

QUETTA VOICE

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A coal miner dies as mine collapsed in Wadh Balochistan



Hakeem Sheikh Abdul Baqi killed in Mastung

Govt presents 'mini-budget' to unlock \$1.1bn IMF loan

Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar Wednesday introduced the Finance (Supplementary) Bill 2023 or the "mini-budget" in the National Assembly and Senate as the government sought to fulfil the prerequisites for unlocking the \$1.1 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan tranche.

Govt rolls out measures to broaden its tax collection net

Running against time to pacify the IMF for the revival of the bailout programme, the government last night approved hiking the general sales tax (GST) rate from 17% to 18% and increasing the Federal Excise Duty (FED) on cigarettes in order to fetch an additional Rs15 billion out of Rs170 billion agreed to by Pakistan in line with the IMF conditions.

Through the "mini-budget", the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government aims to reduce the budget deficit and broaden its tax collection net — in order to meet the conditions laid forth by the Washington-based lender.

Increasing in FED on soft, sugary drinks also proposed

The National Assembly will not be sending the bill for further deliberations to the Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, while the Senate has referred the legislation to the relevant committee.

Talking to reporters after the session, FinMin Dar said that he expects the bill to be passed in both houses by Monday or Tuesday as Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani has "given us till Friday".

Pakistan and the IMF could not reach a deal last week and a visiting IMF delegation departed Islamabad after 10 days of talks but said negotiations would continue. The \$350 billion economy is in dire need of



funds as it battles a wrenching economic crisis.

Increase in GST on luxury items from 17% to 25%

In a bid to appease the IMF, the government sought to roll out the fiscal measure

FED on cement to be raised from Rs1.5 kg to Rs2 kg

An agreement on the ninth review of the

programme would release over \$1.1 billion of the total \$2.5 billion pending as part of the current package agreed upon in 2019 which ends on June 30. The funds are crucial for the economy whose current foreign exchange reserves barely cover 18 days' worth of imports.

In his address to the lower house of parliament, FinMin Dar said that the "nation is facing unprecedented crises" due to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) govern-

ment's "substandard" policies.

FED on business and first-class air tickets be increased to Rs20,000 or 50% whichever is higher

The country, during the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) previous government, had witnessed economic development and the gross domestic product (GDP) had increased by \$112 billion.

"The PML-N always tries to take fewer loans. Foreign investment had also increased during the PML-N tenure. In contrast, during the PTI government, the loans hit record highs, and a common man's income also plunged."

The finance czar went on to say that apart from overcoming the "challenges that the present government faces due to PTI's policies", last year's floods had also incurred losses worth more than \$8 billion.

"But, we should always prefer the state over politics," he reiterated — the mantra that PDM leaders have time and again propagate as they face an uphill task on the economic front.

The finance minister insisted on reforms in the power sector, deeming those as key for the country's economy. "International financial institutions have asked for reforms in the sector," he said.

Senator Dar said the PDM-led administration has fulfilled the promises made to the IMF by the PTI-led government. "We are paying a hefty political price for all this. We consider the state, and not politics, important."

The minister said that efforts are being made to impose taxes in such a way that common folk don't have to face difficulties. Dar informed the parliament that the government has allowed the import of five-year-old tractors and has set a target to install 75,000 solar tube wells. Web Desk.

WHO supports 17 maternal and child centers in Naseerabad Balochistan

Matiullah Khan

Last year floods devastated not only the living conditions as well as most of the primary health centers, but hospitals including maternity centers were also completely destroyed, due to which there was a fear of death of women and children due to the non-availability of facilities at the time of childbirth and chances of increase maternal and infant mortality rate.

World Health Organization (WHO) has supported 17 maternity and child centers in different districts of Naseerabad division, which will provide health facilities to the pregnant woman during the pregnancy period and labor. The maternity and child center is fully equipped with modern machinery to help the complications during pregnancy. This will reduce the fears of mother and child deaths at the time of

delivery.

WHO supports child centers in Naseerabad

The establishment of maternity and child centers equipped with all facilities in all the districts of the division, 3 in Sobatpur, 4 in Naseerabad, 2 in Jaffarabad, 2 in Usta Muhammad, 3 in Jhal Magsi and 3 in Kechi by WHO has been fully functional providing services.

In flood-affected areas, WHO has provided large-scale medicines supplies to control the epidemics of malaria, typhoid, measles, rubella, and other skin infections and water-borne diseases. WHO is also working on the rehabilitation of damaged health facilities. WHO surveillance system is also ongoing to prevent various epidemics.

Commissioner Naseerabad Division



Bashir Ahmed Bangalzai has said that due to the timely actions of WHO in Naseerabad Division, precious human lives

were saved on a large scale due to the flood that happened in Naseerabad last year. Due to this 90% of the population of the

Naseerabad division was affected that not only destroyed people's houses as well as the government health centers.

He expressed these views during a special interview. Bashir Ahmed Bangalzai said that due to limited resources, the district administration faced a lot of problems, while after the flood situation, the spread of different types of diseases increased sharply, which was a challenge for the health department to control.

At the same time, the World Health Organization's full cooperation with the Balochistan Health Department is commendable. WHO has also established five Nutrition Stabilizing Centers in different districts of division to provide treatment to malnourished children. Which are completely equipped and will also provide healthy food including treatment for malnourished children to reduce the mortality of malnourished children.

A coal miner dies as mine collapsed in Wadh Balochistan

Syed Muhammad Qaseem

A coal miner died when a mine collapsed in the Dakhala area of Wadh on Wednesday. According to the Levies' sources, the dead body has been retrieved from the mine and was identified as Abdul Jalil Baranzai. The coal miner was working deep in the mine when the incident occurred.

The dead body was shifted to a nearby hospital. After the necessary official procedures, the hospital authorities handed over the dead body to the heir of the victim.

Mines incidents claim scores of precious human lives in



Balochistan

Similar incidents have claimed many precious lives of coal miners in Balochistan. The Chief Minister of Balochistan and other provincial officials have taken notice of the incidents with coal miners but still, no action has been carried out.

Heirs of the victims have continuously claimed that they are deprived of justice and no action is taken against the coal mine owners for their negligence in adopting precautionary measures for the mine laborers. "We are not provided with the types of equipment to detect the presence of a poisonous gas inside the mine". A coal miner Zanjir Gul claimed.

Hakeem Sheikh Abdul Baqi killed in Mastung

From Our Correspondent

Unknown accused opened fire and killed Hakeem Sheikh Abdul Baqi in Mastung district of Balochistan on Wednesday.

