

QUETTA VOICE

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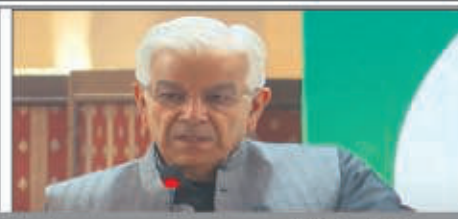
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statement about Bajwa's 'support' to PTI 'wrongly attributed', Alvi



Imran face of 'collective wrongdoings' of establishment, judiciary: Asif

Is Maulana Hidayat a political threat to Baloch nationalists ?

Syed Ali Shah

GWADAR: The Maulana is not only a headache for the Chief Minister Mir Qudus Bizenjo-led provincial government rather he is posing a serious threat to the Baloch nationalist political parties. The Baloch nationalists are skeptical about his movement and call it a pre-planned conspiracy to weaken the nationalist movement. The charge was vehemently denied by Maulana and other GRM leaders. The Maulana swept the local bodies elections, which appeared to be a major blow to the Baloch nationalist parties in the port city of the country.

Ideologically, the Maulana is associated with Jamaat e Islami (JI), the religious party, which always enjoys the support of the establishment. The JI has been very active and strong in Gwadar and other parts of the Mekran division for a long time. People still respect and acknowledge, the JI's leader Maulana Abdul Haq Baloch's political struggle and vision.

JI had a strong base in Gwadar

In the 1980s the Baloch nationalist leaders including the late Mir Ghous Bizenjo were facing political resistance from the JI in Gwadar. Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal, the Chief of Balochistan National Party once told this scribe. Although, Maulana Hidayat claimed to have distanced himself from the JI. The Baloch nationalists say Maulana has far-reaching political ambitions.

"His eyes are now focused on MP Aship", Mir Hamal Kalmati once told this scribe. Hamal belongs to the Balochistan National Party (Mengal) and is an MPA from the port city.



Talks failed between Maulana and Balochistan government

On Sunday, talks failed between the visiting provincial ministers and leaders of the Gwadar Rights Movement (GRM). As expected the GRM Chief, Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman preferred not to meet the visiting Balochistan Home Minister, Mir Ziaullah Langove, and Lala Rasheed Dashti in the country's port city.

This forced the provincial ministers to hold dialogue with the second-tier leadership of the movement. The GRM has been protesting for last more than two months to mount pressure on the Balochistan government to accept its demands. The Balochistan government ignored the GRM protests and sit-ins for more than two months and played delaying tactics to weaken the defiant Maulana.

Ministers rush towards Gwadar

However, recent videos shared on social media by people highlighting the intensity of the protest forced the ministers to rush towards the port of Gwadar and quell the ongoing protest. "Rulers are not serious and they are just deceiving the masses", Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman told this scribe. Despite repeated appeals and requests, the government is yet to bring an end to illegal trawling and abolish unnecessary check posts in Gwadar, the Maulana claimed.

Although, the Balochistan government claimed to have made considerable progress with regard to the implementation of the demands of the GRM. In a statement issued on Monday morning, the Spokesperson government of

Balochistan said the provincial government was committed to addressing the issues through political and peaceful means. This government has ended all protests through peaceful negotiations, however, it can not be blackmailed through aggressive language, the Spokesperson warned. There was no immediate response on behalf of the GRM.

"Illegal fishing underway right under the nose of government", Maulana claims

"Government failed to address our concerns about border trade", Maulana Hidayat claimed. He said the traders were facing difficulties at the Pak-Iran border. "We want to end these restrictions", the Maulana demanded.

Last year, the Maulana gathered thousands of women protesters in Gwadar, which attracted national and international media. The situation prompted Chief Minister Mir Qudus Bizenjo to hold an immediate dialogue with the defiant Maulana. Subsequently, the GRM ended its protest after having successful negotiations with Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman and other GRM leaders.

The Maulana also claimed that illegal fishing/trawling was going on in Gwadar right under the nose of the provincial government. Although, the Balochistan government claims to have arrested people involved in illegal fishing.

A few days back, the Maulana and some GRM leaders displayed weapons and threatened armed resistance if their demands were not met. This prompted the police to register an FIR against the Maulana and 12 other leaders of the GRM. The photo of Maulana was widely shared and condemned on social media.

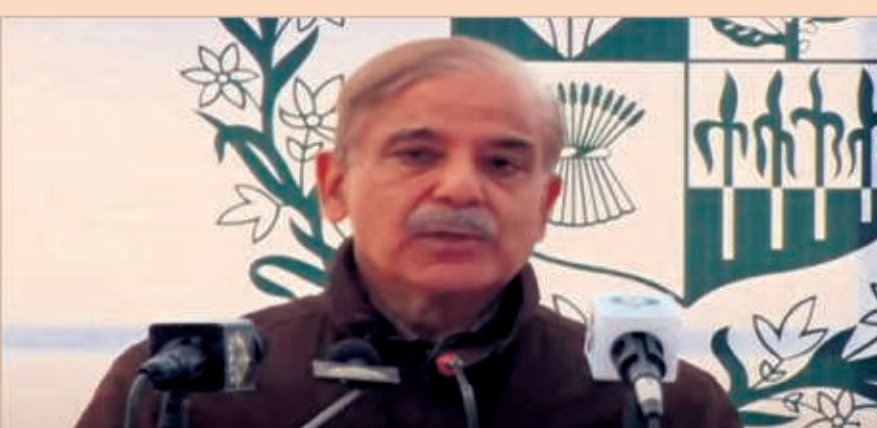
PM Shehbaz reiterates resolve to uproot menace of terrorism

ISLAMABAD As the country has been witnessing an uptick in terror incidents, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday reiterated his resolve to uproot the menace of terrorism by using all resources available in Pakistan.

The premier, while addressing an event in Dera Ismail Khan, said that he will take all possible steps to control terrorism in all its forms in the country.

Premier says govt to take all possible steps to eliminate terrorism.

PM Shehbaz's assurance came while commenting on the recent acts of militancy across the country, particularly highlighting the Bannu operation against the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) where its terrorists took over the Counter-Terrorism Department compound, which



was later cleared by security forces. "Security forces bravely combatted the terrorists in Bannu. Acts of terrorism have once again seen a rise in the recent weeks. Those who embraced martyrdom in Bannu are Pakistan's heroes. The nation will remember them," the premier said, speaking at an event following the launch of development projects in DI Khan. He told the attendees about his visit to the Rawalpindi Hospital to meet soldiers injured in the Bannu operation. The prime minister also spoke about the spate of terror attacks in Balochistan a day earlier.

"Another terror attack took place in Balochistan yesterday. We are working hard to prevent them. We will employ all resources to uproot terrorism to bring peace in Pakistan," Premier Shehbaz added.

He also assured the people of the eradication of extortion and other crimes.

Commenting on the state of development in Pakistan, the prime minister said that the country was led towards a disaster due to the wrong policies of the previous government.

Promises engaging all resources to bring peace to Pakistan

While inaugurating development projects in district DI Khan and realising the dream of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supreme Nawaz Sharif of constructing motorways across the country, he said:

"Inaugurated development works in DI Khan today. [We] have also laid the foundation for the Sukkur-Hyderabad motorway. Nawaz Sharif's dream of motorways from Peshawar to Karachi has come true."

The premier also lambasted the previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for not doing the necessary infrastructural work in DI Khan and Zhob.

"The previous government did not even lay a brick for the DI Khan and Zhob corridor. The provincial government did not spend a penny on the project that the federal government completed in the past," he said. Speaking on the construction of an airport, the premier said that it will be a waste to invest money in the old airport as it gets flooded. He added that to ensure the success of the airport, the government will complete the project of an industrial state.

