

WAKE UP

Editor: Asim Khan

Quetta Safe City Project: Watchful Dawn Breaks Over City Scarred by Tragedy

Editorial:

For too long, Quetta has borne the scars of tragedy etched deep in its heart. From the reverberations of the Civil Hospital blast that snatched innocent lives, lawyers to the chilling silence left by the Police Training College massacre, the city has known the harsh sting of terror. But amidst the echoes of pain, a beacon of hope ignites – the Quetta Safe City Project.

This ambitious initiative, finally nearing completion, stands as a testament to the city's resilience and the government's unwavering commitment to its safety. Over 1,400 watchful eyes, embodied in cutting-edge cameras, will soon peer across 255 key locations, woven into a protective tapestry that will blanket the city. No longer will shadows play host to hidden menaces, for Quetta's streets will be bathed in the unforgiving light of vigilant technology.

This symphony of safety transcends mere hardware. It's a collaborative masterpiece, orchestrated by the government, conducted by the expertise of the National Information Technology Board, and played by the dedicated instruments of law enforcement agencies. Together, they harmonize into a powerful chorus of protection, its melody drowning out the discordant notes of fear.

But this fortress of safety is not an imported marvel; it's a local masterpiece, crafted by the ingenuity of Quetta's own sons and daughters. From the command center, a nerve center pulsating with digital intelligence, to the intricate network of cameras, the project hums with the heartbeat of self-reliance. This is not just technology; it's a declaration of a city refusing to be defined by its past, choosing instead to forge a future bright with safety and hope.

As the project prepares to unveil its might, Quetta residents whisper dreams of nights untroubled by anxiety, of carefree laughter echoing through bustling markets, and of evenings where children play unafraid beneath the watchful gaze of technology's sentinels. The Quetta Safe City Project is not just a shield against threats; it's a bridge to a future where trust flourishes between citizens and law enforcers, paving the way for a dawn of peace and prosperity.

However, the path to safety is never a straight line, requiring unwavering commitment. The government must be the unwavering torchbearer, ensuring the project's lifeblood of resources flows uninterrupted. Law enforcement agencies must be the agile runners, adapting their strategies to dance in perfect step with technology's swift rhythm.

The Quetta Safe City Project is more than just circuits and wires; it's a poem of possibility etched in the city's soul. As the cameras begin their vigil, let us remember that the true poem is penned not by technology, but by the collective will to write a new chapter for Quetta. Together, let us turn the final page on fear and open the first chapter of a safe, vibrant future for this city, rising from the ashes of tragedy to become a fortress of safety under a hopeful sky.

This editorial acknowledges the tragic past of Quetta while celebrating the present progress and highlighting the collective responsibility to ensure the project's success. It uses evocative language and imagery to paint a hopeful picture of the future and expresses appreciation for the government's proactive initiative.

Securing borders

By Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry:

PAKISTAN'S national security has lately been under threat on its eastern as well as western borders. On the eastern frontier, India's attitude towards Pakistan has unfortunately hit a new low. The Modi regime is constantly innovating prickly ways to assert its growing hubris in the neighbourhood and beyond. Its latest practice is to deploy assassins on foreign lands to kill so-called anti-India elements. The evidence shows that Indian intelligence operatives managed to have not only Muhammad Riaz and Shahid Latif assassinated on Pakistani soil, but many more Pakistani citizens too, for which investigations are underway. This is in line with what Indian operatives did in Canada and the US when they targeted Sikhs calling for an independent state of Khalistan.

Using assassins to kill on foreign soil is a variant of the earlier policy of sending in Indian operatives, such as Kulbhushan Jadhav, who would enter Pakistan under fake identities to destabilise the country. However, the cause of regional peace will not be served if India continues to commit state terrorism, while accusing

Kadafil Fasaad. The terrorism. Both countries would do well to eliminate transnational terrorism through cooperation rather than confrontation.

Pakistan's western frontiers are also in the grip of cross-border terrorism. Last month, Iran attacked a target inside Pakistan, ostensibly to eliminate an alleged hideout of Jaish al-Adl, an anti-Iran Sunni militant group active in Sistan-Baluchistan. Pakistan responded with a strike against Baloch terrorists in the border town of Sarawan. Both governments swiftly resolved the matter through diplomacy. But soon after, nine Pakistanis were murdered in Sarawan. The Iranian foreign minister has since visited Pakistan to calm tensions. Ultimately, the root cause, which is the alleged presence of terrorist elements on both sides of the border, would need to be addressed to avert the recurrence of such incidents. Ever since the Taliban came to power in Kabul in 2021, the TTP has been reinvigorated. The group had been beaten in operations in Swat, South Waziristan and North Waziristan as well as the countrywide

intelligence-based operation Kadafil Fasaad. The TTP's resurgence led to the release of Afghan Taliban rulers' release of TTP prisoners in the name of facilitating talks with Pakistan. A tentative ceasefire was agreed to, leading to senior TTP leaders being freed from prisons in Pakistan and the resettlement of hundreds of TTP fighters in the country.

