

QUETTA VOICE

Email address:
dquettavoic@gmail.com

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BPSC to recruit all employees from grade 5 in Balochistan: CM Bizenjo



Ruling BAP office evacuated in Quetta new locks installed

Foolproof security to be provided to Chinese nationals in Gwadar: Interior Minister

Mir Salam Jozezai

GWADRA: The federal interior minister, Rana Sanaullah said that foolproof security would be provided to Chinese nationals in Gwadar.

The federal interior minister visited Gwadar and reviewed security arrangements for the Chinese nationals.

Locals and foreign nationals would be provided foolproof security

"All locals and foreign nationals would be provided foolproof security", the Minister said. He reviewed the security arrangements against the menace of terrorism.

Security arrangements against the menace of terrorism, federal interior minister

The Minister was thoroughly briefed about the law and order situation in Gwadar and

Mekran. The federal interior secretary, Yousaf Naseem Khokhar, Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili, Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other high level officials were also present on the occasion.

Rana Sanaullah stated that one percent of all CPEC projects allocated for security purpose.

He directed the federal departments to make sure timely and immediate recruitment on the vacant posts.



Govt has given FIA go-ahead to arrest ex-finance minister Shaukat Tarin: Sanaullah

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Sunday that the government had given the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) permission to arrest ex-finance minister PTI Senator Shaukat Tarin in a case pertaining to his alleged role in derailing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal.

Two audio leaks had surfaced in August last year in which a man, purportedly ex-minister Tarin, could be heard guiding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab finance ministers, belonging to the PTI, to tell the coalition government in the Centre and the IMF that they would not be able to commit to a provincial budget surplus in light of the monsoon floods that wrought havoc across Pakistan.

Sanaullah says some politicians are taking forward their wicked agenda.

In a notice issued to Tarin in September last year, the FIA said an inquiry had been initiated against his alleged role on the basis of the audio leak.

Informed sources told Dawn that the FIA, which completed a preliminary inquiry into Tarin's audio leaks, saw his leaked conversations as an "attempt to disrupt" the IMF loan programme and funds, thereby causing harm to the national interest.

The FIA sought approval from the interior ministry to initiate legal proceedings against Tarin, leading to his arrest, the sources had added.

"The PML-N does not believe in political victimisation."

Commenting on the matter during a press conference in Karachi on Sunday, Sanaullah lashed out at PTI Chairman Imran Khan and alleged that since his ouster,



the ex-premier had been "campaigning and making moves" to ensure that the country was subject to political instability so that it would ultimately default.

"For this purpose, he (Imran) also led astray a person like Shaukat Tarin who under his influence did something because of which Pakistan could've been hurt."

"The inquiry against him (Tarin) is complete, the FIA had asked permission to arrest him which the government has given and he should be punished for it so no one ever dares to do something like this again."

He said that despite all this, the PTI chief was "unsuccessful" and an agreement between the IMF and the government was seemingly on the horizon.

"Today again he indulged in a very disgusting talk which is highly condemnable and I want to clarify that Pakistan will achieve political and economic stability," he said, referring to Imran's televised address.

Continuing his criticism of the PTI chief, Sanaullah termed Imran to be a "political terrorist" and said the country would remain "safe from terrorists, including political terrorists like him."

He said there was "no possibility" of future negotiations with militants since past talks had not proved successful or yielded any results. Web Desk

BPSC to recruit all employees from grade 5 in Balochistan: CM Bizenjo

Staff Reporter

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo on Saturday said he may not participate in the upcoming general elections and vowed to complete his tenure. The CM addressed a crowded press conference at the CM Secretariat and spoke at length about his priorities and problems. "Neither I will finish the government nor step down as CM", Mr. Bizenjo said. "I am not a weak chief minister", he said.

BPSC to recruit employees from grade-5



The spokesperson government of Balochistan, Farah Azeem Shah, and CM's Coordinators Babar Yousafzai, and Syed Amruddin Agha were also present on the occasion. The Chief Minister announced to empower the Balochistan Public Service Commission (BPSC) for the recruitment of employees from grade-5 across the province. "This is a difficult decision and the MPAs would be annoyed over this", he said.

Teachers to be appointed on a contract basis

Mr. Bizenjo stated that officers with the best performance would be

posted at the BPSC to ensure transparency and merit in the recruitment process. He said that the number of members of the BPSC would be increased so that the process could be improved. "Youth would be appointed on a contract basis to overcome the shortage of teachers in Balochistan", the CM mentioned. He announced that teachers and professors from other provinces would be recruited if there was a lack of faculty members in Balochistan.

Balochistan to get Rs. 300 billion from Reko Diq: CM Bizenjo

About the Reko Diq gold and copper project, the CM informed

that Balochistan would get Rs.300 billion at per annum from the project. He said the company would invest 8 billion dollars in the Reko Diq and thousands of youth from Balochistan would be given jobs. He said that the federal government would also invest Rs.600 billion in the Reko Diq project and this would be a major investment in Balochistan.

About the elections, he said the election commission of Pakistan was said to spend only Rs.1.5 million during the campaign. He stated that the ground realities negate this and one election needs from Rs.10 crore to 20 crores. He said the monthly expenditures of an MNA and MPA were in millions of rupees.

Death toll in Turkiye, Syria quake tops 33,000

Rescuers pulled more survivors from the rubble on Sunday six days after one of the worst earthquakes to hit Turkiye and Syria, as Turkish authorities sought to maintain order across the disaster zone and began legal action over some building collapses.

With chances of finding more survivors growing more remote, the toll in both countries from Monday's earthquake and major aftershocks rose above 33,000 and looked set to keep growing. It was the deadliest quake in Turkiye since 1939.

Displaced residents in the Turkish city of Kahramanmaraş, near the epicentre, said they had set up tents as close as they could to their damaged or destroyed homes in an effort to prevent them from being looted.

Facing questions over his response to the earthquake as he prepares for a national election that is expected to be the toughest of his two decades in power, President Tayyip Erdogan promised to start rebuilding within weeks.

In Syria the disaster hit hardest in the rebel-held northwest, leaving



homeless yet again many people who had already been displaced several times by a decade-old civil war. The region has received little aid compared to government-held areas.

"We have so far failed the people in north-west Syria," United Nations aid chief Martin Griffiths tweeted from the Turkiye-Syria border, where only a single border

crossing is open for UN aid supplies.

"They rightly feel abandoned," Griffiths said, adding that he was focused on addressing that swiftly.

More than six days after the first quake struck, emergency workers still found a handful of people clinging to life in the wreckage of homes which had become tombs for many thousands Web Desk

Ruling BAP office evacuated in Quetta new locks installed

Staff Reporter

The central office of the ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) was evacuated on Friday in Quetta. Senator Ahmed Khan, elected on the BAP ticket evacuated the office and installed new locks at its main gate.