In a veiled reference to PTI Chairman Imran Khan, PM Shehbaz said that he had brought disrespect to the country after selling out precious gifts presented by foreign leaders given as a symbol of fraternal ties with Pakistan's people, but the former ruler sold them out in open markets. Web Desk

statement about Bajwa's 'support' to PTI 'wrongly attributed', Alvi

President Arif Alvi on Monday rebutted a statement "wrongly attributed" to him regarding alleged support extended by then army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) during the 2018 general elections.

A statement issued by the President's Office on Twitter said that the president has taken notice of the "wrongly attributed" statement, adding that it "has been quoted out of reference to the context and is twisted and self-coined."

"President Dr Arif Alvi has taken notice of the statement wrongly attributed to him about the alleged help extended by the former Chief of Army Staff, General (r) Qamar Javed Bajwa, and his team in the Senate, and their help to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) during the elections also," stated the tweet.

The clarification by the President's Office comes after a



local newspaper published a report in which Alvi was quoted telling journalists, leaders of the business community, and foreign diplomats at a dinner on Saturday that "Gen (ret'd) Bajwa and his team" had helped PTI Chief Imran Khan in

the Senate and during elections also.

The report further stated that the president said he discussed the "neutrality" of the armed forces with the army chief, adding that "if the army had left politics, it was the time politicians took charge of the situation."

While answering a question that whether Imran at any stage thought of sacking the then army chief, the report added, that the president said "No, I don't think so. That was a rumour."

Alvi added that he is "still looking for an answer" as to why and when relations between Khan and Gen (ret'd) Bajwa soured.

According to the report, the president said he had verbally suggested to both the government and opposition that a middle ground might be found and elections could be held at the end of April or in May. Web Desk

Imran face of 'collective wrongdoings' of establishment, judiciary: Asif

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has become the face of the establishment and judiciary's collective mistakes, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said Monday.

"Imran's not intelligent, he's a fool. The 'Imran Khan model' was forcedly manufactured in the laboratory in 2018," the federal minister said while speaking at an event in Lahore.

Since his ouster in April, the deposed prime minister has been targeting the institutions for allegedly helping the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) come into power — but the incumbent government had repeatedly denied the notion.

Slamming the PTI chief, Asif said that he invested the charity money he received from a cricket club into properties. "This person [Imran] has lived off others'



money."

"He has been siphoning money from the people for a long time. He and his followers are pickpockets," the senior minister said, noting that it was time that the "political elite" ensure that they are doing their job in the right manner.

The defence minister also advised his party's leadership to

accept the resignations of PTI lawmakers and send them "on a wild goose chase".

"Right now, at least 130-135 lawmakers have quit. But, all the PTI lawmakers are residing in Rs500 million residences and taking all the facilities from the government. They're thieves," he said.

He also suggested to the PTI leadership that if they want their members of parliament to resign, they should begin first with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Asif added that 2013, there were "some transactions" former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was asked to do a transaction in 2013, but he did not follow through.

"Had he followed through on it, there would be no Panama Leaks and no punishments," he said, adding that Nawaz has always stood firm on his "stance" and never backed down. Web Desk

Covid variant threat: NDMA orders NIH to review vaccine stock, hospital arrangements

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday conducted a review of the prevailing coronavirus situation with a particular focus on "evolving Covid variants" and directed the National Institute of Health (NIH) to review the stocks of vaccines and arrangements in hospitals to deal with virus cases.

China is experiencing a surge in coronavirus

According to CBS News, China is experiencing a surge in coronavirus cases due to a strain that is a sub-variant of the highly infectious Omicron variant: BF.7 or BA.5.2.1.7.

NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik presided a special session of the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) today that focused on "evolving Covid variants and expressed confidence in Pakistan's current strategies and national preparedness."

The NDMA said the situation will be continuously monitored by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) and "preparedness, preventative protocols and vaccination administration system will be strengthened to tackle spike in concern."

A press release from the NDMA said that an NIH team briefed the meeting's participants on the "updated monitoring of regional trends of the new



coronavirus variant and trajectories development for Pakistan without creating undue alarm."

The NDMA chief directed the NCOC and NIH to "issue a precautionary Covid variant risk advisory for the public and relevant stakeholders based on scientific analysis of data at the global and regional level and carry out

selective mock drills for Covid emergency."

The press release highlighted that the "NCOC showed detailed statistics on Covid management, vaccination administration data and low risk of a new variant in Pakistan."

The NIH officials also informed the meeting's participants that the current Covid positivity rate stood at 0.53 per cent and 95pc of the eligible population was inoculated with the first and 90pc with the second dose of vaccines.

The press release added that Lt Gen Malik "apprised the participants of the prime minister's vision on the establishment of National Preparedness and Response System in the country."

"He also explained the expansion plan for NEOC and making it live interfaced with all departments to remodel the country's emergency response from a reactive to a proactive mode for disaster management."

Regarding the Covid situation in the country, Dawn reported that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health department recently asked employees of public sector hospitals to get fully vaccinated against the infectious disease.

As new variants of the coronavirus spread at a rapid pace in parts of the globe, including India, China, and the United States, health authorities in Pakistan seem to be ill-prepared to stop the arrival of the virus in the country. Web Desk

QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

Balochistan needs inclusive development

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIMITATION OF APPLE VALUE CHAIN IN BALOCHISTAN AND GOOD AGRICULTURE PRACTICES (GAP)

Balochistan is the largest producer of apples in Pakistan. Apple is one of the major deciduous fruits of Balochistan. Apple is the second-largest fruit after dates in Balochistan. Apples are grown in the highland of Balochistan. The most grower districts are Ziarat, Quetta, Mastung, Kalat, Killa Saif Ullah, Killa Abdullah, and Pishin. Apple varieties that are grown in Balochistan are Ture Kulu (Red Delicious), Shine Kulu (Golden Delicious) Kashmiri, Amri, and Kaja. Both Ture Kulu and Shine Kulu are famous varieties for their very attractive color and taste throughout Pakistan.

Balochistan produces fruits of high quality but the supply chains of the apple fruits are faced with limitations such as the use of traditional production and marketing technology, climate change issues (reduction in precipitation, rise in temperature, shortage of irrigation water) lack of appropriate technology, use



of inputs at improper times, miss management during pre-harvest and post-harvest practices, inadequate education of insects pests and pathological diseases control, expensive input (fertilizer, pesticide, packaging materials, etc) shortage of capital, low electricity voltage, poor quality pesticide, expensive transport, poor farm to market road, lack of cold storage in each apple grower districts, shortage of technical knowledge about apple crops, unskilled labor and inadequate education about application of pesticides and fertilizer, which not only affects the produce but also significantly reduce of the amount

of produce. Injudicious use of pesticides and fertilizers have adversely affected the natural resources, like soil, air, water, quality and safety of food. Farmers mainly use synthetic chemicals for the control of pests but these are used unwisely. These all issues are making Pakistan uncompetitive in the international market and affected the apple value chain and, it also affecting the welfare of the local consumers adversely. As high quality and healthy food are becoming more important, consumers have concerns about the control of food production and demand more information along the food

chain. Good agriculture practices (GAP) is based on the principle of risk prevention, risk analysis, sustainable agriculture (by mean of integrated pest management (IPM), and integrated crop management (ICM) to continuously improve the farming system.

Aim of the Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) is food safety, quality assurance and protecting workers and consumers' health. It requires ensuring safety throughout the food chain. It must be compulsory and transparent and operate not only from the table but also upstream to conclude supplier, e.g. fertilizer, plant protection etc. Good agriculture practices (GAP) will provide important advantages for developing countries like Pakistan not only for the domestic market but also export markets. Therefore, introducing and expanding good agriculture practices in Pakistan (Apple Value Chain) will provide some advantages to those countries who trade food with Pakistan so

Jamil ul Rehman Tareen

implementation of good agriculture practices is important for the whole horticulture food chain from field to fork.

