

# QUETTA VOICE

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**Shehbaz invites Imran to all-parties conference amid daunting challenges**



**Sheikh Rasheed arrested from his home in Rawalpindi**

## Within 2 days 14000 tickets sold out for PSL match in Quetta: Bizenjo

**Manan Mandokhail**  
QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo on Thursday informed that 14,000 tickets were sold out within two days for the fast-approaching Pakistan Super League (PSL) match in the provincial capital. The CM paid a surprise visit to the Nawab Akbar Bugti Stadium and reviewed security arrangements for the upcoming PSL match in Quetta.

"There is a capacity of 14000 people inside the Stadium", Mr. Bizenjo informed. He said the Balochistan government has decided to provide fool-

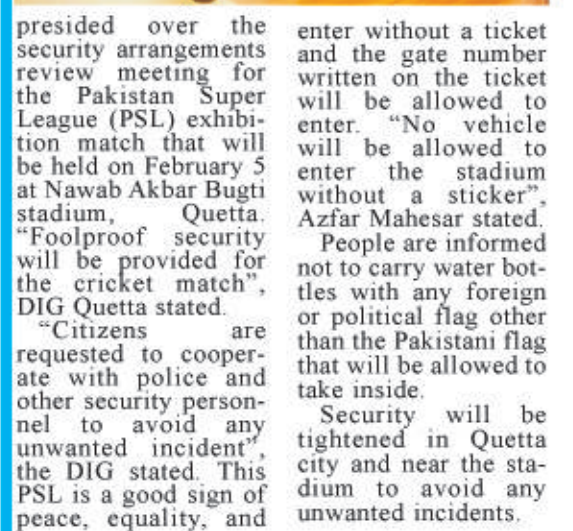


proof security to the players and spectators of this historic match. The CM said the government was organizing the match after a long time.

"We cannot issue additional tickets since there is no space inside the stadium", Mr. Bizenjo stated. He said the PSL match was being played in Quetta following the efforts of the Balochistan government. He said his government was committed to promoting sports activities in Balochistan. "Government wants to encourage local talent so that our players could play on national and international levels", he said.

## Foolproof security to be provided for PSL match at Quetta: DIG Operations

**Sports Desk**  
Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Quetta Azfar Mahesar for Balochistan province, he added. DIG briefed the meeting that no one will be allowed to enter without a ticket and the gate number written on the ticket will be allowed to enter. "No vehicle will be allowed to enter the stadium without a sticker", Azfar Mahesar stated. People are informed not to carry water bottles with any foreign or political flag other than the Pakistani flag that will be allowed to take inside. Security will be tightened in Quetta city and near the stadium to avoid any unwanted incidents.



## Pakistan expects 'sincere cooperation' from Afghanistan on addressing terrorism: FO

The Foreign Office (FO) said on Thursday that Pakistan expected "sincere cooperation" from the interim Afghan government to address the "challenge of terrorism".

The remarks come a day after Acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said that Pakistan should not put the blame for the Peshawar suicide bombing on Kabul.

**"We do not believe in accusations or finger-pointing," Foreign Office**

On Jan 30, a powerful explosion ripped through a mosque in Peshawar's Red Zone area where between 300 and 400 people — mostly police officers — had gathered for prayers. The suicide blast blew away the wall of the prayer hall and an inner roof and claimed 101 lives.

**FO wants Afghan Taliban to take concrete actions and fulfill promises**



The outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) initially claimed responsibility for the attack. It later distanced itself from it but sources earlier indicated that it might have been the handiwork of some local faction of the outlawed group.

According to TOLO News, the Afghan FM said there "is no terrorist base in Afghanistan and the country's soil will not be used against other countries".

"We ask Pakistan's ministers not to throw the snow of their own roofs onto the roofs of others. They should consider their problems in their own country. We advise them. Web Desk

## Sheikh Rasheed arrested from his home in Rawalpindi

**Dawood Ahmed**  
Chief of Awami Muslim League (AML), Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed was arrested from his home in Rawalpindi on Thursday morning.

Police conducted a raid at the residence of Sheikh Rasheed and arrested him. "I will not bow down before the rulers", Sheikh Rasheed said.

A huge contingent of police arrived at the residence of AML Chief Sheikh Rasheed. He is considered to be one of the arch political rivals of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) government.

Added A local court in Islamabad has sent Awami



Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on two-day physical remand in a case registered against him for levelling allegations against former president Asif Ali Zardari. The Awami Muslim League

Rashid's handcuffs. The lawyer of the former interior minister Abdul Razaq began his arguments, saying that his client was arrested in a politically motivated case. "The case against Rashid was registered at 8pm last night. The police had arrested Rashid against the high court's orders," he told court. The prosecutor then told the court that Sheikh Rasheed tried to create "threats" for the family members of the Zardari for levelling allegations against his client Sheikh Rasheed is booked under three sections — 120B (criminal conspiracy), 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief).

## Shehbaz invites Imran to all-parties conference amid daunting challenges

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday invited Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan to an all-parties conference (APC) aimed at finding solutions to surmount the daunting economic and political crises.

The prime minister seeks to bring heads of all political parties on the table so they can join heads and figure out ways to address "important national challenges", Information Minister Marriyung Aurangzeb said in a statement. The conference is set to take place in Islamabad on February 7.

In this regard, she said, Federal Minister Ayaz Sadiq has begun contacting top PTI leaders — including former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser and defence minister Pervez Khattak — and asked them to participate in the upcoming moot.

The invitation is a major development as the PDM-led government and the PTI have always been at loggerheads over almost all national issues, not only since Khan's ouster from the PM Office, but even when the tables were turned.

The move comes as Pakistan faces a severe threat of terrorism and distressing economic and political situations, with no signs of respite soon. Web Desk

## Tribal dispute claims five lives in Bolan district of Balochistan

**Aziz Marri Imran Sumalani**  
At least five people were killed in a tribal dispute in the Bhag Narhi Bolan district of Balochistan. Levies' sources claimed that this untoward incident occurred as a result of an exchange of fire between tribes.

The firing occurred over a land dispute between the two tribes, Levies sources. The Bhag administration reached the spot as it got the information about the incident. Deputy Commissioner Kachi, Sami Agha arrived at the spot of the incident and made the two tribes declare a ceasefire.

The dead bodies are being taken into custody and are being shifted to the hospital for neces-



sary operations. Security was tightened in the area to avoid any other untoward incident. Similar incidents have claimed precious lives that occurred in other districts of Balochistan i.e. Musa Khail, Killa Abdulah, Ziarat, Zhob, etc.

