

QUETTA VOICE

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Opposition submits no-confidence motion against CM Elahi in Punjab Assembly



Court quashes three FIRs against Azam Swati in Balochistan

This young couple lost their lives on Quetta Karachi highway in accident

Staff Reporter

This young couple lost their lives in a deadly traffic accident on the Quetta Karachi highway. The incident happened in the Sorab area near Kalat. The couple was coming from Karachi to Quetta when the incident happened, Levies sources said.

The victims were identified as Faheem Ahmed and Varda Urooj

The couple was identified as Fahim Ahmed and Varda Urooj. Varda Urooj was one of the faculty members of Balochistan university. The incident happened because of a narrow road near Sorab and over-speeding, levies sources said. The vehicle of the couple was completely damaged in the accident.

However, Faheem Ahmed Khan was serving as district monitoring coordinator in the Khuzdar district of Balochistan. Faheem studied at the Hamdard University of Karachi and also worked at the Aga Khan Hospital Karachi.

This was a highly qualified couple, which fell prey to the Quetta Karachi highway commonly called the 'killer highway' in Balochistan. The incident was widely shared on social media networks and people mourned the tragic



incident and lashed out at the government for its what they called stepmotherly treatment towards Balochistan.

People in their tweets and posts on Facebook demanded of the federal and provincial governments to make sure launch work on the dualization of the Quetta Karachi highway as early as possible. The federal government has already given approval for the dualization of the Quetta-Karachi highway linking Balochistan with Sindh province.

Reckless driving and narrow roads continue to claim precious human lives in Balochistan

Reckless driving, poor condition of highways, and narrow roads have claimed scores of precious human lives in Balochistan. The 'killer highway' continues to claim human life on a daily basis. The federal and provincial governments have repeatedly announced the dualization of the highway linking Balochistan with Sindh province. However, practically no progress on the ground.

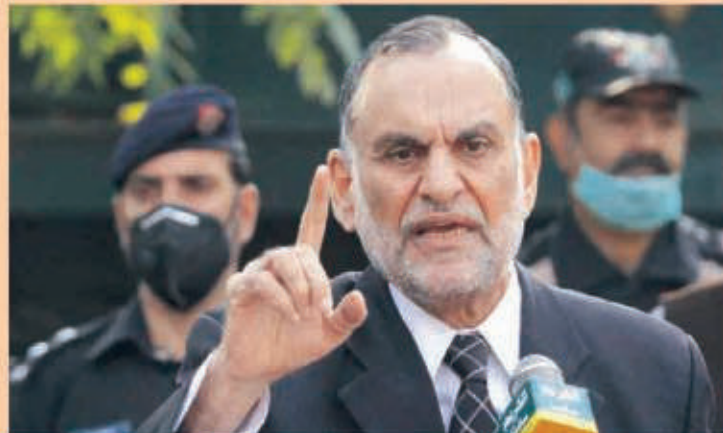
Balochistan, which covers half of the country in terms of area has not had a single-kilometer motorway.

Court quashes three FIRs against Azam Swati in Balochistan

Manan Mandokhail
Syed Muhammad Qaseem

QUETTA: Balochistan High Court (BHC) on Monday ordered quashing all three first information reports (FIRs) registered against Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI) leader, Azam Swati. A single bench of the BHC comprising Mr. Justice Abdul Hameed Baloch passed this order on a petition filed by the son of PTI leader Azam Swati in Balochistan.

Senior lawyer, Naseebullah Tareen Advocate, Syed Iqbal Shah Advocate, and others



appeared before the court on behalf of Mr. Swati. Police had registered three FIRs against Azam Swati in Killa Abdullah, Windar, and Bela. The applicants had accused the former ruling party's leader for using foul language against State institutions and requested the police to apprehend the former lawmaker and punish him as per law of the land.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested Mr. Swati for the second time in Islamabad under the Prevention of Electronic Act 2016 PECA in the federal capital a month ago. However, Balochistan police arrested Mr. Swati after the registration of five FIRs against him in the province.

the release of the PTI leader. However, police produced three fresh FIRs registered against Mr. Swati in Balochistan.

BHC had ordered the quashing of all 5 FIRS earlier

Court has quashed all FIRs registered against the PTI leader, Naseebullah Tareen, the lawyer of Mr. Swati said. He said now there is no case against the PTI leader in Balochistan.

Amid tight security, the former federal minister and a key leader of the PTI were brought to Quetta by police. However, a division bench of the BHC had ordered quashing all five FIRs registered against the PTI leader. The court had ordered

Mr. Tareen said Islamabad police had already lodged FIRs against the PTI leaders on the same allegations in the federal capital. It was against the law to register similar FIRs against the latter in Balochistan or Sindh, Mr. Tareen explained.

Cylinder blast leaves 17 people injured in Lasbela Balochistan

Ilyas Kambho

A cylinder blast left 17 people injured in the Lasbela district of Balochistan. The blast damaged nearby buildings and shops. Several motorcycles and cars were also damaged as a result of the incident.

Fortunately, no human loss has been reported yet. A large crowd was present at the spot of the blast.

The injured were rushed to District Headquarters Hospital



Lasbela to provide treatment to the victims. The district administration reached suddenly the spot of the incident.

Abdul Jabbar Baloch

A blast in Balochistan's Khuzdar city left over a dozen people injured. The bomb went off on the Omar Farooq Chowk Khuzdar. The injured were rushed to the district headquarters hospital Khuzdar for medical treatment. An emergency was declared in the hospital to provide medical treatment to those injured by the blast. Three children are also among the injured, police sources said.

