

# QUETTA VOICE

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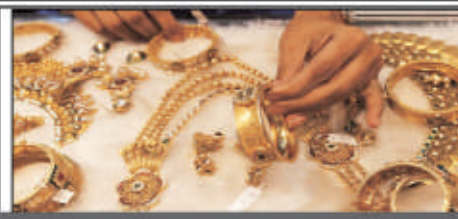
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**Balochistan board metric examinations to commence from today**



**Gold rate sees massive increase in Pakistan**

## Delayed IMF deal: Rupee tumbles by Rs.19 against US dollar

**Davood Ahmed**

The Pakistani rupee witnessed a major depreciation as it sank Rs.19 against the US dollar in interbank on Thursday. Local currency trading at a historic high of Rs284.85 in morning trade, according to data shared by the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (Ecap).

Analysts attributed the record drop — which is 7.04pc — to the government's impasse with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

On Wednesday, the PKR closed at Rs266.11 per dollar, according to SBP data.

"In other words, they had said our actual rate should be as in the grey market rate, not the interbank rate or the open market. They are right as the availability and trade of dollars taking place right now is only in the grey market," he added.

**Local currency depreciates by Rs18.98**

He said that the government imposed restrictions on foreign exchange, as a result, the trade shifted to the grey market.

The dollar does not come or go because of the many restrictions they have imposed on foreign exchange companies on its buying and selling, he said.

He said this is despite the government's crackdowns [on the grey market]. Paracha called for a revamp in the policies, saying conducting crackdowns would not help.

"Inadvertently, we have greatly supported the grey market because of our policies. The IMF can also see this so they have said to bring our rate — of the rupee and dollar — to that point," he added.

Meanwhile, Topline Securities chief executive Mohammed Sohail told Dawn.com that the fresh plunge was mainly because of uncertainty in the currency market regarding the delay in funding from the IMF.

Tresmark Head of Strategic Planning



Komal Mansoor said: "The IMF demanded a 20pc reduction in the rupee's value before the new agreement that was fulfilled."

**It closes at 285.09 against dollar**

Saying she hoped the dollar would eventually settle between Rs278-Rs280. "If it gets above this, then the State Bank would intervene."

Mansoor said that was the reason behind the current surge in the dollar rate. "Our expectation is the market would set below Rs280 and the rupee ssswould not depreciate further."

KCCI urges SBP to 'play its role'

In a statement released later in the day, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) President Mohammed Tariq Yousuf urged the State Bank to play its role and devise an effective strategy to bring the value of dollar down.

He said the devaluation of the rupee was having a deeply negative impact on the econ-

omy, businesses and inflation.

**Dealers blame stalled IMF deal for fall**

"Although the experts are attributing the rupee devaluation to monetary policy, the SBP — being the regulator — has to play a role to find out the causes of abnormal upsurge and bring it down at any cost," the statement quoted Yousuf as saying. He went on to say that the rising dollar against the rupee would keep on creating numerous problems for the economy, as it was already facing a lot of challenges due to widening current and fiscal deficits. Yousuf said that the appreciating dollar was increasing the cost of doing business, making Pakistani goods uncompetitive in the export markets and unaffordable for the common man at the local markets. "Due to lack of effective price control mechanism, an abnormal upsurge has been witnessed in the prices of almost all the commodities of household usage which have to be controlled to ease.

## Growers block highways against load shedding in Balochistan

**Syed Ali Shah  
Manan Mandokhail**

QUETTA: Growers Action Committee (GAC) blocked all highways across Balochistan against the ongoing load shedding. The province remains disconnected on Thursday via the road network as a result of the blockade of roads by the GAC.

"QESCO has been deliberately observing more than 20 hours of load shedding in Balochistan to destroy our standing crops", Syed Abdul Qahar Agha, the central leader of the GAC claimed. He said unannounced and prolonged load shedding had severely damaged the standing crops and orchards across Balochistan. They burnt tires to vent their anger.

**CM Quddus Bizenjo takes notice of the growers' problems**

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Quddus Bizenjo took a notice of the growers' protest and directed the QESCO to hold a meeting with GAC. The parliamentary leader of the Balochistan National Party (BNP), Malik Naseer Shahwani and JUI F lawmaker Asghar Tareen and QESCO Chief Engineer Kareem Jamali participated in the meeting.



**Quetta-Karachi highway was blocked at Johan Kalat**

A large number of growers blocked the main Quetta-Karachi highway at Johan Kalat to vent their anger against the QESCO. Prince Laal Jan Ahmedzai led the enraged growers in demanding the restoration of power supply to rural Balochistan.

Traffic between Quetta to Karachi remains suspended as a result of the blockade of the highway.

"We want justice", Mr. Ahmedzai said. He said the growers' community had suffered billions of losses because of unannounced and prolonged hours of load shedding in Balochistan.

Long queues of vehicles were witnessed and the passengers remained the worst sufferers of the blockade of the highway. Especially, women and children suffered a lot due to the highway blockade.

The GAC had also

blocked the main Quetta-Chaman road at Yaro in protest against the QESCO. The enraged protesters chanted full-throated slogans against the provincial and federal governments and the WAPDA.

**MPAs and ministers could not meet the federal minister of power**

The growers' load-shedding problem was also discussed in the Balochistan Assembly the other day. And a delegation of lawmakers also visited Islamabad to meet the power minister. However, they were unable to meet the minister. QESCO Chief, Engineer Kareem Jamali said there were billions of rupees outstanding against the growers' community in Balochistan. He said the growers were reluctant to pay their bills. Mr. Jamali also said that the demand for the power supply was high but the availability was less to meet the growing demand of consumers.

## Balochistan board metric examinations to commence from today

**Education Desk**

Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) is all set to commence 2023 metric examinations across the province from tomorrow. A total of 1,44,000 students are appearing for this examination.

**BISE 2023 matric exam date sheet announced**

"We have introduced digital attendance for the first time", Professor Ejaz Baloch, the Chairman of BISE told Daily Quetta Voice in an exclusive interview. He said e-marking has also been introduced to make sure trans-



parency in the examination. Mr. Baloch informed that 415 centers have been set up in Balochistan and 1300 staff was appointed to check to cheat and ensure transparency in the examination. The BISE Chairman said that the board has taken strict steps to eradicate the curse of cheating in examinations. "No compromise over transparency", Mr. Baloch mentioned. He said that strict instructions were issued to eradicate the curse of cheating.

## Muhammad Khan Bhatti Principal Secretary to CM Punjab arrested in Balochistan

**News Desk**

QUETTA: Muhammad Khan Bhatti, the Principal Secretary to the former Chief Minister of Punjab, Chaudhary Pervez Elahi was arrested in Balochistan.

Sources within the anti-corruption Balochistan said the accused was crossing the Balochistan-Punjab border when arrested by the anti-



corruption department.

"The former principal secretary to CM Punjab is now under the custody of police", t h e y said. Arrangements were being made to hand over the accused to the Punjab police. There are allegations of corruption against the former principal secretary to the former CM of Punjab Chaudhary Pervez Elahi.

## Negotiations with IMF 'about to conclude', staff-level pact likely next week: Dar

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said on Thursday that Pakistan's negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) related to the completion of the ninth review of a \$7 billion loan programme were near conclusion and the staff-level agreement with the global lender will be signed by next week.

The government is in a race against time to implement measures to reach an agreement with the IMF as the country has reserves barely enough for three weeks of essential imports, while hotly contested elections are due by November.

In a series of tweets today, the finance czar rubbished rumours regarding Pakistan defaulting.

"Anti-Pakistan elements are spreading malicious rumours that Pakistan may default. This is not only completely false but also belies the facts," he said.

Dar said that the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) forex reserves had been increasing and were almost near \$1 billion, "higher than four weeks ago despite making all external due payments on time".

"Foreign commercial banks have started extending facilities to Pakistan. Our negotiations with IMF are about to conclude and we expect to sign Staff Level Agreement with IMF by next week. All economic indicators are slowly moving in the right direction," he added.



The finance minister's remarks come as the Pakistani rupee sank sharply by Rs18.74 against the dollar in the interbank market today. Analysts attributed the record drop — which is 7.04pc — to the government's impasse with the global lender.

