochistan. A strict financial discipline needs to be introduced and implemented in Balochistan to improve the living standard of the people of Balochistan before the situation turns ugly turn.

## Our wheat problem

Daud Khan/Ghasharib Shoukat

Wheat is the main staple food in Pakistan. Consumption is around 125 kilograms per head per year — one of the highest in the world. Wheat and wheat-based products account for 60-70% of total calories consumed. As incomes and urbanisation increase, consumers are gradually shifting towards more of a diversified diet with increased consumption of higher-value foods such as fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy products. However, for the foreseeable future wheat will remain of primary importance — and the main source of calories, especially for the poor.

One of the country's principal policy goals is to produce enough wheat to meet national needs, and if possible, a small surplus for export or to put into stock. To meet this objective, the government conducts a rigorous wheat planting campaign every year — targets for planting and yields are set and procurement targets are agreed upon. Thousands of extension agents and agriculture students are instructed to fan out across the country to

encourage and advise wheat farmers — whether they do this, and whether this has any impact is another matter. The government also spends billions on subsidising inputs and buying wheat at a fixed price which is then sold to flour millers at concessional rates to provide cheap atta to consumers.

Over the past decades, in this process, despite its myriad inefficiencies, along with better seeds and production systems, has succeeded in increasing wheat production. In 1990 production was 14.4 million tons and crossed 25 million tons in 2011 — an increase of 75% in about 20 years. Since then progress has been much slower — it took 10 years before production hit a new record of 27.5 million tons in 2021 (a 10% increase in 10 years) before falling back to 26.4 million tons in 2022. Prospects for 2023 are highly uncertain as it is still not clear if lower planting, due to areas still being underwater or water-logged, will be offset by higher yields due to enhanced soil fertility caused by silt deposits.

Slower growth in wheat production has made Pakistan increasingly dependent on foreign supplies. Two to three million tons — around 10% of needs — are being imported in the last years. However, high dependence on imported wheat is of some concern. International markets have been volatile and turbulent in recent times, and this may well be a continuing feature for the coming years if not coming decades.

Trade-related decisions in the face of volatility and turbulence is difficult. The situation in the case of wheat is made even more difficult by the lack of reliable real-time data on domestic production and supplies, on regional trade flows — for example to Afghanistan, and on actual public sector stocks whose quality is doubtful and quantities are reportedly inaccurate due to thefts, pilferage and pest attacks. The difficulties of handling the wheat market became clear in 2019 when government estimates suggested a wheat surplus and some 500,000 tons were exported.

But then, as domestic market conditions tightened, the government was forced to change gears and import some 3.4 MMT to meet consumer needs and help rebuild the country's wheat stocks, at a much higher cost. These events created a public uproar and triggered an investigation by the Federal Investigation Agency which was highly critical of the government's handling of the wheat trade.

A good option for Pakistan would be to try to increase domestic wheat production. At present the average yield of wheat is around 3tons/ha, substantially lower than other comparable countries. There is a huge scope to increase this yield through relatively simple changes in the production system such as reduced tillage, increased use of certified seeds, use of seed drills, a better match between fertiliser applications and soils, and application of micro-nutrients. There is also a large potential scope to reduce on-farm and off-farm losses through improved harvesting, bulk handling and storage in modern silos.

Climate change poses problems for Pakistan as it does for many other countries. However, it also creates opportunities. Changing rainfall patterns have resulted in higher precipitation in some of the arid areas in Balochistan and Sindh. And this has expanded the potential area for wheat. With relatively minor investments, for example, in water storage (small dams) and water spreading technologies, these areas could, in a good year, get a reasonable wheat crop from post-monsoon residual moisture.

These changes and innovations require a much more efficient and dynamic production system than we have at present. There is a need for better inputs, better technology, better machinery and equipment, and better trained technical staff. And if Pakistan needs to make better use of rain-fed areas, production systems need to be agile. In low rainfall years, planting may not be viable. But in a year with good rainfall inputs, manpower and equipment need to be quickly moved into arid areas to plant wheat.

## Our 'permacrisis of polycrisis'

By Mosharrar Zaidi

What country ranks 134th out of 192 countries in per capita GDP by purchasing power parity? What country is second from the bottom in the WEF's Global Gender Gap Index? What country is ranked number one in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum for Countries at Risk of Mass Killing? What country is in the top twelve in the world for risk of sovereign default?

Before you guess, here is some more data. Maybe more important.

In the list of countries that are relatively poor, this country has stayed static, in its region and globally — many countries that are as large or larger, as complex, or more complex, as complicated or more complicated, have rocketed past it in terms of GDP per capita. In the list of bottom feeding countries on the Global Gender Gap, this country is a constant, as it is at the top of the list for risk of mass killing. On the list of countries that are constantly flirting with a conversation about default, this country has been the most consistent chart topper, with at least a quarter century of constant chatter about an imminent default.

So conversations about an absence of prosperity, massive gender inequality, insecurity of life and property, and the potential for insolvency are not new conversations in this country — they are constants, all having multi-decades long intros and no coda in sight.

The kicker in all this is not the absence of prosperity, or the quantum of inequality of the sexes, or the constant risk of conflict and mass killing, or even default being constantly around the corner. The kicker is that for each and every one of these deeply worrying indicators, there is no plan for an exit, and no imminent hope of such a plan emerging.

By now, the discerning reader knows that the country in question is Pakistan. The constancy of the country's troubles — which is code for the troubles of the people of the country — is well established. What is less clear to many is that, in the words of Daniel Markey, there is, "no exit from Pakistan" for Pakistan. There is no path to a better economic future (per capita), there is no plan for improved gender equity, there is no plan to address drivers of conflict or ameliorate the risks to the security of Pakistanis, and there is no real medium-term plan for how Pakistan will exit the desperate dash to Beijing and Riyadh cycle as it shadow boxes with a sovereign default.

The polycrisis in Pakistan has the four dimensions I have tried to highlight above in the order that they matter. Microeconomic wellbeing, social exclusion, insecurity and macroeconomic dysfunction.