## Integrity Icon awards Dr. Shair Zaman the best civil servant award

**News Desk**  
The Integrity Icon awarded Dr. Shair Zaman, the consultant Endocrinologist at Bolan Medical College, Quetta, the best civil servant award. He was declared one of the five best civil servants by the Integrity Icon across Pakistan. A ceremony was held in Islamabad to encourage and motivate the best civil servants in the country.

Dr. Zaman defines integrity as a way to serve in a most responsible and professional



manner, to the most vulnerable and those without the power to influence you. Integrity Icon Pakistan

government officials across the country. We want to move away from "naming and shaming" corrupt public officials and towards "naming and fanning" those public servants that are working with integrity and honesty with a focus to improve public service delivery in their respective domains. Only by creating a positive conversation about values-driven governance and by supporting heroes, doing the right thing, we push for a collective shift in mindsets in Pakistan.

## SBP-held reserves plunge to precarious level

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)-held foreign exchange reserves plunged to precarious levels as the cash-strapped nation desperately seeks to revive the stalled bailout programme of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

**Forex reserves fall to \$3,086.2 million**

Due to foreign debt payments, the central bank said its reserves fell \$592 million to \$3,086.2 million during the week ended on January 27, their lowest since February 2014, and are barely enough to provide import cover for 18.5 days (0.61 months).

The reserves held by the commercial banks stand at \$5,655.5 million, \$2.6 billion higher than those of SBP, taking the total reserves of the country to \$8,741.7 million, the central bank's statement mentioned.

Despite the falling reserves, the federal government is ensuring it meets international debt obligations to avoid default — a long-standing threat that has now forced the Shehbaz Sharif-led administration to meet the conditions of the IMF.

Amid the liquidity crunch and the government's removal of the cap on the dollar, which was a pre-condition of the IMF, the Pakistani rupee plunged to a historic low of Rs271.35 in the interbank market.



With the reserves hitting new lows every week and the government trying to keep itself afloat by meeting IMF demands, the prices of commodities have also witnessed a spike.

**They are enough for imports of 18.5 days**

Consumer prices rose 27.6% compared to 13% in the same month of last year, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Wednesday. This is the highest year-on-year inflation after May 1975 when the median rate clocked in at 27.77%.

Development economist Maha Rahman told Geo.tv that the Washington-based lender's bailout programme had become critical for Islamabad as further inflows were dependent on the IMF's nod.

"Pakistan is in a precarious situation given the limited reserves and our total monthly import bill," the economist said.

## IMF bailout critical for Pakistan

"Please bear in mind that the import bill is a conservative amount right now given the payment difficulties and restrictions. So a realistic estimate is worrying," she added. Web Desk



## QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

## Reimagining Pakistan seminar in Quetta

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

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

## The session was underway for 7 hours

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

Miftah Ismail presented killings facts about the declining economic condition of the country and the socio-economic state of the people. Former Chief Minister Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani reiterated the demand for immediate recovery of the missing persons and termed it one of the most important issues, Balochistan is facing today.

## Mehfooz Ali Khan shared killing facts

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

Young intellectual, Rafullah Kakar termed the undeclared MPA fund as a major speed breaker and political bribe before the political parties. He spoke at length about the issues of bad governance, the province is facing today.

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

The government has announced a financing package to promote the sale of e-bikes. These environmentally friendly bikes have the potential to contribute towards achieving environmental objectives, industrial growth and reduction of petrol imports and consumption.

E-bike manufacturing is a volume business, and the Pakistan market has the required potential volume. There are 26 million petrol bikes on the road, and around two million new bikes are sold every year. Also, it is relatively cheap to own and operate an e-bike than a conventional motorcycle. While the upfront purchase cost is higher than that of conventional motorcycles – at least 30-50 per cent, the fuel cost is lower.

In this regard, an affordable financing scheme with some interest rate subsidy may be beneficial. It is also a good omen that there is continuity of policy in this respect, irrespective of political changes.

E-bikes have a large market share in the developing and poor countries of Africa, South America and Asia-Pacific. It appears that the EV car market is small and possibly not feasible either for imports or for progressive manufacturing. The story of progressive manufacturing of automobiles is

not a successful one. Small volumes have been a major constraint in building a viable automotive industry.

There has been some success in small cars where the price and volume factors are dominant. There have been quite a few successes in the area of agricultural tractors, which are being manufactured and even exported. The price and volume factors are visible in this case also although there is an added factor of the peculiarity of the tractor market. Cheap credit financing has also promoted the tractor market and its local manufacturing. The tractor industry has also benefitted from a lack of dominance and oligopolistic market, something that has been seen in the case of cars.

The import promoting policies of the last two-three decades under the WTO regime and the IMF-World Bank ideology and the entry of cheaper Chinese goods has not only slowed down local manufacturing initiatives but also damaged the timely emergence and strengthening of the industrial base. The result and consequence is obvious in the prevailing economic circumstances focusing around current account deficit – imports of \$80 billion vs exports of \$36 billion. High energy imports are one of the

leading causes of this problem.

EV expansion may help alleviate these problems to some degree. EV initiatives ought to be associated with the localization of energy sources as well. The fast-track solar PV programme may help achieve some targets to a great extent. Progress in solar PV has been slow in the last few years partly due to the over-capacity issue, which is a common problem in electricity generation due to the lumpy nature of supplies involving 1000-1300MW capacity power plants in the fossil fuel sector. E-bikes have an especially attractive aspect, and can boost and encourage roof-top solar which would be much more economical for e-bike users. One or two panels without an inverter might be a good package for DC systems. A subsidized electricity tariff for e-bikers in off-peak periods may also be considered.

Another market for EVs are trucks and buses. These vehicles consume high volumes of diesel. These are expensive items, operating in a tough and competitive market. These would also require a well-spread charging network. Recently, the Sindh government bought a fleet of EV buses for Karachi's public transport network. Authorities have installed

charging infrastructure in bus garages. For a government, upfront costs which may be as high as \$300,000 may not be as big an issue as it may be for the private sector.

International subsidized financing lines can be found for financing EVs. The conversion of diesel buses can be a viable approach since diesel engines are to be replaced every five years. At this replacement juncture, the conversion of diesel buses to the EV system may be a feasible approach. Only institutional operators may be able to own and operate EV buses due to the issue of expensive charging infrastructure.