Doctors and paramedical staff were called on an emergency basis to provide medical treatment to the injured in the blast. Eyewitnesses said there were two blasts and most of the people were injured in the second blast. A senior health official told Daily Quetta Voice that a

Blast in Khuzdar leaves several injured



total of 13 injured were brought to the hospital for medical treatment. Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar,

Major (R) Ilyas Kibzai, and other high-level officials reached the hospital and inquired about their

health condition.

DC Khuzdar Major (R) Ilyas Kibzai and other officials visiting hospital

Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Qudus Bizenjo strongly condemned the blast and directed the administration to arrest the culprits behind the attack. He also directed the health department to provide better health facilities to injured of the blast.

This is a developing story, we will keep you updated as we get more accurate information from our correspondent on the ground

Opposition submits no-confidence motion against CM Elahi in Punjab Assembly

A delegation of PPP and PML-N lawmakers submitted on Monday night a no-confidence motion against Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi in the Punjab Assembly, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said.

The confirmation from Sanaullah came during an interview with Geo News after opposition lawmakers, including PPP Parliamentary Leader Hassan Murtaza, PML-N's Khawaja Imran Nazir, Chief Whip of PML-N Tahir Khalil Sindh and others reached the Punjab Assembly Secretariat and submitted the no-trust motion.

It was formally received by Punjab Assembly Secretary Inayat Hussain Lak.

The document submitted by the opposition, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, stated that "members of the PPP and the PML-N of the provincial assembly have lost confidence in CM Pervaiz Elahi's ability to lead the house as per the Constitution".

It added that Elahi had "massacred democratic traditions" and thus he had lost the confidence of the majority of members of the house.

The no-trust move was moved under "Article 136 of the Constitution read with Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure Provincial Assembly of Punjab (PAP), 1997".

According to Article 136, a resolution for a vote of no-confidence moved by not less than twenty per cent of the total membership of the



provincial assembly may be passed against the chief minister by the provincial assembly.

A resolution referred to in clause (1) shall not be voted upon before the expiration of three days, or later than seven days, from the day on which such resolution is moved in the Provincial Assembly.

If the resolution referred to in clause (1) is passed by a majority of the total membership of the Provincial Assembly, the Chief Minister shall cease to hold office.

Separately, a no-trust motion has also been submitted against PA Speaker Sibtan Khan under Article 53 of the Constitution.

PML-N's Nazir, in an interview with ARY News after the submission, said the no-confidence motion was submitted against the chief minister, PA speaker, and deputy speaker.

He said there were signatures of "around 150 members" and there were more members coming from outside Lahore.

"A constitutional and legal action has been undertaken after consultation from constitutional experts and we are completely confident," Nazir added.

Immediately after the resolution was submitted, Punjab Governor Baligh ur Rehman directed Elahi to seek a vote of confidence from the assembly on December 21. Web Desk

QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

17 coordinators to CM Balochistan !

In less than a year, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Qudus Bizenjo has appointed 17 coordinators. The appointment of a further three coordinators is in the pipeline. In all notifications, the Services, and General Administration Department (S&GAD) said the coordinators were appointed on an 'honorary' basis.

Honorary or paid, coordinators are a burden on the province facing a serious financial crisis and hardly maintaining the fragile financial condition. Chief Minister Balochistan has already appointed all 14 provincial ministers, and 5 advisers as per the 18th constitutional amendment. The question arises, what is the need for new recruitment of a crowd of coordinators? The answer is simple, this is just an attempt to please well-wishers and influentials.

Offices allotted for some coordinators

Although, the government claims to have appointed them on an honorary basis, moreover, some of the coordinators have been allotted offices. Who pays for the staff and accommodation given to the coordinators? Administration provides them with security, whenever they roam across the province. Unnecessary protocols and security have already disturbed the routine life of the people across Balochistan. When the government removed unnecessary check posts on highways throughout the province, people appreciated this step taken by Chief Minister Mir Qudus Bizenjo.

Friendly opposition should also play a role in ensuring financial discipline

Given Balochistan's serious financial crisis, the coalition government coupled with the friendly and powerful opposition must ensure financial discipline. The government needs to reduce non-development expenditures and increase the development budget to improve the socioeconomic condition of the people.

The province is lagging behind all other provinces in terms of key social indicators including education, health, sanitation, clean drinking water, etc. The government has to focus on improving governance and reducing non-development expenditures rather than appointing coordinators on a mere political basis.

By Ramzy Baroud

The next Nakba Day will be officially commemorated by the United Nations General Assembly on May 15, 2023. The decision by the world's largest democratic institution is significant, if not a game changer.

For nearly 75 years, the Palestinian Nakba, the 'Catastrophe' wrought by the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by Zionist militias in 1947-48, has served as the epicenter of the Palestinian tragedy as well as the collective Palestinian struggle for freedom.

Three decades ago, namely after the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinian leadership in 1993, the Nakba practically ceased to exist as a relevant political variable. Palestinians were urged to move past that date, and to invest their energies and political capital in an alternative and more 'practical' goal, a return to the 1967 borders.

In June 1967, Israel occupied the rest of historic Palestine - East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza - igniting yet another wave of ethnic cleansing.

Based on these two dates, Western cheerleaders of Oslo divided Palestinians into two

camp: the 'extremists' who insisted on the centrality of the 1948 Nakba, and the 'moderates' who agreed to shift the center of gravity of Palestinian history and politics to 1967.

Such historical revisionism impacted every aspect of the Palestinian struggle: it splintered Palestinians ideologically and politically; relegated the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees, which is enshrined in UN Resolution 194; spared Israel the legal and moral accountability of its violent establishment on the ruins of Palestine, and more.

Leading Palestinian Nakba historian, Salman Abu Sitta, explained in an interview a few years ago the difference between the so-called pragmatic politics of Oslo and the collective struggle of Palestinians as the difference between 'aims' and 'rights'. Palestinians "don't have 'aims' ... (but) rights," he said. "These rights are inalienable, they represent the bottom red line beyond which no concession is possible. Because doing so will destroy their life."