However, Pakistan does not have the international infrastructure for supporting good agriculture standards at the farm level in terms of their implementations. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has worked extensively on raising awareness on food safety and sustainability in Pakistan (apple value chain in Balochistan). Farmers need to fulfill high standards on food safety and sustainability, and worker health and safety. So followed the good agriculture practices, guidelines in the apple value chain for better quality products and reduced input use especially hazardous pesticides and fertilizer for apple fruits.

The author is an Agriculture Officer (SF) Master trainer of UNIDO for the project PAFaid

Why are the young leaving?

By Aasiya Riaz

In a recent public opinion survey to gauge whether Pakistanis wish to stay in Pakistan or leave the country, the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) asked survey respondents about their choice to live in Pakistan or leave if given an opportunity and the reason behind making the choice.

The survey results show that 37 per cent of Pakistan's population wishes to leave the country and settle abroad. The desire to leave Pakistan is much higher in male youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years as 62 per cent respondents in this category wished to leave the country. The desire to escape Pakistan was also higher in cities where 40 per cent of the population preferred to leave Pakistan while only 36 per cent respondents from the rural areas chose to leave Pakistan if the opportunity presented itself.

The PIDE survey also claims that the desire to live outside of Pakistan is highest in Balochistan where 42 per cent wish to leave Pakistan and lowest in Punjab where 35 per cent wish to leave the country.

Perhaps not surprising that when asked for the key reason behind wishing to move and live overseas, a majority of the respondents identified economic reasons or the possibility of attaining better living standards as their key motivation. However, a size-

able portion or 44 per cent of those who chose the option to move abroad said that gaining more respect was the key driving force behind their wish. What is more surprising is that in Sindh and Balochistan the desire for more respect outweighed the urge for better income as the main reason behind wishing to leave the country.

The breakdown further shows that in Sindh more respondents chose the reason to move out of Pakistan for more or better security. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, gender equality and biological basis for identity were major reasons behind the wish to move out of Pakistan.

A somewhat similar survey by Gallup Pakistan in June last year concluded that 26 per cent Pakistanis wished to move abroad as opposed to 70 per cent Pakistanis who felt connected to the country and preferred to live and work in Pakistan. The worrying trend of more and more young Pakistanis wishing to leave Pakistan was also captured by the Gallup Pakistan which had pointed out that young Pakistanis under the age of 30 years had a higher desire to leave Pakistan as opposed to the older population.

The desire to migrate for greener pastures, better education and better opportunities is certainly not new nor is it peculiar to Pakistan. That a large population of young

Pakistanis is increasingly preferring to leave Pakistan ought to be of concern. Another alarming aspect is that it is not the need to improve one's economic future alone that is traditionally behind migration. Respect, security, gender equality and ethnic or biological identity offered as reasons by Pakistanis to emigrate speak volumes on the failings of the country with regard to its people.

Migration is a hard choice to make for humans though it has a centuries-old history. Modern migration is not just the suffering of one society through brain drain and enrichment of another through skill. There is vast literature on the social, cultural and development impact of migration on individuals, households and societies. The boost available to Pakistan's economy through remittances from migrant labour is also well-acknowledged.

The effects of migration on human emotions have also shaped magnificent literature and art through societies. Bruno Catalano's 'Les Voyageurs' or 'The Travellers' statues unveiled in 2013 in Marseilles have become a haunting symbol of economic migration and the loss of home and belonging to an individual. The bronze statues show hollowed men with huge portions of body parts missing carrying a briefcase that is both weighing them down and

also their only means of support — serving as poignant reminders of the individual cost of migration.

To unpack the desire of more young Pakistanis wishing to migrate from Pakistan, the youth's growing alienation with Pakistan and its present and future must also be analyzed. Young people's desire to leave the country also raises serious questions on the malfunction of our society, as of our leaders and governments, on national, social, civic and cultural integration of our diverse youth across Pakistan. It is this continuing failure which is at the heart of the youth's disaffection.

In its 2018 Human Development Report, the UNDP had shared some staggering statistics on the availability of basic facilities to the youth of Pakistan to live, grow and prosper — painting a rather bleak picture. According to the UNDP report, based on consulting more than 130,000 people across Pakistan of which 90 per cent were youth including from marginalized and underprivileged young communities, if the youth of Pakistan were viewed as 100 people, only seven had access to sports facility while a whopping 93 did not have access to any sports facility. Only six had access to a library and 94 had no library access; only one had a car, 12 had motorcycles, 10 had bicycles and 77 had none

of these transportation facilities. There is little evidence to suggest at the end of 2022 that any considerable investment was made to alter these statistics for Pakistan's youth.

In the latest PILDAT Voice of Youth Survey conducted from November 22 to December 2, young people wish to see decisive focus and action by Pakistan's political parties on managing rising inflation, unemployment and corruption through the 2023 General Election. Their key concerns, following the identification of the above top three issues are: a solution to the issue of lack of availability of quality education and the rising cost of fuel within the country. Disenchanted with political uncertainty and chaos in the country, a whopping majority of 70 per cent of the youth respondents also favoured holding of early general election than the scheduled time towards the end of 2023.

A lot is written and researched on what Pakistan needs to do to take advantage of the demographic dividend, but it is not possible through youth-focused human development. There is also no dearth of information on what young Pakistanis really need from the state. What is needed is policy intent and required bandwidth to address the challenges faced by the youth.

Tales from the Mountains

By Jamil Akhtar

The northern areas of Pakistan are amongst the most beautiful parts of our planet. Here, nature can be witnessed in all its might and glory. The remoteness of this region has added to its mystique and aided in the conservation of the environment to some extent. But this isolation has also caused more hardships for the inhabitants of this land and has hindered its development.

UNDP has been very active in the northern parts of the country, including Chitral in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the Gilgit Baltistan province. Its interventions have focused on the environment, disaster risk reduction, environmentally friendly tourism, empowering the people, and providing them with livelihoods.

The drastic changes in the climate are wreaking devastation on glaciers the world over and Pakistan is no exception. The melting glaciers create lakes that can overflow and cause tremendous devastation to lives and property.

To prevent this from happening a project by the name of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF-I) was initiated a few years back by the Adaptation Fund. Now, with an investment of 36.9 million dollars by



the Green Climate Fund, GLOF-II is being implemented across the two provinces.

In addition to climate change, the increase in the human population has also adversely affected the environment. To reverse the effects of deforestation, thousands of poplar and fruit-bearing trees including cherry, apple, and apricot have been planted all over the northern areas.

These interventions have been managed through the Improvement of Central Karoram National Park (CKNP) project (funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and Government of Italy), and the Pakistan Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme implemented through World Wide Fund for Nature and Snow Leopard Foundation.

Tales from the Mountains The author is an international award-winning writer, and photographer, currently working as a consultant for UNDP Pakistan

Improving the living conditions of the people has had primary importance in UNDP's efforts. The provision of clean drinking water is a very important aspect of these efforts. Numerous water treatment and purification plants and hydro-ram pumps have been installed and water supply schemes have been put into place in various villages.

These initiatives of CKNP and CCAM-II projects have been funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Government of Italy, and the Global Water Challenge (CocaCola Foundation).

The gathering storm

Zamir Akram

War clouds have once again gathered over Afghanistan. Even as American's longest war in its history has ended, the Afghan people are unlikely to enjoy the dividends of peace. In fact, a renewed civil war has already started between the Taliban and the Afghan government. The impact of such a conflict will not remain confined to Afghanistan but will engulf the entire region.

The Taliban have already made extensive territorial gains. They claim to now control 85 per cent of Afghanistan, especially the rural areas and the crucial highways, thereby encircling the major cities with fighting currently raging for the control of Herat, Kandahar and Lashkar Gah. The Taliban are also trying to rebrand themselves, projecting a more tolerant and responsible image in order to increase their domestic and international acceptability.