If one starts with an initial production rate of 175,000 units per year with a growth rate of 10 per cent per annum, one would get the annual sales of 341,000 units. It is much lower than the required sales of 2 million per year by FY 2030 (50 per cent market share of e-bikes). One would have to start with an initial production of 400,000 units per year with an annual production growth of 25 per cent per annum to be able to get the required production rate of 2 million units per year. More aggressive policies may have to be designed in the mid term to achieve these targets. This shows that it may

By Syed Akhtar Ali

not be feasible to achieve the 2030 target of a market share of 50 per cent in new e-bike sales. It may be worthwhile to explore other policy options as well, such as conversion of the existing motorcycles to e-bikes; it costs Rs50,000 for one such conversion. These rates may go down if the market expands. Many countries, including Indonesia, have made conversion a part of their policy programme. In India, conversion is being pursued in the bus sector; one conversion costs INR6 million. There are plans in Karnataka to convert 30,000 diesel buses to e-buses by 2030.

India has 200 million plus motorcycles. In FY2022, 231,338 units of e-bikes were sold. In India and Indonesia – two countries with a large e-bike market – there are 10-12 e-bike manufacturers. Contrary to this, in Pakistan, with a much smaller market, licences have been issued to 23 companies for e-bike manufacturing. It would certainly reduce the individual market shares of manufacturers to an uneconomical capacity. While companies may be making profits, the goal of 90-100 per cent local manufacture will remain elusive if this trend continues. Hopefully, some licence holders may not turn up.

## Resilient Pakistan

By Zile Huma

Pakistan has successfully conducted the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan with the support of the UN in Geneva to garner international support for the rehabilitation of flood victims. The outcomes of the conference have had many positive impacts, which is a huge achievement for Pakistan.

First, the international community has announced an enormous amount of funds for Pakistan's flood victims. The country highlighted the suffering of flood victims during the conference and presented its framework based on the 4R strategy – recover, resilience, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The prime minister of Pakistan highlighted that "nine million children are among those flood survivors who were desperately waiting for help."

Pakistan has secured around \$10 billion in funding through this conference. Islamic Development Bank

has announced the support of \$4.2 billion, Asian Development Bank \$2 billion, the European Union 0.5 billion euros, USAID \$100 million, Japan \$77 million, Germany 84 million euros, France \$345 million, Saudi Arabia \$1 billion, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank \$1 billion and China \$100 million. The aid will be spent to rehabilitate flood victims and recover some of the loss of \$30 billion caused by the floods. The funding will be also utilized to acquire knowledge and technical support to make Pakistan climate-resilient in the future.

Second, the successful conduct of the conference is a huge diplomatic success for Pakistan. The participation of heads of state, diplomats, high-level official delegations, international donors, and media persons is a testimony that Pakistan successfully achieved its target of effectively communicating to the world the suffering of flood victims and the emergency steps required to rehabili-

tate the flood victims. Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr expressed his support for Pakistan at the conference and said, "despite the help of Norway and other state's immediate response, the needs remain enormous." The funding announced proves that the international community has also felt the pain and realized the magnitude of the disaster faced by Pakistan in the form of the floods.

Third, the conference has helped sensitizing the world to the fact that climate change is a real threat. It requires efforts at all levels to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Today, Pakistan has become a victim of climate change; next time, it could be any other country. Switzerland's president also mentioned in his speech that his country stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Pakistan and that while Pakistan needed the world's help at the moment, tomorrow it could be his country. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said that "the climate-resilient

rebuilding of all regions at risk of injury will prevent new suffering."

The conference has also reminded the world that Pakistan is at the top of the list of countries most affected by climate change despite having minimum carbon emissions. The UN secretary general during the conference called the recent floods in Pakistan "a climate disaster of monumental scale." Moreover, this conference has also reiterated that developed nations are responsible for socio-economic losses caused by climate-led catastrophes being faced by Pakistan and other developing countries, which they need to compensate. It will further pave the path to convince nations to achieve the targets of the Paris agreement and take practical steps for its implementation.

Fourth, the funding received through this conference will also help stabilize the economy of Pakistan, which is in a deteriorating situation, so it can gain some strength. Recently, after paying back debt, the foreign

reserves of Pakistan dwindled. So this funding will support the recovery of the economy as well. The optimistic environment to recover the economy will boost businesses and reduce inflation.

Fifth, the conference has proved to be a ray of hope for flood victims to normalize their lives. The flood victims, who are in dire need of food, medicines, and shelter in the harsh winter, will be helped on an immediate basis. They will be able to restart their lives and acquire economic opportunities to earn their living and support their families.

The conference is a great victory for Pakistan to gather international funding to rehabilitate the flood victims and apprise the world about the threats of climate change. Now, the government of Pakistan should implement the 4R framework in the best and most transparent manner to maintain the trust of the international community, which has stood with Pakistan in this difficult moment.

## Rivals and revivals

By Michelle Fatima Syed

The recent local government elections in Karachi are a testament to one undeniable fact: the city has had a change of heart and the Pakistan Peoples Party has emerged victorious.

Why, after ten years of an elected, democratic government of the PPP, does its victory seem indigestible and unfathomable for the esteemed political analysts of the country, is a question one might feel like asking. If the first tertiary cardiac care institute in South Asia (NICVD), an amount of Rs1,043,46.57 million spent on the construction and improvement of 5220 km of road network benefitting approximately 47,886,051 people living in the districts of Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan, Matiari, Tando Allahyar, Thatta, Sujawal, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Tharparkar, Sanghar, Shaheed Benazirabad, Dadu, Jamshoro, Karachi, Sukkur, Ghotki, Khairpur, Kambar Shahdadkot, Larkana, Jacobabad, Kashmore, Kandhkot, Nausharo Feroze, Shikarpur and a plethora of other projects are not enough, surely the restoration of the 1973 constitution and the 18th Amendment are purely expository pieces of irrefutable triumphs listed under the phoenix's

resume.

A psychological phenomenon that often shrouds the minds of humans is denial. Gerard Hendrik Hofstede was a psychologist and researcher hailing from the Netherlands, who introduced the concept of cross-cultural dimensions. According to Hofstede's Insights, Pakistan has an estimated score of 70 on the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI). What this essentially means is that we have a high tendency to avoid ambiguity, uncertain situations and we may even resist innovation. Why, despite such caution having been woven into the very fabric of our conduct as a society, do we still find ourselves entangled in the arms of vagueness and doubt? Why do we tend to prefer roaming the corridors of misinterpreted rules and partial verdicts, when we could opt for dialogue and mutual agreement?

The Jamaat-e-Islami and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf have both accused the Election Commission of Pakistan and the PPP of rigging the elections in collusion with each other. While this does not come as a shock, it does lead one to wonder why the idea of sportsmanship seems to take a backseat every time our country is at the crossroads of progress. According to the election commission-

er of Sindh, the city of Karachi is home to 1230 constituencies and 4990 polling stations, with 246 union committees further branching into five categories. It is expected of seasoned political parties that have been contesting elections for decades to realize that ensuring a smooth electoral process is the responsibility of the ECP, which it fulfils in the administrative milieu of its capacity.

