

# QUETTA VOICE

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**BUIITEMS employees demand immediate payment of salaries**



**Altaf Hussain loses £10m properties case to MQM-P at UK High Court**

## Balochistan: Census can not be initiated in 228 blocks

Syed Muhammad Qaseem

QUETTA: The census process can not be initiated in 228 blocks of the province due to some technical issues, Noor Ahmed Pirkani, the Commissioner of Census Balochistan told reporters on Monday.

Balochistan has a total of 11,860 census blocks, Noor Ahmed Pirkani, the Commissioner of Census Balochistan informed. He stated that the process of the census was going smoothly in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan. However, there were some technical issues in some blocks.

The process of the census will begin tomorrow in the province however, 228 blocks will not be included in it due to some technical fault, Mr. Pirkani mentioned. As we address with the issues in 228 census blocks, the process will continue there too, Noor Ahmed stated.

All the people living in Balochistan are requested to register themselves in this census, Mr. Pirkani demanded in the press conference.



### Total Population of Balochistan in 2017 census

Balochistan, the area-wise largest province of Pakistan, had a population of 12.3 Million in the 2017 census. The province contributed less than 6 percent to the total population of the country.

According to census 2017 reports, Balochistan has an average population density of 35 persons per km square compared to the national average population density of 236 persons per km square and 536 persons per km square for Punjab province.

The census commissioner's response has come a day after the political parties expressed reservations and apprehension about the process of census underway in Balochistan. The political parties complained about the absence of census staff in their respective areas because of administrative issues.

## No Baloch Pashtoon dispute: Governor Kakar

Staff Reporter

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Malik Wali Kakar on Monday dispelled the impression about any Baloch-

The Governor observed that until peace is established, education, the economy and other problems will be solved. He said that in Balochistan, not



Pashtoon dispute and termed it an issue of 'few' people. "All ethnicities and religions are equal before me", Mr. Kakar told reporters.

The Governor stated that the media highlights the issues and the government finds solutions to issues relating to the province. Governor Balochistan said that "I was informed about the problems of the universities today, I will meet the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister regarding their financial problems."

**"No better economy without establishing peace", Governor Balochistan**

only Pashtuns and Balochs, rather all nationalities living were equal before him.

He reiterated that there is no conflict between Pashtun Baloch in the province, it is only a few people's problems. He said that the elected MNAs of Quetta city and MPs should make policies for the development of the city. "We have to raise our voice for the rights of our citizens", the Governor said. "I am the governor of the people of Balochistan, not of BNP, as a governor, I will close the gulf between Balochistan and the federal government", he concluded.

## Imran announces Minar-i-Pakistan power show on Sunday as twice-delayed PTI rally finally taken out

PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Monday announced a power show at Minar-i-Pakistan on March 19 as the party's twice-delayed election rally was finally taken out peacefully.

The rally was originally scheduled for Saturday and then Sunday but was postponed after the party failed to get relief either from the Election Commission or the Lahore High Court against the caretaker Punjab government's order of imposing Section 144 in the provincial capital.

The interim Punjab government had imposed Section 144 citing a Pakistan Super League match in the Qaddafi Stadium and a marathon race in the city. However, in a notification on Sunday, the administration had allowed the PTI to take out the public rally on Monday (today)



but mentioned that it would carry "high-security risk due to the general and specific threats against political gatherings and previous instance of attack on the ex-prime minister".

The permission was given after an undertaking by the organiser to the "effect that in case of any untoward incident he shall be held responsible". The notification had also barred speeches against the constitutional officers, including the military and judiciary.

The election rally kicked off from Zaman Park today with Imran leading it in a bulletproof vehicle.

Reaching Data Darbar, Imran addressed the rally from inside his vehicle, thanked PTI workers and supporters for their participation and announced Sunday's Minar-i-Pakistan

power show set for 2pm.

"This rally will be in the day and it will be my sixth in Minar-i-Pakistan in the last 12 years," he added.

Imran said he would address the country out of its current issues. He called on the people of Lahore to start preparing for the power show.

"It is clear from today's rally why this imported government did not allow our [previous] rally," he said, referring to the PTI's March 8 plans.

Imran also paid tribute to PTI worker Ali Bilal, also known as Zille Shah, who lost his life on March 8 as the caretaker Punjab government used force to block a rally called to launch the party's campaign for the April 30 elections in the province. Web Desk

## Firing in Pishin leaves a man and woman dead

Asmatullah Hanafi

The unknown accused opened fire and killed a man and woman in the Pishin district of Balochistan on Monday evening. Police sources said the armed accused opened fire in the Ganj Muhalla area of the Pishin district.

The man was identified as Fateh Muhammad, a resident of Mianwali Punjab province. The dead bodies were shifted to the district headquarters hospital in Pishin.

Police reached the spot as an investigation into the incident went underway. The attackers fled from the spot after the attack. The motive behind the killing could not be ascertained immediately.



## President calls for enhanced outreach as FTO decides 6500 complaints in 2022

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday asked the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) to increase its outreach and raise awareness about its role in providing speedy justice to the people against the maladministration of tax authorities in matters relating to income tax, customs duties, sales tax, and federal excise duty.

The president said this talking to the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), Dr Asif Mahmood Jah, who called on him to present FTO's Annual Report for the year 2022, at Aiwan-e-Sadr here.

Highlighting the salient features of the report, Dr Asif Mahmood Jah informed that FTO received 7000 complaints during 2022 as compared to 2816 complaints in the year 2021. He said that 6500 complaints out of 7000 had been disposed of during the year 2022.

The FTO highlighted that tax



refund claims to the tune of Rs 7 billion were decided and the due amount was paid to the aggrieved taxpayers by the FBR. He said 78% of FTO's decisions have been implemented and he was personally monitoring the implementation of decisions on a daily basis.

FTO Dr Asif Mahmood Jah also briefed the president about the important initiatives taken by his organization during 2022.

He said that an Overseas Pakistanis Grievances Redressal Cell (OPGRC) had been established in the FTO Secretariat to deal with the complaints of overseas Pakistanis pertaining to federal taxes.

He informed that a facilitation desk had also been set up for taxpayers to enable them to avail all customs/tax-related services and get their issues resolved within the FTO's premises in Islamabad.

The FTO highlighted that Honorary Coordinators (Business Liaisons) from different chambers of commerce and industry and other trade bodies were appointed in FTO headquarters and regional offices to enhance its reach to aggrieved taxpayers. INP

## BUIITEMS employees demand immediate payment of salaries

Education Desk

QUETTA: Employees and faculty members of the Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS) staged a protest demonstration against the non-payment of salaries on Monday. The employees and faculty members have been protesting against the university administration for the continued delay in the payment of their salaries.

The protesters staged a demonstration inside the campus and changed full-throated slogans against



the administration for its failure to pay salaries. "We want salaries", Nauman Khan Kakar, one of the faculty members

said. Mr. Kakar stated that despite repeated appeals, the university administration was not paying any salary to employees.

There was no immediate response on behalf of the university with regard to the ongoing protest of protesting employees.

