

QUETTA VOICE

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First nationwide anti-polio drive begins



Shahid Afridi sports complex establishes in Quetta

Balochistan polio free for last 2 years: CS Balochistan

Mir Salam Jomezai

QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili, on Monday said the province was polio-free for the last two years because of the sacrifices and struggle of polio workers and masses. The CS kicked off a seven-day anti-polio campaign in Balochistan. The Chief of the Emergency Operation Cell (EOC), Syed Zahid Shah, and other officials were also present on the occasion.

The Balochistan health department formed over 11,000 teams to make sure the provision of polio drops to children under the age of five years. The provincial government has evolved a strict security plan to provide security to all polio volunteers and workers to ensure their security during the campaign.

Progress made in eradicating the crippling virus

"Progress has been made in eradicating the crippling virus from Balochistan", Abdul Aziz Uqaili said. He said last year two policemen were also martyred by mis-



creants during the campaign. He said earlier even some of the government employees were refusing to administer polio drops to

their children. Now refusals decreased, he said.

The CS stated that government employees were issued show cause notices

and apprised them about the importance of immunization. He said especially the front-line polio workers played a key role in the

eradication of the crippling virus from Balochistan.

Media, religious scholars play an important role: CS

Abdul Aziz Uqaili urged the parents to cooperate with polio teams and make sure to administer polio drops to their children. He said the media, civil society and religious scholars also play an important role in creating awareness among the masses about the polio virus.

Syed Zahid Shah, the coordinator of the Emergency Operation Cell, said in a statement that during the seven-day anti-polio campaign, the target of immunizing more than 2.5 million children up to five years of age has been set. Around 11 thousand 28 teams will participate during this campaign, including 8 thousand 998 mobile teams, 948 fixed sites, and 575 transit points. During the campaign, vitamin A drops will also be administered to the children.

Senior lawyer Latif Afridi succumbs to injuries in Peshawar court attack

Monitoring Desk

Senior lawyer, Abdul Latif Afridi was killed in a firing incident inside the

Peshawar High Court after the attack.

Latif Afridi remained the President Supreme Court Bar Association



Peshawar High Court on Monday afternoon. Police sources said Latif Afridi was seriously injured in a firing incident inside the Peshawar court. Police sources said the senior lawyer has been rushed to Lady Reading hospital for medical treatment. The senior lawyer breathed his last on his way to the hospital. Police sources said that the attacker has been detained by policemen inside the court premises. Latif Afridi received six bullets, initial police investigation reveals. Scores of the members of the legal fraternity reached the

(SCBA), a well-known political and human rights activist in the country. Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo strongly condemned the killing of Latif Afridi in Peshawar High Court. In a statement issued after the incident, Mr. Bizenjo said Latif Afridi has always struggled for the supremacy of the constitution and democracy in the country. He expressed condolences with the broken family members and prayed that may Allah rest the departed soul in peace.

Shahid Afridi sports complex establishes in Quetta

Sports Desk

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo

ing a platform to the youth of the province to show their skills, Mr. Bizenjo added. At the occasion of the opening ceremony of



and Shahid Afridi laid the foundation stone of the Shahid Afridi Sports complex at Saryab road Quetta on Monday. The Cricket Academy established at Saryab Sports Complex is a joint effort of the Government of Balochistan and the Shahid Afridi Foundation. Provincial Ministers, Members of the Assembly, and the Chief Secretary of Balochistan also participated in the ceremony. "I welcome Shahid Afridi on his arrival here," the Chief Minister stated. Today is a big day that we are provid-

the sports complex, the CM Balochistan said, "there is no dearth of talent among the youth of Balochistan". The youth of the province is more fond of the game of cricket, the CM added.

Mr. Bizenjo determined that the provincial government will fully cooperate with the Shahid Afridi Foundation to make the cricket academy functional in three months. "Shahid Afridi Foundation's interest in promoting the game of cricket in the province is welcome," Chief Minister lamented.

First nationwide anti-polio drive begins

ISLAMABAD: The first national immunization campaign of the year begins across the country on Monday, to vaccinate children under five years of age against the crippling disease of polio.

According to official sources, over 100,000 trained and dedicated "Sehat muhafiz" are taking part in the vaccination drive to inoculate the targeted children at their doorstep.

On this occasion, Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel said Pakistan has made great strides in the fight against polio, reducing the virus circulation to only one small part of the country in Southern

districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said the country is quite close to elimination of polio virus.

Coordinator of the National Emergency Operation Centre Dr. Shahzad Baig said high-risk districts will be top priority during the anti-polio campaign. In Punjab, a five-day anti-polio campaign began in all districts today, like other parts of the country. The health authorities have set a target of vaccinating more than 22 million children up to the age of five years. A total of 84,500 mobile teams, comprising of two lac polio workers are in the field. The drive will continue till 20th of this month. INP

Four illegal fishing trawlers seized in Pasni Gwadar: DG Fisheries

Staff Reporter

QUETTA: Director-General Fisheries Balochistan, Saifullah Khetran on Monday said the department seized four illegal fishing trawlers in Pasni tehsil of Gwadar. The Fisheries department has launched a crackdown against the elements involved in illegal fishing and trawling in Gwadar and adjoining areas.

"Cases have been registered against the accused", Mr. Khetran informed. He said the department has also arrested the accused operating the illegal fishing trawlers in Gwadar. Action against illegal trawling and fishing has been one of the main demands of the Gwadar Haq Terik.

Fisheries department seized four illegal trawlers in Gwadar. Photo provided by fisheries department Balochistan

Masses and fishermen should cooperate with the department: Khetran Says



The public and the fishermen should also cooperate with the fisheries department so that strict actions are taken against the trawler mafia. The fisheries department is always ready against illegal trawlers, the DG of Fisheries vowed. The steps taken by the provincial government are commendable and decisions have been taken in favor of the fishermen. The fish which had disappeared in the marine life has started to appear again because of the steps taken by the fisheries department, he asserted.

Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman critical of Balochistan government

Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman, the Chief of the Gwadar Rights Movement (GRM) and other activists have been protesting against the illegal fishing and trawling in the port city of Gwadar. Police have arrested the Maulana and a number of activists of the GRM for what police claim caused damages to public and private proper-

ties in Gwadar and Pasni. The charges were vehemently denied by the GRM leaders including Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman. Chief Minister Mir Qudus Bizenjo had passed strict orders to the Fisheries department to launch a crackdown against the elements involved in illegal fishing and trawling. "Provincial government has determined to end the illegal fishing in Gwadar", the CM stated in a statement. Mr. Bizenjo said all-out efforts were being made to address the grievances of the masses and fishermen of Gwadar on a priority basis.

