

QUETTA VOICE

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CM Bizenjo asks Islamabad to include 3 major dams in federal PSDP



Manzoor Kakar appointed as parliamentary leader of BAP in Senate

Six of a family died in gas leakage blast in Quetta

Syed Muhammad Qaseem

Six members of a family died and four were injured in a gas leakage blast in Quetta on Tuesday. The incident happened in the Double Road Sirki Kalan area of the city.

The dead include two minor girls, a woman and three sons.

Police sources said the hapless family had left the gas heater on and suddenly the supply suspended during the night. When the head of the family identified as Maulana Abdul Aziz tried to switch on the gas heater, there was a huge blast, police said.

The entire mud-walled room collapsed as a result of the blast, police mentioned.

Gas leakage incidents claim scores of precious human lives

The injured were rushed to civil hospital Quetta for medical treatment. Police and rescue workers reached the spot and retrieved the dead bodies from rubble of the house.

Gas leakage incidents in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan claimed scores of precious human lives during this winter season.

There was no response from the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) regarding the tragic incident.



Sardar Khetran appears before court about Barkhan incident

News Desk

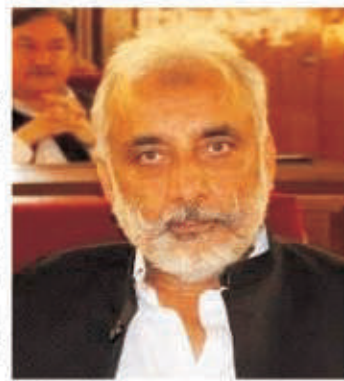
Sardar Abul Rahman Khetran, Balochistan Minister of Communication and Works (C&W) appeared before the court of the judicial magistrate about the Barkhan incident on Tuesday. In the judicial magistrate's court, Gran Naz, the wife of Khan Muhammad Marri while recording her statement claimed she was abducted and raped.

Levies force had recovered Gran Naz and her children in the Barkhan mountains a few days back after the Marri Itihad staged a three-day sit-in in Quetta to mount pressure on the authorities for their recovery. Relatives of the victims and members of political parties and civil society continued their protest demonstration in the Red Zone of Quetta to seek justice for the deceased.

Khetran arrested by police in connection with Barkhan killings

Police produced Sardar Khetran before the court amid tight security in Quetta. Police had arrested the Balochistan minister in connection with the killing of two men and a teenage girl in Balochistan's Barkhan district.

Mr. Khetran was under the custody of the crimes branch on ten days of physical remand. Khan



Muhammad Marri, a local tribesman had lodged an FIR against the minister, accusing him of murdering his two sons and making the remaining family members including his wife hostage.

Sardar Khetran sent back to Quetta jail

Sardar Khetran was sent back to the Quetta district Jail after his appearance in the case. Sardar Khetran's lawyer has also submitted a bail application before the court in this regard.

Khan Muhammad Marri had accused Sardar Khetran of kidnapping his family members and orchestrating the killing of his two sons. The charge was vehemently denied by the minister. Sardar Khetran blamed his own son Sardadrzada Inam Khetran for staging what he called this conspiracy to achieve political gains and get chieftainship of the Khetran tribe.

Parvez Elahi appointed PTI president

Parvez Elahi was appointed as the president of the PTI on Tuesday, cementing his split with his former party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q).



"Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, who has stood firm with Chairman Imran (Khan) and PTI since the regime change, has been appointed as the president of PTI. Notification released!" the party said via its official Twitter account while sharing the notification.

PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry met Elahi on Imran's instructions and presented him with the notification while congratulating him on becoming the party president.

Elahi said he was "grateful" for the trust reposed in him by Imran, adding that he would continue to stand by him and strive to uphold the Constitution and the law.

Elahi's son Moonis Elahi also thanked the PTI chairman and said: "God willing we will not let you down." Parvez had last month announced his joining the PTI along with ten other former PML-Q MPs.

Parvez had said he had always stood with Imran during "hard and testing times". "Parvez Elahi is quitting the PML-Q and is joining the PTI," Chaudhry had confirmed. Differences in the PML-Q ranks first appeared in March last year around the time of the no-confidence motion against Imran as Parvez and Moonis Elahi entered the PTI camp while Shujaat joined the then-opposition. The same split was witnessed in July's Punjab chief minister election saga as Shujaat supported the candidature of PML-N's Hamza Shehbaz instead of Parvez. Amid a widening rift between the Chaudhrys of Gujrat, Shujaat had extended an olive branch in August to Parvez. Web Desk

Toshakhana case: IHC suspends Imran's arrest warrants till March 13

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday suspended till March 13 the non-bailable arrest warrants issued against PTI Chairman Imran Khan by a district and sessions court in the Toshakhana reference.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq announced the verdict after it was reserved earlier in the day. The court also directed the PTI chief to appear before the district and sessions court on March 13.

The 70-year-old ex-premier, who has been recovering from a gunshot injury from an assassination attempt in Wazirabad last year, has thrice skipped indictment hearings in an Islamabad sessions court in the case.

He is accused of concealing, in his assets declarations, details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana — a

repository where presents handed to government officials from foreign officials are kept.

The sessions court was set to indict Imran in the Toshakhana Reference on Feb 28, but his lawyer had requested the judge that he be exempted from the hearing because he had to appear in several other courts. His indictment was deferred twice before.

The judge had then issued arrest warrants for Imran and adjourned the hearing till March 7.

On March 5, an Islamabad police team was sent to Lahore to arrest Imran with the court summons. However, it returned empty-handed after the PTI chief evaded the arrest.

Subsequently, Imran had approached the sessions court for the



cancellation of the arrest warrants, arguing that the withdrawal of the summons would enable him "a fair opportunity to appear and defend himself" in the case.

However, the sessions judge rejected his request on March 6 and upheld the warrant, ruling that the PTI chairman "wilfully avoided" appearing before the court.

At the outset of the hearing, Imran's lawyers — Ali Bukhari and Qaiser Imam — urged the court to cancel the PTI chief's arrest warrants.

However, the court remarked that the warrants were not issued for arrests but to frame charges against Imran in the Toshakhana case.

"You appear in court for the framing of charges and then request for an exemption," Justice Farooq said.

"The law is the same for everyone. What can the court do?"

"The court has to adopt a legal procedure," he stressed, saying that Imran had to appear in the sessions court today but he did not.

"You tell, when will he appear?" the judge asked. "Imran Khan has to appear before me as well. He can come on March 9 and appear before the sessions court too."

At one point during the hearing, the IHC CJ also said that Imran would get "nothing on merit" on the petition. "What can I do? Just give me a date as to when Imran will appear in court." Here, the PTI lawyer said that Imran had severe security threats to which the judge replied that everyone was getting threats these days. Web Desk

CM Bizenjo asks Islamabad to include 3 major dams in federal PSDP

News Desk

Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo sent a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in which he demanded to include three major dams worth 143 billion rupees in the federal Private Sector Development Program (PSDP) 2023-24.

The Public Health Engineering (PHE) has prepared a feasibility report of three important dams to solve the serious problem of water shortage in



Quetta city. The PHE department has prepared the feasibility report and PC I of Babar Kach Dam, Brij Aziz Khan Dam and Halk Dam. The estimated cost of Babar Kach Dam is 73 billion rupees, the estimated cost of Brij Aziz Khan Dam is 48 billion rupees and the estimated cost of Halk Dam is 22 billion rupees. The Federal Government will be requested by the provincial government

to include these projects in the Federal PSDP 2023-24.

The construction of Babar Kach Dam is indispensable to meet the water needs of Quetta. Apart from Babar Kach Dam, the provincial government has also prepared the feasibility of Brij Aziz Khan Dam and Halk Dam projects.

The construction of dams will help for meeting the water needs of the capital city. It will also be possible to avoid the loss of flood water during the monsoon season.

