

QUETTA VOICE

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**Three MPs,
other BAP leaders
join PPP**



**Jan Muhammad of
Quetta is now father
to 60 children**

Flour crisis hits Balochistan per kg flour now at Rs.125

Staff Reporter

QUETTA: Flour crisis hits Quetta and other parts of Balochistan as per kilogram of flour reaches Rs.125. Skyrocketing flour prices have compounded the problems of the downtrodden class and middle classes in the province. "What this government is doing, per kg directly jumped from Rs.115 to 125", Noor Muhammad, an aged citizen told Daily Quetta Voice.

**Shopkeepers
are selling 20
kgs at Rs.2600
in Quetta**

Some shopkeepers are selling 20 kgs at Rs.2600 in Quetta city. "There is no check and balance on increasing prices", Badruddin Kakar, the central leader of the flour mills association Balochistan lamented. He said the food department stock of wheat was finished and that rulers were least bothered about



the plight of customers. The provincial government's plan to provide cheap flour is also failing to meet the requirement, the provincial government has announced to provide a bag of 20 kg at Rs 1470 but the government does not have enough flour. Citizens say that when some bags are sent to an area, they have to go back disappointed after standing in long queues.

**18 flour mills in
Quetta need 25
thousand bags of
wheat per day**

Eighteen flour mills in Quetta need 25 thousand bags of wheat per day, the mills are running out of stock of wheat and flour. The mill owners have blamed the government for the crisis and said that the government bought only two and a half lakh bags of wheat from Pasco, which fell short. Flour mill owners say that the government should immediately arrange 9 to 10 lakh sacks of wheat or the flour will disappear from the market.

Drivers peons posts being sold at Rs.1.5ms in S&GAD Balochistan: Jam

News Desk

QUETTA: Former Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan claimed the rate for induction in the Balochistan Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD) as driver and peons was Rs.1.5 million. The former CM took to the social media network

to the S&GAD, which is considered to be the backbone of the provincial government. The parliamentary secretary of S&GAD, Bushra Rind rejected the claim of the former Chief Minister and said if the former CM has any proof he should produce it. "Recruitment to be completed on the basis of merit",



Twitter and said the post for the stenographer was being sold at Rs.4 million. The S&GAD has given advertisements in local newspapers demanding applications to fill around 1000 posts recently. Thousands of unemployed youth submitted their applications

Bushra Rind said, rejecting the allegations leveled by the former CM of Balochistan. Jam Kamal stated that those who are running S&GAD should know this. "The new appointees would be investors rather than workers", he concluded.

K-P 'copter bill' was signed to save Imran: Fazl

PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Assembly, dominated by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), recently passed legislation to save former premier Imran Khan from a scandal involving the use of public funds to hire expensive helicopters for government functionaries.

He said this on Sunday while addressing the All Party Conference (APC) in Peshawar, organised against the PTI-led K-P government and to discuss the prevailing law and order and economic situation of the country. The legislation was passed by the provincial assembly last month, allowing the chief minister to hire an aircraft or helicopter at public expense from the open market or from the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air



Force, or the federal government for official use. The opposition had protested against the legislation, claiming the bill would allow everyone to use aircraft or helicopters at public expense like 'rickshaws'. Addressing the APC today, Fazl also blamed the provincial government for the deteriorating security situation in the province, warning it to "take immediate steps otherwise the opposition parties would take a tough decision". Fazl called for holding the K-P government accountable for billions of rupees in irregularities. "The provincial government has taken loans of Rs900 billion. The helicopter bill was passed by the assembly to save Imran Khan from the helicopter scandal Web Desk

'It would further delay LG polls': Alvi refuses to sign bill that would raise number of UCs in Islamabad

President Arif Alvi on Sunday refused to sign off on an amendment bill that would raise the number of existing union councils in Islamabad, saying the move would "further delay local government elections".

The move comes a day after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) flouted court orders to hold local government elections on Dec 31, triggering a fresh round of litigation.

In a statement released by the President's Secretariat, President Alvi "returned unsigned the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in terms of clause (1) (b) of Article 75 of the Constitution".

The amendments propose the number of union councils in the Islamabad Capital Territory be increased to 125 from the existing 101. It also allows for the mayor

and deputy mayor to be directly elected as joint candidates by the voters.

It was passed by the National Assembly on Dec 22 and the Senate the following day, requiring only the president's assent for the bill to be signed into law.

In the president's statement, the bill was returned by observing that it would further delay the local government elections.

"Actions of the federal government taken in haste resulted in delaying election process twice, which was anathema to democracy," the statement said.

It added that elections could not be held in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) due to the following "malafide actions" of the federal government.

After the completion of delimitation of 50 union councils, Alvi said, the ECP announced elections of



local government in ICT on July 31, 2022. "Despite announcement of polling date, federal government increased number of union councils from 50 to 101, resulting into postponement of elections," he added.

Therefore, elections scheduled for 31st December 2022 have been again postponed. He added as per Section 3 of current bill, the mode of elections of the mayor and deputy mayor has been changed after the announcement of the schedule of elections. In the latest row, the federal government challenged the "hasty" decision of the IHC, and the ECP explain-ed in writing to the court reasons for its inability to hold the polls yesterday. The opposition PTI, meanwhile, sought contempt proceedings against both — the government and the election watchdog.

Besides, IHC Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir released the detailed order passed a day earlier on the petitions of PTI and Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) seeking directions for the ECP to hold the elections on Dec 31. The court in the detailed judgement noted that "the decision

of the federal government to increase the number of UCs [union councils] from 101 to 125 was based on a summary moved by the Special Secretary, Ministry of Interior. However, neither in the summary [prepared] for the Cabinet, nor the Notification dated Dec 19, 2022 [is] mention[ed] any cogent reason [for increasing the number of UCs]. The court observed that ECP had issued the election schedule on Oct 20. Thereafter all the process required for the conduct of election was completed by the ECP. The polling day, as per the schedule, was Dec 31. The Federal Government was aware of the schedule, however, at the end, issued the notification dated Dec 19, based on unconfirmed statistics/information provided by the Administrator Municipal Corporation of Islamabad (MCI) Web Desk

Jan Muhammad of Quetta is now father to 60 children

Syed Ali Shah, News Desk

Jan Muhammad Khilji, 50, is now a father to 60 children after the birth of his 60th child on Sunday morning. "My target is 100 children", Mr. Khilji told Daily Quetta Voice via telephone. The name of the 60th child is Haji Khushal Khan, he informed.

Jan Muhammad has three wives and trying to find the fourth one. "I am in search of the fourth one", Mr. Khilji said. He preferred not to give details about the number of male and female children. This is not good, just count 60 children, he said. "The number of girls is high as compared to boys", he responded to a question asked by this scribe. Shagufta Nasreen, the elder daughter of Jan Muhammad says



the girls outnumbered the boys. Shagufta was also seriously injured a few years back when a gas cylinder exploded while cooking. Jan Muhammad lives in a mud-walled house in the Eastern part of Quetta

Five children of Jan Muhammad Khilji have died, whereas, 55 are alive. Earlier, Jan Muhammad's monthly expenditures were Rs.100,000. Now, expenditures doubled because of the increasing number of children and inflation, he mentioned.

Jan Muhammad lives in a mud-walled brick house on the Eastern outskirts of Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan province. Jan Muhammad's children came into the limelight in 2016 when the census officials got a long list of his children. A long list of his daughters and sons was widely shared on social media outlets.