Ordinary Pakistanis have a standard of living that should be unacceptable to anyone anywhere

in the world, with per capita GDP (PPP) at below \$6,000 per annum. This is lower than Bangladesh and lower than India. It is less than half of the figure for Egypt and it is nine times lower than the figure for Saudi Arabia.

To add insult to the injury of being extraordinarily poor, Pakistanis live in a country where women are denied basic distributive and social justice — leading to a massive array of inter-generational problems. Malnutrition, high rates of infant mortality, high maternal mortality, low school enrolment, low literacy are all products of the original social sin in Pakistan: a massively skewed set of political and social freedoms for women.

For years, Pakistanis pointed at Saudi Arabia and Iran as places that Pakistani women could look to feel better about the oppression they face. Like every other race that Pakistan could once look comfortably upon, the score in both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (thanks to the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman) and in the Islamic Republic of Iran (thanks to the courage of Iran's young women) is changing fast. Pakistan? The country recently had a prime minister that sought to urge women to cover up more to avoid sexual assault.

Pakistanis also live in a country where mass killings have been normalised. From the north

through the south, from the mountains to the plains, in markets, schools, hospitals and on the battlefield, Pakistani lives are treated cheaply. Most egregious in this list are the terrorist groups, the separatists and the criminals that run around the country with impunity — but watching society and state respond to obvious cases of blatant disregard for human life (like the Noor Muqaddam case, or the Shahzeb Khan case, or the Sara Inam case) reinforces the old adage: you are given the respect that you command.

Pakistanis have been killed wantonly and without consequence by Pakistan's enemies for so long, that the very concept of the sacredness of human life has been reduced to a punchline. When Pakistanis forced to the periphery of a good life complain too loudly, the state and society conspire to relegate them further into the periphery. When such peripheries explode into foreign-funded insurgencies, state and society bury their heads in the sand, hoping the noise and shrapnel will stay in places far away, where social media doesn't penetrate as lucidly as in the leafy cafes where much of English-speaking Pakistan feels optimistic about a future as dark as the coffee some of us insist on.

Perhaps the poster child for all this dysfunction is the one metric of Pakistan that has the potential to damage and

destroy the Pakistani elite: a sovereign default. I began a regular space in this newspaper with this column in 2008 and among my first pieces was an exploration of whether perhaps a sovereign default was a necessary step in the country's path toward normalcy. I meant to write the piece only to provoke some thinking. Almost fifteen years later, Pakistan is closer to default and more likely to complete the journey than ever before. There is still no thinking.

Why is there no thinking on such an existential issue, especially one that will permanently alter the lifestyles and standing of the Pakistani elite?

Part of the reason is that the country has enjoyed and continues to enjoy a miraculous ability to evade catastrophe by cycling through different kinds of crises. But what makes the Pakistan polycrisis of 2022 really worrying for anyone that cares to examine the seriousness of the individual crises that make up this polycrisis is that there is no new kind of crisis to stumble into. Sure, Pakistan just experienced the worst flooding on the planet, and in Pakistan's own history this summer, but look around the public discourse. Do you see any sign that it has affected the Pakistani elite? Save perhaps the tireless work being done by Sherry Rehman as the minister for climate change?

## DISCOs and price hikes

By Sara Danial

The rising costs of electricity due to the non-availability of the right kind of fuel is irking consumers. DISCOs are helpless as the whole process is under the government's control.

This increase has been triggered by long-term trends such as under-investment in natural gas and clean energy supply, and short-term developments like reductions in natural gas. Such trends have prompted the government to pump up subsidies to protect business communities leading export-oriented operations against the financial strain. As a result, the energy crisis is now contributing to the rising inflation across the country.

The government is now struggling against the current energy price spike, which has been driven by a mix of increased demand and supply disruptions caused in the wake of fluctuating exchange rates and general instability in the country.

It is important to note that if the input prices keep rising as many analysts expect, without any replaceable raw materials such as LNG and natural gas, they could take a bite out of economic growth and force power outages and load shedding. In the past

recent months, rising tariffs caused protests across the country. People in large numbers protested against exorbitant hikes in electricity bills, rising electricity tariffs and various miscellaneous taxes.

Also, electricity distribution companies have not been able to procure natural gas, despite specific instructions from the court. One must note that DISCOs are powerless in such a situation — in the sense that higher rates will not solve the energy shortage, nor are they responsible for leveraging one industry over another. In all fairness to them, they have little choice but to at least appear to be addressing the crisis they all see coming. We can hope that they might make good decisions for the public.

While both residents and commercial users are affected by fuel-cost adjustments and high tariffs, export-oriented industries are being provided natural gas, enjoying cost savings and operational efficiencies, and disrupting the industry norm. Distribution companies are facing the brunt of this privilege extended to these industries.

The reality here is that Pakistan faces an energy crisis that is mainly a product of the government's decision-making.

A shortage that has been artificially created by government restrictions on energy production, distribution, and usage. Those policies were formed beyond any external coercion, and they have played a major role in creating the crisis.

Such economic policies of the incumbent government will fail to control the rising and the economy. Pakistani authorities must step up and take measures to contain the price hikes. They must shift away from policies that directly seek to limit prices. This approach will ensure that the support provided is fair and effective on the part of the government. And while all of us agree that the global fuel prices have also had an impact on the local scenario, the government must realize that it is a driving factor behind the worsening outlook for both growth and prosperity.

In addition, broad and equitable access to alternative energy sources is a prerequisite for an effective and publicly acceptable longer-term strategy for the state to direct and distribution companies to implement. The state must devise a plan for an 'emergency intervention' into the collective's power markets in an effort to stabilize electricity prices.

## Floods, animals and pets

By Awais Anwer Khawaja

Pakistan has been battered by flash floods that have claimed the lives of nearly 1,500 people and one million animals, including cattle. Between 1999 and 2018, Pakistan ranked as the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change.