Rejecting Taliban claims, the Afghan government has asserted that its forces are regrouping to halt the Taliban advance and will retake lost territory. The government has also enlisted local Tajik, Hazara

and Uzbek militia to boost the capabilities of its troops while relying heavily on military support by Washington and New Delhi. In these circumstances, a protracted civil war is now the most likely outcome.

Prime Minister Imran Khan is correct in stating that the Americans made a mess in Afghanistan. Now they are leaving a mess behind. Instead of ensuring a peaceful transition, the Biden administration has rushed for the exits, abandoning Afghanistan to its fate. American "over the horizon" military operations in support of the Ghani government, such as recent air strikes against the Taliban, have encouraged Kabul to reject any compromise solution. The recent meetings in New Delhi between US Secretary of State Blinken and the Indian leadership indicate that India will also militarily assist the Afghan government. The Indian objective was clearly spelt out recently by former Indian Foreign Secretary Sham Seran that an Afghan civil war would be preferable to a Taliban government.

A more sinister aspect of such Indo-

US cooperation, underscored by the meeting between Secretary Blinken and Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, is that Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies would feel encouraged to intensify support for terrorist groups like the TTP and Baloch separatists against Pakistan. The Chechens, Uzbeks, Uighurs of the ETIM and ISIS will also gain greater freedom of action to increasingly target China, Russia and Iran.

In these circumstances, Afghanistan will not only face further devastation but will also be denied the benefits of its potential role as a hub for regional connectivity. Projects like TAPI and CASA-1000 will remain unimplemented. China's extension of its BRI into Afghanistan as well as its investments in the country would have to be put on hold. For Pakistan, the costs would be even higher — continued instability and security threats on its western and eastern borders, influx of Afghan refugees, and denial of access to the region. Since Afghan instability will have regional implications, the geopolitical interests of

Pakistan, China, Russia and Iran converge on the need for a peaceful transition in Afghanistan and avoidance of a renewed civil war. As such, all four countries have individually and collectively reached out to the Afghan parties. The Taliban have, in their engagement with these countries, stressed their willingness to accept a political solution, sought international recognition and promised to ensure that the Afghan territory is not used against any other country. In a significant development, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the visiting Taliban leader, Mullah Bradar that the "Taliban... is a pivotal military and political force in the country and will play an important role in the process of peace, re-conciliation and reconstruction there." Similar endorsement for the Taliban has also been expressed by the Russians and Iranians. Efforts by this "Quartet", therefore, hold the most promising option to secure peace in Afghanistan. Intensified collective initiatives by them can still prevent a full scale civil war and lead to a peaceful

transition.

While the Ghani government will prove to be a hurdle, it can still be given a safe and honourable exit under conditions that could be guaranteed by the "Quartet". More troublesome would be the spoiler's role by India which views its strategic interests against Pakistan and China being better served by continuing warfare in Afghanistan. But the Indians or the Americans will not deploy their forces in Afghanistan to protect Ghani, having learnt the lessons of history. Consequently, the Kabul government cannot survive for long and would be eventually forced to find a political solution. Pakistan's support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process is laudable. But given the high stakes involved and the obvious Indian interference in Afghanistan, there is need for a proactive Pakistan policy in collaboration with China, Russia and Iran to protect shared national interests. Such a collective approach needs to be based on the ground realities, in particular that the Taliban must play a key role in a future Afghan government.

'Minorities' and their rights

By Dr Naazir Mahmood

The writer holds a PhD from the University of Birmingham, UK. He tweets @NaazirMahmood and can be reached at:

Talking about minority rights is essentially an attempt to change the world for future generations; how societies treat their minorities often reflects their ideals for the future. We can mimic developed countries in talk, but we can't do the same in practice unless we improve the lot of the marginalized.

Every year International Minorities Rights Day is observed on Dec 18 to uphold the right to freedom and equal opportunities for minorities across the world. In 1992, the United Nations declared this day and adopted the statement on individuals' rights — for ethnic, linguistic, national, or religious minorities. The day tries to promote dignity and respect for minority groups and highlights the challenges and issues the minority communities of diverse origins have been facing.

When Prof Sagar Samejo and Chandar Keswani called from Karachi inviting me to speak at the festival-and-seminar they were organizing, I was a bit reluctant due to my other commitments, but they would accept no apologies. The Forum for Rights of Marginalized Communities (FRMC) has been trying to highlight the issues minority

communities have been facing in Pakistan. This year the topic of the seminar was 'Rights of marginalized communities — issues and challenges'. Sagar Samejo and Senator Gianchand were the coordinator and organizer of this timely seminar whereas Khushhal Premee moderated it. Sagar himself is a son of the Thar desert where life can be both adorable and pitiful. Like most other children in that area, Sagar received his primary education from his village's open-air school. Through sheer hard work, he went on to acquire an MSc in chemistry from Sindh University.

This background helps us understand how some people overcome all obstacles to achieve academic excellence, and then do not confine themselves to personal gains. Sagar has been an activist from his college days and thanks to his love for democracy and progressive politics he could join the ranks of those who challenged Gen Ziaul Haq's military dictatorship. He ended up in jail and endured hard imprisonment from 1978 to 1982. His active participation in the Movement for Restoration of Democracy in the 1980s is exemplary. His literary quests also groomed him as a fine Sindhi poet and short-story writer.

Through the efforts of Gianchand and Sagar Samejo — with full support from Culture and Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah and senior

PPP leader Nisar Khuhro — the festival and seminar became a huge success. Gianchand himself is an engineer from Umakot and was only the second Dalit to become senator of Pakistan on a PPP ticket in 2015. Credit must go to the PPPs as it sent the first Hindu woman Ratna Bhagwandas Chawla to the Senate of Pakistan in 2006, and then the first Dalit woman Krishna Kohli in 2018.

Though minority issues get some highlights here and there, the most marginalized seldom get any attention. Many of their leaders — not all — puff up their chests and strut around in the corridors of powers while not doing much for their communities. Only some of them are able to develop a measure of personal trust with their own people while becoming well-heeled and developing an intimate knowledge of politics. It is not only religious minorities alone that face such situations; cultural, ethnic, and linguistic minorities also face nearly the same or similar challenges.

To be able to eliminate all forms of discrimination against minorities is an uphill task, as full equality and freedom for minorities calls for creating awareness about the respect for minorities that is hard to come by. A policy of non-discrimination at all levels that the state must enforce and every tier of government must implement is perhaps the only way forward. The theme by the UN.

AC issues writes order on Suleman Shehbaz interim bail

LAHORE: A national accountability court (AC) on Monday issued a written order on interim bail of Suleman Shehbaz, son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a money laundering case.

Suleman, who returned to Pakistan earlier this month, was granted bail after he filed a petition for pre-arrest bail in the reference filed by the National Accountability Bureau

(NAB) in 2020. As per details, the court stated in a written order that Suleman Shehbaz should join the investigation and make sure of his presence in every hearing in the court.

The AC ordered Suleman Shehbaz to submit surety bonds worth Rs500,000 for the court's satisfaction and issued notices to NAB till January 7. The petitioner told the court that he is innocent and he is booked

in this case contrary to the facts, the written order stated.

The AC written order stated that according to Suleman Shehbaz if he is arrested, this will cause unprecedented damage to him. Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) stopped the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from arresting Suleman Shehbaz, son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif upon his arrival from London. INP



ISLAMABAD: chief of Jamaat-e-Islami, Siraj ul Haq addressing during a National seminar Hurmat-e-Sood at a local hotel in Federal Capital.

PU HCBF launches MPhil, PhD programs

LAHORE: Punjab University Hailey College of Banking & Finance (HCBF) has launched its MPhil and PhD programs in Business Management after approval of Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad.

In an inaugural ceremony held at the college's greens on Monday, Principal Prof. Dr. Mubbsher Munawar Khan briefed upon the steps taken to strengthen research segment in academic profile of the college.