## Altaf Hussain loses £10m properties case to MQM-P at UK High Court

LONDON: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) founder Altaf Hussain has lost £10 million approximate worth of London properties case to his former loyalists in the MQM-Pakistan (MQM-P) after a legal battle at the UK High Court.

IT Minister Syed Aminul Haque represented the party in the UK court.

Insolvency and Companies Judge Clive Jones, sitting as a High Court Judge in the High Court of Justice Business and Property Court of England and Wales, has ruled that the MQM-P is the real MQM and its members are the true beneficiaries of the trusts that control London's properties which are currently under the control of Altaf Hussain.

The judge ruled that MQM



founder Altaf Hussain had resigned from the party after his August 2016 speech. The judgment means that the UK judge has ruled in the favour of MQM-P led by Khalid

Maqbool Siddiqui, and against MQM-London, led by Altaf Hussain.

Geo News has received a copy of the judgment exclusively which shows that ICC Judge Jones has ruled that the lawyer acting for Syed Aminul Haque of MQM-P has established that the MQM's April 2016 Constitution was adopted and "it has not been established that the 2015 Constitution was adopted and on the balance of probability it was not."

ICC Judge Jones said in his judgment. "As on 23 August 2016 Mr Altaf Hussain stood down from any role in or involvement with MQM-P. Whether temporarily or permanently that did not alter before his expulsion from MQM-P when he formed a new association operating from London." Web Desk

## IHC upholds Zahir Jaffer's death sentence

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday upheld the death sentence for Zahir Jaffer, the convicted murderer in the Noor Mukadam case.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Ijaz Ishaq Khan announced the verdict which was previously reserved on December 21, 2022.



The high court also sentenced Jaffer to death in the rape case. The 10-year sentences of the other convicts, Iftikhar and Jan Muhammad, were also upheld.

On July 20, 2021, Noor Mukadam was found brutally murdered in Islamabad's upscale F-7/4 sector. Following the discovery of her body, Jaffer was arrested as the prime suspect in the case.

Noor Mukadam while his employees, watchman Muhammad Iftikhar and gardener Muhammad Jan, were sentenced to 10 years in prison for abetting in the act. However, Additional Sessions Judge Atta Rabbani acquitted his parents, Zakir Jaffer and Ismat Adamjee, as well as other suspects in the case including Therapy Works employees, from the charge of abetment. The judge issued a short order according to which Zahir was sentenced to death under Section 302(b) (premeditated murder) of the Pakistan INP.

Read Counsel wraps up arguments in Noor murder. A sessions court in Islamabad on February 24, 2022, handed down the death penalty to Zahir Jaffer for the murder of



QUETTA VOICE

Flaws in the Balochistan census

Flaws have been witnessed in the seventh census underway in Pakistan's Balochistan province. The census is underway amid reservations and apprehensions expressed by the Baloch and Pashtoon nationalist political parties. The census staff is yet to reach the people living in urban parts of the province. What to speak about the remote areas of the province, which covers half of the country in terms of area and houses only 6% population of entire Pakistan. Census staff is yet to reach the population in Balochistan Specific law and order situations, rugged mountains, long distances, plains, and administrative issues make it very difficult to make sure proper and accurate counting of all individuals in Balochistan. As per the 2017 national census, Balochistan makes hardly 6% population of the entire country. Indeed, this is equal to salt in the flour. It is ironic fate if this meager population is not counted properly during the census of 2023. Census also a sensitive topic in Balochistan Like in some cities of Pakistan, census/enumeration is also considered to be one of the sensitive topics in Balochistan. Almost all political parties are skeptical about the process of the current enumeration/census. The Baloch nationalist parties are concerned about the inclusion of Afghan refugees in the census process and fear that this would bring a demographic change in Balochistan. Similarly, the Pashtoon nationalist parties fear that their (ethnic Pashtuns) population should not be ignored under the garb of Afghan refugees. Balochistan makes up only 6% population of the entire country The resource-rich province of Balochistan has a nominal representation in the parliament with only 19 members of the national assembly out of a total of 342. The province has no say in the formation of the federal government, and distribution of development funds under the federal public sector development program (PSDP). Even its (Balochistan) meager share of 6% percent in services is swallowed by Islamabad through fake domiciles. Balochistan is lagging behind all other provinces in terms of key social indicators including education, health, sanitation and clean drinking water. Nevertheless, its own funds are not utilized in a transparent way because of the worst governance. To be precise, all political parties should put their heads together and bury the hatchet and come up with one point agenda that a fair and transparent census should be conducted before it is already late.

Looming threat of climate change in Pakistan

Muhammad Jehangir Kakar



Pakistan is threatened with the challenges of climate change. Be it global standing or regional vulnerability, caused due to climatic threats, Pakistan is on crossing the red line. This is so alarming as much as it is so interesting. Is there someone looking after climate change at the provincial or federal level in Pakistan? There is none! Ministry of Climate Change at the federal level is downplayed to act only as a regulator and one that has the technical capacity to still maneuver only unto the limitations of checking the quality of ambient airs. Similarly, at all the provincial levels, there

are environmental protection agencies that look after the conformity of environmental regulations in various sectors contributing to certain types of pollutions. These provincial agencies act as regulators and with a stick they enforce the environmental laws which can cater for only a limited version or a speck of what forms the big idea of climate change. At the provincial levels like at the federal level, there is no agency that is technically sound, composed of such professionals and equipped with such facilities as to counter the grand horror of climate change. No climate change data being collected at the provincial level. As for the data and statistics, there is as much fragmentation and silos-approach as much it is in the inter-governmental coordination mechanism. The question is not of the dearth of amplexness of data however it is how the data is made meaningful. Not at any provincial-level one

could ensure that any climate-oriented data is being collected. The aforementioned agencies only ensure the quality of air by recording the various gaseous emissions in the ambient airs. The Pakistan Metrological Centers throughout the country pick up conventional weather data by various means but is hardly translated into making a meaningful statement on where we stand on climate change. As for policies, laws, rules and regulations, we are more affluent than the developed nations. When it comes to drafting policies, odes are worth writing to our expertise but when given to see them on the ground being implemented; only darkened eulogies are symphonized to shrieks ad infinitum. The laws are being multiplied each day and have become as difficult as to remember the exact number of laws on one single sector. The National Climate Change Policy 2012 remains a docu-

ment of the past being pushed to nullity though it was the vital document that elevated the Division of Climate Change to a Ministry level yet the promising implementation never has come off until this date. Though a devolved subject yet the NCCP grants the legitimacy to the Ministry of Climate Change to wreathe all the provinces together in one garland of beautiful working and legal integration to manage the national issue of climate change. The Climate Change Act 2017 was another move towards climate consolidation that promised to establish the Pakistan Climate Change Authority, Climate Change Council, and Climate Change Fund all of which were last time seen in 2017 when the said Act was passed. The vision 2030 remains a virgin vision thus far. Ministry of Climate Change must realize that it is the organization at the federal level entirely responsible for

catering for climate change affairs. The integration of such a central body with the provinces would be the next challenge given to over politicization of everything. Climate is something which should not be made political though globally it is something which has become an element of political decisiveness as in the Biden-Trump thaw. Nature and nurture along with the potential of Pak-Met office and reach are to be integrated and enhanced fully at the federal and provincial levels with the climate change organizations so formed above. The data and statistics need to be enhanced and made up to the mark as being internationally acceptable with proper transcriptions and applications of data. A lot must be done to keep the generalists away from making any decisions and calling the shots and the professionals are given the entry who have both the capacity and the legitimacy.

