

QUETTA VOICE

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Maryam says PTI's politics only revolves around top appointments



'PTI press release': PM chastises president for supporting 'one-sided, anti-govt' views

Govt providing ration to 100,000 deserving families in Balochistan: CS

Manan Mandokhail

Balochistan government has decided to provide ration/commodities to 100,000 deserving and needy families across the province. This was stated by the Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili while chairing a meeting.

The CS directed the food department and concerned deputy commissioners to make sure judicious provision of rations to deserving and needy families.

The top civilian officer of the province took to the social media network Twitter and announced that the ration would be provided to the needy and deserving families.

We are providing ration packages to 1 lac underprivileged families of Balochistan in this Ramzan. Chairing a meeting to finalise the plan and ensure that ration reaches the most deserving.

The Balochistan government has established sasta bazaars in all district headquarters of the province to make sure availability of commodities at reasonable prices.



Hassaan Niazi handed over to Lahore police on transit remand

Syed M. Qaseem

QUETTA: Hassaan Khan Niazi, the nephew of Pakistan Tehrik e Insaf (PTI) Chief, Imran Khan was handed over to the Punjab police on transit remand on Sunday. A local court ordered handing over Hassaan Khan Niazi s/o Hafeezullah Khan Niazi to Lahore police on the transit remand.

This decision has come after a judicial magistrate granted bail to Hassaan Khan Niazi the other day in a case. Police had arrested Hassaan Niazi for what it claimed was 'misbehaving' with police outside the judicial complex in Islamabad, the federal capital.

PTI leaders present outside the court

A large number of PTI Balochistan leaders including Ghaffar Kakar, Noor Khan Khilji, Muhammad Asif Tareen, and others were present outside the court. "Handing over Hassaan Niazi to Punjab police on transit remand is illegal", Muhammad Asif Tareen, the PTI Balochistan leader said.

PTI lawyers wing's



chief, Syed Iqbal Shah Advocate appeared before the court in this regard.

The Punjab home department had written a letter to the Balochistan home department for the extradition of Niazi. Imran's nephew was then produced before the judicial magistrate.

Jail administration reluctant to release Hassaan Niazi despite bail from the court: Lawyer

Talking to the media, Niazi's lawyer Iqbal Shah told the media that the party chairman's nephew was granted bail a day earlier, stating "under what law has he been sent to jail?"

"We had submitted surety bonds and kept waiting at the jail gate, but Niazi was not released," Syed Iqbal Shah Advocate added.

The lawyer furthered that the jail administration was "reluctant to take protective bail order yesterday".

Shah also stated that when the police had no justification to detain his client, the DC issued a detention notification under Section 3 of Maintenance of Public Order (MPO).

"We want justice", Abdul Ghaffar Kakar, a provincial PTI leader told Daily Quetta Voice. He said that his party would not be pressed through such tactics rather it would keep continuing its struggle for supremacy of parliament and constitution in the country.

Merit violated in SBK appointments: Joint Action Committee

Staff Reporter

QUETTA: The Joint Action Committee (JAC) has accused the Vice-Chancellor Sardar Bahadur Khan (SBK) Women's University of appointing blue-eyed in the recruitment process.

Addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club on Saturday, the President of the JAC Sadaf Khan claimed that the VC has subjected the employees raising voices against irregularities in the university to victimization. "Instead of meeting the employees, the VC lodged FIRs against them", Sadaf Khan said.

Vice President JAC, Raheela, Assistant Professor Nelofar, and Press Secretary Tariq Mehmood were also

present on the occasion.

University administration rejects the allegations

The university administration started retaliatory actions against the employees, and due to these actions, the university continued to suffer day by day, Sadaf Khan stated.

The University administration was quick to reject the claims of the protesting employees and termed its propaganda



against the VC and the university as baseless. "Baseless claims and accusations" the spokesman of the SBK university said in a statement after the press conference.

Despite the financial crisis, 125 contract employees appointed in the SBK

As proof of her stubbornness, despite the current economic situation of the country, 125 people have been appointed on contract to the university, they claimed.

They said that the VC Sajida Noreen violated merit in terms of appointments inside the university. They demanded of the Governor Balochistan and the provincial government to take action against the VC.

7 Haq Do Tehreek activists arrested after cancellation of bail in Gwadar

From Our Correspondent

GWADAR: Police arrested seven activists of the Haq Do Tehreek (HDT) after the cancellation of bail in Gwadar on Saturday.

The activists appeared before the court in connection with the registration of FIRs against them in Gwadar. Police lodged FIRs against them for damaging public and private properties during a protest demonstration in the district.