The agreement with the IMF on the completion of the ninth review of a \$7bn loan programme — which has been delayed since late last year over a policy framework — would not only lead to a disbursement of \$1.2bn but also unlock inflows from friendly countries.

The prerequisites by the lender are aimed at ensuring Pakistan shrinks its fiscal deficit ahead of its annual budget around June.

Pakistan has already taken most of the other prior actions, which included hikes in fuel and energy tariffs, the withdrawal of subsidies in export and power sectors, and generating more revenues through new taxation in a supplementary budget.

IMF 'shifts goalposts' However, a day earlier, senior officials told Dawn that the government was finding it increasingly difficult to convince the Fund to release a loan instalment. The IMF had changed interpretations of at least four prior actions ahead of reaching a staff-level agreement on the direly needed economic bailout. Sources had said that the authorities were extremely annoyed at the latest situation, describing it as "maltreatment". Another official had even likened the situation to that in 1998, when Pakistan's economic difficulties worsened in the wake of nuclear tests, and default seemed imminent. As per the sources, authorities have secured \$1.3bn inflows in three tranches from Chinese banks, on top of the \$700 million that has already been received. Web Desk

## An alleged child rapist nabbed by Quetta Police

**Syed Muhammad Qaseem**

An alleged child rapist was nabbed by Quetta Police on Thursday evening. Police sources said that the accused was arrested timely under the supervision of Superintendent Police (SP) Airport Quetta, Adeel Akbar.

DSP Airport Masood Kasi SHO Airport Haji Abdul Hai Grani and SI Muhammad Dawood took timely action to arrest the rapist of a 7-year-old child. The accused was identified as Abdul Bari S/O Abdul Kareem a resident of Afghanistan.

Senior Police officers are interrogating the alleged child rapist.



## Gold rate sees massive increase in Pakistan

Following a historic decline of the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar, the per tola gold price in Pakistan surged by a whopping 4.77% as investors' attention once again diverted towards the precious commodity considered as an inflation hedge.

According to All-Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA), the price of gold (24 carats) surged by Rs9,400 per tola and Rs8,058 per 10 grams to settle at Rs206,500 and Rs177,040, respectively. The massive increase in



the price of gold came on after the rupee plunged by nearly Rs19, or 6.66%, against the US dollar to close at 285.09 against the

dollar in the interbank market. The price of gold is Rs3,000 per tola "undercost" in Pakistan, as compared to the Dubai market,

showing that the Pakistani gold market was currently cheaper than the global.

It should be noted that Pakistan meets almost all its gold demand through imports, and traders follow its international price in setting rates in the country. Jewellers import the metal against the US dollar and UAE dirham before converting its price into rupees. Cumulatively, the precious commodity gained Rs12,400 per tola in the last three sessions reversing the prevailing trend recorded last week — when gold lost Rs1,900 per tola. Web Desk



## QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

## Balochistan Education Sector Plan, Go beyond words

Much has been said about the Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP) 2020-25 on the official level and among the academia and international donor agencies. Undoubtedly, some officers of the education department and donor agencies deserve appreciation for preparing the Plan.

The estimated cost of the five years BESP is Rs. 72 billion as per the data shared with journalists during a function in this regard in Quetta the other day. Attractive banners, books, and brushes with the best paper quality were given to the participants of the function held at Quetta's luxury hotel. As usual, very few individuals bothered to read the information in bags given to them by organizers of the function.

The Secondary Education Department had prepared the BESP 2020-25 in collaboration with European Union, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and UNICEF. Thanks to these organizations for extending support to the Balochistan government in improving the quality of education. Nevertheless, these international donor agencies should also go beyond words and ensure sustainable efforts to improve the state of education in Balochistan.

Most of the teachers, parents are unaware of BESP 2020-25. When educationists, academicians, bureaucrats, ministers, and representatives of donor agencies were addressing the BESP function, parents and teachers in remote remained unaware of the Plan. This daily asked some teachers and parents about the BESP 2020-25. They simply said, "What is this?"

Subsequently, the target group is unaware of the BESP 2020-25 and the multi-billion rupees spending on the Project. Most of the speakers spoke about the quality of education. In reality, speaking about the quality of education is like daydreaming in Balochistan, lagging behind other provinces of the country in terms of key social indicators.

Over 6,000 schools with one teacher in Balochistan. The education minister Naseebullah Marri lamented that 70,000 teachers and the quality still low. Palvasha Jalalzai, the education specialist of UNICEF put some critical questions about the one-teacher one-school, teachers training in Balochistan.

To be very precise, the government and donor agencies should come out of Quetta's only luxury hotel and mobile teachers, parents, political people, media, and religious scholars at the district level to improve the state of education in Balochistan.

## The climate challenge

By Sharmila Faruqi

Human-induced climate change, also known as anthropogenic climate change, refers to the long-term changes in Earth's climate system that are primarily caused by human activities, such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and other industrial and agricultural practices that release greenhouse gases (mainly carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) into the atmosphere.

These greenhouse gases trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere, causing the planet's temperature to rise, which leads to changes in precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, and more frequent and severe weather events such as heatwaves, droughts, floods, and storms.

The overwhelming scientific consensus is that human activities are the leading cause of the current climate change, which is happening much faster than natural climate change cycles observed in the past.

In 2019, Pakistan's greenhouse gas emissions stood at 435 million tons of carbon dioxide per year, equivalent to 0.9 per cent of global emissions. Climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions affects the social and environmental determinants of health, clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change

is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress. We need to build Pakistan's capacity to combat climate change-related flooding in the future. Building capacity for climate change damage is crucial for several reasons:

**Adaptation:** Capacity building helps individuals, organizations, and communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. This includes developing the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to mitigate and manage the risks associated with climate change. By building capacity, communities can become more resilient to the effects of climate change, reducing the damage caused by natural disasters, extreme weather events, and other climate-related impacts.

**Mitigation:** Capacity building also supports efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change. By developing the capacity to implement clean energy solutions and sustainable practices, individuals and organizations can reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to global efforts to combat climate change.

**Economic benefits:** Building capacity for climate change can also have economic benefits.

For example, investing in renewable energy infrastructure can create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Similarly, developing the capacity to implement sustainable practices in agriculture, forestry, and other sectors can increase productivity and improve livelihoods.

**Environmental stewardship:** Capacity building can help promote environmental stewardship and encourage individuals and organizations to take action to protect the planet. By developing the capacity to understand and address climate change, communities can become more engaged and active in efforts to address environmental issues, protect biodiversity, and preserve ecosystems.

This step towards a greener future needs a structured three-pronged approach. It should include financial resources, technical assistance, and human capacity building.

For the last 50 years, oceans have absorbed 90 per cent of global warming. In 2050, there will be more plastic than marine life in the oceans. We need to move towards a plastic-free lifestyle.

We need to build Pakistan's water infrastructure, particularly new water reservoirs and dams. Pakistan is an agriculture-based economy, and water is a critical resource. Building dams

and reservoirs can help control the flow of water and reduce the impact of floods, as well as create opportunities for generating hydroelectric power, which can help meet the energy demands of the country and reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources. Building reservoirs and dams can help supply water to communities that lack access to safe drinking water. Reservoirs and dams can also have environmental benefits, such as mitigating soil erosion, providing habitats for wildlife, and promoting biodiversity.

Pakistan has been experiencing devastating floods for many years due to a combination of factors such as heavy rainfall, melting glaciers, and poorly maintained infrastructure. Despite this, the country's flood management system has been inadequate in addressing the scale and frequency of flooding.

The Met office's first alert was released on June 28, but it was not until early August that we realized the magnitude of this disaster that was unfolding. Pakistan's infrastructure, such as drainage systems, dams, and levees, is often poorly maintained and unable to cope with the volume of water that floods bring. To stir the pot further, corruption and mismanagement in the allocation of funds and resources for flood

management have further exacerbated the situation.

We need to be more proactive in our approach. One such step in the right direction has been the RBOD II project. The Realignment of RBOD II (Rasul-Qadirabad Link Canal) is a major infrastructure project in Pakistan that aims to improve water management and irrigation in the country. The RBOD II is a canal that runs from the Rasul Barrage on the Jhelum River to the Qadirabad Barrage on the Chenab River, and it is a critical component of the Indus Basin Irrigation System.