دو قطرے خوشحال مستقبل

قومی انسداد پولیو مہم

16 جنوری 2023 سے آغاز

- پولیو وائرس کا خطرہ ابھی بھی ملک کے کچھ حصوں میں موجود ہے
- پولیو سے بچاؤ کی مہم کے دوران اپنے 5 سال تک کے بچوں کو پولیو ویکسین ضرور پلوائیں
- پولیو لاعلاج مرض ہے اس سے بچاؤ کا واحد حل پولیو ویکسین ہے

دوران مہم وٹامن اے کی اضافی خوراک بھی دی جائے گی

QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

Slow pace of development projects in Quetta

The pace of the development projects currently underway in Quetta is slow. Various suburbs of this provincial capital paints a bleak picture when it comes to development projects and the availability of basic facilities including water, education, health, road network, and sanitation.

Billions are pumped by the federal and provincial governments to bring this city at par with other developed parts of the country, but with no tangible results. For instance, the dualization of the Sabzal Road, Sariab Road is yet to be completed in spite of passing three years.

Sabzal Road is yet to be constructed. Former Chief Minister Balochistan, Jam Kamal Khan inaugurated a portion of the Sabzal Road, which was really a good addition to the development and beauty of Quetta. However, a major portion of Sabzal Road is yet to be completed. Dirty water on the surface of the road and piles of garbage made peoples' lives miserable.

Residents of the area have made repeated appeals for immediate construction of the road. Chief Minister Mir Qudus Bizenjo has also visited the road and directed an early construction. Despite this all, the road is yet to be constructed. This actually exposes the bad governance in Balochistan.

Action should match the directives of the high-ups. Sariab Road and other ongoing development projects are also underway at a slow pace. Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili visited various development schemes the other day and directed the concerned departments to ensure timely completion.

Action should match the directives of the high-ups. People are fed up with the ongoing slow-paced projects, which compound their problems. The provincial government should also share the volume of funds being spent on various development projects in Quetta with the media and people. This will improve transparency and accountability.

A viable master plan needs to be evolved to address the city's problems including an influx of people, new settlements, traffic, water, education and health problems.

Gender budgeting- a tool for gender removing inequalities

Mehfooz Ali Khan



Article 25 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan says that there will be no discrimination among the citizens on the basis of sex. It means that the rights of men and women shall be equal. Gender equality is a basic fundamental right in any self-respecting society. Do ground realities substantiate this assertion? Are there even playing grounds for

both genders? If not, why it is so? And how can gender mainstreaming be achieved? Gender Sensitive, Gender Sensitive and Gender Aware budgeting

There are many policy options to reduce this imbalance but budget is important as a policy and planning instrument

for governments that can be used for reaching the goal of Gender Equality. Gender Responsive, Gender Sensitive and Gender Aware budgeting in a country, region, or a province can create enabling environment to bring equality? The fundamental objective of gender budgeting refers to refining budget and related policies with a view to promoting gender equality as an integral part of human rights. Gender budgeting makes the gender-specific effects of budgets visible and raises awareness about their frequently implicit dimensions of discrimination against women.

Gender impacts of budgets and policies

Gender budgeting thus identifies the gender-specific implications of public finance - which is usually presented as gender-neutral - and, in particular economic policies. Gender budgeting is therefore regarded as a core strategy for raising awareness and understanding of gender issues and the gender impacts of budgets and policies. When

we talk in the context of Balochistan, the first question that strikes us that, 'Is there any study ever conducted to find out the Gender Gaps? Did we undertake any post or pre-budget assessment of the annual budget on different segments of the society, especially women, who form almost 50% (48.76%, to be specific) of our national population? In Balochistan, this ratio

is 47.47%. If our budget is not Gender Sensitive, almost half the population is left out. In our set up women empowerment starts and ends with the provision of Sewing Machines, the opening of embroidery centers, or the holding of few cultural shows. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process, and restructuring revenues and expenditures is required in order to promote gender equality. As mentioned above female population in Balochistan is 47.4% and their needs are completely ignored at

all levels and they are hardly involved in the budgetary process. An analysis of PSDPs since 2013-14 till 2020-21 shows that there was not a single project in the years 2013-14 1st 2014-15, as if women did not exist or they were not worthy of any consideration. Then from 2015-16 to 2019-20, there were one to three projects and the total outlay ranged from .12% to 22%. It shows how much priority that 47.49% of the population gets in the province. Although the world over women is not categorized as a vulnerable group.

In Balochistan, they are not only vulnerable but also marginalized. But the treatment they get in Pakistan, especially in Balochistan, they are not only vulnerable but also marginalized in the real sense of the world. A UN Report on Women said that compared to men, women have 26% fewer chances of employment, and around 75% of the women labor force works in unregulated sector of the economy. Why they are consid-

ered vulnerable because they are

solely dependent on male counterparts both at home as well as at the workplace. Surprisingly there are no separate Rest Rooms (Washrooms) for ladies in Secretariat and directorates. For the entire female population, there is only one female park in Smugli Road and they have no recreational facilities whatsoever.

Women development department manned by male officers

There is a women's Development Department, mostly manned by male officers and workers, who are supposed to work for the welfare of female workers. They lack the capacity to formulate and implement plans for female uplift.

Conditions outside the capital city are simply deplorable. Economic Development will remain an unrealized dream unless the government takes concrete steps through gender budgeting for Gender mainstreaming and using this untapped potential.

From conferences to courage

By Michelle Fatima Syed

Seldom does the world come across predicaments so immense that they call upon the very essence and cohesion of humanity to step in. Tumultuous and testing, 2022 was nothing short of devastating for over 30 million Pakistanis.

The gloom left by the torrential rains reflected precisely the scene inside the millions of hearts that had to navigate through unmitigated loss, disease and death. As per Unicef, an estimated four million children are still living near contaminated and dangerous flood waters, risking their health and lives while 10 million girls and boys are still in need of lifesaving support. The epoch of misfortune is not yet over.

For our youngest foreign minister and Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the past year was one of meeting milestones, achievements and persevering through tribulations. Putting on a brave face for a people that are finding it hard to hold their heads high as they fight a war with water, is a trial if there ever was one.

Throughout his ministerial endeavors, a theme that remained a pivotal concern in the young FM's talks was the plight faced by the people of his country. Last August, our Foreign Office actively collaborated with the United Nations for the launch of the UN Flash Appeal as part of the "2022 Pakistan Floods Response Plan (FRP)" under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto. This appeal garnered international attention, with the US, China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates,

Qatar and Kuwait among others stepping up to help the calamity-struck nation.

It was as a result of this initiative that the World Bank pledged \$370 million along with technical assistance with bodies such as the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, Red Cross Society of China, Red Crescent societies of Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE following suit and offering further aid. During the event, organizations such as the EU, ADB and WHO announced financial and medical assistance, including shelter, food and medicines.

A detail that often goes unnoticed in the unabashed criticism of the current government is how UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, arguably one of the most influential figures on the planet, fought Pakistan's case internationally. It was not without FM Bilawal's invitation and persistence that Pakistan earned such a face to come to its aid. In his visit to the flood-ridden country, Guterres stated that he had never seen a "climate carnage on this scale", having witnessed an area three times the size of his native country, Portugal submerged in water.