Police sources said unknown accused opened fire at the Hakeem outside his clinic on old Kalat road. He suffered serious injuries and succumbed to injuries on his way to hospital.

The attackers escaped unhurt from the spot

Police and levies personnel reached the spot as an investigation into the incident went underway.



The traders community strongly condemned the killing and demanded of the government to arrest the culprits involved in the attack. The traders community observed shutter down strike to mourn the killing of Sheikh Abdul Baqi.

Imran wants to be in the saddle 'through judiciary': Maryam

LAHORE: PML-N chief organiser Maryam Nawaz has alleged that Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan is making efforts to return to power "riding the judiciary".

"Imran Khan is desperate and he wants to return to power riding the judiciary. Imran again needs crutches to come to power." Ms Nawaz said while talking to the party's young leaders in Model Town here on Tuesday. This is her second speech in a week in which she targeted the judiciary with regard to the PTI chief.

"The judiciary is still behaving like a facilitator of Imran Khan as he gets off scot-free of charges of corruption and misuse of power despite availability of evidence against him. The judiciary is still facilitating him," she recently said.

In Monday's meeting, she questioned the role of a former chief justice in disqualifying her father, Nawaz Sharif, who has been living in self-imposed exile since November 2019 on medical grounds. "Where has Saqib Nisar been? Today I am looking for the Dam



Baba Jee to ask him to tell the people that you had given 'sadiq aur amin certificate' to Imran Khan," she questioned and said that in order to prove that only one person (Imran) was honest an organised campaign against other politicians was run during the last 10 years to tag them as 'corrupt and dishonest'.

Ms Nawaz, who was appointed the party's senior vice president and chief organiser last month with a task to reorganise the party, has been given two assignments — counter Imran Khan's rising popularity and his pressure tactics on institutions, the judiciary and the army, and inject new life into the beleaguered PML-N.

Says federal govt can't provide jobs in trying times. She expressed her delight over the Imran-Bajwa wrangling, saying those who targeted Nawaz Sharif were today fighting with each other. "Gen Bajwa said he had videos in which Imran told him to do this against Nawaz Sharif," she said and added as Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa had retired, Imran Khan started targeting him. "Web Desk

Mujeeb ur Rehman posted as Secretary Food Balochistan

News Desk:

QUETTA: The Balochistan government posted Mujeeb ur Rehman, a grade-20 officer as the Secretary of Food on Wednesday. According to a notification issued by the Services and General Administration Department (SGAD), the government has transferred Ayaz Mandokhail and posted Mujeeb ur Rehman as secretary of food. Mr. Mandokhail has been appointed as a temporary member of the chief minister's inspection team.



QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

BPSC: an unprecedented decision, if implemented

Indeed, it would be an unprecedented decision if the provincial government empowers Balochistan Public Service Commission (BPSC) to recruit employees from grade-5 to 17. There has always been a black mark over Balochistan regarding the sale of jobs. Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Quddus Bizenjo deserves appreciation for taking this hard and politically difficult decision since all ministers and MPAs always strive to recruit their own blue-eyed in government departments.

Action should match words

The important question is still, Action should match the words of Chief Minister Balochistan regarding the BPSC decision. Undoubtedly, recruitment through BPSC would wash away the black dot of corruption and ensure better governance in the province. This would also help recruit competent and deserving youth to serve the province in the future irrespective of creed, color, and political affiliation.

As per a well-placed officer in the Balochistan government, currently, over 30,000 posts of employees are lying vacant. Only in the Balochistan higher education department, the number of lecturers and professors posts is over 1000. Similarly, in secondary education in Balochistan, over 10,000 posts of teaching staff/teachers are lying vacant.

BPSC act empowers the government to increase the number of members

Yes, the existing manpower and the members at the BPSC are not in a position to conduct tests and interviews for all grades. However, the BPSC act 1989's section 3 allows the provincial government to increase the number of the members from present 8 and establish new branches of the commission in the divisional headquarters of Balochistan. This would also be easy for candidates to apply in their nearest branches and appear in tests and interviews. Financially, it is also economical for the government. The provincial government would not need to pump extra resources to run the system.

Sindh and Punjab are the best examples and they can be approached with regard to the establishment of BPSC branches in interior Balochistan. It is not only the responsibility of the Chief Minister rather all political parties should play their role in this regard to pave the way for good governance in Balochistan.

The politics of narratives

By Abdul Sattar

As millions of Pakistanis continue to bear the brunt of inflation and poverty, the political elite finds new narratives to fool the hapless people of the country. Both former prime minister Imran Khan and PML-N's leader Maryam Nawaz believe that their political rhetoric can somehow help the 220 million people who are facing the challenges created by not only the policies of global and regional financial institutions but also the country's ruling elite.

Khan seems determined to prove that he can help the country tackle the plethora of crises Pakistan currently faces, and blames politicians and institutions for all the wrongs in the country. Maryam asserts that everything could be fixed if Khan is put behind bars. Both leaders do not have any welfare programme that might lift more than the 80 million poor people out of poverty. And they do not seem to care about the threat of large-scale starvation; the poor are already facing acute food shortages.

There could be hundreds of other questions for her. But since she may not have enough time to answer all of them, she

must at least spare some time to reflect upon the performance of her family-led government. Punjab houses the highest number of poor in the country. Many of its cities do not have sewage treatment plants. Some urban centres in the province are also not equipped with industrial effluent treatment systems. But since a number of industrialists are affiliated with the PML-N, no one can compel them to install these plants.

While the PML-N demands constitutional rights for itself, it denies the same rights to workers, students and minorities. Millions of workers cannot form unions, especially in factories owned by those close to the PML-N. Brick kiln families present a picture of modern slavery; many brick kiln owners claim to be the supporters and local leaders of different political parties. Influential land grabbers from Islamabad to Lahore are also believed to be closely associated with these parties that are known for evicting poor people from slums in the name of anti-encroachment drives, including the PML-N.

Khan, who is known

The former CM of Punjab kept taking action against those who resisted the evictions of people to start the Ravi development project.

After miserably failing in achieving his target, Khan got the provincial assemblies of Punjab and KP dissolved. Before the dissolution, his party leaders went to the extent of writing to the IMF, warning it against granting loans to the country. This attitude flies in the face of his claims that he holds the country dear.