Indeed, shifting the historical centrality of the narrative away from the Nakba was equivalent to the very destruction of the lives of Palestinian refugees as it has been

tragically apparent in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria in recent years.

While politicians from all relevant sides continued to bemoan the 'stagnant' or even 'dead' peace process - often blaming one another for that supposed calamity - a different kind of conflict was taking place. On the one hand, ordinary Palestinians along with their historians and intellectuals fought to reassert the importance of the Nakba, while Israelis continued to almost completely ignore the earth-shattering event, as if it is of no consequence to the equally tragic present.

Gaza's 'Great March of Return' (2018-2019) was possibly the most significant collective and sustainable Palestinian action that attempted to reorient the new generation around the starting date of the Palestinian tragedy.

Over 300 people, mostly from third or fourth post-Nakba generations, were killed by Israeli snipers at the Gaza fence for demanding their Right of Return. The bloody events of those years were enough to tell us that Palestinians have not forgotten the roots of their struggle, as it also illustrated Israel's fear of Palestinian memory.

The work of Rosemary Sayigh on the exclusion of the Nakba from the trauma

genre, and also that of Samah Sabawi, demonstrate, not only the complexity of the Nakba's impact on the Palestinian collective awareness, but also the ongoing denial - if not erasure - of the Nakba from academic and historical discourses.

"The most significant traumatic event in Palestinian history is absent from the 'trauma genre,'" Sabawi wrote in the recently-published volume, 'Our Vision for Liberation'.

Sayigh argued that "the loss of recognition of (the Palestinian refugees') rights to people- and statehood created by the Nakba has led to an exceptional vulnerability to violence," with Syria being the latest example Israel was always aware of this. When Israeli leaders agreed to the Oslo political paradigm, they understood that removing the Nakba from the political discourse of the Palestinian leadership constituted a major victory for the Israeli narrative.

Thanks to ordinary Palestinians, those who have held on to the keys and deeds to their original homes and land in historic Palestine, history is finally being rewritten, back to its original and accurate form.

By passing Resolution A/77/L. 24, which declared May 15, 2023, as 'Nakba

Day', the UNGA has corrected a historical wrong.

Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, rightly understood the UN's decision as a major step towards the delegitimization of Israel as a military occupier of Palestine. "Try to imagine the international community commemorating your country's Independence Day by calling it a disaster. What a disgrace," he said.

Absent from Erdan's remarks and other responses by the Israeli officials is the mere hint of political or even moral accountability for the ethnic cleansing of over 530 Palestinian towns and villages, and the expulsion of over 750,000 Palestinians, whose descendants are now numbered in millions of refugees. Not only did Israel invest decades in canceling and erasing the Nakba, it also criminalized it by passing what is now known as the Nakba Law of 2011. But the more Israel engages in this form of historical negationism, the harder Palestinians fight to reclaim their historical rights. May 15, 2023, UN Nakba Day represents the triumph of the Palestinian narrative over that of Israeli negationists. This means that the blood spilled during Gaza's March of Return was not in vain, as the Nakba

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 risk analysis

By Noman Ur Rashid

With COP27 in the books, Pakistan has witnessed a ray of light, a chance to turn adversity into opportunity. This can be a 210 million euros opportunity that the flood-stricken South Asian nation can leverage to 'shield' itself from extreme climate events.

The 'Global Shield against Climate Risks' initiative launched by the G7 and the Vulnerable 20 (V20) countries has identified Pakistan as one of the 'Pathfinder Countries', providing it an opportunity to access pre-arranged disaster financing for climate-induced disasters.

Such an opportunity can prove to be a lifeline for a country like Pakistan which is currently facing an extreme liquidity crunch in the wake of the recent catastrophic floods. The inability to secure requisite financing for its rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts has led to an ineffective response to the worst calamity in the country's history.

The sheer scale of destruction is best reflected in the recently published Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, carried out by the government of Pakistan and international development agencies. As per the official figures, Pakistan's cash-strapped economy is currently facing a \$14.9 billion reconstruction & rehabilitation challenge, equating to more than 1.5 times the country's overall development expenditure of \$10 billion. It is pertinent to mention that this figure only exhibits the costs associated with

reconstructing the damaged infrastructure in the 'vulnerable pre-flooding state'.

However, the science of Post-Disaster Reconstruction & Rehabilitation emphasizes incorporating 'Building Back Better' principles that require the reconstructed infrastructure to be significantly more resilient than the one it replaces. Considering Pakistan's climate vulnerability, undertaking such a 'Flood-resilient Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Process' would cost an additional \$1.3 billion thus inflating the overall rehabilitation and reconstruction costs to \$16.2 billion.

The situation has left Pakistan's policymakers searching for answers as to how the other countries, especially the developed world of the Global North, respond to the financial implications of extreme climate events. After all, no country is immune to the adverse impacts of climate change in today's world. The answer to this question lies in having effective 'Country-level Climate/Disaster Risk Financing Mechanisms' in place that enable these countries to access large amounts of financial reserves in case of a catastrophic climate-induced disaster. An effective climate/disaster risk financing mechanism generally comprises a three-layered approach that involves: 'risk retention' where 'less severe economic losses' are financed through ad-hoc budgetary reallocations and contingency funds. Then there's 'risk transfer' where 'moderate-

ly severe economic losses' are financed through risk transfer solutions such as risk insurance or the issuance of catastrophe bonds. Third is 'residual risk mitigation' where "highly severe economic losses" that are beyond the financial capacity of a country are financed through international humanitarian assistance.