The foreign minister accompanied the UNSG to flood-affected Mohenjodaro in an effort to highlight the extent of the suffering of the people. The significance of this visit cannot be encompassed into a mere list of bullet points, for not only did the Pakistani people earn attention, they earned respect. During his visit, Guterres was able to direct-

ly interact with the victims and first responders, all while witnessing their unwavering determination to emerge from the water.

During his visit to the Wilson Center last September, FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari emphasized the need for climate-resilient infrastructure. This was done so by proposing the idea of Pakistan being a 'test case' for the world, a term that compelled the international community to pay attention to the submerged country and its inhabitants. The alarming undertones of the term were what beckoned fellow stakeholders to take action, as it may be Pakistan bearing the brunt for the rest of the world today, but nature might opt for someone else to fill its shoes tomorrow.

Resultantly, the success of the Resilient Pakistan conference in Geneva and raising over 10 billion dollars is not just the accumulation of a day's worth of work. It is sleepless nights and impassioned speeches coupled with genuine concern for the people and their well-being that have resulted in a resounding victory for a country that had been previously thought to be isolated globally.

Launching a joint flash appeal in collaboration with the UN, canceling foreign tours to stay among the food victims, highlighting the impending impact of climate change on international platforms are a few of the many efforts made by our top diplomat. We, as a nation, may find it difficult to reward a virtue, but finding it in us to regard it is the least we can do for

those who are willing to do so much for us.

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Lessons in school reforms

By Kamila Hyat

Pakistan has struggled to maintain any kind of standard at both government and private schools across the country. While private schools often claim to offer the best education and learning in English to their students, they are not always successful.

The kind of education that many children receive is based on rote learning and cramming - similar to how they would learn at most government schools. The only difference is that parents pay exorbitant fees for their children's education at private schools. Only high-tier elite schools - which charge high fees and are accessible to only a tiny minority - can claim to offer education which matches international standards.

According to the available surveys, a majority of Grade-5 children at both government and private schools are unable to write a complete sentence in either English or Urdu. The conflict of the languages adds to the problem. At English-medium schools, children are taught in English and barely understand the content they have been taught. When the same content is provided to them in Urdu, their eyes light up. Children who have never been exposed to English at their homes and have received no specialized English tuitions

at their schools begin to understand the concepts.

It is unclear why the country has not chosen to follow models from other countries where children are first taught in their mother tongue so they can understand the content, and then in later grades, they are taught English as a skill they will need for employment opportunities.

In our country, the situation is dismal. In Punjab, the education authorities have neglected Punjab; this has added to the problem. Punjab is the only province which does not offer primary-level education in the native tongue of most children, often leaving them blank in the class, unable to comprehend what they are learning. The only option for them is to cram what is put before them to pass the exam.

Pakistan does not need just major education reforms. The Single National Curriculum (SNC) offered by the PTI government solved no problems and, in some way, added more to them, further emphasizing cramming and taking away from a child's intellectual ability to develop skills. This is a deeply rooted problem and should be solved if the country is to progress and grow in any direction.

So, how do we go about it? One method would be to study the example of Vietnam, a desperately poor country in the 1990s, whose per

capita income has now grown massively; the Vietnamese government thinks it can grow further if education is massively reformed through the retraining of teachers and other methods. Such strategies help education become child-centred, based on the capacity of children to learn and then acquire places in universities and gain jobs.

In Vietnam, the emphasis is not only on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects but also on development of other skills. These reforms have been massive, and in some schools, classes were shut down for some days to allow teachers to be trained in the new method required for teaching.

The same happened in Japan, and since the 1990s, the Japanese committee responsible for education has recognized that cram learning is not helpful. Japan adopted and introduced an approach centred on child-based learning and the individual ability of children at schools one by one. This initially resulted in a steep fall in education standards as measured through global academic benchmarks. But Japan has since then caught up and retained its policy of training children not to cram, not to depend entirely on teachers, and to further their skills through their own initiatives and learn through these rules.

Who will win the narrative battle?

By Khalid Bhatti

The battle for Punjab has entered a decisive phase. Not only did Chief Minister Punjab Parvez Elahi successfully win the vote of confidence from the Punjab Assembly but he also advised the Punjab governor to dissolve the provincial assembly.

According to the constitution, the Punjab Assembly stands dissolved from January 14 regardless of the Punjab governor's notification. The PTI had already confirmed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly would dissolve too. This means that early elections are certain in at least two provinces.

The PML-N tried everything to avoid early elections in Punjab but failed. Now as per Article 224 of the constitution, a caretaker government will be installed within eight days following the dissolution of the assembly. And the province will soon be under a neutral caretaker setup; elections will be held in the next 90 days, which means before April 12.

The ruling alliance in Punjab led by Ch Parvez Elahi has delivered on its promise to dissolve the assembly. Many analysts were saying that the PTI would never dissolve the assemblies and it

was just a political stunt. But the PTI has finally proven them wrong. Now it is up to the PML-N to either prepare for elections or hide behind technical reasons to delay them.

However, any attempts to delay elections will strengthen the already existing perception that the PML-N is running away from polls simply because it cannot win against the popularity of Imran Khan.

It is better for the PML-N to leave technical issues like holding elections in the middle of a census exercise to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and let the people of Punjab elect a new government which can steer the province from the current political, administrative and economic crisis and provide much-needed relief to ordinary people.

The PML-N should accept its defeat in round one. The party has suffered both legal and political setbacks in a province where it used to enjoy popularity. It is high time for the party to accept that things have not turned out the way it wanted. The economic crisis has intensified in the last nine months, since it came to power.

The PML-N-led coalition government

has failed to control the soaring inflation. The worsening economic situation and inflation have dented its popularity, and it is now finding it hard to counter the popular narratives of Imran. Undoubtedly, the PTI has outsmarted the PML-N as far as the ability to develop and spread a narrative is concerned.

So far, the PTI is winning the war of narratives. The PML-N's performance on this front is not satisfactory. Election campaigns are mainly a war of narratives. The better a party creates its narratives, the better chances it has to improve its image.

The PTI has won the first round of power politics in Punjab. Along with the PML-Q, it has destroyed the opposition parties, including the PML-N and the PPP. It has not only gained back the power it lost in Punjab after the ouster of its government but also thwarted all the efforts of the PML-N to gain power in Punjab.

Even though the PTI failed to force early elections in the country through street protests, it has finally achieved its target. The PTI has also exposed its street power and organizational strength at the grassroots level in the process. The party

might not have the street power to oust the current coalition government but its electoral politics is powerful. It enjoys popular support among different sections of the population including the middle class and young voters. It also has a big number of electables in its fold.

The sudden surge of support for Imran after his ouster from power also helped the leadership to keep the parliamentary party intact. The PML-N and the PPP has failed to cause big defections in the PTI.

The results of the by-polls in Punjab in 2022 also proved to electables that the PTI's ticket could help them win their constituencies. The PML-N failed to perform well in the by-polls as well and lost considerable support after taking power in Islamabad.