A low literacy rate has made Pakistani society hostile towards animals and pets. A large segment of society believes that dogs, in particular, bring bad luck.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited Pakistan in September and appealed the world for generous relief efforts and cooperation to mitigate the challenges faced by the country. He has called the floods a 'monsoon on steroids' and said that rich polluters have turned a blind eye to the country that has been victimized by their reckless emissions.

Some countries including the US, UK, Canada, France, Italy, UAE and Turkey have sent aid to help the country repair the damage caused. Several relief items including tents, medicines, dry food, clothes and other essential items have been donated. But the most vulnerable members of the ecosystem — animals and livestock — have escaped the attention of almost everyone. Lumpy skin disease, an infection that causes nodules on the skin of

cattle, was already rife in the southern parts of Pakistan, and now the cataclysmic floods have further exacerbated the misery of these animals. The floods have already washed away several crops and agricultural produce. The shortage of food and lack of medical facilities are not only making the lives of the flood-affected people miserable but also creating difficulties for animals.

Climate change is also affecting migratory birds that travel long distances to escape the harsh winter, flying all the way from Siberia through the international migration route known as the Indus Flyway, over the Karakoram, Hindu Kush, and Sulaiman ranges (Koh Sulaiman) along the Indus, down to the delta.

These migratory birds include ducks and waders, geese, teal, houbara bustard, cranes, pintail, mallard, spoon bills, raptors, and passerines such as warblers, pipits and buntings. Some species, including the common and Demoiselle cranes, snipe and pelican enter through Kurram Agency, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

More floods are likely to cause severe damage to the natural habitat of these migratory birds. Unethical hunting, pollution in the wetlands and anthropogenic structures abutting the

wetlands are some of the threats faced by these birds.

Bird hunting in Pakistan is one of the favourite sports of young royals from the Middle East. In 2014, a foreign national was reported to have killed 2,000 houbara bustards even though he had the permit to hunt only 100 birds. Pakistan keeps ignoring such violations because of its economic woes — it relies on friendly countries for financial bailouts. Such economic compulsions pose threats to the safety of migratory birds, especially houbara bustard, in this country.

Some duck species are also facing massive depopulation, including white-eyed pochard, marbled teal and garganey. Cranes, popular for their size and unique calls, and complex behaviour, are the favourite prey of hunters.

Animal cruelty is also rife in Pakistan where thousands of dogs get brutally culled every year by state authorities, particularly in parts of Sindh, to curb the uncontrolled population of stray dogs. Government officials do not allocate a sufficient amount of funds for neutering and other humane ways of controlling the population of stray dogs.

Poaching is also rampant in Pakistan with pangolins fast losing their population.

Pangolin scales are high in demand for medicinal use. Gilgit-Baltistan is also home to the trophy hunting of ibexes and 'markhors', both rare species of the goat family.

There are other financial issues that indirectly affect animals. Pakistan sets aside a huge part of its annual budget for non-development expenses. The huge gap between its exports and imports has caused a massive budget deficit that in turn has brought the nation to the verge of default. Pakistan, a few months back, had to restrict its imports to balance its foreign reserves. As a result, the import of pet food was also banned. There is no local production of pets' vaccines and their dry food. Thus, the ban was likely to cause a shortage of pets' medical supplies and dry food. It rightly attracted backlash from pet owners that forced the government to lift the ban. But now the prices of pet food items have skyrocketed.

Pakistan has not been able to build enough reservoirs to store the water that travels in the monsoon season from the peaks of Himalayas to the highlands of KP, onto the plains of Punjab and finally entering the Arabian Sea. Discard among the four provinces of the country has swayed the focus of the dam-building

process from a technological challenge to political brandishing. Sindh has repeatedly expressed its reservations that the coastal line of the province is gradually submerging in the Arabian sea, and the building of dams will further accelerate the land erosion process as the flow of water will be crippled, which is a natural deterrent against the submerging of the coastal line in the sea. Distrust, among the provinces, in water distribution resources, is also one of the reasons Pakistan does not have enough water reservoirs. With heavy rainfall this year, the country's agricultural produce has been badly damaged. This has caused a famine-like situation for humans, cattle and livestock.

People living in the developed world are not fully aware of the damage caused by the apocalyptic floods in Pakistan and other vulnerable countries, which was triggered by their extravagant and environmentally insensitive lifestyle. Pakistan cannot take enough measures on its own to counter the challenges posed by climate change.

It is time the biggest carbon polluters took effective measures to deal with the climate challenge. Their failure to do so will pose threats to humans and animals alike.

## Animal cruelty in Pakistan

Syed Mohammad Ali

The indifference, callousness, and contempt that so many people exhibit toward animals is evil first because it results in great suffering in animals, and second because it results in an incalculably great impoverishment of the human spirit. I did not pen these words. Albert Einstein did. Islam also forbids treating animals cruelly or killing them except for food. Zabiha rules stipulate how an animal to be slaughtered must not be mistreated or caused undue pain. Yet, animal cruelty is rampant and exists in varied forms in countries like ours.

We live in a country where political leaders have been known to hold political rallies with caged and chained lions, and where animals like turtles given away as party favours at children's birthdays. Many well-to-do people pay a lot of money to purchase expensive cats, dogs, or birds but treat them callously. Cruelty towards animals is not the reserve of rich people only. Cruelty to animals especially donkeys, horses and mules is also widespread. These animals are overworked, under-fed, and harshly beaten by their owners.

Some recent attempts at humane dog population management and mass vaccinations in Karachi have dissipated. Instead,

the recent uproar following the negligence of animal owners and attacks by guard dogs on pedestrians in Karachi unleashed another unwarranted attacks on dogs all over the country. Several neighbourhoods started instigating municipal organisations to shoot stray dogs on sight. Use of strychnine poison was once again allowed to poison dogs.

There is a general absence of adequate laws related to animal welfare and animal slaughter, and the existing laws that exist are not adequately implemented. Pakistan's Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1890) aims to protect many animals, including draught animals. This law is however outdated and does not reflect the prevalent scientific, cultural, or commercial compulsions pertaining to animal welfare.

It is time to update this law to protect both pet and wild animals, to institute mechanisms for their care, and define consequence for those who are neglectful towards animals.

