

# QUETTA VOICE

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**Dollar inflows from next week will improve reserves: SBP governor**



**Sindh LG polls: PPP, PTI workers clash outside Keamari DC office**

## Balochistan Govt not in a position to pay salaries of employees: CM

Staff Reporter

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo on Wednesday said that the financial condition of the provincial government was serious and that it was not in a position to pay the salaries of the government employees. The CM has expressed serious concern over the prevailing financial crisis, an official handout issued here said.

**Official matters were badly paralyzed because of financial crisis**

He said official matters were badly paralyzed because of the prevailing financial crisis. He said that the federal government was apprised of the financial position of the province. However, the federal government is yet to translate its words into action, he said.

**Government was not in a position to support flood-affected people**

Mr. Bizenjo said the flood-affected people were in desperate need of support and that the provincial government was not in a position to support them due to the financial crisis. "We demand our fair share in the national finance commission award", he said.



**Balochistan had already faced the brunt of climate change**

This situation has developed a sense of deprivation among the people of Balochistan, Mr. Bizenjo said. He said Balochistan had already faced the brunt of climate change and global warming and that the federal government should support all possible support to the provincial government in addressing the issues of the masses. He reiterated the demand for the payment of outstanding the PPL share for Balochistan.

## Quetta Ziarat receive heavy snowfall white carpet on mountains

Syed Ali Shah  
Manan Mandokhail  
Sardar M.Khondai

QUETTA, CHAMAN: Quetta, Ziarat, Kan Mehtarzai, Toba Achakzai, Toba Kakarai, Kozhak top and other parts of Balochistan received heavy snowfall on Wednesday. The

chilly weather. Heavy snowfall at the Kan Mehtarzai and Kozhak tops severely affected the flow of traffic. Passengers faced difficulties to reach their destinations after the snowfall. "We have put all staff on high alert after snowfall", Naseer Ahmed Nasar, the Director-General

dream to witness such snow", Fehmida, a woman from Karachi told Daily Quetta Voice. Like Fehmida scores of families from Karachi and other parts of the country visited Hanna Lake and moved toward Ziarat to enjoy the first snowfall of the winter season. The PDMA also pro-



weather turned cold and tourists thronged towards the beautiful Ziarat valley and Hanna Lake to enjoy the cold pleasant weather. "Beautiful, beautiful, after a long time, heavy snowfall", Shah Jehan alias Shahjee told Daily Quetta Voice.

Mountains in Quetta turned white and the ancient juniper trees wore white carpets after heavy snowfall. However, people suffered because of low and no gas pressure in

Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said. He said heavy machinery was also deployed at all sensitive points/mountaintops to make sure an uninterrupted flow of traffic.

Tourists from across Balochistan and other parts of the country thronged towards Ziarat and Hanna Lake to enjoy the weather and the snowfall. Women and children also visited tourist points to enjoy the weather. "This was our

provided food and other necessary support to the stranded passengers at Kozhak pass and Kan Mehtarzai. Environmentalists term snowfall as a very positive thing for the overall climate. "This is like fresh oxygen for the planet", Faiz Kakar, a well-known environmentalist said. He said this snow will be having a far-reaching positive impact on improving the depleting water table in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan.

## Sindh LG polls: PPP, PTI workers clash outside Keamari DC office

PTI and PPP workers clashed outside the Keamari deputy commissioner's (DC) office in Karachi on Wednesday, pelting either side with stones during the consolidation of the results of the recently held local government elections in Sindh.

The second phase of the local government elections was held in 16 districts of Sindh on Sunday. However, major contesting parties — including the ruling PPP — had raised concerns over an unusual delay in the results in Karachi and blamed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for mismanagement.

The ECP took more than 36 hours to announce the results of 236 union committees of Karachi as the opposition PTI and Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) accused the provincial administration of "rigging and managing things" in its favour.

On Wednesday, the PTI accused the PPP of attacking its workers while the Keamari DC maintained that PTI workers forcibly



entered the office and harassed staff. Keamari DC Mukhtiar Abro, who is also the district returning officer, told Dawn.com that the PTI workers had "encircled" his office.

He alleged that PTI's Ali Haider Zaidi and others forcibly entered the premises and broke the locks. "The PTI workers ransacked the computer and harassed staff including female returning officers who were busy performing their electoral duty," he said.

He further said that PTI workers threw stones and broke the windows of several vehicles. He said police took action against the hooliganism and removed the party workers from the DC office.

**First information report would be lodged against PTI leaders, Abro**

Abro said a first information report would be lodged against PTI leaders and workers over the incident. A handout issued by the Keamari police said SSP Fida Hussain Janwari had reached the spot and brought the situation under control. The statement said district police arrived at the scene with water cannons and other equipment to deal with any emergency situation. It added that the situation was currently under control and all political workers had been dispersed. Separately, Dunya News Karachi bureau chief Talha Hashmi told Dawn.com that a reporter and a cameraman had sustained injuries during the clash. He said that the two were provided first aid at Abbasi Shaheed Hospital and were later shifted to Aga Khan University.

Zaidi, on the other hand, alleged that he had gone to meet his candidates and talk to the press when PPP "goons prepared with stones and under full protection of Sindh police attacked". Web Desk

## Dollar inflows from next week will improve reserves: SBP governor

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad said on Wednesday that the country would start receiving US dollar inflows from next week, which would help shore up the central bank's rapidly depleting foreign exchange reserves.

Addressing businessmen at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), he acknowledged that the country's reserves had fallen quite low but added that projects in the pipeline would help improve them, according to a report by Mettis Global.

In the absence of any dollar inflows from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or friendly countries, the central bank's forex reserves dropped to \$4.34 billion in



the week ending Jan 6, the lowest since February 2014.

The country has been facing a serious dollar shortage, which is resulting in restricted imports of even food and industrial raw materials. The latest position of foreign exchange reserves

reflects that the country doesn't have sufficient dollars to cover even one month of average imports.