The problem with Pakistan's traditional risk financing approach is that it solely relies on 'risk retention' and 'residual risk mitigation' measures while neglecting the most critical step of 'risk transfer' altogether.

This situation leaves the country with essentially two unviable options to respond to the economic repercussions of natural calamities: 1) bear the financial costs through the government's existing resources (which are non-existent considering Pakistan's current economic outlook); or 2) rely on international humanitarian assistance by making flash appeals in case the financial impact is beyond the government's capacity (Pakistan, in addition to the initially secured \$132.7 million, has so far received only 21 per cent - \$174.8 million - against an international flash appeal of \$816 million). The situation calls for policymakers' immediate attention towards the climate risk transfer solutions that can be best employed in Pakistan's geographical, meteorological, and economic context. So far, Pakistan does not have a Climate Risk Financing Strategy and National Adaptation Plan.

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 push-back 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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Imran's interim bail extended

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Monday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan in a case filed against him after demonstrations were held following his disqualification by the ECP in the Toshakhana case.

As per details, the anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hasan resumed the hearing where the PTI chairman's counsel Babar Awan told the court that the former prime minister and PTI chief Imran Khan is in Lahore and cannot appear before the

court. The court accepted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman's plea for exemption from personal appearance in the case and extended the interim bail till January 10.

Earlier, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) reserved a verdict on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders' pre-arrest bail plea in case of violating section 144. It is pertinent to mention here that several members of the local leadership of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) were booked in a terrorism case over alleged vandalism during the protests in Islamabad after ECP disqualified

Imran Khan in Toshakhana reference. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan in the Toshakhana reference under Article 63(1)(p).

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shazain Bugti presenting a souvenir to Mohammed Bin Saeed Al-Qarni, Director General of Directorate of Narcotics Control of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

xArkroi village residents still seeking basic facilities

CHITRAL: Civil dispensary Arkroi could not functioned in ten years since its establishment. Thousands of residents of Arkroi village on Arundo Road in the very south of Drosh Tehsil are deprived of health, education, communication, basic human rights and other facilities.

In this area, the former Provincial Minister of Population Welfare Saleem Khan Chitrali had provided funds for a civil dispensary and constructed a building, but this civil dispensary locally known as hospitals is still closed for the last 10 years. Qari Muhammad Daim, Nazim village council Arkroi Langur Butt told that a civil dispensary was established at Arkroi in 2011 but unfortunately this dispensary is still closed. He said that we have repeatedly requested the District

Health Officer Chitral and the district administration to open it, but in response they said that the owner of the land asks for his employment, but this issue has not been resolved yet.

Qari Muhammad Daim, Nazim of Village Council Arkroi Langurbutt, offered that if the owner of the land does not object, we are ready to give him alternate land in return as substitute or compensation of his land, but our problem should be solved. He said that if the Health Department want to solve our problems we are also ready to give them alternative land, either by sending staff to this dispensary and opening it, or else we are ready to give land to its owner in exchange for this land. Another land should be given and a hospital should be built on it. He said that Arkroi is

a backward area where there are no health facilities.

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China-Pakistan-Belt LUSAIL stadium successfully hosts FIFA World Cup Final

ISLAMABAD: LUSAIL stadium on Sunday 18th December successfully hosted the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Final. An event that secured its place in football and architectural history.

China Railway Construction Corporation Ltd (CRCC), the main contractor, with the collaboration of more than 3000 Pakistani Engineers and Workers, spent 4 years constructing this "Shiny Golden Bowl", said the Chinese Embassy Islamabad in a tweet, according to Gwadar Pro on Monday.

Lusail Stadium received a five-star rating on 16 August 2022 for its design and construction from the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS. The iconic stadium entertained 80,000 fans who came together for the World Cup Final played between Argentina and France.

According to the Qatar football Association, the stadium is expected to be reconfigured into a 40,000-seat stadium. Excess seating will be removed, and other parts

of the building will be repurposed as a community space with shops, cafes, athletic and education facilities, and a health clinic.

The design is inspired by the handcrafted bowls found throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds during the rise of civilization, while light interplays are reminiscent of the region's fanar lanterns.

The golden exterior will fade over time, replicating aged metal handicrafts to create a venue alive with cultural character. The procurement process for the stadium conversion began in 2014. The stadium was built as a joint venture by HBK Contracting and the China Railway Construction Corporation. Like the other stadiums planned for the 2022 World Cup, the Lusail Stadium is cooled using solar power and is claimed to have zero carbon footprint.

Construction began on 11th April 2017. Completion of the stadium was originally scheduled for 2020. It was then to host three friendly

matches until the 2022 World Cup, but as the completion of the stadium was postponed, it subsequently hosted 10 games including the final.

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Italy, Ali Javed called on President Dr Arif Alvi at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Govt empowers Ch Shujaat to take decision regarding Ch Pervez Elahi

LAHORE: Government has empowered PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain to decide with regard to Chaudhry Pervez Elahi.

PML-Q has once again assumed importance in the fast evolving political situation in Punjab.

The coming 48 hours are being dubbed the most important in the political landscape of the largest province of Punjab.

Government sources have claimed that Asif Ali Zardari and Shahbaz Sharif have delegated all the powers to Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain with regard to decision about Chaudhry Pervez Elahi.

The motion of no confidence will not be submitted in Punjab Assembly till the reply from Chaudhry Shujaat is received.

The decision to retain

Chaudhry Pervez Elahi as Chief Minister Punjab has also been postponed till the report of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

Sources further told Online Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain has started consultation with Chaudhry Pervez Elahi and other family members on all the situation besides seeking details that what PTI is giving to PML-Q.

On the other side Shahbaz Sharif has reached Islamabad. He will make consultations with all allied parties on the entire matter.