The session court rejected their bail and they were taken into custody by the police. The HDT activists were shifted to jail after the cancellation of the bail.

The HDT Chief Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman is already



under the custody of police for causing damages to public and private properties in Gwadar.

The charge was vehemently denied by HDT Chief Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman.

Maryam says PTI's politics only revolves around top appointments

PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz on Sunday came down hard on the PTI, saying that the latter's politics only revolved around appointments to the country's top posts.

She made the remarks while addressing the office-bearers of the PML-N lawyers' wing alongside Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah in Lahore a day after PTI chief Imran Khan challenged the country's incumbent rulers to put



forward a plan to rescue Pakistan from the many crises it found itself mired in, and laid out his own roadmap to recov-

ery. At the outset of her talk, Maryam said that she had previously stated in her speeches that the

PML-N was not afraid of elections, but merely wanted the scales of justice to be balanced before they were conducted.

"We are not scared of elections. We are not selected, we are elected. Those who are selected should be worried," she said. She also took exception to assertions that the PML-N only wanted to delay elections till October as a new chief justice would be in place by then. Web Desk

'PTI press release': PM chastises president for supporting 'one-sided, anti-govt' views

PM criticises president for not commenting on Imran Khan's failure to appear in courts

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif informed President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday that his letter regarding the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa elections read like a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) press release which is "blatantly partisan in nature" and supports the Imran Khan-led party's "one-sided and anti-government" views.

The president on Friday had penned a letter to PM Shehbaz, urging him to ensure the implementation of the Supreme Court's orders in relation to the general elections in both provinces.

The move came after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had postponed the upcoming elections in Punjab — initially scheduled to be held on April 30 — citing security reasons as the major cause behind the change in plans. In his letter, the president emphasised that all concerned



executive authorities of the federal and provincial governments should be directed to refrain from abuse of human rights and also to assist the ECP to hold general elections in the two provinces, within the timeframe, in compliance with the apex court's order, to avoid further complications including contempt of court. However, the prime minister, in his letter today, stated that the president's letter to him was one-sided and held anti-government views. "You openly express anti-government views and your letter was not reflective of the president's constitutional role and this is what you're constantly doing," wrote the premier.

Criticising the president, PM Shehbaz said that the head of state followed former prime minister Imran Khan's unconstitutional instructions by dissolving the National Assembly — which was deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on April 7.

He added that President Alvi failed to fulfil the constitutional duty to administer the oath to him as the prime minister under Article 91, clause 5. "Despite the foregoing and several other instances, where you actively worked towards undermining a constitutionally elected government, I have made all-out efforts to maintain a good working relationship with you. However, the contents of your letter, its tone and language has compelled me to respond to it," the premier stated. Web Desk

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 into the limitations of checking the quality of ambient air.

Similarly, at all the provincial levels, there

are environmental protection agencies that look after the conformity of environmental regulations in various sectors contributing to certain types of 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 air. 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 at shrieks ad infinitum. The laws are being multiplied each day and have become as difficult as to remember the exact number of laws on one single sector.

The National Climate Change Policy 2012 remains a docu-

ment of the past being pushed, to nullify 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 Shafiq 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 helplines 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.

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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

Rana Tanveer calls for electoral reforms to ensure transparent elections

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education Rana Tanveer Hussain has lauded the Election Commission of Pakistan's announcement delaying provincial assembly elections in Punjab as a decision in the best interest of the country.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the next general elections will be held on time after August 2023. He said the Election Commission, under the constitution, had postponed the elections keeping in view the security, political and economic

challenges. He also called on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership to end growing polarization in the country and decide on an election date. The minister emphasized the need for electoral reforms to ensure transparency in the next elections. INP

No respite as Covid kills another Pakistani

ISLAMABAD: There was no respite from the deadly Covid-19 as it took another life after Pakistan reported 100 plus more coronavirus infections during the last 24 hours, showed the statistics released by the National Institute of Health (NIH) on Sunday morning. It may be mentioned here that Covid-19 pandemic has killed four people in Pakistan during the last five days. According to the NIH data, the death toll in the country inched up to 30,649 whereas the number of total infections now shot up to 1,579,112 after adding the fresh 106 cases. During the last 24 hours (Saturday), 4,213 tests were conducted throughout Pakistan whereas the positivity ratio stood dropped to

