

QUETTA VOICE

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PPP central leader Syed Khurshid Shah in an exclusive interview with Editor in Chief Daily Quetta Voice, Syed Ali Shah: Photo Ismail Khan

PPP Leader Pledges Commitment to Balochistan's Progress

Syed Ali Shah:

ISLAMABAD: In an exclusive interview with Daily Quetta Voice, Syed Khurshid Shah, a central leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), reaffirmed the party's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights of the people of Balochistan. His heartfelt words echoed through the corridors of power, promising hope and progress for the province.

Motorway Construction: A Path to Prosperity

Shah, with conviction in his voice, vowed to play a pivotal role in the consti-

tion of a motorway in Balochistan. This ambitious project aims to boost economic development, create jobs, and connect distant regions. "It is the right of the people of Balochistan," he emphasized, eyes unwavering.

Inclusive Politics and Provincial Rights

PPP's ideology revolves around an inclusive political system—one that transcends provincial boundaries. Shah's vision extends beyond party lines; he champions the cause of Balochistan despite the

odds. "We stand for the people of Balochistan," he declared, promising to protect their rights at all costs.

Education and Health: Priorities Ahead

Acknowledging the challenges, Shah stressed the need for improved education and healthcare services. The PPP, he assured, would work tirelessly within the federal government to ensure these essential rights for Balochistan's residents. "Issues should be resolved through dialogue," he asserted, urging cooperation and understanding.

A Historic Era Post-Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto

As the PPP celebrated its 56th foundation day, Shah reflected on its journey. The legacy of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto loomed large—a beacon of democracy and resilience. Balochistan, too, played a vital role in this saga, and Shah's commitment echoed the party's unwavering resolve. The interview concluded with Shah's heartfelt promise: "We won't rest until Balochistan thrives." His words, etched in ink, resonated across the province—a testament to hope, progress, and the enduring spirit of the PPP.

From Trash to Treasure: Quetta's Remarkable Cleanup Journey

Syed Muhammad Qaseem:

Once upon a time in the bustling city of Quetta, garbage heaps towered like forgotten monuments. The air was thick with the stench of neglect, and residents yearned for a cleaner, healthier environment. But hope glimmered on the horizon.

Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, Quetta embarked on an ambitious mission: to rid itself of the 1.5 million tons of garbage that had plagued its streets for far too long. The district administration rallied, and the battle against waste began.



The Great Cleanup

Heavy machinery roared to life as the Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) mobilized its forces. Garbage trucks, bulldozers, and street sweepers worked tirelessly, their operators fueled by determination. Day and night, they collected, sorted, and hauled away the mountains of trash. The city's skyline changed—one discarded plastic bag at a time.

Outsourcing the Solution

Chief Minister Bugti, with a stern gaze, announced a game-changing decision: starting in August, all waste collection services would be outsourced. Transparency would be the cornerstone. Public-private partnerships would bid for the honor of

keeping Quetta pristine. The Finance Department nodded in agreement, ensuring timely salaries for the unsung heroes—the QMC employees.

The Audit Trail

But accountability mattered. An audit team scrutinized the past two months, tracing every rupee spent. Fuel expenses raised eyebrows—Rs. 70 crore vanished into thin air. The Anti-Corruption Establishment sharpened its claws, ready to pounce on any financial irregularities.

Eid-ul-Azha and Beyond

As Eid-ul-Azha approached, Chief Minister Bugti's resolve intensified. No holidays for the QMC! Officers and employees can-celed their leave, donned

their gloves, and swept through the streets. Airport Road Cantonment Board area witnessed a transformation—the grime yielding to brooms, the chaos to order. Pashtunabad joined the movement, proving that cleanliness knew no boundaries.

Epilogue: A New Quetta

The meeting concluded with applause—a standing ovation for Commissioner Hanza Shafiqat. His vigilant supervision had birthed a clean city. The city breathed easier, its residents smiling. The once-forgotten garbage heaps now whispered tales of redemption. And Chief Minister Bugti? He vowed to protect this newfound treasure—the city's cleanliness—for generations to come.

SC issues show-cause notices to Faisal Vawda, Mustafa Kamal on remarks against judiciary

NEWS DESK: The Supreme Court on Friday issued show-cause notices to lawmakers Faisal Vawda and Mustafa Kamal, seeking responses from them on their recent rhetoric against the judiciary.

The development came as a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and including Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice Naem Akhtar Alghan presided over the proceedings of a suo motu notice taken a day ago against the independent Senator Vawda.

On Wednesday, two senators — Vawda and PML-N's Ijaz Chaudhry — had held separate pressers, questioning the Islam-abad High Court (IHC) judges' claim that intelligence agencies had interfered in the judicial affairs. Without any evidence no one had the right to point a finger at the institutions, they added.

The next day, two MNAs — Mutahida Qumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P)'s Mustafa Kamal and Itekhani-Pakistan Party's (IPP)'s Awn Chaudhry — also highlighted the



judiciary's alleged shortcomings and called for establishing ethical standards for the judges.

Kamal claimed the judiciary had set "ethical standards" for politicians and the dual citizenship of judges was a "big question mark" and the judiciary should be made amenable on this issue, while Awn had termed it a crisis that would lead to an "anarchy in the country".