The sources said a meeting between Shahbaz Sharif and Maulana Fazlur Rehman is also likely to take place. Government sources have claimed that Asif Ali Zardari and Shahbaz Sharif have delegated all the powers to

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Pakistan's 95% population vaccinated against covid-19

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's 95 percent population has been vaccinated against Covid-19.

According to media reports, Sindh remains on top of the list with almost 100 pc of its eligible population vaccinated against the pandemic, while Islamabad and Punjab remain 2nd and 3rd with 99pc and 95 per cent vaccination ratio.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has vaccinated 85pc and Balochistan has vaccinated 66pc of the population. Gilgit Baltistan has vaccinated 74 per cent of its eligible population against Covid-19.

It further stated that 14,31,90,050 people are eligible for the vaccination against Covid-19 from which 12,84,29,464 people have received both doses of vaccine against the deadly virus.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has reported no death in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of confirmed positive cases has surged to 1,575,589. The nationwide tally of fatalities stands at 30,635 on Monday.

According to the latest figures issued by the National Institute of Health (NIH), at least four people tested positive for Covid across the country in the past 24 hours. INP

Khan forms committee to work out seat adjustment with PML-Q

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Monday formed a three-member committee to discuss seat adjustment with the PML-Q for the next elections.

It stated in media reports that PTI Vice President Shah Mahmood Qureshi led the committee while former defence minister Parvez Khattak and former information minister Fawad Chaudhry were its members.

The committee would hold its first meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi and his son Moonis Elahi on Tuesday to decide SOPs for negotiations. The committee, sources said, would also review the electoral position of the PTI in constituencies where the PML-Q was asking for seat adjustment. It would later submit a final report on negotiations to the PTI chief.

The PML-Q has demanded seat adjustments in more than two dozen constituencies with the PTI before the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly. Last week, Mr Khan announced that the assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be dissolved on Dec 23. INP



ISLAMABAD: Syed Javid Gillani Executive Director Muslim Hand calls on Chairman National Disaster Management Authority, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik.

Dissension is dagger of enemy in Muslim hands, Unity is call of Allah, Allama Syed Jawad Naqvi

Islamabad: Under the auspices of Tehreek Bedari Ummat-e-Mustafa SAW, a grand Wahdat-e-Ummat Conference was held, titled "Wahdat Deen Ki Pukaar" Tafaarq dushman ka hathiyar".

The conference was held in NICL Building Islamabad, in which leading and senior scholars of all schools of thought, religious Muftis, Sajjada Nasheens, intellectuals of the nation, journalists and people from different walks of life from all over Pakistan attended.

Head of Tehreek Bedari Ummat-e-Mustafa Allama Syed Jawad Naqvi while addressing the conference said that division is the dagger that the enemy has given in the hands of Muslims. From which Muslims have been cutting their own bodies like butchers for a long time. These weapons must be

thrown away and returned to the enemy. And instead, one should respond to the call of Allah, which is unity. In the program, Sajjada Nashin Eid Gah Sharif Rawalpindi Pir Muhammad Naqibur Rahman Sahib, Sajjada Nashin Astana Alia Hussainabad, Pir Syed Muhammad Shamsur Rehman Mashhaddi, Mufti Syed Osman Shah Badshah (Peshawar), Cultural Consul of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Dr. Ehsan Khazai, Astana Alia Bhand Sharif Gujjar Khan Pir Sain Naeem Ahmed Qalandri.

Central Deputy Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Dr. Farid Ahmed Paracha, Head of Department of Comparative Religions Islamic University Islamabad Dr. Aftab Ahmad, Mr. Pir Syed Mujahid Shah, Allama

Muhammad Abid Shakri Sahib (Peshawar). Pir of Manki Sharif, Mr. Pir Junaid Amin, President of Ittehad al-Madaris al-Arabiya, Mr. Mufti Zubair Fahim, Mr. Khalid Mahmood Abbasi, Vice-Nazim-e-Ala for Political Affairs, United Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith Pakistan, Mr. Sikandar Hayat Zaki, Mr. Allama Akhlaq Hussain Shariati, Deputy Secretary General Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan Allama Haider Alvi, Dr. Asad Zaman (well-known social scientist and economist), President of Nizam al-Madaris Punjab and Azad Kashmir, Minhaj-ul-Quran International, Mr. Akhtar and the moderator of the Jamaat al-Madaris Shaqir al-Katab wa Al-Hikmah Islamabad Allama Umis Ashraf Sahib and others participated. INP

No authority has record for mortality ratio in Pakistan: Experts

ISLAMABAD: While in Pakistan, no authority has record and official data of mortality ratio and the causes of death, said by health experts on Monday.

Pakistan academy of science in collaboration with Agha Khan University has organized an interactive session with multi-stakeholders on Non-communicable diseases and vital health statistics in Pakistan.

As per Gallup Survey, some quick and interesting findings from forty year research on NCDs,

eating and drinking habits, exercise habits, mental health issues, health-seeking behavior, incidence of NCDs, and smoking are the key elements and causes of NCDs in Pakistan.

Prof. Mohammed Wasay from the Agha Khan University said that no institution has official data and record of the mortality ratio and the causes of the death in Pakistan. "Only Union Council is the key source to collect the data in Pakistan at local level", he added.

He said that the

National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has no legal framework or legal authority to collect the data of deaths in Pakistan.

He added that as per civil responsibility act, every citizen has to report the birth and death statistics in the concerned authorities.

Federal Special Secretary Health, chief guest of the session Mirza Nasir-ud-Din Mashood ensured the stakeholders to make policy for proper registration and collect the

data from different sources.

He announced that health ministry is ready to write letters to the private and government hospitals for making sure the provision of the data and record on the deaths ratio and their causes to the health ministry.