Instead of appreciating the gesture, the TTP used the opportunity to regroup and resume its attacks against targets in Pakistan, particularly the security forces. Despite this setback, Islamabad has, prudently, maintained its contacts with Kabul at multiple levels to stress that the strategic interests would be better served if Kabul restricted the space given to the TTP or cross-border terrorism, and reoriented its policies to focus on peace and development. Ever since the launch of CPEC in 2015, Pakistan's detractors have tried to carry out acts of terrorism against Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects here. At the request of China, Pakistan's steadfast friend, the government constituted a strong force to safeguard CPEC projects and Chinese nationals.

The Buddhists, for example, say forgiveness is a difficult process. In order to learn how to let go of hurt feelings, I have been practising alternative forms of therapy and reading ancient texts. We have much to learn from our elders.

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Linda was there with her daughter's murderers, who continue to work with the foundation; one of them told the media

Balochistan's Population Growth Challenges: A Call for Comprehensive Strategies

Muhammad Asghar Harifal:

Recently, Balochistan held its 2nd Task Force meeting on population growth, a crucial moment identified by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. This intervention in 2018 led to the formation of Task Forces at national and provincial levels, focusing on key areas such as legislation, financial resources, advocacy, family planning services, contraceptive security, and the support of ulama.

Effectiveness of Task Forces: The Task Forces, comprising various stakeholders, have proven to be effective tools in addressing urgent and complex issues. These bodies, meeting every three months, bring together departments like Population Welfare, Planning and Development, Health, Education, Social Welfare, Women Welfare,

and activists. This collaborative approach is crucial, contrasting with the fragmented attention and funding typically allocated to social well-being agencies in the public sector.

Lessons from China and Regional Disparities: Examining successful models like China's one-child policy, it becomes evident that population control is intertwined with economic growth. China's shift from the most populous country to the highest-growth economy highlights the correlation. Unfortunately, the success factors in birth control models are lacking on a national scale, especially in Balochistan, where the population growth rate is 3.37%, higher than the national average of 2.55%.

Balochistan's Unique Challenges: Compared to other provinces, Balochistan faces

similar issues but with heightened severity. The province's population growth rate is alarming, estimated to reach 24 million by 2050 if the current trends persist. Institutional crises, coupled with resource limitations, pose a significant hurdle to effective population management.

Institutional Effectiveness and Political Processes: The quality of political processes directly impacts institutional effectiveness. Political appointments overlooking promising specializations have weakened public institutions, creating a fragmented environment for addressing population-related challenges. The collusion in appointments, particularly concerning public service effectiveness, is a point of contention.

Lack of National Narrative: Population

growth and its consequences remain inadequate in the national narrative, and despite being a critical challenge. Balochistan, with its low literacy, women exclusion, widespread poverty, and traditional values, needs increased investment in public outreach. The rise of social media offers a potential platform for disseminating information and engaging with the public, but significant public sector investment is lacking.

Resource Allocation and National Finance Commission: Balochistan's disconnect with the National Finance Commission's resource distribution, particularly concerning population weightage, is a point of contention. The province advocates for a formula considering

elections and threats to political leaders highlight this disconnect. In the 2018 general elections, the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was utilised (in Punjab), in Balochistan and KP, a significant decline in overall support for the religious parties would suggest a negative perception of the Taliban due to the actions of the TTP. A low turnout in these areas traditionally associated with the Taliban and TTP influence would signal public disapproval of their activities.

While the JUI-F might benefit from established support in some constituencies, it is crucial to recognise its potential role as a tool by the Pakistani establishment to counter the PTI in KP. It is worth noting that the 2002 general election saw the religious parties' alliance

of marginalising major parties like the PPP and PML-N. While the MMA touted their victory as a success of religious unity, they failed to replicate it in subsequent elections. The JUI-F's and Jamaat-e-Islami's attempts to position themselves as anti-establishment also failed to win the public's trust. Rehman's recent visit to Afghanistan to secure Maulana Fazlur Rehman to realign himself with the establishment.

The alliance between the religious parties and the establishment is widely recognised and enduring despite the complexities in their relationship. In the 2018 general elections, the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was utilised (in Punjab), in Balochistan and KP, a significant decline in overall support for the religious parties would suggest a negative perception of the Taliban due to the actions of the TTP. A low turnout in these areas traditionally associated with the Taliban and TTP influence would signal public disapproval of their activities.

However, the 2024 elections occur in a more tightly controlled context due to the country's political turmoil and economic crisis. In this scenario, voters in Punjab, KP, and urban Sindh may not vote as freely as in the past, as inflation, price hikes, and unemployment offer traditional ideological or ethnic considerations. General sympathy often sways voters towards the PTI and PML-N, which may also influence their choices.

A few political pundits forecast that the MMA would be used again for electoral engineering. However, it would be risky for the PML-N and pro-establishment parties, as they have failed to dent the PTI vote bank. The TLP can prove counterproductive for them as it holds more lethal narratives against the PML-N and its allies.

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ing factors beyond population due to its high poverty rates, vast area, low literacy, and health indicators. The divisible pool distribution gains significance as it constitutes nearly 90% of Balochistan's revenue, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to revenue generation.