While the central bank had lifted curbs on the imports of several essential items required as raw material earlier this year, several associations across different sectors have complained that the non-opening of letters of credit (LCs) is creating shortages, with several companies suspending operations in recent months.

In his address today, SBP Governor Ahmad explained the move to restrict imports, saying that banks had been directed to prioritise the opening of LCs for imports of food, pharmaceutical items, oil, agriculture-related items and raw material required by export-oriented industries. Web Desk

## Qaiser says NA speaker committed 'great injustice with his office' by accepting resignations of PTI lawmakers

PTI leader Asad Qaiser on Wednesday said that National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf had committed a "great injustice with his office" by accepting the resignations of 34 PTI lawmakers.

The PTI had resigned en masse from the lower house of parliament following the ouster of PTI Chairman Imran Khan in April last year. Subsequently, the NA speaker had accepted only 11 of the resignations, stating that the remaining lawmakers would be summoned individually for verifica-



tion. In an apparent bid to scuttle PTI's purported plan to bring a confidence motion against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sha-rif, Ashraf on Tuesday accepted the resignations of 34 PTI lawmak-

speaker had stated that the resignations would only be accepted once the lawmakers appeared in person for verification.

Commenting on the matter during an interview on Geo News show Capital Talk, Qaiser said: "I think the speaker committed a great injustice with his office."

"When you occupy a constitutional position, then you should make decisions keeping in mind the law and the Constitution. You have to act in accordance with the law [rather] than fulfilling the wishes of political people." Web Desk

## 4 security personnel martyred in terrorist activity from across Pak-Iran border in Balochistan: ISPR

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Wednesday that four security personnel were martyred during "terrorist activity" from across the Pakistan-Iran border in Balochistan's Panjgur district.

"Today, in a terrorist activity from across Pakistan-Iran border in Chukab sector, district Panjgur, Balochistan, four security forces personnel have embraced martyrdom," the statement said.

It further said that the militants used Iranian soil to "target a convoy of security forces patrolling along the border".

Iran has been asked to hunt down the terrorists on their side, the ISPR statement said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the incident. "Nation pays homage to the sacrifices of their martyred soldiers in [the] line of duty. We expect Iran will ensure that its soil is not used for cross-border attacks," he said.

President Dr Arif Alvi condemned the attack, and paid trib-



ute to the services and sacrifices rendered by the martyred officials.

He stated that the whole nation had resolved to fight terrorism.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari also condemned the attack, and expressed grief and sorrow at the martyrdom of the security officials.

"Martyrs officials are the country's heroes. The militant who carried out the attack will have to pay," he said in a statement.

Last year in October, the Iranian authorities had closed the border with Pakistan at Taftan for two days after clashes between protesters and security forces in Zahedan, the capital city of Sistan-Baluchestan.

In February 2021, the border in Panjgur was closed after violent demonstrations and attacks on government offices in Saravan area of Sistan-Baluchestan. Web Desk

## QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

### Balochistan facing dire financial crisis

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Food security in danger

By Shafqat Kakakhel

As defined by the World Food Summit (1996), "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has further elaborated the four key dimensions of food security. Availability of food means availability of sufficient quantity of food of appropriate quality supplied through domestic production or imports (including food aid). Food access means individuals' resources for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.

The utilization of food means utilization through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation, and healthcare to attain a state of nutritional wellbeing where all physiological needs are met. Food stability means the ability of a population, household, or individual to have access to sufficient food at all times.

Since the beginning of the global discourse on climate change in the mid-1980s, increasing attention has been paid to the likely consequences of climate change for food security, especially in the Global South. This is because all the impacts of global warming and anthropogenic climatic variability adversely affect one or more key dimensions of food security.

The impacts of climate change documented by climate scientists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), established in 1988 to assess climate change trends, their drivers, and impacts as well as responses to alleviate the effects, are relevant for Pakistan. The major impacts are noted below.

Higher surface and ocean temperature in the Arctic causing rising sea levels inundate coastal regions and island states, damage human settlements and salinate fresh water thereby threatening farming and fishing and forcing farmers and fishers to seek alternative homes and livelihoods. This is referred to as climate-induced migration.

The vulnerability of Pakistan's thousand kilometre long coastline in Sindh and Balochistan to rising sea level as well as coastal storms and rains caused by sea level rise has been corroborated by the physical erosion of coastline and growing number of climate migrants. Food production, livestock sector and fisheries in the coastal regions have reportedly suffered mounting loss and damage. It is imperative to carry out further investigations in order to assess the magnitude of the problem.

More frequent, longer lasting, and more intense extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, cyclones and storms, and heatwaves damage water courses and irrigation infrastructure such as beedworks, barrages, bridges, dam reservoirs, lakes and ponds, and wetlands as well as standing crops and livestock. They also damage wetlands and mangrove forests. During the past five decades, the number of extreme weather events has increased exponentially. Superfloods such as those in 2010 and 2022 have caused huge loss and damage, making the agriculture, food, and livestock sector the most climate vulnerable economic sector in Pakistan.

The prolonged droughts during 1996-2002 had severe negative effects on our agriculture, food, and livestock sector and overall socio-economic growth. Rapid melting of snow and ice in the Himalaya-Karakoram-Hindukush mountain glaciers initially cause flash floods and glacial lake outburst floods and after the erosion of glacier mass will cause declining supply of water to the rivers fed by the glaciers. The Indus River Basin depends for over half of its water assets on the orderly melting of the snow and ice of the HKH glaciers.

There is disruption of the timing, duration, and intensity of the twice-yearly monsoon winds causing precipitation in summer and winter leading to floods and droughts. The monsoon rains are vital for supplementing river flows in the Indus Basin and sustaining lakes and wetlands as well as recharging the Indus aquifer, our most reliable water storage. Increased evapotranspiration caused by higher temperature, heatwaves, and droughts drastically reduce surface water stored in dam reservoirs, lakes, and watercourses.