A leader of BAP said that two months ago, a close relative of Senator Ahmed Khan suddenly came to the party office and posted two watchmen there along with locking the main door. So when he came to know, he was told that due to some reason between Senator Ahmed Khan and his relatives, he had vacated this office.

Not in touch with the party leadership, Senator Ahmed Khan has maintained an independent status in the Senate after being elected as a senator. The party leader also said



that the furniture and records of the party officials have not been handed over to the party. Furniture is also the property of Senator Ahmed Khan, while he did not take any rent from the party for providing the office. Attempts were made to contact

Balochistan Awami Party Central General Secretary Senator Manzoor Khan Kakar, but no contact or response was received from them until the publication of this news item. The BAP appeared as the largest parliamentary party in the 2018 general

elections in Balochistan. Jam Kamal was elected as the party president earlier and then the Chief Minister of Balochistan. Mir Qudus Bizenjo, the current CM also belongs to the ruling BAP.

The ruling BAP was established before the 2018 general elections in Balochistan. The electables and influential from across Balochistan joined the party and it emerged as the largest parliamentary group in the provincial assembly in the 2018 general elections. Jam Kamal Khan was elected as the first president of the BAP and then elected as the Chief Minister of Balochistan.

After three years, the dissidents within the BAP led by Mir Qudus Bizenjo brought no confidence motion against Jam Kamal Khan. And subsequently, Mir Qudus Bizenjo was elected as the CM for the second time in Balochistan.

Pakistan, US to hold second round of defence talks Today

The second round of mid-level defence dialogue between Pakistan and the United States of America (USA) will be held from February 13-16 in Washington DC, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday.

The first round of the Dialogue was held in

Pakistan in January 2021, read the communique, adding that the country's inter-agency delegation, led by the Chief of General Staff, will comprise senior officials from the foreign ministry, Joint Staff Headquarters and three services headquarters. The US multi-agency team will be represented by the office of the under-

secretary of defence, it added. Matters related to bilateral defence and security cooperation will be discussed during the dialogues, said the spokesperson of the ministry. Last month, Pakistan and the US agreed to further optimise military-to-military ties, particularly in training and operational domains. Web Desk

Renowned Balochi singer Bashir Baloch passes away

News Desk

QUETTA: Renowned Balochi singer, Bashir Baloch, breathed his last on Sunday morning. Friends and family members confirm the demise of the well-known Balochi singer. Late Baloch was suffering from kidney prob-

lem. He was famous among music lovers across Pakistan since he could sing songs in ten languages.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo expressed grief and sorrows over the demise of Bashir Baloch. In a condolence statement, Mr. Bizenjo prayed that may Allah bless on



the departed soul and give patience to the family members to bear this irreparable loss.

Chaghi levies foil major bid of terrorism in Balochistan by seizing weapons

From Our Correspondent

Chaghi levies foiled a major bid of terrorism in Balochistan by seizing huge cache of arms and ammunition on Saturday morning. Levies sources said Chaghi levies conducted an intelligence-based operation and seized huge cache of arms and ammunition. The weapons include 1 light machine gun, 2 heavy machine guns, 1 RPG launcher, 2 9mm pistols, 3 kg of explosives, 51 grenades, 1700 rounds of ammunition and 14 magazines. Levies sources said the weapons were being smuggled from Afghanistan and Iran to carry out subversive activities in Balochistan. Timely intelligence operation held levies force to foil the major terrorism bid in Balochistan, the concluded.

QUETTA VOICE

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.

Balochistan floods: The tale of pain and destruction

Abdul Shakoor Khan

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Balochistan faced the brunt of floods.

Balochistan province, having the title of almost half of Pakistan had badly suffered from the eight monsoon spells, overwhelming in magnitude and severity. It swept away the kith and kin of the survivors, their cattle, houses and crops.

"It was unprecedented. We had never even thought of such a disaster," said 70 years old Abdul Ali, a resident of the Pashtoonabad area in Quetta. "I spent my life here. We came across many calamities. But, it was disastrous."

He appealed to the federal and provincial governments for early relief as hundreds of thousands of people were forced to stay under the open sky direly needing food and shelter.

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

Agriculture sector destroyed

The catastrophe left some 61718 houses damaged, 145936 livestock dead and about 190 thousand acres of agriculture land badly affected. "The loss only incurred to the agriculture sector of Balochistan is estimated as Rs 98 billion," said Director General Agricultural Balochistan Abdul Wahab Kakar.

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

Lasbella, Bolan, Naseerabad, Jaffarabad, Sohbatpur, Kachi, Jhal Magri, Kohlu, Dera Bugti, Sibi, Quetta, Pishin, Qila Abdullah, Qilla Saifullah, Loral, Harnai, Zhob were some of the worst affected districts.

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

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

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

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

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

Razaq, a government official in Quetta said.

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

Looming threat of climate change in Pakistan



Muhammad Jehangir Kakar

Pakistan is threatened with the challenges of climate change. Be it global standing or regional vulnerability caused due to climatic threats, Pakistan is on crossing the red line. This is so alarming as much as it is so interesting. Is there someone looking after climate change at the provincial or federal level in Pakistan? There is none!

Ministry of Climate Change at the federal level is downplayed to act only as a regulator and one that has the technical capacity to still maneuver only into the limitations of checking the quality of ambient air.

Similarly, at all the provincial levels, there are environmental protection agencies that look after the conformity of environmental regulations in various sectors contributing to certain types of pollutants.

These provincial agencies act as regulators and with a stick they enforce the environmental laws which can cater for only a limited version or a speck of what forms the big idea of climate change. At the provincial levels like at the federal level, there is no agency that is technically sound, composed of such professionals and equipped with such facilities as to counter the grand horror of climate change.

No climate change data being collected at the provincial level. As for the data and statistics, there is as much fragmentation and silos-approach as much it is in the intergovernmental coordination mechanism. The question is not of the dearth of amplexness of data however it is how the data is made meaningful. Not at any provincial-level one

could ensure that any climate-oriented data is being collected. The aforementioned agencies only ensure the quality of air by recording the various gaseous emissions in the ambient air. The Pakistan Meteorological Centers throughout the country pick up conventional weather data by various means but is hardly translated into making a meaningful statement on where we stand on climate change.

As for policies, laws, rules and regulations, we are more affluent than the developed nations. When it comes to drafting policies, odes are worth writing to our expertise but when given to see them on the ground being implemented; only darkened eulogies are symphonized at shrieks ad infinitum. The laws are being multiplied each day and have become as difficult as to remember the exact number of laws on one single sector.

The National Climate Change Policy 2012 remains

a document of the past being pushed to nullity though it was the vital document that elevated the Division of Climate Change to a Ministry level yet the promising implementation never has come off until this date. Though a devoted subject yet the NCCP grants the legitimacy to the Ministry of Climate Change to wreath all the provinces together in one garland of beautiful working and legal integration to manage the national issue of climate change.