Khan talks about poverty and lack of human development. But he is yet to share the number of people who were lifted out of poverty during his tenure. Did the issue of stunted growth witness a downward spiral during his tenure? Were the homeless provided any decent housing? How many schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and basic health units were set up during his time? When he came to power, around 60 million lived in poverty. Now that number has gone up to over 80 million. It is clear that both Maryam and Khan have no answers to the problems of the people. Both apparently believe that a narrative is enough, but the reality is different. The country owes a staggering debt of over \$120 billion. A storm of merciless inflation.

Tales from the Mountains

By Jamil Akhtar

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



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

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

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

In addition to climate change, the increase in the human population has also adversely affected the environment. To reverse the effects of deforestation, thousands of poplar and fruit-bearing trees including cherry, apple, and apricot have been planted all over the northern areas.

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

These initiatives of CKNP and CCAM-II projects have been funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Government of Italy, and the Global Water Challenge (Coca Cola Foundation). Tales from the Mountains. The author is an international award-winning writer, and photographer, currently working as a consultant for UNDP Pakistan

Ties with Russia

By Lt-Gen (r) Abdul Qayyum

Russia is the largest country on the globe, with about 11 per cent of the world land mass, nearly double the size of the United States. Russia's main expansion took place in the later half of the 16th century when they annexed an extensive geographical region of Siberia. Russia's population is close to 150 million and the country's strength lies in its land mass, resilient population, and strong armed forces which are equipped with the world's largest stockpile of 5977 nukes and 1588 missiles.

Russia's main strength, however, lies in its energy resources as it is the largest supplier of gas and second largest supplier of crude oil in the world. Its economic strategy is based on a mixed concept of controlled and free market economies and the Russian economy is the fourth largest in Europe and 11th largest in the world.

Pakistan badly needs the best of socio-economic, political and military ties with all regional countries - especially with energy superpower Russia. However, Russia-Pakistan relations suffered a setback when in the very first decade of our independence we failed to keep an optimum balance in our diplomatic ties with both the superpowers of the time: the US and (former) Soviet Union. Allowing American anti-Soviet spy planes to operate from the Badaber PAF base located near Peshawar further aggravated the situation.

This notwithstanding, the Soviet Union later tried to play a neutral role in the 1965 Indo-Pak war and

facilitated both countries to finalize the Tashkent Declaration. Unfortunately, however, the former Soviet Union continued to support India on the Kashmir dispute and provided India assistance during the 1971 India-Pak war. The Soviet Union made a positive gesture in the mid-seventies when they signed a contract to establish a steel mill in Pakistan. Bilateral ties however again got aggravated when Pakistan played a pivotal role in thwarting Soviet aggression in Afghanistan which culminated in a humiliating Soviet defeat (1979-89).

After the end of the Soviet Union, especially after the dawn of the 21st century, the global financial centre of gravity started shifting from the West to the East and with that international geostrategic environment also started witnessing a transformation. Russia and China came close to each other; the SCO was formed. India gradually started slipping into the American camp and finally became a strategic ally; Covid badly affected the world economy; and Nato's eastward gradual expansion culminated in the Ukraine war which inter alia created a world energy crisis.

Russia also started to extend its influence eastward. This provided a golden chance to Pakistan to improve its bilateral ties with Russia. As a result of this, we got some Mi-17 helicopters, joint military exercises were conducted and later we also got a few more Mi-35 helicopters. Currently, a \$2.5 billion worth Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline (PSGP) project is in progress which will lay a 1100 km gas pipeline from

Karachi to Kasur.

The 8th session of the Pakistani-Russian Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on trade, economic and science and technology cooperation was held last month in Islamabad. And the Pakistan-Russia Business Council (PRBC) of the FPCCI is actively seeking purposeful interaction with Russia's business community and they have also signed some MoUs. The G-to-G signing of an MoU for supply of crude oil and gas is however the biggest breakthrough which quickly needs to be translated into a formal contract. It is being estimated that about 35 per cent of the 70 m barrel annual Pakistani crude oil requirement will be met by importing Russian oil at subsidized rates.

Pakistan's foreign minister's recent visit to Russia further reinforced bilateral ties. Areas of further cooperation with Russia can also be explored. First, we need to discuss and finalize issues pertaining to currency swap, barter trade and managing a safe trade route through Afghanistan - maybe through a tunnel under the very narrow Wakhan Corridor created as a buffer between Russia and British India in 1895. Its minimum depth is nine miles and it can be a safe land route to Russia through CARs - of course with the consent of the Afghan government for which they should get suitable royalty. It will also be very beneficial for Russia as it has no warm water sea port close by. Refining Russian crude oil will not be a problem as out of our five refineries we can use two for Russian crude oil processing.

Life after abrogation of HOKJ's autonomy

Mehak Arshad

In 2019, BJP revoked the special status of then Jammu and Kashmir, and illegally integrated it with India. I was studying in India at the time while my family was in Kashmir. Due to the communication blockade, I was not able to connect with them for a very long time. I still remember how difficult it was for me to live far from home and not hearing back from my family. The history of India, Pakistan and Kashmir may be intertwined but such stories remain at the very heart of it.

neither acceded to India nor Pakistan and decided to remain independent. After doing so, Pakistan tried to enter its territory to take control. In order to defend his state, the Maharaja asked India for military help but India only agreed to help if Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India. The Maharaja signed the 'Instrument of Accession' on 26th October, 1947. This day is considered as a 'Black Day' for the Kashmiris.

Part XXI of the Indian Constitution with the title of "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions." It guaranteed special status and power to Jammu and Kashmir to have their separate Constitution, a state flag, and autonomy of internal administration, defence and communication. Article 35(a) of the Indian Constitution, allowed the state legislature of Jammu and Kashmir to define their people as the states "permanent residents." All the residents had a state subject or a resident proof which gave them fundamental rights, citizenship, right to own and buy a property in the state. As a result of this article, anyone outside the region couldn't purchase property in the state. On 31st October 2019, the parliament of India gave the order of reorganising Jammu and Kashmir into two was union territories - Jammu and Kashmir was one and Ladakh was the other.

of these Articles happened with the intention to change the demography of the region. Since the removal of these articles, the legislative framework of the region has started to change. For example, in colleges 50% of seats are reserved just for Indians. Such changes have angered the locals as they feel neglected in their own land. Post 2019, the Indian government claims that everything is 'normal' in the region and since then large number of Indians have started visiting. However, despite the changes, insurgency still exists. Almost every day we hear about encounters and attacks in various parts of the region. The vicious cycle still continues. Since the accession of Jammu and Kashmir was not acceptable by the people, the Indian government gave it special status. In the Presidential order of 1954, Article 370 and 35(a) were drafted in the Constitution of India to guarantee this special status. Article 370 was drafted in Part XXI of the Indian Constitution with the title of "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions." It

guaranteed special status and power to Jammu and Kashmir to have their separate Constitution, a state flag, and autonomy of internal administration, defence and communication. Article 35(a) of the Indian Constitution, allowed the state legislature of Jammu and Kashmir to define their people as the states "permanent residents." All the residents had a state subject or a resident proof which gave them fundamental rights, citizenship, right to own and buy a property in the state. As a result of this article, anyone outside the region couldn't purchase property in the state. On 31st October 2019, the parliament of India gave the order of reorganising Jammu and Kashmir into two was union territories - Jammu and Kashmir was one and Ladakh was the other.

