

# QUETTA VOICE

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**Exchange companies to remove cap on dollar rate from Today**



**Gas leakage kills a father and 3 sons in Quetta Jan Muhammad Road**

## Reimagining Pakistan seminar and The way forward

Syed Ali Shah Analysis

**Political pundits called it a gathering of political dissidents since most of the political figures have been sidelined by their own political parties**

Politicians, intelligentsia and members of the legal fraternity almost discussed all issues relating to the country and Balochistan at the first Reimagining Pakistan seminar. The speakers delivered stormy and speeches based on facts and figures with regard to the prevailing economic crisis and political uncertainty at the seminar organized by the Balochistan Peace Forum (BPF) run by Senior politician Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani.

Political pundits called it a gathering of political dissidents since most of the political figures have been sidelined by their own political parties. Nevertheless, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, the former prime minister defended the Pakistan Muslim League (N) supremo Nawaz Sharif and urged the judiciary to undo its wrongs to the former premier.

**The session was underway for 7 hours**

Throughout the seven hours long sessions, Mr. Abbasi faced the brunt of



stormy and aggressive speakers criticizing Islamabad for what they called stepmotherly treatment. Hussain Wadela, the patron-in-chief of Gwadar Haq Do Tehrik put very hard questions before the audience and called for addressing the grievances of the people of the country's port city.

Miftah Ismail presented killings facts about the declining economic condition of the country and the socio-economic state of the people. Former Chief Minister Nawab Muhammad

Aslam Raisani reiterated the demand for immediate recovery of the missing persons and termed it one of the most important issues, Balochistan is facing today.

**Mehfooz Ali Khan shared killing facts**

Former Secretary of Finance Balochistan, Mehfooz Ali Khan shared killing facts about Islamabad's stepmotherly treatment towards Balochistan. He mentioned that gas was discovered in Sui in 1952 and Dera Bugti was provided a gas facility in 2015.

Young intellectual, Rafiullah Kakar termed the undeclared MPA fund as a major speed breaker and political bribe before the political

parties. He spoke at length about the issues of bad governance, the province is facing today.

To be precise, it was an event that brought the high-ups who had served the country in the center and province to one forum and they all openly shared their experiences and knowledge to bring an end to the prevailing crisis. Dissent voices need to be heard. They should not be pressed.

### Gas leakage kills a father and 3 sons in Quetta Jan Muhammad Road

Manan Mandokhail

Gas leakage killed a father and three sons in Quetta's Jan Muhammad Road on Tuesday morning. The room was filled with gas and the victims were sleeping inside. All four victims breathed their last inside the room. Residents of the area rushed towards the affected room and retrieved the dead bodies.

The dead bodies were shifted to the civil hospital Quetta. Heartbreaking scenes were witnessed on the eve of shifting the dead bodies to their house in the Killi Kamalo area of Quetta. Gas leakage and explosions have claimed scores of precious human lives in Quetta, especially in the prevailing chilly weather.

This incident has come a week



after the gas leakage incident claimed the lives of six family members in the Satellite Town area of Quetta. People have lashed out at the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) for its failure to make sure prior announcement before the gas

load shedding in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan

Despite repeated attempts, this scribe was unable to speak to the SSGC officials since the Spokesman of the company is based in Karachi a.

### QESCO claims to have restored power supply to all feeders

Staff Reporter

The Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) claimed to have restored power supply to all feeders across Balochistan on Tuesday morning after a major power outage across Pakistan. The Spokesman of QESCO said the technical staff of the company has made hectic efforts to ensure the restoration of the power supply to all feeders from the national feeder. Major power breakdowns across the country also severely affected routine life in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan.

"In Quetta, power supply has been completely restored", the spokesman said in a statement issued to the press. However, people complained about the power outages and unannounced load shedding in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan. They have criti-



cized the QESCO for its failure to restore the power supply despite repeated promises and announcements. "No power supply since yesterday", Shaukat Ali, a shopkeeper in the heart of Quetta claimed. Routine life was also badly paralyzed the power supply was abruptly suspended from the national grid station on Monday. All major cities of the country plunged into darkness after the major power breakdown that paralyzed the whole official system. "We are investigating this major

power breakdown", Khurram Dastagir, the Federal Minister for Power said. In rural Balochistan, the QESCO is already observing more than 15 hours of long load shedding. Most of the people in rural Balochistan have accused the QESCO of depriving them of power supply. "We are accustomed to these power outages", Shamsullah, a resident of Pishin claimed. He said the QESCO officials only visit their village to collect bills and they are least bothered about the sufferings of the masses.

The charge was vehemently denied by the QESCO officials and they accused the tube well owners and domestic consumers of not paying their bills. "We are tired of issuing notices to the consumers but they are not ready to pay their bills", Engineer Karim Jamali, the Chief Executive of the QESCO claimed.

## PM Shehbaz reiterates Pakistan's desire to complete 9th review of IMF programme

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Tuesday that Pakistan had given a "clear message" to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) about the country's desire to complete the ninth review of the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

Addressing the launch of a loan scheme in Islamabad, the premier reiterated the government's desire to complete the review.

"We have given the IMF a clear message that we want to complete the ninth review. We are ready and want to sit down regarding our conditions so that it can be concluded and Pakistan can move forward."

He stated that Pakistan had been "given a clear message left and right" that the country would not be abandoned but that it was necessary for it to "stitch" the IMF programme.

PM Shehbaz said that the government had written to the international money lender. "I spoke to the IMF managing director two weeks ago and we have proactively approached them that we want to complete the ninth review without delay so that the programme moves forward, in addition to other multilateral and bilateral programmes."

Islamabad is waiting for the ninth review of a loan-arrangement that the previous government signed with the IMF. The review would lead to the release of the next tranche of funds to Pakistan that has been pending since September.

The prime minister's remarks come a day after it was reported that the government's fear of losing popularity before the elections seems to be



keeping Pakistan from finalising a deal with the IMF that could stabilise the economy.

Official and diplomatic sources told Dawn that both sides were still discussing the seven demands that the IMF wants Pakistan to accept before it resumes economic assistance to the country.

The demands include withdrawing electric subsidies, linking gas prices to the international market, free-floating dollars, and not blocking LCs.

The government "fears that implementing some of these demands will hike the price of essential items across the board," a source said. "It will make the government even more unpopular than it already is, so close to the elections."