He said that it was his desire that the curriculum matrix of HCBF should include the superior qualifications thus adding to the academic stature of the institution. He was optimistic that with industrial linkages, the research activities at HCBF would lead not only to creation of knowledge but would also provide industry to align its business strategies to combat threats and challenges.

The Principal HCBF advised the scholars enrolled in PhD program to focus their attention to their specific areas of concentration from the day one so that they are able to be productive and accomplish their objectives in the given time frame. He assured all support and facilitate in this regard.

The session was also addressed by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ehsan Malik, Director General PU Gujranwala Campus Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naveed, Prof. Dr. Salman Razavi, Prof. Dr. Liaquat Ali and Prof. Chaudhry Nazir Ahmad. They congratulated Prof. Dr. Mubbsher Munawar Khan and his team in successfully accomplishing HEC approval to their new academic programs. They advised the scholars to focus on operational aspects so that practical solutions were offered to the ailing economy and business.

The speakers stressed upon the need of continuous and rigorous hard work to be the exemplary research scholar in academic fraternity. Newly admitted scholars extended their felicitations to their academic institution and the academic team led by Prof. Dr. Khan for paving the way to accomplish superior qualification thus adding to their intellect, skills and attitude. INPHE said that it was his desire that the curriculum matrix of HCBF should include the superior qualifications thus adding to the academic stature of the institution. He was optimistic that with industrial linkages, the research activities at HCBF would lead not only to creation of knowledge but would also provide industry to align its business strategies to combat threats and challenges. INP

DS Cabinet who de-notified CM Punjab, transferred

LAHORE: Deputy Secretary Cabinet Jehanzeb who had de-notified Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhary Pervez Elahi on directives of Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman has been transferred.

According to notification issued on Monday, Abdul Rauf Mehr has been appointed new Deputy Secretary Cabinet while Jehanzeb has been given responsibilities of Deputy Secretary Services.

It is worth to mention here that during last couple of days, Governor Punjab had de-notified CM Pervez Elahi for not taking vote of confidence and Chief Secretary had also issued a notification in this connection.

However, the Lahore High Court (LHC) restored the chief minister and provincial cabinet after Pervez Elahi he submitted an undertaking that he would not dissolve assembly. INP

Children among eight die in various incidents of suffocation

LAHORE: Children among eight people died while others affected in various incidents of suffocation in different districts of the province were hospitalized on Monday.

According to details, the first incident was reported in Jia Bagga area of Lahore where gas accumulated in room of a house. Two children including Zainab 03, and Usman 04, sleeping in the room were suffocated to death while five-year-old Fatima was hospitalized in critical condition. Parents of the victim children were not present at home at the time of incident.

In Nasir Town area of Faisalabad four people slept on night after burning coal in the room to keep them warm. Combustion of coal produced carbon monoxide due to which three including Mazhar Sarfraz, Nafees Munir and Shabbir Munir died of suffocation whereas Husnain Fazal became unconscious and was shifted to District Headquarters Hospital in a critical condition.

In Shergarha area of Okara, three children Noor Fatima, Usman and Iqbal die in another incident of asphyxiation while two women Abida 25, and Bushra 45 were shifted to hospital in precarious condition for medical aid. The victims had burnt wood to keep their room warm while sleeping in a closed place in a frosty weather, police added. Moreover, in an incident of gas leakage blast in Dhok Hassu of Rawalpindi, a mother and her child sustained.

10 years after UK's first hand transplant, patient and surgeon meet again

ISLAMABAD: On 27 December 2012, the UK's first hand transplant took place at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LIHT). A decade on, we spoke to the patient and his pioneering surgeon.

"Many patients say after surgery it is the small things that are the most significant to them," says Prof Simon Kay OBE, a consultant plastic surgeon.

"Being able to brush their daughter's hair, take money out of a purse or turn on the tap and fill a glass of water, and to feel complete again."

Or, in the case of former West Yorkshire pub landlord Mark Cahill, save his wife's life after she suffered a heart attack.

Leeds, the home of the UK Hand Transplant Unit, is the UK's only provider of this type of complex surgery. It is also now considered one of the leading hand transplant services in the world. It's an area of medicine that would have seemed implausible just a few decades ago.

Mr Cahill is the poster boy for this unit. In

2012, his right hand had become so badly infected following years of gout that it required amputating.

He addresses Prof Kay as "Prof", revealing a familiarity forged through years of interaction. When the consultant takes hold of his patient's hand and inspects his work, the connection and pride is clear for all to see.

Some patients who have walked these corridors over the past decade lost their hands or limbs due to accidents. Others lost theirs to medical conditions such as sepsis or scleroderma.

"My mother had seen Professor Kay on the television saying he was going to do hand transplants," recalls Mr Cahill, of Greetland near Halifax. "I managed to get to see him, and he said I was an ideal candidate. I talked it over with my family and thought I may as well go for it, it's got to be better than what I've got, which it turns out it has been."

Very few donors or their families agree to donate their hands

Hand donation is not an option that can be selected from the donor register.

Finding a match is more complex than for other organs as physical look and psychological acceptance play a key role in transplant success.

A one-year assessment of the patient is key and includes psychological as well as immunological assessment.

Recovery and full usage of the new transplants can take between one and three years.

Hand transplant is not yet available for children, but this is an area the team aims to develop.

Only after intense psychological interviews, did he go under the surgeon's knife. "They test your psychological being to see if you're suitable," he says.

On Boxing Day, the call he and his family had been waiting for finally came. "They said, 'can you come across?' They said you might spend a while in hospital while we do the tests to see if you're suitable. All sorts. INP



HYDERABAD: Women crossing the road after washing clothes in the Karachi Canal.

Political instability, economic decline worrying Chinese investors: Dr. Murtaza

ISLAMABAD: President Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) Dr. Murtaza Mughal has said that the political instability, law and order situation, and economic decline are upsetting Chinese investors.

In a statement issued on Monday, he said that there was no possibility of further investment by Chinese businessmen in Pakistan in the prevailing circumstances.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that under the CPEC, some investments are being made in energy and infrastructure projects, but it is becoming impossible to attract Chinese investors in other sec-

tors. He said that Pakistan's trade with Iran and Afghanistan is insignificant while trade with India is suspended while trade continues with only one neighboring country China.

Chinese investors can invest heavily in Pakistan if their concerns are addressed and they are provided with a favorable environment, he added.

The President PEW said that Chinese investors have relocated many industries to far-flung countries avoiding Pakistan due to a number of issues that were never addressed.

He said that the rules

of doing business in Pakistan are not good and the overall business environment is toxic, due to which foreign investors hesitate to invest in Pakistan.

For 40 years the policymakers believed that Pakistan would be protected if there is a friendly government in Afghanistan which turned out to be an illusion as now Pakistan is continuously being attacked by this side.

The Taliban government has not only failed to meet the expectations of the international community, but it has also failed to meet the expectations of Pakistan, Dr Mughal said. INP

First Lady terms attitudinal change vital to overcome challenges faced by PWDs

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi has termed the changed in attitude of society vital to overcome the challenges being faced in the rehabilitation and development of persons with disabilities (PWDs). She stressed the need to alter the narrative on persons with disabilities. Speaking during his visit to Karachi Down Syndrome Program (KDSP) on Monday, Begum Samina Arif Alvi appreciated the efforts made by the organization in integrating people with Down Syndrome into society. She also talked about the need for family support and their involvement, especially in the early years. The First Lady strongly emphasized the need to integrate PWDs into the national economy to alter their image as liabilities to one of the revenue generators. She interacted with children. INP

Husne Qirrat & Naat Conference 'Quaid-ka-Pakistan' organized by PAC

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council (PAC) in collaboration with the International Recitation Research Academy (Irra) organized a Husne Qirrat & Naat Conference entitled Quaid Ka Pakistan here on Monday. The program was presided over by Prof. Qari Muhammad Mushtaq Anwar, a prominent reciter of the world of Islam. Pir Mujtabi Farooq Gul Badshah, Sajjada Nashin Astana Alia Mohra Sharif, came as a special guest. Addressing the young generation, Syed Mahmood Saharanpuri said that young generations are fortunate to come to such gatherings, but at the same time, these conferences are also a refresher course for you spiritually. Qari Abdul Basit Siddiqui, Qari Waseem Abbas, Qari Abu Bakr Saifir Lodhi, Qari Mirza Zain Baig and Qari Kashif Rabbani recited the Holy Quran, while the honor of Naat Sharif was given by the well-known Naat Khan of the National Assembly Syed Zeeshan Bukhari, Professor Syed Asad Ali, and Muhammad Armaghan Sarwar. Prof. Gul Mast Khan and Hafiz Mohsin Ali Bhatti performed the duties. INP

NEOC directed to issue precautionary COVID variant risk advisory for public

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik has directed the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) to issue precautionary COVID variant risk advisory for public and relevant stakeholders based on scientific analysis of data at global & regional level and carry out selective mock drills for COVID emergency.