To protest is to exercise one's constitutional right, which the 'rivals' can opt for if they feel wronged. However, to accuse without applying rational thought is as redundant of an act as overlooking the work that goes behind the preparation of Forms 11 and 12, only remembering to criticize the new delimitations when it is convenient and demanding immediate elections without taking into account one's own lack of preparation and shortcomings.

While it is human nature to make predictions and go into either contestations or any other contest with certain expectations, it is just as imperative to realize that the probability of winning a competition is equal for all. It is rather amusing to see our community of analysts get carried away when it comes to just how passionately they seem to consider deviations from their expectations.

## The technocratic takeover

The whispers for the new technocratic setup have decreased a little but it is an idea that needs to be strongly debunked as it raises its ugly head every few years.

Why are such short-term and stop-gap desperate measures such as installing a technocratic setup bad? This has to do with accountability. Given the fact that Pakistan has all kinds of rent-seeking and corrupt elite, it is only democracy that ensures some form of accountability of the political class through elections every five years. The non-political technocratic elite is not accountable to anyone.

Democracy has a 'feedback loop' built in the system. The political class has to take into account the public aspirations since it has to seek votes to come to and remain in power. Any technocratic setup has no such compulsions. Therefore, a government without accountability is a non-starter.

The poor in the country are hugely disempowered. The bureaucratic, legal, judicial, socio-political, and economic system works against them and is mostly alien to them. The poor only have the power to vote that they can leverage to get a pittance of favourable terms for themselves. Endorsing any idea for technocratic setup is equivalent to snatching the last vista of empowerment of the poor from them.

The much-condemned political patronage sys-

tem is sometimes the only refuge the poor have to negotiate their way with state institutions. Social science literature has shown time and again that the poor use their power of vote and politics of patronage to deal with 'thana/katchehry' and other government institutions. Any technocratic setup cannot deliver for the poor the way democracy does.

It is true that though democracy largely delivers for the people, it should not be so populist that it becomes the slave of anti-rational socio-political and economic policies – an example being the government's inability to tax traders as political parties are afraid of the power of the trader class and are unwilling to bear the political cost of antagonizing them in elections. As a result, politicians do not tax them, and this is bad for the country's economy. However, such short-sighted policies are not limited to democratic governments; traders have never been taxed by authoritarian regimes in Pakistan as well. It shows the problem is not democracy that can be fixed by the mirage of any technocratic setup; the malaise is deeper than that and it needs structural overhaul.

When democracy was given some breathing space between 2008 and 2016, some evidence showed the emergence of across-the-board public service delivery in the Punjab education sector, despite it co-existing with

the culture of selective patronage/sifarish in high-powered politics. It is important to highlight this trend. There are not enough public funds to please all the voters through the politics of patronage. If regime change only occurs through performance-based competitive elections, democracy will surely and slowly move towards universal public service delivery despite having some selected pockets of patronage. It will largely propel the system to deliver for the people.

The only thing derailing the system is political instability and this entrenched game of musical chairs that does not let any civilian regime to continue. Both Mujibur Rahman and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were not financially corrupt, then why were they not allowed to remain in power? One can only imagine how Pakistan would have taken a different trajectory had Mujib/Bhutto ruled the country for extended periods. One can look at Bangladesh to have an idea as it has been transformed into an emerging economic power since Sheikh Hasina took power in 2009. Pakistan might have prospered like this too, but Mujib/Bhutto were not allowed to remain in power for long.

Post-1988, all political governments have been facing political instability as a built-in feature in the system. How can we expect democracy to deliver when it is being

systematically undermined all the time and when some present a technocratic setup as a panacea?

The Pakistani elite has largely survived in the last 70 plus years by earning geostrategic rents from external powers and coercive rents from inside the country. Now that geostrategic rents have dried up and the ability of the internal system to pay coercive rents has diminished due to adverse economic conditions, the squabbling over the limited resources has started. Some voices call for the reversal of the 18th Amendment and the 7th NFC Award. Some argue that the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) should be stopped – things we heard before the 2018 general elections. Now, recently, an oped called for ending public education in the country and replacing it with a private voucher scheme or insurance.

It is true that the private education system is largely more efficient than the public education system, and we have written about it in these pages in the past. It is also true that the private education system does not have its presence in cities only; it is also prevalent in rural areas. However, not all provinces have private schools. Rural Sindh and Balochistan and former tribal areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa do not have a strong private-school system as Punjab does.

Education comes third in terms of government

By Foqia Sadiq Khan

expenditure – after debt-servicing and defence. Hence, the call to undo it has entered a new phase of fight over public resources. Public education has to (and must) continue, and the sector must have better accountability. We have evidence that with technologies such as geo-tagging, public-sector employees' absenteeism can be better monitored. Why can't our authorities reform the public education system that delivers even in the far-fetched areas of the country instead of replacing it with a private voucher scheme?

Politicians should at least spare education in this new quest for more financial resources.

Similarly, the provinces must generate their revenues and also need to better spend the provincial resources that they are given and devolve the financial and administrative resources to the district and sub-district levels.

Recent media reports show how the present PTI-PMLQ government in Punjab is spending all the provincial resources in the hometown district of the present chief minister and over-extending patronage spending in a way that is not good for the public welfare. Such counter-productive patronage spending will be effectively deaf with if there is an autonomous system that distributes provincial resources to the lowest tier of the government just as the 7th NFC Award gives it to provinces.

## Inequality and hunger

By Chuck Collins

Beginning on May 24, the World Economic Forum is gathering in Davos, Switzerland for an in-person meeting, discussing the global tax system and financial inclusion.

Thanks to protests and new research, however, participants will not be able to avoid the elephant in the room: the surging inequality of wealth during the pandemic.

As the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) and Inequality.org have documented over the last two years of a global pandemic, billionaire assets have surged while millions lost their lives and livelihoods.

A new report from Oxfam dramatizes how hundreds of millions of people around the world have slid further into poverty during this time period. In a detailed examination of the food and agriculture industry, Oxfam found that billionaires in that industry saw their wealth increase by \$382 billion during the pandemic. An emergency windfall tax on their wealth increase alone (to say nothing of their pre-pandemic billions) could end world hunger and double the incomes of 545 million small-scale farmers.

In January, an analysis by the Fight Inequality Alliance, Institute for Policy Studies, Oxfam, and the Patriotic Millionaires found that an annual wealth tax starting at just 2 percent for those

with more than \$5 million, 3 percent for those with over \$50 million, and up to 5 percent for billionaires could generate upwards of \$2.52 trillion a year. That's enough to lift 2.3 billion people out of poverty, fund vaccines for everyone in the world, and deliver universal health-care and social protections for all the citizens of low- and lower-middle-income countries.