Finally, this scribe found Jan Muhammad and spoke to him about his life and children. The video on Facebook was watched by millions across the globe.

Quetta: Court convicts an accused to life imprisonment in murder case

Syed Kaleem Shah:

Additional District and Session Judge Quetta one Mr. Shamsuddin Sarpara convicted an accused to life imprisonment and a fine of rupees 200,000 in the case of murdering Sohbat Khan Kakar in Nawa Killi area of Quetta.

In case of non-payment of fine, the accused will have to undergo further imprisonment

In case of non-payment of fine, the accused will have to undergo further imprisonment. The court directed to preserve the case of the other 3 absconding accused named in the case. According to



the prosecution, accused Ghanam Rang, fugitive accused Badrang, Saleem Noorzai, Nazargai and others killed Sohbat Khan through firing in Quetta last year in February.

Sohbat Khan Kakar was killed while others were injured by firing in Nawa village on which the police filed a case against the accused and presented the challan in the court. Yesterday, the

judge of the court pronounced a safe verdict in the case and sentenced the accused Ghanam Rang to life imprisonment.

In case of non-payment of fine, the accused will have to undergo another 6 months imprisonment. The court sentenced the accused to another 7 years imprisonment and a fine of 50 thousand rupees.

The court directed to keep the 3 fugitive accused Badrang, Saleem Noorzai and Nazrgai safe in the case.

It should be noted that the killing of a young man was over a land dispute in Nawa Killi, a suburb of Quetta last year. After the incident there was a strong public reaction and this issue was also discussed in the Balochistan Assembly.

Three MPAs, other BAP leaders join PPP

KARACHI: A number of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) leaders on Saturday parted ways with the ruling party in Balochistan and joined the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) after weeks of talks spearheaded by former president Asif Ali Zardari.

The announcement to join Sindh's ruling party was made after a meeting with Mr Zardari at Bilawal House in Karachi. A brief statement issued by the Bilawal House said MPAs Zahoor Buledi, Saleem Khosa, and Arif Muhammad Hasani called on the PPP leader.

Other BAP leaders included Haji Malik Shah Gorej, Mir Wali Muham-mad, Mir Asghar Rind, Mir Faiz Jamali, Sardarzada Faisal Jamali, and Agha Shakeel Durani.

"The PPP has always raised its voice for Balochistan. The province had a special place in Shaheed Bibi's [Benazir Bhutto] heart. The PPP has done a lot for Balochistan but definitely more needed to be done for the province," the statement quoted the PPP leader as saying.

The BAP leaders justified their move to join the PPP, citing "growing challenges" in the province and the region that could only be handled through "visionary leadership". They weren't only confident about the future prospects of the PPP in Balochistan but also its



role in the current setup of the governance. "The PPP is sort of our mother party as most of us were actively associated with the PPP in the past," Arif Muhammad Hasani told Dawn. In response to a question about how the move would affect the provincial government led by BAP leader Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo, Mr Hasani said, "We would soon discuss what needs to

be done with the current government. The change, I think, would definitely emerge, the thing is that we have to decide when and on which scale it should happen." Mr Hasani added that they would be back in Quetta to discuss all these issues and come up with a strategy based on consensus.

However, experts don't see any significant change in

the current provincial setup in spite of the departure of the bigwigs. However, they believe this move would definitely affect the general elections in Balochistan. "It's a major blow to BAP but I don't think it poses any threats to CM Bizenjo," said Shahid Rind, a Quetta-based journalist who covers politics.

Mr Rind hinted that more provincial leaders would join PPP due to the 'reconciliation' efforts led by Mr Zardari. "You would see more such announcements soon from electables from the ruling BAP and other parties as well." The BAP leaders' entry into the PPP is being considered a 'pre-emptive' move by Mr Zardari to strengthen his party in Balochistan ahead of general elections. However, this 'aggressive' politicking to bolster its ranks in Balochistan ahead of general elections has put PPP in apparent competition with its ally Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F). "It would be interesting to see how much ground the PPP would hold after its recent aggressive political campaign in Balochistan before the next general elections, as its ally in the Centre, JUI-F, has also been in the same mode for the past couple of months," Mr Rind said, adding that in contrast to the PPP, Fazl's JUI has a strong political and parliamentary presence in the province already. Web Desk

QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

24 coordinators to CM Balochistan !

In less than a year, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Qudus Bizenjo has appointed 24 coordinators. The appointment of a further three coordinators is in the pipeline. In all notifications, the Services, and General Administration Department (S&GAD) said the coordinators were appointed on an 'honorary' basis.

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

Offices allotted for some coordinators

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

Friendly opposition should also play a role in ensuring financial discipline

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

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

Abdul Shakoor Khan

A month after being shifted to a newly-constructed home, 50 years old Saeda Bibi, along with her two sons and daughters in law had to make a midnight escape from the flood that submerged the entire locality in the Nawa Kili area of Quetta city on the last day of monsoon's eighth spell.

"I was scared all the time and never thought that I, with open eyes will witness the perishing of my home that my husband built with hard-earned money," she recalled the night when her neighbor knocked at their door asking to immediately vacate the house as gushing water of deluge had started washing away homes in the suburbs of the main city.

This house was completely washed away by floods in Malik Town Nawan Kili Quetta. Saeda's husband constructed house after his retirement.

Bibi Saeda is the wife of Mohammad Ashfaq, a retired Deputy Director of Education Department who after receiving gratuity and benevolent fund on his retirement, had constructed his own house on a small piece of land after spending years in rented houses.

Technical staff engaged in clearing of the highway in Bolan Balochistan: Photo taken

Balochistan floods: The tale of pain and destruction



"Carrying the Holy Quran, I stayed for a while in the backyard of my home, with my eyes towards sky, praying to Almighty Allah, to save our house and family," she narrated the saga of a nightmare with tears in her eyes.

"We have been listening that floods had wreaked havoc in green belt of the province, but in the history of Quetta, we had not seen such a disaster as inflicted by recent spells of monsoon," she added.

This heart-touching story of Saeda Bibi perhaps helps understand the miseries of those bearing the brunt of devastating flood with their houses and valuables inundated under knee-deep water.

Technical staff engaged in clearing of the highway in Bolan Balochistan: Photo taken

Director Provincial Disaster Management Authority Naseer Ahmed Nasar stated that non-stop heavy downpours, uncontrolled waves of water and gushing hill torrents had so far claimed around 250 lives with thousands injured and displaced.

Agriculture sector destroyed

The catastrophe left some 61718 houses damaged, 145936 livestock dead and about 190 thousand acres of agriculture land badly affected.

"The loss only incurred to the agriculture sector of Balochistan is estimated as Rs 98 billion," said Director General Agricultural Balochistan Abdul Wahab Kakar.

"The flood has damaged crops, orchards, 15800 tube wells, ponds and solar systems on an area of 190,000 acres."

Meanwhile, the federal and provincial governments, jawans of Armed Forces, NDMA, Frontier Constabulary and civil society organizations have accelerated the relief operation, during the challenging situation due to collapse of road infrastructure, connecting highways and bridges.