He issued the directives while presiding over the special session of NEOC on Monday. National Institute of Health (NIH) team was called on for updated monitoring of regional trends of new variant of coronavirus and trajectories development for Pakistan without creating undue alarm.

Chairman NDMA focused on evolving COVID variants and expressed confidence in Pakistan's current strategies & National Preparedness. However, the situation will be continuously monitored by National Command & Operation Center (NCOC) and preparedness, preventative protocols and vaccination administration system will be strengthened to tackle spike in concern.

NCOC showed detailed statistics on COVID management, vaccination administration data and low risk of new variant in Pakistan. It was informed that current COVID positivity rate stood at 0.53 percent and 95 percent eligible population has been inoculated with first & 90 percent with second dose of COVID vaccines.

Besides directing the NCOC ex NIH to issue precautionary COVID variant risk advisory for public and relevant stakeholders, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik also directed NIH to review the stocks of COVID vaccines and arrangements in hospitals to deal with COVID cases. He apprised the participants of Prime Minister's vision on establishment of National Preparedness and Response System. INP

Terrorism increasing, Army and police deserve tribute: Mian Zahid

Says lack of resources to hinder fight against terrorists, ignoring development of backward areas a mistake

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 has said that the incidents of terrorism are increasing in the country.

He said that our soldiers and policemen have been sacrificing their lives to provide security

to the masses but lack of resources can hamper the fight against terrorists.

In a statement issued on Monday, Mian Zahid Hussain said that military action is taken against the terrorists but development is avoided while only claims are made to provide employment to the local population due to which the problem resurfaces after a few years.

Claims of breaking the back of the terrorists have been made for years, but they have proved wrong, he added.

The business leader said that during the past,

the top military officers had told the political leaders many times that if the backward areas were not developed, the problem of terrorism would continue to reappear after a few years, but despite this, the development of these areas was not given importance.

Politicians prefer to spend resources where they can get votes which amount to wasting sacrifices offered to eradicate terrorism, he maintained.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the government has asked the Afghan Taliban many times to play their part in stopping

the attacks of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), but so far no positive result has come out of the negotiations.

The reactivation of the TTP will divert attention and resources, which may reduce the focus on fighting terrorism in Balochistan, which will create new problems, he said.

The business leader said that Pakistan is already suffering from incompetence, political instability, depletion of resources, unbridled debt, inflation, and the ravages of floods, and under these conditions, it is not sur-

prising that the security situation will deteriorate.

He said that the government also does not want to turn the people against it by making tough decisions and economic reforms, due to which economic recovery is becoming difficult and the country will have to run on loans.

Even in such a critical time when the survival of the country is at stake, some politicians are trying to create uncertainty instead of doing any constructive work, which is making the economic crisis more serious, he added. INP

TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer, Building CW, PP&H Department District Mastung invites sealed bids tender based on Balochistan Composite Schedule of Rates 2018, Government of Balochistan amended up-to-date from interested contractors / firms for the works listed below under BPPRA Rules 2014. Earnest Money 2% of the E/cost and tender fee Rs. 1000/-, time limit 30th June 2024 for each work.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Est. Cost
PROVISION OF BUILDING FOR 10 SHELTERLESS PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF DISTRICT MASTUNG. (PSDP No. 6167 22022-1943)		
1.	GBPS MALIK ABAD (SEHOON) BEMIS 02913 TSE-222312204653	11.329 M
2.	GBPS CHAKUL KALOZAI BEMIS 03038 TSE-222312204613	11.329 M
3.	GBPS HASSAN LEHRI NOZA BEMIS 02911 TSE-222312204683	11.329 M
4.	GBPS REKI PUST BEMIS 03027 TSE-222312204703	11.329 M
5.	GGPS KILLI MANO KHAN KANAK BEMIS 15211 TSE-222312204723	11.329 M
6.	GGPS LANGOVE ABAD KHAD KOOCHA (UMAR ABAD) BEMIS 15214 TSE-222312204743	11.329 M
7.	GGPS ABDUL RAZZAQ BEMIS 12296 TSE-222312204953	11.329 M
8.	GGPS BALOCH COLONY PADDAH BEMIS 15412 TSE-222312205023	11.329 M
9.	GGPS KILLI DASHI AMBO (RINDAK MALIKABAD) BEMIS 15413 TSE-222312205043	11.329 M
10.	GBPS MIR IZZAT KHAN. BEMIS 02953 TSE-222312205053	11.329 M
11.	CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDING FOR BOYS PRIMARY SCHOOL AT KILLI SALAM ASH KHAN PIRKANI KARDIGAB DISTRICT MASTUNG. (PSDP No. 6185 22022-1917) TSE-222312205073	11.329 M
12.	CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL CLASS ROOM & BOUNDARY WALL AT GBPS KILLI KHALLI KANAK DISTRICT MASTUNG. (PSDP No. 6137 22022.1434) TSE-222312205083	9.413 M
13.	CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL CLASS ROOM & BOUNDARY WALL AT GBPS KILLI MENGHI MENGAL KARDIGAB DISTRICT MASTUNG. (PSDP No. 6138 22022.1438) TSE-222312205093	9.413 M

The procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Rules 2014 amended up to date. **ELIGIBILITY:** The Contractor must have valid registration for year 2022-23 with Pakistan Engineer Council relevant category, C-6 & above in relevant discipline and specialization code CE09, CE10. Registration with tax authorities. Le (NTN), sales Tax Department, & BRA. Relevant works experience (Work completed in last five years), Turn-over of last three years. Tender Fee deposited through Green Challan in treasury office Mastung/NBP and Bid security @ 2% as mention above. **METHOD OF PROCUREMENT:** Single Stage -One Envelop Procedure will be adopted. **FINANCIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:** Least Cost based selection method. **BIDDING / TENDER DOCUMENTS:** Issuance; Documents will be issued from the date of publication till submission date and time on production of green Challan form amounting Rs. 1000/-, as mentioned above (for each scheme bidding document) deposited in the head of Account C-02716 through Government Treasury District Mastung in Branch of National Bank of Pakistan. **Submission:** The last date of submission will be on 16-01-2023 at 12:00 Noon, no forms will be entertained after mentioned date and time. **Opening:** The tender document will be opened on 16-01-2023 at 1:00 PM before Procurement Committee in the presence of the contractors or their authorized representatives. **Address:** The place of issuance, submission, inquiries and opening will be the office of the Executive Engineer, Building CW, PP&H Department District Mastung Office Phone No. 0843-895419 (E-Mail address: eebuildingmastung@gmail.com) **Terms & Conditions:** (A) Under following conditions bids will be rejected; Conditional, electronics and telegraphic bids / tenders. Bids not accompanied by Challan or bid security / earnest money in shape of Call Deposit in favor of the undersigned. Bids received after specified date and time. Blacklisted contractors/ firms. Bid validity period will be 90 Days. The Procurement Agency reserves the right to cancel any bid or the entire bidding process at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal subject to the relevant provisions of Balochistan Procurement Regulatory Authority Rules, 2014. Bidders are required to submit following documents with their bids: - List of similar / general assignments with cost undertaken over last 5 years and completion certificates as mentioned in bidding data. Affidavit showing that contractor / firm has not been blacklisted. Affidavit showing that contractor / firm is not currently involved in any litigation process. All relevant forms mention in bidding documents.