The realignment of RBOD II involves the construction of a new canal alignment and the rehabilitation of existing canal structures. The project aims to address a number of issues with the current canal system, including poor water flow, sedimentation, and erosion. The realignment is expected to increase the canal's discharge capacity, reduce water losses, and improve water distribution to farms in the region. The project is being implemented by the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) with funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The estimated cost of the project is around \$400 million, and it is expected to be completed by 2024.

## Stop pretending to be the state

The scope and passion of the spontaneous support witnessed on the occasion of Imran Khan's appearance before a Lahore High Court bench for securing protective bail is an affirmation of his ever-ascending popularity and singular domination of the national political landscape. This was despite the widespread speculation that the occasion may provide another opportunity for an attempt on Khan's life.

Simultaneously, the perilous dereliction in just about every aspect of governance is expanding with every passing day, but there is neither any method visible, nor an earnest effort to stall the plunge into chaos and anarchy. We are virtually staring into a bottomless pit with no route available for escape.

The pivotal focus of this madness is the elimination of Khan as an adversary, either politically or physically. In the former context, his stature and standing has only increased since his ouster from government and, in the latter context, one failed attempt has already been made on his life with bullets piercing his right leg which is still in a cast pending full recovery. Yet another option is his incarceration which, according to the government's own strategists, will further increase his popularity.

The institutions of the state have collapsed as

economic default looms. The resignation of the NAB chairman on the plea that he cannot operate under pressure from other institutions and individuals to let mega criminals stay free and punish the petty ones is a slap in the face of the ruling elite and their sordid beneficiaries. Sultan said that there can be no accountability to soothe someone's whims: "I can neither initiate a false case, nor drop an established reference merely because the culprit is related to some big shot".

This, in no way, validates his integrity as, during his tenure, he allowed numerous certified criminals walk away free. If a compromised person like him could not continue any longer, one can imagine the extent of pressure exerted on him to do the criminal cabal's bidding. The mandatory provision of the constitution to hold elections to a dissolved provincial assembly within a maximum period of 90 days is being flouted with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the chief election commissioner (CEC) and the governors of the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa blatantly violating the appropriate Article 224 (1B) (2) which states categorically that "when the National Assembly or a provincial assembly is dissolved, a general election to the assembly shall be held within a period of

ninety days after the dissolution and the results of the elections shall be declared not later than fourteen days after the conclusion of the polls".

This violation is ongoing when virtually all legal and constitutional experts have stressed on the inviolable need to hold the elections within the stipulated period as contained in the constitution. The same has also been ordered by the high courts of Punjab and KP. Instead of proceeding with holding elections, the ECP is planning legal recourse in a desperate bid to delay the process which emanates from the fear that the incumbent criminal cabal would be administered a battering at the hustings.

To redress the situation and put the process in motion, the president, using his powers under Section 57 of the Election Act 2017 which states that "the president shall announce the date or dates of the general elections after consultation with the commission", has fixed April 9 for holding elections in Punjab and KP. Rejecting a presidential role in the matter, the ECP contends that it is bound to announce schedules and hold elections only after the "competent authority" announces it. Now the governors of the concerned provinces and the ECP/CEC continue shying away from accepting responsibility to be that

"competent authority" in the existent case which is tantamount to ensuring that the matter lands up in the court with the exclusive intention to delay holding the elections as per the constitutional provision.

Is it that we should dig out the framers of the constitution to explain who that "competent authority" is in the matter whom the ECP/CEC are looking for? Or, following up on the letter written by two sitting judges of the Supreme Court to the chief justice to take suo-motu notice of the shenanigans of the concerned institutions and officials, should we request his lordship to do so? Or should we implore the gubernatorial offices and the heads of the concerned institutions to proceed urgently with discharging their constitutional duties, or resign their offices? Or should we just give up on the state and let it slide into anarchy at an ever-accelerated pace, this being the clear option for the ruling criminal cabal for whom even the most disastrous outcome would be preferable to the prospect of holding elections?

Till some years ago, one could not imagine that a day shall dawn when there would be no one to stand up for the law and the constitution, not even the institutions and individuals whose prime responsibility it is to defend the statute book

By Raouf Hasan

and the regulations and practices emanating from it. We are witnessing such a state in our midst now with conditions deteriorating rapidly with no one coming forth to stall the fall.

The regime-change experiment has floundered disastrously, but its architects and implementers are unwilling to take note of the damage which has been done, and that which may yet be done. They show little sensitivity, even less resolve to concede their grave mistake and make amends in terms of letting the law and constitution dictate what needs to be done by binding the respective institutions and officials to perform their duties in accordance with the key constituents of their oath. Or have they made up their mind that their will must prevail irrespective of the damage it may accrue to the state, even its prospect of survival? If that be so, they should have the courage to come out from the shadows and show us what their agenda is for this hapless country. For now, an egotistical and unrepentant mindset has taken hold of the country and its affairs. No method, no mechanism is visible to address the grave challenges it faces in the aftermath of the failure of the ill-conceived regime change operation. It is time to soothe the exceedingly bloated.

## A bonfire of literary festivals

By Ghazi Salahuddin

What use do we have for the poets, writers and, in a general sense, intellectuals whose business it is to teach us to think, to feel and to dream? Well, a measure of what such creative individuals have contributed to our society is available in the quality and strength of our intellectual, educational and cultural resources.

Sadly, any assessment that you make in this regard would leave you with a larger deficit than there is in the nation's financial balance sheet. And we do not seem to be so worried about our intellectual deficit while we struggle so desperately to make ends meet, collectively. Nor is it so evident to us that both the deficits have a symbiotic relationship.

Anyhow, we have some comforting distractions around this time of the year. Call it a bonfire of literary festivals. This weekend, we have the 14th edition of the Karachi Literature Festival - KLF - that may rightly be designated as the mother of all literary festivals of Pakistan. It is surely a big event, tilting somewhat towards an economic dimension with the theme: "People, Planet and Possibilities".

But as I write these words, I have still to fully recover from the hangover of the literary festival I attended in Lahore last weekend. Actually, a certain kind of mood that

is aroused by a literary festival is passing on from one event to the next. While there will be time to sum up one's involvement with the present season of the KLF, let me dwell a bit on my experience of Lahore.

In fact, the three-day Pakistan Literature Festival - PLF - held at Alhambra was an inaugural event of its own kind, adding a new chapter to the catalogue of our literary celebrations. It was sponsored by the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, and was wholly organized by a team transported from Karachi. It goes to the credit of the Arts Council's president, Ahmed Shah, and his energetic team that it turned out to be a success, with its focus on youth and a lively blend of literature, current affairs, arts and music.

For me, the real worth of a literary festival is not so much the discourse that is held in specific sessions but what transpires on the sidelines. This coming together of scores of leading writers and critics, including some from abroad, inspires an endless series of casual encounters that can be so insightful and invigorating. Lahore last week, thus, was a feast for me as Karachi is turning out to be.

Ah, but the PLF was flanked by sad news. When some of us were waiting to board the flight for Lahore on Friday last week, we got the message that Amjad Islam Amjad

had died in Lahore. When we left for the airport for the return flight on Monday, we learnt about Zia Mohyeddin's demise in Karachi. However, the timing of these tragedies has allowed us to share our sorrow. Amjad Islam Amjad's absence was very conspicuous in the Lahore festival and both, he and Zia Mohyeddin, are fondly being remembered in Karachi and in Lahore.

In Lahore, because this weekend the Faiz Foundation is holding its 7th three-day Faiz Festival at Alhambra and it is as elaborately designed as, say, the KLF. That these major festivals have overlapped is not nice because the literary stars we have are limited in number and some of them have to rush from one place to the other to make appearances in both.

And then, there is the tenth edition of the Lahore Literary Festival - LLF - next week, also at Alhambra. That is why I see all this as the bonfire of literary festivals, illuminating for a brief period our relatively barren cultural and literary landscape. For the literati of Karachi and Lahore, this fleeting interlude is a moveable feast. The pity of it is that with all these really enterprising ventures, they cannot bring Basant back to Lahore.

Incidentally, this past week during this month of February, marked as spring in the calendar, had landmark dates that provide.