Dawood Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Senat or Manzoor Ahmed Kakar was appointed as the parliamentary leader of the ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) in the Senate of Pakistan on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo had recommended the name of Mr. Kakar as the parliamentary leader of the BAP in the upper house. Mr. Bizenjo had



addressed a letter to the Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani the other day. The Senate Secretariat has formally issued the notification in this regard, an official handout issued said.

Imran Khan must be brought to justice for corruption, other crimes: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday called for bringing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan to justice for his crimes, including massive corruption.

"Till date, Imran Khan has not appeared before courts in any case whether it is related to Malam Jabba, Billion Tree Tsunami, BRT Peshawar, Toshakhana, foreign funding or Tyrion White's parental issue," the minister said while talking to the media.

Imran Khan, she said, had been avoiding the courts as he had nothing in defence to escape from punishment for the crimes.



She said Imran Khan was a "foreign agent", who had "indulged in laundering money through his cronies and using charity in his poli-

tics". By evading court appearances, Imran Khan, in fact, had made fun of the law and the Constitution, the minister said, adding he was the first accused who despite being summoned repeatedly, was not appearing before the courts. It would be better that Imran Khan should be arrested and produced in the courts. If Imran Khan were not brought to justice for his crimes, then it would set a precedent for other accused to stop appearing before courts, Marriyum said. She said ironically, Imran Khan had run his government through video links and now wanted to face the law in the same way INP

Only quality education, skills can drive country toward progress: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Tuesday stressed that only quality education and skills could drive the country toward progress. "Pakistan is blessed with two-third of the young population and economic development is possible only when provided with the right ideas, technology, and relevant skill sets", he said during an event held here to mark International Women's Day.



The event was organized by Higher Education Commission (HEC) in collaboration with the

United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The event was aimed to

announce over 500 scholarships for flood-affected university students, half of which will be awarded to female students.

These scholarships will cover one academic year (three semesters) for the students at 30 Pakistani universities. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Iqbal said that under vision 2025, Pakistan had embarked upon a journey to put Pakistan on the path of accelerated development by introducing the latest technology and introducing skill sets. INP

QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

SSGC: Why this discrimination with Balochistan ?

As the winter sets in, the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) comes into the limelight. Based on its track record, complaints regarding no gas pressure, and low gas pressure against the company are nothing new in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan.

Currently, Quetta, Kalat, Ziarat, Pishin, Mastung and other parts of Balochistan are under the grip of dry cold weather. However, most of the residents of these areas are deprived of a gas supply. In Quetta, the SSGC officials manage to make sure the provision of gas supply to posh and VIP areas, whereas, the poor and the marginalized neighborhoods remain deprived of the facility.

However, the situation turns from bad to worst in Ziarat, Kalat, Mastung and Pishin when it comes to the gas supply in chilly weather. Residents of these districts complain that SSGC has crossed QESCO in terms of unannounced and prolonged load shedding.

Last year BHC declares 'other charges' null and void

Consumers also complain about receiving increasing bills from the SSGC every winter. Thanks to the Balochistan High Court (BHC), which declared the company's 'other charges' in every bill a null and void last year.

Despite the court's clear instructions, the consumers have been getting high bills. A well-placed source in the company told this daily that more than 80 percent of gas meters are tampered with/ faulty. Now the question arises, meters tampered with without the knowledge of the company, or some black sheep inside the company are complicit in this regard?

SSGC has to put its own house in order

The answer is simple, the company has to put its own house in order prior to take action against the consumers stealing gas.

In this whole situation, when this daily tried to take an official version of the company. We were simply told the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the company is based in Karachi. Gas was explored from Balochistan's Sui tehsil of Dera Bugti in 1952. Industries and factories developed through the same supply over decades.

Balochistan is yet to get the position of PRO in the company. This step-motherly treatment of Balochistan must be stopped and consumers in this part of the country should be treated like consumers elsewhere.



The beleaguered public offices have come under a new wave of employee associations broadening the turf war. The new rallying point is to assert the right for the coveted packages in wages given to the provincial secretariat. Guided by the tools employed by secretariat employees to secure bloated wages in comparison with the attached department, the number of associations has multiplied and the pre-existing ones have coalesced into a broader alliance.

They have further asserted to arrogate the positions of head of attached departments claimed by provincial secretariat employees. A few days back Balochistan Secretariat Employees Association announced its withdrawal from a grand

alliance of other employees' associations. The alliance was formed to put pressure on the government for demands they all shared, which included the rise in pay and allowances and to address the discrepancies.

A growing number of employees adding public grievances

The growing number of employee associations, in the name of their welfare, underscores the growing utility of forming pressure groups to protract spheres of influence. Taking a cue from the past, the growing trend will bring serious pressure on the frail institutional framework adding to public grievances.

One of the phenomena, engendered by growing pressure groups in the public, is written writ large that institutions have exponentially grown in size, while at the same time turned into pathetically ossified entities, foretelling their imminent fall. The eventuality

will not only bring about suffering for all employees associated with these institutions but it will also add to the flight of the public at large. The bloated oversize of public departments in association with their age-old calcified nature has turned them into a self-serving superstructure and lost relevance to the common man.

A department created for the general public turned into a service provider for employees only

A department created for the service of the general public has turned into a service provider for their respective employees. All the offices at district, divisional or provincial levels have more affairs related to employees than that of the ones for whose welfare the same are created. The resources placed at the disposal of these institutions with the aim to alleviate the issues of citizens, are arrogated to themselves and have turned into a

bone of contention for members of the institutions. Speaking of personal experience of a department, with district and divisional level offices, it was noted that more than 90% of the correspondence made with that office was related to the personal affairs of the employees working in that department. It is the case with every public sector institution. Their raison d'être is service unto self.

Element of powers keep their opponents at bay

The element of powers among employees' associations also include larger size; the larger the size, the more nuisance value to keep the opponent at bay. At the provincial secretariat with the aim to enlarge its own size decades-old clerical staff positions are exponentially expanded leading to a 'one size fits all' structure. Despite specialization in every field turning into a norm, the public sector is stuck in an age-old management model. The information technology devel-

opment has turned the public sector structure into an obsolete entity. The manpower and the machine have found no compatibility. The only change in the last 75 years is that number of positions has shifted from one service group to another. Mutual bargaining among the service groups is termed reform in the system. A third-body assessment guided only by the public interest has never taken place.

The resistance to change has not only left the public sector unworkable, the private sector has overtaken it in the market. When private sector services are required from the market, the public sector functionaries are found totally clueless about the trend in the market. Resolutely, the public sector is uniformly characterized by sub-standard quality. The public sector has still not parted from the role, long performed by it but is now overtaken by the private sector with better performance. A role swap from a player to a regulator has still not taken place. The role of regulator, which should have been taken by the public sector, is distasteful for it.

The author is a serving Balochistan Secretary for Archives and Culture

Time for an election

By Mosharraf Zaidi

The polycrisis in Pakistan rages on. Urgent questions agitate the condition of the Pakistani. A sovereign default may not be imminent, but an existential economic crisis has raged for months, perhaps years – depending on who is measuring what. How long before economic difficulties cause major social unrest in Pakistan?

The dissolution of the Punjab Assembly means that an already frayed federal compact could be tested more severely than at any stage since the 7th NFC Award and the 18th Amendment. How much dissonance between provinces and across the federation can the existing system bear before subnational narratives and movements emerge as key variables in governance?

The terrorism of the TTP has surged in recent weeks. Can the country continue to send its soldiers and police personnel in harm's way without a coherent, politically feasible counter terrorism strategy in place?

Significant chunks of post disaster reconstruction remain pending from the 2005 earthquake and the 2010 floods. Will the reconstruction of the damage caused by the climate change induced superfloods of 2022 follow a different trajectory?

Afghanistan is relatively stable after nearly four decades, but short periods of stability there have always produced long

periods of instability. Will the Taliban be able to sustain their control over Afghanistan's territory in a manner that eventually leads to the end of terrorist sanctuaries in that country?