Climate change induced floods and droughts degrade the land soil and cause increased insect-pest and other disease infestation. They also affect milk production and poultry. The cumulative effect of all climate change impacts is a net reduction of freshwater resources. While the reduction cannot be predicted in precise quantitative terms, some studies mention a decrease of 25-30 per cent in the flows of the Indus Basin Rivers. The critical dependence of our agriculture on perennial irrigation due to our predominantly hot and humid weather and our mainly arid soil, and extremely low average annual precipitation level of 200 -290 cm, highlights the acute vulnerability of our food production and security to the effects of climate change.

Pakistan's food security is also threatened by the adverse effects of the higher temperature on the quantity and quality of crop yields due to the shorter growth season. Some studies have mentioned reduction of crop yields by as much as 50 per cent in an extreme climate scenario.

Economic development and poverty eradication initiatives are major victims of the physical loss and damage caused by climate induced events such as super floods.

"Pakistan Floods 2022: Post- Disaster Needs Assessment", published in October 2022 by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives of Pakistan and compiled by ministries of the government of Pakistan in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, EU, and the UN agencies facilitated by the UNDP, comprehensively describes the sector-wise loss and damage caused by the June-August super floods. It mentions that Pakistan's poverty rate is estimated to increase by 3.7 per cent to 4 per cent, pushing between 8.4 million and 9.1 million people into poverty.

### 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 say an eight- or nine-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 realities 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.

Artificial Intelligence

### 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 leading 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 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 biomedicine will alert people before the onset of a disease so that they can take precautionary.

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

### 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 and Kashmir 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), and 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 had 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 students 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,

### The forever ideology

By Eric Shahzad

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.

## Notification for appointment of administrators in Punjab issued

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman on Wednesday issued gazette notification for appointment of administrators in Punjab.

Governor Rehman gave orders to issue gazette notification after the approval of cabinet committee. The administrators have been restored under the Local Government Act, 2022. All the powers

of the local government departments have been entrusted to the bureaucracy. The commissioner will be the head of 11 metropolitan corporations of the province. The deputy commissioners will be the heads of 11 district councils of the semi-urban areas. The deputy commissioners will also be the chiefs of 30 district councils of the rural areas.

The heads of union councils will be the respective assistant directors of local governments.

The gazette notification of new administrators to run the local government system has been issued. On Tuesday night, the governor asked Punjab Assembly speaker to initiate legal process for establishing a parliamentary committee for choosing a caretaker chief minister for the province. INP

## A microorganism promises macro benefits for economy

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan can create a better environment and a healthier economy by cultivating Spirulina — a highly nutritious blue-green algae, said Dr Muhammad Asif Javed, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of 'No.1 Organics' from Rahim Yar Khan, while talking to WealthPK.

He said Spirulina cultivation was growing all over the world and business opportunities concerning its value-added products were coming forth.

"China, France, Ireland, Spain, and India are a few examples of its largest producers. Pakistan can be one of them by bringing awareness among the people. Normally, 100 to 130kgs of Spirulina can be easily delivered in a month. It depends upon the capacity of your culture vessel/pond. Dry Spirulina powder easily sells at PKR600 per kg and around Rs40-50,000 per month can be earned. It requires less water and less land, and is used in wet or dried forms as a complementary dietary ingredient for livestock commercial aqua cultures of prawns, fish, and other

industrial productions," he said.

Continuing the discussion, he said Spirulina Platensis was widely used due to its outstanding nutritional value. They are single-celled, photosynthetic, phototrophic microorganisms, commonly called cyanobacteria. It grows throughout the world and is called the vegetable plankton as well.

"BGA is one among very few botanical sources of all 20 essential amino acids important for life. It is a rich probiotic source to replace the good bacteria lost due to the use of antibiotics in human beings. It is also considered perfect food for the skin and body due to its broad-spectrum nutrients, i.e. essential fatty acids, minerals, proteins, enzymes, amino acids, vitamins (A, C, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B12, E, K, choline, thiamine, folic acid, biotin), trace minerals (calcium, chloride, chromium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, phosphorus, zinc, sodium, etc.)," Dr Asif said.

"In short, fewer than 20 such substances have been discovered and are believed to be required

for human survival. BGA contains 13 out of them. Spirulina Maxima and Spirulina Platensis are two species of BGA commonly used for a variety of industrial purposes.

For example, in the pharmaceutical industry, it is used to produce protein supplements and other medicines. It is used to cure high blood pressure and increased levels of cholesterol/lipids in the blood, diabetes, obesity, anemia, night blindness, pancreatitis, glaucoma, etc. New potential uses of spirulina include extraction of a valuable enzyme like Phosphoglycerate Kinase for ATP determination, use in immunodiagnoses as a phycobillin, and superoxide dismutase required in genetic engineering." Dr Asif said Spirulina's anti-oxidant properties prevent cancer possibilities, and its effect on skin nourishment has also paved the way for cosmetic formulations using this alga. "With fairly high nutritious value, Spirulina is favorable for fish growth and can be used as a complementary nourishing ingredient of feed for poultry, shrimps, fish, etc. It is also a cheap source to get very nutritious biofertilizers. INP



ISLAMABAD: 8th meeting of the Pakistani-Russian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation has started.

## ECP restores membership of 36 more parliamentarians

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday restored the membership of 36 more lawmakers after the submission of assets' details.

According to the ECP, the membership of 25 lawmakers of the National Assembly and 6 of the Senate. The restored members include Senator Zaqqa, Senator Taj Haider and Senator Fida Muhammad Khan.

The ECP has also reinstated the membership of three lawmakers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly as well.

Earlier, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) suspended the membership of as many as 271 lawmakers over

their failure to submit details of their assets and liabilities.

The electoral watchdog suspended the membership of 271 lawmakers after they failed to submit the statement of their assets and liabilities that is required by the ECP at the year-end.

The parliamentarians suspended by the ECP include 136 members of the National Assembly, 21 from the Senate, 54 from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly, 48 from the Sindh Assembly and 12 from the Balochistan Assembly.

It is pertinent to mention here that in January, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)

had given a deadline to the parliamentarians for submitting the details of their assets by January 15.