## Conditional financing

By Sheharyar Ahmed

Pakistan has always been an agrarian economy. This gives it a comparative advantage in the sector. The abundance of natural resources in the country and the specialized labour force provide the country an edge over the economies of its neighbouring countries.

Data also supports the fact that a huge chunk of Pakistan's labour force (37 per cent approximately) is absorbed by the agriculture sector. It contributes roughly 22 per cent to the country GDP. This sector not only caters to domestic food demand but also contributes significantly to our exports.

It is also true that this sector is highly vulnerable to climatic change. And the nation is yet to witness a serious action plan to combat this global challenge. Be it unprecedented rains, water scarcity or adaptation issues, the country is often found short of mitigation and adaptation plans. And while we raise alarm bells when we witness the devastation caused by climate hazards, we rarely take preventive measures.

Pakistan witnessed multiple catastrophic effects caused by climate change in the last two decades. The floods of 2022 caused large-scale losses: infrastructure damage, loss of crops and livestock, deaths of 1,700 people, and displacement of thousands of people, particularly the rural population. The economic loss is estimated to be \$16 billion approximately, which jolted our

already crippling economy.

What this incident needed was a prompt response both domestically as well as from the international community, but what our policymakers did was to focus on the latter, ignoring the former. The much-celebrated pledges of approximately \$10 billion made by the international community and several financial institutions at the Geneva conference in January are a result of the efforts made by the government, but at the same time they also reflect the priorities of the government.

The pledges are yet to materialize, but the government portrayed it as a success of its foreign policy and a solution to our current economic crisis. Though these pledges are directed towards infrastructure development over a period of three years, this success could be short-lived unless coupled with dedicated efforts at the domestic level, aimed at building resilience to climate change and preserving scarce resources.

The country is about to welcome yet another monsoon season and our helpless farmers are yet to be compensated for the loss that occurred last year. Also, our infrastructure is yet to be built, crop mix is yet to be optimized and the national climate policy is yet to be implemented. Unfortunately, the present government seems to be occupied by the prevailing political instability and the exacerbating economic crisis.

The important point to highlight here is that the world sees us from a different lens. Climate financing by the international community cannot be solely used for sustainability; these finances must be coupled with a comprehensive domestic work plan and its timely implementation.

The pledges made to Pakistan are conditional to our domestic strategy and actions towards combating climate change. It cannot be the case where we only look up to the international community after the damage has been done.

In the long run Pakistan will not be able to convince the international community regarding climate financing without putting in a dedicated effort at the domestic level. Unfortunately, climate change has not found any place in recent socio-economic and geopolitical debates. To implement any action plan, there has to be a consensus among all stakeholders, which in Pakistan's case is far from achieving.

The prevailing polarization in our society, particularly among decision-makers, has further suffocated the environment for dialogue. The clock is ticking and with the present fragile governance framework, Pakistan is just one rainfall or flood away from unavoidable climate-led collapse, the ultimate victim of which will be our poor farmer.

It is high time for all stakeholders to forgo their egos, put their heads together, build a national

consensus over the issue, and devise short, medium and long-term workable plans by utilizing all the resources necessary to prevent disasters before the country sinks again. It cannot be left to the international community solely to take care of our issues.

Our political economy needs to be revamped, and a comprehensive plan must be chalked out to preserve crops. All political parties should sit together to deal with national issues. And building climate resilience must be prioritized. Policies must be drafted to protect small farmers; infrastructure needs to be upgraded as soon as possible or else the country which is already losing the battle at the economic front will not be able to absorb another climate-led collapse. It is also true that this sector is highly vulnerable to climatic change. And the nation is yet to witness a serious action plan to combat this global challenge. Be it unprecedented rains, water scarcity or adaptation issues, the country is often found short of mitigation and adaptation plans. And while we raise alarm bells when we witness the devastation caused by climate hazards, we rarely take preventive measures.

Pakistan witnessed multiple catastrophic effects caused by climate change in the last two decades. The floods of 2022 caused large-scale losses: infrastructure damage, loss of crops and livestock, deaths of 1,700

## Green resilience

By Zile Huma

Pakistan has successfully conducted an international donor conference in Geneva with the support of the UN and convinced the world to support flood victims in Pakistan. This conference has helped Pakistan collect around \$10 billion for rehabilitation of flood victims and reconstruction of properties damaged in last year's floods.

After pledging to the international community to provide financial assistance for flood-affected people, Pakistan should now focus on the local business community, especially targeting businesses damaging the environment and contributing to global warming. The government of Pakistan can convene a 'national resilience conference' inviting representatives from the business community who are directly or indirectly involved in carbon emissions, and are the reason for accelerating climate change and environmental degradation like oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) companies, housing societies, mine owners, transport companies, etc.

According to the report 'CO2 Emission from Pakistan's Energy Sector 2021' - published by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) - Nepra has reported that the country's energy sector has introduced the necessary shift. The report says that "in 2019-20, the sectoral contribution shifted to 35 per cent for gas, 26 per

cent, for oil, 8 per cent, hydro, 15 per cent for coal, 3.5 per cent nuclear and one per cent for LPG, while LNG and renewable energy contributed 11 per cent and one per cent, respectively."

According to information shared by the minister of energy in the Senate in 2020, "50 companies - including 15 local and 35 foreign - are working in Pakistan to explore and produce oil and other natural resources". The consumption of fossil fuels is a major cause of carbon emissions. Similarly, the real-estate and development sectors mushroomed rapidly in the last two decades.

Every day a large number of new housing societies are being launched and huge amounts are spent on their publicity advertisements to multiply profits. Not only do such development projects occupy huge lands and clear green areas, they also reduce the country's forest cover. This reduction is making Pakistan more vulnerable to climate-change disasters. Similarly, the industrial sector is another source of producing huge carbon emissions and causes many environmental disasters in the form of wastes.

Agriculture and livestock also produce greenhouse gases (GHG). The mining sector also has huge negative environmental impacts like deforestation, erosion, contamination and alteration of soil features, contamination of local streams and wetlands, and an increase in noise levels, and dust in the air.

Similarly, the transportation network in Pakistan is also a source of pollution and has huge earnings as well.

A 'national resilience conference' will raise awareness among the business community about the issue of climate change and environmental challenges in Pakistan. It is also important to apprise them about the negative impacts of their businesses on the environment, leading to many catastrophes faced by Pakistan. All big companies contribute to social causes under their corporate social responsibility (CSR). The business community should be communicated effectively to play their part to invest in the 4R strategy: Resilience, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Recovery.

The government can establish a 'green fund' at the national level. The business community can be given options to either invest in green projects or contribute to a 'national green fund'. Those interested in giving donations can deposit a mutually agreed amount in the national green fund on a yearly basis. The government can utilize this amount for different projects of clean energy, forest conservation, mass awareness, etc. The government can also allocate various projects to different business communities for implementation under their corporate social responsibility (CSR) on a short- and long-term basis. Under short-term goals, different projects related.



Gatherings outside Islamabad courts banned as Section 144 imposed

ISLAMABAD: Section 144 has been enforced in Islamabad on Thursday due to security reasons banning gatherings in and around all the courts in the federal capital. According to the official sources, the administration has banned gathering of people outside the courts, warning that action will be taken against any type of protest outside the courts. According to a tweet uploaded by the Islamabad police, only the lawyers, journalists and people concerned will be allowed to enter the courts during the hearing of cases. The supporters will not be allowed to come to the courts during the appearance of political leaders. In another tweet, the police said the security high alert orders have been issued in view of terrorism and other threats. It is noted here that a large number of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers had reached the judicial complex during the appearance of PTI chairman Imran Khan. The PTI workers forcibly entered the court premises and vandalized the public property. They also protested against the government and shouted slogans. The police had registered two cases against the PTI workers. INP

Pakistan emphasizes NAM, world community's role for just resolution of Kashmir dispute

