

QUETTA VOICE

Editor :Asim khan

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dquettavoice@gmail.com



1,20,000 Afghan refugees have been repatriated via the Pak-Afghan border Chaman.

Balochistan Govt To Finance 11 Palestinian Students In BMC

Education Desk:

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has announced to provide scholarships to 11 students studying in the Bolan Medical University on Wednesday.

Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Ali Mardan Domki took to social media network X and announced the decision of the government in this regard.

"Our government will bear all educational expenses of Palestinian students", Mr. Domki said. He stated that the government would also provide free accommodation to all 11 Palestinian students.



SC seeks responses from federation, FIA on Imran's bail plea in cipher case

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notices to the federation and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and sought responses from them on PTI Chairman Imran Khan's bail plea in the cipher case.

The cipher case pertains to a diplomatic document that the FIA's charge sheet alleges was never returned by Imran. The PTI has long held that the document contained a threat from the United States to oust Imran as prime minister.

The former premier and his aide Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who is also behind bars, were indicted in the case on Oct 23. Both have pleaded not guilty and approached the apex court for bail.

Earlier, the Islamabad High



Court endorsed Imran's indictment, disposing of his plea against the same, but had also instructed the special court judge to ensure a "fair trial". Last week, the court halted trial court proceedings against the PTI chief while hearing his intra-court appeal.

Yesterday, the court declared illegal the proceedings of the cipher case, meaning that the entire

process would have to start afresh. It also said notifications issued for conducting the trial in jail were against the law and spoiled the proceedings, including the indictment of the PTI leaders and the testimonies of four witnesses.

Today, a three-member SC bench, comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Ayesha A. Malik and Justice Yahya Afridi took up Imran's plea and declared it as admissible.

At the outset of the hearing, PTI counsel Salman Safdar read out loud the first information report registered against Qureshi and Imran in the case after which Justice Masood inquired how far the matter dated back to.

It is from 2022, the lawyer re-

plied. At that, the judge said the PTI had spent an entire year on the case. He also highlighted that some sections in the FIR mentioned two-year punishment while others entailed lifetime imprisonment and the death penalty.

Justice Masood also chided the FIA investigating officer for appearing in court without notice.

Meanwhile, Justice Afridi noted that the cipher case inquiry had said the role of the co-accused would be determined during the investigation. "What did the investigator say about Azam Khan in the final investigation report?" he asked.

In his response, Safdar said the probe did not convey a clear stance. NEWS DESK

2 soldiers martyred in IED blast in North Waziristan: ISPR

WAZIRISTAN: Two soldiers were martyred on Wednesday after an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded on a security forces' convoy in the Razmak area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district, the military's media affairs wing said.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) identified the martyred soldiers as 33-year-old Lance Naik Ehsan Badshah and 30-year-old Lance Naik Sajid Hussain.

"Sanitisation operation is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists present in the area as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said.



2 killed, 2 injured in Bajaur blasts

Meanwhile, two people were killed while two others were in-



jured in two separate blasts in KP's Bajaur, according to officials.

Bajaur Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Sattar Khan told Dawn.com that the first incident occurred in Dama Dola area.

He said three people affiliated with the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam were on their way to a funeral when a planted explosive device detonated. The DSP said two people were killed while the third was injured. Khan said that second blast was also of a similar nature and took place in Manzo area. He said that a man travelling in a car was returning home when a planted explosive device detonated, completely wrecking the vehicle.

The police official said the injured person was moved to the District Headquarters Hospital for treatment. A day earlier, the ISPR said that a soldier embraced martyrdom in an IED blast in North Waziristan, while separate intelligence-based operations in Dera Ismail Khan and South Waziristan districts. NEWS DESK

Quetta Green Bus Driver Suspended: Reckless Driving Prompts Swift Action

Staff Reporter:



QUETTA: In decisive move by the Balochistan Transport Department, a green bus driver in the provincial capital faced suspension following a viral video depicting reckless driving. The footage, which circulated widely on social media on Wednesday morning, captured the driver's careless maneuvers, raising concerns about passenger safety.

Chief Minister Ali Mardan Domki took swift notice of the incident and, in response, ordered a thorough inquiry into the matter. Concerned about the potential risks posed by such behavior, the Chief Minister directed the Transport Department to suspend the driver promptly.

Video Drew Public Attention

The video's circulation drew public attention, emphasizing the importance of accountability in ensuring road safety. This incident serves as a stark reminder of the potential dangers associated

with irresponsible driving practices. The government's decisive action reflects a commitment to maintaining the highest standards of safety within the transportation sector.

Social Media Holds Individuals Accountable

The Chief Minister's intervention underscores the significance of leveraging social media to hold individuals accountable for their actions. By addressing the issue promptly, the government aims to send a clear message about the zero-tolerance policy towards reckless driving, prioritizing the safety and well-being of passengers in Balochistan.

Green Bus Service is considered to be one of the success stories of the Balochistan Public-Private Partnership Project. Eighth buses carry more than 10,000 passengers in the provincial capital. "Zero tolerance against such reckless driving", Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan, the Chief of BPPP said.

Indian rescuers drill two-thirds of way to 41 trapped workers

UTTARAKHAND: Indian rescuers have drilled two-thirds of the way through debris towards 41 workers trapped in a collapsed road tunnel, officials said on Wednesday, warning that the next 24 hours could be critical.