A group of over 150 millionaires released a strong statement calling on Davos attendees to face the dangers of runaway wealth inequality and speak out in favor of national efforts to levy progressive income and wealth taxes on the ultra-wealthy. "The truth is that 'Davos' doesn't deserve the world's trust right now," the statement reads. "For all the countless hours spent talking about making the world a better place, the conference has produced little tangible value amidst a torrent of self-congratulations."

"Until participants acknowledge the simple, effective solution staring them in the face – taxing the rich – the people of the world will continue to see their so-called dedication to fixing the world's problems as little more than a performance."

The letter is signed by actor and activist Mark Ruffalo, as well as supporters of the In Tax We Trust movement including Abigail Disney, Morris Pearl, and Nick Hanauer. These millionaires delivered the In Tax We Trust

letter directly to the World Economic Forum offices in New York and Geneva, and attended pro-taxation demonstrations at the outskirts of the elite compound in Davos itself.

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In January, an analysis by the Fight Inequality Alliance, Institute for Policy Studies, Oxfam, and the Patriotic Millionaires found that an annual wealth tax starting at just 2 percent for those with more than \$5 million, 3 percent for those with over \$50 million, and up to 5 percent for billionaires could generate upwards of \$2.52 trillion a year. That's enough to lift 2.3 billion people out of poverty, fund vaccines for everyone in the world.



Preparations to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day in full swing

ISLAMABAD: The preparations for observing Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 05 (Sunday) have started across the country by arranging a number of activities to show solidarity with the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in their just and principled struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination.

The print and electronic media will highlight the struggle of Kashmiri people for their just right to self-determination as per UN resolutions. The print and electronic media will highlight the struggle of Kashmiri people for their just right to self-determination as per UN resolutions.

The Department of Electronic Media and Publications will arrange a Digital Photographic and Painting Exhibition at the Information Service Academy on February 03 (Friday). INP

Pakistan's first aerospace startup strives to apply tech in aviation: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: National Incubation Centre for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT) is Pakistan's first ever aerospace incubation centre, established in partnership with Pakistan Air Force (PAF). The NICAT is a joint venture between the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, Ignite (National Technology Fund), and National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP).

Imran Jattala, Project Director of NICAT, said while talking to WealthPK that the market size of global aerospace and defence industry is \$697 billion, with commercial aerospace at \$298 billion. He said Pakistan's aerospace and defence market size is \$8.7 billion. According to Boeing (aircraft industry company), there is demand for more than 43,500 new airplanes valued at \$7.2 trillion through 2040.

and equipping Pakistani talent, by bringing together investors, innovators, entrepreneurs, thought leaders, and talented youth of Pakistan. The NICAT with strong government, industry, and academia linkages will help foster meaningful partnerships with aerospace, aviation and deep tech stakeholders, allowing startups to accelerate their growth.



QUETTA: Activists of PTI woman wing hold protest against prize hike outside QPC.

Eight PAF officers promoted to rank of AVM

ISLAMABAD: The Government on Thursday promoted eight Pakistan Air Force (PAF) officers to the rank of Air Vice Marshal (AVM). The promoted Air Officers included Air Vice Marshal Imran Qadir, Air Vice Marshal Ghazanfar Latif, Air Vice Marshal Shahryar Khan, Air Vice Marshal Nauman Waheed, Air Vice Marshal Mehr Yar Saqib Niazi, Air Vice Marshal Abuzar Khan, Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Asif Aslam and Air Vice Marshal Ghulam Shabbir, a PAF news release said.

Support Wing and served as Commandant Combat Support, PAF Airmen Academy Korangi Creek. He has served as Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Training-Officers) and is currently holding the prestigious office of Advisor to Chief of the Air Staff for Operations, Audit and Evaluation Cell at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. He holds a Master's degree in War Studies and is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

A graduate of National Defence University and holds a Master's degree in War Studies. He is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Sitara-i-Basalat. Air Vice Marshal Shahryar Khan was commissioned in GD(P) Branch of Pakistan Air Force in May, 1993. During his career, he has commanded a Fighter Squadron, a Flying Wing, Military Training Wing and an Operational Air Base. He has also performed his duties as Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Plans) at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. The Air Officer has also served as Personal Staff Officer to Chief of the Air Staff and Senior Air Staff Officer at Regional Air Command. He holds a Master's degree in National Security and War Studies. He is also a graduate of Advanced Staff and War College and Royal College, INP.

Shopkeeper looted in the name of payment via jazzcash

FAISALABAD: A gang of fraudster women deceived a shopkeeper in the name of payment through jazzcash after shopping here on Thursday.

According to details, a group of well dressed and handsome ladies visited shop of Awaiz Butt in Mintgumri Bazaar Faisalabad and purchased cosmetics worth Rs9200.

The women instead of paying cash asked for payment through jazzcash. The women made a jazzcash payment and went away.

Later, when shopkeeper Awaiz Butt checked the message it was a text message rather a jazzcash payment message. The police have registered a case into the incident and started efforts to nab the fraudster women. INP

PTI's only interest in KP is securing votes, says Sikandar Shperao

PESHAWAR: Provincial Chairman of Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Sikandar Hayat Khan Shperao has said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was only interested in securing votes here and it was least bothered about the progress and development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He expressed these views while addressing a party meeting regarding preparations for 48th death anniversary of Hayat Mohammad Khan Shperao Shaheed at Shabbadar on Thursday.

He said that after the martyrdom of Hayat Mohammad Khan Shperao, his mission to serve the poor was continued by party chief Aftab Ahmad Khan Shperao. INP

Pakistanis biggest support for Kashmiris: Mushaal

LAHORE: Kashmiri's freedom struggle leader Yasin Malik's wife Mushaal Mallick said on Thursday that Pakistani people were the biggest support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), and they could highlight the cause of help valley people across the world.

She was addressing a ceremony through video-link, which was jointly organised by the Unique Group of Institutions (UGIs) and Aiwan-e-Iqbal at the college auditorium here. She said Kashmiris were offering sacrifices for decades to live in an independent country. He called upon the youth to play their role for liberation of Kashmir and exposing the Indian atrocities as well as propaganda before the world. She said Kashmiris and Pakistanis observe Kashmir Solidarity Day every year on February 5, across the world, but the Indian oppression of Kashmiris people was going on unabated. She regretted INP



QUETTA: Activists of APCA Balochistan hold protest in favour of their demands.

Reforms for fair geographical representation on seats reserved for women urged

ISLAMABAD: Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) has stressed the need for introducing divisional quotas for seats reserved for women in the National and Provincial Assemblies to ensure the geographical representativeness of women as well as to incentivize their greater political role in the areas where women's participation is marginal.