Indus Waters Treaty under threat: Part - II

By Shafiqat Kakakhel

Pakistan's strategy to counter the Indian move to undermine the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) should be based on a comprehensive, objective appraisal of the effectiveness of the treaty, the inadequacies of the treaty to address the impacts of climate change, and the suggestions made by experts and stakeholders of India and Pakistan. The IWT has served India and Pakistan well for more than six (6) decades despite three wars and adversarial relations. The first decade (1960-1970) saw Pakistan's Herculean efforts to complete the gigantic civil works, also called 'replacement works', for carrying water from the western rivers allocated to Pakistan to lands in Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan which had hitherto been irrigated by waters of the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) assigned by the IWT to India. The civil works, for which the US mobilized grants at the request of the World Bank, included two huge dams for storing water and hydropower generation, eight (8) large and long link canals and two barrages which had to be built in less than a

decade without the earth-moving machines that became available in later years. The timely completion of the civil works was widely acclaimed. Since the 1970s, India and Pakistan have been at loggerheads over several hydropower plants built by India on the western rivers. India has so far built 30 run-of-the-river electric power plants and plans to build an even larger number during this decade. In fact, the Indian hydropower projects (HEPs) are the only topic addressed by the Permanent Indus Commission which was mandated to follow up on all the provisions of the IWT, including exchange of data (Article 6) and mutually beneficial cooperation (Article 7). In 1970, India started building civil works for the Salal Dam on the Chenab for a 690 MW hydroelectric power plant. In 1974, Pakistan objected to the design of the plant alleging that it violated the IWT. The Indus Commissioners having failed to resolve the issue, it was taken up by the foreign secretaries who were able to settle the differences in several rounds of talks in 1976 and signed an agreement in April

1978. The second dispute was over the Indian barrage on the Jhelum at the mouth of the Wular Lake. Pakistan calls it 'the Wular Barrage project' while India calls it the 'Tulbul Navigation Project', claiming it is mainly designed to promote water transport linking Kashmiri towns although a run-of-the-river HEP will also be built. India started the construction of the barrage in 1984. Pakistan received information about the project in 1985 and lodged a complaint with the Indus Commission alleging that the project would create storage exceeding the limit permitted by the IWT. India suspended work on the project. More than a dozen meetings held in the 1980s and 1990s failed to resolve these differences. This dispute was discussed by Indian and Pakistani Water Resources Secretaries in 2011 and 2012. It is included in the agenda of the ill-fated Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue. The third notable dispute relates to the 450MW project on Baglihar, upstream from the Salal Dam. Construction work on the project started in 1999. Pakistan con-

tended that the low-gate spillways would increase the manipulatable storage beyond the limit allowed by the IWT. India claimed that the dated spillways were needed for preventing silting of the reservoir as had happened in the case of the Salal Dam. Protracted discussions by the Indus Commission for four years (2001-4) having failed, India and Pakistan agreed to refer the dispute to a 'neutral expert'. The neutral expert's verdict rejected Pakistan's objections and allowed the building of gated spillways below the dead-storage level on the ground that this was an acclaimed global practice for sediment control. The verdict caused widespread dissatisfaction in Pakistan, with the media highlighting the comments of late Professor John Briscoe who contested the view expressed by the neutral expert that "the IWT could be updated as new knowledge accumulated" and proceeded to allow India to draw water out of the dam at levels lower than those specified by the IWT. Briscoe had also cautioned against the new meanings given by the neutral expert to 'live

storage' and 'dead storage' which negated Pakistan's historic and persistent concerns regarding India's capability to manipulate water flows to hurt Pakistan. The fourth, and by far the most contentious, dispute is the 330MW hydropower project on the Kishanganga River, a tributary of Jhelum, which envisaged the construction of a 180.05 metre long and 35.48 metre high concrete dam. The flows of the Kishanganga were to be diverted through a 24-km long tunnel to a tributary of the river called Madymati Nulla which was to be rerouted to Jhelum through the Wular Lake. Pakistan objected to the design of the project on the ground that the inter-tributary transfer of water violated the IWT. It also contended that the project would adversely affect agriculture in Azad Kashmir as well as a 900MW hydropower project called the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project. Once again, the Indus commissioners could not iron out the differences concerning the project. Eventually, the project was referred to a Court of Arbitration.

The IMF is not fit for purpose

By Shahrukh Rafi Khan

There is substantial evidence that an IMF bailout merely sets countries up for repeat bailouts. Some countries, like Rwanda and Liberia, have been under continuous IMF tutelage since their independence six decades ago. Low-income countries that have not fallen out of favour politically with the West have been engaged with the IMF on average for 45 years. They have experienced an average of 16 IMF programs and interventions. For low-middle-income countries, these numbers are 40 and 14 respectively. Pakistan has been under IMF tutelage since 1958. Over this period, it has experienced 30 IMF loans and interventions. It is well known that the IMF is very influential in the economic and social fate of low- and middle-income countries. Less well known is the fact that since 2008 this influence has grown astronomically. As low- and middle-income countries started building up their foreign exchange reserves to avoid bailout conditionalities, by December 31, 2007 the IMF's portfolio size had shrunk to \$9 billion from \$34 billion in 1984. Via domino effects, the 2007-2009 financial and economic crises even impacted high income countries like Ireland,

Portugal, Spain and Greece, and so the G-7 decided to expand the IMF's portfolio size. There was another boost to this portfolio size to deal with the Covid-19 supply chain shocks and those that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine. By December 31, 2022 the outstanding IMF credit was \$113 billion, about a 13-fold increase from 2007 in nominal terms. Recent empirical research on the IMF's effectiveness in promoting economic growth is inconclusive while earlier research showed it had a negative growth impact. An analysis of IMF programmes shows that there is no economic growth theory embodied in its programs. At best, IMF-led reforms lead to stabilization and a one-time boost to economic growth. However, programme conditionalities are often at cross-purposes. For example, devaluation, interest rate hikes and import liberalization will lead to difficulties in meeting fiscal, balance of payment and inflation targets. On balance, these conditionalities prove to be anti-growth and anti-development and so it is not surprising that countries are unable to graduate out of IMF tutelage. The key focus of IMF programmes, not surprisingly for a financial institution making loans, is to make countries solvent.

This serves the interests of creditors including the IMF, the World Bank and key high-income country shareholders. Economic logic suggests that attaining economic sovereignty from the IMF is the only path to catch-up growth. While it has been argued that the IMF is 'the only game in town', countries like Japan, Korea and Taiwan have shown there is an alternative. All of them managed to build up their FOREX reserves to attain their economic sovereignty and pursued a market friendly developmental approach that has proved to be much more effective in attaining catch-up growth and development. Developmentalism evolved as a conceptualization of the Japanese economic practice which began in the 1950s. It was honed and enhanced from the 1960s to the 1980s, based on local conditions by Korean and Taiwanese economic practice, and again conceptualized by several scholars as an alternative to neo-liberalism. Developmentalism, unlike the IMF's neo-liberal approach, embodies a growth theory. Growth, if the approach is successfully adopted, comes from a focus on technology. The successful adoption of developmentalism requires a continuous move up the value chain.