Conclusion: Balochistan's population growth challenges demand immediate and comprehensive strategies. The Task Forces provide a platform for collaboration, but resource allocation, institutional effectiveness, and a national narrative are essential components in tackling this critical issue for the province's prosperity and well-being.

The author is the Secretary Family Planning Government of Balochistan

Taliban's declining influence

By Muhammad Amir Rana:

POSITIVE development for Pakistan's upcoming general elections on Thursday is the declining influence of the Afghan Taliban as a source of inspiration for voters. This starkly contrasts with the 2002 elections, where a pro-Taliban religious alliance secured record votes, particularly in Balochistan and KP. Back then, the Taliban's recent overthrow by the US-led coalition stirred sympathy votes. Conversely, with the Afghan Taliban now ruling Afghanistan, concerns arose about a similar pro-Taliban wave in the 2024 elections. However, initial indications suggest the Taliban's appeal has diminished in Pakistan, although deeper analysis is still needed.

The upcoming elections in Pakistan are a crucial test of public sentiment regarding the Taliban's influence. The election results, particularly in the Pakhtun-dominated areas, will provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of power and ideology in Pakistan.

Despite the Afghan Taliban's diminished influence, their support for the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) remains unabated. JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman's recent visit to Afghanistan to secure Maulana Fazlur Rehman to realign himself with the establishment.

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Fight to forgive

By Muna Khan:

COULD you forgive your daughter's murderers, and then hire two of them to come work for the organisation set up in her name?

This is what Linda and Peter Biels did in South Africa following the stoning and stabbing of their daughter Amy by a mob in Cape Town in 1993. Amy, then 26 and a Fulbright scholar, was helping educate previous her murderer at one of the schools they've built in Cape Town.

Linda was there with her daughter's murderers, who continue to work with the foundation; one of them told the media

his relationship with the Biels allowed him to become the person he is today and also allowed him to forgive them.

They have shown what reconciliation looks like, and how it can extend to the entire community to move forward.

But getting there is a difficult process. In order to learn how to let go of hurt feelings, I have been practising alternative forms of therapy and reading ancient texts. We have much to learn from our elders.

Most religious teachings echo similar sentiments.

No one advocates holding a grudge unless they find gain in it, and that thinking is not beneficial for societies. I believe, as a nation, desperately need to let go of anger, resentment and hurt caused by a myriad of reasons, including politics and mistrust.

The challenge is to forgive the very people or institutions that caused the mistrust in the first place. It is complicated, especially when no one is asking for forgiveness or, they are forced to say sorry to avoid punishment and then banished. This happens with one-time

favoured groups who run afoul of the powerful; their 'crime' is a damnation until it is not, and then it is forgotten. This script is old and tiresome but there are too many players who happily acquiesce as a nation along as they gain power.

Forgiveness will not work without accountability. Lucy Allais, a philosopher at Johns Hopkins University who studies forgiveness and believes in going along as they gain power.

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lot of that in Pakistan right now and it is proving a stumbling block to our progress. The anger is both online and on the streets.

I watched a lot of folks share videos of journalists unable to contain their excitement at the disqualification of Nawaz Sharif in 2017.

The video of a reporter showing videos from the inside of the former prime minister's fridge was so hilarious I did the video of a journalist in a tub. 'Do they feel shame now that Imran Khan has been convicted?' screamed half of Twitter.

I don't know what answer — or apology, if that — could have pacified the outraged

mob.

Does social media cause this anger or does it reveal it, as Allais herself asks. We've seen how quickly a mob comes together to 'cancel' people in social media trials. There is no room for atonement in the virtual world while in the real world, the judicial system seems to be failing people.

In this atmosphere, can one even talk of forgiveness and reconciliation? We are days away from elections whose results will be rejected by X percentage of the population. This is the self-perpetuating cycle of mistrust. This hope is worth fighting for.

These stakeholders must reckon with their past and accept that the only way forward is to come together as leaders invested in Pakistan's progress, with different ideas on how to get there. They can teach us how to disagree without being disagreeable.

People tend to assume the best of themselves and the worst of their opponents. 'We need to see people as potentially better than the worst things they've done,' says Allais.

It is a tall task but one worth attempting. We will eventually get it right. This hope is worth fighting for.

Punjab Cabinet gives approval for upgradation of Bab-e-Azadi Wahga Border

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab Cabinet has approved the release of funds for the expansion and reconstruction project of Bab-e-Azadi and Parade Ground of Wahga Boarder. Addressing the 39th meeting of Punjab Cabinet on Sunday, Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that Bab-e-Azadi will be upgraded to the style of Lahore Fort.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the entrance gate will be designed on the pattern of the Alamgiri Gate of the Shahi Fort. The Chief Minister instructed for installation of large LCDs to show the pa-

rade at Bab-e-Azadi. With the expansion of the parade ground, better facilities will be provided and the parking area will be made more spacious, said Mohsin Naqvi.

During Cabinet meeting, the CM was briefed that after the upgradation, the seating capacity of the parade ground will increase to around 18,000 people.