The ECP released a list of parliamentarians from the Lower and Upper Houses, as well as from the provincial assemblies who failed to submit asset details.

The commission stated in a notification that some lawmakers did not submit their statements of the assets despite the expiry of the December 31 deadline. It asked the lawmakers to submit the details of their assets to the ECP by January 15, otherwise, their membership will be suspended on January 16. INP

## Parliamentary panel to decide on nomination of Punjab caretaker CM

LAHORE: The issue of the nomination of the caretaker chief minister of Punjab has been sent to the parliamentary committee for decision on Wednesday.

Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman has written letter to the Speaker Punjab Assembly for constitution of a parliamentary committee over nomination of the caretaker CM of the province. Following dissolution of the Punjab Assembly, the government and opposition expedited consultations for a caretaker set-up in province. Speaker provincial assembly will form a six-member committee, comprising

of three members each from the government and the opposition.

PML-N, the largest opposition party in the provincial assembly, is expected to nominate Malik Ahmad Khan, Khalil Tahir Sindh and People's Party's Hassan Murtaza as its nominees for the committee.

In case the matter won't decide in the parliamentary committee, the issue of the nomination of Punjab's caretaker chief minister will be forwarded to the election commission for final decision.

Before the 2018 general elections the opposition and the gov-

ernment were failed to strike a consensus over the name for the caretaker chief minister of Punjab and the matter was decided by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The election body had nominated Prof. Hassan Askari to lead the caretaker setup in the province before the election.

It is pertinent to mention here that Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi forwarded the summary of dissolution on Thursday, and as per the Constitution, the assembly dissolved within 48 hours regardless of the governor's decision. INP

## Two injured in Lahore cars collision

LAHORE: Two people were seriously injured in collision between two over speeding cars here in the metropolis on Wednesday.

According to details, the accident took place in Main Boulevard Gulberg Lahore where two cars collided which overtaking.

Two people including Ahmed 25, and Imran 40, were seriously injured in the accident and shifted to Services Hospital Lahore.

The police impounded both vehicles and after registering a case into the incident started an investigation. INP

## Woman attempts suicide but rescued by PN divers

SUKKUR: A woman attempted suicide over financial issues by jumping into river but was rescued by Pakistan Navy divers here on Wednesday.

According to details, a woman disappointed over poor financial condition jumped into River Indus to end her life in New Pind of Rohri, Sukkur.

The local people informed the Navy Rescue Centre after divers of Pakistan Navy rushed the scene and saved the drowning woman identified as Sanam d/o Muhammad Nawaz.

The unconscious woman was shifted to Taluqa Hospital Rohri and later handed over to Rohri Police after she returned to consciousness. INP

## Four security personnel martyred in cross-border firing from Iran

RAWALPINDI: Four security personnel embraced martyrdom in a cross-border terror attack from Iran border in Balochistan's Panjgur district.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the incident occurred when terrorists from across the Pakistan-Iran border targeted a convoy of security personnel patrolling along the divide in the Chukab Sector of Balochistan's Panjgur District.

The ISPR said that the militants used Iranian soil to "target a convoy of security forces patrolling along the border". Iran has been asked to hunt down the terrorists on their side, the ISPR statement said. INP



QUETTA: Traditional folk performer sit under temporary setup during rain in provincial capital.

## Pakistan records sharp rise in Covid cases

ISLAMABAD: A day after reporting lowest Covid-19 infections in months, Pakistan has recorded a surge in number of daily coronavirus cases which were 24 with no fatality during the last 24 hours, showed the statistics released by the National Institute of Health (NIH) on Wednesday morning.

According to the NIH data, the death toll in the country remained the same at 30,640 whereas the number of total infections now soared to 1,576,109 after adding the fresh 24 cases. Pakistan had registered only five infections on the previous day.

During the last 24 hours (Tuesday), 4,152 tests were conducted throughout the country whereas the positivity ratio also shoot up to 0.58 percent as compared to previous day's 0.27 percent. The number of patients in critical care

stood at 12.

China back to 'normal' after end of Covid curbs. China has returned to normal after the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, Vice Premier Liu He told the World Economic Forum on Tuesday as he invited "international friends" to visit the country.

China abruptly dropped its "zero-Covid" approach last month after three years of enforcing some of the harshest anti-pandemic restrictions in the world.

The move led to a wave of infections that packed hospitals and overwhelmed crematoriums, with authorities revealing Saturday that almost 60,000 Covid-related deaths were reported in just over a month.

But Liu told the meeting of the global elite in the Swiss Alpine village of Davos that the transition "has overall been sta-

ble and smooth".

"The time to reach the peak (of infections) and to return to normal has been relatively fast. In some senses, it has exceeded our expectations," he said.

Liu said the food and beverage industry and tourism had started to return to normal, with five billion trips expected during China's Lunar New Year holiday that begins this weekend.

"Things have comprehensively returned to normal," he said.

"Currently the main difficulty is still the elderly, those with underlying conditions," he said, adding, "We are currently striving to tackle this."

Millions of the elderly in China are not fully vaccinated, with President Xi Jinping's government criticised for not prioritising immunisation campaigns among the country's most vulnerable citizens. INP

## LHC seeks govt's reply to plea seeking identification of heirless bodies

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday sought the Punjab govt's response to a plea seeking the identification of heirless bodies.

Justice Sajid Sethi heard the plea of Azhar Siddique Advocate. The LHC bench after hearing the initial arguments of the applicant sought the Punjab government's response to the plea and directed it to submit a detailed report regarding steps being taken to identify heirless bodies.

The Punjab government has been directed to also provide details about the number of identified heirless bodies. Azhar Siddique Advocate in his plea said that heirless bodies kept at the various hospitals of the province are being humiliated, which is a violation of human rights. Further hearing on the plea has been adjourned until February 7. On October 13, last year, Adviser to the Punjab Chief Minister, Chaudhry Zaman Gujjar, spotted unclaimed bodies left abandoned on the roof of Nishtar Hospital in Multan. INP

## Efforts of KC-EU in highlighting Kashmir issue commendable: Asad Majeed

BRUSSELS: Pakistan's new Foreign Secretary Dr Asad Majeed Khan has appreciated the efforts of Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) in highlighting the Kashmir issue and said that these efforts will continue with a new dimension.