2.52%. The number of patients in critical care stood at 22. One million Americans have now died from Covid-19, but a new study found death rates are changing between different age groups. Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania using public reports say in the latter half of 2021, when at least half the population was vaccinated, Covid-19 death rates dropped for older Americans, especially those over 80-years old. The death rate rose in the same period for those 25 to 54-years old, an age group where vaccine rates lagged. Now, the Food and Drug Administration is deciding whether or not to recommend another booster shot for people at higher risk. That

includes people over the age of 65 and people who have weakened immune systems. The UK and Canada already have approved a second round of boosters. Those shots target the original strain of the virus and two of the Omicron sub-variants. It's unclear when the FDA will make its decision. That decision could come as the White House disbands its Coronavirus response team in May. That move coincides with the reported plan for the Biden Administration to declare the public health emergency over. The team has been winding down their work in recent months. A senior White House official says the nation is in a better and much safer place than it was 3 years ago. INP



QUETTA: Activists of Quetta Development Mahaz hold a protest against inflation in front of the press club.

Health specialist recommends well-balanced diet during Ramadan

ISLAMABAD: Health specialist on Sunday has advised the public for a disciplined routine and a well-balanced diet while fasting as gaining weight during Ramadan can cause chronic inflammation, heart disease, diabetes and reduced lung function. Talking to a private news channel, a renowned specialist Dr Shahzad Ali Khan advises people to avoid eating fried, oily and heavy food items as they cannot be easily digested and can make you feel bloated. Meals should be chewed slowly and thoroughly rather than being eaten hastily, he said, adding, it is important to drink plenty of water and other hydrating fluids

during the non-fasting hours to prevent dehydration during the day. Regular short-distance walks for a couple of hours are also suggested after iftar also helps digestion. Moreover, he recommended consuming foods that are rich in protein during Seher and iftar, adding, consuming too much sugar can also lead to feelings of fatigue, decreased energy and reduced alertness. Replying to a question, the iftar meal should be a balanced meal that replenishes energy and nutrients, adding, it should include complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, along with some protein and healthy fats. Sehari is

extremely important as it is what helps people maintain their energy levels during the day, he said, adding, however, it is essential that the right food in the right quantity is consumed, especially if the person is working. Talking to a private news channel, a renowned specialist Dr Shahzad Ali Khan advises people to avoid eating fried, oily and heavy food items as they cannot be easily digested and can make you feel bloated. Meals should be chewed slowly and thoroughly rather than being eaten hastily, he said, adding, it is important to drink plenty of water and other hydrating fluids during the non-fasting hours to prevent dehydration. INP

Imran thanks Lahorites for making Minar-e-Pakistan rally a success

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has thanked Lahorites to make Minar-e-Pakistan rally a success. Taking to twitter after the Lahore power show, Imran wrote: "Despite cabal of crooks locking down Lahore (see map) & arresting 2000 of our workers, people of Lahore came in huge numbers to make our 6th Minar-i-Pakistan jalsa a great success. I want to especially thank my Lahorites for not letting me down yet again. Proud of you." A large number of party supporters attended the PTI rally despite the Punjab government sealed roads leading to Minar-e-

Pakistan by placing containers and erecting barricades to stop them from reaching the place. However, caretaker Punjab Information Minister Amir Mir denied that people were being restricted from going to the rally through barriers. In another tweet, Imran wrote: "Tonight will be our 6th jalsa at Minar i Pakistan & my heart tells me it will break all records. I am inviting everyone in Lahore to attend after Tarawih prayers. I will give my vision of Haqeeqi Azadi & how we will pull Pak out of the mess cabal of crooks have put our country in. Taking to twitter after the Lahore power show, Imran wrote: "Despite

cabal of crooks locking down Lahore (see map) & arresting 2000 of our workers, people of Lahore came in huge numbers to make our 6th Minar-i-Pakistan jalsa a great success. I want to especially thank my Lahorites for not letting me down yet again. Proud of you." A large number of party supporters attended the PTI rally despite the Punjab government sealed roads leading to Minar-e-Pakistan by placing containers and erecting barricades to stop them from reaching the place. However, caretaker Punjab Information Minister Amir Mir denied that people were being restricted from going. INP

PM Shehbaz Sharif orders smooth distribution of free flour

BAHAWALPUR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday spent a busy day touring different flour centres in Bahawalpur, Multan and Lodhran to review arrangements for the distribution of free flour bags among the deserving people under PM's Ramadan Relief Package. The prime minister visited flour distribution centers established at Abbasia High School and Dring Stadium in Bahawalpur and expressed satisfaction over the process of distribution. During the visit, PM Shehbaz issued directives to provide free flour to elderly and sick persons on a priority basis. He also interacted with different people, especially the aged ones and females and listened to their complaints. He also inspected a free medical camp set up by the district administration. Later, PM Shehbaz Sharif visited flour distribution centres in Multan. INP