Saudi Arabia is changing rapidly, and for the better. Does the millennial leadership of Pakistan's most vital strategic partner have the appetite to continue dealing with the dysfunction of the dinosaurs of the Pakistani military and civilian elite?

China has responded to the domestic pressures that the strict Covid-19 lockdown in there had generated by opening up to travel. Suddenly there is hope that economic growth forecasts could be revised upward. Will a once-again growing China revert to the pre-pandemic laissez faire infrastructure financing binge in countries like Pakistan?

There isn't an obvious right or wrong answer to any of these questions. Many of the determinants of these questions lie outside the jurisdiction of Pakistan or Pakistanis. Yet there is one thing common to them all. They are substantial questions. Can a weak and internally contradictory government, scared of its own shadow, try answer such questions? Not even a little bit.

Pakistan has been aching for a free and fair election since 2018. The only way the country has any chance at tackling these questions is by conducting a truly free and

fair election. Only a government with a fresh mandate – even if such a mandate is conjured up through a coalition – can attempt to tackle these challenges. Absent the public's renewed confidence through an election, there is no version of Pakistan that will work.

Of course, an election and a new mandate, even a thumping majority, do not guarantee that the resulting government will be able to tackle these questions capably. But they will be able to tackle them the way they want, the way the Pakistani wants. Since 2018, the decision of the military leadership to install a government of its own liking in Islamabad has meant that elected civilian leaders have neither the full agency to sink or swim on their own, nor the liability to be answerable for their decisions.

Imran Khan's popularity after losing the vote of no-confidence in 2022 is not easily explicable or replicable, but it is not entirely drawn from his charisma nor the appeal of Khan's lies about a global anti-Khan conspiracy. It is also not hinged on the anti-military tone that Khan adopted after being dumped by his once-upon-a-time patrons. What does explain some of Khan's appeal since 2022 is that he very clearly aligned all his weaknesses with the military leadership and all his strengths as his own.

It seems unlikely that the PML-N or PPP can pull off such sophisticated

and effective political messaging in the weeks and months to come – but there should no doubt about their attempts to do so in the not-too-distant future. Both PDM members will attempt to distance themselves from the cool shade of the military's bosom under which they currently reside. This is a manoeuvre both parties have honed over decades, and one that Khan has masterfully taken from under their noses.

The military may have gotten too used to having all power in Pakistan flow to it and through it. Things that feel good are easy to catch and hard to quit. Claims of the military being neutral or having dissociated from politics were clearly greatly exaggerated.

All of these factors make an early and immediate general election even more imperative. No one in Pakistan should be more keen for a free, fair and credible general election than the military – so it can rid itself of the stench of the post 2016 era and the 'mistakes' of 2018, 2022 and everything before, during and after. But as ever there are vultures and parasites lined up from here to eternity, ready to argue against the most obvious way forward for the country. Three of the arguments merit dismantling, early and often.

The first and most frequent argument against an immediate election is the one used by many that are understandably con-

vinced that absent a PTI victory, Imran Khan will refuse to accept the outcome of any election. This is true and has been proven in 2013. But what happened in 2014 was more important. Khan camped out, kind of, at D Chowk – and he huffed and puffed as is his wont, but he could not blow this house down. An electorally legitimate Nawaz Sharif survived the triple threat of Tahirul Qadri, Imran Khan and the invisible hand of Pakistani politics. Winners aren't whiners. Hold a free and fair election. The loser won't have the capacity to destabilize or undermine a real winner – just like 2014. Besides, if Khan is not going to accept anything but a victory, then holding an election in October 2023 or holding it in April 2023 will make no difference. Hold the election. As soon as possible.

The second argument against an immediate announcement of elections is that the country and its economy aren't stable enough for an election. But this was true a year ago, and the economy has gotten worse since then. Yes, Shaukat Tarin lined the Finance Division with landmines, but Ishaq Dar is doing the same. The economy cannot recover without difficult decisions that require the electorate's mandate. The desperate retired uncles arguing otherwise as they salivate at the prospects of an unelected cabal of technocrats taking over Pakistan.

Senseless punishment

By Rida Tahir

Corporal punishment is regularly used to discipline children in Pakistan. The latest report by Zindagi Trust reveals some shocking stats: about 75 per cent of schools including public, private, and religious institutions reported that they practice corporal punishment, and around 94 per cent of children reported going through some form of punishment daily.

Corporal punishment affects children regardless of their race, age, sex and social background. However, differently abled, young, and socially marginalized children are more vulnerable. Punishment can include psychological aggression, physical punishment, or other violent and humiliating behaviour as a form of discipline. This includes locking children in the toilet, forcing them to stay in uncomfortable and humiliating positions, hitting or slapping on the face, hands, head or ears.

About 45 per cent of Pakistanis are under the age of 18, according to the latest Unicef Pakistan Country Office annual report. Currently, Pakistan has the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children (OOSC) with an estimated 22.8 million children aged 5-16 not attending school. The environment of schools in Pakistan is often not child-friendly and the use of corporal punishment can result in more children dropping out of schools.

Pakistan's corporal punishment problem arises from Section 89 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), which provided a legal defence for the use of corporal punishment: "Nothing which is done in good faith for the benefit of a person under twelve years of age [...] by or by consent of the guardian or other person having lawful charge of that person, is an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause."

To protect children from maltreatment, the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act 2016 inserted Section 328A titled "cruelty to a child". It states: "whoever wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or does an act of omission or commission, that results in or has, potential to harm or injure the child by causing physical or psychological injury to him..." However, the amendment in the law did not effectively tackle the menace of corporal punishment.

Recently the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Rules 2022 were notified by the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training. These rules were passed under the Islamabad Capital Territory Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act 2021 (ICT Act 2021), which prohibits corporal punishment in the ICT. The Act specifically acknowledges that a child has the right to be shown respect for his personality and individuality and shall

not be made subject to corporal punishment or any other humiliating or degrading treatment" (Article 3).

The ICT Act 2021 is a comprehensive piece of legislation as it prohibits corporal punishment, in all its forms, at workplace, in schools and other educational institutions including formal, non-formal, and religious, both public and private, in child care institutions including foster care, rehabilitation centres and any other alternative care settings, both public and private, and in the juvenile justice system.

The ICT 2021 Act mirrors the Sindh Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act 2016 (Sindh 2016 Act). The rules under the Sindh Act 2016 were notified in July 2021, after a delay of five years by the Sindh Education and Literacy Department. This highlights the non-serious attitude of the provincial government towards critical child rights violations.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2010 has abolished corporal punishment under Article 33. The Balochistan Child Protection Act 2016 and Compulsory Education Act 2014 do not address corporal punishment. However, it was prohibited in all schools in Balochistan through a notification issued on April 13, 2019, by the director of school education. It is important to mention that Punjab has not enacted.

The Scholz-Biden meeting

By Dr Imran Khalid

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's meeting with US President Joe Biden in the White House last Friday, for obvious reasons, did not catch global media attention.

It was not expected to fetch the flashy headlines, but nobody predicted such a bland meeting between the heads of state of the superpower and the world's largest economy and Europe's largest military and economic powerhouse – and that too on the heels of the anniversary of Europe's bloodiest post World War conflict.

The last few weeks have witnessed too much diplomatic squall in the global arena on the Ukraine war. Zelensky made dramatic dashes to Washington and key European capitals, while Biden made a sensational surprise trip to Kyiv to support the Ukrainian president. But, unlike those glamorized visits, Scholz went to Washington on a 'working trip' with a relatively very mild agenda that was primarily focused on supporting Ukraine against Russia and finding ways to enhance Western unity.

Devoid of ceremonial pomp and flurry, the working visit was more symbolic in nature without involving any routine MOUs or agreements signing ceremonies. Chancellor Scholz, who was barely

in office for two months when the Russians entered Ukrainian territory last year, has been criticized by his detractors for his inability to assume the European leadership role vacated by Angela Merkel's departure in the last one year. This trip was considered very crucial in terms of his efforts to regain the momentum for the German leadership of the European continent.