It is encouraging that the Halal Authority Act (2015) has not only mandated humane treatment of animals throughout the slaughter process, but also prohibited animals from seeing one another being slaughtered. However, there has been little implementation of this law. While animal abandon-

ment is illegal in Pakistan, there is scant regulation on how animal owners should care for their animals. Moreover, zoos across Pakistan are notorious for their poor conditions. Prompted by international criticism over the Islamabad zoo's maltreatment of the elephant, Kaavan, the Islamabad High Court issued an unprecedented ruling last year. It ordered that the entire zoo of over four hundred animals to be closed and all the animals within it to be transferred to appropriate wildlife sanctuaries in the short period of two months. The rush to empty the zoo caused the death of a pair of lions which passed away, two days apart, during their transfer from the zoo to a farmhouse in Kasur city instead of a sanctuary as had been directly by the court.

Pakistan also urgently needs to enact legislation detailing specific welfare requirements for the rearing of farm animals during distinct phases of rearing, transport, and slaughter. Such requirements must be legally binding and species-specific and aligned with international animal welfare standards. Regular inspections of farms and slaughter establishments would have to be carried out with a special focus on animal welfare or the situation on the ground will not change for the better.

## Rupee continues downward trajectory against dollar for sixth day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's rupee witnessed its value going down by 40 paisas for the sixth consecutive day against the US dollar during early trading in the inter-bank market on Monday, owing to the depleting foreign exchange reserves of the country. The last working day of the week saw rupee's rate plummeting by three paisas to Rs224.40 from Thursday's traded value of Rs224.37

in the interbank market. Meanwhile, on Wednesday, the spot rate of rupee was found to be at Rs224.16 from the previous value of Rs224.11 on Tuesday.

In defense of the economic situation, the Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Saturday stated that the value of rupee was devalued irresponsibly in the past too, which has created the current situation. However, dismissing the opposi-

tion parties' accusations, Dar stated that the country will not default, despite the fact that the country is not in the state of bearing any further experiments, and that we must work hard and focus on improving Pakistan's macroeconomic statistics.

In the open currency market, the value of rupee has increased to Rs234, respectively. The rate to buy the US dollar stayed at Rs229.70. INP

## Ahsan calls for IT revolution to make growth in all sectors

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has called for catching revolution of information technology to make exponential growth in all sectors.

Addressing a seminar on information technology in Islamabad on Monday, he said IT has accelerated the speed of growth and development.

The Minister said one can only survive by moulding oneself according to the current circumstances.

He said it is necessary for us to bring productivity revolution in our economy by using Information and Communications Technology.

He asked the universities to take rapid action to start new courses in entrepreneurship and exports for students which would help boost economy of the country.

Earlier speaking at the two-day 19th International Conference on 'Frontiers of Information Technology' (FIT-2022) organized by COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) the federal minister highlighted the importance

of Information Technology in today's era, especially for the economic growth of Pakistan.

Ahsan Iqbal also shared the seven-point framework for universities, academic excellence, research and innovation, social community service, technology enablement, corporate governance, industry-academia linkage and quality of products.

Sharing his observations, Executive Director COMSATS, Ambassador

Dr. Mohammed Nafees Zakaria speaking at the opening ceremony lauded the efforts of FIT organizers for providing an esteemed platform to researchers, scientists, and industry practitioners from across the world to present their cutting-edge research as well as sharing latest industry insights.

He mentioned that COMSATS lays its emphasis on building indigenous capacity and competence in emerging sciences and technologies.

Moreover, efforts are being made by the Commission to bring the dividends of technologi-

cal advancements in the areas of education, health, and energy to a large cross-section of the population, particularly of the Member States.

Prof. Afzal said that the dearth of Dollars confronted by the economy can be easily cured by encouraging IT related exports and technology-based startups.

Speakers from France, Netherlands, China, Ireland, Portugal, UK, USA and Pakistan are participating in the two-day conference organized by COMSATS University Islamabad in COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad.

The two days conference will comprise a series of invited talks as part of its technical program while a Ph.D. symposium will provide an opportunity for Ph.D. scholar to present their ongoing research to gather feedback from industry experts.

The last day of the conference will feature a panel discussion on the theme "Make in Pakistan: Need Assessment for a Strong Policy to Strengthen Indigenization". INP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic Kazakhstan Yserlan Koshanov inscribing his remarks in visitor book. Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and other also present at parliament house.

## Forex crisis becoming serious, eroding confidence of investors: Mian Zahid

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said the ongoing foreign exchange crisis in Pakistan is becoming more serious eroding the confidence of domestic and foreign investors as their LCs are not being opened and the goods at the port are not being cleared due to non-availability of foreign exchange and they are losing millions of rupees daily.

Talking to businessmen here on Monday, he said that due to this crisis, hundreds of containers are piled up at ports while importers are facing demurrage

and detention charges.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the IMF's ninth review has also been delayed adding to the uncertainty. He said that in the prevailing situation, Pakistan should try to arrange loans from IMF, Saudi Arabia, and China as soon as possible to save the country from further losses.

Our total annual income is sixty billion dollars while imports are 80 billion dollars and therefore it is impossible to run the country without borrowing, he said adding that to achieve self-sufficiency we have to increase income and reduce imports for which economic policies have to be restructured for public welfare.

The business leader said that productivity and exports in

Pakistan are alarmingly low and we have no option but to increase them.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the country's problems, population, and loans are continuously increasing but the economy is falling instead of developing as improving the economy in the current system is a pipedream.

Our economic system is totally dependent on imports, so whenever the growth rate is more than four percent, the import bill becomes unaffordable, resulting in difficulty in payments, he said and added that if friendly countries do not provide loans, the country may become bankrupt and if loans are provided, it will last for a few months, after which new loans will have to be taken. INP

## District management forcibly occupied Attock Press Club building: Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Senior journalist and patron in chief of the Attock Press Club (Reg) Syed Raza Naqvi has said that district management has forcibly occupied the furnished building along of Attock Press Club with office equipment worth of rupees millions and handed over to the Revenue Department ignoring the strong protests of the local journalists.