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QUETTA: Daily wages labor sitting with their work tools alongside while waiting some work.

Senate Body laments non-completion of FGEHA projects

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works lamenting the non-completion of projects of Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) said, "There is no single projected which is finished."

Chairman of the Senate Body, Senator Haji Hidayatullah chaired the meeting held on Monday to discuss the pending projects and agreements of FGEHA.

While inquiring implementation status of the previous meeting, the committee on the matter of meeting with the D.G (FGEHA) along with his team and representatives of SCBA with the local community and come up with an amicable solution, was apprised that since the property has divided ownership, the main issue is of enhancing the mortgage rates however after the award the rates cannot be increased, he said that we are ready to release cheques to the affectees at the rate of 34 lacs.

The secretary housing and works informed the committee that we have held meetings with the main guarantor owner of the disputed land. The committee also suggested constituting committee having two senior members from the Ministry of Housing and Works which was acknowledged by senior Joint Secretary Housing and works. The committee recommended expediting the resolution of the matter in consultation with the committee members. The matter of briefing of the Director General (Estate) regarding detail of commercial Properties leased out



ISLAMABAD: Former Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad called on President Dr Arif Alvi at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Rupee continues to lose ground against dollar for eleventh day

ISLAMABAD: The economic crisis caused the Pakistani rupee to lose 56 paisas to Rs225.50 for the eleventh consecutive day against the US dollar on Monday during interbank trading, despite the inflow of funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The value of the rupee lost 23 paisas against the greenback on Friday, closing the week at Rs224.94 from Thursday's traded value of Rs224.71 in the interbank market. Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has reaffirmed his commitment to maintaining control over the US currency, despite the widening gap between the open market and interbank trading.

With a gap of Rs10 between both the markets, the rate of a US dollar to a Pakistani rupee remained stagnant at Rs234 in the open market. However, the business community said that there were hardly any currency available at the official exchange rate. Instead, US dollars were being sold in the black market for as high as Rs255. It is pertinent to note that this is the lowest level of SBP-held reserves since January 2019. INP

Eight ghost teachers dismissed

KARACHI: The Sindh Education and Literacy Department on Monday dismissed eight teachers of different public schools across Sindh over their absence from their jobs for the past two years.

Sindh Education and Literacy Department Secretary Gulam Akbar Laghari said that the dismissed faculty had been living abroad, but still drawing salaries from their institutions.

He added that the teachers had not been coming to their jobs for at least two years, over which the administration issued them show-cause notices multiple times.

The secretary added that the educators were given a chance to justify their absence. However, on failing to justify, the education department dismissed them from their jobs.

A notification in this regard has also been issued, the official said. He said that the education officers are trying to identify more ghost teachers to improve the education system in Sindh. INP

Christmas day shopping in full swing

SUKKUR: Christmas Day shopping is in full swing and touching its peak this year in the Sukkur city.

Christian families can be seen crowding shopping centers in Shahi Bazaar, Mission Road, Chamta Gali, Ghareeb Abbad and other places to buy clothes, shoes and other necessary articles.

"Every year we plan to complete our shopping well ahead of Christmas and we always end up with frantically roaming around shops at the dying hours," said Saba Masih.

Ladies are best suited to do the bargaining job and they never seem content at what we buy at the given price, said shopper Farzana at a local departmental store.

Christmas preparations will reach its climax when jingling of bells and hymns at churches at the midnight of December 24th. Meanwhile, city's churches are being decorated with beautiful arches, bunting and bells. INP

Skyrocketing fruits prices hit common man hard

PESHAWAR: The skyrocketed prices of fruits in Peshawar have gone beyond the purchasing power of the middle class as ironically the administration seemed helpless to ensure the sale of the fruits, a necessity for good health, on prescribed rates.

According to a market survey, the oranges, a favorite fruit in winter season, were being sold at Rs 250 to Rs 400 per dozen while in some markets the fruit vendors were charging the customers as per their own will.

The banana, a common fruit of all seasons was being sold at Rs 150 to Rs 200 while the price of per kilogram Apple was Rs 200 to Rs 300 in the market. INP

Song production 'Sahiban' of Phavur Studios released

ISLAMABAD: Phavur Studios has released their song production "Sahiban". Against the backdrop of the melodious voice of Amanat Ali, the gorgeous Urwa Hocane and handsome Hassan Khan tell the Punjabi folklore, Mirza Sahiban.

The infamous Mirza Sahiba story is retold by two dynamo women, Hira Yousafzai (Director), Hirra Ferozi (Producer), and pushed forward by the multi-talented Zayan Agha (On-set Producer). The story is retold using a modern language and a female empowering twist.

The song sings to the younger generation who want to hear of strong individuals unwavering in their aspirations. For the first time ever, we see the female lead, Urwa Hocane, as Sahiba basks in the essence of love for Mirza (Hassan Khan) AND more importantly, herself.

Phavur Studios is an up and

coming production house based in Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, Toronto, and now investing in content in Pakistan and underprivileged communities around the world to bring untold stories to life. Spearheaded by a strong team of independent filmmakers, Phavur is launching their first project with the power of music through folkware story-telling.

The music video is the first of its kind where we see that old traditional story-telling is being met with empowering values. When two empowering women are the driving force of a story, you can see that reflected on screen and that is definitely the case with Mirza Sahiban. There is no doubt that this catchy song will be a hit, especially since romance is in the air with the wedding season in full swing.

Pakistan is home to many inspiring romantic folk stories that tell the tale of pure love. INP

Cold, dry weather expected in most parts of country

ISLAMABAD: Cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country, while very cold in northern areas and north Balochistan. Foggy conditions are likely to persist over plain areas of Punjab and upper Sindh during night and morning hours.