Currently, 57 percent of the representatives elected on seats reserved for women in the National Assembly are residents of only six cities - Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta - as per their nomination papers. Similarly, most representatives elected on women-reserved seats of the provincial assemblies in 2018 had mentioned residential addresses in the provincial capitals in their nomination papers. As many as 59 percent of

women elected on reserved seats in the Punjab Assembly hailed from Lahore, 66 percent in Sindh Assembly from Karachi, 73 percent in Balochistan Assembly from Quetta, and 50 percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly from Peshawar. FAFEN proposes to amend Sections 19(2) and 19(5) of the Elections Act, 2017 in order to provide for administrative divisions as territorial constituencies in a province for the seats reserved for women under Articles 51(3) and 106(1) of the Constitution. Currently, these sections of the Elections Act, 2017 merely reproduce the constitutional provisions of Articles 51(6)(b) and 106(3)(b). FAFEN believes that Article 51(6)(d) read with Article 34 of the Constitution provides INP

Students can play proactive role in strengthening Pak-China ties: Ex VC PU

LAHORE: Punjab University former Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar said that Pakistan and China have strong ties extended over 70 years and young students can play proactive role in further strengthening these relations.

This was stated by him while speaking at a workshop organized by the PU Integration Center in collaboration with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China and the Pakistan Research Center on 'Governance System and Development Model of China' in Al Raazi Hall.

Chairperson Department of Political Science Prof Dr Iram Khalid, Chairman Department of History Prof Dr Mehboob Hussain, Executive Director of

Pakistan Research Center Col. (r) Khalid Taimur Akram, Director RIC Dr Fouzia Hadi Ali, faculty members, researchers and Chinese students studying in PU were present on the occasion.

In his address, Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar said that CPEC and One Belt One Road project was very important for the prosperity of the region, for the completion of which everyone has to work together. He said that measures should be taken at all levels to highlight people-to-people contact and cultural heritage, including exchange programs for teachers and students between Pakistan and China.

He said that centers should be established to promote Chinese language in the universities of

Pakistan and Urdu language in China so that the languages could be familiarized and each other can be defended in a better way in crises. Appreciating the efforts of the organizers for organizing the event, he said that such workshops give young scholars an opportunity to learn more about other countries.

Dr Iram Khalid said that China was taking great measures to bring countries around the world closer, for the development and prosperity of humanity. She said that China's interests in the CPEC project were small, but they were still striving for its success. She said that the Pakistani nation should play its role in the field of action to remedy the propaganda against China through fake news. INP

Two traffic wardens tortured by 8 culprits in Lahore

LAHORE: Two traffic wardens were brutally tortured by eight armed culprits riding motorcycles here in the metropolis on Thursday.

Reports said that patrolling officers Afzal and Fazlur-Rehman intercepted four armed culprits in Shadman Chowk of Lahore.

The culprits held the two traffic wardens, severely tortured them and opened fire at them but they remained unharmed in the gunfire.

The accused fled the scene after beating the patrolling officers.

Chief Traffic Office (CTO) Lahore Captain (retd) Mustansar Feroze took notice of the incident and said that accused involved in the incident will have to face dire consequences.

The CTO along with SP Sohail Fazal also visited the Shadman Chowk. Meanwhile, police have registered a case against unknown armed persons under serious provisions including attempted murder and started efforts for their arrest. INP

Seminar organized on Gandhara's culture & civilization

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Arts Council (PAC) on Thursday organized a seminar on Gandhara's culture and civilization, narratives, history and art on the eve of Gandhara Festival 2023. The seminar was presided over by Dr. Ghaniur Rahman while Dr. Zubia Sultana performed the duties of host. Addressing the participants, Dr. Ghaniur Rahman said that Pakistan came into existence on the basis of civilizations which are thousands of years old. It was an ancient kingdom mentioned in the Vedas and Buddhist scriptures. He said that it was established in the 6th BC to 11th centuries AD and extended to present-day KP, Punjab, Pothohar. When Ashoka came here in 230 BC, People converted to Buddhism in great numbers.



QUETTA: Pakistan Workers Federation Balochistan hold protest rally against prize hike.

Siraj appeals KP people to ensure participation in peace march on Feb 08

PESHAWAR: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has said that the JI will hold peace march in Peshawar on February 8, and he appealed the people of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ensure their participation in it.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, he said that the ruler have failed to protect the life and property of innocent people as the bomb blast in a sensitive and high security zone of Peshawar raised serious questions in their capability to tackle the threat of terror.

"I will lead the march in which thousands of people will participate," he said, demanding the rulers accept their incompetence and resign. Sirajul Haq said that if such incident had happened in any European country, the president and the prime minister would have resigned but the provincial and federal governments. INP

Pakistan's cutlery industry in tight spot: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: The cutlery sector in Pakistan is facing a host of problems which are hindering exports. The problems straitjacketing this industry include manual production processes, limited market access, poor quality, excessive wastage, difficulties in accessing formal financing, and lack of awareness and branding, reports WealthPK.

The exports remained at \$5.340 million in December 2022, up by 13 percent from \$4.736 million in Nov 22, but down by 47 percent from \$10.049 million in Dec 2021. According to a report published by the PBS, China is the world's leading exporter of cutlery, followed by Germany and India. The report also stated that Pakistan's cutlery industry lags behind China except in the Damascus steel knives market, where China

does not venture due to small-scale production. According to the report, in order to ensure quality, the manufacturers must use imported steel from China because it is of higher quality and is less expensive. The report stated that Pakistan's cutlery industry relies on the outdated machinery and manual production processes, resulting in low productivity and speed. Despite the presence of donated machinery at the Cutlery Institute of Pakistan, it has remained unused for many years. The report said the cutlery industry is seeking

TENDER NOTICE. The Board of Revenue invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-222302237071. Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER. The Executive Engineer-(Roads) CWPP&H Department District Killa Abdullah invites sealed percentage tender based on composite schedule of rates 2018, Government of Balochistan, from interested contractors / firms for the works listed below. Tender Fee Rs. 3000 in head of account C-02716). Earnest Money (2%) in shape of call deposit for each work.



# Large-scale green finance to turn tables on climate change: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Green finance has the potential to play a significant role in mitigating the effects of climate change. By mobilizing large-scale investment, it can support the transition towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing the pressing challenges posed by climate change, reports WealthPK.

According to the International Finance Corporation, opportunities for green growth worth US\$197.1 billion are available in various sectors of Pakistan to meet the 2030 climate targets.