Executive Engineer, Building, CW/PP&H Department, District Mastung

PRO No. 161926-12-2022
www.dpr.gov.pk | dpr.gov | dpr.gov | f@dpr.gov.pk

Gas crisis worsen in Pakistan after exceeding 1,200 MMCFD

ISLAMABAD: Owing to the national gas shortage as soon as wintery winds started blowing, people across the country have started facing difficulties in continuing daily activities such as cooking and heating water and other items, says in media reports.

Children are forced to leave home for school without having breakfast, because mothers cannot even make a toast. On returning back of children, mothers are unable to serve them food - as the low gas pressure makes it impossible to cook food within required time. Hence, the residents are forced to buy food from shops which is budding a huge burden of their pockets.

According to the petroleum division, the number of gas consumers in Pakistan have exceeded 10 million. The gas demand for these consumers has increased by 60 Million Metric Cubic Feet per Day (MMCFD) in 2022, to 6,945 MMCFD.

The reason behind gas shortage is the high demand and low supply, forcing the gas suppliers to cut off the supply compulsorily at multiple times of the day.

In 2022, Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) gained 40,000 new customers and now serves over 3.5 million

gas users. On the other hand, the customers of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) have increased to around 7.7 million this year. Following the intensifying cold, the demand for gas in Pakistan has reached to 3,600 MMCFD - while, the availability is only 2,400 MMCFD.

The demand of SSGC is 1,250 MMCFD, while the supply is just 900 MMCFD. Similar goes with SNGPL, having a supply of 1,500 MMCFD against demand of 2,300 MMCFD.

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QUETTA: Home Minister Balochistan Mir Zia Lango addressing a press conference.

Security plan finalized for Benazir Bhutto's 15th martyrdom anniversary

LARKANA: The 15th martyrdom anniversary of the former prime minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto will be observed with utmost devotion and respect today on December 27th at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

In this regard, SSP Larkana Dr. Muhammad Imran Khan presided over a joint meeting, in which a security plan for the said day was discussed in the wake of Pakistan Peoples Party's public rally, with the SP Special Branch Munir Ahmad Khuro, SSP Kamber-Shahdadkot Captain (Retd) Saddam Hussain, SSP Shikarpur Capt (Retd) Faizan Ali, SSP Khairpur Ruhul Khoso, ASP Shikarpur Fazil Bukhari, ASP Larkana City Atiqur Rehman Mekan, and other officers were in attendees.

Addressing the meeting, the SSP said that the foolproof security and traffic arrangements had been completed by the police as 8,140 police officers and jawans would perform their duties.

Besides, it was apprised that the help of Sindh Rangers would also be taken in this regard.

Moreover, SSP Larkana briefed the police officers regarding the formation of various checkpoints, alternate routes and parking routes.

He said that the police patrolling had been increased by establishing checkpoints on the pathways coming from Larkana district and Naudero city. He also said that a strict checking of the participants coming in the rally had been ensured through

modern machines, walk-through gates and watch towers.

The SSP said that the police would provide foolproof security to the participants. He further said that Naudero city and mausoleum would be monitored through CCTV cameras and other modern tools.

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Two women shot dead in Pishin

PISHIN: Unidentified gunmen shot dead two women inside their house here on Monday and fled the scene.

According to details, unknown culprits barged into a house located in Kale Pairan area of district Pishin of Balochistan and opened indiscriminate fire on women present in the house.

As a result of firing two women were killed on the spot and attackers fled the scene of crime.

Reasons behind the dual murder could not be ascertained. However, a case was registered into the incident and investigations were underway. INP

Ch Salik appointed Senior Vice President of PML-Q

ISLAMABAD: The politics of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q) has taken new turn as Chaudhry Salik Hussain is appointed Senior Vice President of the party.

The PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain gave approval of appointment of his son as Senior Vice President of the party.

Secretary General PML-Q Tariq Bashir Cheema issued the notification of new appointment in the party. INP

Robbers' gang busted, cash, valuables recovered

RAWALPINDI: The police arrested three members of robber gang including ring leader, recovered looted cash, motorcycle and other valuables here on Monday.

The police on a tip-off conducted operation in Ganj Mandi area of Rawalpindi.

During operations, three members of 'Abdullah Gang' including ring leader Abdullah Ashraf, Daud Maqsood and Mohsin Ali.

The police recovered Rs40,000 looted cash, a motorcycle and other valuables from possession of the detainees who were being investigated after registering various cases against them. INP

IUI extends last date of admission in over 100 programs till Jan 02

ISLAMABAD: The International Islamic University, Islamabad (IUI) has extended the last date to apply for admission in more than 100 programs of its 11 faculties till Monday, 2nd of the January, 2023.

The university administration made this decision keeping in view the interest and requests of applicants to extend the date. The university has offered admissions in BS, MS and PhD programs of 11 faculties including Social Sciences, Basic and Applied Sciences, Management Sciences, International Institute for Islamic Economics, Arabic, Usuluddin, Languages and Literature, Engineering and Technology and Shariah and Law, Faculty of Computing and Faculty of Education.

The applicants can apply by visiting the IUI website or this link <http://admission.iui.edu.pk>. Male applicants can also call on 051-9019567 and female applicants can call on 051-9019327 for guidance and details. INP

Pakistan, Uzbekistan finalize agreements to enhance bilateral trade volume

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Uzbekistan have finalized agreements to further enhance investment and increase the bilateral trade volume to one billion dollar.

The Preferential and Transit Trade agreements to be implemented from next month were signed by Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar and Uzbek deputy Prime Minister Sardor Umurzakov in Islamabad on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commerce Minister said the two sides have agreed to devise a joint strategy for transit trade via Afghanistan. He said in this regard, we have also proposed a joint trilateral forum of Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan to facilitate trade and sort out any problems in this connection.

Syed Naveed Qamar said Pakistan and Uzbekistan have agreed to organize single country exhibitions to market, promote and facilitate their manufacturers of export products. INP

PM Shehbaz invites Qatari Amir to attend Climate Resilient Pakistan Conference

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has invited the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to participate in the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, co-hosted with the United Nations, in Geneva on January 9, 2023.

The press release issued by PM Office on Monday stated that during telephonic conversation with Amir of Qatar, the prime minister thanked him for the generous humanitarian assistance provided by Qatar during the devastating climate-induced floods in Pakistan earlier this year.

He recalled that Pakistan now faced the enormous challenge of rehabilitation and reconstruction

in a climate-resilient manner.

Premier Shehbaz Sharif highlighted that while Pakistan had mobilised its own limited resources to the extent possible, continued international support and solidarity was required to meet the daunting challenge of recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected areas, and to build resilience against future climate shocks.

He congratulated the Amir on Qatar's successful hosting of FIFA-2022 Football World Cup, which had set a new benchmark for international sports events.

The prime minister and the Qatari Amir also had a brief exchange of views on bilateral and international issues of mutual interest. INP

IHC issues notices on Azam Swati's bail plea

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Monday issued notices to the state and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) while hearing a bail petition filed by PTI Senator Azam Khan Swati seeking his release in a case related to controversial tweets.

Swati was arrested on November 27 after the FIA booked him in Islamabad over a highly obnoxious campaign of intimidating tweets against state institutions. It was the second time that Swati was booked and arrested by the FIA over his tweets about army officials in less than two months.

Last week, the senator approached a special court in Islamabad for bail.