The PML-N used the most popular party in Punjab; it won five out of six by-polls held in Punjab in 2021. The party ticket was the most sought-after in Punjab. But its political fortunes changed in 2022 when the PTI became the most popular party. The PTI is confident about winning elections in Punjab and KP to form the provincial governments once again and

thinks that its victories in Punjab and KP will help it in the next general elections.

It is going to be a close election. Both parties seem head-to-head in most constituencies. A fierce battle is likely to take place in Punjab. It will not be a walkover for any party. It will be a real test of popularity for both the PML-N and the PTI as the two parties have their strongholds in the province.

In 2018, the PTI swept the elections in north and south Punjab, and the PML-N had dominated central Punjab. The real challenge for the PTI is to maintain its strong grip in north and south Punjab and make inroads into central Punjab.

The PML-N has to recover the lost ground in north Punjab as it could manage to win only two out of the 27 seats in four districts of Rawalpindi division. The situation might be different this time.

I believe that the PTI is not as popular as it was in July 2022. It has lost some support in the last few months. In fact, both the PTI and the PML-N have lost considerable support in the province over the years. This election will determine whose popularity has gone down less.

Bureaucratic varsities

By Dr Faizan Naqvi

Public-sector universities are the only hope of those from the middle class for a better future in Pakistan. However, across Pakistan, varsities are facing financial cuts and their autonomy is continuously impeded by predatory governments.

University of Karachi, one the biggest and oldest varsities, is worst affected. Catering to 40,000 students and more than 50 disciplines this once-topnotch university is going through a brain drain. Unending delays in the process of hiring and promoting faculty members take six to eight years to complete while other universities in Sindh take between six months and a year to do the same.

Underfunding, lack of accountability and disregard of standards allow bureaucratic delays, frustrating KU faculty that now stands at the brink of disorder. Faculty with over 25 years of service are retiring as assistant professors.

Attempts were made to reform governance and the Sindh Universities Amendment 2018 simplified the process of recruitment but

Karachi University continues without policy reforms. Over 400 faculty members applied for the next cadre in 2019, scores have retired and hundreds will superannuate in next five years but are denied the right to present their case to the Selection Board.

Recently Dr Zafar Iqbal of Environmental Sciences retired after 25 years of service as assistant professor despite a court order to hold his Board. Similarly, Dr Ameer Ahsan of Pharmacy is to retire in October after serving Baqai, Ziauddin and lastly Karachi University while waiting for a Board.

Universities only need to follow the University Act that requires three experts with eight board members to select a suitable candidate. Instead Karachi University allows deans, chairpersons, foreign expert reports and secretary boards and universities to further the red-tape in the process.

The University of Karachi needs an overhaul of the existing bureaucratic mindset and to get rid of the assumption that red-tape is a substitute for standards. Discrimination against varsities and within a varsity must end by

following same procedures of hiring.

As reported in this paper recently, KU faculty members have extended their protest from demonstrations to a hunger strike onto death. This escalation not only highlights the sense of frustration amongst the faculty but also shows the blatant disregard for faculty by the KU administration and the Sindh government.

The protesting faculty say this is the time for policy reforms that abolish the hindrances and speed up the already delayed processes.

Varsities should be a benchmark for academic standards, hubs of knowledge, and arenas for debate and disagreement with a sense that changing the world is possible. Instead, the varsity bureaucracy has abandoned research and replaced it with a business sense where research culture is shamelessly suppressed and denied official support and the only function of the administration is to ensure salaries.

When teachers turn to hunger strikes to press for their demands, society at large must acknowledge its disbelief at the state of affairs of what should have been a centre of excellence.

Market value of top engineering firms drops 19% in 2QFY23: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: The average market value of the top five companies of the engineering sector dropped 19% in the just-ended second quarter (Oct-Dec) of the ongoing fiscal year 2022-23, shows an analysis of the firm's financials conducted by WealthPK.

The engineering sector on Pakistan Stock Exchange is represented by 18 companies with a total market capitalisation of Rs77.2 billion.

In terms of market capitalisation, International Steels Limited (ISL) is the largest company with

a market cap of Rs19.3 billion, followed by Mughal Iron & Steel Industries Limited (MUGHAL), which has a market cap of Rs15.7 billion.

International Industries Limited (INIL) and Agha Steel Industries Limited (AGHA) with a market cap of Rs9.8 billion and Rs7.9 billion, stand third and fourth, respectively.

Aisha Steel Mills Limited (ASL) with a market cap of Rs7.3 billion is the fifth largest company in the engineering sector. In the 2QFY23, the top five engineering

companies lost Rs3.1 billion collectively in market capitalisation.

MUGHAL's market value decreased from Rs21 billion to Rs16 billion, thus it sustained the highest loss of 25%. The second highest loss was reported by INIL of 23% in 2QFY23 as its market value dropped from Rs13 billion to Rs9.9 billion.

With a market value decline of 19% from Rs9.3 billion to Rs7.5 billion, ASL experienced the third-highest loss during 2QFY23. ISL with a market loss of 17% was the fourth loser. INP



QUETTA: Interim BNP President Abdul Wali Kaker addressing a press conference.

Mainly cold, dry weather expected in most parts of country

ISLAMABAD: Mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country, while very cold in Balochistan, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

Frost is likely to occur over plain areas of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, upper Sindh, Pothohar region and Kashmir during morning hours. Windy weather conditions are also likely in plain areas.

Temperatures of some major cities recorded on Monday morning Islamabad, Gilgit and Muzaffarabad two degree centigrade. Lahore and Peshawar four, Karachi ten, Quetta minus five and Murree minus two degree centigrade.

According to Met Office fore-

cast for Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, very cold and dry weather is expected in Srinagar, Jammu, Pulwama, Anantnag and Shopian, partly cloudy and very cold in Leh and Baramula.

Temperatures recorded. Srinagar, Pulwama, Anantnag and Baramula minus one degree centigrade, Jammu six, Leh minus twelve and Shopian zero degree centigrade.

On the other hand the Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted cold and dry weather in most parts of the province.

It said that frost is likely to occur in the early morning hours while windy weather conditions may occur in plain areas. During

the last 23 hours, very cold and dry weather prevailed over most parts of the province. Light Rain occurred at isolated places in Mohmand and Dir. Rain Recorded (in mm): Ghalanai 03, Dir 01. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were as Peshawar City 18/02, Chitral 06/-1, Timergara 15/00, Dir 12/-6, Mirkhani 08/-2, Kalam 05/-15, Drosch 06/-3, Saidu Sharif 13/-3, Pattan 11/04, Malam Jabba 03/-7, Takht Bhai 18/00, Kakul 13/02, Balakot 14/02, Parachinar 10/-7 Bannu 15/00, Cherat 07/00, D.I. Khan 23/04. The lowest temperatures recorded in the province were -15C Kalam and -10C INP.