In late March, six IHC judges — out of a total strength of eight — wrote a startling letter to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) members, regarding attempts to pressure judges through the abduction and torture of their relatives as well as se-

cret surveillance inside their homes. Meanwhile, in a reported letter written this week to IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq on the breach of his family's personal data, Justice Babar Sattar had said that while hearing the audio leaks case, he issued notices to the heads of intelligence and investigation agencies, besides relevant ministries.

Senator Vawda had said that the trend of targeting institutions must stop. He had asked why Justice Sattar had raised his voice "one year after the alleged interference", adding that if the IHC judges had any evidence they should come forward. "We will stand with you," Vawda also said that

he had requested the IHC for details of correspondence between then-IHC chief justice Athar Min-Allah and Justice Sattar on the issue of the later's US green card, claiming that despite the passage of 15 days, he had not been provided the required details.

The senator requested the SJC to take notice of the matter. In his press conference, Chaudhry said that a judge never writes a letter, rather he issues notice for any interference.

It may be mentioned that the IHC registrar's office had responded to Vawda on Tuesday. Additional Registrar Ijaz Ahmed stated that information related to residency or citizenship is not included in the requirements for the appointment of a judge in the high court.

In his letter to Vawda, the additional registrar stated that "the conversation between potential candidates for appointment as judge or an interview with the hon the chief justice and/or senior puisne judge of high court is not a communication of which record is maintained and minutes taken".

NA suspends PML-N's Tariq Bashir Cheema for current session over invective against PTI's Zartaj Gul

NEWS DESK: The National Assembly on Friday suspended PML-Q legislator Tariq Bashir Cheema from today's session over his alleged abusive discourse towards PTI's Zartaj Gul Wazir.

Cheema delivered a speech in the assembly on Thursday, during which he was interrupted by Gul who jibed that he should talk about the Bahawalpur University case instead, in which Cheema's son was a suspect.

When he was returning to his seat after meeting with the PTT's Ali Muhammad Khan, Gul passed a remark which reportedly made Cheema angry and he went to Gul's seat and was seen whispering something in her ear.

Members of the PTI-SIC were seen rushing towards the treasury benches, some of them even running over benches to physically attack Cheema, who was escorted out by some treasury MNAs.

As soon as he returned to his seat, opposition members started gathering in



front of the speaker's dais and lodged a strong protest, alleging that Mr Cheema had used very objectionable and abusive language and demanded action against him.

Later, PTI lawmakers went to the speaker's chamber and demanded the suspension of Cheema's membership. Informed sources told that NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq called Cheema, who later apologised to Gul "unconditionally".

Talking to the media, PTI members including party chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan confirmed the development, stating that Gul had accepted the apology. However, Gohar declared they would put forward a motion on Friday seeking Cheema's

suspension for the remainder of the ongoing session. "Everyone advised me that 'now that Cheema has come to you, you should let go of the matter,'" she told reporters.

Putting forward a motion to suspend Cheema for the remainder of the session, NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq said that during Thursday's sitting: "An unfortunate incident took place between Tariq Cheema and Zartaj Gul. According to the motion, Cheema violated Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007, which states that no members may "erode" the "sanctity" or "dignity" of the house."

Amid heatwave alert, Punjab govt shortens timings of public, private schools for May

PUNJAB: A mild severe heatwaves expected to hit most parts of the country over the next 10 days, the Punjab government on Friday reduced the timings of all public and private schools from May 18 to May 31.

The Meteorological Department warned a day ago that the presence of high pressure in the upper atmosphere will result in heatwave conditions in most parts of the country, especially Punjab and Sindh from May 21 and a severe heatwave from May 23 to 27.

Daytime temperatures are "likely to remain 4 to 6 degrees centigrade above normal" in Sindh and Punjab from May 21 to 23 and six to 8°C from May 23 to 27.

People were advised to avoid unnecessary exposure



sure that no student be made to sit in an open space or school lawn during the summer.

Chief executive officers and heads of institutions were also directed to ensure compliance with the above instructions in "true letter and spirit". Punjab Minister for School Education, Rana Sikandar Hayat stressed the urgent need for climate action, emphasising that everyone had a "vital role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change".

A separate notification also announced that all private and public schools in the province would remain closed from June 1 till August 14 for summer vacations with the school year set to begin from Aug 15. NEWS DESK.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif calls for enhanced security on NA premises

NEWS DESK: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Friday called for enhanced security measures within the premises of the National Assembly (NA) building and its lobbies.

Speaking in the NA, the minister said that a large number of unattended individuals were often present at the building's entrance, noting that people congregated outside the hall, in front of the elevators, and in the corridors, posing significant security risks.

He noted that previously there was a system for issuing passes to members of the public, but this should be implemented strictly to maintain security in the Parliament.



The defence minister emphasised that enhanced security measures were crucial to avoid any untoward incident. He referenced the March 26 Bisham suicide attack, where the explosive-laden car that targeted the bus of Chinese workers had reached Bisham from



Balochistan's Chaman area 10 days before the terrorist attack took place. He also expressed concern about the behaviour of individuals seated in the gallery, who he said often engaged in slogan-eering, thereby "undermining the sanctity of the House".