IMF officials have indicated that they are willing to continue working with Pakistan, but the country should first meet some basic requirements.

"They are asking for basics, so that they can send their team to Islamabad, but the finance minister is reluctant to do so," said an official aware of the talks.

The official said that the IMF was asking for "some movement on energy prices and the demonstration of Islamabad's intent to reform but Finance Minister Ishaq Dar is not giving an inch."

Officials in Islamabad urged PM Shehbaz to intervene before it's too late. "This could have been finalised four months ago," another official said.

The official said that he "does not personally expect much before a caretaker setup takes over the Centre." Web Desk

### Exchange companies to remove cap on dollar rate from Today

The Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP) announced on Tuesday that it would remove the cap on the US dollar from January 25 (tomorrow).

The exchange rate has been primarily hit hard by a steep decline in the central bank's foreign exchange reserves, which have shrunk to \$4.6 billion. Currency experts say the rupee has been falling "despite being managed" by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Amid a shortage of dollars, the gap between its rates in the interbank and open markets has significantly widened, drastically hurting the economy and diverting remittances from the legal banking channel to the grey market.

Some experts have hinted that the shortage of dollars could cause



Malik Bostan chaired a meeting of the association that was also attended by General Secretary Zafar Paracha.

In a detailed statement issued after the meeting, Bostan said that the decision to cap the dollar rate had proved to be "negative".

"Instead of falling, the dollar rate increased, resulting in the unavailability of the greenback in the market which also gave birth to the black market."

He further lamented that citizens that wished to buy dollars for traveling or funding their education and health expenses were not able to do so and had to turn to the black market. He said that the situation had created a "panic in the market", leading the government to believe exchange companies were "deliberately black-mailing" them. Web Desk

### PTI cries foul amid reports of acceptance of further NA resignations

PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry on Tuesday cried foul after reports regarding National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf accepting the resignations of more PTI lawmakers emerged on media.

NA officials told Dawn.com that Ashraf has accepted further resignations and forwarded them to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). However, there is no official confirmation on the matter.

Reacting to the development, Chaudhry tweeted that the purpose of PTI members going back to the assembly was to oust Raja Riaz from the position of the opposition leader.



Otherwise, we have no reason to return to the National Assembly, he tweeted, adding: "Right now, Shehbaz Sharif and his government have lost the support of 172 lawmakers." He also pointed out that 40 per

cent of seats in the NA were now empty. "The only solution to this crisis is elections. Today's development comes a day after 45 PTI MNAs sent their handwritten withdrawals to the speaker via email and demanded the nomination of a new opposition leader from among them. The PTI members also met Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja and informed him about their decision to return to the National Assembly after nine months. A total of 131 MNAs had submitted resignations minutes before the election of Shehbaz Sharif as the prime minister in April. Web Desk



## QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

## Unsafe Gas Cylinders in Balochistan

Gas cylinder blasts have claimed scores of precious human lives in Balochistan. A recent gas cylinder blast in Balochistan's Kohlu injured 33 people including 31 children. Six children critically injured as a result of the blast have succumbed to injuries in the burn unit of Punjab's Multan hospital. Seven minors are still battling for their lives at the burn ward.

### Unsafe gas cylinders in Balochistan

All the victims had suffered burn wounds when the gas cylinder exploded with a big bang in the Bohri area of Kohlu district. Police said children had gathered around a potato chips seller when the cylinder went off during a wedding party. A similar gas cylinder blast claimed 6 precious human lives in Balochistan's Pishin district.

Gas cylinder blasts order of the day in Balochistan  
Gas cylinder blasts have almost become the order of the day in Balochistan. There seems to be no mechanism to check the quality of gas cylinders. The sale of sub-standard Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders is on the rise in the market. LPG sellers are busy illegally filling the gas cylinders to mint money right under the nose of the authorities.

LPG decanting from one cylinder to another using an electric motor is prohibited by law but the practice is continuing due to the absence of strict monitoring by the authorities concerned. Since the residents face low gas pressure issues, using LPG as an alternate source is the only option for them. Not only domestic cylinders are being filled, but LPG is also being filled in vehicles through electric motors.

### People smoking while decanting the LPG

It can be observed that shopkeepers decant LPG without taking any safety measures. People, customers, and even shopkeepers can be seen smoking while decanting the LPG. The government is yet to take notice of such incidents. The officials had taken notice. Regarding the Kohlu tragedy, the incident happened on November 8 and the police registered the FIR against the accused on November 14. This reflects the interest of the concerned quarters.

In rural Balochistan, such incidents are rampant. Although, very few incidents are being reported. The Balochistan government needs to take notice of such incidents and form a committee comprising experts to evolve a proper mechanism in this regard to avoid future human losses. Rulers need to be framed and the LPG sellers must be strictly monitored to ensure implementation of the said mechanism.

## The purpose of education

By Kamila Hyat

When former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf was in power in Pakistan, he violated democratic and moral dictates by altering the electoral laws and making it mandatory for candidates to have at least a bachelor's degree to hold a seat in the National Assembly.

The 2002 parliament comprised politicians with higher qualifications. However, when a US-based academic carried out research to compare the performance of legislators elected in 1997 (prior to the electoral law amendment) to those in 2002, the results showed that levels of education made no difference in the performance of representatives on the ground. Since then, Musharraf's insistence on education as a prerequisite to hold an NA seat has been thrown aside, extending the right to contest elections to all Pakistanis, including the vast majority who have not received graduate-level education.

This brings us to a larger problem. While Musharraf's ruling on the matter was obviously unjust and biased in favour of a particular class, what we should be asking is precisely what is achieved through the education we offer to our people. Only a tiny minority attending elite schools, and backed by parental influence and anxiety-inducing pressure, make it to top academic institutes in the world. Many have performed brilliantly at these centres of excellence and

made Pakistan proud. Among them, there are those who have given back to their country by opting to work here, at least for a period of time, thereby trying and putting their knowledge to the use of people. Economist Asim Ijaz Khwaja, who visits home regularly, is an example. There are many others in various fields including medicine and other sciences.

But we need to ask what happens to the rest. The education that the majority of our children receive at public or lower-end private schools offers them little benefit. The education is alienated from their needs and often designed to favour those from the comparatively more privileged tiers of society. Making English a compulsory subject to pass the basic matriculation exam in the country is just one example.