B A K U (Azerbaijan): Pakistan on Thursday urged the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the international community to promote a just, peaceful and expeditious resolution of longstanding Jammu and Kashmir dispute as per the UNSC resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. "Foreign intervention and occupation, and the accompanying denial of the right to self-determination to peoples, are of the root cause of conflicts and disputes and of grave violations of human rights. This is manifest in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)," Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said addressing the summit level meeting of the NAM Contact Group in response to COVID-19 on post-pandemic global recovery held here. The minister, who headed the Pakistani delegation at the summit, said the decisive condition for achieving all our development goals rested on the promotion of just and durable peace and security, nationally, regionally and globally. "It is impossible to talk about a post-pandemic global recovery against the backdrop of wars, conflicts and foreign occupation," the minister told the meeting attended by the delegates representing from around 70 countries and chaired by Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev as NAM chair. He said Pakistan deeply valued the NAM's fundamental ideals, especially its principled support for the right to self-determination of people living under foreign occupation. He said NAM, which numbered two thirds of UN member states, had a critical role to play in shaping the post-pandemic global recovery. Proposing a comprehensive and cooperative strategy to "build forward better" which, the minister said, should include, ensuring global food security through the urgent provision of food supplies to the 250 million living in hunger. The strategy should also feature urgent and adequate concessional financing for developing countries facing liquidity challenges, reform of the international financial architecture, through a comprehensive debt solution and implementation of the climate change agenda and climate commitments, especially the fulfillment of the climate finance commitments and the launch of the Loss & Damage fund agreed at COP27. "Climate justice requires full adherence to the Principle of Equity and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities," the minister said. He also suggested the mobilization of large-scale investment from the public and private sector to build sustainable and resilient infrastructure, in developing countries. He told the international gathering that the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc worldwide, putting the lives of billions of people around the globe in turmoil, inflicting grave suffering and destabilizing the global economy. Besides exposing the fragility of the societies and economies to shocks, it has laid bare deep inequalities threatening the achievement of the SDGs, the said COVID-related challenges were further compounded by the inflationary spiral caused by supply chain disruptions and the impact of the war in Ukraine, the minister said. "The crowning blow to our endeavour for sustainable development was the devastating INP



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi and First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi in a group photo with the Board of Governors of Behbud Maternal and Children Hospital Rawalpindi.

HEC to set up NAHE Regional Center in Sindh

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has finalized the groundwork for establishing a regional center of National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) in Karachi, Sindh. The HEC, under its Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) project, aims to strengthen its NAHE, an academic wing of HEC launched in 2019 to improve the quality of teaching, research, and governance in higher education institutions (HEIs) across Pakistan. The establishment of four NAHE regional centers were envisioned during the life of HEDP project. Addressing the immediate need for a lack of quality training facilities for academia in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, two chapters were notified in these two provinces last year while moving forward, two more are to be established in Punjab and Sindh. In this regard, a two-day consultative workshop was held with the regional stakeholders of Sindh on the establishment of the NAHE regional center in Karachi here Thursday. The workshop was chaired by Programme Coordinator, HEDP, Dr. Mahmood-ul-Hassan Butt, while more than 40 stakeholders, including Chairman Sindh HEC, Vice Chancellors, and Deans. Some Vice Chancellors mentioned that their universities have already developed human resource development activities and expressed their desire to collaborate with other universities. The participants provided their valuable inputs on the envisioned role of the NAHE regional center and how it would build the capacities of faculty and administration in performing their roles more efficiently. The universities in Sindh supported the establishment of the NAHE regional center, recognizing the importance of continuous learning and improvement in higher education. The participants suggested that the center should also be replicated in other regions of the province to meet their needs. The implementation of the revised Undergraduate Education Policy (UEP) was also discussed in length, and HEIs extended their support to HEC for its implementation. They were also briefed on the upcoming HEC initiatives to further improve the higher education system in the country. They suggested involving universities in designing capacity building programmes for faculty and administration. INP

Two burnt alive in Balochistan road accident

QUETTA: Two people were burnt alive in a road accident in Balochistan province on Wednesday. The accident occurred on RCD Highway when a container and a pick-up van hit. A huge fire broke out as the Iranian-made pickup was carrying oil, burning alive its driver and cleaner. The driver of the container sustained serious injuries, Levies sources said, adding that the injured is shifted to a hospital. The charred bodies were retrieved after the fire was put out. INP

Lt-Gen (r) Amjad Shoaib proved to be part of propaganda campaign

ISLAMABAD: Amjad Shoaib, a retired army officer, and his YouTube channel is proved to be part of an organized propaganda campaign, it was surfaced on Wednesday. The FIA has completed the forensics of Amjad Shoaib's mobile phone and as per the findings, his mobile turned out to be an important tool of PTI and Imran Khan's negative propaganda. The detail of his close contacts and conversation show the ex-serviceman's connections with the persons involved in the campaign targeting the state organs and key figures. PTI leaders Asad Umar, Ali Zaidi, Usman Dar, Fawad Chaudhry, Shibli Faraz, Zartaj Gul, Farrukh Habib and Ghulam Sarwar are included in the WhatsApp circle of General Amjad Shoaib. His ties with notorious Adil Raja and some journalists are too found. Amjad spread rumours about Israeli Prime Minister and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Qatar. Though the ex-serviceman admitted in writing that the story was bogus, the YouTube propaganda went on. A couple of days ago, he was arrested on charges of inciting public servants against the state and the government. Amjad Shoaib deleted WhatsApp data before FIA summons, but forensics dug everything out. Following the leads, more revelations are expected. NP



SPAIN: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque in a group photo after meeting with GSMA delegation on the sidelines of Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona.

Jl alleges rigging in Akhtar Colony vote re-counting

KARACHI: Jamaat Islami on Thursday alleged rigging in re-counting of votes in Union Committee-VI of Akhtar Colony. Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, JI local chief and candidate for Karachi Mayor, held PPP leader Saeed Ghani as responsible for rigging in re-counting. "Our 350 votes were rejected at five polling stations in Falcon House School," he claimed. "We have told the election commission Sindh, what is happening," Hafiz Naeem said. "We knew well how the PPP uses people and provides jobs in a particular manner," he said. "The People's Party and the election commission should understand that the JI won't withdraw from a single vote," he said. "You are depriving the people of Karachi; we will raise voice and won't talk until the results are not corrected. We want result of votes, the people have entrusted us," he demanded. "The recounting of votes also going to happen at the Gulshan Hadeed UC and according to our reports, they have made preparations to forge the result," he said. "A presiding officer of Keamari has testified, the presiding officers who have been asked repeating their thumb impressions, have been in contact. They are threatened to be removed from their jobs," JI leader claimed. "If they had conducted direct election of mayor, they knew well of their weightage," Hafiz Naeem said. He demanded re-election in 11 union councils of Karachi. "People have mandated the JI with massive number of votes. We are not those who were sold over ministries. The election commission has an opportunity to correct its actions, otherwise we will hold a sit-in on March 10 for an indefinite period," he warned. INP

Sheikh Rashid skips indictment on medical grounds

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Awami League chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmad will not appear in a district and sessions court of Islamabad today owing to his ailment, in a case pertaining to his allegations against Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari for plotting to assassinate PTI chief Imran Khan. Sheikh Rashid has submitted an application in the court requesting for exemption to attend court. He said he was on bed rest. The medical report has also been attached with the application. Judicial Magistrate Umar Bashir will resume hearing of the Zardari remarks case against Sheikh Rashid Ahmad. The district and sessions court had to indict AML Chief Sheikh Rashid today. The court had asked Sh Rashid Ahmad to ensure his attendance in the court on Thursday (today). In the last hearing, Islamabad Police had presented a challan against the AML chief in the court and Judicial Magistrate Umar Bashir fixed the date of March 2 for indictment. During the hearing, Rashid requested the court to give a date of March 15 as he had to participate in a conference, to which the court replied that the orders of the high court had been issued and they could not prolong the matter. "We will see when the trial starts," stated Judicial Magistrate Bashir. The judicial magistrate had also returned the AML chief's request. INP

Azam Nazeer Tarar decides not to take salary, other allowances

ISLAMABAD: Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday decided not to take salary or other allowances as part of the austerity measures announced by the federal government. Azam Nazeer Tarar penned down a letter to the Cabinet secretary stating that he would not take salary, allowances and other perks and privileges from the ministry. It is pertinent to mention here that last month, PM Shehbaz Sharif announced austerity measures to combat the increasing inflation. As per details, the PM said that austerity is the top priority of the federal government and it's the need of this hour. He said that life has become tough for the poor and we have to learn lessons from the past and move forward. The elites have to play an important role as the entire nation is looking at us. PM Shehbaz Sharif urged ministers, SAPMs and advisors, everyone needs to sacrifice and make efforts and support austerity. The government will sacrifice first then we will ask others to become part of the austerity drive. We will fight against all the challenges together, PM Shehbaz Sharif added. INP