Tomatoes price hiked by Rs 41 per kg in a week: PBS

ISLAMABAD: The price of tomatoes increased by 41 rupees per kilogram in a week, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Per kilogram price of tomatoes soared to Rs. 180, PBS stated. The commodity has been available at Rs. 180 per kilo in Islamabad and 150 rupees in Rawalpindi. Tomatoes being sold in markets of Karachi and Khuzdar at Rs. 80 per KG and in Quetta at Rs. 90 per kilogram, PBS stated. INP

PTI to attend parliament's joint session

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to attend a joint session of parliament, which was earlier adjourned till March 27. Media reports said PTI senators will participate in tomorrow's joint sitting of parliament. Opposition leader in Senate Dr Saleem Shehbaz has summoned a meeting of PTI parliamentarians in this connection. The session will be held at 2 pm tomorrow at parliament house, say sources. INP



QUETTA: people are buying different items for iftar.

Market stability prerequisite for long-term economic growth: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Well-functioning markets is a prerequisite for smooth and efficient transactions which in turn encourage long-term economic growth and stability, said Dr. Nadeem ul Haq, Vice-Chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). Explaining the market characteristics, he said complete information, solvent agents, well-defined rights, and transactions were the essentials. However, these characteristics are mostly unsatisfactory in the case of Pakistan. "Enhancing the competitiveness of three important markets - agriculture, real estate and energy - requires the adoption and implementation of prudent measures," he

said. Agriculture sector Agriculture, the backbone of rural economy, has enormous potential to resolve the country's economic woes through expanding exports, reducing dependence on imports, and driving growth in other sectors, said State Minister for Industries and Production Tasneem Ahmad Qureshi while addressing the closing ceremony of a training course on "Productivity gainsharing in agribusiness enterprises" in Islamabad recently. Pakistan's agriculture sector is short on growth and productivity compared to many other countries. The most commonly cited constraints include limited use of high-yielding seeds, obsolete farm practices,

soil infertility, inadequate water availability, farmers' poor access to agricultural credit, and higher input cost. Moreover, this sector has been hit hard by heightened inflation, high electricity tariff, and torrential rainfall in 2022. To leverage the potential of the sector, the department concerned must encourage modern farming practices, address the water scarcity issue, and implement innovative agricultural technologies. In addition, the development of a comprehensive agriculture strategic framework with a clear vision is also necessary. The real estate sector is witnessing a reduced demand, decreased investment, and slower construction activity. INP

PPP, PTI workers engage in brawl at Hyderabad's UC-28 polling

HYDERABAD: People's Party and PTI workers were engaged in a brawl at union committee 28 of Hyderabad during local councils by election. The workers of two rival political parties during polling at Ward-1 of the UC-28 treated each other with punches and blows after a heated argument. The workers also torn apart each other's clothes. The brawl started after former district president of the PTI Ali Hingoro entered in the polling station. People's Party workers objected over the PTI leader's entry in the polling station. Policemen posted at the polling station for security were failed to control the violence. A heavy contingent of police reached to the spot to disperse the fighting workers of rival parties and control the situation. The polling for Sindh LG by-elections has been underway in 15 districts of the province for multiple seats including seats for Chairman, Vice Chairman, Member District Council and General Members. INP

Fawad defends President Alvi's elections letter to PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Sunday reacted to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's letter to President Dr Arif Alvi stating that the latter had advised the former to impement on the Constitution regarding elections in Punjab and KP. Taking to Twitter, he said no doubt they [reuters] would assume this advice as a press release of the PTI. "The country would have been come out of constitutional, political and economic crisis had the act of dissolving the assemblies and the process of new elections been implemented upon." Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif penned a reply letter to President Dr Arif Alvi, terming the latter's written correspondence regarding elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) a "one-sided affair" and "the PTI's press release". The premier wrote the letter that contains five pages and seven points in response to the letter written by President Alvi on March 24. INP



QUETTA: An elderly man is buying expensive herby like garlic and ginger from a roadside vendor.