Balochistan disconnected from rest of the country for more than a week

Balochistan is almost cut off from Punjab, KP and Sindh provinces due to the collapse of bridges on Quetta-Zhob-Dana Sar-Dera Ismail Khan road; Quetta-Loralai-Dera Ghazi Khan; Quetta-Khuzdar-Karachi; and Quetta-Sibi-Jacobabad roads.

Although, the authorities have partially restored the Quetta-Karachi highway, yet the people have been advised to avoid unnecessary traveling.

"My family is stuck in Dera Murad Jamli area of Naseerabad due to damaged infrastructure and I am helpless to reach there and bring them along," Abdul

Razaq, a government official in Quetta said.

It is yet another dilemma that most parts of the province are without gas, electricity, internet and cellular services.

Celebrating the deluge

More than likely, you have attended one or more weddings in this proverbially festive season. Or you may be set to attend one during the next few days. And if the wedding was within your close family, the usually week-long whirl of it is sure to have left you groggy - with fun?

Weddings in the middle and the upper middle class are always a spectacle, bearing gifts of many familial entanglements. Destination weddings, with their cinematic settings, belong in a different category and like other weddings were greatly subverted by two years of the pandemic pause.

My perspective here is restricted to Karachi, with its multiple flavours I suspect that the lifestyles of the Punjabi aristocracy, the crème de la crème of Pakistani society, would have their own expressions of glare and glory but the scene in Karachi is fairly opulent and it has touched, commercially and socially, a fairly large number of people. I am told that some high-end restaurants are fully booked for a number of weeks. Workers of tailoring shops have sleepless nights.

Talking of weddings, I want to underline two specific aspects. One is the higher than usual participation of family

members who live abroad. Though the threat of Covid lingers, in particular consequence of the ongoing Chinese experience, there is this sudden sense of liberation in international travel. An added incentive is the decline and fall of the Pakistani rupee. In short, you run into more Pakistani expatriates visiting their home country.

Another aspect of getting together at wedding receptions is the opportunity to share thoughts about the state of the nation and the temptation, in a sense, to cry on someone's shoulder. Your concerns and your moods do not change when you wear very expensive clothes and step into a perfumed environment of song and dance. You cannot ignore the reality of fear and disorder that lurks out there in the dreary streets of the city's sprawling neighbourhoods.

Frankly, this is not the occasion to do any justice to the alarming situation that is developing in Karachi in the context of law and order and crime. The social fabric is in tatters. The media is not paying much attention to this process of disintegration but the rich in Karachi can feel it in their bones. I had thought of picking out some incidents of this week, but they too are

hard to handle.

There are three separate faces of the worsening Karachi situation. There are reports almost on a daily basis of citizens being looted at gunpoint and being shot at when they resist, resulting in fatalities. One is advised to never challenge the muggers. One media clip this week showed how customers sitting out at an eatery in Gulshan-e-Iqbal meekly handed over their wallets and phones to two muggers, one of them carrying an automatic weapon. It seemed such a run-of-the-mill exercise.

Then, there are regular incidents of police encounters in suspicious circumstances that often lead to serious injuries or even deaths. Take the example of this headline on Wednesday: "Trigger-happy policemen shoot 'innocent' youth to death". But the most disturbing violence that has been repeated in Karachi is how the mob literally lynches suspected robbers. There was one incident recently when two employees of a telecommunication company were lynched by a mob in Machhar Colony when someone mistakenly accused them of trying to kidnap a child.

There is a message here that our rulers are not able to comprehend. The rise in militancy,

resulting in acts of terror, can easily prompt a meeting, say, of the high-powered National Security Committee (NSC) but the phenomenon of the instant formation of mobs that are ready to kill in anger in a total loss of reason seems beyond the intellectual grasp of those who occasionally assemble in the PM's Office.

But the rich - those who have amassed wealth mostly through unfair means - do have an inkling of what is happening. They are fearful of where we are headed. Meanwhile, they are trying to find an escape in conspicuous consumption. The current wedding season, in cases where fortunes are invested in a display of pomp and show, is one manifestation of the elite's confused state of mind.

As I have said, a large number of expatriates are visiting Pakistan, mainly to attend wedding functions. Their presence underlines another important trend that is increasingly influencing the Pakistani mind. It is the desire to leave this place and find refuge in some foreign country. This is a serious matter. I know some well-to-do families desperate for an exit route to a safe haven. Pakistan has become a great country to go away from.

By Ghazi Salahuddin

A recent PIDE survey finds that 37 per cent of the total population would like to leave the country if they are given an opportunity to do so. This is an astounding proportion. Next time you see a gathering of any kind, just think that more than one-third of them are already emotionally rootless in this country. According to the survey, the number of those who want to leave the country has increased with increasing incomes and higher standards of education.

I am conscious of the fact that this column is appearing on the first day of 2023 and a note of cheer about a Happy New Year would be in order. But the more I interact with people who appear to be well-informed and genuinely concerned about the current state of affairs, the more I tend to lose hope about what 2023 would bring for us.

For that matter, a sense of fatality is taking us into its grip because we have no control over what happens to us. All we can do is continue to watch this phenomenal contradiction between a bejeweled show of affluence and the mounting deprivations of the common people. Yet, the pity of it is the level of depression that you find among those who are in a celebratory mode.

Democracy in 2022

By Aasiya Riaz

As the world gears up to celebrate another trip around the sun, there is this innate human urge to review what we experienced in the year concluded. In Pakistan, this stock-taking should also include a review of how the system of democracy functioned in 2022 and what are the prospects of democratic consolidation in 2023.

There is agreement that the passage of the vote of no-confidence motion against the then prime minister, Mr Imran Khan, has had a major impact on the functioning of democracy in 2022. Ironically, this has unleashed both positive and negative implications for democracy in Pakistan.

A constitutional and democratic process of a vote of no-confidence was employed by the then-opposition parties to remove Mr Imran Khan from the office of prime minister. In procedural terms, an elected prime minister was removed by the will of his electorate in the National Assembly. Given its troubled history, Pakistan's democracy would certainly celebrate the small mercies thrown its way when the vote-count in the National Assembly sends a PM home and not the marching of boots that has traditionally packed up the entire system.

However, the negative aspect of the reality behind the VONC is that it was only successful because institutional support was withdrawn from

Mr Khan's government; no previous attempts to change any office holder in parliament were possible for the joint opposition until that support was made available to the motion of their vote of no-confidence against PM.

Mr Khan's departure from the PM House has opened the floodgates of political mayhem of new proportions for Pakistan's democracy. From political opponents to the media to state institutions, his populist communication strategy arsenal has been utilized to attack each perceived opponent at will. In response to his unrelenting assault on all, the joint opposition and their supporters, despite a lot of damning material against him, appear clueless on its effective utilization. Coupled with his populist rhetoric, his maneuvered ouster has resulted in greater public popularity for him. At the end of 2022, the apparent inability of the ruling coalition to arrest the economic chaos also proves that their unique selling point of 'experienced over novice' has also failed. There is little clarity on how to effectively govern the republic at the start of 2023 just as at the start of the previous year despite the tumultuous change brought about in 2022.

Another key institution of the state, parliament, has remained just as irrelevant to the process of democratic governance as ever during the year. Apart from its utilization

to steer a change of guard at the centre, its continued inability to resolve the political and governance crises facing the country is evident from the fact that political conflicts are either spilling onto the streets or their management is discussed elsewhere behind closed doors. Despite change in government, its sessions are generally called to hurriedly pass a required piece of legislation without leaving much room for consultation or discussion. Perhaps its worst period in terms of utter disregard for parliamentary sanctity and its rules was witnessed during the year as the VONC was managed by the outgoing presiding officers.