Potential investments include \$90 billion in green building financing, followed by \$41.7 billion in electric vehicles, \$41.5 billion in renewable energy, \$10 billion in climate-smart agriculture, 7.5 billion in climate-smart urban water, and \$6.4 billion in municipal solid waste management.

The latest report published by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) showed that the flow of green finance from foreign investors to Pakistan has also gradually increased over the past decade. Two of the biggest international funds involved in the process are the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The report said the GEF had supported 38 projects in Pakistan by providing nearly \$100 million in funds; it is currently facilitating four projects by providing a total of \$131 million. The report said the current green finance flows were insufficient to meet the growing needs of the country.

According to the Ministry of Climate Change, these investments are insufficient to curb the climate crisis in Pakistan. As per the updated NDC targets set in 2021, the country requires at least \$101 billion for energy transition by 2030.

According to the SDPI report, acquiring green finance in Pakistan is contingent on overcoming the challenges associated with the development and implementation of green financing mechanisms.

The report pointed out that for a struggling economy like Pakistan, green finance represents a lifeline that can support the development goals while reducing its vulnerability and contribution to climate change.

The report highlighted that Pakistan must make significant efforts on this front, as inaction will likely push the country back in the global competition. Given the country's economic situation and institutional capacities, the effective strategy would be to take small, calculated steps forward, it added.

According to the report, the first 6-12 months of the process should be spent planning and preparing for the road ahead. Pakistan must overcome inefficiencies and challenges in its industrial, financial, and legislative sectors, it added.

Based on the report, the government should develop a concrete strategy for closing down fossil-fuel-based power plants and reaffirm its commitment to a just energy transition in order to gain credibility in the eyes of international investors. INP



ISLAMABAD: Senior Vice President Tehreek-e-Insaf Chaudhry Fawad Hussain along with Senior PTI leader Shahbaz Gill and Hammad Azhar at PTI Secretariat G-8.

## Six killed as two tribes clash over property dispute in Kachhi

KACHHI: At least six people were killed in armed clash between two tribes over property dispute here on Thursday.

Levies sources said that armed men of Lehri and Abro tribes which were in old dispute ownership of a piece of land traded fire in Bhagnari area of district Kachhi.

In cross firing six people belonging to both tribe were killed.

The district administration reached the scene and brought situation under control. The bodies were shifted to hospital for postmortem. A case was registered into the incident and investigations were underway. INP

## Unidentified body found in Lahore

LAHORE: Body of an unidentified person stated to be drug addict was found here on Thursday.

Edhi sources said that body of 40-year unknown person was recovered from footpath near Government College in New Anarkali Lahore.

The deceased was a drug addict and allegedly died due to drug overdose.

The body was shifted to mortuary through Edhi ambulance. INP

## Peshawar blast: PM Shehbaz summons apex committee meeting today

PESHAWAR: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has summoned a meeting of National Apex Committee (NAC) on Friday following the suicide blast at a mosque in Peshawar's Police Lines.

According to details, the prime minister has summoned the National Apex Committee (NAC) meeting at Governor House, Peshawar - which will be attended by political and military leadership.

Media reports said that the meeting will review the progress in investigation of the suicide blast in Peshawar's Police Lines, which claimed lives of more than 100 people.

The apex committee will consider relevant actions to curb terrorism and protect citizens' lives and property. Matters related to reorganisation of KP Police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) will also come under discussion.

The participants will also consult on provision of necessary equipment, quality training and modern weapons to KP law enforcement personnel.

It is pertinent to mention here that a powerful blast triggered by a suicide attack rocked a mosque in Peshawar's Police Lines during the afternoon prayers. INP

## FBR seals five shops on Karachi's Tariq Road

KARACHI: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Thursday sealed five shops in Karachi for not depositing the collected tax with the national exchequer.

According to the details, FBR Corporate Tax Office Karachi took action against the point-of-sale (POS) registered vendors in Karachi's Tariq Road market, found guilty of evasion of government tax.

The FBR officials sealed five shops in Tariq Road for not following the standard operating procedure which was released by the Federal Board of Revenue regarding depositing the tax.

The sealed shop owners are accused of charging customers with sales tax on every sale linked to the POS but not depositing it with the national exchequer.

It is pertinent to mention here that the FBR has failed to achieve its tax collection target of Rs965 billion for December 2022, falling short of Rs225 billion. INP

## Dar briefs Japanese envoy about economic challenges, policies & reforms of govt

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Thursday and discussed with him issues of bilateral interests.

The Finance Minister welcomed Ambassador Wada Mitsuhiro and highlighted cordial relations between Pakistan and Japan, said that Pakistan and Japan enjoy sound friendly relations which have been getting stronger with each passing day. He said that Japan is one of the major development partners of Pakistan and he firmly believes that the cooperation will further strengthen in multiple fields for the mutual benefit of both the countries.

Ishaq Dar gave a brief overview of the economic challenges and apprised of economic policies and reforms of the government to set the things in right path. He reiterated the resolve of the government to enhance and strengthen the bilateral economic and trade relations between Pakistan and Japan.

Ambassador of Japan Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro stated that Japan greatly values its bilateral relations with Pakistan. He briefed the Finance Minister about operations of the Japanese entities in Pakistan and shared his commitment to work to enhance business and investment relations. He expressed confidence on the economic policies of the current government and said that business and economic linkages would further strengthen between the two countries. The proposed visit of the Finance Minister to Japan in the month of February also came under discussion in the meeting. In conclusion, the Ishaq Dar shared sentiments of gratitude to the Ambassador for his support and extended his cooperation in improving the trade and economic relations between the two countries. INP

## Digital transformation key aspect of modern higher education landscape: President IIUI

ISLAMABAD: President International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi has said that digital transformation is an important aspect of the modern higher education landscape, and it has the potential to transform the way students learn, the way teachers teach, and the way researchers conduct research.

He was speaking as chief guest of the graduation ceremony of the National Freelance Training Program (NFTP) held at the new campus of the IIUI on Thursday.

On the occasion, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi distributed certificates among 301 students who completed their training at IIUI centre. The ceremony was also attended by Mr. Ali Aghar, Senior Joint Secretary Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, Program manager, PITB, Mr. Muhammad Amjad, members of the PITB, Vice Presidents of IIUI, Deans DGs and senior faculty members.

Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Hathal said that the self-employment programs for youth are vital for the growth and development of any nation. He added that universities must encourage entrepreneurship and prime focus must be on providing students with an enabling environment of Digi skills and opportunities to pursue freelancing career. It will equip them with the tools they need to succeed. "By encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, we can help to create new businesses, new jobs, and new opportunities for all, IIU President opined.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Ali Aghar said that the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom is focusing on reducing the unemployment and promoting the youth sustainability. He said the ministry is working to provide enabling environment to the youth to be involved in emerging technologies. INP

## Governor Punjab, Ch Shafay Hussain discuss political, economic situation

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman has said that the development of the country is possible only with the promotion of democratic values and the supremacy of the constitution.