He was speaking to Chairman KC-EU Ali Raza Syed during a farewell ceremony held in his honour.

It should be mentioned here that Asad Majeed was previously Pakistan's Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg before assuming the charge of Foreign Secretary and the Pakistani community based in Belgium organized a function in his honour in Brussels.

Chairman Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed praised Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed's diplomatic efforts in improving Pakistan-EU relations and highlighting the Kashmir issue and said that we wish him all the best for his new responsibilities. It should be noted that the Secretary of Foreign Affairs is on a visit to Belgium after assuming office of the foreign secretary. INP



ISLAMABAD: Former Law Minister and leader of PPP Senator Maula Bakhsh Chandio speaks during press conference at People Secretariat.

## ANF foils smuggling bid in Karachi

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) authorities on Wednesday foiled a smuggling bid in Karachi in a raid.

The ANF confiscated 186kg of heroin from a truck. The truck which was coming from Balochistan to Karachi stopped near Gadap town. The large haul of heroin was hidden behind the

driver's seat in a secret portion. The two suspects from Pasheen were taken into custody.

In a separate incident, 201 heroin-filled capsules were recovered by ANF near the Islamabad motorway toll plaza.

The ANF and ASF Peshawar airport confiscated 1.5kg of heroin from a Doha-bound flight. In Rawalpindi, the

ANF arrested a suspect from Jhelum and recovered 20 heroin-filled tablets.

The Anti-Narcotics Force has booked all accused in the anti-narcotics law, an ANF spokesperson added.

Earlier, the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized a large haul of hashish in a raid in the hilly terrain. INP

## Production barriers in Pakistan hinder exports: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Private businesses play a very imperative role in the economic development of Pakistan and are considered the backbone of the economy, said Zahid Mehmood Akhtar, a PhD scholar at the National University of Modern Languages, while talking to WealthPK.

He said almost 75% to 80% of the labour force was employed by private companies, showing their huge contribution towards reducing unemployment in the country.

"Private businesses are more labor-intensive and tend to lead to a more

equitable income distribution. They are crucial for creating jobs and reducing poverty by frequently offering jobs at fair pay rates to employees from low-income households and also to women who have few other options for earning."

Furthermore, he said private enterprises were a major contributor to the country's technological innovation, which was a major part of economic growth. A variety of business operations can be conducted in these sectors, in both rural and urban areas of the coun-

try. Akhtar said, "Private businesses make a significant contribution towards income generation, and reduction in unemployment and poverty but there are also some hurdles they face such as lack of capital and [lack of] access to the cutting-edge technology. There are also flaws in the trade policies and the government needs to address them."

"Goods' exports result in a rise in the country's gross domestic product (GDP). But being a developing country, there are production barriers

faced by the private firms due to which they cannot export goods. Pakistan has thus been unable to take full advantage of exports as it should have taken. The government should focus on these issues and develop policies to make production easy, as the country can be economically strong due to exports," said the NUML scholar.

Responding to a question about the barriers faced by the private sector, he pointed out that electricity was one of the main barriers since its consumption was increasing on a daily

basis. Access to financing and macroeconomic instability are also important barriers, according to Akhtar.

He said foreign direct investment could also benefit the country if it was easy to start a new private business and if it had strong investment policies that accommodate private companies. Investment is considered to be an important indicator of growth and Pakistan needs to focus on provision of a business-friendly environment to safeguard the interest of investors, he said. INP

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Deputy Director, Agriculture (On Farm Water Management) DERA BUGTI, invites sealed Tender/Bid for execution of various development schemes under the project **CONST OF LINING OF WATERCOURSES (2000 RFT EACH SCHEME, DERABUGTI, PSDP NO. 125 [22022.0370]** from interested contractors/firm with the Bid Security @ 2% of estimated cost/offered rate in shape of Call Deposit (Refundable). The non-refundable Tender Form Fee Rs.2000/- to be deposited in any National Bank of Pakistan Branch situated in Balochistan Province through Green Bank Chellan in a head of account (C03136) (verified by the District Accounts Officer), TSE No. TSE-222301225013Bld Security 2% for the work.

Sl#	NAME OF WORK/S	E/COST
1	CONST OF LINING OF WATERCOURSES, IN DISTRICT DERABUGTI.	39,054,000/-

Procurements shall be made under BPP Rules 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turnover of at least 27,337,800/- PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-5 and above (Upto 65 million). In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE04(v) (Irrigation only), CE10(i) (General Civil Engineering Works). The bidding firm must submit Income Tax Return of Taxation Year 2022. Income Tax Registration certificate is required. The Bidding Firm must submit Audit Report/Audit Balance Sheet of FY 2019-20, 2020-21 & 2021-22. The bidding firm must submit Company's latest Bank Account Statement or Bank Credit Line Certificate. Bidder has to submit tender fee on original green challan Method of Procurement: Single Stage-Two Envelope Procedure. Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security (2%) in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee (Bank's certificate is mandatory) in the name of the undersigned from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be downloaded from BPPRA website. Bid Validity Period: 90 days issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication, during office hours of any working day. Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders should be submitted on 10-02-2023 till 12:00 PM Sharp at the office of the undersigned. Tender opening: The Technical Proposals will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at 01:00 PM. Stamp Duty: The successful bidder must submit the Stamp Duty in shape of Judicial Stamp Paper or Special Adhesive Stamps as per policy. Address: Office the Deputy Director Agriculture On Farm Water Management, Dera Bugti. Note:- The Tender Opening Committee/Bid Evaluation Committee reserves the right (Delegated by the BPPRA Rules 2014) that either accept or reject any or all the offers/quotations prior to the acceptance of a bid. a) The Contractor/Firm not qualifying the basic eligibility criteria will not be entertained in the bidding process. b) The bidder / firm should quote all the rates in BQ's otherwise the bidding would be consider as non-responsive. c) As per policy, the Procuring Agency reserves the right to increase or decrease quantum of work. Contact No. +342324004

PRQ No.1984/18-01-2023

DEPUTY DIRECTOR AGRICULTURE ON FARM WATER MANAGEMENT DERA BUGTI

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# Traders, industrialists seek lifting of import curbs: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Leading industrialists and representatives of chambers of commerce and industries from across Pakistan have urged the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to ease import restrictions.