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

Inequality and hunger

By Chuck Collins

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 healthcare 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. 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.

Political parties, institutions jointly devise action plan for Pakistan: Fawad Chaudhry

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry on Wednesday has said that state institutions and political parties should give space to each other to take the country ahead and the political parties and the establishment will have to devise an action plan together to bring the country out of political and economic crises.

According to the details, while talking to media in Lahore alleged that Maryam Nawaz's media cell is running a systematic campaign to

malign the judiciary and has been threatening the courts continuously but no notice is being taken of her blaming remarks.

He further said that today is the fifth day, but the court order regarding the date of the election has not been complied with by the government.

He warned that if the courts and the constitution are not respected then Pakistan will become a "Banana republic".

Fawad blamed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has been maintaining its tradition

of not following the culture of compliance.

He demanded, "Our dignity must be taken into account because PTI holds a Court order for the announcement of the election date and those who do not uphold the sanctity of their oath are not respected anywhere".

Earlier, Fawad Chaudhry said that the "Jail Bharu movement" can be started at 24 hours' notice, and thousands of PTI workers including leadership are ready to offer their respective arrests in the "Jail Bharu movement".INP



NEW YORK: Ambassador Masood Khan in a Group Photo with faculty and students at Yale University. Counsel General New York Ayesha Ali and Press Attaché Maliha Zargham Jabboana were also present at the occasion.

Authorities to ensure procuring wheat for the year 2023, Syed Nasir Agha

QUETTA:(PR)In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he said that according to data of provincial Agriculture Department, 1,200,100 kilogram bags of wheat was harvested each year in Balochistan which was sufficient to cater to the flour requirements of the province, but regrettably poor people of the province were confronted with acute deficiency of flour. He said that every year large quantity of wheat, harvested in

Balochistan, was transported to Sindh and Punjab, resultantly, province had to face dearth of flour. He said that it was the demand of Pakistan Flour Mills Association to impose ban on the transportation of flour to Sindh and Punjab on the analogy the Governments of Sindh and Punjab had imposed. Illegal and unlawful restrictions imposed on flour mills of the province created problems regarding scarcity of flour not only for the flour mills of

the province but also for the poor peoples of the country, said he. He demanded that provincial Food Department be bound to procure at least 210000 bags of wheat in view the requirements of the province. He called on Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo and Chief Secretary Balochistan to ensure procuring wheat for the year 2023, so that scarcity of flour in the province could be overcome.

Pakistan's textile exports hit hard by shortage of raw material: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: The shortage of raw materials, depreciation of the rupee against the dollar and energy crisis have badly affected exports of textile items from Pakistan to other countries during the last few months, WealthPK reports.

Pakistan's textile exports declined by 12% in January, making it the fourth consecutive month of negative growth. The country's textile exports also fell by 8% during the first seven months of the current fiscal.

Asad Naqvi, a senior analyst at the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), told WealthPK that the growth in textile exports remained below expectations due to various problems. He said that a shortage of raw materials, an increase in prices of petroleum products, currency devaluation, and the global financial crisis hindered Pakistan's textile export.

"Non-availability of cotton, closure of textile units, stranding of cotton consignments at ports and high-interest rates are also among the major problems," said Asad Naqvi.

He said that Pakistan's cotton production dropped by 50% from 14

million bales to six million bales, inflicting annual losses of \$2 billion on the textile industry.

The analyst feared that textiles exports could further decline in the coming months if reliable and affordable energy supplies were not ensured.

APTMA has repeatedly said that the volume of Pakistan's textile exports can decline by \$400 million to \$500 million each month if the problem of energy shortage is not resolved.

According to data released by the association, Pakistan's textile exports dropped to \$10.08 billion during the first seven months of the current fiscal year from \$10.93 billion in the same period of the previous financial year.

Exports in January also dropped to \$1.33 billion in January 2023 from \$1.55 billion during the same month of last year, showing a decline of 12%.

Pakistan exported textile items worth \$19.329 billion, the highest-ever volume, during the last fiscal. However, the textile sector couldn't sustain the trend of positive growth and exports started to decline in October after recording a growth

of a single digit during the first three months of the current fiscal.

According to the data, textile exports surged by only 1%, 8% and 9% in July, August and September, respectively. However, exports apallingly dropped by 15%, 18%, 15% and 12% in October, November, December and January, respectively.

Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) has also said that the economic slowdown in the country has negatively impacted exports. "The main issue is falling foreign exchange reserves," the PTEA said in a statement.

It said that the country's textile industry was operating at less than 50% of its actual capacity and many people associated with the sector had already lost jobs.

"Textile export industry is under stress due to the high cost of doing business and it is also at a comparative disadvantage in respect of production cost in the region," said the statement.

The PTEA feared that meeting the export targets in the current fiscal would be more difficult in the prevailing circumstances. "Worsening international INP

Anti-India rally held in Muzaffarabad

MUZAFFARABAD: A protest rally was held in Muzaffarabad, today, against the Narendra Modi-led Indian fascist government's nefarious designs to change the demographic composition of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The speakers appealed to the United Nations Security Council and Organization of Islamic Cooperation to impress upon India to stop its brutalities in IIOJK.

Opposition leader in the AJK Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Naib Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Aqeel-ur-Rehman, Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, APHC-AJK leader Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Usman Ali Hashim, Shaikat Javed Mir, Dr Muhammad Manzoor, Chaudhry Muhammad Mushtaq, Muhammad Asim Inqalabi, Muhammad Riaz Awan, Abdul Latif Abbasi, Raja Zakheer Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Ismail, Mubarak Haider, Jahangir Mughal, Tanzeer Iqbal, Mudassar Abbasi, Muhammad Farooq Sheikh, Chaudhry Shebbaz Ahmed, Muhammad Ishaq Shaheen, Muhammad Fayyaz Khan, Dr Safer Ahmed, Syed Mehmood Shah and others were also present on the occasion.INP

UK PM's silence over raids on BBC offices in India questioned

ISLAMABAD: Questions are being raised over the silence maintained by the UK prime minister Rishi Sunak on the ongoing raids by tax authorities on the offices of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in Delhi and Mumbai in the wake of a documentary that exposed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's role in 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in the Gujarat state.