There are countless teenagers and young people who are unable to excel in their lives because they cannot clear the paper in a subject that has no place in their lives and is badly taught at schools. Their teachers would also have difficulty in passing it. This is an education crisis. Research by non-profit groups such as Alif Ailaan have found that a majority of children educated up to the primary level cannot read or write a simple sentence in either English or Urdu or perform the basic mathematical calculations that would be expected of a 10-year-old child. We are thus failing

our children badly by providing such a low-quality education which handicaps them, instead of empowering them.

The matter gets even worse by the new focus on the teaching of particular disciplines in a specific manner. While it is important that children learn as widely as possible, there are many countries in the world which leave religious education to families, given the nuances and sensitivities involved in the matter as well as the question of interpretation and how this is put across to the child. More significant still is the fact that almost all teaching at schools, except perhaps for the most elite, depends entirely on rote and the focus is solely on acquiring high grades, forcing parents to send their children to tuition centres or 'academies', which now exist across our country.

Children then have no relief from the rote learning imposed on them and this learning means that, as historian K.K. Aziz noted in his detailed study of Pakistani textbooks, history had been deliberately distorted to fit a certain narrative. Students, for instance, have little knowledge of the events of 1979 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged in a verdict which, according to the confession of two Supreme Court judges, was given under pressure, or of other events of immense significance to the Pakistan of today such as the 1971 civil war which tore the country into two parts. The reali-

ties of the war are never discussed.

Critical discussions, arguably the pivotal point around which education should rotate, rarely exist in our classrooms. Students do not find any opportunities to explore issues or facts critically, whether in science or the arts, and must simply go with what their textbooks tell them. But their textbooks – even of straight-forward subjects like mathematics – are frequently flawed; this has been pointed out several times by experts. What then are we teaching to our children and why are we doing so? The answer to the second question is quite simple. We wish to create a rigid and limited mindset that discourages people from thinking creatively or putting forward ideas that could help produce some momentum in a stagnant society.

All this is a well-known fact. We also make limited efforts to help young people move into technical fields which could benefit both them and the country. Vocational education is limited and substandard. Many promises made to promote it have never been honoured.

We should then be asking if people who have not been forced through the educational mill in our society are in some ways better equipped to reason for themselves and put forward solutions to our many problems. Of course, wider education is helpful for the country as schools provide the skilled workforce and

with this more investment in the country. But given that we have been so lax in providing quality education, we must ask how our teaching methods benefit our people. Those who are uneducated are perfectly aware of the problems they face and able to articulate their opinions lucidly and sensibly. Many protests that are often led by those with no formal degrees highlight how these people are better informed despite having no education training. They have views that need to be put forward strongly and debated so that we can find solutions.

In the seven decades of our existence, we have found far too few answers to the problems we face on a daily basis. The poor face many more problems than the rich. The recent floods are one example, and only a limited number among those affected can fully comprehend how global climate change is so devastatingly affecting their lives. There needs to be a much better understanding of these problems so that we can take our people forward and create real differences in society.

At present, the Pakistani people are not in a position to do so, whether they are educated or not, as a result of the flawed and deeply biased learning they receive. The quality of textbooks offered to young children tells us the story of what lies ahead. This story has to change if education is to bring any real benefits to the country.

## Conserve energy

By Enem Ali Abbas

of energy conservation, we need to understand that it is not energy-crisis management, it is actually the new world order that we must comply with. Energy conservation in all its forms is the only healthy lifestyle solution for creating sustainable societies. Therefore, an energy conservation roadmap is a move in the right direction. It is not being introduced as just another conservation campaign but is backed by research and figures to estimate the outcome.

The prime minister's team has already made substantial progress in the gas conservation initiative. Petroleum Minister Dr Musadik Malik has already been emphasizing the use of conical baffles and other gas conservation devices through communication campaigns. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) has made it mandatory for all households to have conical baffles installed in their geysers. The Sui Northern Gas Company is installing these saver cones that could help consumers save energy.

Fortunately, the petroleum division is employing outreach tools to connect with its consumer base through

social media applications, including TikTok. This is an intelligent strategy to inculcate conservation habits among young people. Conservation communication through cricket stars, role models and influencers can develop relevant conservation habits.

Also, the government should engage architects and builders working on new housing societies and areas being developed to promote infrastructural designs that maximize natural light and make rooms airy. For example, the use of double-glazed windows could help the cause as they keep the room cooler during the summer and contain the heat of the room during the winter.

The government needs to promote water conservation as well. As world leaders have successfully prioritized food security as a matter of national and global security, governments and heads of states need to recall the forgotten concept of water security – a far greater problem and a global crisis affecting the developed and underdeveloped worlds. Unfortunately, Pakistan lacks a provincial narrative regarding water conservation and

the reuse and safe use of water.

The federal government intends to coordinate with provincial governments for the energy-conservation drive. It must develop a similar roadmap in close coordination with provincial governments to save water. The provincial secretary for information in Balochistan, Hamza Shafiq, has also introduced several water conservation awareness campaigns to put an end to water abuse and promote fair usage. A campaign to promote water safety from Balochistan could turn into a national action plan as this is for our generations to come.

We already have multiple conservation initiatives in place in Lahore on the directions of the water commission. Imagine how much water we could save if we cut down our shower time from 20 to 15 minutes.

Behavioural change communication and awareness campaigns can facilitate much-needed change in people's attitude towards resource use, which can eventually prevent the water table from depleting in big and populous cities.

## A different democracy

Atta-ur-Rahman

The present alarming situation of the country, which stands at the brink of a financial default, is a reflection of the failure of successive governments to transition from a low value-added agricultural economy to a strong knowledge economy. This is primarily due to massive corruption and a failed judicial system.

Even tiny countries such as Singapore or Taiwan have forged far ahead of Pakistan by investing in education, science and innovation, whereas we remain trapped in a weak natural resource-based economy with low-value textiles comprising some 60 per cent of our exports. The low hanging fruits are in the field of information technology, agriculture, minerals and emerging disruptive technologies.

India has exports of about \$150 billion annually for IT products and services whereas we have only been able to reach about \$3 billion. Even if we take our six-fold population difference into account, these should have been about \$25 billion. This target can be achieved if we spend a paltry \$0.5 billion on training our graduates with high quality faculty and focus on such rapidly emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence and quantum computing.