دفتر سینئر سپرنٹنڈنٹ آف پولیس، لاجسٹکس اینڈ ہیڈ کوارٹرز، اسلام آباد اسلام آباد پولیس کی پرانی گاڑیوں کا شاندار نیلام عام

عوام الناس کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اسلام آباد پولیس کی ایک عدد ہینڈ بس (Hino Bus Prisoner Van) اور دو عدد سوزو موٹر گاڑی (TOYOTA Pickup Single Cabin) اور دو عدد سوزو موٹر گاڑی (Isuzu Mazda Trucks) جہاں جیس جیس کی بنیاد پر بروز مورخہ 15 مارچ 2023 کو نیلام عام کیا جائے گا۔ نیلامی کے مقام کے بارے میں رجسٹرڈ شدہ پولی و ہینڈنگ کو بعد میں مطلع کیا جائے گا۔ خواہش مند حضرات مورخہ 04 مارچ 2023 تا 14 مارچ 2023 تک صبح 9 بجے سے شام 5 بجے تک مذکورہ گاڑیوں کا باہتمام پولیس لائن ہیڈ کوارٹر، سیکٹر 11-H، اسلام آباد عامر گھر سیکٹر میں - نیلام عام میں صرف رجسٹرڈ افراد ہی حصہ لے سکیں گے۔

- شرائط نیلامی:
۱۔ نیلامی میں حصہ لینے کے خواہش مند حضرات مورخہ 04 مارچ 2023 تا 14 مارچ 2023 کے درمیان ڈرافٹ مبالغہ Rs.100,000 جتن سینئر سپرنٹنڈنٹ آف پولیس، لاجسٹکس اینڈ ہیڈ کوارٹر سیکٹر 11-H، اسلام آباد پولیس لائن ہیڈ کوارٹر میں پیش کر کے رجسٹریشن حاصل کریں۔ رجسٹریشن فارم زیر دستخطی کے دفتر سے حاصل کر کے پر کرنے کے بعد مورخہ 14 مارچ 2023 تک اسی دفتر میں جمع کروائے جاسکتے ہیں۔ رجسٹریشن نمبر کے ساتھ سیکورٹی پاس بھی جاری کیا جائے گا۔
۲۔ خواہش مند حضرات بے آر ڈر ڈرافٹ مبالغہ Rs.100,000 بہت شائق کارڈ کی فونو کاپی اور موہل نمبر بذریعہ ڈاک / کوریئر مورخہ 14 مارچ 2023 تک دفتر سینئر سپرنٹنڈنٹ آف پولیس، لاجسٹکس اینڈ ہیڈ کوارٹر سیکٹر 11-H، اسلام آباد ارسال کر سکتے ہیں۔ بذریعہ ڈاک / کوریئر بے آر ڈر ڈرافٹ مبالغہ ڈرافٹ بھجوانے والے حضرات کو رجسٹریشن نمبر اور سیکورٹی پاس مورخہ 14 مارچ 2023 کو دوپہر 12 بجے تک زیر دستخطی کے دفتر پولیس لائن ہیڈ کوارٹر سیکٹر 11-H، اسلام آباد سے حاصل کرنا ہوگا۔
۳۔ صرف نوٹن منی اور رجسٹریشن نمبر جمع کروانے والے حضرات یا ان کے بااختیار نمائندگان ہی نیلامی میں حصہ لینے کے اہل ہوں گے۔
۴۔ بوقت نیلامی رجسٹریشن نمبر و سیکورٹی پاس اور اصل شناختی کارڈ بولی دہندہ کے پاس ہونا لازمی ہے۔ بصورت دیگر وہ نیلامی میں حصہ لینے کا اہل نہیں ہوگا۔ رجسٹرڈ افراد کے ساتھ زیادہ سے زیادہ صرف ایک فرد کے آنے کی اجازت ہوگی۔
۵۔ نیلامی موقع پر موجود افراد کی موجودگی میں کھلی بولی کے ذریعے 15 مارچ 2023 صبح 10 بجے شروع ہوگی۔ کسی بھی وجہ سے مذکورہ تاریخ کو نیلامی کا انعقاد نہ ہونے یا ملتوی ہونے کی صورت میں متبادل تاریخ کا اعلان کر دیا جائے گا۔
۶۔ تمام گاڑیوں کی نیلامی فی گاڑی کے حساب سے کی جائے گی۔
۷۔ کامیاب بولی دہندہ زر نیلامی کا 25 فیصد حصہ (نہ قابل واپس) موقع پر نیلام کنندہ کو ادا کرے گا۔ جبکہ باقی رقم اندر سامت کامیاب خریداریس نیلامی کو آفس، اسلام آباد میں جمع کروانا ہوگی۔ عدم ادائیگی کی صورت میں ادا کردہ 25 فیصد رقم زر نیلامی اور نوٹن منی رجسٹریشن نمبر منسوخ کیا جائے گی۔
۸۔ محکمہ ایسیز اینڈ ٹیکسیشن میں گاڑیوں کے کنڈراکٹ کی منتقلی کی تمام ذمہ داری بولی دہندہ پر ہوگی۔ خریدی گئی گاڑی کامیاب بولی دہندہ کو نیلامی کی پوری رقم اور ٹیکس سہولتیں ادا کرنی ہوں گی اور اپنے نام پر سٹامپ کرانے کے بعد حوالے کی جائے گی۔ کامیاب بولی دہندہ کو بولی کی تاریخ سے 45 یوم کے اندر مکمل ادائیگی اور اپنے نام پر سٹامپ کرانے کے بعد گاڑی پولیس لائن ہیڈ کوارٹر سے منتقل ہوگی۔
۹۔ جن رجسٹرڈ حضرات نے نیلامی میں کوئی گاڑی نہ خریدی وہ اپنا بے آر ڈر ڈرافٹ مبالغہ موقع پر ہی بعد از نیلامی وصول کر سکتے ہیں۔ یا مورخہ 20 مارچ 2023 تک دفتر نیلامی کے وقت میں رجسٹریشن نمبر منسوخ کر سکتے ہیں۔ بصورت دیگر بے آر ڈر ڈرافٹ مبالغہ جتن سرکار منسوخ کر لیا جائے گا۔
۱۰۔ بعد از ان نیلامی نیلام شدہ گاڑیوں کے ضروری دستاویزات اور نوٹن منی سیکسز وغیرہ کی ادائیگی بذمہ کامیاب بولی دہندہ ہوگی۔
۱۱۔ کامیاب بولی دہندہ کو Withholding Tax اور دیگر منجھوتہ عین کے مطابق ادا کرنا ہوگی۔
۱۲۔ کسی بھی قسم کے سوالات کی صورت میں دفتر زیر دستخطی سے بذریعہ ٹیلی فون نمبرز 051-9258371 (Ext:140) مورخہ 14 مارچ 2023 تک دفتر نیلامی میں رابطہ کیا جاسکتا ہے۔
۱۳۔ نیلامی کھلی کوئی وجہ بتائے بغیر ایک یا تمام گاڑیوں کی بولی کو سٹور کرنے کا حق محفوظ رکھتی ہے۔

PID:5436/22 سینئر سپرنٹنڈنٹ آف پولیس لاجسٹکس اینڈ ہیڈ کوارٹر پولیس لائن ہیڈ کوارٹر سیکٹر 11-H، اسلام آباد (051-9258371 Ext:140)

Lovebirds commit suicide after failing to tie knot

NANGARPARKAR: Bodies of a boy and a girl have been found hanging from a tree in Kotaro, a suburban village of tehsil Nangarparkar on Thursday. Police have said the bodies are of lovebirds, 18-year-old Meena, who was a ninth class student, and Mithan Kolhi, a student of intermediate. Police have further said both boy and girl committed suicide after they failed to marry each other. And since in Hinduism, close relatives cannot marry each other, these two could not tie the knot either as both were closely related to each other, the Force explained. Bodies have been shifted to a nearby hospital while further investigation is underway. Record increase in suicides have been noticed in Tharparkar in the ongoing year as 20 such incidents have been reported in the last two months from the area so far. All the efforts made by the government to control suicide rate in Tharparkar have failed since there is only one psychiatrist to cater to the entire population of the area, considered to be the most backward in entire Pakistan. On the other hand, a letter has been recovered from the pocket of one of the love birds in which they have listed the reasons for resorting to such an extreme step. "Please forgive us. But we cannot live without each other," reads the letter. Both have also requested for not conducting their postmortem. They have also requested for their burial in the same graveyard. They have further requested that their parents and family members are not caused inconvenience in the name of investigation since they are committing suicide of their free will. Police said boy and girl had to take their lives when the girl, Meena, was engaged to a man against her will. Their parents, on the other hand, have said if they knew that they loved each other, they would have allowed them to go ahead with their marriage in complete disregard for religious rituals. INP



# President urges bureaucracy to make fast decisions

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday underlined the need for inculcating the spirit of fast decision-making in bureaucracy to improve service delivery and achieve the desired goals well in time.