This ultimately led to the former deputy speaker dismissing the no-confidence motion as against Article 5 of the constitution, resulting in an unconstitutional dissolution of the National Assembly by the president on the advice of the PM. This was later set aside by the Supreme Court. The Punjab Assembly went a step ahead and made a spectacle through violence and disorder during the process of election of the chief minister.

Another constitutional pillar, the judiciary, has lost a serious opportunity during the year in formalizing a clear and transparent nomination and appointment criteria for judges to the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The year saw some unprecedented public display of disagreements.

Tales from the Mountains

By Jamil Akhtar

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

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

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

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

In addition to climate change, the increase in the human population has also adversely affected the environment. To reverse the effects of deforestation, thousands of poplar and fruit-



bearing trees including cherry, apple, and apricot have been planted all over the northern areas.

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

Wide Fund for Nature and Snow Leopard Foundation.

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

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

Tales from the Mountains

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

Planning power

By Shaheera Tahir

Energy planning in Pakistan is mostly carried out on an ad-hoc basis as a reaction to an urgent crisis. This hasty and short-sighted approach has not only caused irreversible damage to our environment and local communities but also exposed our national energy supply chain shocks.

Lack of attention to address the structural causes of growing illiquidity in the energy sector has further hampered its financial position. As a result, what we see today is a rather dysfunctional energy sector compromised on both environmental and economic grounds. Our expensive energy mix, heavily reliant on imported fossil fuels, and lower contribution by cheaper renewable energy resources such as wind and solar bear testament to such shortcomings.

The energy sector's swelling circular debt crossing over Rs2.5 trillion highlights the magnitude of the prevalent inefficiencies. In such circumstances, a long-term system-oriented planning centred at sustainable energy resources such as solar and wind is direly needed. The adoption of a systems approach is particularly important to unleash the true potential of solar and wind energy resources to

address issues of energy affordability, energy security and energy sustainability. Solar and wind energy resources are inherently intermittent energy sources, and for this reason they are also known as variable renewable energy (VRE) resources. In Pakistan their potential has remained neglectfully unexplored, misled by the deep-rooted belief of power planning institutions that their variability would cause additional costs for the system.

A mere six per cent share of VRE in the current installed generation capacity, and over 150 pending wind and solar power projects worth more than 8 GW reflect institutional reluctance towards VRE. Their feasibility is objected by unduly burdening them with system costs of the energy sector.

The 2021 State of Industry Report, issued by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), says, "while analyzing the financial viability of renewable energy resources, the intermittency cost arising out of the need for keeping back-up generation capacity as well as the affiliated transmission and construction costs must be accounted for to induct the appropriate share of RE in the generation mix." It further states: "the requirement of back-up arrangement for com-

plementing the intermittent power generation capacity ... increases CPP [capacity purchase price] on account of non-utilization of available capacity of base-load thermal power plants".

It is important to understand our power system elements, their relevant characteristics and inter-connections to ascertain the validity of such cost attributions towards VRE. The key components of our power system are power producers, central power purchasing agency (CPPA-G), power distribution companies (DISCOs) and power consumers.

According to the Nepra report, if VRE share increases, the existing thermal power plants will be underutilized, resulting in increased capacity payments to the thermal fleet. However, the 'take or pay' nature of power purchase agreements between thermal power producers and the central power purchasing agency (CPPA-G), necessitates capacity payments irrespective of their utilization. Moreover, the clauses of minimum off-take guarantee baked into power purchase agreements, such as seen in recent coal-fired generators, translate into additional penalties. So, the portrayal that capacity payments to the existing thermal fleet will increase as a result of increased VRE share is misleading.

Gunshots fired at PML-N leader's house in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Gunshots were fired at the house of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Irfan Qureshi situated in Islamabad's Sector 1-9/4 in the 1-9 police precincts, police said on Sunday.

The police registered a case of the incident on the complaint of the PML-N leader.

The First Information Report (FIR) stated that Irfan Qureshi was out for

election campaign when the gunshots were fired at his house.

"A few days ago, a person named Zafar Iqbal threatened me with dire consequences on a phone call," the FIR read.

The claims of fool-proof security arrangements on the New Year's night were left in tatters, for the house of the PML-N leader was near the police station.

The incident also sent a

wave of shock and fear among the residents of the area. The police were, however, investigating the incident.

The First Information Report (FIR) stated that Irfan Qureshi was out for election campaign when the gunshots were fired at his house.

"A few days ago, a person named Zafar Iqbal threatened me with dire consequences on a phone call," the FIR .INP



LAHORE: Women are busy in buying old books at Nila Gumbad area, in Provincial Capital.

CPEC created 192,000 jobs for Pakistanis: Nong Rong

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has created 192,000 jobs, 6000MW of power supply, 510 km of highway, and 886 km of transmission line, which laid a solid foundation for Pakistan's socio-economic development, according to Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong. According to Gwadar Pro, he was speaking at the Awarding Ceremony for Outstanding Pakistani Staff of the CPEC Projects 2022, held in the Chinese Embassy.

Ambassador Nong Rong said that a series of good news are coming from different sectors under the CPEC umbrella.

The China-aided Eastbay Expressway of Gwadar port has begun operation since June, enhancing connectivity of the port, which is now

transporting two hundred thousand tonnes of fertilizer. Karot Hydropower started commercial operation in June as well, which provides cheap and clean electricity, and can reduce 3.5 million metric tons of carbon emissions annually. The TEL and Nova power plants in Thar also started operations with the local coal. The Shanghai Electric Thar coal-based power plant has been connected to the national grid. Six model farms under Pakistan-China Red Chilli Contract Farming Project are achieving a harvest in Punjab and Sindh Province, with an estimated yield of 700 tons of dried chilli. This is just a portrayal of the great potential of agricultural cooperation between our two countries. In fact, Pakistan's trade

surplus of agricultural products for the year 2021 enjoyed an increase of 13 times. This year is expected to exceed a record high of US\$ 1 billion. The ambassador said that the CPEC is not possible without the joint efforts of staff from both China and Pakistan. According to him, CPEC, as the pilot project of BRI and China-Pakistan cooperation in the new era, will always provide a broad stage for people to display their talents and realize personal values. It is hoped that the Chinese and Pakistani staff will cherish the opportunity, contribute to the construction of the CPEC with practical actions, and continue to consolidate the iron friendship between China and Pakistan. INP

KP moves to ensure food security, cut reliance on other provinces: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Food security is the most challenging issue in Pakistan after the recent heavy monsoon floods which washed away millions of acres of agricultural land countrywide. To overcome food security in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, the provincial government has taken some pragmatic steps.

A spokesperson for the KP food department told WealthPK that the flood has adversely affected almost every farmer causing food shortages in the country.

The provincial government has taken pragmatic measures to ensure food security to help reduce dependency on the other provinces. The floods destroyed almost 60% of crops, vegetables and fruits. The land of all the four provinces is very fertile and produces fruits, vegetables and crops of the finest quality.

He further said the KP government was the first to have introduced small, medium and long-term policies to overcome the problem of food security. Kisan cards have been introduced to help the farmers by providing them with subsidies on agricultural products.