EDITORIAL

Editor: Asim Khan

Gas Injustice Chronicles: Sui Southern Gas Company Under Scrutiny

Editorial:

As the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) awaits an impending judgment, it finds itself entangled in allegations that go beyond mere billing discrepancies. Increasing gas meter tampering exposes a systemic problem within the company in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan, prompting this editorial to underscore the urgent need for the SSGC to address these issues, especially in light of allegations linking some officials to major gas thieves.

A court order issued a few months ago brought to light the alarming rate of gas meter tampering, resulting in significant financial losses for the SSGC. These losses, coupled with allegations of illicit connections between certain officials and major gas thieves, unfairly burden the economically vulnerable. Unannounced load shedding has become an unfortunate norm, exacerbating the challenges faced by consumers already grappling with inadequate gas pressure and exorbitant bills.

SSGC Must Acknowledge The Gravity Of The Situation

The SSGC must acknowledge the gravity of the situation and take immediate steps to rectify its practices. The alleged ties between the company and those involved in gas theft not only raise ethical concerns but also perpetuate a vicious cycle of inequality. These connections, whether direct or indirect, erode public trust and undermine the integrity of the entire energy sector.

The impending judgment marks a pivotal moment for the SSGC, going beyond financial implications for the company. This case will set a precedent for accountability within the energy sector, emphasizing the need for the SSGC to prioritize the welfare of its consumers and work towards restoring public trust in its operations.

Recent Protests In Quetta Underscore Urgency Of Situation

Recent protests in Quetta against overbilling and gas load shedding underscore the urgency of the situation. Allegations of disproportionate billing, variations in charges between regions, and inflated bills in Balochistan demand a transparent and fair investigation. The company must demonstrate a commitment to fair and transparent billing for all consumers, regardless of their geographical location. Failure to address these issues not only harms the company's reputation but deepens the existing trust deficit between the SSGC and its consumers.

Company Must Take Steps To Ensure Justice For Consumers

In conclusion, the Sui Southern Gas Company cannot afford to delay corrective measures any longer. The pursuit of gas justice necessitates immediate action, rectification of billing practices, and a commitment to transparency. Addressing these issues head-on is the only way for the SSGC to rebuild public trust and fulfill its responsibility to provide a reliable and equitable gas supply to all consumers. The company must act swiftly to prevent further harm to its reputation and, more importantly, to ensure justice for its consumers.

April enigma

By Naseer Memon:

THE country is in the grip of an enigmatic weather cycle. Snowfall drifted its way from December-January to February-April. A startlingly wet April baffled weather oracles. Upcountry mountains were enveloped in snowfall, and westerly systems brought frequent and heavy rainfalls. Torrential rains in southern Balochistan during February-April avoided the previous trajectory of the Gwadar, located on the shore, experienced nightmarish urban flooding. Standing water in the fields of Potohar was battered by untimely downpours.

Regional countries were also pummeled by cloudbursts. The UAE, dwarfing a 75-year record, received almost two years' rainfall in a single day, leaving Dubai's drainage system crippled and the city under vast waist-deep water. Just before, Oman had been lashed by an intense monsoon downpour, leading to fatalities. Moving eastward, in April, southern China witnessed an unprecedented double the normal precipitation for the month, the second-highest level since 1961. In Guangdong's provincial emergency department had to relocate over 100,000 residents amid a massive surge in the Beijiing river. The El Niño-stricken East and South Asian countries,

including the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh and India, endured blistering weather. Half the districts in the Philippines experiencing a drought and heatwave, compelled the government to suspend in-person classes. In Bangkok, muggy weather pushed the heat index to 52 degrees Celsius amid real temperatures of over 40°C. Bangladesh also had to close schools as temperatures soared to 42°C in some areas. In India, an intense heatwave has affected the water turnout in the ongoing elections. India's election commission has constituted a task force to monitor the impact of heatwaves before each round of voting. Inclement weather attacked East Africa where at least 155 people lost their lives in Tanzania and more than 100 in Malawi. The flooding generated by the rainfall in April. A dangerous situation is anticipated as the monsoon season. Bewildering bouts of rain and snowfall in April could be the prelude to a wet monsoon. In April, the weather took a sharp turn in Pakistan. In early April the India's River System Authority (Irsa) predicted a 30 per cent water shortage in the early Kharrif season. This was subsequently reversed after improved Kabul river flows in the

river forced Hyderabad's water and sanitation authority to stop the consumption of drinking water from the Kotri Barrage canals due to contaminated flows from Manchar lake. Additional water had to be released to lessen the intense pollution at Kotri Barrage. However, soon Pakistan was struck by a series of westerly weather systems that brought substantial rain, hailstorm and snowfall. A flood of over 110,000 cusecs in the Kabul river augmented flows in the Indus zone. Within a fortnight, an abrupt climate twist nullified Irsa's calculations regarding the early Kharrif flows. By the end of April, the country received rainfall which was more than 150pc of the usual for the month. Balochistan received an astoundingly 500pc excessive rainfall. In KP and Sindh, the amount of rainfall was almost double that usually observed in the month. This portentous behaviour of climate can lead to a dangerous situation during the next monsoon. The climate outlook for the 2024 southwest monsoon season was finalised during the 28th session of the South Asian Climate Outlook forum held on April 29 in Pune, India. The outlook anticipates above-normal rainfall during 2024 in most parts of South Asia except some areas in the northern, eastern and north-eastern parts.