DigitAll for climate

By Zile Huma

The theme for UN International Women's Day 2023 'DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality'. This year's International Women's Day highlighted the gender gap in technological advancement, which creates many hurdles for the socio-economic prosperity of women. The aim of the theme is also to celebrate the achievements of women and girls making positive impacts on humanity through technology and innovation. There are many areas where technological solutions can help bridge the gender gap and empower women. Climate change is an area where the use of technology and innovative solutions can assist in reducing gender inequalities. Women and girls all over the world are disproportionately impacted by the negative impacts of climate change. Technological solutions can help women and girls better adapt to climate-related catastrophes. According to a report by the FAO, "72 per cent of women are associated with the agriculture sector out of the total women labor force in Pakistan." Floods and droughts in developing countries like Pakistan directly impact women financially. The provision of climate adaptive technologies to women can help them better deal with the impacts of climate change in the agriculture

sector and reduce financial losses. Similarly, many health and educational challenges arise after climate-related disasters like floods, droughts and smog. Climate change calamities like floods and glacier lake outburst floods (GLOF) also destroy homes, health infrastructure and educational institutions. According to a Unicef report 'Devastating Floods in Pakistan', vital infrastructure has been destroyed and damaged after the floods - including nearly 27,000 schools and 1,500 public health facilities. The destruction of health units and communication networks after climate calamities leads to health crises making it worse for women to avail health facilities. Moreover, there are cultural and traditional barriers for women when it comes to visiting hospitals and clinics alone. In such a situation, if women are well versed in the use of technologies and online platforms, they can utilize telehealth services and get free advice on health challenges faced by them. The government should make arrangements to provide telehealth services for free consultations in emergencies for women. As a result of climate disasters, a large chunk of the population, especially women, is displaced. Many families migrate to new places to find employment opportunities. As a consequence of displacement and demol-

ished infrastructure, the education of women and girls is compromised. Also, in a patriarchal society, education of male family members is given preference in a state of financial crisis. The use of technology for online education can provide solutions to female education issues during such catastrophes. Access to online education is also an easy and affordable means of knowledge sharing and can solve many issues of gender inequality in the education sector caused by climate change. During natural catastrophes, women and girls can become a victim of domestic violence, kidnapping and rape. If women possess expertise in technological knowledge, it can help women get better access to digital safety measures normally established by the government as helpines and online complaint management systems. They can also easily access information about initiatives taken by the government to facilitate women and prevent any crimes against them. To reduce the gender gap caused by climate change, governments need to spread digital literacy among women. We need to encourage women to study specialized subjects of information technology, linked to climate change. Higher education institutions should introduce subjects under IT and climate change studies complementing knowledge linking other sectors. Students should be

encouraged to conduct their research related to reducing the gender gap in climate change through technological solutions. Research institutions and universities can conduct workshops and seminars to spread awareness among people about the role of technological solutions to reduce gender inequality in climate change. Also, we need to create jobs for women IT experts in projects related to the use of technologies for mitigation and adaptation of climate change like early warning systems, geo-mapping, etc. International forums like annual climate change conferences should arrange discussions on digital literacy of women to better mitigate and adapt to climate change. The use of technologies and innovative solutions to reduce the gender gap in climate-related issues is an important aspect that we need to promote. The aim of the theme is also to celebrate the achievements of women and girls making positive impacts on humanity through technology and innovation. There are many areas where technological solutions can help bridge the gender gap and empower women. Climate change is an area where the use of technology and innovative solutions can assist in reducing gender inequalities. Women and girls all over the world are disproportionately impacted by the negative impacts of climate change.

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Governance for local governments: Part - I

By Ishrat Husain

This article is divided into three parts. The first part deals with 'why local government?' The second with experiences during the 2001-2009 period and finally in the third part it proposes a governance system for local governments. Why local government? The World Bank in its 1997 report asserts that governments are more effective when they listen to businesses and citizens, and work in partnership with them in deciding and implementing policy. Where governments lack mechanisms to listen, they are not responsive to people's interests. The devolution of authority to local tiers of government and decentralization can bring in representation of local business and citizens' interests. The visibility of the results achieved by the resources deployed in a specific geographic area maintains pressure on government functionaries. Public-private partnerships, including NGO-public partnerships have proved to be effective tools in fostering good governance. The World Development Report (WDR 2004) has argued that the accountability of governments to local communities and marginalized social groups will increase by assigning service delivery functions to politicians who are closer to the people and

make them electorally accountable. The 1973 constitution did specify only two tiers of government - federal and provincial. It is only after the 18th Amendment in 2010 that a new clause - Article 140A - was introduced which states that "Each province shall, by law, establish a local government system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the local governments." The Supreme court has asserted and directed the holding of elections of local governments on several occasions. Unfortunately, unlike the detailed distribution of powers between the federal and the provincial governments clearly defined in the constitution, there is no such provision for local governments. This vagueness and ambiguity has been used by the provincial governments which have been struggling to come to some reasonable piece of legislation since 2010 on the functions and powers of this tier. Logically, once the provincial governments were devolved, adequate powers accompanied by sufficient financial allocations out of the divisible tax pool and grants from the federal government there should have been similar decentralization and delegation to the local governments. How is it possible for Punjab, with a population of 110

million people and 36 districts covering an area of 205000 sq km, to respond to the disparate needs of citizens in the delivery of essential services? DG Khan and Faisalabad, for example, have very different requirements and a uniform one-shoe-fits-all approach that is the characteristic of an over-centralized system won't simply work. The present culture of concentrating authority in power centres at Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta has not only alienated the population living in the peripheries, but reduced its productive potential also - and to no small extent. It is little surprise then that our research found 80 districts whose ordinary citizens are living in miserable conditions, according to the Deprivation Index, and remain almost criminally starved of their most basic needs. The political parties that introduced this article in the constitution do not realize that meaningful empowerment of communities through decentralization and delegation of authority, in which the local government system plays a crucial role would in the long run promote greater trust, cohesion and harmony in our society and ensure access to basic public services in an efficient and equitable manner. These outcomes will not only help mobilize additional.



## As a flagship project of BRI, CPEC brought infrastructural development in Pakistan: Zhang Shuibo

BEIJING: As a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has not only brought infrastructural development in Pakistan, but also paved way for industrialization.

Infrastructural scholar exchanges may also pave a better and further way for CPEC. A brighter future of Pak-China cooperation remains to be seen, said Zhang Shuibo, dean of School of International Project Management of Tianjin University, China, who is also a deputy to the 14th National People's

Congress (NPC). "We should establish a scholars' alliance of Countries of Belt and Road initiative (BRI) on infrastructure construction to deepen and normalize relevant academic exchanges.

It will also make international cooperation on infrastructure construction more efficient and sustainable," said Zhang Shuibo.