He said that the slow decision-making process by the bureaucracy resulted in poor governance as well as hampering the progress of the country.

The President made these remarks while chairing a meeting of the Board of Governors of the National School of Public Policy (NSPP), at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The meeting was attended by the Special Secretary Finance Division Awais Manzoor Sumra, Special Secretary Establishment Division, Asmat Tahira, Rector NSPP Dr Ijaz Munir, and Secretary of Executive Committee of BoG of NSPP Nadeem Mahbub.

Members of BoG Javed Sadiq Malik, Muneer Kamal, Zaid bin Maqsood, Muhammad Hanif Channa, and Dr Hafeez Ahmad Jamali attended the meeting via video link.

Speaking on the occasion, the President underlined the need for imparting modern knowledge and techniques to civil servants to ensure good governance and efficient service delivery.

He asked the Rector of NSPP to inculcate the spirit of fast decision-making among the civil servants getting training at NSPP, besides adopting best international training practices to improve the decision-making process as well as enhance the efficiency of the civil servants.

The Board of Governors approved the proposal to allow NSPP to hire young professionals as internees. The President advised that suitable and efficient internees may be hired in order to enhance the capacity of young professionals.

The meeting also approved the upgradation of Computer Operators from BPS-11 to BPS-16 with the change of nomenclatures as IT Officers in all National Institutes of Management in the country.

The Board also accorded approval to the proposal for adopting special dispensation for the employees in BPS-1 to BPS-16 as per the Finance Division's Office Memorandum of 14 February 2023.INP



WASHINGTON DC: Ambassador Masood Khan during a meeting with Michael K. McGovern, Chair International PolioPlus Committee, at Embassy of Pakistan.

## LHC rejects contempt petition against Rana Sanaullah

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday turned down a petition seeking contempt proceedings against Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah for allegedly scandalising the judiciary through an audio leak involving former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi and his lawyer.

LHC Justice Abid Aziz Shaikh issued a written verdict, stating that the petitioner did not provide any evidence and transcript of the leaked audio. It said the case was declared inadmissible as the petitioner was not victim in the case.

Last week, the judge had reserved the verdict after hearing arguments of petitioner Shahid Rana who argued that the minister hurt the privacy of a lawyer and his client by leaking the audio. He said contempt proceedings should be initiated against him for "ridiculing" judiciary and taking unconstitutional step. During the hearing, the judge had remarked that the Supreme Court was also looking into the matter and inquired if forensic examination of the audio had been conducted. When petitioner said the interior minister attempted to defame the judiciary, Justice Shaikh remarked: "Now, you don't need to worry. We will handle it."

Rana Sanaullah urges CJPC to take notice of Parvez Elahi's alleged audio.

On Feb 16, Mr Sanaullah in a press conference run an audio tape of an alleged conversation between Chaudhry Parvez Elahi and his counsel, Supreme Court Bar Association President Abid Shahid Zuberi. The minister claimed that the former chief minister wanted to get a case fixed before his favourite judge in a bid to get desirable verdict.

He also appealed the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial to take notice of purported audio of former Punjab CM Parvez Elahi. He also demanded the forensic test of the former CM's alleged leaked audio tape. "If the former Punjab CM is found guilty after the forensic, then the matter should be presented before the judicial committee," he remarked.INP

## Fawad sees electricity surcharge as 'punishment for paying bills'

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior vice president Fawad Chaudhry said on Thursday the surcharge of Rs3.23 per unit of electricity was punishment for paying the bill.

His statement comes in the wake of the government's imposition of a power surcharge of up to Rs3.23 per unit on electricity consumers throughout the country from July 1, 2023, kowtowing to another demand placed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ahead of the staff-level agreement (SLA) on the direly needed economic bailout. Taking to Twitter, he wrote, "Inflation is breaking the back of the middle class and the incompetent government puts a new burden on the nation every day. A new surcharge of Rs3.23 on the electricity bill is an injustice as those who pay the bill will also have to pay for others. This tax is just a punishment for paying [that] bill".INP

## Maryam to address PML-N convention in Gujranwala

GUJRANWALA: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz will address party workers' convention in Gujranwala, the city of wrestlers, on March 3 (Friday).

With this announcement, the local PML-N activists have swung into action for the finalization of arrangements in Ghulam Hussain Park. INP

## 'JAIL BHARO TEHREEK': LHC moved for recovery of Zulfi Bukhari

LAHORE: PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry on Thursday filed a habeas corpus petition in the Lahore High Court (LHC) seeking recovery of party leader Zulfi Bukhari from "improper, illegal and unlawful" custody of the Punjab police.

PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari had voluntarily offered his arrest under the party's "Jail Bharo Tehreek" (court arrest drive) on the call of party chairman Imran Khan.

The petitioner has made Punjab police, the Punjab government and others as respondents.

The petition stated that Zulfi Bukhari courted arrest in Rawalpindi under the party's 'Jail Bharo Tehreek' and Punjab police had shifted former SAPM to "unidentified location".

The petition said that Bukhari was in the "illegal and improper custody" of the respondents and

was not being provided with food and necessary medicine by the superintendent.

Fawad requested the court to set aside Zulfi Bukhari's detention order as being "unlawful and illegal" and pass a direction for his production before the court.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan Wednesday announced the suspension of the "Jail Bharo Tehreek" after the Supreme Court (SC) verdict on Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) polls.

Taking to Twitter, the former premier had said the party was suspending its "Jail Bharo Tehreek and moving forward with election campaigns in KP and Punjab".

It was the responsibility of the Supreme Court to uphold the Constitution and they have valiantly done that through their judgment today.INP

## Pakistan a potential market for Chinese EVs

BEIJING: Global sales of pure electric vehicles (EVs) surged 68% to reach 7.8 million in 2022, accounting for 10% of the market share for the first time, as per preliminary statistics from UK-based auto market research company ALG and global EV database provider EV-volumes.

According to a Gwadar Pro's report, over half of the pure EV sales has been registered in China. In 2022, the sales of pure electric vehicles grew 81.6% to 5.365 million in the country, data from China's ministry of industry and information technology shows.

In a January press briefing, the ministry said China's new energy vehicle production and sales have ranked first in the world for eight consecutive years.

In 2022 alone, the country's production and sales of new energy vehicles reached 7.058 million

and 6.887 million respectively in 2022, occupying a global market share of 25.6%.

similar EV boom can also be seen in Europe. In 2022, Europe witnessed a 29% increase in the sales of pure electric vehicles to 1.58 million. The market penetration rate of pure electric vehicles in Germany, the UK, and France reached 18%, 17%, and 14%, respectively. In Germany, the largest automotive market in Europe, the proportion of electric vehicle production to new car production reached 25%, and over 30% of newly registered cars were electric vehicles. Encouraging signs are also observed in other countries and regions including Pakistan. The South Asian country produced its first EV in 2022 after the Pakistani government unveiled a series of incentive policies including INP

## NEPRA refuses to accept increase in power charges by govt

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Thursday refused to accept the federal government's request for an increase in power surcharge.

The government had filed a petition requesting a surcharge of Rs3.82 for consumers, following the support of additional power prices during the ECC meeting.

However, Nepra Chairman Tauseef H. Farooqi objected to the request, citing that consumers who had paid their bills were already being charged a surcharge of Rs3.39, while those who had not paid were still receiving relief.