Balochistan's Wheat Procurement Dilemma: A Costly Venture or Opportunity for Growth?

Quetta Voice Special Report:

Balochistan faces a critical decision regarding wheat procurement, hovering below Rs. 3,000 per mound, and the government of Pakistan's financial stability.

Critics argue that this procurement strategy primarily benefits a select few rather than the struggling farmers, exacerbating inequalities within the agricultural sector. Instead, they advocate for diverting resources towards more sustainable agricultural practices, including the cultivation of cotton, edible oil, pulses, and animal fodder.

By Zafar Masud:

PAKISTAN'S agricultural sector is not just a segment of the economy, it is the lifeblood that sustains the country's populace and fuels its economic engine. With over 37 per cent of the labour force employed in it and its contribution of approximately 46pc to GDP, both directly and indirectly estimated by employing backward and forward linkages between agriculture and other sectors of the economy, agriculture's significance cannot be overstated. It is a pivotal source of foreign exchange earnings, with a substantial delta as high as \$15 billion in our cur-

rent account, underscoring its role as a cornerstone of Pakistan's financial stability. Innovation and out-of-the-box solutions provide hope amidst myriad challenges faced by farmers. With over 37 per cent of the labour force employed in it and its contribution of approximately 46pc to GDP, both directly and indirectly estimated by employing backward and forward linkages between agriculture and other sectors of the economy, agriculture's significance cannot be overstated. It is a pivotal source of foreign exchange earnings, with a substantial delta as high as \$15 billion in our cur-

Institutional attrition

By Shahab Usto:

Until we are not subject to a system, we cannot move forward — Justice Mansoor Ali Shah.

The old and much-moumoured 'matter of the secure judicial independence has resurfaced — this time, in the wake of an explosive judgement by the apex court that was recently sent to the Supreme Judicial Council (a constitutional body meant for the accountability of the higher judiciary) by six out of the eight judges of the Islamabad High Court. The letter solicits a 'guidance' to deal with the meddling in judicial affairs and the harassment of judges by shadowy intelligence agencies. The matter has finally landed in the Supreme Court through various stakeholders, including the petitioners, the bars, and the government, have given various proposals on how to save the judiciary from interference — 'internal and external'.

Will the endeavour bear the desired results for the judiciary? As part of a whole system, judicial independence cannot be

contemplated in isolation. The Constitution envisages a state run by the executive, parliament and judiciary. Each of the three organs of state pivots on its own orbit, but also complements the other. If any one of them falters, the constitutional framework — they are conjoined in a way where they that or founder together. The sole light of an institution has proven to be unshakable, if not downright destructive for the troika. In fact, much of the history of our filtering democracy reflects the perjury of — and the mutual suspicion and discord among the judiciary and weakened democracy. But no lessons were learnt. Some of chief justices Chaudhry's successors took judicial activism to its extreme. They undermined the trichotomy, gave controversial 'political' decisions; dismissed an elected prime minister, and deprived many parliamentarians of their seats, if not liberty.

Deplorably, history has since witnessed a string of judicial debacles — 1977, 1999, 2009, 2017, 2022. But the historians were also con-

temporarily recording their sad commentaries on the failure of mainstream political leaderships to protect their turf — and democracy — against extra-constitutional forces. The higher and lower judiciary, under the chief justice Hilkar Chaudhry, again missed a historic opportunity when, instead of securing judicial authority and strengthening the democratic dispensation, the court attempted to dominate other organs of the state, unleashing an unsavoury judicial activism that ultimately damaged the judiciary and weakened democracy. But no lessons were learnt. Some of chief justices Chaudhry's successors took judicial activism to its extreme. They undermined the trichotomy, gave controversial 'political' decisions; dismissed an elected prime minister, and deprived many parliamentarians of their seats, if not liberty.

What is needed is the revival of constitutional democracy in its true form and substance. No wonder, the inse-

curities generated by a lax or an absent rule of law are now hitting all — including the judges of the higher and lower judiciary. Still, the ruling political leadership — the ones who had faced the wrath of the judiciary allegedly at the behest of the establishment just before and during the 1970s — PTI's government — now seems to be aligning its interests with untested elements and happily running a 'hybrid' system. This, the dangerous game of musical chairs continues, the fact that these never-ending institutional 'wars of attrition' have a long history. The PTI's government has and deprived the people of their rights and liberties is disregarded. As a result, recurring political instabilities and economic meltdowns have brought the country to the verge of an implosion. It is, therefore, naive to believe that institutional democracy can be ensured in a hybrid regime.

We have had a history of constitutional aberrations including the long era of military dictatorships. We also

specialised science parks, provides a blueprint for Pakistan to emulate. Ethiopia's resolute of credit access issues for farmers through a land-titling programme demonstrated mobile technology enabling them to book tractors on-demand thus significantly enhancing their productivity. Out-of-the-box solutions provide hope amidst myriad challenges faced by the farm sector. Yet, the scope of innovation extends far beyond the realm of technology. It is important to delve into strategic approaches that have borne fruit in other nations. China's emphasis on food security, bolstered by government grants and

the decision made in the coming days will not only shape the province's economic trajectory but also define its commitment to sustainable growth and inclusive development.