Sindh LG by-elections: polling in 15 districts underway

KARACHI: The polling for Sindh LG by-elections in 15 districts is underway on Sunday, amid strict security measures. The polling is being held for multiple seats including seats for chairman, vice chairman, member district council, and general members. A total of 81 polling stations have been set up across the districts, including 21 separate stations for men and 22 for women as well as 38 combined stations. The repolling is taking place in Jacobabad, Kashmore, Larkana, Shikarpur, Qamber, Shahdadkot, Sukkur, Khairpur, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Umarnot, Tharparkar, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, and Badin. The polling that began at 8 am will continue till 5pm without any break. The electoral watchdog has taken necessary steps to ensure fair and transparent elections by conducting the revote in response to allegations of misconduct during the previous local government elections held in 15 districts of Sindh. Three control rooms have been set up at the Election Commission of Pakistan to address the complaints of the people during by-elections. The move aims to address the concerns and allegations of irregularities in the previous elec-

tions. The polling is being held for multiple seats including seats for chairman, vice chairman, member district council, and general members. A total of 81 polling stations have been set up across the districts, including 21 separate stations for men and 22 for women as well as 38 combined stations. The repolling is taking place in Jacobabad, Kashmore, Larkana, Shikarpur, Qamber, Shahdadkot, Sukkur, Khairpur, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Umarnot, Tharparkar, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, and Badin. The polling that began at 8 am will continue. INP

Lahore police reach Quetta to arrest Hassaan Niazi

LAHORE: The Lahore police on Sunday reached Quetta to take custody of PTI Chairman Imran Khan's nephew Hassaan Niazi who got bail from a local court in Balochistan provincial capital on Saturday in a case related to misbehaving with police officials. The Punjab home department sent a notification to the Government of Balochistan requesting it to hand over Hassaan Niazi as he is wanted in a murder case in Lahore. The Lahore Moztang police reached Quetta to

take Niazi into its custody. Earlier, Niazi (who is also a prominent lawyer) was shifted from Quetta District Jail to Cantt police station under the MPO 3. The Balochistan home department relayed instructions to the provincial police in this regard after getting a notification from the Punjab government. According to the notification, Niazi has been booked in an attempt to murder case lodged with the Race Course police station in Lahore. The Balochistan home

department instructed the provincial police to fulfill all legal requirements and also take measures to arrange the fool-proof security. A sessions court in Quetta on Saturday approved the bail of Hassaan Niazi in a case related to misbehaving with police officials. Niazi was arrested on March 20 in Islamabad on charges of intimidating and obstructing police officers from discharging their duties. He was later handed over to Quetta police on one-day transitory remand after a case was filed

against him at Airport Police Station. On Thursday, the Islamabad court rejected the request of Ramna Police to extend Niazi's physical remand in the case. The case in Ramna police station was filed on the complaint of Assistant Sub-Inspector Khuban Shah under sections 34 (common intention), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 324 (attempted murder), 353 (assault on criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 427

(mischievous causing damage amounting to Rs50) and 506(2) (criminal intimidation) of the PPC. The Punjab home department sent a notification to the Government of Balochistan requesting it to hand over Hassaan Niazi as he is wanted in a murder case in Lahore. The Lahore Moztang police reached Quetta to take Niazi into its custody. Earlier, Niazi (who is also a prominent lawyer) was shifted from Quetta District Jail to Cantt police station under the MPO 3. INP



LAHORE: Vendors are selling vegetables at Vegetable market, in Provincial Capital.

Improved storage facilities to help ensure food security, quality: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan needs to invest in improving its grain storage facilities to ensure food security and quality, said Nadeem ul Haq, Vice Chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE).

"In recent years, Pakistan has experienced various challenges, including climate change, natural disasters, and economic downturns, which have significantly impacted the country's food systems. Improving grain storage facilities can help mitigate some of these challenges and strengthen the country's food systems."

He said, "Grain storage facilities play a crucial role in ensuring food security. They help reduce post-harvest losses, maintain grain quality and ensure a steady supply of food throughout the year. However, Pakistan's current grain storage facilities are inadequate and outdated, leading to significant post-harvest losses, which reduce food availability and drive up food prices."

"To address this issue, we must invest in modern and efficient grain storage facilities. New facilities should be designed to reduce post-harvest losses by providing adequate protection against pests, rodents, and moisture, which are the major causes of grain spoilage. Additionally, the facilities should have sufficient capacity to store enough grain to meet the country's food requirements and prevent shortages during the times of need."

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Pakistan ranks 63rd in food loss.