They said the government's import restrictions have left the industrialists and importers with no other option but to cut their business activities.

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri told WealthPK that the government should find alternatives and substitutes to imports, and to take appropriate measures to promote exports in the country. He said that shortage of dollars is one of the main causes of financial crisis, adding that the government needs to enhance cooperation with the business community and industrialists to explore new export markets.

He said that foreign currency reserves of the country could only be increased with burgeoning exports. Almost all the export-oriented industries in Pakistan need to import raw material to produce finished products for exports, and all respective industries are waiting for the SBP to open letters of credit (LCs) to import basic raw materials and tools of industries. Meanwhile, Bakhtawri said while addressing a function at the ICCI that the government

should announce bonuses for the exporters and remitters to deposit dollars in banks.

Many industrial units in the country have either closed their operations or come to the point of halting their productivity due to non-issuance of LCs from banks to import raw materials and intermediate tools of the industrial units.

The automotive industry in Pakistan has also suffered as leading car manufacturers including Suzuki, Indus Motors and Honda have halted operations owing to import restrictions.

Waheed Khan, Member of Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association, told WealthPK that although the State Bank has exempted assemblers of the auto industry from prior approvals to open LCs, commercial banks have been asked not to open LCs and are allowing only essential import commodities in the country.

Importers of foodstuff are also protesting in Sindh's port city of Karachi. They have warned that crisis of pulses, edible oil and ghee could heighten in the country in the coming days owing to import restrictions. They said the prices of these commodities are increasing with each passing day and may go beyond the reach of consumers if imports are not allowed. INP

## PM says he asked UAE to facilitate dialogue with India

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had during his recent trip to the United Arab Emirates asked Emirati President Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to facilitate dialogue with India and vowed sincere talk with the arch rivals, if a channel were to open.

Mr Sharif, in an interview to Al-Arabiya news channel, confirmed that he had sought Al-Nahyan's help for the dialogue, while noting that Pakistan had "learnt its lesson" and "was ready for peace".

"I have requested Mohammed bin Zayed — that he's a brother of Pakistan and the UAE is a brotherly country. He also has good relations with India, he can play a very important role to bring the two countries on the talking table and I give my word of honour that we will be talking to Indians with sincerity of purpose," he said.

The prime minister met Mr Al-Nahyan on Jan 12 in Abu Dhabi during his two-day visit to the UAE. The visit, Mr Sharif's third to the UAE since assuming office in April, was focused on promoting bilateral economic, trade, and investment ties.

Recalling the three wars with India and the resulting toxicity in ties and sufferings that were caused to the people, Mr Sharif told the interviewer that "we have learnt our lesson" and wanted to live in peace. However, he conditioned that offer to the resolution of "genuine problems". He specifically noted the Kashmir dispute.

"My message to the Indian leadership and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is that let us sit down on the table and have serious and sincere talks to resolve our burning issues like Kashmir," he said while reminding about the continuing "flagrant human rights violations

in the occupied region, and the 2019 revocation of the Kashmir's autonomy.

He also recalled the persecution of minorities in India. "India must stop this to give a message to the world that the country was ready for talks," Mr Sharif said while underscoring that Pakistan was "more than willing" for peace.

The prime minister's spokesman later, through a tweet, reminded that it has been Mr Sharif's consistent position that talks won't be possible till India reversed its "illegal action of August 5, 2019" and that the settlement of the Kashmir dispute must be in accordance with the UN resolutions and aspirations of people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Interestingly, notwithstanding the prime minister's emphasis on the centrality of Kashmir dispute in any dialogue with India, including one potentially facilitated by the UAE, the word Kashmir was conspicuously absent from the UAE-Pakistan joint statement issued at the end of the two-day official visit.

The UAE boasts strong ties with India. Al-Nahyan's foreign policy adviser Anwar Gargash, while speaking at India Global Forum held in the UAE in December, said the two countries hold "reservoir of trust".

Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had on that occasion said India and the UAE would play a significant role in reshaping the global order.

Abu Dhabi has in the past played its part in defusing Pakistan-India tensions. Its quiet role in preventing the situation from spiraling out of control during the Balakot stand-off is well known.

Emirati envoy in Washington Yousef Al Otaiba had in 2021 acknowledged that his country had helped in managing escalation over Kashmir. Web Desk



DAVOS: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman speaking in a panel discussion in WEF annual meeting in Davos.

## New rain, snowfall spell to hit many cities

ISLAMABAD: Different areas of the country will receive light rain and snowfall from today.

The westerly winds will enter Balochistan, the Meteorological Department said.

Snowfall is likely in Quetta, Zhob, Barkhan, Ziarat, Chaman, Pishin, Nokundi, Dalbandin and other areas. The Meteorological Department has alerted the departments concerned.

Similarly, a new wave of cold will enter Karachi from January 21 and 22.

Drizzle and light rain are likely in Qambar Shahdadkot, Kashmore, Shikarpur, Larkana, Sukkur, Ghotki, Khairpur, Dadu and Naushehro Feroze.

In Lahore, fog has withered away. However, the intensity of the cold remains. The temperature in the city was recorded six degrees Celsius.

In Murree, snowfall has stopped, and the sun shines. The tourists have thronged the hill station. INP

## Imran Khan summoned in female judge 'threat' case

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Wednesday summoned former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in a case related to his "threatening" remarks against a female judge.