Colombia's strides in empowering women-owned agricultural businesses via microfinance partnerships offer valuable insights.

New way to learn

By Zubeida Mustafa:

PAKISTAN is not famous for its reading culture. Few people read books and the publishing industry has never flourished here as in other countries where books sell by the millions. But we shouldn't be surprised. After all, education is also in the doldrums in Pakistan and the co-relationship between the two is obvious.

An ideal solution would be to combine the two by prioritising books, with teaching literacy following much later. This sounds ridiculous and untenable. But it is not and those who have experienced the joy of reading from an early age would tes-

tify to the feasibility of this approach. Here is how books, libraries and education can be integrated systemically. My friend, a book writer, randomly, to make an impact. My friend of long standing with whom I have shared an interest in books, education and language, actually outlined a plan. Considering that 'reading is the first and vital step for all gain in knowledge', my friend (she prefers anonymity) says our focus should be on the library.

On the contrary, very few schools have a functioning library with a full-time librarian. Even in the public discourse on education, the library is hardly ever finds a mention.

To 'kindle children's interest in reading', it is important to introduce them to books as early as possible. My friend, a children's book writer, herself, describes her "dream library" as one that is spacious, airy and well-lit. It should be comfortably furnished — even if sparsely — and ideally with mats, cushions and rugs and appropriately designed tables and chairs. It must have writing and drawing materials including a white board, markers, pencils and paper, and electronic equipment as suitable for promoting storytelling.

Books, libraries and education can be integrated systematically. Books, mostly in a language familiar to children, should be attractively arranged in open-access shelves. The most essential component of a library is the friendly librarian who has a passion for books. The walls should be adorned with framed pictures with some wall space for the students to hang the pictures they draw. They should be allowed to browse and draw, without compulsion.

What will a child learn in this library? She will acquire confidence, agency and love of books. In the process, she will also pick up literary etiquette which will come naturally to her if the librarian gently

demonstrates to the children how to use the library user. The librarian should encourage children to discuss the books they read. She should also facilitate book-related activities such as famous people being invited to read their own life stories. Essay writing, illustrating a text and reviewing books we saw children to the library.

Another feature of her plan pertains to the importance of environment for the child. She strongly suggests that all children in a school should be given some nourishment, such as milk and a boiled egg every day. Children are known to have fasted at school as they expect

breakfast at home and then to school hungry. Given the fact that nearly 50pc of Pakistan's children are malnourished, it is not surprising that feeding them is an excellent one. The dream library could be attached where the school could offer edibles to the students whenever they entered the library.

The plan outlined here could be tried on an experimental basis in one school in each province. The primary classes should have a library period every day that should be free of the rigours of 'normal' schooling. The results can be assessed a year later

— if she has her one — for reading. This should spur on the self-directed learning drive every child possesses. It will stimulate her creativity and self-discovery instinct as well as her curiosity. Month after month of some children learning the teacher's guidance if she has been given the right exposure.

Here is food for thought for the readers. A child enticed by a kindly librarian to come to the library she had hitherto shunned, remarked excitedly, "What lovely books. I had always been like my textbooks and I am bored stiff of them."

US military reported sees slight drop in sexual assaults

PENTAGON (INP) — The US military reported Thursday a slight drop in cases of sexual assault in its ranks, a first in almost 10 years and on the heels of Pentagon reforms.

Prevalence fell five percent in fiscal year 2023 compared to the previous year, from 8,924 to 8,515 cases reported to the US Department of Defense, which employs or supervises some 3.4 million military personnel and civilians. The figure has been increasing

almost constantly since 2011, with only one slight decrease in 2015.

Notably, the estimated prevalence is also decreasing: 6.8 percent of female soldiers and 1.3 percent of men indicated having experienced "unwanted sexual contact" in the previous year, compared to 8.4 percent and 1.5 percent respectively two years earlier.

The study that produced the figures, carried out every two years by survey, helps tackle under-reporting of cases of sexual violence.

Only 25 percent of cases are reported, compared to 20 percent two years ago.

Cases of sexual harassment are also declining, according to this report.

The results "demonstrate that the Department is making progress to prevent sexual assault and harassment in the military," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement.

"These early findings are encouraging," he added, stressing that there was much more work to be done.

Since 2023, the management of cases of sexual violence within the US army has been handled by special prosecutors, independent of the military hierarchy, a reform launched by President Joe Biden.

An independent commission of inquiry estimated in 2021 that 20,000 soldiers suffer sexual assault each year, less than 8,000 report this assault and less than 5,000 request an investigation, and only a small number lead to military justice action.



ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCI) receiving Deputy Head of the Mission UAE Embassy Mohammed Sultan Alkhatib at Chamber house.

police investigation department raid wrong flat, arrest two in Karachi

KARACHI (INP) — In a shocking incident, police investigation department raided a wrong flat and arrested two of the family in Ahsanabad apartments, Karachi.

Asper details, the Site Super Highway police conducted a raid to vacate a flat but they raid on a wrong flat which was rented by a teacher.