LHC hears ex-governor's plea against taxes on his properties abroad

KARACHI/HYDERABAD/ISLAMABAD: Amid rigging claims by the political parties due to the slow announcement of results in Karachi, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was leading in Hyderabad local government (LG) elections and for the first time was in a position to appoint its mayor in Sindh's second-largest city, unofficial results showed on Monday.

PPP emerged victorious on 37 UCs, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has secured 14, Jamat-e-Islami 14 while Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP) and Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) claimed victory in two UCs each, while an independent candidate has one won seat.

Meanwhile, PTI suffered a setback in Karachi local bodies polls when Khurram Sher Zaman — who was considered the party's candidate for the top slot of the mayor — lost to PPP's Najmi Alam in Saddar.

However, the initial results of the much-

delayed local body election's second phase in Karachi could not be finalised yet despite the polling process ending at 5pm, political parties started claiming that "rigging is underway in the metropolises".

The voting kicked off at 8am and continued uninterrupted, with reports of sporadic clashes. However, several confrontations were also reported even after the polling process ended.

The parties seemingly did not respond strongly to the clashes, however, later on, claims were made that the Sindh government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) were involved in delaying the release of results. As hundreds of thousands of people headed to vote in a bid to elect their local representatives, many political parties had also earlier complained and demanded the ECP to increase the polling time as the process began late at some of the stations — which was accepted in

some polling stations.

At first, JUI-F — an ally of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) — and JI alleged that the Sindh government had used delaying tactics by not ensuring that the polling officers reach the stations on time.

"Everything has been pre-decided and they have just staged the elections for a show," JUI-F's Karachi leader Qari Usman alleged while speaking to reporters in the metropolis.

When the day began to pass and results stopped coming in, JI Karachi Emir Hafiz Naem Ur Rehman alleged that rigging was underway in the metropolis as he castigated both — the ECP and Sindh government.

Analysts said that despite the process of elections being the responsibility of the election commission, it would raise questions if the PPP were the polls in Karachi since it is the ruling party.

In response to the delay, Rehman directed the public. INP

LHC hears ex-governor's plea against taxes on his properties abroad

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday conducted hearing on a petition of former Punjab governor Syed Ahmad Mehmood against the capital value tax imposed on his properties abroad.

Justice Jawad Hassan heard the plea of the former governor and sought an answer from the federal and Punjab governments, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the Commissioner of Inland Revenue.

The court directed to club the plea with other petitions.

The former governor had challenged the federal government's move to tax his foreign properties.

"I own properties in Pakistan and abroad," he said in his plea.

"I am paying tax in the country. Taxing the property abroad is unfair and against the law," he added.

"The court should declare the federal government's imposition of capital value tax on the foreign properties of the federal government null and void," he pleaded. INP

Lawyer shot dead in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: A lawyer who was returning home after leaving his child to school has been shot dead in Rawalpindi.

As per details, Advocate Sheikh Imran's vehicle came under gun attack in Dherri, Ahsanabad, Rawalpindi, the police said. The assailants riding a motorcycle fled after the attack.

The lawyer succumbed to his bullet wounds. The police in its initial investigation said, the incident is looking like a targeted killing but the situation will become clear after a thorough investigation.

The body of the deceased has been moved to the hospital for autopsy. Meanwhile, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi, Nasir Mahmood has taken notice of the killing of the lawyer and summoned a report from the CPO. Separately, a Lahore-based lawyer was shot dead in the Faisal town area, last year.

The CCTV footage obtained by ARY News showed that the slain lawyer was sitting outside his office when two unidentified men riding a bike stopped in front of him and opened fire. The dead body was shifted to hospital for post-mortem. INP

PTI suffers setback as PPP's Najmi Alam defects Kuurram Sher Zaman

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is leading in Karachi's local government (LG) elections and has secured a simple majority in Hyderabad for the first time in history, according to unofficial and unconfirmed results.

Results show that PPP has emerged victorious on 75 UCs, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has secured 40 UC seats and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) emerged victorious on 35 UC chairmen seats. Meanwhile, PTI has suffered defeat from Karachi's Saddar as Khurram Sher Zaman

who was considered the party's candidate for the top slot of the mayor lost to PPP's Najmi Alam. In the East and South districts of Karachi, the Pakistan People's Party grabbed 15 each seats. In Kerman, PPP emerged victorious on 18 UCs and in Malir it was declared the winner on 21 seats, as per unofficial and unconfirmed results.

In Hyderabad, the results of 94 union committees out of a total 160 have been released. According to the unofficial and unconfirmed results PPP has secured 55 seats, Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf 20 seats, Independents candidates grabbed three seats, and JI one.

In Sujawal, according to unofficial and unconfirmed reports Pakistan People's Party has bagged 20 seats, while JUI-F won a single seat. In Badin, as per unconfirmed results of 38 town committees out of 64, Pakistan Peoples Party won 30 seats, independent candidates won six seats and the Grand Democratic Alliance secured two seats. In Dadu, PPP has secured seven Town committee seats while Independent. INP



QUETTA: Activists of Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party hold protest in front of Sui Gas office due to shortage of Sui Gas supply.

Pervaiz Elahi writes to Punjab governor for caretaker govt set-up

LAHORE: The chief minister (CM) of Punjab Pervaiz Elahi on Monday wrote to Governor Punjab Baligh-ur-Rehman for caretaker government set-up in the province.

As per details, Pervaiz Elahi sent a letter to Governor Punjab mentioning the finalized three potential candidates for caretaker Punjab CM.

The letter included three potential candidates Ahmed Nawaz Sukhira, Naseer Khan, and Nasir Mehmood Khosa.

In a separate development, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) has decided to consult with chief minister Pervaiz Elahi on the caretaker setup in Punjab.

The opposition leader in the Punjab assembly Hamza Shehbaz will nominate a representative on his behalf as he is abroad.

The representative will consult with Pervaiz Elahi to finalise the name of the caretaker CM Punjab. INP

SLAMABAD: Farming for tourism is a unique idea as it not only provides socioeconomic benefits but also adds beauty to a country's landscape.

Dr Ayesha Shaikat, the owner and chief executive officer of Rana Hunting and Luxury Resort (RHLR) at Head Balloki in Kasur district of Punjab, informed WealthPK that her father, Rana Shaikat Mahmood, was actively engaged in bamboo farming, as he cultivated bamboo for environmental and animal conservation. "My father turned this farm into a resort for the socioeconomic uplift of the people living in the vicinity."

She said her family planned to start a bamboo-based cottage industry in the near future to help people, especially women, learn multiple crafts, and prepare food items and other valuables from bamboo. "I want to carry on my father's mission of empowering people socially and economically."

Talking to WealthPK, RHLR farm manager Farhan Mahmood said their bamboo plantation was started in 2006. "The farm is a vast clump of millions of Bangladeshi bamboos, spanning over an area of 7,623,000 square-foot. It was created as an agritourism place and a bamboo conservation area. A great number of deer roam freely in it. All the shelters, furnishing, sitting areas, and restaurants here are made out of bamboo. About 2,000 people visit the farm daily by paying Rs250. INP



QUETTA: Activists of APCA Balochistan hold protest rally.