Imran Khan, who was asked to appear before the court in person today, skipped today's hearing, while his junior counsel Sardar Masroof appeared before the court.

The hearing was adjourned until January 24 as senior judge Rana Majid had been on leaves. PTI chairman Khan has been directed to ensure his court appearance on the next hearing.

A terrorism case was registered against Imran Khan in Margalla police station for allegedly using derogatory language and threatening Additional Session Judge Zeba Chaudhry in his speech in Islamabad on August 20.

However, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Sep 19 ordered removal of terrorism sections from the case registered against the PTI chief for threatening the woman judge and officials of Islamabad police. INP

## IHC adjourns Azam Swati's contempt plea against CDA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday adjourned the contempt plea filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Azam Swati against the Capital Development Authority's (CDA).

As per details, the court rejected the plea to issue a contempt notice to the respondents.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir said that the contempt plea which the petitioner mentioned, was neither the court order nor the petitioner's plea.

The court remarked that the petitioner himself is ready to demolish illegal construction but urged to stop the authorities from demolishing the illegally constructed farmhouses.

There is no mention in the court order or in the petition to de-seal the property, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir added.

Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) suspended the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) notice to seal Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Azam Swati's farmhouse.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard the petition filed by Azam Swati's wife in IHC.

The court issued notices to all the parties and stopped them from taking any further measures.

CDA didn't issue any notice prior to sealing the farmhouse, the petitioner's counsel told the court and requested the court to stop CDA from taking any further measures. INP

## KP governor dissolves provincial assembly on CM's advice

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali on Wednesday signed the summary sent by Chief Minister Mahmood Khan Tuesday advising him to dissolve the provincial assembly.

With the governor's signature, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly stands dissolved today.

Unlike his counterpart in Punjab, KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali signed the summary of assembly dissolution well before the expiry of stipulated time. Whereas Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman, who had also received the assembly dissolution summary by Punjab Chief Minister Ch Pervaiz Elahi, did not sign it, letting it dissolve on its own on Saturday night after an expiry of 48 hours.

According to the notification issued by the Governor's House, Peshawar today, "Governor Haji Ghulam Ali under Clause (1) of

Article 112 of the Constitution of Pakistan dissolves the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with immediate effect. Henceforth, the Provincial Cabinet also stands dissolved."

The notification further states: "In terms of Clause (4) of Article 224-A of the Constitution, the incumbent Chief Minister Mr Mahmood Khan shall continue to hold office to perform day to day affairs of the Province till the appointment of caretaker Chief Minister."

The Article 224 (1A) of the Constitution binds the Chief Minister and the Opposition Leader in the outgoing assembly to appoint the Caretaker Chief Minister and sent the name to the Governor within the stipulated period of three days. KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan on Tuesday night advised KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali to dissolve the provincial assembly. INP

## Qureshi asks Govt to accept resignations of remaining PTI MNAs

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Wednesday slammed the National Assembly speaker for accepting the resignations of 35 party's MNA.

Talking to media, the former federal minister took a dig at Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, asking him to denotify 125 PTI lawmakers rather than 35.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi slammed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), claiming that PTI members were de-notified in order to shorten the run-off. "The prompt denotification of PTI MNAs proves ECP-NA speaker nexus."

The move of ECP has mocked democracy in the country, he added. Continuing to take a jibe at his political opponents PTI leader claimed that PDM parties are

afraid of facing the masses and running away from elections. "We have a one-point agenda on holding elections in the country."

Lambasting the government over the economic situation, Shah Mahmood Qureshi lamented that the PDM-led government was not concerned about the poor people, adding that today the country was witnessing the closure of the industries and there was chaos everywhere.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has denotified more Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) after the NA speaker accepted their resignations.

In July last year, NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf had accepted the resignations of 11 PTI MNAs. INP

## Pakistani rupee's fall against US dollar continues unhindered

ISLAMABAD: The downward trajectory of Pakistani rupee against the US dollar pressed ahead unhindered for the 21st consecutive session as it shed another nine paises in interbank trading on Wednesday.

According to the information collected from the forex dealers, the greenback went up by nine paises in the morning session and was currently being traded at Rs228.75.

On Tuesday, the local currency depreciated 0.14% in the inter-bank market as it declined by 32 paises to close at 228.66.

During the ongoing fiscal year, the rupee has depreciated 10.47% against the greenback.

In a key related development, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Affairs Ishaq Dar

had said that exporters of textile products, leather goods, surgical instruments, carpets, and sports goods would be given complete facilitation on the import of raw material/inputs to meet their export requirements.

The top priority of the government is to fully implement the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) bringing all big exporters within the ambit of the scheme to allow duties and taxes-free inputs for goods to be exported.

Moreover, the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP) suggested introducing and setting the special exchange rate of the US dollar against the rupee for export-import bills and remittances. INP

## NA speaker's move exposes fear of PML-N leaders: Sheikh Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Wednesday the move of National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to accept resignations of the PTI lawmakers had exposed the frightened leadership of the PML-N.

In a surprise move, the speaker on Tuesday accepted the resignations of 34 PTI lawmakers and Sheikh Rashid and Imran Khan dropped a hint of his party's return to the National Assembly to ensure that the dissent PTI legislators should not give vote of confidence to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif if he would be asked by President Arif Alvi to go for it.

The AML chief warned that the country would further plunge into economic disaster and disorder if elections were not held on time. The coalition government hit the panic button when Imran Khan just gave a signal of his party's return to the assemblies, he said, adding that the decision of accepting the resignations had damaged the government itself.

He said such moves would prove futile as only elections were the suitable solution to the prevailing chaotic situation. He announced that he would hold a press conference in London on Thursday. INP

## ANF foils narcotics smuggling bids, arrests five

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) foiled several narcotics smuggling bids and arrested five drug peddlers besides recovery cache of narcotics in countrywide operations on Wednesday.

Spokesman of ANF said that during snap checking, the authority recovered 186 kilogram hashish from secret cavities of a truck in Gadap Town Karachi. The drug was being smuggled from Balochistan to Karachi and two drug peddlers hailing from Pishin were arrested.