President Biden very poignantly lauded Scholz as: "You stepped up and provided critical military support and you know, I would argue that beyond your military support, the moral support you gave to Ukrainians has been profound. And you've driven historic changes at home – increase in defence spending and diversifying away from Russian energy sources – I know that has not been easy, very difficult for you."

This actually encapsulates the political journey of Scholz in the last one year. There is no doubt that, after Merkel's exit, German diplomacy has been witnessing a gradual erosion of its influence and Scholz has been projected by the media as a phlegmatic leader who takes decisions only when pressured to do so. Many examples are cited to validate this point, particularly the delayed decision to send Leopard tanks to

Ukraine.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz delivered a highly significant speech in modern German history a year ago, where he overturned Germany's post-Cold War strategic thinking. In this speech which was made in the Bundestag three days after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Scholz referred to the Ukraine war as a "Zeitenwende", meaning a significant, tectonic shift. He promised to bring about a paradigm shift in Germany's foreign and defence policies as a response. He has certainly moved in this direction, particularly in the domain of defence spending, but so far the progress is very sluggish.

After taking charge, Scholz pledged to exceed the longstanding Nato target of spending at least two per cent of Germany's gross domestic product on military expenses. In addition, he also announced the establishment of a Euro100 billion investment fund, twice the size of the annual defence budget, for the Bundeswehr (armed forces). Although a third of the fund has already been allocated for new weapons purchase, not a single penny of the Euro100 billion has yet been expended for the defined segments. Some observers attribute this delay to former defence minister Christine

Lambrecht, who was retained by Scholz despite indications of procrastination, until being replaced by Pistorius in January this year, who has since restored some sense of direction and vigor to the beleaguered ministry.

The German defence minister, Boris Pistorius, is widely acknowledged for having invigorated the ministry following the departure of Lambrecht. Similarly, Scholz is being seriously criticized for his exceedingly delayed 'yes' to send German tanks to Ukraine. After months of persistent requests and diplomatic pressure, Scholz yielded in late January and declared his intention to dispatch 14 Leopard main battle tanks to Kyiv, with other countries that possess German-made tanks also offering theirs. However, Berlin acted only after receiving assurances from the US that it, too, would furnish tanks, despite initially refusing to do so.

Scholz was initially hesitant to make a bold move and kept on waiting for Washington's decision to make a similar move. However, he is being credited for his efforts to wean Germany off its inordinate dependence on Russian energy supplies. With remarkable speed, Germany has managed to reduce its

dependence on Russian energy by constructing new terminals for liquefied natural gas imports, amassing gas reserves, and identifying alternative providers.

Interestingly, Scholz, who is facing growing protests at home against giving more weapons to Ukraine, is the only European leader asking his colleagues to desist from 'outcompeting' each other on providing weapons to Ukraine irrationally. By agreeing to send Leopard tanks to Ukraine, Scholz has made a momentous decision in recent German political history which is also a testament to the country's willingness to engage in foreign military intervention, which was previously hampered by post-war hesitancy.

The Scholz-Biden meeting did not add anything new to the ongoing Western support to Ukraine but has given some plus points to Scholz in his bid to gradually make Germany the nucleus of European unity. Ironically, amid souring Sino-US ties, Scholz was the first European leader who went to Beijing, which also reflects his tendencies to develop his independent global perspective, away from the dictates of the White House, to strike a pragmatic balance in Germany's foreign policy. He is also among the select.

Inequality and hunger

By Chuck Collins

Beginning on May 24, the World Economic Forum is gathering in Davos, Switzerland for an in-person meeting, discussing the global tax system and financial inclusion. Thanks to protests and new research, however, participants will not be able to avoid the elephant in the room: the surging inequality of wealth during the pandemic.

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

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

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

with more than \$5 million, 3 percent for those with over \$50 million, and up to 5 percent for billionaires could generate upwards of \$2.52 trillion a year. That's enough to lift 2.3 billion people out of poverty, fund vaccines for everyone in the world, and deliver universal 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.

Three power generation facilities in Thar Block-II to generate 1,320MW

ISLAMABAD: "After the successful commercial operation of EPTL 2x330MW Power Plant on 10th July 2019, TEL Power Plant on 1st October 2022 and ThalNova Power Plant on 17th February 2023, the three power generation facilities in Thar Block-II are fully capable of generating gross output of 1,320MW to promote power utilization in Pakistan."

This was stated by Zhang Ke, spokesperson of the TEL and ThalNova Power Plant project in an interview with Gwadar

Pro. Zhang said that during the entire course of construction and commissioning, the TEL and ThalNova Projects have created thousands of jobs for the locals.

At the peak stage, there were more than 1,200 Chinese and over 5,000 Pakistani employees working at the site, including engineers, laborers and security personnel.

He said that upon the accomplishment of these projects utilizing local coal resources, Pakistan will be able to ease its

long-term reliance on imported coal for power generation, which will considerably reduce Pakistan's foreign currency expenditure.

He believed that the benefits of cheaper electricity will boost the economy locally and nationally, with more investment opportunities, more infrastructures, more jobs, and more consumption that will bring the economy to a more virtuous circle. Upon the success of the Reliable RUN TEST (RRT) of the ThalNova 1X330MW Power Plant project, INP

Govt asked to secure tariff cuts on export of sports goods: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Exporters have demanded the Pakistani government negotiate tariff concessions with other countries on export of sports goods.

"The government should include sports goods in the list of goods given tariff concession while signing trade agreements with other countries," Mohsin Masood, Secretary General of Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PSGMEA), told WealthPK.

He said that sports goods manufacturing is a well-established industry in Pakistan, but it never got the attention of the successive governments.

"Pakistan is producing world-class sports products, including footballs, basketballs, hockey sticks, sportswear, boxing equipment and gloves," Masood added.

He was of the view that sports goods manufacturing mostly relied on exports due to a lack of sports activities in the country. "We need government support in exporting our products," he said.

He said that if the government could secure some tariff concessions on exports to various countries, exports of

Pakistan's sports goods could be enhanced substantially.

He said that recently Pakistan had negotiated zero-duty in Uzbekistan for export of several products under Uzbekistan Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (UPPTA), but not a single sports product was included in the list.

Masood said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan were expected to sign PTA in near future. "The Pakistani government should also negotiate for tariff concessions for sports goods," he demanded.

He said that Central Asia could be a good market for sports goods, especially footballs, volleyballs, basketballs, and sports gloves if the government tried to negotiate and include these items on the list for items given tariff concessions.

He said that Pakistan's sports goods exporters only had concessions on tariffs in exports to European Union countries under the GSP-Plus status. "Pakistan's sports goods exports to the EU countries had grown during last few years due to concessions on tariffs," he added.

Under the current GSP-

Plus status, Pakistan is given zero-rated tariff preference on almost 91% of tariff lines to the EU market.

According to the ministry of commerce, Pakistan's overall exports to EU increased by 47% under the GSP-Plus during last seven years. The exports to EU increased from \$6.095 billion in 2013-14 to \$8.943 in 2020-21.

Pakistan has free trade agreements and PTAs with several countries that also include concession in tariffs on certain items, Masood said, adding the government should also negotiate with those countries to include sports goods as well.

The PSGMEA's secretary general urged the government to support the sports goods industry in research and development. He also suggested that technical training for manufacturing of sports goods must be provided as it would add good human resource in the industry and boost job creation. Masood also demanded that Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) should prepare a smart strategy for ensuring maximum publicity of traditional INP



ISLAMABAD: Royal Highness Prince Fahad bin Mansour Al Saud and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan Nawaf a group photo during Launching Ceremony Saudi Pakistan Teach House at local Hotel, in Federal Capital.

Committed to bringing Pakistan forward for green, sustainable development

ISLAMABAD: This year will see the 10th anniversary of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the 10th anniversary of the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

As one of the key enterprises participating in the construction of the CPEC, POWERCHINA has been active in various fields such as energy, electricity, water management, and infrastructure investment in Pakistan since it entered the Pakistani market as early as 1987.

Over the past 36 years, POWERCHINA has completed the 103 projects in Pakistan, including the first roller-compact concrete (RCC) dam in Pakistan - the Gomal Zam Dam Multipurpose Project, and the

first mainstream hydropower station on the Indus River - the Ghazi-Barotha Hydropower Project, the largest installed hydropower station - the Tarbela 4th&5th Extension Hydropower Project, and the largest wind farm - the Tricon Boston 150 MW Wind Power Project.

In the past ten years, among the first 20 energy and infrastructure projects of the CPEC, POWERCHINA has participated in the investment and construction of 11 projects. POWERCHINA has consolidated the traditional power business, and continued to contribute to the development of new energy and other fields.

Pakistan's largest hydropower hub project currently being con-

structed by POWERCHINA, the Diamer Basha Dam Project, will become the tallest and largest RCC dam in the world, and is expected to provide Pakistan with 18.1 billion KWh of clean electricity every year. As the project progresses, it is expected to provide more than 20,000 job opportunities, which is considered as one of the many positive effects of the project by Nadeem Ilyas, a Pakistani engineer of the project. As one of the leading enterprises in China, POWERCHINA has carried out high-quality clean energy project construction and operation in accordance with international standards, and is committed to improving Pakistan's infrastructure conditions and alleviating local power shortages. INP

Chinese, Pakistani officials discuss luggage industry cooperation

BEIJING: Representatives from Zhejiang Ruian Municipal Government and the Consulate General of Pakistan in Shanghai held an online trade and investment matchmaking meeting.

According to China Economic Net (CEN) on Tuesday, the two sides conducted in-depth discussions on trade and investment cooperation in luggage and other key industries in Ruian City, and reached consensus on accelerating bilateral cooperation.

At the meeting, Hussain Haider, Consul General of the Consulate, stressed Pakistan's demand for middle and high-end luggage and bags and explained the trade and investment policies of Pakistan.

He pointed out that Pakistan's overall policy on foreign investment is lenient, and foreign

investors are free to invest in Pakistan except in a few prohibited sectors, with no shareholding limit.

"Under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Pakistan is introducing more favorable reform measures to attract Chinese investment, which will also create better conditions for Ruian enterprises to do business in Pakistan," Haider said.

Ruian, a major manufacturing hub for bags, leather shoes, auto parts and electrical equipment in east China's Zhejiang province, is rapidly developing an export-oriented economy.

In these areas, both China and Pakistan have complementary industrial structures and strong demand for cooperation, which has laid a solid foundation for

bilateral industrial cooperation.

Chen Peng, vice mayor of Ruian, proposed to promote China-Pakistan cooperation on a regular and systematic basis. He also sent an official invitation to Haider, hoping he would lead a delegation to Ruian for a field visit and looked forward to early results of bilateral cooperation.

Haider hoped to hold an online "B2B" matchmaking meeting for business representatives of both sides to achieve direct dialogue between trade and investment circles, and hold an offline investment conference to accelerate the implementation of cooperation projects. Representatives from Ruian Bureau of Commerce, Municipal Council for the Promotion of International Trade, and Ruian Luggage INP

Law Minister, UAE Ambassador discuss bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al Zaabi called on Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar in Islamabad on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral national issues between the two countries. Speaking on the occasion, Azam Nazeer Tarar said UAE, being an old friend, has always supported Pakistan in testing times.

He said we are grateful to the United Arab Emirates for its assistance in economic stability of the country. The Minister said overall situation of the country is improving under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He said the Ministry of Law and Justice of Pakistan and the Ministry of Justice of the UAE will continue to cooperate for the benefit of both the countries and the convenience of the people. On the occasion, the UAE Ambassador appreciated Pakistan's role for peace and stability in the region. He said political and economic stability in Pakistan is important not only for Pakistan, but for the entire region. INP

Qureshi, Fawad booked for inciting speeches

LAHORE: Police have registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Fawad Chaudhry for making inciting speeches and accusing state institutions of hatching a plot to assassinate former prime minister Imran Khan, says in media reports.

The first information report (FIR) was registered on the complaint of Sub-inspector Waseem in the Race Course Police Station in the Punjab capital. Both PTI stalwarts, according to the FIR, held a press conference at Zaman Park in Lahore where they allegedly provoked public for violence. It said the presser caused traffic jam on the main canal road, adding that Mr Chaudhry attempted to spread hate among people for the state institutions.

FIR said the PTI leader also alleged the state institutions of hatching an assassination plot against Imran Khan. On March 5, a team of the capital police reached the Zaman Park, the residence of Imran Khan in the Lahore, after a district and sessions court of Islamabad issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for him in the Toshakhana case.

Later, Fawad Chaudhry took to social media and warned that any attempt to arrest the PTI chief would further deteriorate the situation. INP



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship seized huge quantity of drugs during deployed on Regional Maritime Security patrol at North Arabian Sea.

Japan to provide grant to five NGOs for development projects

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has decided to provide grant assistance of up to USD 295,430 to five non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for development projects in Pakistan.

The grant contracts were signed between Ito Takeshi, Charge d' Affaires ad interim of Japan to Pakistan and representatives of the five NGOs at the Embassy of Japan, said a news release issued here on Tuesday.

The NGOs, including Rural Aid Pakistan, Rumbur Development Welfare & Conservation Society, Hana Development Council, Saibaan Development Organization, and Dir Area Development Organization, will implement the projects.

According to details Rural Aid Pakistan will receive a USD 65,617

grant to install solar power irrigation systems in four agricultural villages in Narowal district, Punjab. The project will improve agricultural infrastructure in an environmentally-friendly and sustainable way, and then contribute to boosting farmers' income with the efficient increase in food crops.

Rumbur Development Welfare & Conservation Society will receive a USD 51,907 grant to construct check dams and protection walls for disaster prevention and an incinerator for a hygienic environment in Chitral district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The project will enhance security when natural disasters such as sediment flow caused by heavy rain occur, and also help environment preservation by introducing

proper disposal of waste.

Hana Development Council will receive a USD 49,489 grant to install electricity facilities in seven villages in Mandi Bahauddin district of Punjab. The project will make electricity available for the villagers and improve their living standards by enabling them, for example, to turn on a light at night and use home electrical appliances and farm equipment.

Saibaan Development Organization will receive a USD 56,418 grant to pave one kilometre of link road in Mansehra district, KP. The project will offer local people better transportation infrastructure, and then make it easier and safer for children to go to school as well as improve access to medical facilities and cities. INP

Pakistan Navy seizes drugs worth Rs4 billion in sea raid

Karachi: Pakistan Navy in an action in the Arabian Sea foiled a bid to smuggle narcotics worth nearly Rs4 billion.

As per details, Pakistan Navy's ship during an action in the open sea arrested smugglers and recovered 280kg of crystal meth. The recovered drugs are nearly worth Rs4 billion in the market, the spokesperson added.

The smugglers and the recovered narcotics have been handed over to law enforcement agencies for probe. In a separate action in 2020, Pakistan Navy in a successful intelligence-based operation busted a major contingent of narcotics being sent by sea.

A raid near the outskirts of Karachi, the seaways adjacent to Mubarak Village was explored where a vessel carrying copious amounts of Hashish and Heroin were confiscated. According to details, the recovered amount of the bust is approximately 300 million rupees approximately which includes 675 kilograms of Hashish and 4 kilograms of Heroin. INP

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang briefs the media: Highlights

BEIJING: Foreign Minister Qin Gang answers questions about the country's foreign policy and diplomatic relations at a press conference on Tuesday during the first session of the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature.

China firmly opposes any form of hegemonism, power politics. China stands firmly against any form of hegemonism and power politics, against the Cold War mentality and camp-based confrontation, and against containment and suppression. China has steadily resumed exchanges with foreign countries, and China's diplomacy has pressed the "acceleration button". INP

TENDER NOTICE

The DIRECTOR GENERAL SOUTH Invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2022 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates.