He also expressed his frustration, questioning why the government sought approval from

Nepra when it had the power to impose surcharges itself.

The director general tariff clarified that Nepra had the authority to dismiss the surcharge.

As a result, Nepra decided to discuss the power surcharge approval with power holding companies for imposition.

A day ago, the federal government approved a power surcharge on consumers for the next fiscal year, in a move aimed at covering losses, paying debts, and providing financial assistance to the electricity sector.

This move came after pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for Pakistan to implement certain conditions for a staff-level agreement.INP

## Thar Coal providing cheap energy to millions of households: Report

ISLAMABAD: Inside the Thar Block-1 Integrated Coal Mine Power Project, an open-pit coal mine with an annual lignite output of 7.8 million tons and a total capacity of 1,320 megawatts, is providing the most cost-effective energy to millions of Pakistani households.

Gul Hassan, a mining engineer with Sino Sindh Resources (Pvt.) Ltd. (SSRL), is carrying out routine safety checks.

He proudly told Gwadar Pro in an interview after being named an outstanding staff member of CPEC projects by the Chinese embassy, "The Thar Block-1 project has been instrumental in transforming the lives of people in Thar." "The opportunity to be a part of this desert energy oasis means a lot to me."

While strictly implementing safety control measures for mining, stripping, dumping, and traffic in open pit coal mines himself, Gul Hassan also translated Chinese mine management materials such as "Coal Mine Safety Regulations" into English and Urdu and organized training for 5,000 Pakistani employees cumulatively, by specialty and by post.

Gul said the project management team has taken multiple measures to ensure safety, energy conservation, and emission reduction to maintain ecological balance.

It normally carries out "safe production month" activities, organizes hidden danger screening, regulations, and competitions, and popularizes awareness of safety and environmental responsibility.

Meanwhile, a clean and beautiful Thar is being built through afforestation and environmental protection techniques.

Thar is a relatively underdeveloped area. Thar Block-1 Integrated Coal Mine Power Project has provided more than 18,000 direct employment opportunities for the locals, and Mazhar Ali Khan is one of those who, like Gul Hassan, has inspired the other staff and demonstrated the Thar spirit.

As a bridge between the National Power Control Center (NPCC) and the operation team, Mazhar Ali Khan's work has greatly contributed to the grid connection of the power station.

When he joined Thar Coal Block-1 Power Generation (Pvt.) Ltd. in 2021 (TCB-1), Mazhar Ali worked assiduously on the initial energization of the project and also independently corresponded with the NPCC on the back-feeding and energization work.

Starting with the coal mills from DCS, he went on to witness their proper functioning at a local site after conducting a two-hour trial test. Despite being assigned with another difficult task to participate in "GCB" commissioning, Mazhar Ali Khan refused to give up and quoted, "Never give up; there is a light after dark."

Playing a vital role in performing all the commissioning tests on the GCB, particularly the "electrical resistance test," Mazhar Ali Khan went inside the GCB's confined chamber and stayed there for almost 5 hours.INP

## Punjab CM Naqvi visits Raiwind Tablighi Markaz

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi on Thursday visited the Raiwind International Tablighi Markaz, where he met Ameer of International Tablighi Jamaat Maulana Ahmed Laat, Maulana Farooq and other clerics.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi was informed about the activities for spreading the teachings of Islam.

On the occasion, CM Naqvi said that Tablighi Jamaat is rendering invaluable services for propagation of Islam and that those who do so benefit both the religion and the world.

Furthermore, Maulana Ahmed Laat and Maulana Farooq prayed for the stability, peace, and unity of the Muslim world as well as the advancement of Islam as a faith.

A proposal to build a mosque with a capacity of one million worshippers as per the design of Masjid-e-Nabwi at the International Tablighi Markaz was also suggested.

The CM also assured full cooperation in the mosque construction project. INP

## Lt Gen (ret) Amjad Shoaib acquitted in incitement case

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad has acquitted Lt. General (retired) Amjad Shoaib in a case pertaining to inciting the public against state institutions on Thursday.

As per details, the court ordered to immediately release Lt. General (retired) Amjad Shoaib from the case.

Earlier, the district and Sessions court remanded Lt. General (retired) Amjad Shoaib into police custody for three days.

Shoaib's lawyer in his arguments before the court had said his client is a patriotic citizen who fought the wars of 1965 and 1971. He also pleaded with the court to quash FIR against his client, which was opposed by the prosecutor.

It is pertinent to mention here that lieutenant General (retired) Amjad Shoaib was arrested by the Islamabad police on charges of inciting the public against national institutions on early Monday morning.

Sources had said that a First Information Report (FIR) was filed last evening against the former army officer at the Ramna INP

## Former PTI MNAs move SHC for early hearing on resignations

KARACHI: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) former members National Assembly (MNAs) from Karachi on Thursday once again approached Sindh High Court (SHC) for an immediate hearing on a plea against the NA speaker accepting their resignations and the holding of by-elections on the vacant seats.

The counsel for PTI said that Aftab Siddiqui, Saifur Rehman Khan, Faheem Khan, Attaulah Khan, Aftab Jahangir, Najeeb Haroon and others have approached the SHC.

At the outset of the hearing, the PTI counsel urged the court to hear the case on an urgent basis as by-elections are scheduled for March 16.

"The by-elections are scheduled for March 16 but SHC has fixed March 21 as the date for hearing a case regarding NA resignations," he told court and requested for an early hearing of the case.

At this, the SHC issued notice to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and fixed March 7 as the date for hearing PTI MNAs' resignation plea.

In the petition, they maintained that after the LHC verdict, the speaker could not issue any notification regarding acceptance of the resignations.

The petitioners further prayed court to suspend the ECP notifications as case is already pending in Lahore High Court (LHC).INP



ISLAMABAD: Abdulaziz Hamad Aljomaih, Managing Director, Aljomaih Holding Company Limited called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, at Finance Division.

## Keamari Deaths: Report points out dangerous chemicals presence

KARACHI: The environment department on Thursday report submitted in Sindh High Court disclosed presence of dangerous chemicals at Karachi Port in Ali Muhammad Goth mystery deaths hearing.

A police report, prepared in the light of the Sindh Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) probe, submitted in the high court.

"The SEPA team witnessed smoke on February 17 at KPT Terminals 15 and 16," according to the report. "Unhygienic imported raw material was being dumped at those terminals," police stated in its report. "Dangerous chemicals were found at containers parked at terminals for long time," according to report.

"The air quality in the area has worsened by a rating from 2.5 to 10," the report said. "Prevalence of tiny particles in the area posing threat to the population."

"It is responsibility of the Karachi

Port Trust (KPT) to ensure complete enforcement of the environment laws. The port authority has failed to ensure improvement of the environment and air quality," according to report.

"The residents are being affected from poisonous and lethal gases owing to the negligence of the KPT," report stated. "The air quality found to be extremely dangerous for human health and the environment," according to report.

"The reports of tests will point out the cause of deaths. The families of deceased don't want any legal proceedings in the matter," the police concluded in its report.

It is to be mentioned here that, ahead of recent deaths in Ali Muhammad Goth, at least 14 deaths had been reported in February 2020, whereas more than 300 patients complained having breathing problem in Keamari port area and hospitalized amid offloading of a consignment of soybean cargo from a ship.INP

## LHC dismisses contempt plea in election case

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday dismissed plea seeking contempt proceedings against the Election Commission of Pakistan and others in the Punjab elections delay case.

The LHC judge Justice Jawad Hassan dismissed the plea of Azhar Siddiq advocate seeking contempt proceedings after the judge of the Supreme Court in the elections delay the case.

The SC has ordered to hold elections in Punjab and KP within 90 days, the judge remarked and observed there was no need to take up a contempt plea.

Justice Hassan while noting happiness on the face of ECP's lawyer hoped that elections will be held on time.

It may be noted that the Supreme Court in a split verdict, has ordered ECP to hold elections in Punjab, KP within 90 days. Earlier, the Lahore High Court (LHC) ordered the Election

Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to organise by-polls in Punjab within three months. The LHC's Justice Jawad Hassan announced the reserved verdict on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petition seeking the court orders for Punjab by-polls.

In a 16-page short verdict, the high court ordered the election commission for organising by-polls in Punjab within 90 days.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of Federal.