The height of Bab-e-Azadi project will be around 120 feet. The cabinet also gave approval of contract with Bank Al-Falah for remodeling of Liberty Chowk and South Asia's largest

national flag. The cabinet also gave approval of funds for the construction and expansion of Lahore Metrobus service corridor. Moreover, Punjab Cabinet gave approval of nomination of new board members of Bank of Punjab with approval of Government of Punjab policy for allotment of government residences 2023 and approval of extension of Speedo bus service contract from Bahawalpur to Lodhran. The cabinet also gave approval of approval of extension of wheat and flour by Food Department to Jails Department in the meeting. In the meeting, the decisions of the 14th meeting of the Cabinet Standing Committee on Law and Order were approved. Provincial Ministers, Advisors, Chief Secretary, Advocate General Punjab, Inspector General Police, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Chairman Planning and Development Board and secretaries of concerned departments attended the meeting.

At least eight dead in Ukrainian shelling of occupied city: Moscow's forces

MOSCOW (INP): A Ukrainian attack on the eastern occupied city of Lysychansk killed at least eight people and wounded 10 others, Moscow-installed authorities said Saturday, adding that there were likely more dead in the rubble underneath a bakery that was struck.

Lysychansk, in the Lugansk region, a Russian forces after a brutal battle six months into Moscow's offensive in 2022.

Russia's forces said that Ukraine had struck a building housing a popular bakery and that

it believed more victims were buried in the rubble. "According to current data as a result of the shelling of a bakery in Lysychansk, eight people died and 10 were wounded with varying degrees of severity," the military said, pulling out an entirely crushed car.

The one-storey building had a large sign on it that read "Restaurant Adriatic" and appeared entirely destroyed and covered in rubble.

Moscow-installed authorities said one wounded man in a "serious condition" was

taken to hospital in the city of Lugansk and three other wounded people would also be taken.

Paschnick said local police and emergency services were at the scene and trying to "rescue victims with special equipment".

Lysychansk had a population of around 11,000 people before Russia's offensive.

Russia took control of it and its twin city of Severodonetsk in summer 2022 after some of the most brutal battles of its almost two-year offensive.

Rain lashes Karachi for second day with parts of city still submerged

KARACHI (INP): Heavy downpours lashed Karachi for the second day on Sunday as many parts of the port city are still submerged in the rainwater.

The areas that experienced heavy to moderate rains for the second day include North Karachi, Superhighway, Buferzone, Nagan Chowangi, Sadi Town, North Nazimabad, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, New MA Jinnah Road, Nazimabad, I.I. Chundrigar Road, Saddar, Shah Faisal Scheme 33 and other areas Sunday morning.

The Met Office said nimbus clouds persisted in central and northern areas of the city, which received rains intermittently.

"The series of rains may continue intermittently till evening," the meteorological department said adding that it was after 40 years that the city was witnessing such rainfall in February.

Earlier today, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) forecast that the weather in Karachi would remain cloudy and various parts

of the metropolis are likely to receive intermittent rain.

The current temperature in the metropolis is 19.9 C, whereas winds are blowing at the speed of 20-25 km an hour during the day.

The humidity is recorded at 92% in the metropolis, the Met Office said.

Several areas of the city including major arteries are still clogged as rainwater has not been drained from there yet. This includes Q a y u m a b a d Chowrangi, II Chundrigar Road, Burns Road, Arts Council, Korangi Industrial Area Road from Godown Chowrangi to Chandra Chowrangi, Shah Faisal Colony area near Shama Centre. Because of this, people have to take long routes to reach their destinations.

Whereas, rainwater has been drained from Safoora Chowrangi, Garaman dir, Hassan Square and Essa Nagri.

Several areas exper-

ience hours-long power outages due to heavy rainfall. Electricity supply to Gulistan-e-Johar Block 8 and Jamsheed Road has been suspended since Saturday night.

Heavy rain coupled with thunder and lightning Saturday night wreaked havoc in parts of Karachi as rainwater mixed with sewage overflowing from choked lanes entered houses and hospitals in the port city.

Areas that received downpours included Baldi Town, Orangi Town, North Karachi, Surjani Town, Gulshan-e-Maymar, Korangi, Landhi, DHA, Shah Faisal Colony, Malir, Orangi Town, Bahria Town, Saddar, North Nazimabad, Tower, Liaquatnagar and Nazimabad.

Following the rain, major arteries in the mega city were submerged with rainwater and commuters were stuck in their vehicles as the city administration had not taken any measures to cope with the rain, despite the PMD's forecast for heavy rain a day earlier.



Costal Highway flooded after haway rain on Coastal Highway.



Security high alert in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan

Power tariff hike to put burden of Rs 40 b on trade, industry: Anjum Nisar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former president FPCCI and Chairman Businessmen Panel (BMP), Mian Anjum Nisar criticizing the decision of government to make another raise in electricity tariff has urged the NEPRA to reverse the decision of hike in power charges, as it has increased tariff of power Distribution Companies by Rs 56 per unit as part of the December fuel adjustment to recover Rs 76 billion from trade and industry.

Nisar also applied to a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that this change in tariff will cause an additional burden of Rs 40 billion on consumers.

He said that it was unfortunate that during last two months, electricity prices have gone up by Rs 69 due to fuel price adjustment. In November alone, the electricity tariff was raised by Rs 13.

In just two months, the power tariff raise has put an additional burden of Rs 76 billion on consumers.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that the requests from these firms have come amid a prevailing inflation rate of 30 percent, suggesting that official estimates of declining trends might be less forthcoming because electricity and gas rates have a major contribution to the price baskets.

Besides, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has kept its policy rate unchanged at a record 22pc, citing frequent energy price hikes that keep

inflation at elevated levels.

In their separate tariff petitions, the Discos have sought to rise about Rs 81.5bn from their consumers in three coming months under the quarterly tariff adjustment for the October-December 2023 period.

This was also on top of about a Rs 6.5 per unit monthly fuel cost increase for the billing month of February that currently awaits a decision by the National Electricity Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra).

The regulator has accepted the respective tariff petitions and has called public hearings on Feb 14 to see if the proposed increase in tariff was justified in line with the quarterly tariff adjustment mechanism.

The quarterly adjustments for Discos now also apply to K-Reg, the regulator of well under recent government and regulator decisions.

The Discos have sought the increase to finance the additional financial impact of capacity charges arising out of currency devaluation and the interest rate hike besides the market operation fee, the impact of transmission and distribution losses on fuel cost adjustments, the cost of incremental consumption and variable operation and maintenance charges for the second quarter of the current fiscal year.

At present, the consumers were paying

about Rs 3.28 per unit QTA for the fourth quarter of the last fiscal year that would remain applicable for six months — from October 2023 to March 2024 — to mop up more than Rs 200bn from power consumers across the country, including those of K-Electric.

Another QTA for July-September 2023 was also being charged to consumers at the rate of Rs 1.15 per unit for the billing period of January to March 2024 to raise another Rs 22.3bn.

Under the petitions, the Disco from Lahore has demanded the highest claim of Rs 15.1bn, followed by Rs 14.9bn by Multan Electric, Rs 11.6bn by Peshawar Electric and Rs 1.1bn by Quetta Electric.

These were followed by a Rs 9.45bn claim filed by Faisalabad Electric, Rs 6.92bn by Islamabad Electric, Rs 5.8bn by Hyderabad Electric, Rs 3.5bn by Tribal Electric, Rs 2.9bn by Sukkur Electric and Rs 2.7bn by Gujranwala Electric.

The biggest chunk of additional cumulative burden on account of capacity charges has been claimed by Discos at Rs 75bn for the quarter, followed by Rs 10.8bn on account of the uncorrected impact of transmission and distribution losses and Rs 6.6bn on account of the use of separate capacity charges and market operation fee.

On the other hand, Discos have offered Rs 8.7bn worth of negative variable operation

and maintenance charges and Rs 2.34bn worth of impact of incremental sales, thus working out a cumulative net additional demand of Rs 81.5bn. On approval, the adjustment would be recovered on a uniform basis from all consumers except for lifeline users.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that the government's decision to increase the electricity tariff was anti-industry, and the BMP strongly condemns the government's move and calls on it to rescind it.

He urged the power ministry to identify system constraints and communicate targets to all concerned departments in order to launch a wartime effort to upgrade the transmission system. It is to be noted that the authority conducted the hearing in the matter on November 29, 2023, whereas the data submitted by the CPAA-G came under scrutiny.

According to reports, the NEPRA reviewed the request by CPAA-G seeking monthly FCA and due diligence was done accordingly. From perusal of the information so provided by CPAA-G, the actual pool fuel cost for the month of October 2023, as claimed by CPAA-G was Rs 11.4277/kWh, against the reference fuel cost component of Rs 7.8938/kWh. The actual fuel charges, as claimed by CPAA-G for the month of October 2023 increased by Rs 3.5339/kWh as compared to the reference fuel charges.

Handloom sector holds key importance in carpet, other products manufacturing: CTI

LAHORE (INP): Chairperson of Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Ejaz-ur-Rehman has underscored the importance of handloom sector in manufacturing of carpets and other products on handloom.

Briefing a delegation that visited CTI on Sunday, he said, "The modern handloom development by the CTI can produce a wide range of products apart from carpets and in this regard, our rival neighboring country is successfully supplying to local markets and exporting globally."

Ejaz-ur-Rehman gave detailed information to the delegation regarding various departments of the institute and said that there was an urgent need to highlight the importance of handloom sector in Pakistan. In the current situation, we need to plan in a wider perspective apart from the production of handloom carpets for which different brands will have to help us to bring this idea to completion, he added.

He said that Pakistan's hand-made products have immense fame but they are not

available in the local and international markets in such numbers, however, the Carpet Training Institute and its modern handlooms can be very helpful in this regard.