This was stated by him while talking to Chaudhry Shafay Hussain, the son of Pakistan Muslim League (Q) chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (Q) who called on him at Governor House Lahore on Thursday.

During the meeting, in addition to education, political and economic situation came under discussion. The incident of terrorism in Peshawar Police Lines Mosque was condemned and prayers were also offered for the elevation of the ranks of martyrs during the meeting.

Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that the promotion of IT and technical education in the education sector is the need of the hour. Governor Punjab said that the federal government has taken effective steps to promote technical education in educational institutions.

He said that as the chancellor, he has formed a consortium to strengthen the links between academia and industry, this will benefit industries from the research done in universities. Governor Punjab further said that improving universities and promoting higher education are among his priorities.

Senior PML-Q leader Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said that political stability is very important to stabilize the economy in the country. INP



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf chairing a meeting of the Special Committee on Balochistan at Parliament house.

## Unified efforts vital to resolve long-standing issues of Balochistan: Speaker

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has stressed the need of unified efforts to resolve the long-standing problems of Balochistan and welfare of its people.

He was speaking during the National Assembly's Special Committee on Balochistan held at Parliament House on Thursday to discuss the pressing issues faced by the province and work towards their resolution.

Comprising prominent members from various political parties and government stakeholders, the Committee decided to frame Terms of Reference (TORs), prepare list of most pressing issues for their fast tracking. Initially, the committee agreed to take up the issues of: non-provision of gas to local residents in certain areas of Balochistan, rehabilitation of flood affected people, repatriation of IDPs, illegal occupation of land by oil and gas companies and fixation of job quotas.

Besides the Committee members discussed various initiatives and plans to improve the standard of living, provide basic necessities, and create job opportunities for the residents of Balochistan.

The NA Body also stressed the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process to ensure that their perspectives and concerns are taken into account.

## Governor directs caretaker CM for recruitment on vacant seats in public universities

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman has directed the Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi to start the recruitment process on public universities.

He said that vacant seats of Vice Chancellors, Pro Vice Chancellors, Deans, Registrars, Treasurer and Controller Examination in public universities should be filled within the next 6 months.

In order to do this, the Higher Education Department and the administrative departments of the universities wrote a letter to instruct them.

The Governor Secretariat sent the list of vacant seats of Vice-Chancellors and those vacant in the near future to the Chief Minister's Secretariat.

Muhammad Balighur Rahman drew the attention of the Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab to the fact that non-firmly appointment to important posts affects the administrative affairs and academic activities in the universities. INP

## Fire guts entire village, burns live-stock alive in Balakot

BALAKOT: An entire colony of houses was gutted while livestock worth millions of rupees was burnt alive when a fire erupted in a remote village in tehsil Balakot on Wednesday-Thursday midnight.

According to police sources, the fire broke out in village of Patti village of Jaraid union council. The incident also caused severe to minor injuries to dozens of people including women and children.

One of the victims, in a video circulating on social media, said the fire erupted due to a short circuit in one of the houses between 11 pm to 12 am and engulfed the entire colony of wood-mud houses within no time.

He claimed there were a total of 12 houses in the colony and all were burnt to ashes. While complaining about the late arrival of rescue teams and police, he said the victims were trying on their own to put the fire out but to no avail. INP

## Won't allow anybody to play with province's peace: KP police chief

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inspector-General Moazzam Jah Ansari has made it clear that nobody will be allowed to play with the peace and security of the province. He was addressing press conference on Thursday about the status of the investigation into the horrific January 30 Peshawar suicide bomb blast at a mosque inside a highly sensitive police headquarters which claimed over 100 lives. The attack took place during afternoon worship. An entire wall and some of its roof was blown out. Bloodied survivors emerged limping from the wreckage, while bodies were ferried away in ambulances. Responding a question related investigation, he Ansari said that the police was closing in on the terror network behind the suicide attack on a mosque in the Peshawar Police Lines area, disclosed that the bomber was clad in a police uniform. The police headquarters in Peshawar is



QUETTA: Ex Senator Nawabzada Haji Mir Lashkari Raisani addressing a press conference.

## Police prepared to fight terrorists, criminals: Additional IG South Punjab

MULTAN: Additional Inspector General Police (AIGP) South Punjab Maqsoodul Hassan on Thursday ordered all district police chiefs to step up security arrangements encompassing all important places and routes.

He said that police were fully prepared and on alert to fight terrorists and criminals for peace in society.

During a visit to Dera Ghazi Khan, AIG Police South, accompanying RPO Captain (R) Sajjad Hasan Khan, held a meeting with the district police chiefs including DPO DG Khan Muhammad Akmal, DPO Muzaffargarh Ahmad Nawaz Shah, DPO Kot Adu Tanveer Ahmad Malik, DPO Layyah Muhammad Nasir Sial and directed them to take all measures necessary to deal with the terrorist elements.

The RPO briefed the AIGP South on security arrangements and law and order situation while DPOs apprised him of the sensitive places in their respective districts, police arrangements to deal with terrorists and the overall

## Pakistan must collaborate with China on AI, quantum computing: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani tech experts believe that the country's future information technology (IT) development is aligned with that of China, which is doing wonders in Artificial Intelligence (AI), nanotechnology, quantum computing and other high-end industries.

Talking to WealthPK, co-founder of Automcamp Naveed Iftikhar said that China had achieved remarkable progress in research and development (R&D) and training of human resources. "Pakistan needs to collaborate more with China to train our human resources and do more R&D," he stressed.

Hussain Nadim, a well-known IT expert and founder of a 5G Internet observatory, told WealthPK that Pakistan's overwhelming focus is on tangible development items like dams and infrastructure. "On the other hand, China dominates in R&D as it is one of the leaders in AI, nanotechnology, quantum computing and other industries," he pointed out.

"Even if with one percent of Chinese tech cooperation, we could do wonders in enhancing our technical capabilities," Hussain Nadim said. He said that Pakistan needs to "de-secure" the technology space and focus on business, commercial and training sides. "We also need to have technical and information technology corridors, which is the future of Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor," he added. Hamza Saeed Orakzai, director of planning and regulatory affairs, Special Technology Zone Authority (STZA), told WealthPK that "we established China Pakistan Science and Technology Centre, the first of its kind, in Beijing around two months ago. Recently, we also conducted a webinar, where around 5,000 Chinese technology companies and delegations participated." He said that Pakistan has considerably large youth population, which should be made to learn the Chinese language, and at the same time they. INP