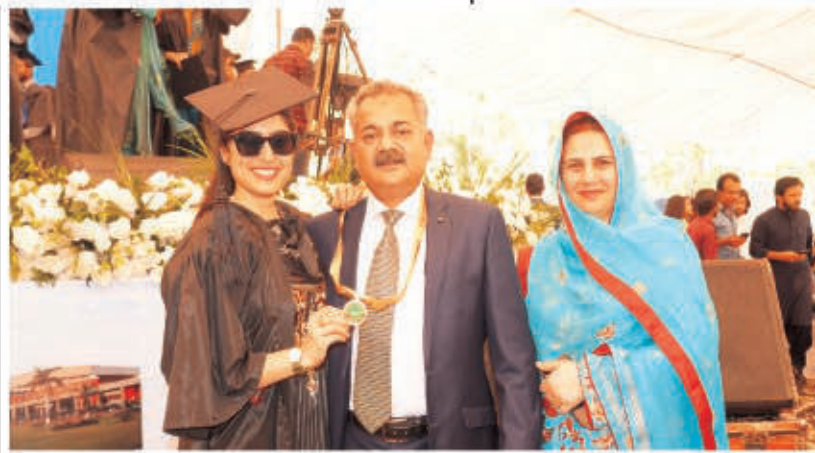
Tender Fee Rs.1500/- and Bid Security 3% TS222303262823

S.No Name of Scheme E/Cost
1 INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREET LIGHTS AT TURBAT TOWN DISTRICT KECH 15,000,000/-

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 1 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turnover of at least 3,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-6 and above (up to 25 million) in Relevant category and specialized code is EE 11 (i) (Solar). Declaration of Non Blacklisting on Non Judicial Stamp Paper. Registration of Firm With BPPRA Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 3% specified above in the name of the under-signed From a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the Under- signed 1,500 PKR. Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 22nd March, 2023, during office hours on working days. Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 22nd March, 2023 11:30 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under signed at 12:30 PM. Address: C-30, Railway Housing Society Joint Road, Quetta Phone no: 0300-9383825 Email: baloch-nusrat@hotmail.com

PRQ No.2763/7-3-2023 DIRECTOR GENERAL SOUTH ENERGY DEPARTMENT

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FAISALABAD: A student showing her gold medal along with her mother during 26th convocation of Agriculture University, in the City.

Pharma sector seeks inflationary adjustments in medicine prices: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: The pharmaceutical sector has called upon the government to allow inflationary adjustments in the maximum retail price (MRP) of

essential medicines in order to ensure smooth supply. The current economic crisis has also impacted the pharmaceutical sector in shape of short-

age of imported raw materials and machinery due to import restrictions.

Syed Farooq Bukhari, Chairman Pakistan Pharmaceutical INP

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Urban Planning & Development Department, Sibi Division invites sealed tender based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2018, Government of Balochistan, amended up-to-date from interested Contractors / Firm who have the renewal up to date, for the work listed below: Earnest Money 3%, Tender Fee Rs.5000/-, Time limit June 2023

S.No	Name of work	E/Cost
1.	Provision of Water Supply Scheme along with Solar System at Salenwad, Old Malwand and Karam Khan Shah District Kohlu TSE-222303263813	43.365 M

ELIGIBILITY OF BIDDERS: The Contractor must have valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council in relevant Category, C-6 & above in relevant discipline i.e. CE 09, EE 11 respectively. Registration with tax authorities i.e. (NTN, BRA and Sales Tax Department), where applicable. Three Years Relevant Work Experience. The contractor/firm must not either be black listed nor involved in any litigation. The bidder must have similar work experience or has completed or has similar work in hand for applying in the tender and produce certificates (original) of completion. Turnover of at least equivalent to 70% average in last three years showing financial capacity of firm. The firm quoting their rates 10% below of contract cost must attached the analysis of rates /breakup of each work. METHOD OF PROCUREMENT: Single Stage - Two Envelope Procedure BIDDING / TENDER DOCUMENTS :-

The Tender Form/ Bidding Documents will be issued from the date of first publication till submission date and time during working hours and working days, from the address mentioned below/ bid office on production of green challan form for an amount as mentioned above respectively (as bidding documents charges, Non-refundable) deposited in the head of account C-03870 through Government Treasury / National Bank of Pakistan against written request which should be on original letter head pad having name, address, phone numbers and signature of the contractor, or can be downloaded from BPPRA website i.e. www.bppra.gov.pk. Tender application should accompany with Earnest Money in shape of deposit at call in favor of the undersigned issued from any scheduled bank against firm's Account. Name of firm should be clearly mentioned on instrument (Deposit at call in Fp). Application for issuance of tender documents accompanied with valid copies of PEC License, NTN and Sales Tax. BRA Certificates, CNIC, and Registration of firm/ Partnership Deed/ Sole Proprietorship/ Power of Attorney/ Authority letter from the contractor in favor of their representative. No tender will be issued without showing the required documents in "ORIGINAL". ISSUANCE OF TENDER DOCUMENTS: The tender documents will be issued from the date of publication of this NIT till date of submission i.e. 22nd March, 2023 during office hours. DEADLINE OF BID SUBMISSION: The technical and financial proposals from intending contractors / firms sealed in two separate envelopes clearly marked with work title and type of proposal must be submitted latest by 22nd March, 2023 at 1300 Hrs at the office of the undersigned. TENDER OPENING: The Envelope containing technical bids will be opened on the same day i.e. 22nd March, 2023 by 1400 Hrs in the office of the undersigned before procurement committee in the presence of contractors or their authorized representatives. Second envelope containing financial bids of technically qualified bidders will be opened later the date and time of which will be communicated after evaluation of technical bids. PLACE OF ISSUANCE AND SUBMISSION WILL BE:- Address: Office of the Executive Engineer Urban Planning & Development Department Sibi Division, Sibi. E-mail Address: eacpd@sibi4201@gmail.com BID VALIDITY PERIOD: Ninety (90) Days. TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Blacklisting, Integrity Pact and All other AFFIDAVITS (To be provided by the bidder on Stamp Paper of worth Rs.100/- duly attested by notary public) and the others Terms and conditions are mentioned (incorporated in detail in bidding documents).

PRQ No.2770/07-03-2023 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER URBAN P&D SIBI DIVISION

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China's enterprises encouraged to invest in Pakistan in shoe industry

ISLAMABAD: Recently, Wenzhou Council for the Promotion of International Trade (WCPIIT) organized a video conference on shoe leather industry, aiming to encourage Wenzhou's export-oriented enterprises to invest in Pakistan and promote in-depth and effective cooperation between China and Pakistan.

Hussain Haider, Consul General of the Consulate General of Pakistan in Shanghai, addressed the event,

believing that the seminar provides a good opportunity for China-Pakistan exchange of shoe leather industry.

"Pakistan is rich in leather raw materials, synthetic leather materials, machinery and other related products. I hope that Chinese entrepreneurs can see the development potential and invest in our shoe leather industry," Haider said.

Ahmed Fawad Farooq, Secretary General of Pakistan Footwear Manufacturer Association, introduced

quality leather products made in Pakistan.

Farooq said the Pakistani Government is guiding and supporting its leather industry by providing policies such as exemption of import duties, reduction of regulatory duties and encouragement of automation.

On behalf of the Chinese side, WCPIIT vice president Zhu Qianji said that the conference provides a new platform and new opportunities for the development of leather industry, and further broadens.

China to opt for 'mutually beneficial coexistence with USA: FM

BEIJING: China hopes the United States will explore the right way to get along with China that benefits both countries and the world, Foreign Minister Qin Gang said Tuesday.

Speaking at a press conference on the sidelines of the 14th National People's Congress, Qin said China will continue to follow the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation to pursue a sound and stable relationship with the United States.

"We hope the U.S. government will listen to the calls of the two peoples, rid of its strategic anxiety of 'threat inflation', abandon the zero-sum Cold War mentality, and refuse to be hijacked by 'political correctness,'" he said.

Foreign Minister Qin Gang said that China has pressed the "acceleration button" and sounded "the clarion call" for diplomacy. "We will follow the guidance of head-of-state diplomacy," he said, adding that China will host the first China-Central Asia Summit and the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation this year.

China stands firmly against any form of hegemonism and power politics, the Cold War mentality, camp-based confrontation or acts that contain and hold back other countries' development, Qin said.

"We will take it as our mission to defend China's core interests," he said. "We will resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty, security and development interests."

China will build on its extensive partnerships, and take openness and development as the objective, said Qin.

"We will reject 'decoupling,' and oppose severing industrial and supply chains and imposing unilateral sanctions," he stressed.

Qin also underscored the importance of multilateralism, and said China will promote the building of a commu-

nity with a shared future for mankind, promote greater democracy in international relations, and make global governance more just and equitable.

"The new journey of China's diplomacy will be an expedition with glories and dreams, and it will also be a long voyage through stormy seas," he said, vowing to meet challenges head-on.

China will foster an enabling external environment for building a modern socialist country in all respects, and write a new chapter in China's distinctive major-country diplomacy in the new era, said the Chinese foreign minister.

"China fully respects Middle Eastern countries as the masters of their own affairs. We have no intention to fill a so-called vacuum," Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang said. "And we will not build exclusive circles," he added.

In the Middle East, China will be a facilitator for peace and stability, a cooperative partner for development and prosperity, and an enabler for building strength through unity, Qin stressed.

China-Europe relations are not targeted at, dependent on, or subjected to a third party, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang said. No matter how the situation develops, China always regards Europe as a comprehensive strategic partner and supports European integration, Qin said.

China hopes Europe truly achieve strategic autonomy and lasting security and stability, he said. China is willing to work with Europe to uphold true multilateralism, and to deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership, he added. INP



QUETTA: A bagger woman hold her baby while asking some mercy to commuters.

Punjab, KP polls: ECP to approach PM Shehbaz for funds, security

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to approach Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for assistance in holding elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as relevant ministries paid no heed to its requests.

According to media reports, the electoral body would ask the premier to release funds and take steps for provision of security in both provinces. The decision to write a letter to the prime minister was taken over non-cooperation from the Ministry of Interior and Finance.

The letter will be sent in light of the Supreme Court's ruling stating that elections in the both provinces must be held within 90 days of the dissolution of the assemblies. The PTI had dissolved the Punjab and KP assemblies in January, seeking fresh elections. Last week, President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday gave assent to April 30 date to conduct the all-important elections in Punjab.

The president's announcement came minutes after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) proposed dates for holding general elections in Punjab following a landmark verdict of the Supreme Court.

In a letter to President Arif Alvi earlier, the electoral body recommended a day between April 30 and May 7 for elections in the province where assembly was dissolved in January last. The letter was dispatched after Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja chaired a meeting of the ECP officials. INP

Imran Khan to lead PTI election rally Today

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Musarrat Jamsheed Cheema on Tuesday said the PTI would incept an election rally in the leadership of PTI chief Imran Khan from his residence at Zaman Park to Datta Darbar tomorrow Wednesday at 1pm.

Taking to Twitter, she wrote that the whole nation was aware of "Save judiciary, save Pakistan". "The judiciary attempted to save the country from anarchy and guard the Constitution, which brought them under fire", she added.

On the other hand, the political temperature rose in the country as the capital city police had, earlier, reached Mr Khan's residence at Zaman Park to arrest him in connection with his multiple absences from appearing before the court in the Toshakhana case despite the court's orders directing him so.

The police "remained unsuccessful" in arresting him. However, Mr Khan later decided against appearing before the court citing security threats as the reason. INP

SHC suspends by-polls on 9 NA seats in Karachi

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Tuesday restrained the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from holding by-polls on National Assembly (NA) seats in Karachi.

The SHC issued the verdict on a petition moved by nine former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf MNAs from Karachi against the acceptance of their resignations by the National Assembly speaker.

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

After hearing arguments, the SHC suspended the by-polls schedule which were to be held on March 16 and adjourned the hearing till March 25.

The by-elections were scheduled to be held in the constituencies of NA-241 Korangi Karachi-III, NA-242 Karachi East-I, NA-243 Karachi East-II, NA-244 Karachi East-III, NA-247 Karachi South-II, NA-250 Karachi West-III, NA-252 Karachi West-V, NA-254 Karachi Central-II, and NA-256 Karachi Central-IV. INP

Imran challenges denial to suspend his arrest warrant in IHC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan challenged on Tuesday a local court's decision against the suspension of his arrest warrant in the Toshakhana case against him in the Islamabad High Court.

A day earlier, additional sessions judge Zafar Iqbal had rejected the request of the former prime minister seeking the suspension of a non-bailable arrest warrant against him issued in the Toshakhana case Khan, in the petition filed in the IHC, requested the suspension of his arrest warrant. He also sought an immediate hearing of the petition today.

The deposed prime minister is yet to appear before an Islamabad sessions court in the Toshakhana case despite a non-bailable arrest warrant against him.

At the outset of the hearing earlier in the day, Sardar Masroof Khan, a junior lawyer of Imran Khan, appeared before the lower court. Meanwhile, Pakistan

Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha and the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) lawyer Saad Hasan also appeared in court.

Additional sessions judge Zafar Iqbal inquired whether Imran Khan wouldn't appear in court again today. The lawyer said it was not known whether Imran would appear or not and that a senior legal team of the PTI chair would appear before the court at 10am. The court then adjourned the hearing till 10am.

When the hearing resumed, ECP's lawyer Hasan requested the court to adjourn the hearing till March 9 as Khan is due in the IHC. Ranjha supported the lawyer's request saying that the PTI chief would surely appear before the high court on March 9.

It is worth mentioned here that Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan in the Toshakhana. INP

Shab-e-Barat bring observed with religious reverence today

ISLAMABAD: Shab-e-Barat is being observed with religious reverence across the country today Tuesday night.

On this particular night, the majority of faithful seek forgiveness from Allah Almighty and the people whose rights were usurped consciously or unconsciously.

They prefer to keep fast on the very next day to express submissiveness in the court of Allah Almighty and beg His countless blessings for both the worlds.

The faithful would also organize several gatherings and Mahafil-e-Naat to achieve Allah Almighty's blessing in the world and the life hereafter.

They would bow before the Allah and pray for getting rid of the menace of terrorism besides showing right path to disgruntled people, playing in the hands of anti-state elements.

Ulema and religious scholars in their sermons would highlight the teachings of Islam and various aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) so that the followers could lead their lives in line with the Quran and Sunnah.

The houses, streets and especially mosques to be decorated with colorful pennants and bunting whereas at night these were well illuminated by means of electric lights, candles or even oil lamps.

Besides, people to visit graves of their near and dear ones, seeking Allah Almighty's blessings for the departed souls.

Special security arrangements would be made for peaceful observance of "Shab-e-Barat". INP

Legendary actor Qavi Khan laid to rest in Canada

LAHORE: Legendary actor Qavi Khan has been laid to eternal rest in Canada.

The funeral prayers of Qavi Khan, renowned Pakistani actor, has been offered in Canada after his body was buried in the graveyard of Muslim Community. Former legendary actor's funeral was attended by his close relatives and large number of Pakistani community.

He had passed away yesterday at the age of 80 years. Renowned actor was a cancer patient and had traveled to Canada to his family for his treatment.

Qavi Khan was born in Peshawar in 1942. He had worked in theaters, radio and more than 200 TV dramas and films. The legendary actor was

awarded with 'Pride of Performance' and 'Sitara-e-Imtiaz' awards for his outstanding performances.

He was also nominated for 'Nishan-e-Pakistan' award this year and also received 'Life Time Achievement Award' in tribute to his work for Radio Pakistan and Pakistan Television. Some of his masterpieces included 'Lakhon mein teen', 'alif noon', 'andhera ujala', 'angar wadi' and 'ashiana' among TV serials and also played roles in movies like 'tiger gang' and 'sarfarosh'.