However, Special Judge Central Azam Khan dismissed the plea ruling that he had "committed the same offence twice". Subsequently, Swati filed a post-arrest bail petition through his lawyer Babar Awan in the IHC, challenging the special court's

orders.

Awan appeared before the IHC as it took up Swati's petition on Monday. During the hearing, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq issued notices to the respondents and adjourned the hearing till January 2 (Monday).

Speaking to the media outside the IHC, Awan quoted a judgement authored by IHC Justice Babar Sattar wherein he said that mere tweets could not incite a mutiny in the army. He also lashed out at the authorities for being unable to prepare a challan against Swati after registering a first information report. Swati said that the law required authorities to prepare a challan within 17 days of registering a case. "Those experts in leaks are sitting in the PM House and indulging in propaganda," Awan claimed. He said the country was heading towards default as foreign exchange reserves had dropped to an alarming level, adding that citizens were withdrawing. INP

PBM releases 1st installment to 84 deserving families under OWSP

LAHORE: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) under the "Orphans and Widows Support Programme (OWSP)" on Monday released the first installment to the deserving families in Lahore.

Managing Director of PBM, Amir Fida Paracha launched the programme by releasing the payments of first month, in a ceremony organized at Lahore.

Highlighting the aims of the project, Amir Fida Paracha told that the widows registered under the Benazir Income Support Programme have been connected with OWSP with the condition of having one or more school going orphan girls.

He said this initiative translates the distinctive and compassionate idea of taking care of the orphan girls by provid-

ing them education and other basic needs of life.

"To ensure transparency and efficacy in this project, the payments are released through UBL OMNI Digital Banking", he added.

The MD PBM said that monthly stipend of Rs.6000/- is granted to the mother having school going orphan girl while Rs.10,000/- per month is given to mother of more than one school going orphan girls.

Amir Fida Paracha also reiterated his passion to materialize the vision of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (Shaheed) for the wellbeing of vulnerable populace of the country.

On the occasion, 84 deserving families were offered first monthly payment for the education and upbringing of their orphan girls. INP

COAS, CJCS attend funeral prayer of martyred Captain Fahad

RAWALPINDI: Funeral prayer (Namaz-e-Janaza) of Captain Muhammad Fahad Khan, who embraced martyrdom in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast near Kahan Balochistan, was offered at Army Graveyard Rawalpindi on Monday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir and a large number of senior civil and military officers, soldiers, citizens and relatives of martyr attended the funeral prayer.

The martyr captain of Pakistan Army was laid to rest with full military honour. INP

Maritime, customs foils attempt to smuggle narcotics worth Rs 2b

KARACHI: The Pakistan Maritime security agency and customs team on Monday foiled an attempt to smuggle narcotics worth Rs 2 billion.

As per details, the smugglers were carrying the narcotics in the ship, and the moment the maritime ship reached they threw the narcotics into the sea. The Maritime agency arrested the smuggler and recovered the narcotics from the sea.

Earlier, the anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized 2.68 kilograms of crystal ice from a Qatar-bound passenger at Karachi airport. The accused was trying to smuggle the drugs in a jam bottle to Qatar when the ANF arrested him and foiled the smuggling attempt. INP

3 street criminals arrested; weapons recovered

RAWALPINDI: In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police on Monday arrested three street criminals and recovered Rs 31,000 cash, a motorcycle, weapons and other items from their possession.

According to a police spokesman, Taxila police apprehended three members of a street criminal gang, identified as Mumjeera' including Alam Zaib alias Mumjeera. INP

China's leading company signs a MoU to boost renewable energy in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan aims to increase its renewable energy share to 60% by 2030, GoodWe, one of China's leading smart energy solution providers, is also playing its part to boost renewable energy in the country, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday.

The GoodWe has signed a 50MW memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Maxgreen and Solcraft to boost the renewable energy sector in Pakistan.

"We are looking forward to this cooperation. It will add significantly to Pakistan's fast-growing renewable capacity and will further contribute to green energy development and industrial clean electricity demand, as well as enhancing eco-friendly residential

living," reads a statement of GoodWe. Maxgreen and Solcraft, with their head offices in Karachi, are Pakistani companies that deal with Solar PV and provide clean, green, and smart energy solutions through constant innovation and research.

GoodWe is behind different initiatives in Pakistan promoting green energy in Pakistan by actively participating in different programs on PV and renewable energy.

GoodWe donated its SDT G2 10KW Inverter to the Energy Training and Research Center (ETRC), the most authoritative PV training school in Pakistan, to the next generation of PV installers to learn the latest technologies and techniques. INP



QUETTA: ANP Senator Nawabzad Omer Farooq Kasi addressing on Grand dialogue on "Unresolved Financial Crises of the University of Balochistan" organized by Joint Action Committee University of Balochistan.

Lahore ranked 5th among cities with poor air quality

LAHORE: Lahore experiences poor visibility in the morning owing to foggy conditions. The city ranked fifth among top ten most polluted cities of the world on the Air Quality Index (AQI).

An average air quality reading of Punjab's capital city recorded 181. Air quality wise Karachi ranked third today among the world's cities with most polluted air. Thick fog engulfed Lahore that affected flight operations and five flights were diverted to Islamabad including flights from Istanbul, Kuwait, Kuala Lumpur, Jeddah and Sharjah.

Moreover, two flights of PIA destined for Jeddah and Medina will now take off from Islamabad instead of Lahore. Passengers of these flights have been informed to reach Islamabad by road for their flights. It is to be mentioned here that AQI as high as 151-200 is considered unhealthy, while an AQI reading between 201 to 300 is harmful and AQI rate over 300 mark is extremely hazardous. According to experts, the air becomes heavier in the winter as compared to summer, causing poisonous particles in the atmosphere to move downwards and making the air polluted.

As a result, a layer of polluted particles, including large amounts of carbon and smoke, covers an area.

Smoke produced by factories and with burning coal, garbage, oil or tyres enters the atmosphere and the impact of it appears at the onset of winter and remains till the season's end, experts said. Thus, air pollution reaches to extremely dangerous levels in winter, severely compromising air quality.

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ANF seizes 531.237 kg drugs, arrests 22 drug pushers

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Narcotics Force seized 531.237 kg drugs, 1604 Liter Prohibited Chemicals, 97.31 kg suspected substance worth US\$ 17.44 million internationally, arrested 22 drug pushers including 3 Afghan nationals and 3 women, impounded 3 vehicles while conducting 25 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country.

The seized drugs comprised 15.311 Kg of heroin, 401.524 kg of hashish, 39.84 kg Methamphetamine (Ice), 9.744 kg Amphetamine (Ice), 8.958 kg weed, 2,40,000 Xanax Tablets (55.790 Kg), 100 Ecstasy Tablets (0.070 Kg), 1604 Liter HCL, 97.31 Kg suspected substance and 31x Bottle Branded Alcohol, said a spokesperson of the ANF in a statement here on Monday.

In Balochistan, the ANF recovered 110.774 kg of drugs and 1604-liter Prohibited Chemicals in 6 operations and impounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 101 kg

hashish, 9.744 kg Amphetamine (Ice) and 1604-liter HCL.

In Punjab province, the force recovered 177.33 kg of drugs in 3 operations and arrested 6 persons including a lady in drug smuggling and seized a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 7.5 kg heroin, 168 kg hashish and 1.83 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice).

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the ANF recovered 129 kg drugs and 8.580 kg Suspected Substance drugs in 3 operations while arresting 3 Afghan Nationals involved in drug smuggling. The seized drugs comprised 7 kg heroin, 84 kg hashish and 38 kg Methamphetamine (Ice).

ANF Sindh in Sindh province, the force recovered 108.39 kg drugs, 88.730 kg suspected substance and 31 bottle branded alcohol in 7 operations while arrested 4 accused persons including a woman involved in drug smuggling. Online



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique addressing during death 50th anniversary of late Khuwaja Muhammad Rafique at a local hotel.