"Farmers who produce grains don't have much access to resources. For example, if there is an excess of produce, they are unable to store it and are forced to sell it at a loss to local traders. In order to solve this issue, the government should offer simple incentives to the farmers for using storage facilities on a big scale." "With improved storage facilities, the farmers can store their grain for longer periods, allowing them to sell their products at a better price when the market conditions are favorable." Using technology for storage and post-harvest management can help Pakistan address its food insecurity issue. Investing in grain storage facilities can also help strengthen Pakistan's food value chain. The PIDE vice chancellor added, "The private sector can also play a crucial role in improving grain storage facilities in Pakistan. The government can incentivize private companies to invest in building new storage facilities or upgrading the existing ones by providing tax breaks or other financial incentives. The private sector can also bring in new technologies and management practices to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of grain storage facilities." Use of modern technologies such as automated temperature control systems, moisture sensors, and pest control measures can significantly reduce post-harvest losses and increase the shelf life of the stored grains. These technologies can also provide real-time data on the grain status, enabling farmers and traders to make informed decisions about when to sell or use their stored grain. INP



BAHAWALPUR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits free flour distributing points established as part of Prime Minister Ramadan relief package for deserving families.

Sikh community continues good-will gesture of serving food to fasting Muslims during Ramzan

PESHAWAR: The Sikh community in Peshawar has continued its good-will gesture of serving food among fasting Muslims during the holy month of Ramzan with the objective of promoting love, fraternity, respect and honor among people of different faiths.

Every year Sikh community living in different parts of the country including Peshawar, arrange Iftar (serving of food for breaking fast) and food distribution among fasting Muslims with the aim of reflecting the sentiments of reverence they had for holy month of Ramzan.

As the fasting month of Ramzan begins, Sikh residents in Peshawar come out for arranging Iftar dinners, announcing special discounts on their shops for fasting Muslims besides helping the poor fasting faithful by providing them edible goods at their doorsteps.

For ordinary citizens gathering of turban wearing Sikhs around long plastic mats spread to serve food for fasting Muslims at places like Bolton Block of Lady Reading Hospital of Peshawar becomes very strange and incomprehensible, leaving them in a state of bafflement.

Many faithfuls are found sharing their feeling of bewilderment over seeing Sikh youth standing in front of their doors for the distribution of food items to breakfast.

"This year within four days of Ramzan, we have distributed food items among 100 deserving Muslim families for providing them ease in fulfillment of their religious obligation", informs Jatinder Singh, Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of National Peace Council for Interfaith Harmony. INP

20 butchers arrested for profiteering

PESHAWAR: The district administration here on Sunday conducted raids in different areas of the provincial metropolis and arrested 20 butchers involved in selling beef at excessive rates.

Taking notice of the complaints lodged by people regarding selling of beef at an excessive price during holy month of Ramadan, the Deputy Commissioner Shah Fahad directed for taking stern action against profiteers.

Following the directives of DC, the raiding team led by Assistant Commissioner Syed Zainab Naqvi inspected various markets in board Bazaar, Tehkal, University Road and Hayatabad Phase-III.

A total of 20 butchers were found guilty of violating government approved prices and sent behind the bar after registering the cases against them.

The police contingent was also accompanied by the team of district administration to avoid any untoward happening. INP

Police recover stolen tractor, 04 bikes during crackdown

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested two-member gang involved in theft and recovered a stolen tractor and tank and 04 motorcycles from their possession during a crackdown here on Sunday, informed a police spokesman.

The arrested accused were identified as Yusuf and Asad Khan.

Morghah Police have registered separate cases against both of them and further investigation was in progress. SHO said that the accused will be challaned with concrete evidence and will be punished.

SP Pothohar Muhammad Waqqas Khan appreciated the performance of police team adding that the accused who deprive the citizens of their valuable assets cannot escape from the grip of the law. INP

Asad Umar says 'coming week will be turning point in Pakistan's history'

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary-General Asad Umar on Sunday praised party's workers and supporters for showing up at the rally's venue Minar-e-Pakistan despite 'all the obstacles', saying that the coming week will be turning point in Pakistan's history.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore, the former planning minister said that the people of Lahore came out despite fear, arrests and containers placed across the city.

Asad Umar also lambasted the incumbent government for mishandling the country's economy, saying that the nation was suffering after the incumbent rulers were imposed on them. "People are losing their lives while queuing up to get flour," he added.

The PTI leader noted that Pakistan was created in the month of Ramzan and its 'journey to prosperity' will also begin in the

same month.

Taking over the presser, PTI senior vice-president Fawad Chaudhry said that there is no way in Pakistan except implementing the Constitution while commenting on the ongoing political crisis in the country.

Fawad Chaudhry claimed that over 2,000 people were arrested in the ongoing crackdown against PTI workers. "People are being picked and rendered missing from Lahore. Azhar Mashwani went missing," he added.