Over the past decade, the Belt and Road Initiative has made remarkable achievements. Constructions of railways, ports, airports and roads in the BRI countries have played a posi-

tive role in promoting their economic and social development.

However, due to the differences in technical standards, legislation and religious culture between China and the host countries, China sometimes faces challenges in the implementation of the programs. "Conflicts and misunderstandings occur occasionally, which increases the cost and elongates construction," Zhang Shuibo pointed out. He suggests that academic exchanges among scholars from China and other BRI countries in the field of infrastructure construction. INP

## PTA for special pavilions abroad to boost leather goods export: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Establishment of special pavilions in the world market is inevitable to boost the exports of our leather and all other products, said Chairman Pakistan Tanners Association (PTA) Muhammad Ali Mehar while talking to WealthPK.

Ali said amidst the current economic crunch, the government has to come forward and take special measures to boost the confidence of industries and other stakeholders.

According to Ali, the Pakistan Tanners Association and Pakistan Footwear Manufacturers Association organized the 8th Pakistan Mega Leather Show 2023 in February at the Expo Centre, Lahore, which turned into an annual feature of the leather industry and provided an equal opportunity for showcasing all sorts of finished products, including leather shoes, leather garments, and leather gloves. The show was equally beneficial for the allied industries of chemicals and machineries.

"The Mega Leather Show 2023 proved successful and attracted potential buyers and investors from China, Italy, Germany, Cyprus,

USA, UAE, Spain and Tunisia. It also provided a mega business opportunity to the entrepreneurs and investors."

Ali said tanning, including production of leather goods, is the second largest export-oriented industry of Pakistan and in view of export volume, it is considered the third largest stakeholder in the overall exports.

The PTA chairman added that the Pakistan Mega Leather Show was one of the biggest exhibitions of leather-based products in the country's history in which more than 100 national and international exhibitors, including many Chinese organizations, took part and demonstrated keen interest in the growing leather industry of Pakistan.

Continuing, he said Pakistan has access to the markets of different countries and it is the need of the hour that exhibitions should be organized with the objective to promote and project the made-in-Pakistan products.

"The leather garment industry is one of the leading sectors in the country. There was a time when Pakistan was known in the internation-

al market for its finest quality leather jackets. Our leather sector needs to adopt modern technologies, as synthetic and man-made leather is grabbing the customers' attentions nowadays."

Pakistan's economy can only flourish with the boost of exports and the entrepreneurs should prioritise the development of world standard brands to capture the global market, Ali said. He suggested that all the respective government bodies should come forward on an emergency basis and devise joint strategies to steer the country from the ongoing economic crunch.

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Quetta: Dr. Tahira Kamal Baloch, MS Fatima Jinnah and Chest Hospital is giving oxygen machine to the poor citizen through Social Welfare from Szakat Fund.

## Pakistan to experience extremely hot days in coming months

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has issued a warning that the country is likely to witness higher-than-usual temperatures during the upcoming summer season. The intensity of the heat is expected to be more than normal from this month March to May due to less-than-normal rains, according to the Met Office.

The PMD has stated that due to a decrease of 77% in rainfall in February, the average day and night temperatures of the last month were recorded as 3 to 5

degrees Celsius higher than normal. This has resulted in a possibility of a further increase in the intensity of heat, with temperatures higher than normal predicted not only for March but also for April and May.

Previously, the average temperature during March was recorded as up to 26°C, with a slight increase being observed last year. However, this year's temperatures are expected to be even higher, with the PMD forecasting an intense heat wave in the coming months.

The PMD has advised peo-

ple to take necessary precautions to avoid heat-related illnesses and stay hydrated during the summer season.

The department has also urged the government to take necessary measures to mitigate the effects of the heat wave and minimize its impact on the population.

As Pakistan braces itself for the upcoming summer season, the authorities and citizens alike will need to remain vigilant and take necessary steps to protect themselves from the anticipated extreme temperatures. INP

## Toshakhana case: Islamabad court reserves verdict on Imran Khan's exemption plea

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in the federal capital reserved a verdict on a petition filed by PTI Chairman Imran Khan seeking exemption from appearance in the Toshakhana case owing to security threats.

Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal reserved the verdict after hearing arguments from Mr Khan's lawyer, Khawaja Harris, on the petition. He would pronounce the verdict at 3:30pm. The court has summoned the PTI chief today for indictment in the case initiated on the complaint filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

PTI chief's lawyer Khawaja Harris told that his client could not appear in court due to security threats. He said Mr Khan

was not deliberately skipping the hearings, adding that it was on the record that he got injured when an assassination attempt was made on him last year.

He informed the judge that petitions had been filed in the Islamabad High Court and

Lahore High Court for appearance of his client via video link. He also submitted another plea asking the court to declare the petition filed by the ECP seeking criminal proceedings against the PTI chief inadmissible. Khawaja Harris raised questions on the ECP complaint saying it was not filed by a competent authority. He said it was yet to see in which conditions the ECP could file a complaint. He opposed the indictment of Imran Khan in the case. Last week, the

IHC suspended the non-bailable arrest warrants issued against the former PM by Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal in the graft case related to the purchase and sale of gifts from the Toshakhana till March 13.

IHC chief justice Aamer Farooq accepted Khan's plea against judge's decision and directed the PTI chairman to ensure that he appears or March 13 before the trial court that had issued the arrest warrants. The former prime minister has thrice skipped indictment hearings in the district and sessions court in the case initiated at the request of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for concealing the details of gifts he retained from the Toshakhana while in the power. INP

## Admin orders early closure of schools ahead of PTI rally

LAHORE: The city district administration in Punjab capital has ordered closure of all the schools and colleges located on the route designated for the rally of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) owing to security threats by 12pm today (Monday).

Lahore Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa issued the directives. He also asked people to keep their shops located on Circular Road closed after 12pm.

The party is scheduled to hold an election rally from Zaman Park to Data Darbar a day after it deferred it due to imposition of the Section 144 in the city.

The district administration has granted conditional permission to the Imran Khan-led party to stage rally. Sources said the interim Chief Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi directed the district administration to meet with the PTI's leaders and finalize the strategy for the rally. The administration, however, warned the PTI's leaders to not give statements against the judiciary and institutions. INP

## Solution to country's problems lies in constitution, says Abbasi

KARACHI: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has stated, "solution to the country's problems lies in the Constitution. There is no alternative. If we don't run this country as per the Constitution, then this state will not survive."

"The military chief suggests politicians to change parties while the inelegance head tells them you can't win elections. We are responsible for destroying ourselves so that we can't send competent people to parliament or stop them," Abbasi said.

Speaking at a seminar entitled "Reimagining Pakistan" at the Habib University here, the former prime minister said the way the country was being run will do no good and stressed dialogue to get the country out of the current situation. Fawad Hasan Fawad, aide to former PM Nawaz Sharif, PPP former leader Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar and other economists were present at the seminar.

He said the country's economy remained connected with politics and believed that corruption was the biggest of all the problems the country was facing, local media reports. Urging politicians to stop leveling allegations against each other, Abbasi said by refraining from doing politics. INP



QUETTA: Cobbler sitting roadside while waiting for customers.