Engineers are working to drive a steel pipe through at least 57 metres of the tonnes of earth, concrete and rubble that have divided the trapped men from freedom since a portion of the under-construction tunnel in the northern Himalayan state of Uttarakhand collapsed 11 days ago. Looking into the Silkyara tunnel on Wednesday, an AFP journalist spoke as workers welded metal tube sections together, with the site busy as excavators and heavy trucks brought in equipment.

"I am very happy to share... that 39m of drilling has been completed," said Mahmood Ahmad, a road and highways ministry official involved in the operations.

"If there is no blockage, we hope there could be happy news tonight or tomorrow," Ahmad told reporters at the site.

"We are moving forward at a fast pace," he added. "Stay hopeful, pray that the pace continues."

However, he warned that the remaining section yet to be drilled was critical. Rescue efforts have been slow, complicated by falling debris as well as repeated breakdowns of crucial heavy-drilling machines.

The giant earth-boring machine last week ran into boulders, and drilling was put on hold for more than three days after a cracking sound in the roof.

Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhamoon Wednesday spoke of the "positive progress made in the last 24 hours", without further details.

But a government statement also noted that "timelines provided are subject to change due to technical glitches, the challenging Himalayan terrain and unforeseen emergencies."

In case the route through the main tunnel entrance does not work, blasting and drilling have begun from the far end of the unfinished tunnel, nearly half a kilometre long. NEWS DESK

1,20,000 Afghan Refugees Repatriated Via Pak-Afghan Border Chaman

Manan Mandokhail:

QUETTA: Balochistan Caretaker Information Minister, Jan Achakzai on Wednesday informed that so far 1,20,000 Afghan refugees have been repatriated via the Pak-Afghan border Chaman. Addressing a press conference at the Quetta Press Club, the Minister briefed the media about the ongoing crackdown against the illegal immigrants in the province.

Over 2,00,000 NICs Blocked In Balochistan

Mr. Achakzai said police have detained over 2000 illegal immigrants and handed them over to Afghan authorities at the border. About the blocked NICs, the minister informed that the National Database Authority (NADRA) has blocked more than 2,00,000 suspected cards. "NADRA is investigating the blocked NICs", he mentioned. He however said that no

policeman would be allowed to disrespect any illegal immigrant. "We want to ensure their respectable repatriation", he said. This is an order from the federal government to make sure respect of every individual, he added.

Crackdown Across The Country

The Minister stated that the crackdown was across the board and that no specific community was being targeted by law enforcement agencies.

"Police have the right to check every suspected person", he said.

The caretaker information minister vowed that the government and the law enforcement agencies were committed to eliminating the curse of terrorism from Balochistan. Scores of successful operations have been conducted to neutralize terrorist gangs, he said.

EDITORIAL

Editor: Asim Khan

Quetta's Cry for Clean Air: Urgent Action Needed Against Hazardous Crushing Plants

Editorial:

Quetta, the capital of the Balochistan province, finds itself in the grip of a severe crisis as crushing plants operating on its outskirts continue to pose an imminent threat to human life. These plants not only release toxic chemicals into the air but also contribute to water pollution, resulting in dire consequences for respiratory health and the overall ecosystem.

Alarming Rise of Respiratory and Allergy Diseases: Dr. Shireen Khan, a prominent chest physician, has sounded the alarm about the alarming rise in respiratory and allergy diseases, directly attributing them to the hazardous emissions from these crushing plants. Compounding the issue is the significant influence wielded by the owners of these plants, hindering necessary actions to safeguard public health.

A senior official from the Balochistan Environment Department, speaking on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter, has acknowledged the influential role of the plant owners. This underscores the urgency for the government to intervene and address this critical issue that directly impacts the well-being of the citizens of Quetta, the capital of Balochistan.

Plants Dangerous for Ecosystem and Human Life: Environmentalists have labeled these crushing plants as extremely dangerous for both the ecosystem and human lives. Faiz Kakar, a former Balochistan health minister and environmentalist, emphasizes the urgent need for practical action, declaring that the hazardous plants must be sealed without further delay.

The citizens of Quetta have persistently demanded the closure of these stone-crushing plants, recognizing the imminent threat they pose to their health. It is crucial for the government to listen to the concerns of the masses and take decisive steps to address this pressing issue.

Sealing Plants Imperative for Public Health: While sealing these plants is imperative for public health, it is equally vital for the authorities to ensure the provision of alternative locations for stone crushing. This move would not only mitigate the environmental impact but also safeguard the livelihoods of thousands of people currently employed in these plants.

In the face of the escalating health crisis and environmental degradation, we urge the government to prioritize the well-being of its citizens. The time for action is now, and the government must demonstrate its commitment to the health and safety of the people by swiftly addressing the issue of hazardous stone-crushing plants in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan. The inaction today jeopardizes the well-being of future generations, making it imperative for the authorities to act responsibly and decisively.

Climate finance gap

By Jamil Ahmad:

THE upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai will be tackling tough questions on how to curb rising temperatures, control carbon emission spikes, develop efficient technological solutions, learn from the first Global Stock-take, and agree on a new roadmap to realise the Paris Agreement's goals. Climate finance will be one of the toughest questions.

Globally, efforts to address climate change face a lack of financial resources to support developing nations through the Climate Convention goals. The efforts are constrained by the absence of sufficient means of implementation, i.e. financial resources. Already under debt distress, many developing countries are forced to spend most of their lean budgets on debt servicing, leaving little for sectors such as health and education, and diverting investment from climate and environmental protection. Constricted fiscal space in these countries delegates the responsibility of global warming to the back-burner. So, they face serious challenges in combating climate change and expect injections of climate finance

from multilateral funding agencies and bilateral donors. While there's no clear definition of what constitutes climate finance, it is accepted as a concept accommodating different types of financial contributions from a variety of sources and mechanisms. The Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund, and other regional and international financial institutions are used to mobilise and disburse funds. Bilateral arrangements from donors, public and private, supplement these funds. The Loss and Damage Fund, once operationalised, will be the latest addition.

Some of these funding mechanisms are not well-endowed, while others are not replenished in a timely manner to meet the rising needs of climate finance in vulnerable countries. At a time when climate change threatens lives, the inadequacy and inaccessibility of climate finance hinders the Global South from taking urgent action while climate costs rise sharply. A recent study published in the journal Nature Communications found that the climate crisis resulted in average

global costs of \$143 billion per year for the last 20 years. For the year 2022, which saw multiple climate-induced disasters across the world, the direct cost estimate was \$280bn due to storms, heatwaves, floods, droughts, and wildfires. Pakistan alone suffered a loss of \$40bn in the same year due to heavy floods. The indirect costs, the long-term impact associated with extreme weather events — not directly measured in the study — would significantly push up these figures.

Vulnerable countries in Africa and Asia, in need of climate finance, are left exposed to the disproportionate adverse impacts of global warming, with 2023 being the hottest year recorded. Last year, the United Nations Environment Programme's estimates for adaptation costs were \$215bn to \$160bn to \$340bn per year by 2030 and \$315bn to \$565bn by 2050 for developing countries. But the financial needs of developing countries for adaptation have now soared to \$215bn to \$387bn by 2030, and projected to rise significantly by 2050, going by UNEP's 2023 Adaptation Gap Report, released earlier this month.

By Rafia Zakaria:

THIS past Monday marked World Children's Day — a day when the international community comes together to commit to a better future for the world's children. But it has been a losing battle. This year, the date felt like a commemoration of just how futile the world's efforts have been in this regard — a complete failure, in fact. Arguably, never before have so many millions of children's lives lost passed in front of our eyes as we scrolled down the screens of our phones.

According to a recent report by Al Jazeera, over 5,500 children have been killed in the conflict in Gaza so far. The report asserts that since the Hamas attack of Oct 7, one child has been killed every 10 minutes in Gaza. Some 1,800 children

remain missing after the Israeli response and are believed to be dead or dying under the rubble of Gaza, with many homes and buildings caused by the bombing. Around 9,000 have been injured with "life-changing consequences". One in every 200 children in Gaza is now dead and many more are expected to perish in the days ahead as Israel continues to rain down bombs on a helpless population.

The Israeli authorities stress the fact that under the Israeli public seem oblivious to the utter inhumanity of the bombing. Take, for instance, the children sent across the US-Mexico border every year without any adults accompanying them. Even though they are children, they are detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. These same

Balochistan's Climate Crisis: Impact, Causes, and Solutions

Chandni Kakar:

Balochistan, a region of unique geological diversity and a long coastline is grappling with severe climate change challenges. This article delves into the causes and consequences of climate change in Balochistan, shedding light on its impact on agriculture, water resources, and the overall ecosystem. Additionally, it explores the global context of climate change, its implications on the region, and potential solutions to mitigate its effects. The Unique Ecosystem of Balochistan

Impact on Agriculture: Impact on Agriculture and Water Resources Climate change has negatively impacted agriculture, causing fruits and crops to suffer. Decreased rainfall and snowfall have led to a significant drop in the underground water level, affecting both farmers and the overall landscape.

Migration and Economic Consequences: The scarcity of water and extreme heat have driven people to migrate to urban centers like Quetta in search of employment opportunities. Reduced agricultural income from fruit sales has further strained the region's economy.

Deforestation and Substandard Fuel: Primary Causes Experts attribute large-scale climate change in Balochistan to deforestation, especially the cutting of juniper forests in Zarat, and the use of

Health Implications During Severe Droughts: Provincial Secretary of Environment and Climate Change, Niaz Ahmed, emphasizes that climate change is a global problem. Balochistan

Past severe droughts in Balochistan, such as the one from 1997 to 2002, resulted in widespread health issues, including diseases like Congo virus, famine, TB, malaria, and hepatitis, particularly affecting vulnerable populations, including infants and young children.

Overexploitation of Tubewells and Falling Water Levels: Balochistan faces the challenge of over 50,000 legal and illegal tubewells extracting large quantities of groundwater daily, leading to a rapid decline in underground water levels, exacerbating the water crisis.

Global Climate Change and Balochistan's Rising Temperatures: The rapid melting of glaciers, partly caused by a deadly heatwave, has further strained water resources.

Multiple Factors and the Way Forward: Climate change has disrupted weather patterns, affecting monsoon rains and westerlies in the region. The rapid melting of glaciers, partly caused by a deadly heatwave, has further strained water resources.

Conclusion: Balochistan's unique ecosystem and geographical characteristics have made it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Deforestation, overexploitation of water resources, and rising temperatures are exacerbating the crisis. Recognizing the global nature of climate change and adopting effective mitigation measures are essential for safeguarding Balochistan's environment, agriculture, and overall well-being. The writer is a Balochistan-based journalist and can be contacted @kakarChand97707

By Zahid Hussain:

THIS more the things change, the more they stay the same. That truism can be applied to Pakistan's power politics. The same old game that we have witnessed many times in the past is being played out yet again on our political stage, with the characters only swapping roles.

While one former prime minister has been consigned to ignominy, another has been pulled out of disgrace and has returned as the favourite. The game of musical chairs is on.

With just a few months left for polls, the outcome, it seems, has already been decided in the study. The field is now being cleared for a former three-time prime minister, who is bidding for a fourth stint, with the main challenger having been demolished.

Indeed, clean elections in Pakistan have never been considered completely free and fair but what is happening now has made a mockery of the entire democratic process.

It appears that another process of selection, with the most brazen pre-poll manipulation, is underway. This makes the legitimacy of the democratic transition extremely doubtful.

What is happening now has perhaps not been witnessed even under military rule. The dismantling of the failed project has been turned into an exercise in vengeance.

While incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan has already been barred from the electoral process by a large number of PTI leaders and activists are either in prison or have been forced to quit the party. After being 'disappeared', they are brought before TV screens to renounce their association with the party.

This shameful spectacle has been going on for some time but even this statement, it seems, is not enough; the quitters are also forced to join newly established the Balochistan Awami Party but has also formed an alliance with the party, which, it had alleged, had been created by the establishment to undermine the PML-N government.

Interestingly, the conglomerate of tribal chiefs and local influencers has also been part of the coalition cobbled together by the establishment to prop up Imran Khan's hybrid regime.

The MQM, too, has entered into an 'alliance' with the PML-N. The development gives an indication of the post-election coalition set-up. Went to mop up Imran Khan's hybrid regime.

This is the environment in which the next elections will be held.

Meanwhile, the return of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif after the VVIP protocol indicates a change in the

wind. Although he is still engaged in a complex legal battle to get rid of his conviction so that he can contest in the elections, he is already out in the field campaigning for his party.

True to our political tradition, several electables and groups have jumped onto the PML-N bandwagon. The widespread perception of the establishment's support for AI seems to have raised the party's stakes. Ironically, the PML-N has not only included many members of the Balochistan Awami Party but has also formed an alliance with the party, which, it had alleged, had been created by the establishment to undermine the PML-N government.

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The fear of a possible backlash has been the reason why the establishment has been stepping in to crackdown against the PTI in recent weeks. But it will be difficult to rug the votes.

It is not surprising that the PPP leadership

has also expressed concern over the fairness of the electoral process. It fears being marginalised in the elections. The party almost entirely comprises PTI defectors.

While some electables from south Punjab have joined the party sensing that time was up for the PTI, many others have taken its cover to escape repercussions. The project seems to be a part of political engineering to produce a 'positive' result in the elections.

There are clear indications that the group will ultimately align itself with the PML-N-led coalition.

It looks like that the stage is set for the return of a PML-N led government. But things may not go as smoothly as planned, given continued public support for the PTI. Despite the crackdown and move to completely demolish its organisational structure, the party refuses to die. Though in prison, Imran Khan still commands huge support. Moreover, the elections generate their own dynamics, affecting the situation closer to the polls.

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Elections or selection?

Founded by Jahangir Iqbal, a former close aide of Imran Khan, the party almost entirely comprises PTI defectors.

That also may be the reason why PPP leaders have stepped up their attacks on the PML-N. The party seems alarmed by the PML-N forming an alliance with the MQM and the Grand Democratic Alliance led by Pt Faraq. The situation is likely to get uglier as the election date approaches.

All this doesn't bode well for the democratic process. A disputed election could further destabilise the country, which is already facing multiple challenges.

The widespread perception of the party going to the hustings with the blessings of the establishment could badly damage the PML-N's democratic credentials. The party can count on power without or without Nawaz Sharif being prime minister but it would be hard for it to bring stability to a fractured polity.

The very perception of being installed through intrigue and backstabbing could inflict irreparable damage on the party and the country. It is time to stop the cycle of power and to seek a new dispensation to remove its tag of a 'selected' government. The country can't afford yet another engineered political system.

is experiencing rising temperatures, with Quetta reaching up to 41 degrees Celsius, highlighting the urgency of addressing climate change.

Pakistan's Role in the Global Climate Crisis: While Pakistan's contribution to global climate change is minimal (less than one percent), it ranks high on the German Watch Index for countries severely affected by climate change.

Impact on Weather Systems and Melting Glaciers: Climate change has disrupted weather patterns, affecting monsoon rains and westerlies in the region. The rapid melting of glaciers, partly caused by a deadly heatwave, has further strained water resources.

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Conclusion: Balochistan's unique ecosystem and geographical characteristics have made it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Deforestation, overexploitation of water resources, and rising temperatures are exacerbating the crisis. Recognizing the global nature of climate change and adopting effective mitigation measures are essential for safeguarding Balochistan's environment, agriculture, and overall well-being. The writer is a Balochistan-based journalist and can be contacted @kakarChand97707

homes and being displaced owing to the effects of climate change. The ever-hotter world and increasing temperatures mean that a great number of children are at risk of starvation because the crops they eat are being threatened by new climate patterns. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have produced some surprising effects on the health of children as well. While COVID-19 has been a target children, the many controversies around vaccination created an unprecedented crisis for inoculation against childhood diseases.

One in five children alive today are "zero-dose vaccinated or under-vaccinated". One reason for this is that in May 2020, more than half of all vaccination campaigns in 57 countries

had to be cancelled or postponed". Since then, many have not gone back to what they used to be. As a result, many diseases that have been wiped out are resurfacing in all sorts of places. Pakistan has also been affected by this. In addition to inadequate outreach, there have been suspicions on the part of parents about the vaccinations themselves. Much of the reluctance to have children vaccinated again is linked to the Osama bin Laden raid in 2011 and the fake vaccination drive that was initiated to identify the Al Qaeda chief's location. The programme has faltered not only because door-to-door vaccination became a target for terrorist attacks but also because the programme has been hampered by climate change and, it

seems, war, the immunisation issue has solutions. One of these is to identify which of the zero-vaccinated and under-vaccinated children can be identified. In many cases, communities do not vaccinate their children because of beliefs that they now hold about vaccination. Sometimes, these misconceptions can be easily addressed by community engagement.

Similarly, it is necessary that those of whom missed vaccination are probed. Finally, a lot more investment needs to be made in the Lady Takiya programme since that remains Pakistan's best bet to get children vaccinated again.

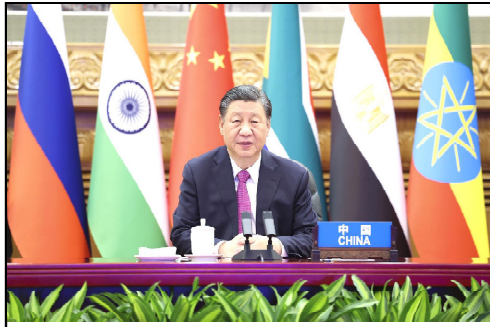
It is particularly tragic that in 2023, when people can video-call each other face-to-face from one end of the

world to the other, children are still suffering and dying from entirely preventable diseases. As a result, more than a decade since the Bin Laden raid, it is time to start re-educating the public about the need for vaccinations and the precarious future faced by children if they are not inoculated against disease.

In these bleak times, it seems that all we can offer most of those who are suffering children is our empathy and prayers. But we do have the power to influence the lives of the children around us by being cognisant of their needs, their delicate minds and their fragile innocence. It will not solve all the problems faced by children, but it will ease the beginning and can save lives.

Pak-China venture Regal automobiles launches its first EV Seres 3

ISLAMABAD (INP): According to Gwadar Pro on Wednesday, official price, booking details, and delivery time have also been unveiled. According to the company, the locally assembled Seres 3 is priced at Rs. 9,199,000. The Completely Built-up Seres 3 is selling for above Rs. 10 million. The vehicle is expected to be delivered by March 24, 2024. The manufacturing facility is located at a 26-acre site in Lahore. The products will be delivered to end customers nationwide through a strong network of 19 independent 3S Dealerships spread across the country. The company has a workforce of more than 200 people. It invests heavily in training the team members and management employees and creating a culture of high-performing and empowered teams who work seamlessly across the various processes in search of quality and continuous improvement. Pakistan is catching a ride on the global EV boom as statistics from the International Energy Agency (IEA) show that in 2022, one in every seven passenger cars bought worldwide was an EV, as compared with one in every 70 just five years earlier. Last year, EV sales rose by 55%, reaching a total of 10.5 million, according to the EV volumes sales database. Pakistan, in its timely joining the trend, is ramping up cooperation with international EV giants to amplify its own competence. A number of Chinese companies such as BAIC, Changan, JAC Motors, Great Wall Motors, MG, FAW, and Chery Automobile have established their presence and even formed joint ventures in Pakistan, driving the EV industry in the country towards intelligence and electrification. While there is a long way to go for Pakistan to build the EV infrastructure, cut down EV prices, and produce parts locally, we have a lot to benefit from the technology transfer from global tycoons like China.

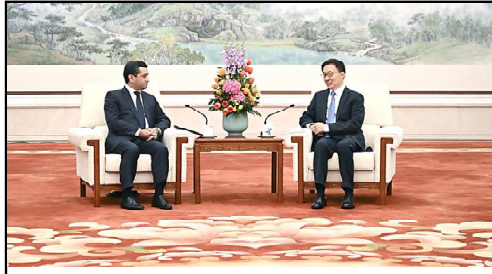


CHINA: Chinese President Xi Jinping addresses an extraordinary joint meeting of BRICS leaders on the Middle East and Gaza cease-fire.

Pakistani Technologies Shine at the China International High-Tech Fair

SHENZHEN (INP): The 25th China International High-Tech Fair (CHTF) took place from November 15th to 19th in Shenzhen, China, attracting participants from over 105 countries and regions and featuring the participation of 4,925 companies. Among the participants, Pakistan stood out by setting up a national pavilion where representatives organized various themed activities and showcased the nation's latest technologies and products. "This is a fantastic exhibition that helps us understand the overall market in China, and our aim is to foster more collaboration with China. I have come across many innovative ideas and high-tech companies and products from around the world," said Muhammad Shirjeel Jamal, an exhibitor from Pakistan. He further mentioned that they brought innovative ideas and solutions related to VR, software services, and digital media markets. "We have a total of four products, including a comprehensive restaurant management system that provides operational solutions for the restaurant industry. Additionally, we offer customer relationship service systems and UCN systems that facilitate communication between companies and clients," he added. "I believe CHTF is one of the best exhibitions in China, providing us with an excellent platform for communication." Rehan Wali, another exhibitor from Pakistan, told us that this was his tenth time participating in the fair, and expressed his plans to establish his own company in Shenzhen. "Our company provides real-time chat services through a web-based live streaming system. Customers can utilize this system for instant messaging, and the system ensures uninterrupted response services. Even if one is unable to respond to customers online, the system can handle the queries and respond to questions.

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CHINA: Chinese Vice President Han Zheng met Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Bakhtiar Saidov in Beijing.

Former Governor Punjab Umar Sarfraz Cheema pledges support for Imran Khan

LAHORE (INP): In an informal talk with the media outside the Anti-Terrorism Court on Wednesday, former Punjab Governor Umar Sarfraz Cheema expressed his unwavering support for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and condemned those who have labeled Khan as a "fitna" (chaos or discord). Cheema asserted that the events of May 9, 2022, benefited the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), while genuine PTI supporters were unjustly targeted. Cheema's remarks came after the Anti-Terrorism Court of Lahore rejected the Lahore Police's request for physical remand of PTI Punjab President Dr. Yasmin Rashid and Cheema in the Prime Minister House Lahore attack case. Both Rashid and Cheema are already on judicial remand in connection with other cases related to the May 9 violence. During the court hearing, the investigating officer sought 30 days of physical remand for Rashid and Cheema to investigate their alleged involvement in conspiracy against the country and the army. Judge Abhinav Gul of the Anti-Terrorism Court denied the request, citing insufficient grounds for physical remand. The court ordered Rashid and Cheema to remain in judicial custody until December 4 and directed the police to continue the investigation. It is noteworthy that Rashid was initially booked under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) for her role in the May 9 events. While the Lahore High Court had ordered her release on May 13, she was re-arrested within hours on separate charges, including involvement in the Jinnah House attack. Cheema's statement reflects the ongoing political tensions in Pakistan following the May 9 incidents. His defense of Khan and his criticism of the prosecution may highlight the deep divisions within the country's political landscape. The court's decision to deny physical remand to Rashid and Cheema suggests that the prosecution may face challenges in establishing their guilt in the Prime Minister House Lahore attack case.

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Pakistani Rupee continues upward flight against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani Rupee continued to strengthen against the mighty US Dollar, and started the currency trading session on Monday, the Pakistani Rupee had witnessed further gains against the US Dollar in the interbank market and was traded at Rs285.50. On Tuesday, the Pakistani Rupee closed the day's session with a rate of Rs285.79 against the US Dollar in the interbank market after witnessing an increase of 18 paisas. It had reached an exchange rate of Rs285.60 against the mighty US Dollar in the afternoon after experiencing gains of 37 paisas, appreciating by 0.13%. In the morning, the Pakistani Rupee witnessed another increase against the mighty US Dollar in the interbank market and started trading at Rs285.50. With this rate, the Rupee saw an upward trend of 0.18% in the

interbank market, as it jumped by 47 paisas against the Dollar. On the first day of the new trading week on Monday, the Pakistani Rupee saw a marginal gain and was available for Rs287.50 for selling and Rs284.50 for buying. In other news, Pakistan's current account deficit improved significantly to \$1.1 billion during the July-October period of the ongoing financial year, as compared to \$3.1 billion during the same period last year in fiscal year 2023.

Israel recalls ambassador ahead of South African parliamentary vote to shut down Israeli embassy

JOHANNESBURG (INP): Israel has recalled its ambassador to South Africa, Eilat Belotserkovsky, back to Jerusalem "for consultations" ahead of a parliamentary vote in the African country to decide the fate of the Israeli embassy on Tuesday. The two countries' diplomatic relations have recently witnessed a rise in tensions over the Israeli war on Gaza. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa previously said his country believes Israel is committing war crimes and genocide in Gaza, where thousands of Palestinians have been killed. "Following the latest South African statements, the Ambassador of Israel to Pretoria has been recalled to Jerusalem for consultations," Israel's ministry of foreign affairs posted late Monday on X, formerly known as Twitter. This came ahead of a vote in South Africa's parliament on a motion to shut down the Israeli embassy and cut all ties with Israel until a ceasefire is implemented in Gaza. The motion tabled by the leftist opposition party Economic Freedom Fighters has the backing of the ruling African National Congress and other smaller parties. South Africa announced last week that it had referred what it called Israel's "genocide" in Gaza to the International Criminal Court for an investigation, with its cabinet calling on the ICC Monday to issue an arrest warrant against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "Given that much of the global community is witnessing the commission of these crimes in real time, including statements of genocide in the country by many Israeli leaders, we expect that warrants of arrest for these leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, should be issued shortly," South African minister in the presidency, Khumalo told reporters Monday. Earlier this month, South Africa recalled its ambassador to Israel and withdrew all its diplomatic staff from the country. The conflict will also be the subject of a virtual meeting of BRICS countries on Tuesday, which will be attended by leaders of the bloc, including Ramaphosa, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The economic bloc was formed by Brazil, Russia, India and China in 2009 and added South Africa in 2010, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Egypt and Ethiopia are also set to enter BRICS.

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KARACHI: Pakistani stockbrokers monitor the share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi, Pakistan, 22 November 2023. The Pakistani benchmark 100 index was up 58,233.34 with 861.76 points during the trading session.

Pakistani businessman explores textile opportunities in Shanghai

SHANGHAI (INP): "Recognizing the importance of the textile industry for Pakistan's economy, the country has been actively seeking opportunities to upgrade its manufacturing capabilities. China, renowned for its expertise in textile machinery, has emerged as a valuable partner in this endeavor," said Waseem Bari, a Pakistani businessman with a keen interest in the textile industry who visits the ongoing ITMA Asia + China International Textile Machinery Exhibition (CITIME) in Shanghai, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. The event, which runs from November 19 to 23, is renowned as Asia's leading textile machinery exhibition, attracting more than 5,500 textile machinery manufacturing enterprises from 23 countries and regions. The exhibition, which showcases the latest advancements in textile technology, including machinery, materials and digital solutions, presents an ideal setting for Waseem, who has 10-20 years of collaboration with over 10 Chinese manufacturers, to gain insights into the latest trends and innovations in the textile machinery sector. As his 4th time visiting ITMA Asia + CITIME, Waseem noticed that many new products were added to the exhibition, including the promotion of low carbon energy saving, the use of artificial intelligence, the improvement of quality control, the ease of production and the reduction of labor input, reflecting the future trend of the industry. To maintain the textile industry's leading position in the country's export contribution, Pakistani textile enterprises have been striving to meet global standards in terms of efficiency, pro-

ductivity and sustainability amid a new wave of scientific and technological revolution. Waseem highlighted the need for continuous innovation and investment in modern machinery to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Pakistan's textile industry. He added that "Chinese textile machinery companies have been providing cutting-edge technologies, equipment, and technical support to Pakistani textile manufacturers by conducting training instructions programs in Pakistan to educate local manufacturers about the latest advancements in the machinery." The Pakistani government has been actively facilitating Pakistan-China textile machinery collaboration by providing incentives and creating a conducive business environment for Chinese textile machinery manufacturers.



CHINA: Parents drop their children off at school during snowfall in Harbin, the capital of China's northeastern Heilongjiang province.

Advertisement for the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) with contact information and details about the trading session.

Eradicating mismanagement, corruption vital to end inflation: Mian Zahid Hussain

KARACHI, Nov 22 (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the continuous increase in the price of electricity and gas is beyond the tolerance of the people and the business community.

Interacting with the business community on Wednesday, he said that the IMF wants electricity and gas not to be subsidized, and full cost recovery must be ensured.

However, the business community believes that if the government reduces the expenses by eliminating mismanagement, incompetence and corruption in these sectors, the prices can be reduced instead

of increasing, he added.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the IMF is justified in its demand that electricity and gas should not be sold cheaper than the cost of production because, in this case, the government has to take huge loans.

He further stated that the people and the industrialists ask why they should pay the price for corruption, mismanagement and incompetence in electricity, gas and other sectors.

The agreements with the IPPs should also be likely because the people are bearing their effects, he observed.

The business leader further said that after the overall increase in gas prices by 194%, electricity rates are also likely to be increased soon, which will benefit the power sector but will affect people and busi-

ness activities and further increase poverty in the country.

The high cost of living has forced people to continuously reduce the expenses of feeding themselves, children's education and medical treatment, which will devastate the country's economy in the long run.

Mian Zahid said that the current caretaker government has yet to do any substantial work in the field of reforms but has considered increasing the price of everything as the solution to all problems, equivalent to indifference to the people's problems.

The caretaker government should take difficult and unpopular reforms and administrative measures as it focuses too much on administrative actions.



RIYADH: SAPM, Javed Sohrab Malik signs Letter of Intent (LOI) with Saudi based Global Conglomerate, Al-Bawani Holdings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

DSP Umair Tariq Bajari, others booked in Orangi Town dacoity case

KARACHI (INP): An under-training Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP) Umair Tariq Bajari and two Shaheen Force officials have been booked in Karachi's Orangi Town dacoity case.

The cops were declared guilty in a high-level police probe.

DSP Umair Tariq Bajari, Khurram and Farman along with 20 others were booked in the Orangi Town heist case under charges of dacoity and kidnapping on the complaint of Shakir Khan, the affected man.

According to FIR, Shakir Khan said he is doing wholesale business of sanitary items in Orangi Town. On November 19, around 20 cops in uniform and civil dress raided his house around 2:20 am.

The cops after taking the family members hostage and took away Rs20 million along with 70 to 80 tola gold, laptops and mobile phones.

The FIR further stated that the cops after making him and his brother Aamir hostage along with the cash, gold and other valuables left them near Baloch Pull and fled.

Later, SHO Defence police station returned Rs10.3 million, 50 tola gold, and 12 mobile phones to the victim. Shakir Khan said in his complaint.

He has urged the higher authorities to take stern action against DSP Bajari and other staff.

The probe was ordered

after evidence surfaced that an under-training DSP of District South Police had been involved in the robbery in which around 20 million rupees, 70 to 80 tola gold, jewellery and other valuables were plundered from a house in Orangi Town.

After the probe, the Karachi police department removed DSP Bajari from the post for his direct involvement in the dacoity, whereas, Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) South Inman Qureshi was removed from his position for exhibiting negligence.

Both police officers were directed to report to the Central Police Office (CPO). The action was taken in light of the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) West's inquiry report.

Sindh government bans sub-leasing of Awqaf Department properties, orders rent review

KARACHI (INP): The caretaker Sindh government has taken a bold step to curb corruption and enhance transparency within the Awqaf Department by imposing a ban on sub-leasing of all properties under the department's purview across Sindh, including Karachi.

This decision was made during a meeting chaired by Awqaf Minister Omar Soomro in Karachi on Wednesday.

Minister Soomro acknowledged the rampant corruption within the department and emphasized the need for immediate action to address the issue.

He stated that the ban on sub-leasing was a crucial step to-

wards ensuring fair and transparent management of Awqaf Department properties.

The meeting also resulted in the formation of a committee comprising Additional Secretary Awqaf, Chief Administrator Awqaf, and Administrator Awqaf Karachi. This committee has been tasked with reviewing the current rents of all Awqaf Department properties and submitting a comprehensive report within 10 days.

Additionally, the committee will assess the appropriate new rental rates for all properties.

Minister Soomro reiterated the government's commitment to bringing transparency to the Awqaf Department. He

warned that strict action would be taken against those found engaged in corrupt practices within the department. He also called for the submission of a detailed data report on the property taxes of the Awqaf Department.

The ban on sub-leasing and the establishment of a rent review committee are significant steps towards ensuring the responsible management of Awqaf Department properties and promoting transparency within the department. These measures are expected to deter corruption, increase revenue, and enhance the overall functioning of the Awqaf Department.



ISLAMABAD: Dutch Ambassador to Pakistan Henny Fokel de Vries meeting with Caretaker Minister of Commerce and Industries Dr. Gohar Ejaz.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on preparations with regard to COP-28.

SNGPL taking steps to address low gas pressure issue in Capital: Shahid Akram

ISLAMABAD (INP): Spokesperson of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), Shahid Akram has said that sufficient gas was available to meet the needs of consumers in the federal capital and the company to address the issue of low gas pressure was connecting multiple large-diameter pipelines to the system.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, he said that regional complaint centres were operating 24/7 to swiftly resolve consumer complaints.

He said, that due to the rapid response of these area complaint centres, individual and area complaints have substantially decreased in the region, and valued consumers are enjoying the facility at normal pressures.

Shahid Akram further said that a "Situation Room" had been established at the regional office

for monitoring gas pressures and resolving complaints through dedicated teams, adhering to international quality and safety standards.

He highlighted SNGPL's Anti-Gas Theft Campaign being carried out in collaboration with FIA, in which numerous cases of gas theft and improper domestic commercial use, including illegal use of compressors, have been traced.

He said that individuals involved in such unlawful activities have been arrested, with many facing trials in the courts.

Shahid Akram urged citizens to report gas theft and the illegal use of compressors without fear. He assured that the identities of informants would be kept confidential to encourage active participation in maintaining the integrity of the gas supply system.

Regarding LPG cylinder services, Shahid Akram said that SNGPL provides cylinders to consumers at competitive rates, adhering to international quality and safety standards.

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ANF seizes 1082kg drugs, arrests 33 in 40 operations conducted across country

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized 1082.841 kg drugs & 3000 liters Acetic Anhydride Chemical worth US\$ 27.970 million, arrested 33 accused including two foreigners (Afghan & Tanzanian Nationals), impounded 14 vehicles in 40 counter narcotics operations conducted across the country.

The seized drugs comprised 67,356 kg Opium, 289 kg Morphine, 84,469 kg Heroin, 627,800 kg Hashish, 1,020 kg Cocaine, 10,788 kg Methamphetamine (ice), 2,086 kg Ecstasy Tablets (3550 tabs), 12 grams Amphetamine, 200 grams Weed, and 16 Midazolam Injections.

The ANF Balochistan recovered 626 kg drugs & 3000 liters Acetic Anhydride Chemical in six operations. The seized drugs

comprised 66 kg Heroin, 471 kg Hashish and 289 kg Morphine.

The ANF Punjab recovered 34,819 kg drugs in 11 operations while arrested 3 accused persons including a foreigner (Tanzanian National) in drug smuggling and impounded four vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 8,411 kg Heroin, 19,200 kg Hashish, 1,020 kg Cocaine, 5,388 kg Methamphetamine (ice), 600 grams Opium, 200 grams Weed and 16 Midazolam Injections.

The ANF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recovered 170.6 kg drugs in 10 operations while arrested eight accused including an Afghan national in drug smuggling and impounded five vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 66 kg Opium, 10 kg Heroin and 94,600 kg Hashish.

The ANF Sindh recovered 36,258 kg drugs in five operations while arrested three accused in drug smuggling and impounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 31,200 kg Hashish and 58 grams Heroin.

The ANF North recovered 15,164 kg drugs in eight operations while arrested nine accused in drug smuggling and impounded four vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 11,800 kg Hashish, 756 grams Opium, 400 grams Methamphetamine (ice), 2,086 kg Ecstasy Tablets (3550 tabs) and 122 grams Amphetamine.

Separate cases in all incidents were registered at respective ANF Police Stations under CNS Act 1997 (Amended 2022) and further investigations were under process.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfaraz Ahmad Bugti chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on ECL.

Increasing local production only way to address gas crisis: Shahid Rasheed

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt has said that for last 15 years, the masses and economy are suffering due gas crisis.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he said that increasing local gas production which was currently insignificant, was the only solution to country's gas crisis.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that after wasting gas for decades, now this clean fuel was less than its requirement in the country.

He said, "Importing gas from Central Asia and Iran has become very difficult. Domestic resources do not allow importing expensive LNG according to the requirement, so the only solution to the problem is to increase local production."

The business leader said that the gas crisis continues throughout the year, but its severity increases in winter, which affects people and businesses as gas exploration and production have declined.

He noted that LNG could not be over-relied because rich countries pay more to buy gas, and suppliers often ignore Pakistan despite the deal. Apart from this, the price of LNG increases a lot in winter.

To solve these pressing problems, the government should encourage foreign companies to explore gas in Pakistan, formalities should be completed in time, and all the permits should be given without unnecessary delays, he urged.

Most companies coming to Pakistan are involved in such deals that they cannot get out despite years of effort and leave the country in the end,

which results in their losses and tarnishes Pakistan's reputation.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the share of gas in Pakistan's energy mix is 38 per cent. The production of gas was four billion cubic feet per day, while its demand was six to eight billion cubic feet per day, which has become a big problem.

He informed that gas was the third-largest energy source consumed around the world. Pakistan has less than a 1 per cent share in world gas consumption. It meets its energy demand through imported and indigenous resources. Natural gas and imported LNG contribute more than 40 per cent to the country's current energy mix. The business leader said that harassment of foreign investors interested in the energy sector should be stopped; otherwise, the gas crisis will continue to increase.