The family claimed that police thrown out their belongings and broke their beds and other items. They took two of the family to police

station after beating them and left an 80-year-old woman and her three daughters stranded on road in the dark.

The police officials said that they had raided the wrong flat, and the intended target was on the third floor, not the second. The family was given their flat back, but the police officers refused to compensate for the lost valuables.

The family claimed that the police officers threatened them to not disclosed any information about the incident

with anyone otherwise they will have to bear the consequences.

An investigation into the incident has been launched, and the Special Investigation Officer (SIO) has stated that the police officers involved will face action for their mistake. The SIO also warned that legal action will be taken against the complainant for providing false information.

In a separate incident, the CCTV footage from a bakery pointing to a popular Pakistani burger chain captures an alleged policeman and his accomplice engaged in a robbery.

The CCTV footage of the incident emerged in which an alleged police officer was seen conducting a robbery at a bakery of a Pakistani burger chain located in Karachi's Tariq Road area. The footage in the video can be seen arriving on a bike wearing police pants and shoes, later he held the staff hostage at gunpoint and fled after looting money from the cash counter.

Turkey court jails Kurdish leader for 42 years over 2014 unrest

ISTANBUL (INP) — A Turkish court on Thursday sentenced the former head of a pro-Kurdish party to 42 years in prison for his alleged role in deadly 2014 protests that erupted as Islamic State group jihadists overran the Syrian town of Kobane.

In jail since 2016, Selahattin Demirtas, 51, a two-time election rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was convicted of dozens of crimes including undermining state unity and the country's integrity.

The court in Sinan, on the outskirts of Ankara, also sentenced the People's Democratic Party (HDP) former co-chair Figen Yuksekdag to 30

years and three months in jail, private broadcaster NTV and rights group MLSA reported.

After the hearing, several lawmakers for the party, which has since been renamed the DEM, held up portraits of the two jailed leaders in the national assembly.

Fearing troubles after the case, the governors of at least 14 southern provinces with large Kurdish and Syrian communities banned demonstrations for four days, MLSA added.

The court ordered the release of some politicians, including

Gultan Kisanak, former mayor of the major pro-Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, but many others were handed jail terms.

The case against

former HDP members, including Demirtas and Yuksekdag, stems from a dark episode of the more than decade-long Syria war.

Thirty-seven people died in demonstrations against the Turkish army's inaction in the face of an IS offensive against

northern Syrian town. The fighting was visible from the Turkish side of the border and many in the Kurdish community viewed the army as complicit in the humanitarian disaster that followed.

The jihadists were driven out of Kobane in January 2015 by US-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters that Turkey officially views as terrorists.

Turkey views the HDP as the political front of outlawed Kurdish militants who have been waging an insurgency that has claimed tens of thousands of lives since 1984. The HDP blamed Turkish police for causing the deaths.

In 2023 testimony, Demirtas slammed the case against him.

"There's no single evidence to move away from outdated bloc logic and zero-sum geopolitical games."

Sehar Kamran discussed the global shift in power distribution over the last three decades, from bipolarity to multipolarity, and the current transition to a multipolar world. She quoted both President Vladimir Putin and President Xi Jinping, who advocated for a multipolar world where countries, regardless of size or strength, have equal rights to partici-



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administering the oath of office to Mr. Ali Pervaiz as the Minister of State, during an oath-taking ceremony, held at Awan-e-Sadr.

UK developing new radio wave weapon to destroy drones

LONDON (INP) — The United Kingdoms are developing a state-of-the-art new weapon that shoots drones out of the sky using radio waves.

The goal of the Radio Frequency Directed Energy Weapon (RFDEW) is to cause enemy combatants' vehicles and drones to stop in their tracks or fall out of the sky by interfering with or damaging their vital electrical components.

Its range of up to 1km, which could be increased in the future, allows it to be utilized on land, in the air, and on the sea.

The announcement of the new

weapon follows Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's promise to increase defence spending in the UK to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2030.

The device is being protected on the battlefield but also kept the UK a world leader in innovative military kit," stated James Carlidge, minister of defence procurement.

"The war in Ukraine has shown us the importance of developing uncrewed systems, but we must be able to defend against them too."

As we ramp up our defence spending in the coming years, our Defence Drone Strategy will ensure we are at the forefront

of this warfighting evolution." Through-out the summer, British soldiers will participate in extensive testing of the new weapons system.

Under Project Heron, a collaborative team from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) and Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) is developing it in collaboration with the UK industry.

"These game-changing systems will be able to deliver decisive operational advantage to the UK armed forces, saving lives and defeating deadly threats," stated Paul Hollinshead, chief executive of DSTL.

"We are already a force to be reckoned with on science and technology, and developments like RFDEW not only make our personnel more lethal and better protected on the battlefield but also keep the UK a world leader in innovative military kit," stated James Carlidge, minister of defence procurement.

"The war in Ukraine has shown us the importance of developing uncrewed systems, but we must be able to defend against them too."

As we ramp up our defence spending in the coming years, our Defence Drone Strategy will ensure we are at the forefront

Sehar Kamran participates in meeting of Russia-Islamic Countries Strategic Vision Group

KAZAN (INP) — Sehar Kamran, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and former Senator participated in the Annual Meeting of the Russia-Islamic Countries Strategic Vision Group, which focused on the theme "Russia - Islamic World."