The CTI Chairperson apprised the delegation about the advanced handlooms developed by the institute and suggested that various brands should enter into joint ventures on an experimental basis and not only promote the products in the local markets but they can also be developed as an export industry. "In order to promote handloom and rural

vide employment through it, the government should give special status to handloom products and also provide its patronage for it," he added. He said that the federal and provincial governments should initiate a plan to provide handlooms at the village level, which can not only prevent urbanization and poverty, providing employment on a large scale will also give impetus to the economy and moreover, this is a project that will not have any burden on the government. Ejaz-ur-Rehman gave the example of a neighboring rival country and said

Abu Dhabi seal commanding 29-run victory over Dubai Capitals

ABU DHABI (INP): An impressive total of 183/10.

With the first drop of rain, different parts of the port city, including North Nazimabad, North Karachi, Korangi, Gulistan-e-Johar and its suburban areas, plunged into darkness because of an electricity supply failure. Shara-e-Faisal sees highest rainfall according to statistics issued by the PMD, the highest rainfall was recorded at 75 millimeters on Shara-e-Faisal in the last 24 hours followed by Malir and Surjani Town at 64 and 63.8 millimeters respectively.

David Willey, Sumil Narine and Imad Wasim were exceptional with the ball picking up two wickets each.

David Willey delivered a comprehensive Player of the Match performance with an impactful knock of 26 runs each, but the lack of support around them and a shrewd display by the Abu Dhabi Knight Riders' bowling unit saw the Capitals' run chase fizzle out.

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Abu Dhabi Knight Riders 183 for 10 in 20 overs (Andre Russell 41, Michael Kyle Pepper 32, David Willey 26, Dushantha Chameera 2 for 20, Akif Raja 2 for 25, Scott Kugelejin 2 for 44)

Dubai Capitals 154 for 8 in 20 overs (David Warner 42, Scott Kugelejin 22, Sumil Narine 2 for 22, David Willey 2 for 24, Imad Wasim 2 for 26)

Player of the Match: David Willey

MQM-P announces to support ANP's candidate in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) on Sunday announced to support Awami National Party's (ANP) candidate in Karachi in general election 2024. Addressing a joint press conference, Senior Deputy Convener of MQM Mustafa Kamal said that his party will unconditionally support Shahi Syed of ANP on PS-88 Karachi in the upcoming polls. He termed the MQM-P support of ANP candidate in Karachi as a historic step in provincial and central politics. Reacting to Kamal's comments, that both parties will

work on solving the problems of provincial capital as ANP has the street power to win elections. Earlier, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) managed to get the support of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) on another provincial assembly constituency from Karachi. Both the parties strike seat adjustment on PS-99 as JUI-F's nominee Babar Qamar has withdrawn in favour of the MQM-P candidate. The JUI-F announced to support Farhan Ansari of the MQM-P from PS-99. Babar Qamar and Farhan

Ansari in their meeting also discussed issues of the constituency. On January 10, a meeting between politicians of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), MQM-P, JUI-F and Awami National Party (ANP) was held to discuss election alliance against PPP. Sources told ARY News that the meeting deliberated on fielding joint candidates across the province and a 'common plan of action'. The meeting vowed to free people of Sindh from 'corruption, incompetence and mismanagement'.

Sindh CM directs to facilitate people during heavy rains

KARACHI (INP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister retired Justice Maqbool Baqar has issued directions to the concerned authorities of the province to facilitate people during heavy rains. He directed the authorities of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation to ensure draining of rain water from low lying areas. He also directed police to take necessary steps to facilitate people including traffic management. Meanwhile, a control room has been established at the office of Commissioner Karachi after heavy rains in the city.

Heavy rain lashed Karachi last night causing inundation of low lying areas. Following the rain, major arteries in the PORT city were submerged with rainwater and commuters were stuck in their vehicles as the city administration had not taken any measure to cope with the rain, despite the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) had forecast heavy rain a day earlier. With the first drop of rainfall, including North Nazimabad, Sir Syed Town, Adam Town, I.P. Morr, New Karachi, Yousaf Goth,

Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Rashid Minhas Road, Liaquatnagar, DHA, Garhiabad, Gulshan-e-Maymar, Ahsan Abad, Korang, Landhi, Garden, Sher Shah, Botani and other areas, plunged into darkness due to an electricity supply failure. Earlier, the Met Office in a weather update said that different areas of Karachi likely to receive light to heavy rainfall till this evening. The westerly wave hovering over the northern and central parts of the city, according to the weather report. "This weather system likely to subside in the evening".

PIAF Founders Alliance of LCCI reiterates to continue serving businessmen

LAHORE (INP): The PIAF Founders Alliance, the ruling group of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI), has reiterated its pledge of continuing to serve the business community with full vigor and passion like in the past, saying the Alliance was a symbol of the unity of the business community. The Alliance was fully united and there were no differences in the premier business community group of the provincial capital. It would win the forthcoming election with a thumping majority, as its manifesto stands for services to LCCI members, who want their businesses to grow, opening up LCCI doors to all. These views were expressed in the meeting of the PIAF Founders Alliance held here on Sunday with its Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar in the chair. The meeting was attended by all the prominent leaders of the 'PIAF' and 'Founders', including former presidents of LCCI Sheikh Mohammad Asif, Muhammad Ali Mian, Shahzad Ali Malik, Mian Abuzar Shad, Shahid Hasan Sheikh, Tariq Misbahur Rahman, Abdul Basit and acting chairman of PIAF Nasrullah Mughal. The PIAF Founders Alliance Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said

that the 22-year long Alliance was as strong as a rock and no one can make a rift in this group whose sole aim is to serve the businessmen of all sectors without any biases. The Alliance, like in the previous years, has been working day and night to solve the problems of the business community. The Alliance has always shown action and not just talk. The purpose of the PIAF Founders Alliance was not to criticize for the sake of criticism, but to show its performance by action. The problems of the industrialists and businessmen were the problems of the PIAF Founders Alliance. Senior Member Steering Committee PIAF Founders Alliance Sheikh Muhammad Asif said that there was an ideal unity and agreement in PIAF Founders Alliance, thanks to which the members of Lahore Chamber get passport, identity card, driving license and other numerous facilities. The senior leader of PIAF Founders Alliance Muhammad Ali Mian said that the Alliance has been achieving clean sweep for the last 22 years due to its excellent performance and it will be successful in the upcoming elections this year too with a huge margin. The participants of the

meeting expressed full confidence in the leadership of Alliance Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar and Steering Committee Mian Muhammad Ashraf and the future activities of the Alliance and the country's economic situation were also discussed. They said that almost all major markets have announced to continue support for the PIAF Founders Alliance. They said that they would raise all the business issues at all relevant forms, help ensure businessmen access to cheaper loan for their working capital needs or expansion plans. Mian Anjum Nisar said that they were fully satisfied with the performance of the Lahore Chamber, being run by the PIAF Founders Alliance for a long time. He promised that Alliance would raise all the business issues at all relevant forms, help ensure businessmen access to cheaper loan for their working capital needs or expansion plans. He said that the Alliance tried its best to introduce sector specialists as their candidates for the LCCI. Executive Committee with the sole objective to forward solid proposals to the government for economic progress and prosperity.

MOFA vows smooth degree attestation in Lahore's liaison office

ISLAMABAD, Feb 04 (INP): Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said that it regret the inconvenience faced by the public at MOFA's Liaison Office in Lahore in the initial days of operation from its new premises. In a statement issued, FO said: "As announced earlier, the consular services were suspended for a few days as the Liaison Office was temporarily closed on account of relocation to a new site. Since the resumption of consular services on 1 February 2024, our dedicated and efficient staff has been working extra hours to service the public." "We expect the backlog to clear over the next few days," the

spokesperson said. "We appreciate the public's understanding during this time of transition," he added. Earlier this week, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also opened its Liaison Office in Gujrat, which is expected to relieve pressure on the Lahore Liaison Office. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained committed to facilitating the public and providing efficient and timely consular services. After you get your degrees attested from the Higher Education Commission (HEC), you can approach the MOFA offices in Islamabad as well as provincial liaison offices in Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, and Peshawar along with

the liaison offices in Gujrat and other cities. You can submit the documents by hand at any of the offices mentioned and get the degrees back on the same day. On the other hand, the applicant can also courier his or her documents through an approved courier service provider from a town, village, or city of Pakistan and get the documents attested. The time duration for the return of documents varies and usually, it takes two weeks to get back the documents. All the educational documents that you can attest to by the MOFA firstly must be verified by HEC. You can visit the MOFA website for further information.



JHAL MAGSI: Deputy Commissioner Jhal Magasi, Ejaz Sarwar, is addressing participants in the meeting regarding arrangements for the upcoming general election.

Pakistan observes Kashmir Solidarity Day tomorrow, reaffirming support for rights of Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistanis will observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on Feb 5 (Monday) with a renewed commitment to support the just struggle of the Kashmiris for their inalienable right to self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The people and the government of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir observe Solidarity Day every year not only to renew their love and affection with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K) but also to reiterate their commitment and dedication to the liberation of occupied Kashmir from Indian occupation. People from different walks of life, including doctors, lawyers, social activists, students and others will hold rallies and demonstrations, forming human chains across the country to infuse new spirits into the Kashmiris, who have long been fighting for their freedom. All Pakistani missions abroad will organise seminars and photo exhibitions to draw

the world's attention towards the worst form of subjugation and human rights violations committed by India in the IOJ&K. The national media, both electronic and print, will air special programmes and print special supplements to highlight the significance of Kashmir Solidarity Day and the decades-long struggle of Kashmiri people against the illegal Indian occupation. Banners highlighting the plight of innocent Kashmiris have been put on display across the country, including airports, railway stations, and national highways. Observance of this day is also aimed at highlighting the long-standing unsettled dispute of Jammu and Kashmir internationally and apprising the people of occupied Kashmir that they are not alone in this hour of trial and turmoil. India has kept a major part of the internationally acknowledged disputed Himalayan Jammu Kashmir state in its illegal and forced occupation since October 27, 1947, against the aspirations of the people of Kashmir. India is using state terrorism against the