The food department

spokesperson said Chashma Right Bank Lift Canal (CRBC) project was also in the pipeline, which, on completion, would bring hundreds of thousands of acres of barren land under cultivation in the southern districts.

The initiatives for agriculture and livestock in settled districts include the reclamation of 4,185 acres for agricultural purposes. They also include the lining of 39,095 meters of waterways, training 2,500 farmers in advanced technologies, and establishing 228 fish farms for trout and carp.

He said some clean drinking water projects were also in the pipeline, including 1463 water schemes in the last four years. As many as 646 water supply schemes have been solarized, while 831 schemes have been completed in the sanitation sector during the past four years in the settled districts alone.

"The flood has damaged almost 14,397 acres of land in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), depriving it of a number of major crops, such as fruit orchards, rice, potato crops, and oil seeds. The loss of maize crops has been estimated at about Rs368.09 million in KP. Out of a total of 15,930

acres, 938 acres have been damaged by the flood causing a financial loss of Rs145.28 million," he added.

He said the agriculture sector was a vital component of Pakistan's economy, as it provided raw materials to the industries and helped in poverty alleviation. The agriculture sector's growth is contingent on favourable weather conditions, he added.

The official said monsoon rains had long been wreaking havoc on Pakistan in terms of human casualties and destruction of already fragile infrastructures but climate change had further increased their frequency, ferocity and unpredictability in recent years. The food department spokesperson said Chashma Right Bank Lift Canal (CRBC) project was also in the pipeline, which, on completion, would bring hundreds of thousands of acres of barren land under cultivation in the southern districts.

The initiatives for agriculture and livestock in settled districts include the reclamation of 4,185 acres for agricultural purposes. They also include the lining of 39,095 meters of waterways, training 2,500 INP

Services of CM Pervaiz Elahi for Islam to be remembered for long: Chuhan

LAHORE: Spokesman of Punjab government, Fiaz ul Hassan Chuhan has said that services of Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi who always played key role for 'Khatam-e-Nabuwat' and 'Namooos-e-Risalat' would be remembered for long.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that establishing first 'Khatam-ul-Nabiyeen University' in the province was a great achievement for two million countrymen and entire Muslim Ummah.

Fiaz ul Hassan Chuhan said that one billion rupees have been allocated for the University.

It was hoped that Khatam-ul-Nabiyeen University will become a great institution regarding research on 'seerat' of

Holy Prophet Peace Be Upon Him (P.B.U.H), he added.

The Spokesman termed that setting up of Khatam-ul-Nabiyeen University by Punjab Chief Minister as continuation of services of PTI Imran Khan for Islam.

He said that entire nation highly esteems the services of Pervaiz Elahi for Islam.

Fiaz-ul-Hassan Chuhan said that we all need to play role for 'Khatam-e-Nabuwat' and 'Namooos-e-Risalat'.

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Tree persons murdered after abduction in Khairpur

KHAIRPUR: Three persons were murdered after being kidnapped in Kahirpur on Sunday.

According to police, unidentified armed men kidnapped three persons riding a motorcycle and killed them.

Their bodies were recovered from Kacha area. After murdering them, the kidnappers informed their families on phone.

Those who had been murdered belonged to the Otha community. A father and son were also among those who died. They were identified as Ghulam Rasool and Ghulam Abbas.

The families of the deceased informed the police that the kidnappers had phoned them after burying the dead bodies of the deceased in the Kacha area.

The kidnappers belonged to the Jatoli community, police said. INP

Children among 33 injured in New Year aerial firing in Karachi

KARACHI: At least 33 people, including women and children, were injured in the aerial firing on New Year's evening in different areas of Karachi.

Karachi reverberated with celebratory gunfire Sunday night despite a restriction on aerial firing. Authorities had warned violators would be booked under murder charges.

An official said the police led a crackdown against miscreants who were involved in aerial firing, and during their operations, they arrested more than 15 suspects in the city, including two police personnel and four security guards. Apart from this, at least two people were also lost their lives in road racing accidents. INP

10,000 hoarded sacks of fertilizer seized

CHISHTIAN: The assistant commissioner on Sunday raided a fertilizer godown in Chishtian, a city in Bahawalnagar, Punjab, and recovered hoarded 10,000 sacks.

As per details, Assistant Commissioner Rana Ghulam Murtaza raided a fertilizer godown located at Sugar Mill Road in Punjab's Chishtian. During the action as many as 10,000 hoarded fertilizer sacks were recovered from the godown. The recovered fertilizer sacks are worth Rs50 million in the open market. INP



HYDERABAD: Ameer Jamat-e-Islami Siraj ul Huq addressing to "Baldyati Convention" at Bagh-e-Mustafa ground Hyderabad.

Faez Isa to succeed CJP Bandial as 14 judges set to retire in 2023

ISLAMABAD: One judge of the Supreme Court and the Lahore High Court (LHC) each and 12 district and sessions judges from the district courts of the country are going to retire this year.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial will retire on September 16, 2023 after attaining the age of 65 years.

Following his retirement, Justice Qazi Faez Isa will take over as Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) on September 17, 2023.

Justice Safdar Saleem Shahid of Lahore High Court (LHC) will retire on July 31, 2023 after attaining the age of 62 years.

Lahore Labour Court Judge Tahir Nawaz Khan will retire on March 9, 2023 on attaining the age of 60 years.

Sessions Judge Muhammad Masroor Khan, who had been made OSD, will retire on March 20, 2023.

Sessions Judge Akhtar Chughtai will retire on March 26, 2023. Sessions Judge Ashfaq Ahmad Rana, who had been OSD, will retire on April 3, 2023.

Sessions Judge Muhammad Azam will retire on April 9, Sessions Judge Khadim Hussain on April 14, Sessions Judge Abdul Haq on May 24, DG District Judiciary Lahore High Court Amir Muhammad Khan on

May 31, Sessions Judge Rao Abdul Jabbar on July 4, Sessions Judge Pervaiz Akhtar on July 31, District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Younis Aziz on August 31, and Sessions Judge Muhammad Iram Ayaz will retire on October 16.

Justice Safdar Saleem Shahid of Lahore High Court (LHC) will retire on July 31, 2023 after attaining the age of 62 years.

Lahore Labour Court Judge Tahir Nawaz Khan will retire on March 9, 2023 on attaining the age of 60 years.

Sessions Judge Muhammad Masroor Khan, who had been made OSD, will retire on March 20, 2023. INP

Cold, dry weather expected in most parts of country

ISLAMABAD: Cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country, while very cold in upper parts and north Balochistan.

Dense fog is likely to occur in Punjab, upper Sindh and plain areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Frost is expected in Pothohar region during Sunday morning. Temperatures of some major cities recorded this morning: Islamabad, Peshawar and Muzaffarabad three degree centigrade, Lahore ten, Karachi thirteen, Quetta and Gilgit minus one and Murree one degree centigrade.

According to Met Office forecast for Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, very cold and dry weather is expected in Srinagar, Leh, Pulwama, Anantnag, Shopian and Baramulla while cold and dry in Jammu. Temperature recorded this morning: Srinagar, Pulwama and Baramulla one degree centigrade, Jammu eight, Leh minus fourteen, Anantnag three and Shopian minus one degree centigrade. During the last twenty-four hours, cold and dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country, while very cold in the upper parts and north Balochistan. INP

PTI to run countrywide campaign against unbridled inflation: Asad Umar

KARACHI: PTI leader and former federal minister Asad Umar on Sunday said the PTI would run countrywide campaign against mounting inflation as the nation has come across a flood of rising prices [in the last eight months of the PDM government].