He pointed out the Punjab government's 'steps to curtail PTI's power show', saying that the entire city was blocked with containers. "The entry and exit routes of Lahore were closed," he added.

He warned that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) led government will have Pakistan added to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) list again. INP

Police to deploy additional force for smooth traffic flow during Ramzan

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic) has decided to deploy additional police personnel around the main markets and shopping plazas in the Federal capital to ensure convenience for the citizens and keep flow of traffic normal during the holy month of Ramadan. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Akbar Nasir Khan, Chief Traffic Officer Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer chaired a special meeting at traffic police headquarters to look into parking and traffic-related issues outside main markets and shopping centers during Ramzan. The meeting was also attended by all Zonal DSPs and it reviewed all traffic-related arrangements for the convenience of citizens during Ramzan. It was decided to make the traffic congestion unit more effective and functional and special tasks were given to Zonal

DSPs in this regard. It was directed to improve traffic flow and provide all possible travel facilities to the citizens. It was decided that additional police personnel would be deployed around shopping malls, markets, restaurants and business outlets. A comprehensive strategy was finalized to keep the flow of normal so that commuters do not face problems. The meeting decided to constitute special squads for strict action against public service vehicles and one-wheelers. On this occasion, the Chief Traffic Officer that shopping activities are at peak at markets and shopping mall after Iftar timings and utmost efforts should be made to facilitate citizens. Chief Traffic Officer said there is a great reward to serving the citizens with honesty, hard work and dedication especially during Ramadan and all efforts should be made to maintain. INP

46,446 Corona patients discharged after recovery in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: As many as 46,446 Coronavirus patients had been discharged after getting treatment from the district's health facilities, out of which 42,789 were Rawalpindi residents and 3,659 were from other districts.

According to the data shared by the District Health Authority, 47,815 patients have tested positive since the pandemic, out of which 44,156 belong to Rawalpindi and 3,659 from the outside district.

The report further updated that 26 patients were quarantined at home while 7,006,011 people, including 44,790 health workers, had jabbed themselves against the lethal Coronavirus.

Meanwhile, District Health Officer for Infectious Diseases, Dr Waqar Ahmed told APP that Corona patients have increased in

the last ten days. He added that around five to six patients were reported regularly in the last two weeks, while the number reached zero earlier.

The health officer advised the residents to wear face masks, avoid crowded places and follow safety measures issued by the government.

According to the data shared by the District Health Authority, 47,815 patients have tested positive since the pandemic, out of which 44,156 belong to Rawalpindi and 3,659 from the outside district. The report further updated that 26 patients were quarantined at home while 7,006,011 people, including 44,790 health workers, had jabbed themselves against the lethal Coronavirus. Meanwhile, District Health Officer. INP

Ishaq Dar says efforts underway to put economy back on track

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday asserted that the government was making all possible efforts to steer the economy of the difficult situation in order to put it on the path of sustainable economic growth.

Addressing the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), the finance minister said that friendly countries were expected to materialize their commitments with Pakistan that would pave the way to close the deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and revive the economy.

He said that in 2016, Pakistan was a rising economy as it was expected to become the world's 18th-strongest economy, but was now facing serious economic challenges.

He said that Pakistan would not default and the government was making all possible efforts to steer it out of a difficult situation in order to put it on the path of sustainable economic growth. He lauded the initiative of ICCI for hosting an Iftar dinner for diplomats.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI urged the government to ensure consistency in economic policies that would enable the business communi-

ty and investors to invest in Pakistan with confidence.

He assured that the business community would fully support the government in its efforts to revive the economy.

He highlighted the business and investment opportunities in Pakistan for diplomats and said that Pakistan was a huge market of over 220 million consumers and offered great investment opportunities in various sectors of its economy.

He said that foreign investors should transfer technology to Pakistan and explore joint ventures and investments in areas of interest.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan needed exports to overcome its foreign exchange crisis and hoped that the foreign diplomats would fully cooperate with Pakistan in realizing this goal.

Engineer Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI thanked the chief guest, diplomats and all the participants for attending the Iftar dinner. He said that if the government created a more conducive business environment, the private sector would be able to improve the health of the economy. INP

Elections will be held after Aug 2023?: Rana Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education Rana Tanveer Hussain Sunday said that the next general elections will be held on time after August 2023 and lauded the Election Commission of Pakistan's announcement delaying provincial assembly elections in Punjab as a decision 'in the best interest of the country.'