A Just Multipolar World Order and Secure Development."

The event, organized by the Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group and chaired by President of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov, brought together distinguished guests and delegates from various nations in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan.

In her conversation with the press and media representatives, Sehar Kamran highlighted the importance of dialogue and the outcomes of the session in promoting peaceful co-existence and the development of all states.

She emphasized the need to move away from outdated bloc logic and zero-sum geopolitical games.

Sehar Kamran discussed the global shift in power distribution over the last three decades, from bipolarity to multipolarity, and the current transition to a multipolar world. She quoted both President Vladimir Putin and President Xi Jinping, who advocated for a multipolar world where countries, regardless of size or strength, have equal rights to partici-

ate in decision-making and fulfill their obligations.

The former Senator stressed the significance of multilateralism and a just global order, aligning with the sentiments of Muslim world leadership and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

She highlighted the potential for cooperation between OIC member states, Russia and China in addressing global challenges to peace and stability, particularly in the Middle East region.

Regarding Pakistan's position as a middle power state, Senator Sehar Kamran emphasized the

country's commitment to a careful balance between global goals and peaceful conflict resolution. Pakistan supports the establishment of a multipolar world order and upholds the supremacy of international law in interstate relations.

Sehar Kamran emphasized the urgent need for cooperation in addressing global challenges, such as climate change, and promoting dialogue between societies, civilizations, and nations. She expressed confidence in the forum's ability to foster constructive dialogue and contribute to a fairer, democratic, and just global order.

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MADINAH: Federal Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain meeting with Pakistani pilgrims in Madinah.

PAKISTAN RAILWAYS

PAKISTAN RAILWAYS
Quetta
Tender Notice

General tender based on through rates to be invited by the Divisional Superintendent, P.R. Quetta from well reputed contractor having valid sale tax number (NTN) for supply of ice including all charges, to Station Master Sibi application for issue of tender form will be received in welfare Branch Office, P.R. Quetta up to 11:00 hrs. on 02-05-2024 and tender form will be issued during working hours on the same day on prescribed form costing Rs. 500/- on non-refundable. Tender will be received up to 12:30 hours on 02-05-2024 and shall be opened at 12:30 hours on the same day in the Office of Divisional Accounts Officer Quetta in the presence of tenders who make here to attend. Approximately Quantity is 320 KG ice per day to SMOs during summer season. Supply period will effect from 15-05-2024 to 15-08-2024 earnest money in hand 20,000/- which will be deposited to the Divisional Accounts Officer, P.R. Quetta duly supported by the bid bond money Rs. 7000/- Railway Administration has the right to accept or reject any tender or all without assigning reasons.

On the restoration of Sibi Hurlal section 114 KG additional ice will be supplied to Hurlal section.

(M. Imranul Jafar)
Divisional Superintendent
P.R. Quetta, Railways Quetta

PD(Q)335/23

TENDER NOTICE	
TSE-232405415643 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE DIVISION BARKHAN invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates Tender Fee Rs. 1000/- and Bid Security 2%.	
S.No	Name of Works
1	Development of Local Bore Well Based Jan
	E/CPet
	2,920,000
	Khan Phulani Zaktani Chawata District Barkhan
	PSDP No. 8019-2023-24)
Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 2,044,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. FICo Category Code C-3 and above (Up to 25 million) and Specialized Code is (CE01J) & Ce10. Income Tax Registration certificate is required. (3 successfully similar work completion certificate each of estimated cost or above, for the last 03 years). The bidding firm must submit Company's latest Bank Account Statement or Bank Credit Line Certificate. Authority Letter addressed undersigned, specifically for this IT issued by the owner of the firm on judicial stamp paper. The bidder should have fully operational office/branch. The firm must be provide from last 3 year audit report duly issued by the registered with ICAIP. The bidder must be submit the Income Tax Return of the last (3) three year. The Bidders must comply with all prevailing Govt. laws as notified by FBR from time to time. The firm must be Deposited a Tender fee Amounting to Rs. 1000/- in the hand of account No. CO-723 Through grant chiller. Submission of the required Bid Security in original Affidavit on stamp paper of Rs. 100/- duly notarized to the effect that if Bidder has submitted the correct and complete information along with the bid/offer. If any document information is found forged/ engineered/ fake/ bogus at any stage, the bidder may be declared as blacklisted in accordance with law and the performance guarantee and payment, if any may be forfeited. Signature and company/ firm seal on every page of the bidding document. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed. 1,000 PKR Advance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NT to 03 June, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The tenders must be submitted latest by 03 June, 2024 till 09:15 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 10:15 AM Address: Barkhan	
Phone no: 0296862429 fax no: 029686242	
Email: wha@sta@gmail.com	
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE DIVISION BARKHAN	
PRQ No.2397/15-05-2024	
www.dgpp.gov.pk dgpp.gov.pk dgpp.gov.pk dgpp.gov.pk	

KP merged tribal districts police to receive enhanced privileges

PESHAWAR (INP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan has reiterated his commitment to providing all prevailing privileges to the police force with aim to bolstering the professionalism and welfare of police personnel in the merged tribal districts.