Narrating the indifferent attitude of the local administration to the media persons here on Monday, he said that the building of the Attock Press Club (Reg) was allotted to the working journalists for performance of their journalistic activities in pursuance of a resolution passed by the

District Council Attock during the chairmanship of ex-MPA Attock Syed Ejaz Bokhari in 1985.

Syed Raza Naqvi said that the rent of the building was also being contributed by the working journalistic community to the District Council Attock without any break. Meanwhile, different constitutional bodies of the office bearers were also elected to perform their day to day official business along with making arrangements of media projection of all provincial, federal visiting dignitaries, public departments, socio-political figures in all print and electronic media.

He further stated that Revenue

Department of Attock forcefully snatched the same building of the Attock Press Club (Reg) including office equipments, computers, furniture, fixture worth of rupees million in the absence of working journalists. The unbridled management even did not bother to serve any legal notice or cancel allotment with the consent of the members of the Attock Press Club (Reg).

The patron in chief of the Attock Press Club said that the aggrieved journalists also lodged a protest sit in before the office of the DC Attock besides filing their appeals to the higher authorities for redressal of their genuine problems. INP

## Dry, cold weather expected in Karachi

KARACHI: The city experiencing a colder weather as minimum temperature drops to 16.5-degree Celsius owing to winds from the northeast.

Dry weather will prevail in the day with cold night in Karachi and other parts of the province. Southwesterly winds or sea breeze, which have soothing impact in mostly warm weather of the city, have been suspended and winds from northeasterly direction, will bring the mercury down, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said.

Minimum temperature in Karachi would further drop in next two days and will drop between 14-16 and 13-15 Celsius, according to the Met Office. The wind speed will remain upto 18 kilometers per hours. The maximum temperature in city will remain between 28-30 degree Celsius.

Dry weather with cold night and misty/foggy morning is likely to prevail over most parts of the province especially in upper Sindh. Pakistan Meteorological Department in a weather report predicted that the weather would remain dry and cold in plains of the country. Rainfall with thunderstorm and snowfall on mountains expected at some places in Potohar region, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, North Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir. INP

## Seminar on 'Int'l Day of persons with disabilities' held

FAISALABAD: The Special Education Department, Punjab organized a seminar regarding 'International Day of Persons with Disabilities' here at Allama Iqbal auditorium, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad on Monday. The students showed their solidarity with the differently-abled by presenting stage performances and photo exhibition. While addressing, Vice-Chancellor of Agricultural University Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that the students under special education department were entitled to our attention and were the guarantors of bright Pakistan.

"To complete this good work, we should continue to arrange such programs so that the society could play its role to encouraging special children".

Divisional Special Education Officer, Faisalabad Abdul Sattar said that, "we should make a commitment to disabled to make them an active part of the society", adding that restoring the rights of these people was our national duty and responsibility. INP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman speaking at the IUCN donor coordination group meeting.

## Sessions court reserves verdict against Imran Khan in Toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad sessions court on Monday reserved verdict on the Toshakhana case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan.

ECP had filed a petition in a district and sessions court against the former premier over tax evasion and amount received from selling expensive gifted watches. In November, the election body had submitted a copy of the reference in court requesting criminal proceedings be initiated against the former premier. The case was heard by Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal.

ECP lawyer Saad Hassan said that Imran Khan failed to inform for how much he had sold the watch for.

He argued that the ECP was legally bound to disclose how he treated

the gifts he acquired from Toshakhana.

The counsel said that Imran Khan mentioned earnings in his 2021 tax and assets declarations which were not present in the previous years record.

The copy of the reference filed in the court said that Imran had furnished the required documents of his assets and liabilities for the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 within the stipulated period of time.

He recalled that a reference regarding the matter was sent to the ECP by the National Assembly speaker. It stated that Imran "deliberately concealed" his assets during the years 2018 and 2019 when he was the prime minister. Malik said that to verify these claims, the commission obtained Imran's statement of assets and liabilities from

the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Toshakhana record of gift items through the Cabinet Secretariat.

"From the perusal of the record, it reveals that for the year 2018-2019 the gift items were purchased on the payment of Rs21,564,600 from the Toshakhana on the basis of assessed value. The total value of gift items was Rs107,943,000."

He stated that the gift items and their sale were not shown in Imran's statement of assets and liabilities submitted to the ECP, and neither was any other explanation about the sale of the gifts was provided.

Also, the district election commissioner noted, Imran had failed to add the details of the cash and bank account of the sale proceeds in the relevant Form-B sections. INP

## ADB okays \$554m loan for Pakistan to support flood-relief efforts

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved \$554 million in financing to help Pakistan provide social protection, promote food security, and support employment for its people amid devastating floods.

According to the ADB, the amount will be spent on the rehabilitation of the damaged structure in Sindh, Balochistan and KP.

The bank further said from the total \$554 million, \$475 million is loan, \$3 million is a technical grant \$5 million donation is from Japan for the flood victims.

It may be noted that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced providing \$ 2.3 to 2.5 billion to Pakistan for flood relief efforts.

On October 26, Asian Development Bank (ADB) transferred \$1.5 billion loan to Pakistan, SBP sources.

ADB signed an agreement with Pakistan to provide \$1.5 billion loan for budgetary support and help flood-related rehabilitation and reconstruction. The loan would build the foreign exchange reserves and rein in the rupee's depreciation. INP

## Major sectors owe govt Rs448b in gas cess

ISLAMABAD: Several sectors owe the government some Rs448.86 billion to the federal government under Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC), over half of the total amount charge.

This was disclosed during a meeting of the Senate's Standing Committee on Petroleum which was held in Islamabad on Monday. The meeting was chaired by Senator Mohammad Abdul Qadir.

Figures shared during the meeting showed that GIDC charges collected from the public by varying sectors have not been deposited in the government exchequer. A document of the money charged, recovered and outstanding balance showed that a whopping sum of Rs795 billion was charged from sectors including industry (captive power), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), Fertilizer (feed), Fertilizer (fuel), Industry (general), Industry (textile), Independent Power Producers, Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) - Genco, K-Electric and Pakistan Steel Mills. Of this charged sum, the government had so far recovered a total of Rs346 billion, or around 43.6% INP



QUETTA: Labourers busy in renovation work at railway station.