## Pakistan needs to invest in blue economy to enhance exports: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's blue economy has huge potential to earn foreign exchange through export of fisheries, promoting coastal tourism and maritime transport and exploring minerals as 95% of the country's trade is carried out through sea.

Talking to WealthPK in this regard, Abdullah Khalid, an associate research fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), said blue economy could play a vital role in economic progress and development of the country as it offers multifaceted avenues for maritime industrial development such as fisheries, coastal tourism, maritime transport, salt manufacturing, shipbuilding, marine engineering, aquaculture, marine biotechnology, deep sea-bed mining, oceanic renewable energy, and maritime tourism.

"It has huge potential to create job opportunities for the people."

Currently blue assets contribute an estimated \$1 billion or around 0.4% to Pakistan's GDP. In comparison, about 10% of China's GDP came from its blue economy sectors in 2022. Unfortunately, Pakistan's blue economy's share to GDP is quite low. According to the World Bank, marine resources in Pakistan are worth at least \$100 billion.

Abdullah Khalid said Pakistan needs to focus on sea for an export-led economy as it would bring the country out of difficult situation.

"Pakistan's coastal areas are rich in bio-productivity and bio-diversity as they provide huge breeding grounds for commercially important seafood varieties like crabs and shrimps potentially worth \$2 billion

annually. However as of today the seafood exports earnings are only around \$450 million (0.2% of GDP)," he pointed out.

He said maritime tourism contributes only around \$300 million (0.1% of GDP) despite having huge potential for domestic and international tourism.

He said it is a good sign that the government has now started focusing on the maritime sector after decades of neglect. "Of late Pakistan's maritime sector is experiencing substantial growth due to favourable policies and investments. Pakistan has to shift fast towards the blue economy as 95% of trade is carried out through sea."

The SDPI research fellow said construction of Gwadar as a transit and transhipment port under the CPEC has further augmented Pakistan's maritime sector. INP

## Pakistani officials learn poverty alleviation experience from China

BEIJING: For the first time in the past three years, China's Ministry of Commerce welcomed the first batch of informational officials who came in-person for training seminars, according to China Economic Net (CEN) on Monday. Ms. Pizwak Imitiaz, Section Officer (F&A), Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS), has just concluded a 14-day Seminar on China's Poverty Alleviation Practices under the Global Development Initiative.

The seminar, hosted by the Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO), Ministry of Commerce, China, is one of the 5 seminars that took place from 22nd February to 7th March for a total of nearly 200 officials from 27 countries across the globe. "Another colleague from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Government of Pakistan attended the seminar on International Cooperation and Trade", she told China Economic Net (CEN) reporter. INP

## Sindh CM inaugurates polio eradication campaign in Karachi

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated on Monday a polio eradication campaign by administering drops to children in Karachi.

Addressing the ceremony, Syed Murad Ali Shah said no polio case has been reported in Sindh in the last thirty-three months.

He appealed parents to cooperate with polio teams to save future of Pakistan and rid country of the disease. During the campaign five point six million children up to the age of five years in high risk sixteen districts of province are being administered polio drops. INP



KARACHI: Woman health worker administering polio drops to child during the Polio Campaign in the city.

## Highlights of President Xi's speech at closing meeting of 14th NPC session

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping delivered a speech Monday morning at the closing meeting of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress, the national legislature.

Xi pledged to perform his duty scrupulously, do his utmost, and prove worthy of the trust of all NPC deputies and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

Xi stresses contributing to building great country, national rejuvenation. He called for due contributions to building a great modern socialist country and advancing national rejuvenation.

From this day forward to the mid-21st century, the central task of the entire Communist Party of China and all Chinese people will be to build China into a great modern socialist country in all

respects and to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts, said Xi.

"The relay baton of building a great modern socialist country and advancing national rejuvenation has been historically passed on to our generation," he said.

Xi stressed accelerating Chinese modernization in accordance with the strategic decisions made at the 20th CPC National Congress.

Xi stresses unwaveringly advancing high-quality development. China will unwaveringly advance high-quality development on the new journey of building a great modern socialist country and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. INP

## Pakistan needs to improve food security to reduce poverty ratio: expert

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's agricultural sector, a key contributor to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and employment, is grappling with various challenges that hinder its growth towards reducing poverty and food insecurity.

Dr Shujaat Farooq, Dean at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), told WealthPK that the agriculture sector in Pakistan contributes one-fifth to its GDP, while 37.4% of employment is concentrated in this sector. 50 to 60% of exports are directly and indirectly

linked to agriculture, and this sector is not helping in reducing poverty and hunger even in purely agricultural zones.

Dr Shujaat said poverty is still concentrated in agricultural zone, such as in southern Punjab and interior Sindh, where cash crops are grown, and added that poverty is less in barani (arid) areas in northern Punjab. He said the food insecurity situation in Pakistan is concerning, as more than 20% of the population is food insecure. He added that malnutrition is rampant in the country, with 57% of children experiencing stunted growth.

According to the World Bank, the ratio of malnourished children in Pakistan stands at 36.7% compared to Bangladesh at 30.2%, India at 30.9%, and Sri Lanka at 16%.

Dr Shujaat emphasised that there are three dimensions to food insecurity: availability, affordability, and stability, and inflation, which is currently at 40%, has made food purchase very difficult for the lower-middle class.

The expert highlighted that wastage and losses are other significant challenges that the agriculture sector is facing in Pakistan, with 8% of food

losses at the production level, and 30% wasted after harvesting due to issues in the supply chain, storage, and wastage at homes. He added that this situation is worsening, with 36 million tonnes of food wasted, which is enough to feed the population of the mega cities of Karachi, Hyderabad, and Lahore combined.

Dr Shujaat highlighted that the production of five major crops, including wheat, cotton, sugarcane, maize, and rice, contributes 80% to the agriculture sector. He said that with passage of time, the production area

has not increased in proportion of the increasing population. He suggested that the focus should be on rural transformation by shifting from low-yield crops to high-yield crops to increase yields.

A recent report by the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) shows that Pakistan has significant potential to enhance its per-acre yield of major crops including wheat, cotton, sugarcane, maize, and rice. The report highlights that the current yield of these crops falls short of the global best, with none exceeding 50% of the worldwide benchmark. INP



LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan leading an election campaign rally on the way from Zaman park to Data Darbar in Provincial Capital.



# Deadline for Development Leader Awards entry submission extended

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives has extended the deadline for submission of entries for the Development Leadership Award (DLA) till March 16 to provide more opportunities to the applicants.

The decision was taken amid providing maximum opportunities to the candidates. Earlier, the deadline was February 25. However, it has been extended to March 16. The DLA initiative was taken by the Planning Ministry to mark the celebrations of 75 years of independence.

The key objective of these awards is to honour Pakistani citizens and overseas Pakistanis who have contributed significantly to the socioeconomic development of Pakistan. The DLA will be given to outstanding individuals in recognition of high achievers, emerging leaders and overseas Pakistanis in specific fields which include teachers, researchers, public policy experts; business owners; investors; startups, social enterprises, philanthropists; social activists; journalists, and others.

Under the awards, three main categories were established which include high achiever (over 35 years of age), emerging leader (under 35 years), and recognizing accomplished overseas Pakistanis.

A high-powered 'DLA Evaluation Board' - comprised of intellectuals, practitioners, professionals, and policy-

makers - will evaluate the submissions and forward recommendations to the Prime Minister Office.

It may be noted that since the government came into power in April last year several initiatives have been taken for the development of the country, particularly for the youth and DLA is one of the initiatives to recognise the contribution of people in respective fields.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal in his message reiterated that the government was committed to taking such initiatives by recognizing the services of citizens in different fields. Those citizens who have contributed to the country's development must be rewarded, said the minister, while urging the citizens to register themselves for these awards. Under the awards, three main categories were established which include high achiever (over 35 years of age), emerging leader (under 35 years), and recognizing accomplished overseas Pakistanis.

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Quetta, Member of Provincial Assembly Sardar Yar Mohammad Rind with his son Sardar Khan Rind holding a press conference.

## Rasheed fears 90 days of turmoil ahead

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed has predicted that the caretaker Punjab government will flee after 90 days and the country will be ruled by the masses (Khaki-e-Khuda). The former minister took to twitter to express his fears about the political turmoil in the country. "It seems that 90 days of April, May, and June will be very horrible," he wrote in his message.

The process of filing of nomination papers had begun and the Election Commission was still in a fix, he added. In reference to toshakkhand, he said the matter had gone beyond court martial. Sheikh Rasheed warned that soon starving people would tear Section 144 into 144 pieces.

He ridiculed the government for failing to secure a deal with the IMF. "One more week has passed without a staff-level meeting with the IMF. Even no help has been received from Saudi Arabia and China."

Referring to the recent violence against the PTI workers in Lahore, Sheikh Rasheed said he had seen Attock Fort during Gen Ayub Khan's rule. But, the violence against the vulnerable people and women by this government is hitherto unheard of. Many people have laid down their lives for democracy including the "five martyrs of Lal Haveli". He described the death of Zile Shah as "a deep wound inflicted on the nation's heart."

In Pakistan, "the poor are born only to go to jail and die in jail, while the elite are born only to rule." INP

## SHC serves notices over Jam Awais disqualification petition

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court on Monday served notices to parties on a petition seeking disqualification of MPA Jam Awais who was indicted in Nazim Jochio murder case. Court issued notices to respondents summoned their reply within three weeks. Jam Awais Gohram, Speaker Sindh Assembly, Chief Secretary Sindh and the election commission have been made party in the petition filed by Barrister Ali Tahir.

"Jam Awais has paid Diyat (blood money) to the family of the deceased in the murder case," according to the petition. "After paying Diyat Jam Awais didn't remain truthful and trustworthy," petitioner said.

"Tial court has in its decision wrote that Jam Awais, by paying Diyat has confessed his crime," Barrister Ali Tahir said. "According to clause 53 of the Pakistan Penal Code, Diyat is punishment," petitioner argued.

A legal notice was served to Jam Awais, who was elected as member of the Sindh Assembly on PS-79 (Thatta-III), according to the petition.

PPP MPA Jam Awais Gohram Jochio and his men were booked in October 2021 for torturing an activist, Nazim Jochio to death, as he tried to stop his foreign guests from illegal hunting of houbara bustard, an endangered species, in the Memon Goth area of Karachi. INP

## Top PML-N brass decides to field candidate in all constituencies

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) has decided to field its candidate in all constituencies for general elections in Punjab.

The decision was made when PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif made a telephonic contact with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and party Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz, says in media reports. The contact between the top leadership of the party ruling in Centre comes as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a schedule for general elections in Punjab. It has announced that elections would be held on April 30 but clouds of uncertainty overhang the polls as the security officials, in a recent meeting, recommended the electoral body to delay the elections due to security concerns. INP

## Punjab fisheries department promotes cage fish farming: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Cage fishing has become a regular practice worldwide to harvest fish from cages as and when needed.

By using the existing water bodies and comparatively low capital and simple technology we can help promote cage or pen fish culture. Introducing and promoting this type of fish farming in Pakistan will help ensure food security and improve economic conditions of farmers.

Discussing the importance and promotion of cage fishing culture in Punjab province, the fisheries department's director general Dr Sikandar Hayat said the department is promoting the non-conventional ways of fish farming, like integrated fish farming, biofloc fishing technique, cage fishing, etc. "Fish varieties like prawns, lobsters, etc can also be reared on a considerable scale through these techniques. To achieve this, regular training sessions are held at different places to facilitate farmers in starting the

fish farming on modern lines and boosting their production. The farmers are made aware that like poultry and cattle farming, fish farming is also a profitable business." He said seafood is not only a source of nutritious meal but also a good income-generating source.

Sikandar Hayat said the Punjab fisheries department is also offering subsidised packages to promote aquaculture in the province. He said cage farming was one of the most beneficial and easy-to-handle fishing techniques. The Gilgit-Baltistan government is also working to promote the rearing of trout through cage aquaculture. The department has also erected about 1,000 cages in different locations across the province, adding 500 more cages would be set up next year. Setting up 3,500 fish cages is the department's target. Enumerating the steps taken to promote cage fishing, Dr Shaista Waqar, an assistant director of the fisheries. INP

## Mastermind of Karachi police chief office attack killed in operation: CTD

KARACHI: The Sindh Police's Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) claimed on Monday to have killed the mastermind of the audacious attack on the Karachi Police Office (KPO) on Feb 17.

In a press release issued, CTD said that Aryadullah and his accomplice were killed in an operation near the Northern Bypass in the Mangochir area.

The identification of the other slain terrorist is underway, it stated, adding that two other terrorists were also arrested during the operation. The CTD statement added that a search and clearance operation was being conducted in the area.

## Minister stresses to improve agricultural productivity through farm mechanization

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Syed Murtaza Mahmud on Monday has stressed to improve agricultural productivity through farm mechanization and to promote agricultural credit for modern technologies. He stated this while addressing to the participants of international training course on productivity gainsharing in Agribusiness Enterprises in Islamabad.

He added that converting raw produce into value added products can promote agribusiness. He said regional skills development programs for rural youth can address the need of the productive workforce. He stressed on the use of productive irrigation methods like drip irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, optimum use of intermediate inputs like fertilizers, seeds and pesticides for better produce of crops. He suggested for promoting low cost enterprise development programs like honey bee keeping

and floriculture to create employment opportunities for the rural youths. He said this training course will provide knowledge on the application of gainsharing tools and share best practices to make agribusiness enterprises more productive and profitable.

Gainsharing has the potential to contribute to agricultural productivity as farmers are empowered, actors in supply chains are motivated to create increased feeling of ownership, and companies receive greater profits due to higher productivity and enhanced efficiency throughout supply chains.

Successful gainsharing plans result in quality and productivity improvements of employees. He deliberated that representing the Ministry of Industries & Production, we own and owe a mission to "To Achieve Efficient, Sustainable and Inclusive Industrial Development" INP

## Finland, Pakistan business communities come together to expand business cooperation

Islamabad: Finland-Pakistan Business Council (FPBC) organized the 10th edition of its legacy Finland Pakistan Business Summit 2023 in Islamabad. This year, the summit primarily focused on expanding cooperation in the energy and education sectors to boost bilateral trade, investment, and exchange of technical expertise for shared growth and development.