Artificial Intelligence

is evolving at a mind-boggling pace and before we know it, lawyers, doctors, and even judges will be robots. It is predicted that by 2030, computers will become more intelligent than humans and even acquire self-awareness with a level of consciousness. IBM has launched two services, an IBM Watson medical service that offers medical advice to patients, and an IBM Watson legal service that offers legal advice to customers within seconds. Such disruptive innovations are transforming the landscape of our societies and opening up amazing new opportunities for socio-economic development.

Another disruptive technology is that of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). I had facilitated the use of MIT Open Courseware in Pakistan in the year 2001 when I was the federal minister of Science and Technology by creating a mirror website of MIT that allowed ready download and access to educational materials. Some 10,000 CDs of computer science courses were prepared and distributed to colleges and universities.

The use of MOOCs has since grown a million-fold, catalyzed by the advent of the covid pandemic. An integrated version of MOOCs launched by us at the Latif Ebrahim Jamal Science Information Center located within Pakistan's lead-

ing research center, the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, is providing free access to school, college and university lectures from around the world. It may be accessed through the website [www.lej4learning.com.pk](http://www.lej4learning.com.pk) and several thousand Khan Academy school level lectures translated into Urdu have also been recently added to it to facilitate school level education.

The advent of energy storage systems has led to the development of electric cars, and within a decade, there will be hardly any cars or buses with combustion engines on the road. Anti-ageing compounds have been discovered and when given to old mice, they showed the remarkable features of changing the body mass and making them much younger. It is therefore expected that children being born today may be aged 120 years or more because of such fantastic advances in medicine. The field of regenerative medicine continues to grow in leaps and bounds and stem cell technologies promise to cure damaged organs and may change the manner in which medicine will be practiced tomorrow. Similarly, exciting advances in genetics and biotechnology will alert people before the onset of a disease so that they can take precautionary.

## India and the South Caucasus

By Sarwat Rauf

The South Caucasus region (which comprises Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) has been receiving the attention of the European Union (EU), Russia, Turkey and Iran, Pakistan and India since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Soon after the independence of the South Caucasus states, the region became a theatre of conflict because of the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Both states fought a war at the time of their independence, and later many clashes erupted between them over three decades. The second war, known as the 44-day war in 2020, over Nagorno-Karabakh made Azerbaijan victorious. This war on the one hand revealed the deep-rooted friendship of Pakistan and Turkey with Azerbaijan, and on the other hand caused further tension between India and Pakistan.

The closeness of the ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan can be gauged from the fact that Pakistan has never recognized the existence of an independent state of Armenia. Further, Pakistan has always raised its voice against the Armenian aggression inside Nagorno-Karabakh and supported Azerbaijan's stance since its inception. Having Pakistan's support on the Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan has openly backed Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue for many years.

The diplomatic and

ideological affinities of Pakistan and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts led New Delhi to start getting closer to Yerevan. Although Baku tried to keep India-Armenia relations from spilling over into its diplomatic and economic relations with New Delhi, India's continuous support to Armenia in the Second Karabakh War in 2020 revealed India's strong attachment to Armenia.

Today, the growing bent of India in the South Caucasus region is discernible as it seeks to exert its influence there. Unequivocally, India's concerns are largely due to Azerbaijan and Turkey's ties with Pakistan and their support on the Kashmir issue. Moreover, Pakistan's persistent support to Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh and its admonition of Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan concern India as it calculates the increasing strength of the Turkic states and their relations with Pakistan. India has been working hard to tap into Azerbaijan's profitable markets since the rise of its oil industry. By the year 2020, more than 190 Indian companies were operating in Azerbaijan with about \$1.2 billion investments, greater than that of Armenia or Georgia; simultaneously, India was increasing its military ties with Armenia.

India's backing for Armenia could also be because of New Delhi's

strong historical relationship with Moscow. Being an ally of Russia, Armenia always seeks Kremlin's economic, military and political support. Further, the membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) binds Russia with India. Thus, Moscow rather encourages Indian-Armenian ties.

To understand the formation of the alliance, it can be said that the 44-day war in 2020 streamlined the alliance between Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Turkey on the one hand, and India and Armenia on the other. Since the closer ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey and Pakistan, India has been distinctly supporting Armenia and extending substantial military assistance. As per social media and other reliable sources, India has agreed to supply Armenian armed forces with a wide range of weapons, Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launchers (MBRL), and anti-tank munitions, which are worth \$250 million. Unsurprisingly, Armenia has already shown interest in Indian military hardware before the 2020 war. Now, it can be reckoned that India's efforts to arm Armenia are to make it a deterrent force against Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

India is also emphasizing its economic and people-to-people contacts with Armenia. The Indian community in Armenia consists largely of stu-

dents pursuing education in the country. Armenia is fast becoming an attractive destination for Indian students and business owners. India is also trying to weaken the strength of Pakistan's alliance by bringing the neighbours – Armenia, Georgia and Iran – into its orbit of influence. India has also been trying for a long time to connect the Chabahar Port with Eurasia through Armenia so that it can bypass Pakistan easily.

The growing military partnership between Yerevan and New Delhi would be harmful to maintaining regional peace and security in South Caucasus and South Asia. So, if India keeps fuelling the war in the South Caucasus region, Azerbaijan will not be alone again. However, the war will not remain limited to the South Caucasus region but will touch on the regional security of South Asia where the Kashmir issue is already on the cusp of becoming a full-fledged conflict.

It is imperative to note that the Kashmir problem has been linked to the question of war and peace in South Asia and after the US departure from Afghanistan the geopolitical landscape is being changed and becoming favourable for Pakistan because of the waning influence of India.

Moreover, India's old ally, Russia, has also changed its South Asian policy; it now regards Pakistan as an important actor and believes that preserving its friendship

with Islamabad will help it maintain its ties with other South and Central Asian states. Moscow wants good ties with Islamabad, something New Delhi considers an immediate and enduring threat. Accordingly, India aims to minimize Russia's proximity to Pakistan. It is equally worried over the strong ties of Turkey and Azerbaijan with Pakistan. Conspicuously, Pakistan's staunch supporters, Azerbaijan and Turkey, are a great help in presenting Pakistan's case of Indian Occupied Kashmir on international fora.