Questioning the British Prime Minister's silence, Ashok Swain, an Indian origin academic and writer and Professor of Peace and Conflict Research at a Swedish university in his comment made on the Twitter said, "Rishi Sunak still silent on Modi's raid on BBC offices in Delhi and Mumbai. Is he really the PM of the UK?"

It is worth mentioning that Rishi Sunak defended Narendra Modi in the British Parliament by saying that he disagreed with the characterisation of his Indian counterpart in the BBC documentary. Sunak had made the remarks while responding INP

Asad Umer Says, "I stand with my word against ECP"

LAHORE: Pakistan General Secretary Asad Umar on Wednesday categorically has ruled out the rumors that he has taken back his words about the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) rather he still stands with his stance in this regard.

During a press conference, while talking to the media in Lahore, Umar said that there was fake news on air about him as he had rendered his apology before the Election Commission, which is absolutely baseless.

He said he had advised his lawyers to take back his reply from ECP.

PTI leader said that the

Election Commission has not been working as a neutral constitutional body rather it has become a political party. ECP has distorted the facts and violated the law which is a clear attempt to deviate from the Constitution.

The deviation of the constitution is being committed because they can face Imran Khan politically.

He further said that the government tried to make attempt to impose heavy taxes on the people of Pakistan through Presidential ordinances but the President rejected the imposition of tax enforcement through ordinances.

The former federal minister said that the worst inflation has

been causing the closure of businesses and as a result, millions have become unemployed. The foreign exchange reserves have reached the lowest level. He raised a question if the government was inflating with IMF already, then what was the purpose of the negotiations?

He alleged that the Imported government has brought political crises in Pakistan. Ishaq Dar negotiated with IMF and he was responsible to explain IMF about Pakistan's economic situation but the result turned out against Pakistan. He told that during the PTI government, the inflation was in single digits but today inflation has reached 34%.INP



Mohammad Ramzan Achakzai, Abdul Hai, Abdul Baqi Lahri and others are addressing the protest demonstration against power sector corruption in front of Press Club Quetta organized by All Pakistan WAPDA Hydroelectric Workers Union CBA.

Khaqan Abbasi not in favour of putting Imran Khan in jail

ISLAMABAD: Insisting on his views against political vengeance, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader and former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Wednesday opposed putting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan behind the bars immediately.

"Even if Imran Khan has done something, I'm not in favour of putting anyone in jail," the former premier said while speaking with journalists in Islamabad.

As allegations are made on a daily basis, he said, trials should also be conducted simultaneously.

Earlier, Abbasi had also opposed the plans to arrest former finance minister Shaikat Tarin for allegedly attempting

to obstruct Pakistan's talks with the IMF — International Monetary Fund.

Commenting on the ongoing cases against the PTI chief, the former PML-N's senior vice-president said: "After completing this matter, punish Imran Khan if he has done anything."

Abbasi added that Khan has done several wrong things and admitted the mistakes himself. "Imran Khan has himself spoken without any limits. I'm not referring to hearsay, but talking about his own confessions."

The PML-N stalwart said that the PTI chief himself admitted to putting people in jail and apprehending them.

"Who authorised Imran Khan to make the cases? In principle, one should not have the authority to put any politician in jail

because this power turns into vengeance." Abbasi said while condemning the political victimisation.

He also highlighted that former prime minister Muhammad Khan Junejo was the only premier who didn't go to jail, while all others were imprisoned under the 1973 Constitution in the last 50 years.

"Even if Imran Khan has done something, I'm not in favour of putting anyone in jail," the former premier said while speaking with journalists in Islamabad.

Earlier, Abbasi had also opposed the plans to arrest former finance minister Shaikat Tarin for allegedly attempting to obstruct Pakistan's talks with the IMF — International Monetary Fund.INP

ECP decides to challenge LHC ruling on Punjab polls

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to challenge Lahore High Court's (LHC) order on holding general elections in Punjab.

Last week, the LHC had ordered the ECP to immediately announce the date for elections in Punjab while announcing its verdict on a plea filed by the PTI against the delay in holding polls.

The decision to challenge the LHC ruling was taken in the ECP meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner, Sikandar Sultan Raja to mull over high court directions to hold Punjab Assembly elections within a period of 90 days. The meeting has been summoned by Chief Election Commissioner, Sikandar Sultan Raja in light.

LHC serves notices to govt, other parties in plea against sedition law

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has served notices to the federal government and other parties over a petition seeking to declare the sedition law as void. Justice Shahid Karim while hearing petition of Rana Shahid Advocate summoned the Attorney General of Pakistan and Advocate General Punjab for assistance to the court in the case. "Sedition laws are a legacy of the colonial history, where British masters while looting and plundering the subcontinent leveraging INP

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-222302242873 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required.

The Project Director Chief Minister Package for Quetta Development invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2023 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates.

Tender Fee Rs.5000/- and Bid Security 3%

S.No	Name of Work/s	Est/Cost
1	Face lifting and Beautification of Quetta City Phase-II	499,847,719/-

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority. Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turnover of at least 400,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-3 and above (Upto 500 million) In Relevant Category and Specialized Code is CE09 (i) (Sewerage Works), CE10 (i) (General Civil Engineering Works) CE01-(i) (Road and Pavements, Drainage & Retaining Structure). Green Challan amounting Rs. 5000 Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure. Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 3% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 06th March, 2023 till 11:00 AM through supplier dashboard. Pre - bid Meeting is to be held on 1st March 2023 at 11 AM in the office of Project Director, CMPQD, House No. 81-A Chaman Housing Scheme Airport Road Quetta. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:00 PM on EPPS System Address: House No. 81-A Chaman Housing Scheme Airport Road Quetta Phone No: 0333-7868226, 0333-7917669, 0333-3312327 Fax No: 0812864466 Email: dpuquettactly@gmail.com

Project Director
Chief Minister Package for
Quetta Development

AB No.310/15-02-2023
www.dpr.gov.pk [@dpr_gov](mailto:dpr_gov) dpr.gov id.dpr.gov



ISLAMABAD: Commander US Naval Forces Central Command Vice Admiral Brad Cooper called on Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Anjad Khan Niazi.