Addressing a presser in the provincial capital, he said the 13-party gang of PDM ran anti-inflation campaign against the PTI government and promised to control the prices, but they had fully exposed now. The minister said per kg milk was being sold in Rs200 presently, but it was Rs130 per kg in the PTI's tenure. Similarly he said the edible oil had witnessed 33 per cent increase. Umar said the country had been passing through testing times, hoping that 2023 elections would end the political uncertainty prevailing in the country. INP



LAHORE: People are busy in buying warm clothes alongside a road at Impress Market during foggy weather, in Provincial Capital.

Sindh Govt to take legal action against Fawad Ch

KARACHI: Sindh Local Government (LG) Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has decided to take legal action against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry for accusing him of 'horse-trading'. According to details, the provincial minister announced that he would serve a legal notice to Fawad Chaudhry for

accusing him of horse-trading in Punjab. "He (Fawad) is trying to harm my reputation," Nasir Hussain Shah said, asking the former federal minister to blame party Chairman Imran Khan for 'political misadventure' in Punjab.

He also asked the PTI leader to file first information report (FIR) against the two Sindh ministers

and provide evidence of the allegations. "PTI's days are gone when they used to get people arrested in false cases", said Nasir Hussain Shah. Earlier in the day, Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon also announced to send a legal notice to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry for accusing him of 'horse-trading'. INP

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Communication Department District Jhal Magsi invites sealed percentage rates tenders based on Composite Schedule of Rates, 2018 Government of Balochistan amended up-to-date from interested contractors/firms for the mentioned below:- Earnest Money 2% in shape of call deposit, Tender Fee Rs.2000/- (in shape of green challan form deposited in head of account C-02716 and time limit 12 working Months

S.No.	Name of Work	E/Cost	E/Money
1	WIDENING & REHABILITATION OF BT ROAD FROM KONARATO KHARILENGTH 4 KM, JHAL MAGSI/FSDP NO. 902/2022-2023 (PROJECT I.D.22022.1320) TSE222312209433	Rs.98.964-M	Rs.1.980-M

ONLY ELECTRIC BID WILL BE SUBMITTED, NO PHYSICAL BID IS REQUIRED.

The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Rules, 2014 & Pakistan Engineering Council By-Laws. BASIC ELIGIBILITY: The contractors must have valid Registration of firm with PEC in category C-4 and above with specialization codes CE01, CE02 and CE10 Code in relevant discipline and registration along with till date renewal with Tax Authorities i.e. (NTN, Sales Tax Department and BRA), where applicable. The prospect bidder(s) must meet the eligibility / qualifying criteria as mentioned in the bidding document (Two years Relevant work Experience and Financial Capabilities / Turn-over of Last Two Year). METHOD OF PROCUREMENT: Single Stage - Two Envelope Bidding Procedure BIDDING/TENDER DOCUMENTS ISSUANCE: The bidder(s) can obtain the bidding documents from the address mentioned below in office working hours on production of green challan form for an amount of Rs.2000/- (NON REFUNDABLE) deposited in the head of account C02716 through Government Treasury/National Bank of Pakistan OR can be downloaded from website of BPPRA (www.bppra.gov.pk), under TSE Nos. given against each work above from the date of publication of this invitation in newspapers till the last date of submission on 17/01/2023 until 12.00 hrs. The contractors/firms who obtain bidding document by downloading them from BPPRA website will also be required to produce deposited green challan form of above mentioned fee. The bids must accompany Bid Security with "Technical Bid" for the work in the form of Call at Deposit above in the name of the undersigned from a Scheduled Bank. Bid security if not found in technical bid envelope the bid will not be taken into account for evaluation and will be rejected straightforwardly. DEAD LINE OF SUBMISSION: The bids (Technical and Financial) in two separate sealed envelopes clearly marked with work Title & Type of Proposal, prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the bidding document must be delivered by hand or through registered mail at the address mentioned below on or before 17/01/2023 at 12.00 hrs. OPENING OF BID(S): Envelope containing "Technical Bid" along with bid security will be opened on the same day i.e. 17/01/2023 at 13.00 hrs before Procurement Committee in the presence of Bidders or their Authorized representatives who choose to attend as specified in the bidding document. Second Envelope containing "Financial Bid" of technically qualified bidder(s) will be opened later, the date of which will be communicated after evaluation of the Technical Bids. Financial Proposals of Technically non-qualified bidders will not be opened and thus will be returned sealed/unopened. Place of issuance, submission, inquiries and opening will be Address:- Executive Engineer CW/PP&H Department (Roads) District Jhal Magsi at Gandawah. TELEPHONE NO:- 0837-430089. E-Mail: xenjhalmagasicommunicationoffice@gmail.com BID VALIDITY PERIOD: Ninety (90 days). TERMS & CONDITIONS:- Terms and conditions are mentioned (incorporated) in detail in bidding documents. A procuring agency may cancel the bidding process at any time prior to acceptance of bid or proposal, as per provision in BPPRA, rule 2014.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CW/PP&H (COMMUNICATION) DEPTT: JHAL MAGSI AT GANDAWAH

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Pakistan Railways replacing outdated manual system through digitization: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Railways (PR) is installing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system as part of its continuous efforts to abandon its outdated manual system and fully automate and digitize its operations, reports WealthPK.

For the implementation of the ERP digital system, the Pakistan Railways has signed an agreement with Telemarks Consulting Pvt. Ltd.

The installation of ERP system will promote innovation, openness, and direct management, according to a spokesperson for the Pakistan

Railways. To give travelers access to contemporary amenities, this system was desperately needed. The ERP system will help reduce resource usage and save time.

The installation of ERP system will assist the Pakistan Railways in deciding more wisely. Likewise, railroads will run more efficiently. Additionally, direct monitoring of income and expenses will be possible and all railway tenders will be conducted in a fair, open, and merit-based manner.

The employees' service-related tasks will be

carried out more effectively. Additionally, digital records for former railway employees are also being computerized.

According to a report of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), it is estimated that 50 per cent of ticketing is now electronic, but the department still lacks an ERP system that integrates all the processes from end to end. There is also a delay of 60 days in the flow of financial information within the enterprise.

The government expects to complete the first phase of ERP in approximately three

months. In the first phase of the ERP implementation, the railway operations will be completely paperless. A dashboard will be available to the chief executive officers, the secretary, and the minister to monitor all the data generated electronically.

WealthPK research indicates that ERP is a process by which businesses manage and integrate various aspects of their operations. Several ERP software applications provide the companies with the ability to implement resource planning by integrating all the processes necessary to

operate their companies into a single system.

Moreover, it is commendable that the state-owned enterprise has made an effort to switch to ERP. The implementation of ERP will enhance transparency and effectiveness, as well as reduce expenditure by promoting an environment-friendly paper-free culture. This system will revolutionize the entire process of hiring and releasing pensions of employees and increase the level of confidence among all the stakeholders, thereby improving the efficiency of the PR. INP

Politicians felicitate nation, pledge Pakistan's prosperity in 2023

ISLAMABAD: As the new year began on Sunday, President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other politicians felicitated the nation and prayed for the development, progress and prosperity of Pakistan. In his message, the president said the nation faced various challenges last year but "overcame difficult situations due to the hard work, sacrifice, determination and resilience."