Having said all this, Pakistan needs to ameliorate its relations with Iran and Afghanistan to counter India's drive to isolate Pakistan from regional states. Strengthening defence relations with Azerbaijan is good but economic linkages are direly needed to deepen its ties as well as to maintain the status quo.

The increased volume of trade between Pakistan and Azerbaijan will lead to the consolidation of the alliance and harmony of interests. Further, instead of fretting over the growing ties between India and Armenia, Pakistan's policymakers should start working on the shortcomings first. Suffice it to say that Pakistan direly needs economic strength which will eliminate more than half of the problems faced by the country.

The writer is an associate professor of International Relations at the National University of Modern.

## The forever ideology

By Eric Shahzad

Calls for regime change in Iran, Lula's presidential victory in Brazil, the latest democratic wave in Turkey, and huge pro-democracy protests in Mexico indicate the rise of the Left and people's growing inclination towards liberal democracy in today's international political arena.

The number of populist leaders around the globe has fallen to a 20-year low after a series of victories for progressives. The year 2023 will be equally important for the future of democratic governments, with critical elections from Pakistan to Poland. Despite its imperfections, liberal democracy and left-wing politics is making a heroic comeback in world politics.

Although we have seen frightening reversals to the progress made by liberal democracies in the past two decades, setbacks do not mean that this form of governance has become vulnerable, or less relevant. One of the core strengths of liberal democracy is its capacity to fail and be exposed to vulnerabilities and errors, but, at the same time, come out more resilient – a distinct advantage not seen in other systems when they face setbacks.

It is fair to say that the right-wing populist experiment appears to be short-lived. In thriving, stable democratic setups, conservative parties are fast losing popularity. In the UK,

for example, the latest voting intention polls show a 30-point lead for Labour. Populist policies and the politics of resentment are not working for right-wing conservatives as such leaders ignore the actual macro-economic problems and instead launch a rigorous witch-hunt against their opponents.

Now that the Russia-Ukraine war has further exacerbated the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world will soon slide into recession. An overwhelming majority of people have lost their life savings, and been forced to brace the effects of the rising inflation. It can be said that people are no longer living with dignity, which is why we see how people across the world are rejecting the existing right-wing conservative setups, which keep them distracted from real issues through propaganda and populist moves.

From 2018 to 2022, former prime minister Imran Khan focused much on putting political opponents behind bars instead of working towards political and economic healing. Similarly, in Turkey, President Recep Erdogan recently used state institutions to apprehend the opposition leader and mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem Imamoglu, for insulting several public officials. These illiberal moves have now become counterproductive. Now, such decisions lead to people coming out in huge numbers to protest, and calls

for early elections have also become a norm.

In the past, liberal notions inspired leaders of several liberation movements – from Muhammad Ali Jinnah in Pakistan and Kemal Ataturk in Turkey to Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia and Nelson Mandela in South Africa. What further attracted the people to follow these leaders was the clear message: liberal democracy distributes power from top to bottom and relies on the consent of the governed. Authoritarian or theocratic regimes do not care about people's opinion.

Liberal democracy is one of the most powerful ideologies because it gifts individuals the notion of practising freewill – something which is rather invisible in other forms of government. Thriving economies have inclusivity in their societal setups, and they accept the most important aspect in life: diversity. In contrast, struggling societies host politics of hate and resentment, toxicity in state institutions and disregard of human dignity.

Fresh ideas, Twitter spaces, parliamentary debates, fancy conferences on critical issues such as the UN's COP, are simply not enough. Meaningful democratic setups are those where principles are enshrined in law, protected by state institutions and advanced by civic participation.

Liberal democracy is not a product of recent times.



How to get rid of a toothache at night

ISLAMABAD: Having a toothache at night can make falling asleep or staying asleep very difficult. Methods to relieve or reduce the pain range from taking pain relief medication to chewing on a clove or using an extra pillow.

9 ways to treat a toothache at night
Treating a toothache at night may be more difficult, as there is not much to distract a person from the pain.

If the toothache is severe, it is best to see a dentist and speak to them about stronger pain relievers.
Using a cold compress may help ease the pain of a toothache.

Textile products account for 61% of total exports in 6 months: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Textile products accounted for 61% of Pakistan's total exports during the first half (July-December) of the current fiscal year (2022-23), WealthPK reported.

lion during the same months of FY22. Exports of men's suits were recorded at \$1.486 billion during the months under review against \$1.494 billion during the corresponding period of last fiscal year, registering a slight decline.

Apart from textile products, rice exports also declined by 13% during the months under review and export volume was recorded at \$928.4 million against \$1.068 billion during the same period of 2021-22.



ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly Azhar Qayyum calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Citi Pharma rakes in 79% net profit in 1QFY23: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Citi Pharma Limited's revenue from sales increased by 57% and stood at Rs3.1 billion in the first quarter of the ongoing Financial Year 2022-23 (1QFY23) compared to Rs1.99 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

by the Pakistani rupee's ongoing depreciation, reports WealthPK. Performance in 2021-22 During the Fiscal Year 2021-22, the company's gross sales went up to Rs9.7 billion from Rs5.8 billion in FY21, posting a massive increase of 69% year-on-year.

The EPS then decreased to Rs3.64 in FY21 and Rs2.8 in FY22. About the company Citi Pharma Limited was incorporated as a private limited company in Pakistan under the repealed Companies Ordinance, 1984 on October 08, 2012.

OGRA rejects speculations about diesel, petrol shortage

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Tuesday strongly rejected speculations about the shortage of diesel and petrol in the country.

Zardari challenges Park Lane reference under new NAB law

LAHORE: The former president and PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday challenged the Park Lane reference under the new Amendments in the NAB law.

ECP mulls over preparations for Punjab and KP elections

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan on Tuesday considered over preparations for Punjab, KP assemblies' elections and by elections.

Electricity completely restored across Pakistan: Khurram Dastgir

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Khurram Dastgir has said the electricity has been completely restored after yesterday's breakdown.

Khurram Dastgir said despite the extensive breakdown, there were some areas in the federal capital and Peshawar where the electricity remained available all the time.

process has been started. He said the coal power plants are also required forty eight hours. Sahiwal and Engro Thar coal units have been synchronized and soon they will start producing electricity.



QUETTA: A man push wheelbarrow loaded with dry branches on tree going toward home for domestic use.

International Steels net profit down by 41% in 1QFY23: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: International Steels Limited's revenue from sales decreased by 29% and stood at Rs 6.3 billion in the first quarter of the ongoing Financial Year 2022-23 (1QFY23) compared to Rs8.9 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

1QFY23 from Rs1.19 billion recorded in 1QFY22. The company posted a net profit of Rs 1.03 billion in 1QFY23 against Rs1.76 billion over the corresponding period of FY22, 41% down year-on-year, reports WealthPK.

by 7% to Rs2.1 billion from Rs2.3 billion in FY21, reports WealthPK. Earnings Per Share The EPS of the company showed a positive growth during recent years. In FY20, the EPS dropped to Rs5.26, from Rs11.94 in FY19.

Mobile phone industry to get boost under CPEC: Murtaza

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industry and Production, Makhdoom Murtaza Mahmud on Tuesday said that the mobile phone manufacturing industry would flourish more under the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Lahore student bullying: DC recommends to suspend school's registration

LAHORE: The district commissioner Lahore on Tuesday recommended suspending the registration of the school where three girls allegedly bullied and beat another girl.



ISLAMABAD: World Bank team for Pakistan called on Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik in his office.

Failed state-run companies should be sold to save Rs600b: Mian Zahid

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, Mian Zahid Hussain noted that stopping imports will reduce the current account deficit, but it is likely to reduce the FBR's revenue by Rs600 to Rs800 billion.

exports and remittances are likely to decrease by 8 to 10 billion dollars this year. Mian Zahid Hussain said that there is a severe shortage of capital in the country, but despite this, billions of rupees are being wasted on failed government companies.

Tuesday, he said that an annual loss of six hundred billion rupees can be avoided by selling failed government institutions. Mian Zahid Hussain said that there is a severe shortage of capital in the country, but despite this, billions of rupees are being wasted on failed government companies.

Karachi Mayor's election likely to take 3 months: EC Sindh

KARACHI: The election commissioner (EC) Sindh stated that the election of Karachi mayor is likely to take two to three months as the commission is still compiling the final results of the Sindh local government (LG) polls.

completed by today. He said that the party position will be finalised after removing the flaws and the recounting of seats. Chauhan said that the commission held polls on 235 out of 246 union councils (UCs).

election on the pretext of change in the number of union councils in Karachi and Hyderabad Divisions that required fresh delimitation.

well, particularly when the political parties are preparing for General Elections that are constitutionally due by October 11, 2023," the report stated.

The CEO of Education Lahore sent the inquiry report to DC Lahore after compiling all the details. The DC Lahore will decide to either suspend the registration of the school or not tomorrow :INP

Advertisement for 'Astar Nilami' (آستار نیلامی) with details about an auction and contact information.

Advertisement for 'Astar Nilami' (آستار نیلامی) with details about an auction and contact information.



# Minister briefed on performance of ANF for 2022

RAWALPINDI: Minister Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shazain Bugti visited Anti Narcotics Control (ANF) Headquarter during which he was briefed about the performance of the authority for the year 2022.

Earlier upon his arrival, the federal minister was received by Director General ANF Major General Muhammad Aneeq Ur Rehman Malik, HI(M), Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control, Ms. Humaira Ahmed was also present at the occasion along with notable ministerial staff.

Chief of Staff ANF, Brigadier Riffat Ali Khan presented comprehensive review of ANF Performance for the Year 2022. Performance appraisal encompassed efforts undertaken in Drug Supply Reduction, Drug Demand Reduction, International Cooperation and Training domains.

Total drug seizures by Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) in 2022 summed up to 227.2 metric tons, out of which ANF seizures were 116.2 metric tons, with ANF share amounting to 51.1% of complete IATF Seizures.

By accounts of drugs make and type, ANF seizures of plant based drugs were 79.986 metric tons (68.95% of seized drugs), synthetic drugs were 3.582 metric tons (3.08%), Chemical Precursors were 25.695 metric tons (22.11%) and other substances 6.9 metric tons (5.8%).

Drug Traffickers used different modes; against which ANF seizures through land based operations were 111.328 metric tons, seizures at seaports added up to 3.312 metric tons and airports were 428 KGs. Seizures against drugs trafficking attempts through parcels at mailing offices were 1.147 metric tons.

During this time, 30 Internationally Coordinated Intelligence Operations were conducted in assistance with international partners.

Three hundred and twenty four individuals were arrested in ANF's operations at airports to foil drug trafficking attempts to other Countries, out of total arrests (1508) made during the year.

595 drug traffickers were convicted in various trials bringing conviction rate to remarkable 87%.

1810 individuals received treatment at Model Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (MATRCs) at Karachi, Islamabad, Sukkur and Hyderabad. Minister Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shazain Bugti commissioned ANF Vigilance Squads (AVS); a swift, smart and service oriented modern proactive mobile patrolling unit, for operations aimed at countering drug prevalence around educational institutions, community centers and public transport terminals in urban areas. AVS in first phase shall operate in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi. Earlier upon his arrival, the federal minister was received by Director General ANF Major General Muhammad Aneeq Ur Rehman Malik, HI(M), Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control, Ms. Humaira Ahmed was also present at the occasion along with notable ministerial staff. Chief of Staff ANF, Brigadier Riffat Ali Khan presented comprehensive review of ANF Performance for the Year 2022. Performance appraisal encompassed efforts undertaken in Drug Supply Reduction, Drug Demand Reduction, International Cooperation and Training domains. Total drug seizures by Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) in 2022 summed up to 227.2 metric tons, out of which ANF seizures were 116.2 metric tons, with ANF share amounting to 51.1% of complete IATF Seizures. By accounts of drugs make and type, ANF seizures of plant based drugs were 79.986 metric tons (68.95% of seized drugs), synthetic drugs were 3.582 metric tons (3.08%), Chemical Precursors were 25.695 metric tons (22.11%) and other substances 6.9 metric tons (5.8%) INP

## Pakistani scientists develop sensor to detect CO in environment: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: A sensor developed by Pakistani scientists to detect carbon monoxide in the environment can prove helpful for different sectors and people associated with different fields, WealthPK reports.

The device can be used in parking, coal mining, homes, factories and many other places to ensure the safety of human life. A team of the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), after scientific experimentation, incorporated a flexible sensing material with a smart sensing device to detect carbon monoxide in the environment.

The "Nano Sensor" for the detection of carbon monoxide can prove helpful in environmental monitoring, the automotive industry, indoor air quality control, greenhouse monitoring and hospitals for the safety of human health.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly dangerous gas with a detrimental environmental impact. The detection and control of carbon monoxide in residential and industrial areas are vital to avoid its catastrophic effects on human health.

Dr Fouzia Perveen, an associate professor in the department of sciences at the School of Interdisciplinary Engineering and Sciences at NUST, told WealthPK that conventional CO sensors were expensive. "Metal oxide semiconductors with wide band gaps are commonly used for CO sensing, so their sensitivity is low. Therefore, it is imperative to determine the best materials and technologies to detect and control this toxic gas," she added.

She said that the computational prototype developed

by them contained nanoclusters as sensing materials. "The nanocluster is a crystalline material with an atomically precise structure on a scale of 0-2 nanometres. Often considered kinetically stable intermediates, they form due to synthesizing substantially larger materials like clusters of zinc oxide (ZnO)," she added.

Dr Fouzia said that nanostructured materials provided a large surface-to-volume ratio and could be adjusted or adapted according to the requirements of the machine. "These materials also have unique properties like high sensitivity and fast response time. They can be used repeatedly and have gained much attention in Nano sensing technology as compared to other materials," she added.

Explaining the superiority of the Nano Sensor developed by the NUST team over traditional sensors, she said that nanoclusters of ZnO were nanoparticles of ZnO with diameters less than 100 nanometres that were used in the prototype.

"The surface area of these catalysts is large as compared to their size. They have a high catalytic activity level. Nanoclusters have gained much attention due to their favourable morphology and electrical properties," she said.

Dr Fouzia said that semiconductor compounds like ZnO were particularly important due to their high excitation binding energy of 60 MeV (one million electron volts). She added that ZnO was cost-effective in the synthesis that enabled its applications in photodetectors, transistors and environmental Nano Sensors. INP



ISLAMABAD Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet Meeting .

### Head constable killed over petty dispute

RAWALPINDI: Body of head constable of police allegedly killed by neighbour over petty dispute was recovered from Shah Khalid Colony of Rawalpindi on Tuesday.

Police said that Muhammad Zahid was shot dead by his neighbour Mir Afzal for throwing water outside his house and culprit had escaped the scene.

The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police was conducting raids to arrest the culprit.

In Nasirabad police station jurisdiction, accused Aamir shot injured his brother-in-law Adnan for returning the motorcycle at pledged time. A case was registered against the culprit.

Gujar Khan Police registered a case against accused Waqas who tortured his mother and sister and expelled them out of home. INP

### Business community apologized over power outage caused losses

ISLAMABAD: The government has apologized to the business community over prolonged power outage of January 23, which caused billions of rupees losses to industrial and commercial sector and government exchequer as well.

Minister of the State for Petroleum Musadik Malik in interaction with President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said that due to sudden trip in electricity, a crisis emerged in the entire system and authorities concerned continued efforts till the power supply was restored.

The state minister said that we have made a progress towards resolving the problems mutually and he will soon visit FPCCI for a meeting. Efforts will also be made to increase the continuity of dialogue, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said that not only the activities of the industrial, commercial and service sectors were completely affected by the recent power crisis, but they also faced large-scale losses and production and productivity, due to the shutdown, we have lost around 400 billion rupees and this estimate needs to be looked at further.

The FPCCI President further said that this loss is in these circumstances, while daily industry and trade are seeing themselves forced concerning huge losses and cannot afford any more. He further said that FPCCI should be taken into confidence for the correctness of the country's economy and consultation with the FPCCI should be ensured while making government economic decisions and policies. INP

### Two killed as truck overturns in Kohistan

KOHISTAN: Two people were killed when a goods laden truck turned turtle here on Tuesday, police.

According to details, a truck carrying goods from Rawalpindi to Gilgit overturned in Bandha area of Kohistan.

Two people including Syed Muhammad s/o Shah Gee Alam and Nasir Khan s/o Gul Muhammad hailing from Shahpur district Shagla were killed on the spot in the accident.

The police and rescue teams shifted the bodies to District Headquarter Hospital Pattan. INP

### 'Anti-PTI officers' being deployed in Punjab: Parvez Elahi

LAHORE: Former Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi expressed on Tuesday his exasperation, saying the officers who had the reputation of standing against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) were being deployed. Parvez Elahi met with former Punjab Assembly speaker Sibtain Khan to discuss political issues and changes in the Punjab bureaucracy during the caretaker regime. Mr Elahi slammed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), claiming that it failed. INP

### Need to focus on export targeted components to earn foreign exchange: Minister

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Syed Murtaza Mehmood has stressed for localization of parts of mobile phone, cheap labour productivity and export targeted components to earn foreign exchange for the country.

Addressing a mobile device manufacturing summit held here at local hotel on Tuesday, he said we have immense potential, which needed to be maximized for development of the country.

Murtaza Mehmood said that we are all responsible for the situation being faced today. Long term policies can help to come out of it, he added.

The minister urged the mobile device manufacturing sector to benefit from this summit by enhancing competitiveness of the mobile phone devices and the

allied equipment like laptops and tablets, targeting export of mobile phones.

The attached department of the ministry of industries and production, engineering development board organized the summit in collaboration with Pakistan mobile phone manufacturers association. All stakeholders including mobile device manufacturers, government officials from relevant ministries and academia contributed their input to boost local assembly of the mobile devices through enhancing investment and employment opportunities in this sector.

About 31 mobile devices manufacturing companies displayed their technology and products including Xiaomi, Realme, Infinix, Tecno, ITEL, Alcatel, G-Five, Oppo, Vivo, Premier Code etc. INP

### Students our asset and future of the country: Governor Punjab

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that students are our asset and future of the country.

Speaking as special guest during the annual degree show at National College of Arts (NCA) Lahore on Tuesday, he said that the art education given in NCA was in accordance with international standards in every way. He said that educated youth with a positive mindset were the asset of the country, adding that with positive thinking, we can create a beautiful Pakistan.

Balighur Rehman said that coming to a prestigious institution like NCA was a unique experience. He said that after seeing the students' projects in the degree show, he was more convinced that talent and creativity are at their peak here. He said that as a chancellor, he was trying hard to improve higher education.