The summit was inaugurated by the ambassador of Finland to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Hannu Ripatti, while the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shaukat Khan Abbasi chaired an important session, 'Future of Energy Landscape in Pakistan'. More than 20 Finnish companies, the majority from the energy and education sectors, participated in the summit, which was also attended by prominent business owners, business representatives, entrepreneurs, and corporate executives from Pakistan.

The summit essentially is a networking platform that has facilitated business cooperation between the two countries for more than a decade. It has helped explore business opportunities, share expertise, and help Pakistani businesses use the Finnish corridor to access the enormous markets in the European Union and the Nordic region.

The panelists, all acclaimed experts in their respective fields, emphasized the need for Pakistan to replicate the Finnish model in enhancing its reliance on renewable energy and excellence in education, professional training and gender equality for socioeconomic success. They also highlighted the need for Pakistan to facilitate investment and a steady transfer of innovative technologies and technical expertise by realigning its



regulatory regime to strengthen its energy and other key business sectors.

Speaking at the summit, the ambassador of Finland to Pakistan, H. E. Mr. Hannu Ripatti expressed his pleasure at the level of business cooperation between Pakistan and Finland. He said Pakistan can capitalize on this cooperation for its socioeconomic growth as Finland is the gateway to the EU market and has the immense technical expertise to help with the development of the Pakistani business and education sectors.

The Finnish delegation expressed its delight over their 'myth-busting' Pakistan experience. They heaped praises on Pakistan's culinary delicacies, rich culture, and hospitality. The next summit is set to take place in Karachi later this week. PR

## ECP urged to appoint DROs, ROS from judiciary

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to appoint district returning officers (DROs) and returning officers (ROs) from the lower judiciary for the Punjab elections.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a letter requested the ECP to appoint DROs and ROs from the lower judiciary under Sections 50 and 51 of the Election Act 2017.

The letter has been given reference of article 2018 of Pakistan in the letter sent to the ECP. The letter further states that the appointment of DROs and ROs from the judiciary is important for impartial elections.

Earlier, sources said that for Punjab by-polls after the dissolution of the assembly, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to appoint returning officers (ROs) and deputy returning officers (DROs) from the judiciary.

Sources said that the ECP decided to appoint ROs and DROs from the judiciary. The ECP requested the Supreme Court (SC) for the ordering the subordinate courts to provide the workforce for Punjab by-polls. INP

## ECP establishes Online Scrutiny Cell to provide legal assistance to Punjab ROs

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has established an online Scrutiny Cell to provide legal assistance and support to 297 Returning Officers (ROs) during the rigorous scrutiny of nomination papers of candidates vying for provincial assembly seats of Punjab.

According to ECP spokesperson, the special software links several government agencies such as the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), National Accountability Bureau (NAB), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) with the Election Commission Secretariat. The Cell, tasked to work round the clock, was also equipped with fax, telephone, and internet facilities.

The necessary proforma and Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) have been devised and provided. INP

## Court issues arrest warrants for Imran in case on threatening woman judge

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Monday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI chairman Imran Khan in a case pertaining to using threatening language against a woman additional district and sessions judge and senior police officers. Senior Civil Judge Rana Mujahid Rahim has instructed the police to arrest the former prime minister and present him before the court by March 29. He also said that the court will hear arguments on Imran's petition seeking to be dismissed from the case in the next proceedings. The PTI chairman had on August 20 condemned the police as well as the judiciary for the alleged custodial torture of Shahbaz Gill and announced that his party would file cases against Inspector General of

Police (IGP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the DIG and Additional District and Sessions Judge Zeba Chaudhry.

Initially, Imran was booked under various sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). Besides, Islamabad High Court (IHC) also initiated contempt of court proceedings against him.

Civil Judge Rana Mujahid Rahim resumed the hearing in the morning and adjourned for an hour to ensure Imran Khan appears before the court.

"I would issue a non-bailable arrest warrant for Imran Khan if he did not appear in court during the specified time," the judge was quoted as saying to Imran Khan's counsel Naeem Panjutha, when he sought exemption from court appearance for his client. INP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr Asif Mahmood Jah presenting FTO annual report 2022 to president Dr Arif Alvi at Awan-e-Sadr.

## 102 acres barren land to be converted cultivatable: DG SWC

CHITRAL: Soil and Water Conservation department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chitral has announced to convert 102 acres barren land into cultivatable soil at Dulomuch. Under this project, one water plant, four check dams, land leveling, terracing and plantation including 4,000 olive trees, 3,000 wild plants and 2,000 fruit trees would be planted. Director General KP Muhammad Yasir Wazir also inaugurated the plantation campaign by planting an olive tree. Talking to media the owner of this land Colonel Retired Shahzada Muhammad Sharif said since we approached the office of the Soil and Water Conservation Department at Chitral, by writing a simple application, they sent their technical team and started work on this project. Director General Soil and Water Conservation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Yasir Wazir said before initiating the project, this was a slope

and barren land and we worked on it making it cultivatable, besides planting olives, almonds, pomegranates and other fruit plants on it.

It will also benefit the landowners financially besides controlling the forest cutting as wild plants will also be planted in this area. The project he said will also promote tourism as it will attract wildlife casting a positive impact on climate. Mujibur Rehman, who is the district officer of this department, said that this year, 8000 kanal of barren land is being cultivated in Chitral. Now, he added we are planning fruit and wild plants that will transform this area into gardens. People can also grow vegetables and get financial benefits by making their lands cultivatable. He said for this purpose any landowner can come to the office and submit a simple application, after which 80% of the expenses would be granted by our department. INP

## Blood of Kashmiri martyrs will not go waste: Pasban-e-Hurriyat

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali has said that the unparalleled sacrifices of the Kashmiri people for freedom and right to self-determination in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) will never go in vain.

In a state ment issued here on Monday, he said that the determination of Kashmiri people for their just freedom struggle has proved that Indian tactics and conspiracies cannot convince them to withdraw from their legitimate cause.

He said that Kashmiri people have placed themselves in the ranks of brave nations of the world with an unprecedented struggle and are continuing the resistance movement despite of all the aggressive and usurping tactics of India.

While paying homage to the people of Jammu and Kashmir for their unprecedented struggle for freedom and self-determination, he said that Kashmiri people have made it clear through count-

less sacrifices that they will continue to fight for their freedom till liberation.

Uzair said that since August 5, 2019, whatever imperialist measures imposed on the Kashmiri people by the Government of India, she has to be accountable.

"The Kashmiri people are defending their state's identity with all their faith and patriotism", he maintained. He further said that Kashmiri people offered their blood for freedom besides endured hardships under Indian oppression and tyranny where thousands of women became widows.

"The endless sacrifices and struggle of the Kashmiri people will compel the Indian oppressive imperialism to withdraw from Jammu and Kashmir", he reiterated.

"The people of the state will never allow the RSS and Modi government to impose their agenda of 'Hindutva', he added. INP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addressing a key note at National Women Police Conference.