## POWERCHINA says promoted Chinese technology to local eco-social development

LAHORE: POWERCHINA has said it has vigorously promoted Chinese technology and Chinese standards, profoundly introduced the real situation of China and the powerful contribution of Chinese enterprises to local economic and social development.

In a statement issued here on Monday, POWERCHINA said it has also enhanced the understanding and recognition of China and Chinese enterprises by people from all walks of life at an international moot in Lahore.

The exhibition also attracted many outstanding students of related majors to observe and learn about the high-quality construction capabilities of POWERCHINA. The exhibition will provide a boost to POWERCHINA's business in Pakistan according to a statement.

The 16th International Conference on Geotechnical Engineering was held at the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan (UET Lahore) from December 7 to 8 under the auspices of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE).

The event attracted many famous enterprises to participate, and POWERCHINA, as the representative of Chinese enterprises, was the only Chinese company to exhibit on site.

The exhibition was organized by Pakistan Geotechnical Engineering Society (PGES), and co-organized by UET Lahore and National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK). POWERCHINA was invited by the organizer to participate in the exhibition as one of the

top sponsors. This year's exhibition was held in a combination of online and offline modes, with 5 professional symposiums held in 2 days, which focused on the theme of "Geotechnical Engineering" and discussed extensively the development direction of various technical fields such as engineering field

and laboratory research, design and numerical simulation, geotechnical engineering construction and equipment, materials and performance monitoring. The symposium attracted experts and scholars from all over the world and professionals in the field of design, construction and manufacturing. INP

TENDER NOTICE		
The Director General (AH&PE) Livestock and Dairy Development Department Quetta invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of TSE-223101353317/ Fee Rs. 1000/-		
Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required.		
S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	ICT Equipment (Network, surveillance devices, storage devices, Office Equipment) (Total Item/s) Count: 6)	150,000 PKR
Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 03 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity. Turn over of at least 5,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 Subsequent Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. Sales Tax Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Dealership / authorization from the manufacturer / authorized importer / distributor / partners for Desktop Computer, Laptop, Printers and Photocopier. The Bidder must have functional corporate office in Balochistan having PTCL or QESCO. 03 successfully completed similar assignments in public Sector in last three years. The Bidder must have completed same nature of work to the tune of Rs. 10 Million in two assignments in last Three financial years Must agree to serve the Contract within Fifteen (15) Days. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of amount 150,000 PKR specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from <a href="http://www.bppra.gov.pk">www.bppra.gov.pk</a> Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at <a href="http://www.bppra.gov.pk">www.bppra.gov.pk</a> Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 27 December, 2022 till 02:30 PM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 03:30 PM on EPPS System Address: All tenders will be opened on EPPS System Phone no: 0819213528 Fax no: 0819213528 Email: <a href="mailto:ghulamrasool25@gmail.com">ghulamrasool25@gmail.com</a>		
Director General (AH&PE) Livestock and Dairy Development Department Quetta		
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## PKMAP leader Sardar Ashraf Kakar killed in Loralai

Amir Khan

LORALAI: Armed men opened fire and killed Sardar Ashraf Kakar, a local leader of the Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) on Monday afternoon. Police sources said Sardar Ashraf Kakar was killed in the Killi Kudezai area of Loralai. The assailants escaped unhurt from the spot. Police and levies personnel reached the spot and



started an investigation into the incident. The dead body of the victim was shifted to the district headquar-

ters hospital Loralai. The reason behind the incident could not be ascertained immediately.

## Afghanistan tendered apology over Chaman border firing: Kh Asif

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has claimed that Afghanistan admitting its mistake over unprovoked and indiscriminate firing by its forces at Chaman border of Balochistan resulting in death of seven civilians has tendered apology.

Speaking on the Floor of National Assembly on Monday, he said that during a border security committee meeting, the Afghan side admitted its fault besides assurance to avoid such incident in future.

Khawaja Asif said that the first firing was carried out during the repair of the fence on the border but the Afghan forces later attacked with heavy artillery resulting in martyrdom of seven civilians.



He said that Pakistani armed forces resorting to unprovoked firing targeted the Afghan post, which resulted in the killings of their soldiers.

of their internal matters. We will continue to extend cooperation for peace and stability in Afghanistan," the defence minister said, adding that this will open vistas of economic and trade cooperation in the region.

He termed the recent visit of Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar to Kabul for talks a symbolic one and 'proud moment' for Pakistan.

Khawaja Asif said that during Hina's visit, no objection was raised from Afghan leadership, adding that the Afghan leaders held talks with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. "Performance should be judged instead of gender," he pointed out.

A day earlier, according to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) at least six Pakistani civilians

embraced martyrdom and 17 other sustained injuries due to 'unprovoked and indiscriminate' firing by Afghan border forces in Balochistan's Chaman district.

He said that Pakistani armed forces resorting to unprovoked firing targeted the Afghan post, which resulted in the killings of their soldiers. "Pakistan is a well-wisher of Afghanistan and desires resolution of their internal matters. We will continue to extend cooperation for peace and stability in Afghanistan," the defence minister said, adding that this will open vistas of economic and trade cooperation in the region. He termed the recent visit of Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar to Kabul for talks a symbolic one and "proud moment" for Pakistan. INP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing a press conference..

### Bilawal condemns threatening calls to Aimal Wali

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the threatening telephonic calls to Awami National Party leader Aimal Wali Khan and assured every possible support to him.

In a statement, the Foreign Minister said the terrorists would not be allowed to harm any democratic political leader, worker, or the common man.

He said the government and the entire nation are on the same page about their strong stance against terrorism.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari asked the authorities concerned to bring the accused before the law and ensure security of Aimal Wali Khan. INP

### 24 criminals arrested

SARGODHA: Sargodha police on Monday arrested 24 criminals and recovered jewelry, motorcycles from their possession.