He added that consortia have

been formed in seven important fields in the universities. On this occasion, Governor Punjab along with Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Murtaza Jafari and senior faculty members also visited the degree show and appreciated the displayed projects of students.

Later, while talking to the media in response to a question regarding announcing the date of Punjab Assembly elections, Balighur Rehman said that adherence to the constitution and law is his priority. The constitutional process is ongoing. He said that so far nothing has been done against the constitution neither will be done. In the future, all matters will be handled according to the constitution and law. Meanwhile, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman strongly condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, saying: "I strongly condemn the despicable act of desecration. INP

### IHC seeks ECP's record for scrutiny of PML-N & PPP funding

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday sought a complete record from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding scrutiny of the funding of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) leader Farukh Habib seeking early scrutiny of the two parties.

The petitioner's lawyer, Aima Anwar Khan, stated that the court had sought the record from the ECP during the last hearing.

The ECP's Director General Law prayed the court to grant

more time for the purpose as the Commission was engaged in the election matters.

The chief justice questioned what the engagements of ECP were as it was not even holding local government elections in the Federal Capital.

The DG Law replied that the ECP was making preparations for LG polls in the Capital, while three National Assembly seats from Islamabad had also been vacated.

The court then adjourned the case till February 7, instructing the DG Law to come up with the complete record of the two parties funding on that date. INP

### Caretaker Punjab cm decides new postings: Sources

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Mohsin Raza Naqvi has decided to replace officers serving in province's important positions.

According to details, the Caretaker Punjab CM issued instructions to Chief Secretary Punjab, directing the latter to change officers serving in province's important positions.

Media reports said that Mohsin Naqvi also issued instructions to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) in this regard.

"Appointments and transfers will be done in the light of Election Commission's guidelines", the caretaker CM said. It is pertinent to mention here that the caretaker Punjab CM removed Ghulam Mahmood Dogar from the post of Lahore Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) and as convener of Joint Investigation Team (JIT), constituted to investigate the attack on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf PTI Chairman Imran Khan. INP

### Education for all, an integral component of PPP's manifesto: Asif Zardari

ISLAMABAD: President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Asif Ali Zardari Tuesday said that "education for all" was an integral component of the party's manifesto.

In a message on the International Day of Education, he said Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto established educational institutions all over the country.

He said Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had advised students to explore knowledge in the realm of computer technology.

"Through the Benazir Income Support Program, a Waseela-e-Taleem education program for the poor was initiated. The aim of the BISP education program is to educate the children of citizens with a low income," he said.

Asif Zardari said that education and knowledge were vital to eradicate ignorance in the society. Education was the main step to end the sense of class and cultural. INP

### Cabinet directs strategy to prevent recurrence of power outages

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet ordered the authorities concerned for formulation of a comprehensive strategy to prevent the recurrence of prolonged power outages in the future and to do away with the factors causing it.

The cabinet, in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, also approved a nationwide public awareness drive on conservation of power, water, gas and other resources to make the people develop such habits.

The meeting also called for inclusion of the subject of best international practices on energy conservation in the educational curriculum.

It was told that energy conservation efforts at public, private, domestic and commercial level would help reduce the import bill of petroleum products which had increased remarkably during

last seven years. Besides, the behavioral changes would also save billions of rupees of foreign exchange and reduce the electricity bills of individuals by 30 to 40 percent.

The cabinet meeting was told that committee formed by the prime minister in the power outage had started functioning which would furnish a comprehensive report after deliberating over all the factors.

The energy minister told the meeting that, as per initial report, the power supply tripped at 0734 hours on Monday, due to technical fault, voltage fluctuation and frequency disruption.

It was told that as per prime minister's directives, all-out resources were used and power supply was restored in all main cities by 2200 hours. INP



DOHA: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar met with Ali Bin Ahmed Al Kuwari Minister of Finance, State of Qatar.

### BISP beneficiaries can receive cash on 24/7 basis

ISLAMABAD: In pursuance of the directions of Chief Justice Lahore High Court, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has taken up the matter of the unavailability of biometric ATM cash withdrawals to BISP beneficiaries with HBL.

As per directions, it has been ensured that all 149 HBL ATMs in the Multan region are biometric-enabled and operational 24-hour basis to provide cash withdrawal facility to BISP beneficiaries.

Besides, a massive crackdown against the delinquent mafia, who are found involved in malpractices and illegal deductions from BISP beneficiaries through ATMs and POS agents, has been taken, in order to ensure transparent disbursement of BISP funds among beneficiaries, said a news release.

The Director General BISP Punjab, Zonal Director of South and other officials are personally paying field visits to monitor the smooth distribution of BISP funds under the directions of the court.

As per recent report from BISP

Punjab dashboard till date, the Punjab Region has blocked 312 POS agents on account of established embezzlement complaints, wherein 30 FIRs have been lodged in local police stations and 01 case has been referred to FIA Cyber Crime Circle Lahore, while 19 POS agents have been put behind bars.

The Director General BISP Punjab, Arshad Liaqat Chaudhary urged the BISP beneficiaries to receive their full amounts from HBL ATMs through biometric verification.

Furthermore, in case of any complaints, they must visit the nearest BISP office for complaint lodging and immediate redressal.

The DG Punjab further added that stern legal action would be taken against anyone who was found involved in malpractices.

He also added that an exclusive control room has been established for BISP beneficiaries where their complaints and queries will be addressed on WhatsApp number Punjab 0325-5365520 or BISP Zonal Office complaint cell number 061-INP

### Punjab, KP elections likely to be delayed till new census results

ISLAMABAD: The election of Punjab and KP assemblies likely to be delayed after fresh population census, quoting sources.

According to sources, the government mulling over delaying elections of the two provincial legislatures till results of the new housing and population census compiled.

The new population census will begin on February 1st and will continue till March 31, sources said. "The results of new census will be released in April," according to sources.

Sources said that the government will refer the issue of postponing elections to the court, sources claimed.

Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal had recently said that general elections in Pakistan are only possible after the population census and consequent delimitation of the constituencies. "Imran Khan himself had decided in

the meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) in April 2021, that the new elections would be held only after new population census," Iqbal said.

He said that the census results would be published by April 30, following which the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will start the delimitation exercise which will take up to four months to be completed.

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ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing a follow-up meeting on mental health at Aiwan-e-Sadr.