LHC suspends ECP's arrest warrants for Imran Khan, aides

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) Monday suspended the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) arrest warrants for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, Secretary General Asad Umar and Senior Vice-President Fawad Chaudhry. The former prime minister and federal ministers had moved LHC Rawalpindi Bench against the warrants issued by the ECP earlier in the day in a contempt case against the trio.

Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan heard the PTI leaders' plea against the arrest warrants. The court suspended arrest warrants and directed the ECP to continue with its contempt proceedings against the PTI leaders.

The ECP issued bail-

able arrest warrants for PTI Chairman Imran Khan and other party leaders in a contempt case last week. Former prime minister Imran Khan, PTI leaders Fawad Chaudhry and Asad Umar had sought immunity from attendance in the case which was turned by ECP's four-member bench.

Earlier, the Supreme Court of Pakistan had allowed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to continue its proceedings against PTI Chairman Imran Khan, and his party leaders Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry in contempt case filed against them over controversial remarks against the electoral body.

Last year, the top electoral body initiated con-

tempt proceedings against the PTI leaders for allegedly using foul language against Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and ECP. It has served several notices on them, asking them to appear in person and explain their point of view. However, the PTI leaders did not appear before the ECP and later challenged its powers to initiate contempt proceedings under Section 10 of the Election Act 2017 in different high courts.

The ECP in its six petitions had urged the top court to transfer all its contempt cases against PTI leaders from different high courts to a single one. The commission maintained that it had issued contempt notices to PTI. INP

PTI MPA Amjad Afridi remanded into police custody

KARACHI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday handed over Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MPA Amjad Afridi to police on two-day physical remand.

Afridi along with his two brothers was arrested in Karachi for allegedly possessing a weapon and ballot papers during the vote count in the second phase of local government (LG) elections.

ATC Karachi has also sought a medical report of PTI MPA from the police till January 18.

PTI leader — named Amjad Afridi — was arrested in Karachi on Sunday for "waving weapon and possessing ballot book". The police have also shared the video of Amjad Afridi's arrest. In a statement, the police said the PTI leader threatened the polling staff and interfered in official work. "He [Afridi] also exhibited weapons and was possessing ballot books," the police added. INP

Bamboo resorts improve lives of locals: WealthPK

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Pakistan's bus manufacturing industry thrives with Chinese cooperation: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: During the last few years, Pakistan's auto industry emerged as one of the fastest growing industries, contributing 3-4% to the gross domestic product, and also providing jobs to over 3.5 million people in different forms.

With the established infrastructure of motorways across the country, the transport and travel industry has flourished tremendously during the last couple of years as the latest and most comfortable buses are plying from one corner to the second end of the coun-

try, making the journey a pleasant experience for passengers contrary to the past.

Following the assembling plants of various car brands, Yutong and Zongtong, leading buses and vehicles manufacturers in China, have established assembling plants in Pakistan, with joint ventures of Pakistani entrepreneurs.

Back in 2013, Yutong signed a technical licence agreement with Pakistan's Master Motor Corporation (Pvt) Ltd and the first bus produced at this plant came in February 2016. Master

Motors since then have assembled approximately 2,000 buses in Pakistan operating from different travel companies.

It has also been estimated that Yutong buses, including intercity buses, city buses and different shuttle buses, are plying on Pakistan's roads, and leading transport companies are making their buses from Yutong Master Bus joint venture.

Daewoo Pakistan and other leading transport companies in the past used to import buses from China and today all leading transport companies across the country

are ordering Pakistan-assembled buses. With these initiatives, the sector is going to become self-sufficient to cater for the local needs of luxury and comfort buses of the country and in the future, hopes are high that Pakistan would be able to export locally-assembled buses to Central Asian countries, Middle East and African countries.

Apart from big names of bus manufacturing industries in the country, buses are also being manufactured and assembled at smaller scale in major cities of Pakistan including Lahore, Sheikhpura

(in Punjab province) and Karachi (in Sindh province).

Nadeem Ahmed, Manager Ganj Bux Bus Body Makers, Lahore, said they import parts of busses from China and assemble buses as per need of their customers. He added that a bus takes 35-40 days in manufacturing, where 20-30 workers, including welders, blacksmiths, metal fixers, and carpenters, do manufacturing work on assembling and framing, painting, seats, and all respective formalities of bus manufacturing. INP

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The procurement of works listed below for which Notice Inviting Tender on sealed percentage rates based on CSR 2018 Govt. of Balochistan are invited from interested contractors/Firms with detail terms & conditions given below. The tender fee will be deposited through green challan in National Bank of Pakistan Ziarat Branch under the head of account C-02716 (Communication Receipt) at the rate shown against each work as mentioned below. EARNEST MONEY 2% of Bid cost in shape of call deposit tender fee Rs. 1000/- DATE OF COMPLETION up to 30th June 2024 from the date of start for the work.

S. #	NAME OF WORK	ESTIMATED COST
1	REMAINING WORKS CONSTRUCTION OF SPORTS STADIUM THEHIL SINJAVI DISTRICT ZIARAT. TSE-222301221143	Rs. 15.502 Million

Procurement shall be made under BPPRA Rules 2014. Eligibility of bidders: - a) Registrations with relevant taxation department i.e. (NTN), Income Tax / Sales Tax Department, Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA) updated. b) Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council in Relevant Category C5 and above for Sr. No 1, C6 and above for Sr. No 2, 3, 4 & 5. Above category and Discipline Code valid for the FY 2021-2022. c) As per BPPRA Rule 25 (3 Amended), only one Bid can be submitted against one NTN. d) Rate analysis of offered rates. e) CDR in case of rate offered below 10% of the total cost. Method of procurement: Single stage, two envelope procedure. Bid Security: The bid must accompany Bid Security in the form of Call Deposit of amount specified above in the name of undersigned from a schedule bank from Contractor's local account. If any Fake Call Deposit provided by the firm, the firm will be recommended for blacklisting. Bidding / Tender Documents Issuance: Bidding documents will be issued on submission of request by the contractor on his original letter head from the date of publication of advertisement in Newspapers on presentation of requisite documents as required in basic eligibility criteria i.e. Tender Fee (Non-refundable in shape of green challan under head C-02716, Bid Security / Earnest Money (in the shape of call deposit from the account of firm, the call deposit amount must be deposited by contractor's Firm / Title account), valid Pakistan Engineering Council Certificate, Income Tax Certificate (NTN), registration from BRA etc. (in original). The tender form will not be issued to any attorney holders of the contractors in any case. However, the partners and representatives of firm by producing their legal documents i.e. partnership deed or firm certificates that he is the office bearer and is on the pay role of firm (duly attested by 1st Class Magistrate only) can participate. The power of attorney will be acceptable for specific work only. Submission: - Last date of submission of bids (Technical / Financial) will be 3rd February, 2023 at 12:00 PM. Opening: - The Tender (Technical Bids) will be opened on 3rd February, 2023 at 1:00 PM before procurement committee in the presence of Contractors or their authorized representatives in the office of the Executive Engineer, Building Communication Works PP&H District Ziarat and for (Financial Bids) opening date will be announced at that time. The bid security (CDR) of technically non-responsive bidders shall be returned within 30 days of declaration of their bid as non-responsive. Bid validity Period: Ninety Days (90 days). In case downloading of bidding documents from BPPRA website, the bidder / firm must provide required document separately to this office before submission of bids. Place of issuance, submission, inquiry and opening will be addressed: - Executive Engineer (Building) Communication Works PP&H District Ziarat. An affidavit shall be provided on non-Judicial Stamp Paper of Rs. 100/- that the applicant has never been black listed. The applicant shall also provide an undertaking to the effect that all documents / particulars / information given with this bidding document are true / correct. All documents / proof provided by the Contractors / Firms will be verified from concerned authorities / department.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (BUILDING)
Communication Works PP&H District Ziarat.