Police said that the teams of different police stations conducted raids in the areas under their jurisdiction and arrested 24 criminals, besides recovering three motorcycles and jewelry worth millions of rupees from them.

The crack down would continue against criminals on daily basis to maintain law and order situation across the District, said police. INP

### Govt rejects NAB's summary for abolition of its autonomy

ISLAMABAD: The government on Monday rejected a summary of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) seeking abolition of its autonomy by declaring the Bureau as a Civil Service Occupational Group.

The government has rejected the summary seeking the abolition of the NAB's autonomy and also dismissed the suggestion to end the independence of the NAB chairman.

The NAB has sent the summary to the government and demanded that employment in the bureau be declared as a Civil Service Occupational Group.

The Ministry of Law also wrote a letter to the NAB stating that employment in the Bureau cannot be declared civil servant.

The letter further stated that the NAB would not remain an independent institution if suggestions proposed by the Bureau were given a green signal.

It also added that the independence of the NAB chairman will also be culminated by doing so. INP

### Two die as truck hits rickshaw in Gujranwala

GUJRANWALA: Two persons were killed Monday after a speeding truck hit a rickshaw near Grand Trunk (GT) Road in Chianwali, Gujranwala.

According to Rescue 1122, two persons including the rickshaw driver died instantly while one was seriously injured in the accident.

The injured was rushed to Kamoke Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital for medical treatment.

The deceased were identified as Munir and Luqman. INP

### Shahbaz Gill skips hearing at Islamabad court

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad heard the sedition case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill on Monday. The hearing of the case was held in the court of Additional Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra. Public prosecutor Raja Rizwan Abbasi appeared before the court. No one had appeared before the court on behalf of Shahbaz Gill till the filing of the report. During the hearing of the case, Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra remarked: "Ammad Yousaf. INP

### Chaudhry Nisar back in political arena after four-year hiatus

RAWALPINDI: After a long hiatus, estranged PML-N leader Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan has announced that he will contest the next general election with a new strategy.

The fresh elections in the country are due to be held next year but the PTI is exerting pressure on the coalition government to announce snap polls since the ouster of Imran Khan as prime minister through a no-confidence vote in April last. Chaudhry Nisar, in his address to a gathering near Rawat, said he would contest the elections and urged his supporters to get ready for it. "I was silent for four years but I have now decided to contest elections from two National Assembly seats," he said, adding that the new strategy would be adopted in the 2023 election. "I will decide about joining a party after the elections," the former interior minister, said while asserting that he didn't want to become a part of the politics of abuse.

The veteran politician contested the 2018 general election as an independent candidate after having differences with the PML-N. He lost the NA seat but managed to win a Punjab Assembly seat.

The fresh elections in the country are due to be held next year but the PTI is exerting pressure on the coalition government to announce snap polls since the ouster of Imran Khan as prime minister through a no-confidence vote in April last. Chaudhry Nisar, in his address to a gathering near Rawat, said he would contest the elections and urged his supporters to get ready for it. "I was silent for four years but I have now decided to contest elections from two National Assembly seats," he said, adding that the new strategy would be adopted in the 2023 election. "I will decide about joining a party after the elections," the former interior minister, said while asserting that he didn't want to become a part of the politics of abuse. INP

### Gwadar airport to be inaugurated in March 2023: NA committee told

ISLAMABAD: The secretary Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has said that the new Gwadar International airport will be inaugurated on March 23, 2023.

The groundbreaking of the project was done in March 2019.

This he stated while briefing the NA Standing Committee on Civil Aviation, here on Monday in Islamabad. The CAA secretary said the non-developmental budget of the Gwadar airport is Rs190 million.

The estimated cost of the NGIA is \$230 million and the China government is providing grants for the project.

New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA), will be capable of handling a combination of ATR 72, Airbus, (A-300), Boeing (B-737), and Boeing (B-747) for domestic as well international routes.

### SHC seeks details of cases registered against Azam Swati

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday sought details regarding cases registered against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Azam Swati in the province.

Last week, Usman Swati, the son of PTI lawmaker filed a petition in the SHC against the registration of multiple cases against his father.

A two-member bench, headed by Justice KK Agha heard the case in which Sindh IG Ghulam Nabi Memon appeared before the court.

At the outset of the hearing, Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha inquired Prosecutor General regarding multiple FIRs in a single case. The prosecutor requested the court some time to prepare to add that the petition has been filed in SHC today and they will be needing time to prepare.

However, the court rejected the request and instructed it to be prepared by tomorrow.

During the hearing, IGP Sindh and the bench hearing the case exchanged harsh words. "What can I do if you don't have turst on me," IGP Memon said to the bench.

Justice KK Agha remarked: "Resign if you are not interested in your job." Interfering into the matter, the prosecutor general apologized the SHC bench.

The SHC bench while seeking the details of the cases registered against Azam Swati, barred the police from registering more FIRs against him in the province.

Later, the hearing was adjourned until December 14. Pertinently, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf lawmaker is currently in Sindh police custody for three days in two cases over his controversial tweets about senior military leaders. INP

## Chinese Consul General awards 38 Pakistanis as "Friend in Pakistan"

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese Consul General in Karachi Li Bijian has conferred 38 Pakistani nationals a special award "Friend in Pakistan 2022" in a ceremony held at the Chinese Consulate General in Karachi, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday.

Certificates of these awards have been given to Pakistani academicians, scholars and media practitioners in recognition of their services to promote deeper understanding of China.

On the occasion Chinese Consul General in Karachi Li Bijian said that awardees are vanguards of China-Pakistan friendship as through their diverse medium of communication and expression, they are exerting their energies to sensitize the people of Pakistan about China's peaceful image, working style & relationship, philosophy and vision.

Given the mind-polluting environment highly poisoned by misinformation and disinformation, they have joined hands with China to debunk the fake propaganda distinguishing false from truth, he added.

"China never had a model of socialist governance system in the world to follow. China did not know about ups and downs of applicability and practicality

of socialist political dispensation.