The Climate Change Act 2017 was another move towards climate consolidation that promised to establish the Pakistan Climate Change Authority, Climate Change Council, and Climate Change Fund all of which were last time seen in 2017 when the said Act was passed. The vision 2030 remains a virgin vision thus far.

Ministry of Climate Change must realize that it is the organization at the federal level entirely respon-

sible for catering for climate change affairs. The integration of such a central body with the provinces would be the next challenge given to over politicization of everything. Climate is something which should not be made political though globally it is something which has become an element of political decisiveness as in the Biden-Trump thaw.

Nature and nurture along with the potential of Pak-Met office and reach are to be integrated and enhanced fully at the federal and provincial levels with the climate change organizations so formed above. The data and statistics need to be enhanced and made up to the mark as being internationally acceptable with proper transcriptions and applications of data. A lot must be done to keep the generalists away from making any decisions and calling the shots and the professionals are given the entry who have both the capacity and the legitimacy.

Burning down the house

By Ammar Habib Khan

A stitch in time saves nine. In the case of our economy, we do not like stitches. We deliberate whether a stitch is even required, or what if we don't stitch at all, and maybe the problem will magically solve itself.

We look back at the past, and see many people who also hadn't stitched in time, and we ask them again what to do. As we do not like to retire, we bring the same people again to do the exact same thing that they did two decades back, and get the same disastrous results. Like clockwork, we do not stitch, and the situation continues to worsen.

Economic policy in Pakistan hasn't evolved in the last three decades. Our policymakers continue to make decisions that are detrimental to the sustenance of the economy. The same decisions that have pushed the country over the edge time and again. The current economic crisis, which started as a balance of payments crisis, could have been easily solved through the right stabilization measures. A perpetual political crisis coupled with the inability to take sound economic decisions catapulted a balance of payments crisis into a potential hyperinflationary episode,

resulting in rampant food inflation, historically high interest rates, and a complete breakdown of supply chain.

To maintain the illusion of a strong Pak rupee, the government embarked on administrative controls to manage the price at which the Pak rupee trades against the US dollar. Such administrative measures meant prioritizing energy and food imports, while rationing supply of foreign currency to other industries. As industries were not allowed to import, whether to produce goods for local consumption, or for exports, gradually they depleted existing inventory levels. The inability to import effectively meant that they did not have sufficient raw material to produce goods, and either sell them locally, or export them.

As production of goods came to a halt, layoffs started happening across the board, with many daily wage earners losing jobs in a historically high inflationary environment. As production of goods halted, so did economic output, and collection of taxes, resulting in an economic squeeze, and tax collection that couldn't even mimic inflation levels. Lower tax collection meant higher budgetary deficits, which meant more borrowing by the government. As the gov-

ernment continues to run its affairs largely on borrowed funds, the equilibrium interest rate also continues to increase.

The administrative controls instead of making things easier, actually made the situation much worse, just to maintain an illusion of a strong Pak rupee. The policymakers prescribing administrative controls probably do not ever consider unintended consequences of their actions. Price controls are a favourite tool of politicized economic managers, a tool that has never yielded a positive outcome ever.

Modern supply chains are complex. Each finished product would require hundreds of inputs. The absence of even a single input can potentially lead to an unfinished product. We may consider the example of a trouser that may be exported by a textile manufacturer in Pakistan. We may have the fabric, yarn, dyes, and everything else that is required, but if a zipper is not available (because it is imported), the trouser remains unfinished, and cannot be exported.

The inability of economic managers to appreciate the complexity of supply chains has led to a total disaster, due to which there is a shortage of many goods in the country, even if they are locally produced.

There can be no economic miracle in Pakistan!

Dr Moonis Ahmar

When Ishaq Dar took oath as federal finance and revenue minister more than a week ago, there was an instant depreciation in the rate of the dollar versus the rupee; rise in the stock exchange index; and reduction in the prices of petroleum products. Does it mean that one person, who has twice earlier served as federal finance minister and escaped from Pakistan five years ago because of corruption charges, can cause an economic miracle? Is there any rational basis of Dar's claim to fix the economy by stabilising the exchange rate; lower the interest rate and mitigate inflation?

Moreover, the meager \$8 billion forex reserves, just enough to pay for only three weeks of imports, is another cause for concern. It will be nothing short of a miracle if Dar is able to have a paradigm shift in the economy because of harsh realities that will not allow the country to escape from the inevitable. In the ongoing fiscal year, Pakistan has to arrange \$40 billion external financing. This is besides the \$20 billion worth of losses the recent floods have inflicted. Artificial appreciation of the rupee against major currencies will not work because of high demand of the dollar for imports

and for other purposes. In today's Pakistan, miracles to salvage the economy are certainly not going to happen because of ground realities which are highly unfavorable.

Neither the IMF nor the World Bank or the friendly countries will come for the rescue of Pakistan because the country is constantly requesting donors to waive loans and provide more financial resources in order for it to avoid a financial default. Even in recent devastating floods, the country has not received substantial amount of financial assistance unlike in the case of the 2005 earthquake. Trust deficit and rampant corruption tend to discourage donors from providing cash assistance. Images of floods and the forceful appeal of the UN Secretary General to help Pakistan in this moment of crisis failed to bring positive results. Under the circumstances, Dar's taking up the economy is a major test case for the PML-N led coalition government.

Things were also difficult when Dar took over as finance minister in 2013 because of the PTI-PAT sit-in in Islamabad in 2014, but he managed to deal with that crisis. This time the situation is different because Pakistan's economy is in dire straits and a country of 222 million people with a conglomeration of internal and external

threats along with the devastation caused by the floods cannot have a smooth sailing for Dar despite his so-called magical skills. In 2013, the PML-N enjoyed a two-thirds mandate; but in 2022, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is heading a coalition of around a dozen parties — and that too with a razor thin majority.

The existential threat to the coalition government in the shape of Imran Khan is real, and it will be difficult for the PML-N "financial wizard" to lead a paradigm shift in the economy. The threat of famine following massive floods looms large and the government has meager resources to import food items in order to prevent a crisis situation. With all economic indicators predicting a hopeless situation, what magic wand is Dar going to wave to fix the issues which tend to aggravate the country's political and economic situation!

One needs to analyse three major realities which will continue to undermine Dar's "mystic" skills for an economic turnaround. First, the reality of corruption, nepotism, bad governance, absence of rule of law and lack of accountability needs to be taken seriously. Miracles never happen when the country is unable to deal with issues which seriously shatter work ethics.

Nations are not built by mere words or rhetoric but must eradicate the culture of corruption and nepotism. How can a country be pulled from the brink of an economic disaster when it lacks the motivation, integrity and planning on the part of those who matter?

Dar cannot let miracles happen because his hands are not clean, as well as of many others who happen to be his coalition partners and frontrunners of his own party. Constant begging from donors and friendly countries will not help because the elitist culture of Pakistan is totally oblivious of ground realities pertaining to serious political and economic crisis. Artificially reducing prices and appreciation of rupees versus the dollar would be counterproductive and generate further crisis.

Second, no economic miracle is going to happen unless our leadership has eight qualities in theory and in practice: hard work, integrity, brilliance, vision, commitment, dedication, planning, and wisdom. Looking at the other models of success, particularly in developing world, one can learn from former Singaporean PM Lee Kuan Yu, former Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad, former Chairman of Chinese Communist Party Mao Zedong and Nelson Mandela, the founding

president of post-apartheid South Africa. Other models of success are found in the UAE, Qatar, Muscat and Oman. Since the inception of Pakistan, leadership vacuum and the lack of qualities essential to successfully run a country is a bitter reality.

Whether in civilian or in military control, Pakistan failed to emerge as a role model in good governance, rule of law and sound work ethics. Laziness, incompetence, dishonesty, fraud and cheating became acceptable norms which mitigated Pakistan's rating in human development index, corruption perception Index and human security index. Deterioration of quality of life of people in terms of absence of clean and safe drinking water for all, quality and compulsory education, housing, public transport and hygienic food are major challenges. When people at the helm of affairs are hated because of their corruption and nepotism, how can Pakistan put its own house in order?

Third, miracles will not happen unless there is culture of merit in Pakistan. When decisions are made on the basis of vested interests and likes and dislikes, the country can never emerge as a successful state. Erosion of merit has a long history in Pakistan which eroded the trust of capable and qualified.

Transcending limits

Ali Hassan Bangwar

Historic moments warrant introspection and reflection. The contemporary pandemic-ridden world seems to be at the crossroads. The prevailing onslaught of Covid-19 against humankind calls for a comprehensive contemplation on what went wrong in our quest for modernisation. The pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented crisis, the likes of which the world has not seen since World War II. Rather than viewing it as a traditional fleeing event, we need to mull over the lessons the pandemic is trying to teach us. When deliberating, one may be forced to conclude that something is wrong with what we have been doing. We shouldn't be oblivious of an inevitable principle: one gets what one gives. When we harm nature, nature harms us back.

Among all creatures, humankind is high up the evolutionary ladder due to unmatched cognitive abilities and intellectual prowess. These intellectual abilities were inherently aimed at distinguishing good and evil, and regulating life on earth in a manner that benefits not only humans but their surroundings. Paradoxically, humans have outstepped and outreached their assigned authority and overestimated themselves as an omnipotent entity enjoying complete impunity of all their activities

regardless of their impacts. Rather than running the affairs and utilising the intellect and bounties in a just and sustainable manner, men have badly embezzled with nature's resources at the cost of destruction of other forms of life and of natural ecosystem. The recently released UN IPCC's terrifying sixth assessment report on the anthropogenic destruction of global climate is but a single instance of mankind's high-handedness against their surrounding environment. Even men didn't spare his fellow beings.

A few in the world hold majority of the wealth — the result: millions of people are currently consumed by poverty, hunger and disease. The rich-poor divide widens as time passes by. Global poverty and wide-scale inequality are on the rise. Laws are made and broken for and by the rich, while the poor remain entangled in them. Merciless pogroms are a norm. The week dies of being preyed and consumed by capitalist predators. The tyranny against the weak, and the atrocities of rulers over their subjects have surged as time passes by. The growing scourge of terrorism and extremism, rising populism and demagoguery, and fascist political leadership is the new normal. Mass adulteration, hoarding, black-marketing, organised crimes, cheating, lying, manipulating, exploiting have all

become common traits of our culture.

There is an ever-rising trend of flattery and hypocrisy, while everything remains centered around material success. Morality, ethos, empathy and compassion are all considered as outdated notions. One might wonder how is NASA even thinking of colonising Mars if we have utterly failed to learn to live peacefully on earth despite being here for millenniums.

Though heinous acts may go unattended or unpunished by our judicial system, we must realise the earth has its own system of justice. Floods, droughts, forest fires, heat waves, tsunamis, epidemics, earthquakes, torrential rains and violent volcanic eruptions are just a few of the consequences that have come about due to our actions. COVID-19 among other cataclysms questions the sustainability of the existing global order and the underlying principles of globalisation. The pandemic has given humankind the opportunity to rethink and reform existing socio-political and economical orders in line with principles of egalitarianism, eco-friendliness, compassion and empathy. Rather than wasting resources on weapons, we must utilize it for the underprivileged, the poor and the weak. Since we have already prospered materially, we now need to invest in humanity if we want to shield ourselves from nature's

Senator Mushahid proposes '5-point action plan to promote blue economy'

ISLAMABAD: While chairing two sessions of Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC) 2023, Senator Mushahid Hussain, Chairman of Senate Defence Committee, proposed a 5-point Action Plan to promote Blue Economy. He said apart from Blue Economy, marine and mineral resources plus CPEC and building on a strategic partnership between Pakistan, China and Saudi Arabia would be a catalyst for an alternative development approach that can help 'bid goodbye to IMF'.

The Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi, Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Faisal Rasul Lodhi and other senior officers of Pakistan Navy plus representatives of 50 countries, participating in PIMEC, were also present. Outlining his presentation, Senator Mushahid Hussain said that 'it's now clear that Pakistan is on the wrong development path, abdicating its autonomy of action and only increasing permanent dependency on the IMF, since economic independence is the material basis of political independence'.

KSB Pumps Company posts 308% growth in profit: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: KSB Pumps Company Limited's sales increased 19% to Rs3.6 billion in the nine months ending September 30, 2022, compared with Rs3 billion over the corresponding period of 2021. The company netted a gross profit of Rs535 million in 9MCY22 compared to Rs404 million in the same period of CY21, registering a growth of 33%.

Company Profile KSB Pumps Company Limited is a foundry-based engineering firm engaged in manufacturing and selling industrial pumps, valves, castings and related parts. The company is a supplier of pumps, valves, and related systems for industrial applications, building services, process engineering, energy conversion, water treatment, water transport, solids transport, and other areas of application. Its products include Zoro Stainless Steel Submersible Pump, which is made of corrosion and abrasion-resistant stainless steel; Macht - IEC Low Voltage Induction Motor, which is suitable for driving various kinds of machines or equipment, and Macht - KSB Submersible Motor, which is designed to drive water submersible pump and bears a waterproof design. The company caters to customers in the water, sewage, oil, energy, industry and construction sectors. INP



HYDERABAD: Social Workers hold a protest against inflation, outside press club in the city.

Anti-India protest in Muzaffarabad on February 15

MUZAFFARABAD: The Chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, has announced that a protest will be held in Muzaffarabad on February 15 against the Indian atrocities in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

He stated that the protest will be organized on the call of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, adding that people of Muzaffarabad will gather at Burhan Wani Chowk and hold a sit-in against the imperialist measures of the Indian government in IIOJK.

He said that Bharatiya Janata Party is evicting Kashmiri citizens from their lands through its forces and under these circumstances, the role of the government of Azad Kashmir, political parties, religious parties, civil society and especially the youth has become very important. He informed that the protest will start at 9:00am to draw the international community's attention to Modi's worst war crimes and appealed to the masses to join the protest and express solidarity with their brethren of IIOJK. INP

PPP to participate in bye-elections after intra-party consultation: Kaira

LALA MUSA: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira has said that the Pakistan People's Party will decide about the participation in the bye-elections after intra-party consultation. Talking to a private media channel, Qamar Zaman Kaira said despite being a coalition partner of the Pakistan Democratic Movement, PPP is independent in making political decisions.

Kaira responded that by-elections were scheduled on fewer seats while the election of two provinces was a major exercise to be completed. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhuutto Zardari has decided to take up a proposal of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to boycott the upcoming by-poll on the National Assembly seats with PPP candidates. It was learnt that PPP chairman has summoned party candidates contesting by-polls on Punjab and KP seats to Islamabad to discuss PDM proposal of not

taking part in by-elections scheduled for March 16 and 19. The PPP chairman will consult with each party leader and final decision on boycotting NA by-elections would be taken after party meeting, they say. The PDM leadership, in the virtual meeting held with top leadership of the PPP last week, had proposed not to take part in by-elections of the National Assembly as the united stance of the ruling coalition. Following the meeting, Bilawal Bhuutto held a virtual meeting with the parliamentary board of the party and discuss the PDM proposal. INP

Female abductor demands Rs30m ransom for snatched boy

LARKANA: The abductor of a seven-year-old boy has demanded Rs30 million as ransom money from relatives of the minor in Larkana for his release, it was learnt on Sunday. Seven-year-old Shoab Soomro was kidnapped from Pirzada Colony of Larkana a month ago. The father of the abductee has said that a woman kidnapper had demanded the money as ransom. He said she threatened to kill his son in case the ransom money was not given to her. He said he could not afford such an amount and when he told the abductor that he could only pay Rs200,000, the kidnapper is continuously hurling threats of killing the child. The father of the abductee has requested the DIG and the SSP Larkana to recover his child immediately and hold the abductor accountable for his crime. INP

Covid infectivity ratio drops in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The positivity ratio of coronavirus infection has dropped in Pakistan to mere 0.47% as 22 new cases have been emerged with no fatality reported during last 24 hours, showed the statistics released by the National Institute of Health (NIH) on Sunday morning. According to the NIH data, the death toll in the country remained the same at 30,640 whereas the number of total infections now rose to 1,576,516 after adding the fresh 22 cases. During the last 24 hours, 4,681 tests were conducted throughout Pakistan whereas the positivity ratio stood at 0.47 percent. The number of patients in critical care stood at 08. INP

Quran Khwani for martyrs Maqbool Butt, Afzal Guru held in Muzaffarabad

MUZAFFARABAD: International Forum for Justice Human Rights Jammu and Kashmir, organized Quran Khwani in Muzaffarabad in connection with the martyrdom anniversaries of Muhammad Maqbool Butt and Muhammad Afzal Guru. Muhammad Afzal Guru in the same jail on February 09 in 2013 for their role in Kashmir freedom movement. Their bodies remain buried in the premises of the jail. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chairman. INP



KARACHI: An artist busy in painting during Art for Peace Workshop at Frere Hall in Provincial Capital.

Chicken prices reach historic highs across country

ISLAMABAD: The prices of chicken and chicken meat have experienced a sharp increase in the city of Karachi and other cities throughout the country. The current price of chicken in Karachi is Rs490 per kg, while the price of chicken meat has reached Rs720 per kg. This price hike is due to the closure of several poultry businesses due to a shortage of feed. Poultry business owners have hinted at this being the reason behind the skyrocketing prices, with a kilogram of poultry meat selling for as much as Rs720 in Karachi. In Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and some other cities, the price of chicken has also reached an all-time high, with a

kilogram of poultry meat being sold for Rs700-705. Meanwhile, in Lahore, the second most populous city in the country, the price of chicken meat is hovering between Rs550-600 per kg. These rising prices have been a cause of concern for many consumers, who rely on chicken as a staple source of protein. The government is currently investigating the cause of the feed shortage and looking for ways to provide relief to consumers affected by these rising prices. The poultry industry is a vital part of Pakistan's economy, and any disruptions to its supply chain can have a significant impact on the country's food security and economic stability. The government is

Pakistan sends 10-member medical team to Turkiye

ISLAMABAD: A 10-member medical team from Pakistan left for earthquake-affected Turkiye on Sunday to take part in the ongoing relief operations in the quake-hit areas. According to the health ministry spokesperson, another medical team of 10 doctors from the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) is set to leave for Syria later today. He said that a ten-member medical team of PIMS along with the medicines left for Turkiye, while a separate 10-member doctors' team will leave for Syria today's evening. Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel extended heartfelt sympathies to the brotherly Turkiye and Syrian people on the human and material loss in the wake of the recent devastating earthquake. He said that Turkiye has always helped Pakistan and Islamabad will also not leave Turkiye at this testing time and will provide every possible support. He said that the medical team will serve the earthquake victims with full dedication and commitment in both countries. INP



KARACHI: Activists of Awami Tehreek hold a protest rally in favor of their demands outside press club in Provincial Capital.

Market-driven approach needed to boost foreign trade: expert

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan needs to follow a market-driven approach keeping in view the global trends and needs to boost its foreign trade, says a leading investment expert. "We are living in post covid recovery period and in great uncertainty at all levels. Perhaps for the first time in near history, we are facing so many challenges of fiscal consolidation," said Haroon Sharif, former chairman Board of Investment (BoI), while talking to WealthPK. "We have two fundamental issues — our productivity is low and our competitiveness is not there. Furthermore, exports are also handicapped due to weak policies and complex incentives offered to the industry," he said. The former chairman

of BoI said the government needs to take local as well as foreign investors into confidence about massive returns of investment in CPEC projects. A spokesperson for the Planning Ministry told WealthPK that many factors prevent Pakistan from fully utilizing its domestic industry, like severe energy crisis, lack of direct foreign investment due to security concerns, unskilled labour, inadequate infrastructure, inefficient transport system, and outdated technologies. "It is a matter of concern that Pakistani exports are going down at a time when the competitors are gaining success in the global market. For Pakistani products to appeal to maximum foreign buyers. INP

Saif Power Ltd turnover increases 55% to Rs20bn in 9MCY22: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Total turnover of Saif Power Limited, an independent power producer, increased by 55% to Rs20 billion in the first nine months of the calendar year 2022 from Rs13 billion over the corresponding period of 2021. The company's cost of sales also increased 57% to Rs17 billion in 9MCY22 from Rs11 billion over the same period of CY21. The gross profit in 9MCY22 increased to Rs2.8 billion from Rs1.9 billion during the same period of CY21, showing a growth of 44%. The net profit

increased 21% to Rs1.4 billion in 9MCY22 from Rs1.2 billion in 9MCY21, reports WealthPK. The company's board of directors approved on October 27, 2022, a second interim cash dividend of Rs1.5 per share to its shareholders. The company has obtained short-term Islamic finance facilities from Islamic banks subject to a maximum limit of Rs5.3 billion. The facilities are secured on fuel stock and energy purchase price receivables of up to Rs7.03 billion. These facilities are

secured against the ranking charge over all present and future fixed assets amounting to Rs6.18 billion. Earnings Growth Analysis Earnings per share of the company have shown a mixed trend from 2018 to 2021. The EPS stood at Rs7.85 in 2018, Rs9.44 in 2019, Rs6.14 in 2020 and Rs4.52 in 2021. The earnings per share growth stood at 16.99% in 2018 and 20.25% in 2019, but it plunged to minus 34.96% in 2020, before slightly improving to minus 26.38% in 2021. An extraordinary general meeting of share-

holders in June 2021 approved the sale of Saif Cement Limited's (SCL) assets in order to invest in Saif Power Limited keeping in view the latter's dwindling profits. Revenues from the sale of SCL assets will also be used to pay dividends to investors of Saif Power Limited. Industry Comparison Nishat Power, Altern Energy, Kohinoor Energy, and Lalpur Power are considered rivals of Saif Power Limited, which has the highest market capitalisation of Rs7.2 billion among its competitors. Profitability The net profit and gross profit margins of the company remained healthy in 2019 and 2020, but dipped in 2021 as is shown in the graph below. The profitability score is a useful metric for determining how desirable a stock is. Saif Power Ltd displays a profitability score of 8, which is much greater than that of its peer group. Company Profile Saif Power Limited was incorporated in Pakistan on November 11, 2004, as a public limited company under the now repealed. INP



HYDERABAD: Workers of Barabri Party Pakistan hold a protest rally against inflation, outside press club in the city.

Safety of workers above all in CPEC projects: Award Winning Engineer

ISLAMABAD: To ensure safety of workers is important above all in CPEC's projects, said award winning engineer Azim ul Haq. Recently, an award ceremony for the outstanding Pakistani staff of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was hosted. The spotlight of the occasion shone upon the unsung yet indispensable personnel who have served as the foundation of this multi-billion-dollar endeavor.

Azim ul Haq, an HSE Engineer working at the 1263MW Punjab Power Plant in Jhang, was among those honored. He is part of a team that ensures the project personnel's safety and health standards are met.

"The primary goal of HSE professionals is to ensure that there are no injuries or accidents, and that workers arrive safely and return to their families," Azim told Gwadar Pro.

"Working as an HSE professional often places you in difficult situations. At work, I faced numerous small challenges, such as workers' irrational behavior during peak working hours, which jeopardized not only their own safety but also the safety of their co-workers," Azim said.

The 1263MW Punjab Thermal Power (Pvt) Ltd. (PTPL) power plant in Jhang district is one of the largest government-owned power plants constructed by the China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC), a Chinese state-owned company which also has CPEC projects in Pakistan.

It is expected to enter commercial operation in combined cycle operation in the first quarter of this year and

will be ready to deliver energy to the national grid at full capacity to help overcome the electricity shortage.

During the construction of the project, one of the most challenging and unforgettable moments for Azim came in the early hours of May 12th, 2021, when a fire broke out at the west boundary wall of the project. Although the incident happened in the dead of night, Azim was quick enough to respond. Once he saw the fire, he was alert and rushed to the location to assess the situation, and managed to quickly bring the blaze under control with the help of his manager and the firefighting team.

"We saved our project from a catastrophe incident," Azim told the reporter with a seemingly relaxed demeanor. When the reporter approached Azim, he was on leave, for his family has been blessed with a baby. "Earnings from this job provide comfortable living for my families. Although living away from family and my newborn daughter is difficult, given that the power project's location is far from my home town, the company provides me with all kinds of benefits and allows me to take vacations as needed."

"I believe CPEC is a world-changing corridor that will facilitate commutes for neighboring countries, particularly China and Pakistan. It is a journey toward economic regionalization in a globalized world, and an effort to improve infrastructure within Pakistan," Azim said. "For myself, the experience and skills I acquired while working on this project have helped me excel in my career. The expertise I gained on this project will surely help me in my future growth and facilitate exploring new opportunities." INP



BAHWALPUR: A Pakistani driver powers his vehicle during the 18th International Cholistan Desert Rally.

Pakistan remains committed to further strengthen ties with Iran: Alvi

ISLAMABAD: Felicitating Iran on the 44th anniversary of Islamic Revolution, President Dr Arif Alvi has stated that Pakistan remains committed to further strengthen its ties with the brotherly country across the entire gamut of bilateral relations.

In his message to Iranian Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on behalf of government and people of Pakistan, he said the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Iran are rooted in linguistic, cultural and religious bonds.

The President conveyed his best wishes for happiness and continued progress, prosperity and wellbeing of the brotherly people of Islamic Republic of Iran.

It was worth mentioned here that tens of thousands of Iranians rallied on Saturday in Tehran and other major cities to mark the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, as their president said months-long protests had been defeated.

For the past two years, the 1979 overthrow of the Western-backed Shah was commemorated mainly by Iranians who drove around cities in their cars or on motorcycles due to Covid restrictions. But this year, waving flags, they took to the streets of Tehran on foot and converged on Azadi (Freedom) Square, one of the capital's most prominent landmarks, despite chilly temperatures. People held up pictures of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as well as the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic republic, and revered general Qasem Soleimani, killed in a US air strike on Baghdad airport in January 2020.

They also held placards reading "We stand to the end", "A united, strong and stable Iran" and "We obey the leader". Sejil ballistic missiles and Shahed 136 drones were on display around the square where President Ebrahim Raisi said people had gathered to renew their "allegiance" to the revolution. INP

Karachi: employee of courier company looted in Gulistan-e-Jauhar

KARACHI: Incidents of street crimes are on the rise in Karachi as another employee of a courier company was looted in the city's Gulistan-e-Jauhar area.

According to details, the incident of street crime was caught on camera in Gulistan-e-Jauhar Block 3.

According to the footage, the armed robber on a motorcycle stopped the employee of a private courier company, deprived him of valuables and fled easily.

Saturday, dacoits looted \$25,000, mobile phones and other valuables from a family in the Liaquatabad area of Karachi who had recently returned from the United States (US).

A US-returned family was looted by dacoits in the Liaquatabad area of Karachi. It was learnt that the family members reached Karachi to attend the Dastarbandi ceremony of their son at Jamia Binoria Aalamia.

Police launched an investigation after registering a case following the robbery. INP

4 hurt critically in van-racing car smash during Cholistan Jeep Rally

CHOLISTAN: A carry van collided with a racing car during an ongoing Cholistan Jeep Rally festival, leaving four men riding in the van critically injured.

The crash between the two vehicles took place two kilometers away from the Dilwish Stadium in Bahawalpur. Resultantly, four people inside the carry van suffered serious injuries while one of them was said to be in the critical condition owing to his head injury.

They were rushed to the DHQ Hospital Ahmadpur for medical assistance. On the other hand, the racing car driver remained safe in the collision. INP

CHEC to start de-silting operation in Gwadar Port

ISLAMABAD: China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd (CHEC) is all set to start de-silting operations at Gwadar Port to reclaim 14.5 meters of natural and original operational depth of Gwadar Port at a cost of Rs 4.7 billion.

According to Gwadar Pro, it is a high-octane CPEC project that finally makes its headway at a watershed moment of the 10th anniversary of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a signature venture of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Under the title of "the maintenance dredging of a navigational channel of Gwadar Port", the project will be completed in 12 months as per the agreement signed between CHEC and Gwadar Port Authority (GPA).

A GPA official told Gwadar Pro that "since earlier we planned to kickstart only one part of the dredging process in two or three phases at Gwadar Port, so around Rs 1 billion was allocated in 2022-2023 budget for partial dredging. Later, it was finalized to do complete dredging in one fell swoop, hence, now the cost of the project stands at Rs 4.7 billion."

On a query, he said that having gone through the bidding process officially launched by GPA last year, CHEC won the contract of maintenance dredging construction on the forward swing waters, approach channel of the Gwadar Port Terminal to ensure ships' moment in entry channel, facilitating their smooth flow, which is of great significance to the future development of Gwadar Port.

He added that GPA awarded the contract to CHEC after gauging technical assessment based on international experience and the financial worth of all participant companies in a bidding process.

"The multi-million dollars project has a significant impact on Gwadar's Port's operations. It will pave the way. INP"

Anti-polio campaign kicks off in 39 districts

ISLAMABAD: Following the polio virus confirmation in the Ravi's environmental samples, an anti-polio campaign has been launched in 39 districts across the country, while a special polio campaign will be carried out in nine districts of Punjab from 13th February to 17th February.

The spokesperson for the health ministry said that a campaign to administer polio drops to more than 6 million children was going to be kicked off.

According to Federal Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel, there will be an overall campaign in two districts of Punjab, Lahore and Faisalabad where children will be vaccinated against the crippling disease.

The minister elaborated that the anti-polio drive is being carried out in seven districts of South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Bannu, DI Khan, Tank, Lakki Marwat North Waziristan, Upper South Waziristan and Lower South Waziristan.

While expressing his concern over existence of polio virus in neighbouring Afghanistan, he reiterated that the virus could pose a serious threat to the children residing on either side of the border.

"There are numerous effective campaigns to prevent the spread of polio virus underway and a variety of practical measures are being taken to eliminate the polio from completely," he added.

He emphasised that in order to prevent our future generation from permanent disability, we all have to play our part in polio eradication. INP

Ukraine says Russia launched new wave of aerial attacks

KYIV: Ukraine has said that Russia had launched a major new wave of aerial attacks, as President Joe Biden announced he would mark one year since the invasion by visiting Kyiv's neighbour Poland.

Strikes were reported from the eastern region of Kharkiv to the western region of Ivano-Frankivsk, a day after President Volodymyr Zelensky travelled to Brussels to lobby EU leaders for long-range weapons and fighter jets. Zelensky said on Friday Russian missiles had crossed over ex-Soviet Moldova and Nato member Romania while heading to Ukraine, though Bucharest denied the claim.

With the bloody conflict approaching its one-year anniversary on Feb 24, the White House said Biden would travel to Nato ally Poland on February 20-22. Biden to visit neighbouring Poland to mark one year since Kyiv's invasion.

Biden will make a speech to mark "Russia's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, addressing how the United States has rallied the world to support the people of Ukraine as they defend their freedom and democracy".

The Kremlin on Friday also announced that Russian President Vladimir Putin would deliver his annual state of the nation speech on Feb 21. Russia last targeted Ukraine with a mass strike in late January, days after Western allies agreed to deliver heavy tanks to Kyiv. Zelensky called the new Russian attacks "a challenge to Nato", adding that "this is terror that can and must be stopped". INP

Effective pest management needed to improve agri yields: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Insect pest damage is one of the primary reasons behind reduced crop production on farms and agricultural premises. The problem can be tackled by employing a strong and effective pest management system.

There are many different pest species that can cause agricultural damage, and if they are not treated, they can also result in a loss of income.

Talking to WealthPK, Muhammad Ashraf Khan, Scientific Officer at National Agriculture Research Centre (NARC), said pesticides have become a major concern in Pakistan due to their widespread use in agriculture and their potential to harm human health and the environment.

"Over the years, the use of pesticides has increased significantly in Pakistan, leading to high levels of pesticide residues in food and water sources. This poses a significant risk to public health, especially for those living in rural areas who rely on crops for their livelihoods and food sources," he said.

Ashraf said agriculture products for human consumption and animal feed are severely harmed by insect pests. He said diseases and insect pests can lower production, and in worst cases, completely destroy a crop. He said every fruit and vegetable have their own pests, and there are separate methods to control them.

"In many cases, farmers use excessive amounts of pesticides without proper training or protective equipment, exposing themselves and their communities to toxic chemicals," he said. The uncontrolled use of pesticides has led to serious concerns about the impact on human health and environment, he added.

"On the other hand, the accumulation of pesticides in soil and water can harm beneficial insects, birds, and other wildlife, disrupt ecosystems, and pose a risk to public health through contaminated food and drinking water," he pointed out.

The use of substandard pesticides is a major problem in Pakistan, as many of these products are fake or counterfeit and contain dangerous chemicals that are banned or restricted in other countries.

The issue of substandard pesticides is exacerbated by the lack of regulation and enforcement, as well as poor laboratory facilities and a shortage of trained personnel to carry out inspections and testing.

In addition, farmers often use pesticides not registered for use in Pakistan either because they are cheaper or because they are not available in the local market. This can result in improper use and the application of the wrong type of pesticide, which can be hazardous and counterproductive. "Pakistan needs a strong pest management system since agriculture is being severely damaged, which costs us a lot. The government is responsible for making sure that farmers employ the proper preventative measures," Ashraf said. "To address these concerns, the government of Pakistan must take a more proactive approach to regulating the use of pesticides in agriculture. This includes strengthening laws and regulations, providing education and training to farmers, and improving laboratory facilities and testing methods," he said. INP

Will quit if Maryam awarded party's presidency: Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has again stated that he would quit if Maryam awarded the party's presidency. In an interview to a television, Abbasi said that his leader is Nawaz Sharif, if Maryam Nawaz elevated to the PML-N's top office, he will consider remaining in the party's fold or not.

"I was named the senior vice president of the PML-N when Shehbaz Sharif was arrested in year 2019," Shahid Khaqan said. "When Maryam was given the leadership position and elevated to the Chief Organizer's position, I had tendered my resignation at that time from the party office to the PML-N president," he said. "I could not work further on the party's office, I told."

Replying a question he said, he will consider remaining in the party or not when Maryam Nawaz will be elevated to the president's office of the PML-N. Responding a question to join another party with a straightforward 'No' he said if he had to quit the PML-N he will return to his home as "I have no other home except it". It is pertinent to mention here that Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, a party stalwart, had not attended the PML-N workers convention, recently held in Islamabad. INP

Man kills transgender sibling, injures three more

KOHAT: A man opened fire on transgenders in Kohat, killing one and injuring three of them in Kohat late on Saturday night. The transgenders were returning from a wedding when they were attacked near Jarma bridge, in the limits of Saddar Police Station.

A heavy contingent of police reached the place of the attack as soon as they received a report and arrested a man along with the weapon allegedly used in the attack.

The man has been identified as Arif, and is allegedly the brother of one of the transgenders. He has been booked in a case containing charges of murder and attempted murder. The three injured transgenders were shifted to KDA hospital where they are receiving medical attention. INP

Punjab flour millers announce strike from Monday

LAHORE: The Punjab Flour Mills Association has announced to go on strike from Monday (tomorrow) against the suspension of the wheat quota of over 100 flour mills by the province's food department, sources said.

The differences between the flour mills association and the Punjab food department has intensified after the govt's move of suspending the wheat quota.

Chairman Punjab Flour Mills Association in his statement said the flour mills will not receive wheat from govt quota from tomorrow.

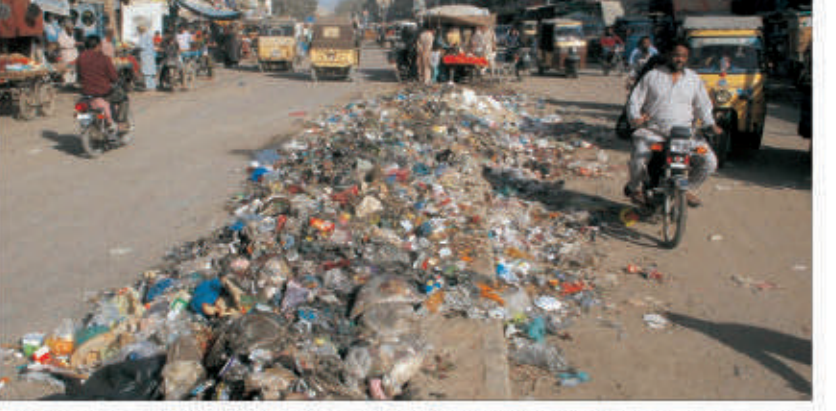
The Punjab flour mills chairman further said the supply of wheat in the market will be hampered during the strike.

On the other hand, the sources said that the Punjab food department has ordered to register cases against 10 flour mill owners in the province.

Earlier, wheat prices in Punjab's open market decreased by Rs1,200 per maund, after the increase in wheat quota and import.

According to market dealers, the per maund wheat price dropped to Rs4,000 from Rs5,200.

Following the reduction of Rs1,200 per maund, the per kg wheat price in the open market has dropped to Rs100 from 130. INP



KARACHI: A view of garbage dump in the middle of Sindhi Hotel road as needs to attention for concern authority in Provincial Capital.

Turkiye-Syria quake deaths pass 28,000, UN expects toll to double

ANKARA: Rescuers pulled a seven-month-old baby and a teenage girl from the rubble on Sunday, nearly a week after an earthquake devastated Türkiye and Syria and killed more than 28,000. UN relief chief Martin Griffiths said he expected the death toll to at least double after he arrived in southern Türkiye on Saturday to assess the quake's damage.

Tens of thousands of rescue workers are scouring flattened neighbourhoods despite freezing weather that has deepened the misery of millions now in desperate need of aid. Security concerns led some aid operations to be suspended, and dozens of people have been arrested for looting or trying to defraud victims in the aftermath of the quake in Türkiye, according to state media.

But miraculous tales of survival still emerged from the destruction and despair. "Is the world there?" asked 70-year-old Menekse Tabak as she was pulled out from the concrete in the southern city of Kahramanmaraş — the epicentre of Monday's 7.8-magnitude tremor — to applause and cries praising God, according to a video on state broadcaster TRT Haber.

A seven-month-old baby named Hamza was also rescued in southern Hatay more than 140 hours after the quake, while Esma Sultan, 13, was also saved in Gaziantep, state media reported. Families were racing against time to find their missing relatives' bodies in southern Türkiye. "We hear (the authorities) will no longer keep the bodies waiting after a certain period of time, they say they will take them and bury them," Tuba Yolcu said in Kahramanmaraş. Another family clutched each other in grief at a cotton field transformed into a cemetery, with a seemingly endless stream of bodies arriving for swift burial. Griffiths toured quake-hit areas of Kahramanmaraş on Saturday, telling Sky News he expected INP

Fawad Chaudhry slams ECP for delaying meeting on Punjab polls

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Fawad Chaudhry slammed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for not holding a meeting on Punjab general elections today (Sunday) despite court orders.

Fawad, in a tweet, said: "The Election Commission should have held a meeting today for the polls, don't make a joke of the Constitution and court orders."

Further criticising the commission, Fawad claimed that the "general impression" is that since the ECP is made up of "Munshis" (clerks or personal assistants), it will not hold provincial elections like it did in Islamabad.

"This fiddling with the Constitution will cost the country dearly," warned the former information minister.

Fawad told the ECP that the Constitution is the only agreed document, and if that is also "trampled, then the state of Pakistan will be in serious danger".

"Enough is enough, our movement for the supremacy of the Constitution is ready. This movement will start with Jail Bharo [movement] and will continue till the restoration of the Constitution," said the PTI leader.

It should be noted that PTI Chairman Imran Khan on February 6 announced the "Jail Bharo" (fill up the prisons) movement over the delay in the announcement of the election schedule in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

"If the elections are not held within 90 days, we will start the Jail Bharo movement," Khan had warned.

Meanwhile, the ECP has summoned a special meeting on Monday to discuss the Lahore High Court's (LHC) decision of holding elections in Punjab in 90 days. A special meeting has been called at its secretariat in light of the LHC decision to hold elections in Punjab, according to a brief statement issued by the commission. INP



ISLAMABAD: People are boarding in Green line train imported from China at Margalla Railway Station in Federal Capital.