During a joint operation with Airport Security Force (ASF), the ANF arrested an accused hailing from Hangu and leaving from Madina through private airline flight WY-324 at Karachi International Airport after recovery of 930. INP

## Pakistan's first DC power transmission talents passing down most advanced technologies

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first DC power transmission talent is passing down most advanced technologies, according to China Economic Net (CEN).

At Matiari Converter Station, the starting point of Pakistan's power transmission artery, the 886-km Matiari to Lahore ±660kV HVDC Transmission Line, Mir Arslan Ali is training junior engineers.

As one of the founding employees of the project Pakistan's first DC power transmission talents, Mir Arslan Ali, Assistant Duty Officer of the Control and Protection Department, is pleased to see that the state-of-the-art technology is being passed on among local technicians.

From the completion of the project in 2020, the number of trained DC power

transmission engineers has nearly doubled, growing from 16 to nearly 30.

On the site of the first HVDC transmission project in Pakistan, the engineers who are bound to become the backbone of Pakistan's power transmission sector are learning different fault situations and the various solutions for the most complex conditions.

"While China's most advanced power transmission technology offers a new starting point for the development of power transmission in Pakistan, we take up the baton and impart the state-of-the-art knowledge to the local staff to sustain its safe operation and make the strongest power equipment worthwhile", Mir Arslan Ali told CEN in an interview after he received the award for outstanding Pakistani staff in CPEC projects from the Chinese Embassy. INP



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome calls on Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Amin Ul Haque.

## Haier group going local in Pakistan with new technology

ISLAMABAD: Haier group is going local in Pakistan with new technology, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday.

The report says, from UPS air conditioners to the electronically controlled variable frequency refrigerator that can make ice in one hour, to washing machines with "one touch" function, to today's smart home appliances, Haier Pakistan has formed a complete closed-loop process of design, research and development, production, local adaptation, marketing and promotion, and localization has gradually penetrated into various fields.

Currently, 5 Haier Pakistan production lines, including refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, washing machines and TVs, have been localized to varying degrees, with the overall level of localization increasing from 5% in 2006 to 30% in 2021. Behind the strong localization is the comprehensive vision and coordination of Haier Group and the

efforts of employees in different positions in Pakistan. After graduating from a public college in 2001, with the dream of a young man, Muhammad Humayun left his hometown for the fledgling China-Pakistan joint venture Haier Pakistan Industrial Park. Haier Pakistan, which became a national special economic zone in 2021, is known as an important microcosm of Sino-Pakistani home appliance cooperation. While Humayun has also grown from a front-line worker to the head of Air Conditioner (AC) factory through his efforts and dedication. Humayun started with the very simple idea of just earning a paycheck. Single, he lived in a shared room with no fan, no bed, no cushions, but full of mosquitoes. Because of his willingness to think and practice, he was selected as one of the first batch of technicians to be sent to Haier HQ, Qingdao, China, for training. The month-long training became the starting point for the change in his life. INP

## Despite 8% increase in sales, PTCL sustains losses in 9MCY22: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Robust growth in both fixed and wireless streams in the third quarter of calendar year 2022 pushed Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited's revenue upwards of Rs110 billion at an 8% annual growth rate.

This growth was primarily attributable to the consumer segment's good performance, which was led by fixed broadband and mobile data; wholesale and business solutions; and microfinance services.

The devaluation of Pakistani rupee versus the US dollar, higher borrowing rates, and other expenses related to purchase of 4G spectrum and corresponding network rollout continued to put pressure on the PTCL's profitability. The company suffered a net loss of Rs5.6 billion during the first nine months of 2022, reports WealthPK.

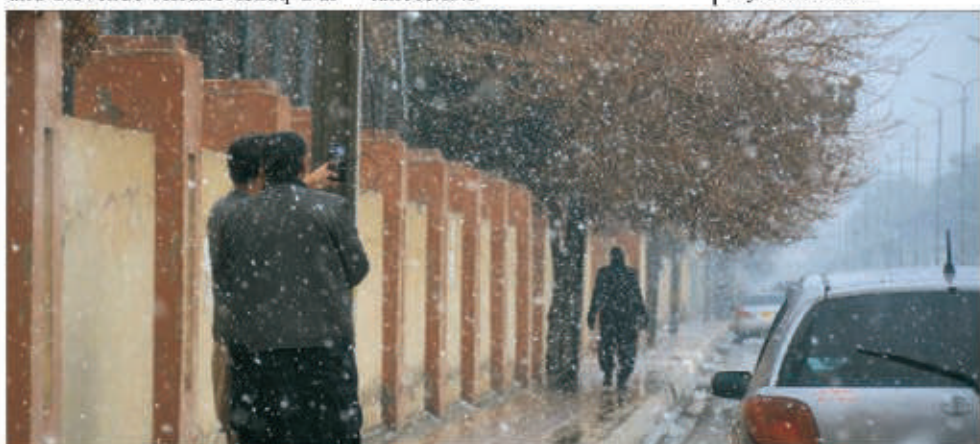
PTCL maintained an upward growth trend in 2021, generating Rs77 billion in revenues, which was 7% higher than in CY20, primarily due to growth in the

corporate and wholesale business categories and broadband. With the largest fixed broadband sales and net additions since 2015, PTCL was able to expand its broadband business in 2021.

PTCL reported an operating profit of Rs4.2 billion in 2021, an increase of 21% year-on-year, and a net profit of Rs6.9 billion, 14% higher than the previous year.

The company managed to achieve growth, despite the difficult economic conditions brought on by inflation, the depreciation of Pakistani rupee versus the US dollar, the increase in electricity prices, and other factors.

Pattern of shareholding  
As of December 31, 2021, the President of Pakistan owned 62.18% of the company's shares, followed by the associated companies holding 26%. Banks, development financial institutions, and non-banking financial institutions owned 1.89% of the shares, insurance companies. INP



QUETTA: A view of snow fall during rain in provincial capital.