PRQ NO.1931/16.01.2023 @dpr.gob.pk @dpr.gob.pk @dpr.gob.pk

JI has won over 100 seats, claims Naeemur Rehman

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman claimed that his party had emerged victorious on over 100 seats while there was confusion in the results of nearly 10 to 15 union councils. In a press conference on Monday he alleged that the returning officers were withholding results and attempts were being made to manoeuvre them.

"I spoke to the authorities yesterday, including ECP officials. The chief minister also called and assured me that this issue will be resolved. However, 18 hours have passed and the results have still not been released," he said. The JI chief demanded that ROs trying to tamper results must be stopped and demanded the ECP take notice.

"I am not talking on hearsay. My party worked hard for the elections and we ran a campaign. We were the only party that wanted elections. We put in the effort and ensured that the elections were held. We praised the ECP when it fulfilled its responsibility. But if you do something wrong, we will expose you as well."

Rehman also warned the PPP and ECP against depriving people of their rights. "If you want to talk, sit and resolve this matter but you must do things with discipline [...] we should be given our rights and this matter should be resolved in the next few hours," he said.

The JI chief added that if the process of counting votes continued on merit, his party would be able to bring its mayor to Karachi. "But attempts are being made to turn us into a minority. I want to tell the chief election commissioner, Bilawal, CM and election staff to not take measures that force us to stage a protest," Rehman added.

Meanwhile, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman congratulated party supporters today on the "victory of the PPP in the second phase of the local government elections". "The arrow is leading the way in Karachi,

Jamshoro, Hyderabad, Dadu, Johi, Sehwan, Khairpur Nathan Shah, Matiari, Thatta and other areas," she tweeted.

Rehman said "the results of local body elections so far revealed that the PTI has received a historic defeat". The people of Sindh have chosen the PPP and have once again rejected the so-called narrative of the PTI, the minister added. "I spoke to the authorities yesterday, including ECP officials. The chief minister also called and assured me that this issue will be resolved. However, 18 hours have passed and the results have still not been released," he said. The JI chief demanded that ROs trying to tamper results must be stopped and demanded the ECP take notice.

"I am not talking on hearsay. My party worked hard for the elections and we ran a campaign. We were the only party that wanted elections. We put in the effort and ensured that the elections were held. We praised the ECP when it fulfilled its responsibility. But if you do something wrong, we will expose you as well. Rehman also warned the PPP and ECP against depriving people of their rights. "If you want to talk, sit and resolve this matter but you must do things with discipline [...] we should be given our rights and this matter should be resolved in the next few hours," he said. The JI chief added that if the process of counting votes continued on merit, his party would be able to bring its mayor to Karachi. "But attempts are being made to turn us into a minority. I want to tell the chief election commissioner, Bilawal, CM and election staff to not take measures that force us to stage a protest," Rehman added. Meanwhile, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman congratulated party supporters today on the "victory of the PPP in the second phase of the local government elections". "The arrow is leading the way in Karachi INP



DAVOS: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman speaks while representing Pakistan at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos.

Ishaq Dar assures exporters on import of raw materials

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Affairs Senator Ishaq Dar has announced all-out support for exporters, promising government's help to them for importing raw materials.

In a tweet uploaded on Monday, Ishaq Dar said export industry was one of highest priorities of the government.

He further said five zero-rated export-oriented sectors and all other exporters will be given complete facilitation for import of raw material, parts and accessories to meet their export requirements.

Export Industry is one of Highest Priority of our Govt. Five (previously) Zero Rated Export Oriented Sectors & all other Exporters will be given complete facilitation for import of Raw Material, Parts and Accessories to meet their Export requirements.

The finance minister's tweet came among desperate efforts by import-based sectors to seek help from other sources than the government.

One such example was of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) Patron-in-Chief Gohar Ejaz who had written a letter to the American ambassador in Islamabad requesting him to arrange loan of two billion dollars for Pakistan to import cotton from the US.

Gohar Ejaz also urged the US government to announce concessional loans for Pakistan's textile industry.

Moreover, the US government should devise a strat-

egy to provide easy credit for importing cotton from the US since the textile industry in Pakistan is facing a shortage of 10 million cotton bales this year due to country's economic slowdown, the letter says.

Gohar Ejaz also mentioned that letters of credit (LCs) of textile industry were not being opened for cotton import.

Pakistan had imported cotton from the United States last year for a total of \$1.48 billion and orders for 1.2 million bales of cotton import from US have been booked so far this year, he added.

In addition, the Patron-in-Chief of the APTMA stated that 3.5 million cotton bales from the US might be imported with a two-billion-dollar loan. In a tweet uploaded on Monday, Ishaq Dar said export industry was one of highest priorities of the government.

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LHC seeks reply on plea seeking voting rights to overseas Pakistanis

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought a response from the federal and Punjab governments on the plea seeking the provision of voting rights to overseas Pakistanis.

Justice Shahid Karim of LHC heard the petitions against of International Lawyers Association Punjab against the non-provision of voting rights to overseas Pakistanis. After initial arguments, the Lahore High Court (LHC) sought a reply from the federal, and Punjab governments and other concerned.

The association in its plea stated that overseas Pakistanis send foreign remittances to the country and denying the right to vote to them is a violation of basic rights. The court pleaded to pass an order to provide voting rights to overseas Pakistanis.

Earlier, National Assembly approved a bill depriving overseas Pakistanis of their right to vote, reversing reforms introduced by the previous PTI government for their voting rights. After the passage of the bill, the overseas Pakistanis would not be able to cast their vote from abroad however they could cast their votes while residing in Pakistan. INP

IHC moved for establishing legislative assembly in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Monday heard a petition seeking to establish a legislative assembly in the federal capital on the pattern of other such assemblies in all the provinces of the country.

The high court issued notices to the Federation and attorney general of Pakistan seeking their replies by March 27.

The petition filed on behalf of SM Yawar Gardezi was heard by Islamabad High Court Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani.

The lawyer of the petitioner requested the court to direct the federal government to do the necessary legislation required to establish a legislative assembly in Islamabad.

Justice Kiyani inquired whether the court could pass an order directing the government to do the legislation or amend the constitution.

The lawyer argued that he was talking about the basic rights of Islamabad residents. He gave examples of the capitals of Australia and India where such assemblies exist.

The judge inquired if it was a separate system other than the local government setup.

The lawyer replied in affirmative. He requested the judge to direct the federal government in this regard and then it would be the Federation's prerogative how it would accomplish it.

He argued that Islamabad is only area in the entire country which does not have its own assembly and federal capital does not come under the jurisdiction of any provincial assembly.

The court after issuing notices to federal government and attorney general put off the hearing till March 27. INP

ECP rejects rigging allegations

HYDERABAD: Provincial Election Commissioner Aijaz Anwar Chohan on Monday rubbished the rigging allegations in the local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions due to delay in results, saying that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had a "strict monitoring" mechanism to ensure free and fair elections.

The results of the much-delayed local body election's second phase in Sindh could not be finalised even past noon on the day after polls, which gave rise to claims of "rigging" and results being engineered in Karachi.

He said that there are around 25 constituencies in a UC and the RO has to make Form 11 and 12 for each of the constituencies. Chohan further stated that a presiding officer has to make five separate forms for four categories for a single polling station, and then these forms are sent to the ROs. "All 11 and 12 forms were handed over to the ROs in Karachi by 11am today," he said.

Responding to the claims of rigging, Chohan clarified that ECP had a very strict monitoring mechanism and he can confidently say that no official was involved in rigging. He asked the political parties to trust that the "ECP is aware of its constitutional responsibility and is serious in holding free and fair elections". INP

Japanese government extends loan for Punjab Transmission Grid Stations Project

ISLAMABAD: The Japanese Government has extended the project loan effective period upto 31 December 2024 of the ongoing loan project "Punjab Transmission and Grid Stations Project (Phase II)".

The loan agreement was signed on 3rd May 2008 under which Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provided a project-based loan of Japanese Yen 11,943 billion (approx. US\$ 119.1 million).

In this regard, the letter of amendment of the loan agreement has been signed between JICA Headquarters, Tokyo, Japan, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Government of Pakistan. Additionally, JICA also accepted the utilization of the remaining project loan amount for flood response, said a press

release issued here by the Japanese Embassy in Islamabad on Monday.

The extension of the loan utilization period will enable National Transmission and Dispatch Co Ltd (NTDC) to utilize the remaining balance for the procurement of necessary materials as replenishment of essential materials in NTDC Warehouses which were urgently utilized for repair and maintenance of national transmission lines affected in the devastated flood 2022 across Pakistan.

The main objectives of this project were to improve the reliability and quality of power supply through the reduction of outages and voltage fluctuation and to meet the fast-growing load demand by strengthening transmission systems in Punjab province. INP

Japanese Govt extends project loan effective period upto 31st Dec

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ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed called on Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf at parliament house.

Masood Khan honoured with Dr. Martin Luther King Legacy Award for diplomacy, int'l

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, was honoured Sunday with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award for Diplomacy and International Service in recognition of his commitment, leadership and service.

The award, named after the leader of the American civil rights movement in mid-50s, was conferred on the Pakistani envoy at the 31st International Salute to the Life and Legacy of the late Dr. King, convened by Institute for the Advancement of Multicultural and Minority Medicine (IAMMM).

The ceremony, held at Willard InterContinental Washington D.C., was attended by more than 150 guests, including US lawmakers, diplomats, entrepreneurs, community leaders and educationists from Washington and across the United States, according to a Pakistani embassy's press release. The coveted award is conferred annually as part of the commemorative celebrations in honour of the late Dr. King's birthday, which is celebrated on January 15. Ambassador Masood Khan was also nominated as the Honorary Chairman of Martin Luther King International Salute. INP

IRSA releases 26,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 26,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 42,000 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1498.03 feet and was 100.03 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 16,900 cusecs while outflow as 8,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1122.75 feet, which was 72.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 7,200 cusecs and 100 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 15,700, 17,800, 4,000 and 4,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala. INP

Former SC Bar President Afridi killed in firing incident

PESHAWAR: Prominent lawyer and former President Supreme Court Bar Association Abdul Latif Afridi was killed when another lawyer opened fire on him in the High Court Bar Room of Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Monday.

The attacker who claimed to be a lawyer himself was arrested from the crime scene. The litigants started to leave after the administration shut down Peshawar High Court's gates and barred entry of people. The dead body was sent to Afridi's ancestral village in an ambulance, the spokes. INP

Karachi records coldest morning of season

KARACHI: Karachi recorded the coldest day of the season on Sunday as the minimum temperature dropped 6°C in the metropolis, according to Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). The Met department said the area of Jinnah Terminal was the coldest spot in Karachi, where temperature was recorded at 4.3°C. Cold and dry weather is likely to prevail in the metropolis for the next couple of days, according to weather department.

Under this weather influence, the minimum temperature may drop between 5 and 7 degrees Celsius in Karachi, 1 to 3 degrees. INP

Fort Munro to be developed as tourists' destination: DG KDA

MUZAFFARGARH: Director General Koh-e-Suleman Development Authority Babar Bashir said that all possible efforts were being made to facilitate tourists at Fort Munro and provide them best tourist places like Murree.

During his visit to different areas of Fort Munro on Monday, the DG Koh-e-Suleman Development Authority said that the projects of 30-kilometer roads were being completed with funds of Rs 250 million. He said that the officers concerned have been directed to complete all ongoing development projects at the earliest. He said that the road projects were being completed for easy access of tourists visiting Demis Lake, Anari Top, Kalma Chowk, Khar Bazaar and Fort Munro Top. He said that the Koh-e-Suleman Development Authority was striving hard to provide Murree-like facilities to tourists at Fort Munro. INP



KARACHI: PTI leader Ali Zaidi addressing a press conference at Karachi insaf huose

Senate condemns renowned lawyer Afridi's murder in PHC premises

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Monday strongly condemned the killing of prominent lawyer and ex-MNA Abdul Latif Afridi in the High Court Bar Room of Peshawar High Court (PHC), directing the provincial authorities to update the Upper House of the Parliament about the inquiry report of the incident daily.

As the House proceedings started, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar drew the attention of the chair and lawmakers towards the murder of Abdul Latif Afridi, who also served the lawyers community as president of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

The minister paid tribute to the deceased for his meritorious services

for the welfare of the poor segments of the society, the struggle for rule of law and constitution, besides the promotion of democratic norms in the country and protection of human rights.

Tarar also recalled his active role in succeeding the lawyers' movement for an independent and vibrant judiciary. He requested Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani to direct the authorities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to complete the inquiry into the incident without showing any negligence.

He questioned the credibility of law enforcement departments as to how a person managed to carry a weapon in the bar room that was used in the murder of Abdul Latif Afridi. INP