APHC-AJK holds demo in Islamabad against Modi regime's brutalities in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter staged a protest demonstration in Islamabad, today, against the Hindutva policies of Modi-led Indian regime to dislodge the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir from their lands and properties to push for settler colonialism.

According to Kashmir

Media Service, the demonstration held in front of the Indian High Commission was led by APHC-AJK Convener Mehmood Ahmed Saghar. The participants were holding banners and placards bearing slogans against brutal measures of BJP regime in IIOJK and its anti-Kashmir policies.

Addressing the protesters, the speakers said the BJP regime is resorting to

the brutal measures to disempower the people of Jammu and Kashmir by grabbing their properties, lands, Waqaf properties, and demolition of their houses, shops and business complexes. They said, such brutal anti-Kashmir actions are meant to erase the Muslim identity of Jammu and Kashmir and convert the Muslim majority into a minority.INP

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

TSE-222302246003 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required.

The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIV/ KHUZDAR invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2023 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee Rs.3000/- and Bid Security 2%

S.NO	NAME OF WORK/S	EST/COST
1	CONSTRUCTION OF KURDAN STORAGE DAM IN SAROONA AREA KHUZDAR	300,000,000/-

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 210,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-3 and above (Upto 500 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE04, CE10. Has a Project Specific Bank Credit Line Facility / Available Cash in Account equal to 50% of the project cost; (Attach fresh Original Bank Credit Line Certificate mentioning Specific Project & attested Copy of Bank Account). The contractor has not been blacklisted earlier by any government agency or private organization. In case of Litigations, History should be enclosed as per prescribed Performa (Attach affidavit on Rs. 100 non judicial stamp paper duly attested). The amount of Bid Security shall be fixed. In case of absence of bid security, all such bids will be rejected. The Bid Security shall only be in the form of Deposit at Call issued by a Scheduled Bank in Pakistan in favour of the Employer; Submission of Tender Fee in shape of Green Challan in the NBP Khuzdar branch under Head of account C-03434 is mandatory. Name of Technical Supervisory/Management Staff along with their qualifications/ experience and proof of stay with the firm, with fresh attested affidavit; Detail of Machinery as per details mentioned in bidding documents. Submission of an application on firm letterhead signed/stamped along with Original CDR and Green Challan is mandatory to be submitted in office on or before date of Online Bidding. Any firm not meeting the above mandatory requirements shall be declared Non-Responsive. Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk. Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 03rd March, 2023 till 11:00 AM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:00 PM on EPPS System Address: Irrigation Colony Old Karachi Road Khuzdar Phone No: 0648413278 Fax No: 0648413831 Email: engg.saeed@yahoo.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
IRRIGATION DIVISION KHUZDAR

PRQ No.2424/14-02-2023
www.dpr.gov.pk [@dpr_gov](mailto:dpr_gov) dpr.gov id.dpr.gov

Village tourism: tradition and innovation come hand in hand: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Village s can be ideal tourist spots in Pakistan like in Spain with a little attention of the tourism departments and involvement of farmers, says Director General Punjab Directorate General of Agri Tourism Development Corporation of Pakistan (ATDCP) Sajid Iqbal Sandhu.

Talking to WealthPK, he said, "The concept behind village tourism is to improve the livelihood of a common villager/farmer. The best thing is to turn them

towards better work opportunities to present their products and assets in an income-generating environment. Owing to a lack of education, our common farmers are not well aware of the real worth of their assets, i.e., a healthy environment, showcasing and value addition of farms and out-crops, etc. To boost all these activities, different village fairs are arranged, which are attended by scientists, agriculturists, industrialists, and educated people. These fairs provide better business opportunities to farmers,

i.e., direct sale of products, new bookings for current and upcoming crops, and even joint ventures. Good responses stimulate the farmers/villagers to make their surroundings more organized and presentable."

Continuing the discussion, Sajid, who is also National Agricultural Expert of NPO Pakistan, said village tourism opens the doors of opportunities to both villagers and city dwellers.

"Given the congested and polluted environments of cities, villages offer refreshing INP

Inflation in Pakistan could average 33pc in first half of FY23, says Moody's economist

ISLAMABAD, Fe: Inflation in Pakistan could average 33 per cent in the first half of 2023 before trending lower, and a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) alone is unlikely to put the economy back on track, a senior economist with Moody's Analytics.

"Our view is that an IMF bailout alone isn't going to be enough to get the economy back on track. What the economy really needs is persistent and sound economic management," senior economist Katrina Ell said in an interview on Wednesday.

"There's still an inevitably tough journey ahead. We're expecting fiscal and monetary austerity to continue well into 2024," she added.

The government and the IMF could not reach a deal last week and a visiting IMF delegation departed Islamabad after 10 days of talks, but said negotiations would continue. Pakistan is in dire need of funds as it battles a wrenching economic crisis.

An agreement on the ninth review of the programme would release over \$1.1 billion of the total \$2.5bn pending as part of the current package agreed in 2019 which ends on June 30. The funds are crucial for the economy whose current foreign exchange reserves barely cover 18 days worth of imports.

"Even though the economy is in a deep recession, inflation is incredibly high as (a result of) part of the latest bailout conditions," Ell said.

"So what we're expecting is that through the first half of this year, inflation is going to average about 33pc and then might trend a little bit lower after that," she added.

The Consumer Price Index rose 27.5pc year-on-year in January, its highest in nearly half a century.

Low-income households could remain under extreme pressure as a result of high inflation on account of being disproportionately exposed to non-discretionary items.

"Food prices are high and they can't avoid paying for that, so we're going to see higher poverty rates as well feed through," the economist said.

Ell said Pakistan has not had a great track record when it comes to IMF bailouts, so infusing additional funds alone may prove to be of little use.

"If we're going to see any improvement, it's going to be very gradual. There's just no overnight fix," she said.

The weaker rupee, which plummeted record lows, is adding to imported inflation while domestically high energy costs on the back of tariff increases and still elevated food prices are likely to keep inflation high.

Moody's expects economic growth for the 2023 calendar year of around 2.1pc.

"It is likely that we will see further monetary tightening in Pakistan to try and stabilise inflation and also with the weakness in the FX they might kind of intervene there to try and force in stability, but again it's not going to be a silver bullet," Ell said. INP



ISLAMABAD: Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Imran Khan warns of sky-rocketing inflation after mini-budget

LAHORE: Former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Wednesday warned of skyrocketing inflation after the federal government tabled Finance Bill to the National Assembly (NA), which is also called mini-budget, for imposing new taxes.