"In the new year, as a nation, we must set our priorities correctly to overcome the challenges facing the nation," he added. He furthered that Pakistan needs national solidarity, unity, discipline, persistent hard work, passion and dedication to making the country prosperous, developed, democratic and stable.

In his message, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hoped that the new year would prove to be the year of ending hunger, war, terrorism, crime, sectarianism and class division from the whole world, including Pakistan. The premier also said that 2022 was "a tough year for Pakistan."

"The worst flooding in history aggravated our economic challenges. My resolve for the New Year is to use my energy & time to get people out of difficulties, rehabilitate flood victims & put Pakistan on the path to growth & stability," the PM added.

Meanwhile, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murriz Khan Aurangzeb wished the nation a "happy New Year" and prayed that "2023 proves to be a salve for the wounds of humanity, get rid of inflation, terrorism, injustice, lies and hatred". Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in his message to the nation said: "Year 2022: it was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Imran furthered that a government "with the best economic performances was removed through a conspiracy," and that the "country was handed over to a bunch of criminals". The PTI chief lashed out at the incumbent government and said "they ran [the] economy to the ground and gave themselves NRO2". He furthered that he has "faith in Almighty Allah and confidence in our people that without [a] doubt in 2023 through elections PTI will form [a] strong government".

Moreover, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that in the outgoing year "people marched, parliament triumphed over the selected, we came together to save [Pakistan]". "2023 will be the year hope triumphs over hate, truth over lies & Unity triumphs over division," he added.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman also remembered the flood affectees and said that "we must not forget about all those in need of help and support to get back on their feet from the worst floods the world has seen". INP



LAHORE: Members of the Punjab Assembly Malik Qasim Hunjra calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Rashid endorses COAS's viewpoint of national consensus on economy, terrorism

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Sunday backed the point view of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir that a national consensus is required on economy and terrorism.

Taking to Twitter, he said the country was passing through a critical juncture at the moment, adding the issues of political instability and financial crunch had now become the issues of national security.

Rashid further said the people of Pakistan, democracy and military were part of each other. He said only general elections could bring political stability in the country and that the only Pakistan Army could hold elections.

The minister indicated that next 120 days were crucial [for the political situation of Pakistan]. INP

Pakistan reports 21 coronavirus cases in 24 hours

LAHORE: Pakistan has reported no death in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of confirmed positive cases surged to 1,575,806. The nationwide tally of fatalities stood at 30,636 on Sunday.

According to the latest figures issued by the National Institute of Health (NIH), at least 21 people were tested positive for Covid across the country in the past 24 hours.

Pakistan has conducted 4,135 tests in the past 24 hours, out of which 21 people were tested positive. The Covid positivity ratio was recorded at 0.51 per cent. INP

Shopkeepers fined over profiteering

FAISALABAD: Price control magistrates have imposed a total fine of Rs.45,000/- on 17 shopkeepers on charge of profiteering in addition to arresting one other on sheer violation of law in different parts of Faisalabad.

A spokesman of local administration said here on Saturday, the magistrates checked 1054 shops in different markets and bazaars of Faisalabad and found 17 shopkeepers involved in overcharging and profiteering. Therefore, a total fine of Rs.45,000/- was imposed on them in addition to issuing warning that they would be sent behind bars if they did not mend their way of profiteering.

Meanwhile, the magistrates also arrested on shopkeeper and got cases registered against two others on sheer violation of price Control Act. Further action against them was under progress, he added. INP

EU ban on PIA flights will end soon

ISLAMABAD: A major development has been made on Sunday in the way to lift the ban on PIA flights to the European countries. Sources informed that the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has decided to conduct an audit of the Pakistan International Airline. The EASA will hold an online audit of the PIA on March 7. It will check PIA's flight safety, flight engineering, flight operation and other measures. Sources further said that if the PIA audit was successful, the EASA team would visit Pakistan and conduct further audit of the Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The PIA spokesperson stated that all the preparations related to the online audit of the EASA were completed and he expressed his optimism that there were bright chances that after the successful audit. INP

Floodwater still standing in Sindh, Balochistan districts

KHAIRPIR: The water of last year's unprecedented floods still standing in flood-hit areas of Sindh and Balochistan provinces. Federal government has received reports on floodwater drainage from provinces, sources said. The water could not be completely discharged from flood-stricken areas and water still standing in 10 districts, sources said.

Floodwater still standing in Khairpur, Badin, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Umartkot, Dadu, Qambar-Shahdadkot, Mirpur Khas, Shaheed Benazirabad and Naushehro Feroz districts of Sindh, according to sources. They, however, said that 85 percent water drainage has been completed in flood-hit areas of the province.

According to sources, six-inch to two-foot deep floodwater still standing in flood ravaged districts of Sindh. Floodwater also standing in Sohbatpur and Jaffarabad districts of Balochistan. Around one-foot-deep water standing at

some places in Sohbatpur and Jaffarabad districts.

The water has been completely drained out from flood-hit areas of KP and Punjab, according to sources. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah in December claimed that flood water from eighty percent affected areas has been drained out while efforts are being made to ensure revival of educational activities in the province.

He said a donor's conference will be held next year so that the flood-affected people are compensated in a better way. It is to be mentioned here that flood affected people have filed petitions in Sindh High Court circuit bench Sukkur over failure of district officers in floodwater drainage from various areas of Sukkur, Khairpur and Naushehro Feroz districts. "The water has been standing for last four months even it has not been drained out from schools," Advocate Shabbir Shar told to the court. INP

10th anniversary of CPEC crucial to Pakistan's economy: Speakers

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar opined that Pakistan needs to revisit its geopolitical strategic and economic framework in the context of the changing world landscape, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. They said that Pakistan will be marking ten years of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) in 2023, which is pivotal to its economic security. According to Gwadar Pro on Sunday, the webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) on Saturday, the New Year's Eve. The theme of the webinar was "Pakistan's geopolitical repositioning in 2023". Munir Ahmed, Executive Director, Devcom-Pakistan said that China has established partnerships and projected its influence by utilizing the huge resources at its disposal. "As an important pilot project for the joint construc-

tion of "Belt and Road Initiative", CPEC has achieved fruitful and remarkable results. It has brought US\$25.4 billion in investment to Pakistan and created a total of 190,000 jobs, it was learned. In 2023, we should give full play to the role of CPEC as a critical engine of Pakistan's economic development." On the occasion, Chairman Senate Standing Committee of Defense Production Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed highlighted that Pakistan must pursue its role as a hub for regional connectivity, while strengthening ties with its core partners like China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

He added that "most importantly, Pakistan needs a 'political ceasefire' at home on key issues like economy, extremism, education, so that people get a respite from this unending polarization and continuing quest for power." INP

Divorced woman killed by younger brother over domestic issues

KARACHI: A youth gunned down his divorced elder sister over domestic issues and fled the scene, police said on Sunday.

According to details, 35-year-old Rukhsana d/o Mirza Jan after being divorced was staying with her parent's home near Paracha graveyard, Qasba Colony Orangi Town Karachi.

An exchange of hot words took place brother and sister over domestic issues after which accused Rashid gunned down Rukhsana and fled the scene.