Frost is likely to occur at isolated places in Pothohar region during morning hours. Temperatures of some major cities recorded on Monday morning Islamabad four degree centigrade, Lahore nine, Karachi fourteen, Peshawar six, Quetta three, Gilgit minus three, Murree three and Muzaffarabad five degree centigrade. According to Met Office forecast for Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, partly cloudy and very cold weather is expected in

Srinagar, Leh, Pulwama, Anantnag, Shopian and Baramula while cold and dry in Jammu. Temperature recorded: Srinagar, Anantnag and Baramula minus one degree centigrade, Jammu eight, Leh minus eight, Pulwama and Shopian zero degree centigrade. On the other and the Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted that mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most districts of the province, while very cold in upper parts and hilly areas during the next 24 hours. It said that fog is also likely to occur over Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi and D.I Khan districts, as well as over Peshawar to Swabi Motorway during the night and morning hours. INP

LHC seeks details of all recipients of Toshakhana gifts

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday sought details of all recipients, who have retained gifts from the Toshakhana from 1947 till date.

Lahore High Court (LHC) Justice Asim Hafeez issued the order while hearing a petition filed by a citizen named Munir Ahmed through his counsel Advocate Azhar Siddique. The petitioner argued that the details of the gifts obtained by the officials from Toshakhana should be made public.

The federal government's lawyer while opposing the plea said in his statement that said the details about the gifts could not be provided since they are confidential. The court ordered the federal government to submit the details by January 16, adding that it would be decided then if the details are confidential or not.

Established in 1974, Toshakhana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats and officials by heads of other governments, states and foreign dignitaries as a goodwill gesture. It has valuables ranging from bulletproof cars, gold-plated souvenirs, expensive paintings to watches, ornaments, rugs and swords. The existence of the Toshakhana represents a very standard practice in global diplomacy. Whenever the leaders of two countries meet, it is customary to exchange gifts. In most democratic states, however, these gifts are considered the property of the state and received by individuals on behalf of the country. INP



QUETTA: Shopkeeper displaying dry fruits in his shop to attract customers.

by the estate office in the country during the last five years was deferred for further deliberation. The committee sought date wise report on the name of the owners and year of allotment.

The committee was briefed that there are total 09 number of petrol pump with covered area of 7965.72 square yard and rent fixed as 784167.5 as per lease. It was revealed in the meeting that the commercial land of the Estate Office was leased at Rs 3 per month, the authorities informed that 532 square yard land allotted to mosque in Karachi Sadar area, the estate office officials informed the committee that on behalf of the people of the mosque, the land with a monthly lease of 3 rupees has been rented out for 3 lakh rupees per month and the people of the mosque have rented a petrol pump in front of this ground to run the expenses of the mosque. The matter was deferred for further deliberation.

While taking briefing by the Director General (Estate) on the detail of the allottees of the Federal Lodge, Islamabad along with their names, designation, CNIC Nos., date of allotment, rent per day, maximum period allowed under the Rules and the period after the maximum period expired, the committee again sought report while also including the date of births of the allottees. On details of whether certificate for having no residence in the name of the officials and their spouses are furnished by the officers before allotment of E-type or above category government accommodation, matter is sub-judice in the court. INP

Pakistan benefited numerous from BRI: SA to PM

BEIJING: "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have significant international influence and can effectively help developing countries promote infrastructure construction and economic development."

Pakistan is the biggest beneficiary of BRI," said Zafaruddin Mahmood, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, according to Gwadar Pro on Monday.

Zafaruddin Mahmood gave remarks at the high-end academic forum on Sino-Pakistan ties. The forum was hosted online and offline by Jiangxi University of Science and Technology (JXUST).

The forum focused on CPEC, China-Pakistan language, culture, and education cooperation, China-Pakistan nonferrous metals cooperation, China-Pakistan economy and trade, and Pakistan hot issues.

The special assistant has studied in China for many years and claims himself a "China-made student". He stated at the forum's opening ceremony that BRI, the Global Development Initiative, and the Global Security Initiative are all very important and have the potential to make the world a better place in the next 100 years.

He specifically affirmed the "2+2" talent training model jointly established by JXUST and the University of Punjab, and expressed his expectation that future exchanges and cooperation between the two parties would be strengthened. In his welcome remarks, Wen Herui, President of JXUST, expressed his optimism for the forum as an opportunity to build on the momentum and make new and greater contributions to the high-quality development of Sino-Pakistan ties.

Luo Lin, Director of Secretariat of International and Regional Studies of the Ministry of Education of China, highlighted that "China and Pakistan have sup-

ported and forged ahead with each other in the face of changes and chaos in the world, which demonstrates our unwavering friendship."

He expressed support to the Pakistan Studies Center of JXUST for its efforts to strengthen liaison with various parties and build a distinctive think tank platform by combining the university's superior disciplines.

Tu Anbo, Vice President of the Jiangxi People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, explained that in recent years, Jiangxi has continuously expanded cooperation and exchanges with Pakistan in the implementation of the BRI, and achieved fruitful results in the areas of CPEC construction, the fight against the epidemic, economy and trade, education and culture. He said the association is willing to work with other parties to expand Sino-Pak cooperation mechanisms and platforms, promote the of establishment Sino-Pak sister cities, schools and hospitals, and add new impetus to the building of an even closer Sino-Pak community with a shared future in the new era.

In his closing remarks, Liu Chengsheng, Secretary of the CPC Committee of School of Foreign Languages at JXUST, proposed to hold similar forums on a regular basis in the future and looked forward to smooth communication channels between the governments, universities and researchers of the two countries to continuously promote exchanges and cooperation.