While addressing the PTI workers via video link today, Imran Khan said that a mini-budget was presented in the NA which will increase the financial burden on the nation. He warned the nation of bracing for another wave of inflation after the mini-budget.

Khan said that he has already warned about the situation the country is facing today. He continued that he has asked everyone that elections are the only solution to all issues after the ouster of the PTI government.

"Only a government holding public mandate can take difficult decisions to end crises. The new government cannot resolve the issues. Economic stability is impossible without political stability."

He criticised that the 'gang of thieves' were imposed on the country which prioritised the dissolution of their corruption cases and targeted PTI leaders.

Khan said that the economic woes will intensify even if Pakistan manages to sign an agreement with

the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He said that the default risk was only 5% during the PTI government. He added that the Fitch rating agency downgraded Pakistan's long-term foreign currency issuer default rating (IDR) to 'CCC-' from 'CCC+' and compared the economic situation of Pakistan with Sri Lanka.

Khan slammed the ruling Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) parties for doing nothing to control inflation. He said that PDM parties had organised massive anti-inflation rallies against the PTI government but they are now failed to stop the skyrocketing inflation.

He said that gas and electricity prices will further increase after the mini-budget. Moreover, the government also hiked the sales tax which will increase the prices of all commodities.

He said that farmers should brace for more financial hardships as the government ends subsidies on power tariffs for tube wells. He said that the inflation rate was standing at 12% during the PTI government which is now soared to 30% and is hiking day-by-day.

Imran Khan said that the current rulers do not have any plan which led the country to more crises. "They were trying to convince President Arif Alvi to present the bill as an ordinance as the INP

CJP directs ECP to act upon LHC's Punjab Assembly polls order

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has dismissed the appeals of dissent members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf after declaring their appeals ineffective.

A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial heard the appeals of the PTI dissent members of the Punjab Assembly on Wednesday.

At the outset of the hearing, the chief justice of Pakistan remarked that after the dissolution of Punjab Assembly, their appeals challenging their disqualification have become ineffective.

The CJP also brought the subject of elections for Punjab Assembly during the case hearing. He said that the Lahore High Court has ordered the Election Commission of Pakistan to hold polls for the provincial assembly.

The top judge inquired what the ECP is doing about the elections in Punjab.

The CJP DG Law told the court that the election commission held a meeting with the Punjab governor yesterday and the latter informed it that he would take a legal course against the LHC order.

The CJP inquired who would take the legal course - Punjab governor or the ECP.

The DG Law replied that the governor would take the legal course.

CJP Bandial directed the ECP to act upon the LHC order.

The DG Law informed the court that the LHC in its order asked the ECP to hold consultation with the governor. INP

Alarm raised after another Karachi teenaged girl goes missing

KARACHI: The parents of a 13-year-old girl, who was reported as missing from the Shah Faisal area of Karachi on Wednesday, have raised alarm, fearful it may turn out to be another case as last year's missing teenager.

According to the victim's parents, she used to play an online ludo game on her mobile device. They feared that unidentified others, with whom she used to play the game may have lured her through the game to meet them outside the safety of her home and then abducted her. The victim's father has lodged a complaint with the police and a first information report (FIR) has been registered at the Shah Faisal police station.

The police have launched an investigation to recover the missing girl. The

parents of the missing girl have urged the authorities to take swift action and find their daughter.

In recent years, the use of online games and social media has increased significantly. With many games including collaborative and communicative mechanisms that allows players to communicate with each other. This opens up the possibility where unsuspecting youngsters are lured away from their homes and can be kidnapped. Last year, a 14-year-old teenaged girl had gone missing from her home in Karachi's Malir area. She was later traced to Lahore where she was apprehended along with her husband. The couple were then brought to Karachi where the court set up medical boards. INP



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman addressing the Inaugural Session of 6th Edition of the Future Summit Nutshell Conferences.

Punjab CM decides to remove DPO Nankana after inquiry into mob lynching

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday decided to immediately remove DPO Nankana from his position after an inquiry report into the mob lynching incident in Nankana Sahib.

A three-member inquiry committee headed by Additional IG Zulfiqar Hameed conducted hearing of the incident and submitted its report to the Punjab chief minister. Two DIGs were also part of the committee.

The chief minister also directed action against other accused responsible for the incident. He said all resources will be used to bring the culprits to book.

Meanwhile, Punjab caretaker government has stopped the recruitment and posting of more than 500 officials and officers in the newly-created districts of the province.

The previous government had approved the posting of 549 officers and officials in Gujrat Division and other new districts. Punjab Chief Minister

Syed Mohsin Naqvi has also ordered to immediately make functional all model graveyards across the province including Lahore. The chief minister chaired a meeting to review affairs of Shehr-e-Khamoshan Authority. CM Mohsin Naqvi abolished charges of Rs10,000 in model graveyards for the poor. At model graveyards, Rs10,000 were charged for digging the grave, providing slabs and for other services.

The chief minister has also ordered that all graveyards of the city should be cleaned and encroachments-free. He issued directions for conducting a survey of the city graveyards.

Projects of Kahna Nau, Raiwind Road, Ahlu and Sue-e-Asal model graveyards will be completed.

825 kanal land will be allocated at Kahna Nau Road model graveyard, whereas 98 kanal land at Ahlu Katcha Road, 127 at Raiwind Road and 276 kanal land will be allocated in Sue-e-Asal Road for model graveyards. INP

Engro Fertilizers sales, gross profit soar in 9MCY22

ISLAMABAD: Engro Fertilizers Limited's revenue increased to Rs110.9 billion in the first nine months of calendar year 2022 from Rs92.7 billion over the same period of 2021, posting a 20% increase year-over-year.

The company's gross profit increased to Rs32 billion in 9MCY22 from Rs31 billion in 9MCY21, registering a 4% growth year-over-year. However, the company's profit-before-tax for the nine-month period under review stood at Rs21 billion, down from Rs21.6 billion over the same months of 2021. The post-tax profit in 9MCY22 fell 36% to Rs9.5 billion from Rs14.9 million 9MCY21. The imposition of super tax on the fertiliser industry was the main cause of the decline in the firm's profitability. The business paid Rs5.5 billion in super tax. Also, the firm faced significant hurdles due to demand damage following the floods in mid-2022, foreign exchange volatility and other inflationary pressures. WealthPK analysis of the

firm's stats shows.

Industry Comparison

The companies that have been considered the competitors of Engro Fertilizers are Fauji Fertilizers Limited, Fatima Fertilizers, and Dawood Hercules.

Based on its price-to-earnings ratio in comparison to the average of its peers' 7.1x, the firm has a solid investment standing at 7x. Engro Fertilizers Limited appears to have a high market capitalisation compared to its competitors.

The earnings per share (EPS) of the company demonstrated a mix trend during recent years. During CY19, the EPS stood at Rs13.90, and decreased to Rs12.59 in CY20, but then jumped to Rs15.78 in CY21. The price earnings growth (PEG) of the company stood at the high of 11.38 in 2019, but then plunged in the following years. The net profit margin of the company also showed steady growth in recent years. During FY19, this margin was 23.43%, which decreased. INP

PPP sets condition for not contesting NA by-elections

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has made it clear to Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) that it will not contest by-elections on vacant National Assembly (NA) seats only if Awami National Party (ANP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) boycott the upcoming polls, ARY News reported on Wednesday, citing sources.

According to details, the PPP has set condition for not contesting by-elections on vacant National Assembly (NA) seats, demanding that it will not contesting the upcoming polls only if Awami National Party (ANP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) also boycott it.

Sources told ARY News that PPP demanded the coalition parties should jointly announce the boycott of by-polls as it refuses to leave field empty for ANP and MQM-P.

PPP leadership was divided on boycotting the polls as majority of the party members were against ANP and MQM contesting elections. "The PDM would suffer a political damage if both the parties contest polls," sources said while quoting PPP. INP

Hammad fires a broadside at PDM over economic woes

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Hammad Azhar launched on Wednesday a broadside at the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), saying the country was witnessing "ballooning inflation" due to the economic crisis.

Taking to Twitter, Mr Azhar took a jibe at the incumbent government, saying, "Due to the baseless policies of the PDM, the country is facing severe economic hardships."

He bemoaned the severity of the economic crisis and the hardships that the masses were experiencing.

Mr Azhar recalled his party's ouster, saying, "Sadly, the stakeholders remained busy for the past 10 months to focus on the matters of NRO-II and fixing the PTI."

The former federal minister feared the CPI would likely jump to 40 per cent, adding the country might be closed to witness the hyperinflation. INP

From oil to shampoo: All packaged items become expensive after GST hike

ISLAMABAD: The government of Pakistan on Wednesday along with increasing tax on cigarettes also increased the General Sales Tax (GST) on all packaged items to 18%.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) issued a notification in this regard, following which the implication of GST will be effective immediately.

Edible oil, ghee, biscuits, spices, jam, jelly, noodles, toys, chocolates and coffees falling under the category of packed items will become expensive.

While the new notification will also apply to make-up products, shaving foam, gel, cream, blades, shampoo, cream, lotion, soap and toothpaste. With an increase in GST percentage TV, LED, LCD,

NAB summons Buzdar with property details, sources of income

LAHORE: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Wednesday summoned former Punjab chief minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on February 16.

The NAB Lahore chapter has asked the former chief minister to attend the anti-corruption watchdog office with documentary evidence of property detail and sources of income.

Earlier, the NAB had apprised the Lahore High Court that it had decided to close the inquiry against Usman Buzdar in a case involving issuance of a liquor licence.

The development came when a two-member bench of the LHC, headed by Ali Baqar Najafi, was hearing a petition filed by a private hotel.

NAB's prosecutor apprised the bench that the anti-graft watchdog's regional board had sent its

recommendation to the body's chairman to end the inquiry against the former chief minister.

Ajaz Awan, the counsel of the private hotel informed the judges that a high court's single-judge bench had declared issuance of the license in accordance with the law.

The lawyer was of the view that an inquiry without any aim has been carried out for the past three years and pleaded with the court to close the investigations.

"Under the NAB amendment law, this inquiry cannot continue," argued the lawyer. In light of the NAB's response, the court wrapped up the case.

It is pertinent to mention here that the former Punjab chief minister was facing NAB investigations for issuing a liquor licence to an under-construction hotel in violation of the law. INP

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While the new notification will also apply to make-up products, shaving foam, gel, cream, blades, shampoo, cream, lotion, soap and toothpaste. With an increase in GST percentage TV, LED, LCD,

smart phones, iPods, computers, laptops and gadgets, juicers, blenders, shakers and other electronic items will become more expensive. Economists said that a 1% increase in the GST rate will put a burden of more than Rs50 billion on Pakistani population.

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Edible oil, ghee, biscuits, spices, jam, jelly, noodles, toys, chocolates and coffees falling under the category of packed items will become expensive.

While the new notification will also apply to make-up products, shaving foam, gel, cream, blades, shampoo, cream, lotion, soap and toothpaste. INP

PTI's Asad Umar denies apologizing to ECP in contempt case

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Asad Umar on Wednesday accused the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of behaving like a political party. He also stated that he had instructed his lawyers to withdraw a reply he had submitted to the ECP.

In a press conference held here, Umar's comments came in response to media reports of his alleged apology to the ECP.

He clarified that he had not apologized and stood by his belief that the ECP was acting as a political party.

PTI leader said that he had instructed his lawyers to withdraw his response, adding that the ECP was not authorized to impose contempt on anyone.

Umar also criticized the previous government and its handling of the finance ministry. He

claimed that former finance minister Ishaq Dar had removed Miftah Ismail from the ministry and that the result was a downgraded credit rating and soaring inflation.

Umar also accused the current government of trying to bypass the constitutional process in an attempt to tax people through an ordinance.

He claimed that the ordinance was intended to defame President Dr Arif Alvi - who is from PTI - and accused the government of attempting to violate the Constitution.

Umar asserted that they would "drag the rulers to the election" and called on the Chief Election Commissioner to not be a part of any conspiracy to sabotage the Constitution.

Last Friday, the Lahore High Court (LHC) ordered an election to be held within 90 days. INP

MNA Noor Alam Khan announces to oppose finance bill

ISLAMABAD: The dissenting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MNA Noor Alam Khan has announced opposing the federal government's Finance Bill to impose new taxes.

Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Noor Alam Khan said that he would sacrifice his seat rather than vote in favour of the Finance Bill. "I oppose the imposition of tax on marriage halls. The government should provide relief to the poor people instead of making tall claims."

While slamming the government, the NA lawmaker asked the authorities to control the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). He added that smuggling is continued through green channels. INP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.