China was also unaware of drawbacks and backlash that had to be incurred on social and economic life of billions of people in China. Almost everything from head to toe was unpracticed. But China learned by doing and made a successful story as a trailblazer," he added.

He said that all the credit goes to the multi-party system of China in which the Communist Party of China (CPC) is at its core guiding China to proceed with flying color.

People-centric vision anchors each and every policy and strategy because people are the only stakeholders deserve to be served to make their lives better, progressive, smooth and peaceful, he added.

He mentioned COVID-19 time as the worst period for China as globally myriad vicious campaigns were launched to demonize Chinese fairness, honesty and credibility. Even now doomayers are hell-bent to undermine China for their vested interests.

He said categorically that China will never succumb to any insidiousness as false is always destined to fall and truth triumphs over evil. INP

### ECP delists five important cases over non-availability of bench

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) delisted five important cases, including the plea seeking the removal of former premier Imran Khan from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairmanship, which were scheduled to be heard on December 13 (Tuesday) due to the non-availability of the bench.

The ECP announced that the delisted cases will be heard on December 20. The ECP was about to hear the case against Imran Khan for not submitting details of election expenses tomorrow. The ECP had also scheduled the hearing of the case regarding seizing prohibited funding tomorrow.

However, the case of contempt of court against Imran Khan, Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry will be heard tomorrow by the ECP. INP

### Students block Murree Road in protest against privatisation of Gordon College

RAWALPINDI: Hundreds of students of Gordon College, Rawalpindi marched towards Murree Road Monday and blocked it in protest against the proposed privatisation of the college.

"The protest is being held against the policy of privatising the college and its handing over to foreign institutions," the protesting students said. INP

### CM Mahmood Khan says KP ran out of funds

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister (CM) Mahmood Khan on Monday said KP has run out of funds due to the non-release of its dues from the federal government.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, CM KP claimed the federal government is trying to squeeze the provincial government. Our dues towards centre have not been cleared yet and as a result, the province doesn't have money for salary payments. Warning the federal government, CM Mahmood Khan said in case of non-release of dues, the people of KP will protest in Islamabad. INP

### Imran Khan Attack: ATC sends prime suspect on physical remand

GUJRANWALA: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Gujranwala has sent the prime suspect in the Imran Khan attack case on 10-day physical remand.

As per details, the prime suspect Naveed Meher was presented before a special court of the ATC Gujranwala in the Imran Khan attack case.

The suspect will be presented before the court again on December 22. The joint investigation team (JIT) head Ghulam Mehmood Dogar was also present in the court.

The police told the court that a motorcycle was recovered from Naveed Meher, the prime suspect in the Imran's attack case.

Earlier, the joint investigation team (JIT) formed to probe the attack on the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan had summoned Faisal Vawda.

It is pertinent to mention here that Naveed Meher was arrested after opening fire at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief and former premier Imran Khan on November 3 from the crime scene at Allahwala Chowk during the party's long march.

The First Information Report (FIR) of the gun attack incident had been registered on November 7. A joint investigation team – formed to probe the attack on PTI chief on November 3, has been constituted under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. INP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic Kazakhstan Yerlan Koshanov called on Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf at parliament house.

## SHC sets free Perween Rehman murder accused again

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court on Monday accepted the appeals of Perween Rehman murder case accused and ordered the Sindh police to release them.

The court declared the MPO order null and void and directed the police to set free the detained accused.

Sindh IG police Ghulam Nabi Memon appeared before the court. Justice Karim Khan Agha who was hearing the appeals filed by the accused asked the IGP under which law the police detained them when the accused had already been acquitted by the same court.

"Did they go to Orangi Town after their release from the court," the judge asked the IG police.

IG Memon replied in negative saying that the police had got some intelligence reports. Expressing its exasperation, the court asked the IGP who

told him about the intelligence reports.

Justice Agha remarked that the court would not accept any excuse in this regard, rebuking the police that they were saying that the accused were criminals but not bringing any evidence against them. He demanded the CRO (criminal record) of the accused. The SSP West told the court that they had got the intelligence. He said they got an application from slain Perween Rehman's sister who told the police that her life was in danger. On this, the court asked the police official whether Mr Rehman's sister had got a threatening phone call or letter. The SSP said that the sister only informed the police that she was facing threat. Expressing his ire, Justice Agha remarked that police were flouting court orders with impunity. INP

## JPECA constituted to reinforce Pak-Japan trade, cultural ties

ISLAMABAD: The Japan, Pakistan Economic & Cultural Association (JPECA) has been established to facilitate the business and cultural activities between Japan and Pakistan, also having the objective of bringing business leaders, social organizations, chambers of commerce, and industrial associations of both countries on a single platform.

During a ceremony held here on Monday, the joint association of the two countries announced its office-bearers, appointing Takeo Kawamura and Mirza Asif Baig as Co-Chairman while Ijaz A. Khokhar and Jawwad A. Chaudhry were nominated as Vice-Chairman and Senior Coordinator respectively.

Addressing the ceremony, JPECA Co-Chairman Mirza Asif Baig observed that our key endeavor and thrust is on easing barriers for Pakistani businesses in Japan, as we seek a flourishing and prosperous Pakistan with sustained economic growth ensured through effective and continued policies.

He said that the JPECA's mission is to provide the best platform for two countries' public-private sector dialogue on the role and needs of business in achieving inclusive, resilient and sustainable development. The Association has already held its launching ceremony in Japan, where it attracted participants from business, government, academia and civil society from Japan as well as Pakistan. Mirza Asif Baig briefed the audience about this Association, which is registered and incorporated in Japan, aiming to strengthen the social and economic values between Japan and Pakistan. He said that JPECA would collaborate to develop a framework of cooperation and undertake actions aimed at strengthening bilateral trade and cultural activities between Pakistan and Japan. Speaking on the occasion, JPECA Vice Chairman Ijaz A. Khokhar, who is also the PRGMEA former chairman, said that JPECA has recently signed a MoU with PRGMEA. INP



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Syed Murtaza Mahmood chairing a meeting at Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA).