

# QUETTA VOICE

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## Mountains of Courage: Women Heroes in Balochistan's Polio Fight

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: Amidst the snow-covered peaks of Ziarat, Kan Mehtarzai, and Toba Kakar in Balochistan, a group of unsung heroes emerged, defying the harshest of conditions and security challenges. Despite the daunting weather and treacherous terrain, these remarkable women stepped forward with unwavering determination and compassion to carry out a crucial mission: administering polio drops to children under the age of five.

### Story Of Resilience And Dedication

As the anti-polio campaign commenced on a frosty Monday morning, these female polio workers embarked on a journey that exemplified resilience and dedication.

Battling against the biting cold and navigating through rugged mountains, they trekked miles to reach remote villages where access to healthcare remains a challenge.

For these women, the mission transcended mere duty; it was a testament to their commitment to safeguarding the health and future of the nation's children.

With each step they took, they brought hope and protection to the most vulnerable members of society, ensuring that no child would fall victim to the debilitating effects of polio.



A female polio worker walking over snow as tractors are busy in clearing the road: Photo provided by the EOC.

### Parents Welcomed These Dedicated Women

Their efforts did not go unnoticed. Communities marveled at the determination of

these brave women, whose presence brought warmth even in the coldest of climates.

Parents welcomed them with open arms, recognizing the vital role they played in securing a polio-free future for their children.

These female polio workers stood as beacons of hope, reminding us all of the power of compassion and the indomitable spirit of humanity.

Their story serves as an inspiration to us all, urging us to persevere in the pursuit of a healthier, brighter tomorrow.

## Snowfall Blankets Quetta Ziarat Kan Mehtarzai Plunges Province into Cold Spell

Asmat Hanafi, Yaqoob Kakar, Nafi Kakar:



QUETTA, ZIARAT, KILLA SAIFULLAH: As winter maintains its grip, several parts of Balochistan woke up to a picturesque blanket of snow on Monday morning, painting the landscape in pristine white.

However, the beauty of the snowfall brought with it a host of challenges for residents as gas and power supply disruptions added to the difficulties. Kan Mehtarzai, Ziarat, Toba Kakarai, Quetta, and neighboring regions witnessed a significant snowfall, transforming the scenery into a winter wonderland. The snow-covered mountains stood as a majestic backdrop, captivating the eyes of all who beheld them. "We are enjoying this cold weather", Azmatullah, a young man in Quetta says.

Many residents found themselves grappling with prolonged periods of darkness and cold, further complicating daily life routines. "The snowfall is a breathtaking sight, but it also brings its share of challenges," remarked, Muhammad Ramazan, a resident from Quetta. "The lack of consistent gas and power supply makes it difficult to stay warm and carry out daily activities, especially during these cold winter days."

### Authorities Urged To Ensure Gas And Power Supplies

Authorities have been urged to address the gas and power supply issues promptly to alleviate the hardships faced by the residents. Meanwhile, locals are advised to take necessary precautions to stay warm and safe during the inclement weather conditions. As the snowfall continues to enchant the region, efforts to mitigate the impact of gas and power outages remain paramount, ensuring that communities can endure the winter chill with resilience and fortitude.

### Scenic Beauty After Snowfall

Despite the scenic beauty, the plummeting temperatures caused discomfort among the populace. With the mercury dropping, the demand for gas and electricity surged, exacerbating the existing load-shedding issues.

## Balochistan's Chief Minister Nomination Stalls, Lawmakers In Islamabad

Dawood Ahmed:

ISLAMABAD: The province of Balochistan finds itself in a state of political deadlock as the nomination of its next Chief Minister remains unresolved. With the recent elections bringing the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) into prominence, the decision-making process has garnered significant attention from across the province.

All eyes are on Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the chairman of the PPP, whose decision is crucial in determining the Chief Minister designate. As anticipation mounts, Balochistan awaits the outcome of this critical impasse.

### Zehri, Bugti, Umrani, Buledi Potential Candidates

Several potential candidates have emerged, each with their political



influence and aspirations. Nawab Sanaulah Zehri, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, Mir Sadiq Umrani, and Mir Zahoor Buledi are among those being considered for the position.

The people of Balochistan express a collective desire for decisive leadership that can navigate

the province toward stability, prosperity, and progress. Negotiations and discussions continue behind closed doors as the fate of Balochistan hangs in the balance.

The decision regarding the nomination of the Chief Minister

holds profound significance for the future trajectory of Balochistan.

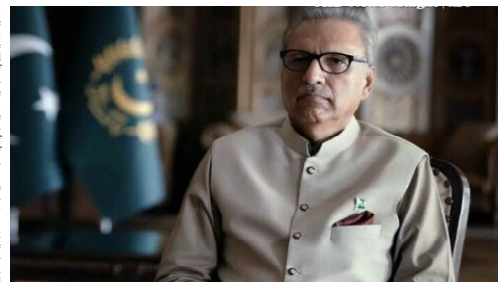
As the political landscape evolves, the resolution of this deadlock remains uncertain, leaving the province in a state of anticipation and speculation.

## Alvi gets flak for sitting on NA session summary

ISLAMABAD: With only three days left in the constitution-mandated deadline to summon the session of the National Assembly, President Arif Alvi has come under severe criticism from the political parties, particularly the PPP and the PML-N, for resorting to delaying tactics instead of convening the session of the lower house of parliament.

Sources in the Prime Minister's Office confirmed that a summary requisitioning the session of the assembly was sent to the president by the parliamentary affairs division four days ago, but there has been no official response from President Alvi.

A National Assembly Secretariat official said the president was bound to summon the session within 21 days and if he failed to do so, then the NA secretariat could bypass him and summon the



session under Article 91(2) of the Constitution. The official said the secretariat had already made necessary arrangements for the new assembly's session. Some reports claimed that the president may not call the session till the notification of the women lawmakers of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) on reserved seats. However,

sources in the presidency were clueless about the decision on the summary. At present, the Election Commission of Pakistan has yet to issue a notification on 20 seats reserved for women and three seats reserved for non-Muslim lawmakers. The PTI-backed independents who joined the SIC — which did not have any seats in

NA — have 92 seats in the lower house. It may be noted a member of the SIC won one seat as an independent candidate. Speaking about the delay in the notification on reserved seats, the official said the process required some time and the session of the National Assembly could not be delayed for this reason. NEWS DESK.

Expanded Programme on Immunization  
Government of Pakistan

## پولیو وائرس کی موجودگی، بچوں کے لیے خطرہ!

اپنے بچوں کی حفاظت یقینی بنائیں اور انہیں ہر مہم میں پولیو کی ویکسین لازمی بنوائیں

Two Drops for Every Child - Every Time

دو قطرے ہر بچے کے لیے ہر بار

صحت تحفظ HELPLINE 1166

POLIO WHATSAPP HELPLINE 0346 7776546

ENVIRONMENT

Editor: Asim Khan

Environmental Samples: Urgent Call to Safeguard Balochistan's Polio-Free Status

Editorial:

In a crucial stride to fortify its polio-free status, Balochistan launched an ambitious anti-polio campaign, reaching out to over 2.5 million children below the age of five. The dedication of 11,000 teams strategically positioned across the province symbolizes a collective determination to combat the poliovirus.

However, amidst this proactive effort, unsettling news surfaces. Environmental samples from Quetta, Hub, Dera Bugti, and Chaman test positive for the virus, casting a shadow on the region's hard-won progress. This alarming development is a stark reminder that the fight against polio is far from over.

Polio-Free Balochistan, A Hard-Won Progress

Syed Zahid Shah, Chief of the Emergency Operation Cell, passionately calls upon parents to actively cooperate, underscoring the urgency of ensuring that their children receive the indispensable anti-polio drops. It is imperative for every citizen to recognize their role in this monumental endeavor.

The collaborative spirit demonstrated by the government, UNICEF, WHO, and various organizations is commendable. However, the recent environmental samples pose a looming threat, demanding intensified efforts and collaboration. It is crucial for these entities to join hands in a unified front against the crippling virus.

Govt And Orgs Should Intensify Their Efforts

This editorial urges the government and relevant organizations to intensify their efforts, pooling resources and expertise to confront and eliminate this newfound challenge. Balochistan's polio-free legacy, meticulously upheld for over two years, demands immediate action. The time to act is now, to secure the health and future of Balochistan's children, ensuring a polio-free landscape for generations to come.

Pack of lies

BY Zarrar Khuhro:

WHEN Hamas and its allies attacked Israel on Oct 7, the assault made headlines. Its aftermath — Israel's genocidal campaign against the entire Palestinian people — continues till today. However, it quickly dawned on the beleaguered right-wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu that the attack was a godsend because (a) the government could ignore its political problems, and (b) it provided an opportunity to implement its Final Solution to the Palestinian issue.

But first, a degree of consent had to be manufactured — you can't eradicate an entire people out of the blue and the Palestinians had to be depicted as mindless barbarians shedding Jewish blood. So, headlines about 40 beheaded babies — a lie repeated by the US president — dominated international media along with tales of sexual assaults by Hamas fighters.

But, as with almost all Zionist claims, it soon became clear that there was little to no proof backing these accusations. Indeed, had Western media bothered to carry out some due diligence, it would have become apparent that the claims were not supported by evidence. Take the New York Times, which ran a piece recently, according to have verified video evidence regarding the alleged rape of an Israeli woman named Gal Abudsh. However, Gal's own parents and sister came out to deny the claim, after which it emerged that NYT's 'video evidence' only verified the woman's identity, and not the alleged rape.

The article also quoted ZAKA, the same Israeli group that spread

the false story about beheaded babies. Interestingly, ZAKA's own co-founder, Meshi Zahav, was accused of "horrendous acts of sexual abuse of men, women and children" following which he took his own life. The NYT also launched a series of investigations based on the same article, which was pulled after it became clear that the information provided was inaccurate.

However, the claims are repeated to this day, most notably by Hillary Clinton who continues to justify Israel's murderous actions as "self-defence". Social media was another vector for misinformation, with prominent Israeli posts and videos in which they claim Hamas fighter is heard singing out female captives for rape. Once translated, it became clear that the fighter is saying "No, no, she is a female captive, leave her ... go back to your place".

Similar accusations were made by pro-Israeli Moroccan journalist Mahdi Baladi about freed Israeli hostage May a Reagy. Baladi falsely claimed that Regey's medical reports stated she was raped by multiple men, a claim that was not verified by the hospital where she was treated or by her family. Regey's remarks during her detention, but perhaps her high profile status saved her from greater indignities. The Israeli media didn't hold back because of her age because that hostage had 67 different sperm samples in her. Later, she retracted these false claims in a tweet by saying that she was "under the influence of emotion". She didn't bother to specify what she was apologising for and the Israeli group that spread

BY Mallecha Lodhi:

WHEN PML-N and PPP leaders forged a power-sharing deal last week and announced they had the numbers to form a government, conspicuous by its absence was any mention of what their alliance plans to do. Elsewhere when such alliances are fashioned there is almost always a common minimum programme agreed among directing parties. This is aimed at setting a policy alignment for the government and setting out its priorities. But when there is no effort to formulate an agreed programme of action the impression conveyed is that the alliance is all about power but bereft of public purpose.

The PML-N-PPP joint presser seemed to signal that the priority was to carve up top policy offices between them, which raised the question of whether they had an aim other than wielding power and securing access to government posts. Already an election campaign even more issue-less than the past provided no clue to the various aspirants for power who would tackle Pakistan's multiple challenges. No credible plan was offered to voters about how they proposed to solve the country's problems. Western media because of its deep enmity to Israel and the victims Palestinian.

UN experts have said that there have been numerous cases where "Palestinian women and girls in detention have also been subjected to multiple forms of sexual assault, such as being stripped, naked and scarred by male Israeli army officers. At least two female Palestinian detainees were reportedly raped while others were reportedly threatened with rape and sexual violence". Photographs of women in "degrading circumstances" have also been posted online by Israeli soldiers.

Lama Khatir, a Palestinian mother of five, who was released by Israel in November, says that at her first detention she was threatened with rape and the murder of her family. She and other female prisoners were sexually harassed and not even provided access to sanitary pads. Palestinian activist Ahd Tamimi, was also subjected to sexualised remarks during her detention but perhaps her high profile status saved her from greater indignities. The Israeli media didn't hold back because of her age because that hostage had 67 different sperm samples in her. Later, she retracted these false claims in a tweet by saying that she was "under the influence of emotion". She didn't bother to specify what she was apologising for and the Israeli group that spread

Power, purpose, governance

election but these barely figured in their campaigning. The manifestos themselves were long on platitudes and extravagant promises but short on substance. This made political parties almost indistinguishable in terms of their stance on issues of public concern. In what passed for debate on television during the campaign, the accent was on criticising political opponents, not how national problems should be solved. In public rallies too political leaders were preoccupied more with vilifying each other than articulating their stance on public issues.

The electronic media did little effort to direct the political conversation to policy issues. This let political representatives on what purpose they would bring to governance, which raised the question of whether they had an aim other than wielding power and securing access to government posts.

Already an election campaign even more issue-less than the past provided no clue to the various aspirants for power who would tackle Pakistan's multiple challenges. No credible plan was offered to voters about how they proposed to solve the country's problems. Western media because of its deep enmity to Israel and the victims Palestinian. UN experts have said that there have been numerous cases where "Palestinian women and girls in detention have also been subjected to multiple forms of sexual assault, such as being stripped, naked and scarred by male Israeli army officers. At least two female Palestinian detainees were reportedly raped while others were reportedly threatened with rape and sexual violence". Photographs of women in "degrading circumstances" have also been posted online by Israeli soldiers. Lama Khatir, a Palestinian mother of five, who was released by Israel in November, says that at her first detention she was threatened with rape and the murder of her family. She and other female prisoners were sexually harassed and not even provided access to sanitary pads. Palestinian activist Ahd Tamimi, was also subjected to sexualised remarks during her detention but perhaps her high profile status saved her from greater indignities. The Israeli media didn't hold back because of her age because that hostage had 67 different sperm samples in her. Later, she retracted these false claims in a tweet by saying that she was "under the influence of emotion". She didn't bother to specify what she was apologising for and the Israeli group that spread

past few years have also seen the tone and content of political discourse plunge to a low not witnessed before. In a polarised environment political narratives have mostly been reduced to deriding rivals. Instead of reasoned debate on issues of national importance, much of the political conversation has consisted of toxic rhetoric and allegations of malfeasance and venality by political leaders against one another. Have parties that will form the government done any policy thinking on solving the country's problems?

Not surprisingly, this conduct and language, which is evidenced in the election campaign. Political parties fell short of offering clear proposals for the country's future or any strategy to reach that destination. This at a time when the country confronts unprecedented challenges crying out for a new loan package to address the economic crisis in the country's history, crippling power shortages, rampant inflation, security threats, declining capacity of state institutions, deterioration in public service delivery, the fraught regional situation and a polity in which power has shifted much more to the military establishment.

An imposing array of problems awaits the next government. Obviously, the economy is the number one issue that needs to be urgently addressed. But this requires an environment of calm, consequences is responsible for more than 50pc of GHG emissions. Traditional agricultural practices have led to extensive land degradation, water scarcity, and a decrease in biodiversity. The latest figure indicates that the per capita availability of water in Pakistan has declined to 1,017 cubic metres per person in 2021, significantly below the threshold for water scarcity, while rent-seeking farmers-turned-industrialists heavily lobbying for sugarcane cultivation in the south have made it worse. This has not only contributed to environmental degradation but also made sugarcane a critical part of the consumption basket, despite its intensive water usage and ecological impact. To counteract this, a shift towards sustainable agricultural practices is imperative. Practices like efficient water management, rotational crop diversification can rehabilitate the land, conserve water, and enhance biodiversity. Similarly, nature conservation and restoration is crucial. Past neglect and overexploitation of natural habitats by unsustainable timber extraction have led to a significant loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the country. Forests span merely 5.7pc of Pakistan's total land, with the remaining forested areas facing rapid decline. The pressures of commercial logging and the increased demand for resources such as fuel, fodder, building supplies, resin, and charcoal by the growing population have severely impacted forest ecosystems. A strategic focus on restoring and conserving natural habitats — forests, wetlands and grasslands — is vital. Another billion-tonne tsunami is badly needed. Despite its intensive water usage and ecological impact, the agriculture sector in Pakistan has an immense potential to contribute to environmental restoration, industrial practices, and housing strategies. The focus on seeking international climate aid and support may have only a limited impact on Pakistan's environmental challenges. The agriculture strategy in Pakistan's proposed land use policy must confront existing practices that have degraded natural capital. The agriculture sector with its distributional

Beyond environmental policy

BY Umar Farooq:

THE time has come for Pakistan to redefine its relationship with the environment, not as a passive recipient of international aid, but as an active steward of its own natural legacy. Pakistan's environmental predicament is a poignant illustration of the disparity between a nation's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions and the severity of its climate-related challenges. Despite accounting for less than one per cent of global GHG emissions, Pakistan is significantly impacted by climate change. The country has been experiencing an alarming increase in environmental disasters, such as flash floods, extending drought periods, and intense heatwaves. According to a World Bank report, the recent climate-induced disasters in Pakistan, including a heatwave and devastating floods in 2023, have claimed over 1,700 deaths, displaced more than eight million people, and resulted in more than \$30 billion in damages and economic losses.

The combined risks of extreme climate-related events, environmental degradation, and air pollution could reduce Pakistan's GDP by 1.8pc to 2.0pc. Like the Amazon's, is significantly influenced by its own conservation and biodiversity. The latest figure indicates that the per capita availability of water in Pakistan has declined to 1,017 cubic metres per person in 2021, significantly below the threshold for water scarcity, while rent-seeking farmers-turned-industrialists heavily lobbying for sugarcane cultivation in the south have made it worse. This has not only contributed to environmental degradation but also made sugarcane a critical part of the consumption basket, despite its intensive water usage and ecological impact. To counteract this, a shift towards sustainable agricultural practices is imperative. Practices like efficient water management, rotational crop diversification can rehabilitate the land, conserve water, and enhance biodiversity. Similarly, nature conservation and restoration is crucial. Past neglect and overexploitation of natural habitats by unsustainable timber extraction have led to a significant loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the country. Forests span merely 5.7pc of Pakistan's total land, with the remaining forested areas facing rapid decline. The pressures of commercial logging and the increased demand for resources such as fuel, fodder, building supplies, resin, and charcoal by the growing population have severely impacted forest ecosystems. A strategic focus on restoring and conserving natural habitats — forests, wetlands and grasslands — is vital. Another billion-tonne tsunami is badly needed. Despite its intensive water usage and ecological impact, the agriculture sector in Pakistan has an immense potential to contribute to environmental restoration, industrial practices, and housing strategies. The focus on seeking international climate aid and support may have only a limited impact on Pakistan's environmental challenges. The agriculture strategy in Pakistan's proposed land use policy must confront existing practices that have degraded natural capital. The agriculture sector with its distributional

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Tyranny of inequality

BY Naeem Sadiq:

"All people who work with their hands are partly invisible, and the more important the work they do, the less visible they are." — George Orwell

In a typical landscape, the eyes take in everything except human beings. They take in the Creek Vistas, the manicured gated communities, the expensive restaurants, the foamy ocean waves and the green golf courses. How come they always miss the sanitation workers in spite of their bright orange jackets, the security guards in blue, the railway coolies in prominent red shirts and the coolsmen blacked to the eyes, their throats

and usups every resource of the 'invisible' to a point where there is no more blood to suck. We fail to realise that Pakistan can progress only by beginning to 'see' our 'invisible' citizens, who have been cruelly and illegally pushed into extreme poverty and illiteracy. We must well have succeeded in designing one of the cruelest inequities on Planet Earth.

The tyranny of stolen wages has resulted in mind-boggling inequality. Data obtained using 'right to information' to determine the highest and lowest salaries in the public sector reveals that the ratio of the salary of a janitor and the senior most bureaucrat in the UK is 1:8, while in Pakistan it is 1:80. The ratio of the salary of a janitor and the senior-most judge in the UK is 1:11, while in Pakistan it is 1:115. The ratio of the salary of a janitor and the heads of the highest-paid public sector organisations in the UK is 1:2, while in Pakistan it is 1:266. At least 12 State OG-8 officers of the State Bank receive Rs3,95,000 per month, not to mention petty cash of Rs3 million each for club membership. Clearly, the 'invisible' citizens, who have been cruelly and illegally pushed into extreme poverty and illiteracy. We must well have succeeded in designing one of the cruelest inequities on Planet Earth. The tyranny of stolen wages has resulted in mind-boggling inequality. Data obtained using 'right to information' to determine the highest and lowest salaries in the public sector reveals that the ratio of the salary of a janitor and the senior most bureaucrat in the UK is 1:8, while in Pakistan it is 1:80. The ratio of the salary of a janitor and the senior-most judge in the UK is 1:11, while in Pakistan it is 1:115. The ratio of the salary of a janitor and the heads of the highest-paid public sector organisations in the UK is 1:2, while in Pakistan it is 1:266. At least 12 State OG-8 officers of the State Bank receive Rs3,95,000 per month, not to mention petty cash of Rs3 million each for club membership. Clearly, the 'invisible' citizens, who have been cruelly and illegally pushed into extreme poverty and illiteracy. We must well have succeeded in designing one of the cruelest inequities on Planet Earth.

But the poorest and neediest who deserved the largest raise were given only a meagre increment of Rs7,000. Sadly, millions have not received this pay rise even eight mo-n-n this after its 10-m-n to be 10 n. Cleverly camouflaged, the state provides 17 types of allowances and incentives which perks beyond basic salary to government officials. These freebies increase geographically with the rise in grade or rank. On the contrary, those who actually carry our load are given the pittance of minimum wage and EOBI. The fact that almost all those who enter the gates are non-Muslims is yet another

aspect of this brazen discrimination. The elite-citizen (convoluted) system was granted 99pc men and women in the UK is 1:11, while in Pakistan it is 1:115. The ratio of the salary of a janitor and the heads of the highest-paid public sector organisations in the UK is 1:2, while in Pakistan it is 1:266. At least 12 State OG-8 officers of the State Bank receive Rs3,95,000 per month, not to mention petty cash of Rs3 million each for club membership. Clearly, the 'invisible' citizens, who have been cruelly and illegally pushed into extreme poverty and illiteracy. We must well have succeeded in designing one of the cruelest inequities on Planet Earth. The tyranny of stolen wages has resulted in mind-boggling inequality. Data obtained using 'right to information' to determine the highest and lowest salaries in the public sector reveals that the ratio of the salary of a janitor and the senior most bureaucrat in the UK is 1:8, while in Pakistan it is 1:80. The ratio of the salary of a janitor and the senior-most judge in the UK is 1:11, while in Pakistan it is 1:115. The ratio of the salary of a janitor and the heads of the highest-paid public sector organisations in the UK is 1:2, while in Pakistan it is 1:266. At least 12 State OG-8 officers of the State Bank receive Rs3,95,000 per month, not to mention petty cash of Rs3 million each for club membership. Clearly, the 'invisible' citizens, who have been cruelly and illegally pushed into extreme poverty and illiteracy. We must well have succeeded in designing one of the cruelest inequities on Planet Earth.

### Shehbaz stresses joint efforts against poverty, unemployment, ignorance

LAHORE (INP): President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and prime minister-designate Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need of joint efforts to get rid of the country of poverty, unemployment and ignorance. In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that political stability was of significance importance for economic stability in the country. Shehbaz Sharif said that the today

need of national unity for political and economic stability was greater than it was felt ever before in the country's history. He said that adopting the attitude of simplicity and frugality, we would have to spent maximum resources on welfare of the people. The PM designate said that political stability and a peaceful atmosphere were extremely important for attracting foreign investment. He said, "Alive nations face challenges and difficulties with bravery and hardwork. We will move forward to-

gether and solve the problems faced by the country." The PML-N President said that during his government, he saved billions of rupees on development projects in Punjab and set a new record of economy and savings. It was a golden era of prosperity, he added. Shehbaz Sharif said that he will lead the country on the path of prosperity and development under the prudent leadership of the people.



QUETTA: Special Secretary Finance Habib-Ur-Rehman Jamot is presiding over the Irrigation Department Budget 2024-25 (NE) meeting.

### Pakistan to seek loan package plus climate finance from IMF

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan will seek a loan package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) plus 1.5 billion dollars climate finance, sources said on Monday. The country is exploring the possibility of increasing the program to \$7.5-8 billion, reportedly seeking addition of climate finance in the next budget package, sources said. Climate finance will be sought to expand the loan package. The International Monetary Fund pro-

vides affordable long-term financing for countries dealing with climate change and pandemics. According to sources, the authorities are looking for options to increase the upcoming IMF bail-out package to 7.5 to 8 billion dollars with possible application for climate finance. Sources said that Pakistan have to allocate initial fund for betterment of the environment before seeking the loan from the global lending institution. PPP leader and former federal minister Sherry Rehman said that President Arif Alvi was again violating the law by not convening the session of the National Assembly despite the requisition summary sent to him earlier. Talking to media here on Monday, Sherry Rehman said Arif Alvi was the president of Pakistan and not of a political party. She said PPP was a political and democratic party which always discouraged politics of division and hate.

### PPP regrets President Alvi's linking NA session with reserved seats

ISLAMABAD (INP): PPP leader and former federal minister Sherry Rehman said that President Arif Alvi was again violating the law by not convening the session of the National Assembly despite the requisition summary sent to him earlier. Talking to media here on Monday, Sherry Rehman said Arif Alvi was the president of Pakistan and not of a political party. She said PPP was a political and democratic party which always discouraged politics of division and hate.

### Over 45.8 mln children to be vaccinated during 2nd national anti-polio drive of 2024

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Health Ministry re-affirming Pakistan's resolve to protect all children from the disability-causing polio virus launched the second nationwide polio vaccination campaign of the year on Sunday. More than 45.8 million children aged under five years will be vaccinated during the vaccination drive which will be held across the country from February 26 to March 3 and in 33 districts of KP from March 2 to March 6. During the campaign, the children will also be given vitamin A supplements to boost their immunity. After administering polio drops to children to launch the drive, Federal Secretary for Health, Iftikhar Ali Shaalwani said, "Polio is a terrible disease that has no cure and can leave children paralyzed for life. Unfortunately, it continues to be a threat to our children as some people refuse to vaccinate children based on misconceptions and false information about the vaccine."

On this occasion, the National Coordinator for Pakistan's Polio Programme, Dr Shahzad Bag, said that the Pakistan Polio Programme has devised a comprehensive mass vaccination and health services delivery plan for the year and will be working with a laser focus on reaching missed children, reducing refusals, and increasing community engagement to build trust and goodwill for polio eradication efforts. The wellbeing of all Pakistani children is our top priority, and we will continue to take all measures possible to ensure quality healthcare delivery to end this disease in the country. This is a critical campaign because polio virus was found in multiple environmental samples in January, which means children are persistently at risk from this disease," said Dr Bag. "Viruses do not discriminate; they will find vulnerable children and target them anywhere, therefore.



GWADAR: Gwadar Deputy Commissioner Aurangzeb Badini is monitoring and reviewing the polio campaign in different areas of the city.



GWADAR: The newly appointed Controller of Examinations of Gwadar University Prof. Dr. Rahim Mehr took charge of his post.

### PRs finalizes plan to procure 230 passenger coaches under PSDP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Railways was set to finalize a plan to procure 230 passenger coaches and 820 High Capacity Wagons under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) aiming to improve the speed of the trains and ensure adherence to fixed timings. An official in the Ministry of Railways on Sunday said, "Out of the total, around 46 Completely-Built-Up (CBU) passenger coaches have been procured up till now while the remaining 184 would be manufactured in the country and the coaches would be able to travel at the speed of 160km/h."

motives of 4000-4500 HP for freight operation to cater maximum haulage at higher speed. The official further stated that infrastructure, including the track and signaling system from Karachi to Peshawar, Main Line-I (ML-I), and doubling of track from Lahore to Peshawar (462.20 Km) was also being revamped. The length of the track was 1,726 kilometers and the department has planned to improve speed up to 160 kilometers per hour in the project of up-gradation of ML-I under the China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC), he noted. He said the rolling stock being procured under this project would be capable of running at a speed of 160 km/h whereas the department had a dedicated fleet of 55 diesel-electric loco-

### SHC issues arrest warrants of four accused in Murtaza Bhutto murder case

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday issued bailie arrest warrants of four accused in Murtaza Bhutto murder case. The high court hearing appeals against the plea of a former police officer Wajid Durani seeking exemption from the court that Shahid Hayat, Shabbir Ahmed Qaimkhan, Agha Muhammad Jameel and Masood Sharif have died. The bench directed concerned SHO's to verify the matter and produce its report in court.

The lawyers informed the court that four police officers nominated as accused in the case have expired. Lawyers told the court that Shahid Hayat, Shabbir Ahmed Qaimkhan, Agha Muhammad Jameel and Masood Sharif have died. The bench directed concerned SHO's to verify the matter and produce its report in court.



HARNAI: Deputy Commissioner Harnai Muhammad Javed Domki is inaugurating the 5-day polio campaign by administering polio drops to the child. DHO Dr. Fayaz Ahmad Mastoi and MS Dr. Farid Ahmed are also present on this occasion.

### ANF seizes 109 kg drugs, arrests 12 in 11 countrywide operations

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized 109 kilogram drugs, arrested 12 drug pushers in 11 operations conducted in various districts of the country. A spokesman of ANF Headquarters said on Monday that a passenger traveling to Qatar was held at Islamabad International Airport after recovery of 1 kg ice. Two passengers attempting to smuggle 663 grams and 352 grams ice to Qatar through different flights were held at Lahore Airport. Another Doha-bound passenger was offloaded and held after recovery of 592 grams heroin. During operation near M-2 Motorway Lahore, 84 kg opium was recovered while 15 kg heroin was recovered near Swabi Interchange. A drug pusher was arrested with 1.7 kg heroin and 130 grams in Orangi Town Karachi. An accused was held with 2 kg hashish in Fando Thoro area in

Hyderabad while 1 kg ice and 952 grams opium were recovered from two suspects rounded up on Sukkur Road. Two drug pushers were apprehended after recovery of 1 kg hashish in Chaklala Scheme-3 Rawalpindi. Another drug pusher was netted with 1 kg hashish in Jhelum. Separate cases against the detainees were registered under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigations were under process.

### Illegal Afghan immigrants repatriate in continued effort

ISLAMABAD (INP): The repatriation of illegal Afghan immigrants from Pakistan persists as the number of returnees reaches 498,228 by February 25, 2024. Despite this major milestone, the repatriation process continues without interruption, showcasing ongoing efforts to facilitate the return of Afghan citizens to their homeland. Between February 19 and February 25, a total of 5,368 Afghan citizens, comprising 1,764 men, 1,120 women, and 2,484 children, have repatriated from various cities across Pakistan.

## Voting for Punjab Chief Minister begins amid boycott by SIC legislators

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab Assembly session to elect the Chief Minister began on a sour note on Monday as members of the opposition Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) boycotted the proceedings right from the word go.

No sooner had Speaker Malik Ahmed Khan explained the procedure for the election of the chief minister than the members of the SIC stood up and heckled him by raising slogans.

The SIC members later walked out of the assembly to register their protest over what

they said "stolen mandate".

Earlier, PML-N nominee Maryam Nawaz, who enjoys support of majority in the House, reached the premises and was warmly greeted by the party leaders. Maryam, who is the Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president, became a member of the provincial assembly by winning the Feb 8 general elections from constituency 159 Lahore-XV.

The speaker explained the procedure of voting when the assembly session started. Later, the assembly secretary

briefed the house on the voting procedure.

In the meanwhile, the opposition SIC members raised the objection that house was incomplete as women's reserved seats and minority members have not been named yet.

The SIC members boycotted the session.

Speaker Khan formed a committee to negotiate with the protesters who briefly returned to the assembly but again moved out. The speaker then decided to proceed without the opposition.



PISHIN: Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Jama Dad Khan Mandokhail is presiding over the review meeting of polio campaign.

## Maryam to follow Nawaz Sharif's footsteps: Rana Sanaullah

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Punjab president and former interior minister Rana Sanaullah said that party candidate for CM Punjab slot Maryam Nawaz will follow the footsteps of her father and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif.

Speaking to media persons outside Punjab Assembly, Rana Sanaullah said that Maryam will become the first chief minister of Punjab as a female candidate and will work for the development of the province.

He maintained that Punjab will play a key role in bringing political and economic stability in the country under the leadership of Maryam Nawaz.

It is pertinent to mention here that the session of the Punjab Assembly to elect the

Chief Minister will be held in Lahore today (February 26).

Maryam Nawaz, the political scion of PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, was nominated as the party's candidate for the coveted position of the chief minister of the country's most populous province, Punjab.

Meanwhile, PTH – at the eleventh hour – named Rana Afiah Ahmed Khan as its new candidate for the post following the provincial police's attempt to arrest its earlier nominee, Mian Aslam Iqbal.

It is noteworthy that the PML-N has a substantial number of candidates, adding to the competitive nature of the election.

The oath-taking ceremony occurred on Friday, with 321 out of 371 members of the Punjab Assembly taking their

oaths. Since PML-N and its allies have clear majority in the House there are no obstacles for Maryam Nawaz to secure the top position.

A day earlier, PML-N clinched victory in the Punjab Assembly speaker and deputy speaker elections in the house numerically dominated by the party.

PML-N's leader Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan was elected as PA Speaker, amassing a commanding 224 votes out of the total 327 cast in the house.

At the same time, Malik Zaheer Ahmed Channer, the PML-N candidate for the deputy speaker position, emerged victorious against Mohammad Moinuddin from the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), garnering 220 votes.

## Nationwide polio vaccination drive kicks off, targeting over 45.8 mln children

ISLAMABAD (INP): The health ministry reaffirmed on Monday its commitment to safeguarding the health of children as it commenced the second nationwide anti-polio campaign of the year today.

Amid concerns over the persisting threat of the poliovirus, more than 4.58 million children are set to receive vital vaccinations during the campaign, which runs from February 26 to March 9.

The initiative aims to inoculate children under the age of five across the country, alongside administering additional doses of vitamin A to bolster their immunity.

Federal Secretary Health, Iftikhar Ali Shalwani, underscored the severity of polio, emphasizing that the virus can inflict lifelong disabilities on children. He lamented the persistence of misconceptions and misinformation surrounding the vaccine, which deter some parents from ensuring their chil-

dren receive vital immunization.

"The government of Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to polio eradication, making significant strides in this endeavor," stated Federal Secretary Health Iftikhar Ali Shalwani.

"However, the collective responsibility lies not only with decision-makers but also with parents to prioritize their children's health."

In a plea to parents, Secretary Shalwani urged cooperation with polio teams visiting households, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the dangers posed by the poliovirus and ensuring children receive the necessary vaccination.

This campaign follows the detection of the poliovirus in sewage samples from 20 districts in January, undermining the ongoing threat.

Dr. Shahzad Baig, Coordinator of the National Emer-

gency Operations Center, emphasized the program's commitment to reaching all children with vaccination and health services, particularly those who have been historically underserved.

"Our primary focus is the welfare of every child, and we are dedicated to leaving no stone unturned in our efforts to eradicate this disease," affirmed Dr. Shahzad Baig. "Given the recent detection of the poliovirus in environmental samples, it is imperative that we remain vigilant and ensure all children are protected."

As the campaign commenced, Dr. Baig urged parents to prioritize their children's safety, emphasizing the indiscriminate nature of the poliovirus.

He implored parents to seize every opportunity to ensure their children receive the mandatory polio vaccine to safeguard against potential harm.



QUETTA: MS BMC Hospital Dr. Amin Mandokhail and MS Civil Hospital Dr. Ishaq Panizal are congratulating Additional Director MSD Dr. Ismail Mirwani.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar is inaugurating the seven-day anti-polio campaign 2024 by administering polio drops to children.

## Hike in GST on locally manufactured auto mobiles matter of concern: PAAPAM

KARACHI (INP): The Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts and Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) has expressed grave concerns over the proposed hike in sales tax from 18% to 25% on automobiles having ex-factory price of Rs4 million and above.

The PAAPAM's leadership comprising of Chairman Abdul Rahman Azzaz, SVC Mumsahd Ali and VC Iftikhar Sherwani in a unified stance was of the opinion that previous move to increase ST to 25% on 1400 cc cars along with other taxation measures and devaluation of Rupee have already resulted in drop of automobile sales to just 30% of 2021-22 levels. This sharp decline has not only resulted in distress to the part-making sector and employment thus generated but also resulted in lesser absolute tax collection from the sector.

Highlighting the current challenges like soaring energy prices, currency devaluation of over 160% in just 6 years, exceptionally high financing rates, and over

40% taxation on every car sold have already curtailed sale to just 100,000 cars/SUVs against the installed capacity of 500,000 vehicles.

The PAAPAM's leadership emphasized that increasing GST to 25% for small size sedans will push the prices beyond purchasing power of country's middle class. Such a move will not only hurt the customer but will also yield lesser collection of tax due to anticipated lesser sale.

It was to be noted that automobile production and sales have been on a downward trajectory for the last five years. Automobiles were demand-elastic items whose sales would further go down with a jump in prices and the risk would prove counterproductive.

Experts said that the Economic Coordination Committee's decision to increase the general sales tax on locally produced vehicles will result both in a drop in volumes as well as revenues, as it was highly unlikely that a hike in

GST would additionally generate revenue.

The measure would only hit the economy, enhancing negative sentiments for the consumers and losing investors' confidence in Pakistan, fearing a rise in prices of locally assembled cars which were already marred by hyperinflation and slowdown.

PAAPAM's leadership emphasized that increasing GST to 25% for small size sedans will push the prices beyond purchasing power of country's middle class. Such a move will not only hurt the customer but will also yield lesser collection of tax due to anticipated lesser sale.

They urged the authorities not to further burden the local industry by raising the GST. This proposal to enhance the GST was earlier turned down when it was discussed with industry representatives.

PAAPAM requested for dialogues with government before taking any decision on imposing further taxes on automobiles.

## Afghan refugee attempting to get CNIC, local facilitator held

CHITRAL (INP): The Darosh Police arrested another Afghan refugee during attempt to get Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) and his local facilitator.

The arrests were made on complaint of officials of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) office Drosch office where an Afghan refugee along with local facilitator produced fake domicile and birth certificates to get CNIC.

Assistant Director NADRA office lodged an FIR with Darosh police station that Mohammad Yousuf of Arandugel was facilitating Afghan na-

tional Sher Hassan in obtaining CNIC.

The police registered the case under Sections 419, 420, 461, 478 and 34 of Pakistan Penal Code.

Muhammad Yousuf admitted that he had got the Afghan man included in his family record showing him as his son after taking Rs15,000 from him.

The police arrested the Afghan refugee along with his facilitator.

It should be mentioned here that thousands of Afghan refugees had migrated from Afghanistan to Chitral during Af-

ghan war and several of settled there and many refugees have also married local woman.

These Afghan refugees were attempting to obtain CNIC.

Last month, an Afghan national along with his local facilitator was arrested from NADRA office Darosh during an attempt to get CNIC.

Now, another Afghan refugee along with local facilitator has been arrested during same attempt.

The local people have appreciated NADRA official Sharif Ahmed for foiling attempt of getting CNIC by Afghan man on fake documents.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Local Government Sheikh Mahmood Al Hasan Mandokhail are meeting with Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Mohammad Khan Jogzai.

## PSX continues bullish run, gains over 700 points

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) commenced the trading week on a notably bullish note, with the benchmark SE-100 index witnessing a robust surge, gaining a remarkable 707 points today.

In the early trading hours, the KSE-100 index demonstrated an impressive ascent, rising by 707 points or 1.06 percent, reaching 63,525 at approximately 9:55 am local time.

This surge follows yesterday's closure at 62,815 points, marking a notable continuation of the positive momentum witnessed in recent sessions.

Last week's trading activities also depicted a promising trend, with the index registering a significant increase of 901

points on the final business day.

The ongoing bullish sentiment in the market has been largely attributed to recent political developments, particularly the agreement between the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Muslim League (N) to form the government, announced on February 21.

Market analysts have underscored the positive impact of this agreement on investor confidence and market dynamics.

Speaking to a private TV news channel, Muhammad Sohail, Chief Executive of Topline Securities, remarked on the market's buoyancy following the news of the political consensus, attributing the surge to renewed investor optimism.

Echoing similar senti-

ments, Owais Ashraf, Research Director at Akshir, emphasized the restoration of investor confidence following the clarity surrounding the formation of the new government.

Yousuf M. Ferooz, Director of Chase Securities, highlighted the positive market sentiment following the resolution of uncertainties regarding the new government's formation, noting the stock exchange's upbeat start in response to the recent developments.

With the market exhibiting resilience and investors showing renewed enthusiasm,

analysts remain cautiously optimistic about the trajectory of the PSX in the coming sessions, closely monitoring both domestic political dynamics and international market trends for further insights.