The body was shifted to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital where it was handed over to heirs after post-mortem.

The police after registering a case against the murderer started raids for his arrest. A youth gunned down his divorced elder sister over domestic issues and fled the scene, police said on Sunday. According to details, 35-year-old Rukhsana d/o Mirza Jan after being divorced. INP



Islamabad: 2022 annual real estate of J Seven Group Chairman Maqbool Hussain, CEO Yasin Mehsud, GM Sales Zafar Abbas and others.

'Smart farming' can help boost Pakistan's agriculture output: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Using the 'smart Internet of Things (IoT) farming solutions' can help farmers increase their production.

Talking to WealthPK, Zubair Ahmed, a scientific officer at the National Agriculture Research Centre (NARC), said the IoT application in the agriculture sector was making farming more profitable. "Extreme weather conditions, climate changes and environmental impacts are some of the challenges faced by the agriculture sector in meeting growing food demand, and IoT is helping tackle these challenges."

"Smart farming is a hi-tech, efficient and sustainable approach to agriculture. This is achieved by applying innovative technologies within the agriculture process from preparing the soil for planting to harvesting crops. In this process, devices are integrated with the cloud technology to provide valuable real-time insights about the crops to farmers," he explained.

Zubair Ahmed said, "the IoT system can detect real-time weather conditions like humidity, rainfall, temperature, and wind conditions very accurately. The data collected thus help farmers choose the right crops to grow and sustain, and quickly act if weather conditions become unfavourable."

"Apart from that, IoT applications are also being used for precise farming, Livestock monitoring, vehicle tracking, field observation, and inventory monitoring all enable farmers to analyse information and take informed and quick decisions."

The NARC scientist further explained, "farmers can

also analyse soil, water, and nutrient conditions to increase farming effectiveness and efficiency."

"IoT applications in the agricultural industry have made farming more efficient, effective, and sustainable."

Zubair Ahmed said the concept behind IoT is about connecting just about everything to the internet in real-time, which directly improves our quality of life and experiences.

"Sensors are becoming the endpoints of IoT networks. They collect data and information such as location, images, and weather conditions and inject them into networks, actuators, and applications in real time."

"IoT is a massive network of interconnected devices. These gadgets collect and disseminate information about their usage and operating environment. Sensors, which are present in all physical devices, are used in every step of the process," he said.

In this regard, Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, has set up 'Smart IoT Farm' at the University Research Farm in Koot, Gujjar Khan, to help farmers become aware of their crops' demands in real time.

At the opening of IoT farm, the agriculture minister of Punjab requested the vice-chancellors of other universities to develop such farms in order to promote digital and precision agriculture in Pakistan.

The minister said that Pakistan could achieve self-sufficiency in agricultural production and export agricultural goods by encouraging digital farming. INP

Wolves devour five dozen sheep in Kasur attack

KASUR: A pack of wild wolves attacked a shepherd's flock of sheep in a Kasur village early Sunday.

Around 60 sheep were attacked and were torn into pieces when a pack of wild wolves raided the shepherd Zafar Ali's cattle farm on a foggy night.

The wild canines ran away after being chased by the local people but not before causing huge loss to the shepherd.

The incident panicked and frightened the locals who demanded a concrete action to curb the menace posed by blood-thirsty animals.

The distraught shepherd claimed that he was breeding the sheep for sacrifice and that they were worth millions of rupees.

Saddar police and the Wildlife Department reached the spot following the incident and examined the cattle farm. INP

Pakistan, India exchange lists of nuclear installations, facilities

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India have exchanged lists of nuclear installations and facilities under the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities.

The Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India was signed on 31st December 1988 and ratified on 27th January 1991.

The Agreement, inter alia, provides that both countries shall inform each other of their nuclear installations and facilities, falling within its definition, on 1st January of each calendar year.

Pursuant to the Agreement, the list of nuclear installations and facilities in Pakistan was officially handed over to a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday.

Simultaneously, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of India's nuclear installations and facilities to a representative of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

The practice of exchanging lists has been continuing since 1st January 1992. INP

Chinese brands shine as Pakistan made around 20 million phones in 2022

ISLAMABAD: In 2022, with the leading role of Chinese manufacturing companies, Pakistan has locally assembled/manufactured about 20 million mobile phones in the country, which outnumbered phones imported from other countries.

Gowder Pro on Sunday quoting Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)'s data, stated that between January and November, the locally assembled/manufactured phones include 11.5 million 2G sets while the number of smartphones is 8.2 million.

On average, manufacturing per month during the first 11 months of the year is 1.8 million phones; thus, the inclusion of December data will bring the overall data to over 20 million phones in 2022.

In 2022, like the previous two years,

Chinese companies are amongst the top local manufacturing/assembly brands.

The PTA data shows that a Chinese mobile company manufactured/assembled 2.74 million; VGO TEL which is a subsidiary of Transion Holdings manufactured 2.10 million phones; China's Vivo manufactured/assembled 1.66 million phones while Infinix, another subsidiary of Transion Holdings, manufactured/assembled 1.61 million phones. Similarly, Oppo has manufactured 1.30 million phones while TECNO has assembled/manufactured 1.05 million phones.

Due to the local assembly/manufacturing of mobile devices, Pakistan has saved foreign exchange reserves, which the country's economic system badly needs. INP



KARACHI: Fireworks light up the sky during the new year celebrations in Provincial Capital.

Pakistan, India exchange nuclear facility lists

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India have officially exchanged annual lists of their nuclear installations and facilities under the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities.

The Foreign Office Spokesperson in a statement in Islamabad said, "Pursuant to the Agreement, the list of nuclear installations and facilities in Pakistan was officially handed over to a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Simultaneously, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of India's nuclear installations and facilities to a representative of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi."

The Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India was signed on 31st December 1988 and ratified on 27th January 1991.

The Agreement, inter alia, provides that both countries shall inform each other of their nuclear installations and facilities, falling within its definition, on 1st January of each calendar year. INP

Establishment of stitching units to promote self-employment in KP: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Investment Facilitation Centre (KPIFC) is soliciting proposals for setting up modern industrial stitching units to promote self-employment and boost the textile apparel industry in the province, reports WealthPK. In the first phase of the project, 150 industrial stitching units out of a total of 1,000 will be established across the country. The estimated cost of the project is Rs350.545 million. The Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), under the Ministry of Industries and Production, will execute the project. The mandate of the project includes fostering public-private partnerships to increase value addition in the textile apparel industry by developing industrial stitching units and supporting small and medium-sized businesses. In addition, a matching grant of 60% will be given under the initiative to cover the cost of the machinery needed to set up an industrial stitching unit through the funds of the Public Sector

Development Programme (PSDP). Relevant SMEs will be responsible for bearing the remaining 40% of the cost.

The National Textile University, Faisalabad, has also offered to impart training to SMEs. Ijaz Ali, a research associate at the Centre for Business and Economic Research, told WealthPK that the initiative focused on skill development as a method of fostering self-employment. He said that the project would help to improve the living standard of the targeted population by providing them with means of livelihood. The initiative will also help to increase exports of the textile industry. "The project will empower the targeted communities and allow them to initiate and control their own development," said Ijaz Ali. He said that the export of textile products from the country grew by 4% and its volume reached \$4.584 billion in the first quarter of the current fiscal as compared to \$4.421 billion in the corresponding period of the previous financial year. INP