The ECP under the constitution had postponed the elections keeping in view the security, political and economic challenges, he said while talking to a private news channel.

"The term of the current National Assembly will end in August 2023 to be followed by the establishment of an interim government that will hold elections," he further said.

Replying to a question, he replied that PTI through social media had damaged the system and misled nation, adding, the agenda of PML-N government is to bring stability in the country, and put the ailing economy back on a sustainable growth path. INP

Nawabshah airport shutdown for two months

NAWABSHAH: The Nawabshah airport has been closed for flight operations for two months, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said Sunday.

According to the notification issued here, the airport will remain closed until May 23.

The closure is due to a geotechnical study that needs to be carried out at the airport, it added.

As a result, only helicopters will be able to land and take off at the Nawabshah airport until May 23. INP

Chinese scientists help enhance quality and quantity of citrus fruits in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Chinese scientists help to enhance quality and quantity of citrus fruits in Pakistan, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

In this connection, they are collaborating with Pakistani scientists to develop biological control measures to achieve the purpose.

To this end, a research centre was launched in the two countries to jointly explore green and sustainable solutions to the growing prevalence of citrus diseases across the South Asian nation.

Speaking to China Economic Net (CEN), Prof Dr Qiu Baoli and Prof Dr Shaikat Ali, director and deputy director of the China-Pakistan citrus pest management centre, said that while chemical measures can provide quick responses to citrus disease outbreaks, they also

increase the resistance of pests against pesticides, posing grave environmental and health threats.

The researcher told CEN reporter that the centre, initiated by South China Agricultural University and Sargodha University, has undertaken four strands of research work to produce environmentally friendly solutions. The first line of research, Dr Qiu and Dr Ali noted, focuses on the use of "lure and kill" technology to dispel pests. For example, the researchers have investigated how different types of traps and lures will affect the efficacy of capturing pests in citrus orchards across six citrus-producing Pakistani cities. Dr Qiu told CEN that the researchers have also been developing technologies to breed parasitic wasps and predatory insects. INP



HYDERABAD: Voters casting their vote during the by-election in union council 28 in Hyderabad.

PPP to contest April 18 by-polls in 11 remaining UCs

KARACHI: The Pakistan People's Party announced that it would field candidates to contest the upcoming by-elections in Karachi in all 11 union committees (UCs), where by-elections are going to be held on April 18. The announcement to this effect was made by Labour Minister Saeed Ghani at a meeting of the PPP Karachi Division.

The meeting took into consideration affairs related to the upcoming by-elections in 11 UCs in the city. While speaking to the participants of the meeting, Mr Ghani, who is also PPP Karachi President, said the PPP would contest the upcoming by-polls from every constituency and would secure victory on the basis of public support.

The presidents and general secretaries of the PPP in different districts of Karachi also expressed their reservations about the ongoing census drive in

the city. The meeting decided that the same reservations would be duly conveyed to the relevant authorities of the federal and Sindh governments.

Mr Ghani said that from day one the PPP had been expressing reservations about the census, adding that the housing census had not been completed before beginning the population count. The accurate population count of the province should be determined through the census campaign so that the people of the province should get their due share in the federal financial resources, he said.

He also said that provinces did receive funds for developmental and other schemes on the basis of the census results. The meeting was attended by PPP Sindh General Secretary Waqar Mehdi, PPP Karachi General Secretary Jawed Nagori, PPP. INP

Police officer shoots dead neighbour on rubbish issue in Karachi

KARACHI: A police official shot dead his neighbour over a petty issue of throwing garbage in Karachi's Lines Area near AB Sinya Line on Sunday.

According to police, one of its officials named Imran indulged in a quarrel with his neighbour over a trivial matter of throwing rubbish. The police official flew into rage during the argument and took out his revolver, shooting the man dead.

Cop Imran was appointed at Mehmood Abad police station.

After killing man, the accused police official fled the scene. Police said they were investigating the incident.

According to the initial informa-

tion, accused cop and his brother Wazir had been involved in a wrangle with their neighbours for the last few days.

Police said they quarreled again on the issue of throwing garbage on the day of the incident and the accused cop opened fire on his neighbour killing him on the spot.

The deceased was a fruit seller. In another incident, an exchange of fire took place between two parties following a squabble in Juma Goth near Dil Nawaz mosque in Korangi area.

As a result, Rehan, s/o Habibullah, died. He was 18-year-old. His body was shifted to Jinnah Hospital. INP



ISLAMABAD: An Afghan family is enjoying Sunday Holiday at a local park in Federal Capital.