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QUETTA: Daily wages labour sitting with their work tools along roadside while waiting for customers.

Carbon tax to help cut greenhouse gas emissions, raise revenue: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Carbon tax can significantly help Pakistan shift from non-renewable to renewable energy sources in order to reduce carbon emissions and increase revenue.

Talking to WealthPK, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, said, "We need to start thinking differently about how energy and carbon tax can help ignite our shift from non-renewable to renewable energy sources. Implementing carbon tax can potentially help minimize the use of fossil fuels in Pakistan."

"Making fossil fuels more expensive and introducing carbon tax will incentivize individuals and businesses to find alternatives like the renewable energy sources [solar and wind power]. This can ultimately help reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change," he said.

According to Dr. Abid, Pakistan is experiencing the harsh reality of climate change with extreme weather events like floods and droughts becoming more frequent. He said the economic cost of ignoring this pressing issue was too high for the government to overlook, as Pakistan entered the summer last year without passing through the spring. The urgency of the situation requires both sustainable lifestyles and support for the government's initiatives, he added.

"China provides an inspiring example of adopting and scaling up sustainable technologies such as solar and wind energy. Focusing on one technology and scaling it up can make it affordable for ordinary citizens, creating a domino effect. This potential must be

explored further, with special emphasis on electric vehicles (EVs)," he added.

The expert suggested that Pakistan must learn from China's success and adopt a similar approach to tackle climate change. It is essential for the government to take these issues seriously and prioritize sustainable development, he said.

He added that with the right policies and investments, "we can make a difference and create a brighter future for ourselves and the planet."

According to the latest research conducted by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), carbon taxation is a key factor in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon emissions. The study highlights that the energy sector, agriculture, and livestock account for over 90% of greenhouse gas emissions in Pakistan. Although Pakistan's contribution to global carbon emissions is less than 1%, it remains highly vulnerable and is among the top 10 countries most affected by climate change. According to a study to combat this issue, Pakistan has set ambitious goals to reduce its projected emissions by 50% overall by 2030, with 15% reduction below business as usual (BAU) from domestic resources and an additional 35% reduction below BAU subject to international financial support.

The study also reveals that the highest carbon emissions are coming from Sindh, followed by Punjab, KP, and Balochistan. Sindh's carbon emissions account for 54% of Pakistan's total emissions, while Punjab 27%. KP's energy sector produces 11% of carbon emissions, while Balochistan accounts. INP

Ex-CM Punjab Buzdar's interim bail extended till March 16

LAHORE: An accountability court on Tuesday extended the interim bail of former Punjab chief minister Usman Buzdar in the assets beyond means case. The court extended Usman Buzdar's interim bail till March 16.

The former Punjab chief minister appeared before an accountability court in assets beyond means case.

At the outset of the hearing, the NAB prosecutor informed the court that the questionnaire was sent to Usman Buzdar but the anti-graft watchdog did not get a reply from the accused.

At this, Buzdar's counsel told the court that his client would submit a reply to NAB questionnaire on March 13.

Furthermore, the accountability court extended Usman Buzdar's interim bail till March 16.

It is pertinent to mention here that the NAB Executive Board launched an investigation against Buzdar in assets beyond the means on the recommendation of NAB Lahore. INP

Info Minister criticizes PTI Chief for his constant refusal to appear in courts

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb has severely criticized PTI Chief Imran Khan for his constant refusal to appear in courts and face cases against him.

Addressing media persons in Islamabad, she said Imran Khan does not appear in courts because he is fully aware that the day he would appear in court, he would be arrested because he has committed crimes. The Information Minister accused Imran Khan of taking shelter behind women and children to avoid arrest by the police.

She said the PTI Chief needs an NRO to escape punishment for the crimes he has committed. Marriyum Aurangzeb challenged Imran Khan that if he has not committed any crime, he should appear in courts and face the law of the land. INP

PAKISTAN NAVY SHIP SIEZED NARCOTICS AT SEA

Islamabad: Pakistan Navy Ship while deployed on Regional Maritime Security patrol seized huge quantity of drugs in a counter Narcotics Operation at North Arabian Sea.

Pakistan Navy Ship while undertaking maritime security operations intercepted a suspicious stateless fishing boat at sea. Upon search of the boat, Pakistan Navy troops seized 280 Kg narcotics (Crystal and Ice) worth approximately US

\$15 Million in international market. The vessel and crew members were later handed over to Law Enforcement Agencies for further legal proceedings.

The successful anti-narcotics operation by Pakistan Navy Ship reaffirms PN resolve to deny illegal activities in maritime zones of Pakistan. Pakistan Navy Ship while undertaking maritime security operations intercepted a suspicious stateless fishing

boat at sea. Upon search of the boat, Pakistan Navy troops seized 280 Kg narcotics (Crystal and Ice) worth approximately US \$15 Million in international market. The vessel and crew members were later handed over to Law Enforcement Agencies for further legal proceedings. The successful anti-narcotics operation by Pakistan Navy Ship reaffirms PN resolve to deny illegal activities in maritime zones of Pakistan. PR



KARACHI: Women lighting candle at their love ones graves in graveyard on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat.

LHC directs Aurat March organisers, DC to decide venue by 2pm

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) directed on Tuesday the Aurat March organisers and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rafia Haider to finalise a location for the march by 2pm.

The development came during the hearing of a plea filed by a citizen seeking permission to organise the Aurat March a women's rights movement in the country in Lahore on March 8. The district administration of Lahore, last week, denied the march organisers permission to hold a public rally.

The local authorities were requested to grant permission for the event, however, the city's DC turned down the requests citing threat alerts from security agencies as the reason. During the hearing on Tuesday the court ordered both parties to hold consultations to decide on a venue.

The Lahore deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police (SP) Civil Lines appeared in the court. Justice

Anwaar Hussain heard the petition and said that these matters are brought to the court every single time.

The DC said that this time they were requested to grant permission to hold the march at Nasir Bagh. "PSL is also taking place and hence, the teams also travel", she added. "Why are public gatherings taking place then?" questioned Justice Hussain. The court remarked that the police become active when a political leader makes an appearance. DC Haider said that a clash took place last year during Aurat March.

"You cannot stop them from organising Aurat March," remarked the LHC. The public prosecutor suggested that the march could be held outside Press Club.

The court remarked that the administration is directed to maintain the law and order situation in the city. It added that the organisers of the march should also take responsibility that there would be no riots. INP

Farmers struggle amid rising input costs, insufficient market availability: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Farmers are finding it difficult to sustain their livelihoods amid rising input costs and insufficient market availability.

Talking to WealthPK, Muhammad Bilal Iqbal, an official of the National Agriculture Research Centre (NARC), said it was worrisome that input costs were on the increase and market availability was shrinking for farmers, whose incomes were constantly decreasing.

"These issues have broader implications for the country's food security and economic growth."

He said prices of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides had skyrocketed in the recent months due to devaluation of the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar because most of these inputs were imported.

Moreover, he said farmers often had to rely on informal credit sources with high interest rates to finance their inputs, which further increased their production costs. Bilal Iqbal said to address these issues, the government could devise

policies that promoted the use of locally-produced inputs or provided subsidies on inputs to reduce the financial burden on farmers. "In addition, initiatives to improve farmers' access to formal credit could help them secure loans at lower interest rates."

"Another challenge for farmers is insufficient market availability, which limits their ability to sell their produce at fair prices. Many small farmers do not have direct access to markets and have to rely on middlemen, who often exploit them by offering low prices for their crops," he pointed out.

"Furthermore, inadequate storage and transportation facilities often result in post-harvest losses, reducing the income that farmers can earn," he maintained.

The NARC official called for developing better market linkages for small-holders such as farmer cooperatives or contract farming arrangements with buyers. "This would help farmers access more lucrative markets and reduce their dependence on middlemen." INP