Kashmiris, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, fake encounters, and staged cord-on-and-search operations. Over 900,000 Indian occupation forces have turned IOJ&K into an open prison, but the desperation of the RSS-BJP dispensation to control the indigenous Kashmiri movement has completely run aground. Jammu and Kashmir's dispute is one of the oldest pending items on the agenda of the UN Security Council. The dispute remains unresolved due to India's obstinate refusal to honor its commitments and its disrespect for fundamental human rights and international law. India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019, are also in blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, the 4th Geneva Convention, and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions stipulating that the final disposition of the state of Jammu and Kashmir would be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

Inflation pushed to over 38% due to high fuel prices: President DFPA

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Disposable Food Packaging Association (DFPA) Ahsan Shahid on Sunday warned that the record inflation and high cost of doing business continued to hurt economic growth, demanding a careful policy to keep it in control, as weekly inflation has surged to new highs for the third consecutive week. In a statement issued here, he while quoting the data revealed a year-on-year increase of 38.66 percent in short-term inflation for this, marking an alarming trend in rising prices. He said that the ongoing depreciation of the Pakistani rupee, coupled with soaring petrol prices, sales tax burdens, and mounting electricity bills were identified as the primary contributors to the persistent inflationary trend. Ahsan Shahid said that the most important factor contributing to inflation was the steep increase in petroleum products. These price hikes have led to elevated transport costs and have subsequently driven up the cost of moving goods, affecting consumers across the country. To meet local demand, Pakistan has become increasingly reliant on imports of essential vegetables, including tomatoes, onions, and potatoes, primarily sourced from neighboring Af-

ghanistan, he added. The SPI basket, comprising 51 essential items, demonstrated notable fluctuations. Prices of 22 goods soared, 11 experienced price drops, and 18 remained unchanged compared to the previous week. Key items that witnessed substantial price increases compared to the same week the previous year include electricity charges, gas charges, rice, sugar, wheat flour, and more. Whereas, on a week-on-week basis, the largest price increases were observed in chicken, garlic, onions, shirting fabric, and matchboxes. It was pertinent to mention here that according to the latest International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast, the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the current fiscal year was projected to be 25.9 percent, slightly down from the previous year's 29.6 percent. The DFPA President observed that the government's inability, ill planning and financial woes had multiplied the miseries of businesses which were facing unscheduled power outages across the country. At the same time, they were already paying heavy electricity bills of up to Rs50 per unit, including surcharges and other taxes, he added.

He said all the major industrial cities of the country were facing unannounced electricity load shedding and stressed the need to rectify technical faults immediately. Ahsan Shahid said that the high cost of production was damaging Pakistan's trade and industry, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability, calling for lessening the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector. He urged the government to shut down all costly oil-fired power plants in order to ensure consumers had access to cheaper energy. He lamented that the previous administration did not prioritize the rehabilitation and maintenance of older power plants, resulting in multiple system constraints and significant losses. The DFPA President argued that underutilization of efficient power plants due to RLNG scarcity could be avoided if the Ministry of Energy assesses and manages RLNG availability in a timely manner. He urged the Ministry to take a proactive role in ensuring the timely supply of RLNG so as not to disrupt the operation of the efficient power plants. Thus, he added, the power sector's inefficiencies could be mitigated without passing them on to end consumers.

Political rivals poses challenge to Aftab Sherpao, Aimal Wali in Charsadda

PESHAWAR (INP): As only five days left in the General Election 2024, the candidates of various political parties and independent campaign on NA 24 Charsadda-1 where political stalwarts are posing a serious challenge to Aftab Sherpao, PTI Chairman and former interior minister, Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao in native constituency. Known as a stronghold of ANP and Quami Watan Party, Aftab Sherpao is again contesting the election from his home constituency where he is being challenged by ANP, JUI, PTI and Pakistan Peoples Party candidates. Winning the 2002, 2008 and 2013 elections despite defeat in the last election, Aftab Sherpao expedited election campaign to

persuade voters besides approaching large tribes to win their support. In the 2013 election, Sherpao won the constituency with 37,044 votes against Munhamir Khan who bagged 33,836 votes. However, Aftab Sherpao had lost to PITs Anwar Taj as the former stood in third position. The women of Charsadda, constituting 45% of registered voters and are eyeing on regulators of their socioeconomic, education and environmental challenges besides seeking jobs. The voters are demanding the establishment of a medical and Cadet College, improved health care facilities, and economic empowerment for women. Senior vice-chairman of the

'Muttahida' Shopkeepers Federation, Sadiqullah said that inadequate healthcare and education facilities, insufficient transport infrastructure, and unfulfilled promises regarding road coverage are major challenges of the constituency and any candidate with the solid program for its resolutions would get an edge over others. He said a medical and cadet college was approved 15 years ago and it was yet to be established in the constituency. He urged the prospective representatives to address these problems and alleviate the burden on the common people. Meena Taj, an advocate for women's rights, emphasized the need for economic empowerment, education, and a change in societal attitudes.



KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Balochistan Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezaei is participating in the Sindh Institute of Reproductive Medicine Fertility 2024 Karachi Conference as a special guest.