Zulfqar Ali, Director of the Board of Investment, Prime Minister's Office of Pakistan, Luo Jianxue, President of the Lahore Overseas Chinese Association, Mahboob Hussain, Chairman of Department of history and Pakistan studies, Ma Zhiwei, Deputy Director of the Liaoyuan South Asia Institute, other scholars and over 200 faculty and students also attended the forum. INP

PML-N likely to use no-confidence vote card to prevent PA dissolution

LHAORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has devised a plan to block imminent dissolution of the Punjab Assembly (PA) on Friday December 23.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired a party meeting at his Model Town residence. PML-N leaders including Khwaja Saad Rafique, Ayaz Sadiq, Attaullah Tarar and Malik Ahmed Khan attended the meeting wherein consultation regarding the dissolution of assemblies was held.

The PML-N huddle decided that Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi would be asked to obtain a vote of confidence in the Punjab Assembly. Furthermore, the party lawmakers have been asked to stay in Lahore this week.

If CM Elahi fails to secure the vote of confidence, he would lose the power to dissolve the assembly. A day earlier, PM Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain. Federal ministers Tariq Bashir Cheema, Chaudhry Saalik Hussain and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Malik Ahmad Khan were present. Both bigwigs pledged to strengthen mutual cooperation and collaboration to take the country out of economic and political turmoil. INP

Sheikh Rashid urges President to use powers to ensure elections

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AMP) head Sheikh Rashid Ahmed urged President Arif Alvi to use his constitutional powers as the coalition government is running away from holding fresh elections in the country.

The 72-year-old politician, who served as the interior minister during the PTI government in Centre, is fully supporting Imran Khan's demand for elections in the country.

Taking to Twitter, he said the PTI chief had kept his word by announcing the date for the dissolution of assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Apart from it, it is a fact that public was fed up with political uncertainty, he said.

People shied away from investing in the country as "dacoits" were ruling, he said, adding: INP

Sanjrani felicitates Govt, people of Qatar on National Day

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has stated that friendly relations and good cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar will be further enhanced in years to come.

He stated this while extending his greetings and warm felicitations to the people and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on behalf of the people of Pakistan on the occasion of Qatar's National Day.

Sadiq Sanjrani said it is a great pleasure to note that the long-existing friendly relations and cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar continue to thrive. He said the govern-

ment and people of Pakistan highly value and express gratitude for the remarkable assistance and support rendered by Qatar over the past years, which have continuously contributed to socio-economic development of the country. He stated this while extending his greetings and warm felicitations to the people and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on behalf of the people of Pakistan on the occasion of Qatar's National Day. Sadiq Sanjrani said it is a great pleasure to note that the long-existing friendly relations and cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar continue to thrive. INP



ISLAMABAD: Tarek Hamdy CEO Eighteen-Elite Real State representative Egyptian Businessman Naguib Sawiris projects in Pakistan called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here.

PBBF gets affiliation with Pakistan Sports Board

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) becomes an active affiliated unit of Pakistan Sports Board after the approval of PSB Board Meeting in line with PSB Rules 2022.

According to the details, the decision was taken in the 26th Board meeting held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC)/President, Pakistan Sports Board, Ehsan ur Rehman Mazar. The promotion of basketball in the country was also discussed in the meeting which recently held at Islamabad.

Under the leadership of its President, Brigadier (R) Muhammad Ifkhar Mansoor and Secretary General, Khalid Bashir, PBBF are playing vital role for the promotion of basketball in the country which is also affiliated with Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) recognised by IOC, International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and FIBA Asia.

PBBF organised mens and womens events in the recent past and contemplating to organise back to back basketball tournaments in coming months.

After the approval and formally notified by Pakistan Sports Board, Pakistan

Basketball Federation is the only representative organization at national and international level that can take all kinds of measures for the development of basketball. Said Pakistan Basketball Federation spokesperson added that the department and division must also take permission from the federation to organize basketball competitions in the country. It is also mention that under the International Olympic Committee (IOC) agreement, the federal government and PSB recognized only those national sports federations which are affiliated with their world bodies PBBF organised mens and womens events in the recent past and contemplating to organise back to back basketball tournaments in coming months. After the approval and formally notified by Pakistan Sports Board, Pakistan Basketball Federation is the only representative organization at national and international level that can take all kinds of measures for the development of basketball. Said Pakistan Basketball Federation spokesperson added that the department and division must also take permission from the federation to organize basketball. INP

SC moved for imposing ban on release of funds against over Rs 100 billion development budget approved for Gujarat division

ISLAMABAD: The process of Development Budget amounting to Rs over 100 billion approved by Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi for Gujarat division has been challenged in Supreme Court (SC).

The petitioner has prayed the court to impose ban on release of the funds.

The petition has been filed by advocate Mian Dad. The petitioner has taken the plea in the petition that Punjab government while allocating illegally over Rs 100 billion development funds for Gujarat division has released these funds in the name of different bogus schemes in the constituency of CM Punjab.

Article 120 and 124 of the constitution have been flagrantly breached while approving the said development schemes and releasing the funds. The SC has in its previous order declared approval to the development funds without yes nod from assembly illegal.

The petitioner requested the court to

impose ban on the release of the said development funds besides ordering probe into development projects of billion of rupees approved for lonely Gujarat Division without the approval of Punjab Assembly. Punjab government, Chairman NAB and other respective departments have been made respondents in the petition. The petitioner has prayed the court to impose ban on release of the funds. The petition has been filed by advocate Mian Dad. The petitioner has taken the plea in the petition that Punjab government while allocating illegally over Rs 100 billion development funds for Gujarat division has released these funds in the name of different bogus schemes in the constituency of CM Punjab. Article 120 and 124 of the constitution have been flagrantly breached while approving the said development schemes and releasing the funds. The SC has in its previous order declared approval. INP