During a meeting with a representative delegation of police from the merged districts at the Central Police Office in Peshawar,

IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan emphasized the importance of developing the police force, enhancing personnel welfare, and making employment more attractive.

Key officials, including Additional Inspector General Headquarters Awaral Khan, Capital City Police Officer

Peshawar Syed Ashfaq Anwar, and AIG Amalghatam Districts Dr. Qureshi Khan, attended the meeting.

The delegation raised various issues, including the need for specialized unit constables in CTD, FRP, Special Branch, and Elite Force to be allowed transfers and given stop pay due to non-attendance and other unavoidable reasons.

Hayat Khan directed immediate implementation of these measures by the concerned police authorities.

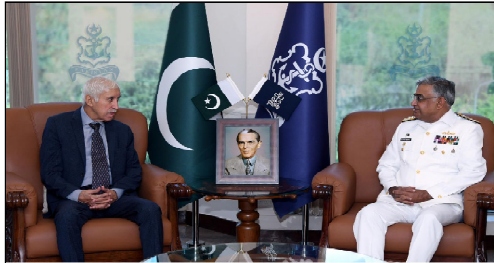
He also instructed regional and district police officers to ensure timely promotions according to existing rules and regulations.

Additionally, the delegation urged the KP to expedite resolution of their cases pending

with the provincial government, particularly in the fourth phase of impeachment. IGP Khan assured them that their demands would be addressed promptly.

Highlighting the welfare of former levies and special officers martyred before the merger, IGP Khan mentioned that summaries for the recruitment of their children and those with less than ten years of service, who are ineligible for pension, have been sent to the government and are expected to be implemented soon.

This proactive approach by IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan underscores the ongoing efforts to strengthen the police force in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and enhance the welfare of its personnel.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Visited Naval Headquarters.

SC issues show-cause notices to Yawda, Mustafa Kamal on remarks against judiciary

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Friday issued show-cause notices to lawmakers Faisal Yawda and Mustafa Kamal, seeking responses from them on their recent rhetoric against the judiciary.

The development came as a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and including Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice

Naeem Akhtar Afghan presided over the proceedings of a suo motu notice taken a day ago against independent Senator Yawda. On Wednesday, two senators Yawda and PML-N's Talal Chaudhry had held separate pressers, questioning the Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges' claim that intelligence agencies had interfered in the judicial affairs.

Without any evidence no one had the right to point a finger at the institutions, they added.

The next day, two MNA Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P's) Mustafa

Kamal and Istekham-i-Pakistan Party's (IPP's) Awn Chaudhry also highlighted the judiciary's alleged shortcomings and called for establishing ethical standards for the judges.

Kamal claimed the judiciary had set "ethical standards" for politicians and the dual citizenship of judges was a "big question mark" and the judiciary should be made answerable on this issue, while Awn had termed it a crisis that would lead to an "anarchy in the country".

At the outset of the hearing, CJP Isa asked the AAG if he had listened to Yawda's press conference and whether it amounted to contempt of court.

To this, Rehman replied that the stream he heard had some words "muted". The chief justice then remarked that there had been "more" statements against him in comparison but he had "ignored" them. "They took advantage of [me] ignoring that by thinking 'we can also make a speech', Justice Isa said.

"If [I] have done wrong then name me [but] will not allow the institution (judiciary) to be targeted," the top judge asserted. Stating that institutions belonged to the public, CJP Isa observed that "defaming" them was not equivalent to serving the country. "There can be faults in institutions. I cannot bear someone else's burden," he added.

The chief justice then said that if a wrong decision had been made, then "criticism" should be done. He further said that the judiciary was "trying to do good deeds", highlighting that the apex court was also following the Practice and Procedures Act.

Justice Isa noted that one to wield a gun was the weakest as "he has nothing to say", adding that the second-most weakest person was who hurled abuses. "A person who would have [valid] arguments would silence even us judges," he said. The top judge emphasized that he had taken oath of his role "not for himself but for the institution".



MUZAFFARABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Tariq Bashir Cheema suspended from NA over Zartaj Gul spat

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly session, presided over by Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, concluded amidst heated exchanges and significant parliamentary decisions.

Despite his apology, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq suspended PML-Q MNA Tariq Bashir Cheema for the entire session of the day due to a bitter exchange between Cheema and Zartaj Gul the previous day. The decision to suspend Cheema was made to maintain decorum and uphold parliamentary standards.

The question raised by the speaker in this regard was accepted by the House.

Meanwhile, in a ruling by the speaker, TikTokers, YouTubeers, and media personnel were banned from recording videos in the corridors of

Parliament. This decision aimed to ensure the sanctity of parliamentary proceedings and prevent disruptions caused by unauthorized video recordings.

The National Assembly approved a motion for the formation of standing committees, empowering the speaker to form and include members in these committees.

The motion, presented by Syed Naveed Qamar of the PPP, was accepted by the House, facilitating the establishment of essential parliamentary committees.

Moreover, Defense Minister Khawaja Asif emphasized the importance of maintaining parliamentary decorum amidst gatherings of party members outside the National Assembly Hall.

"People belonging to one

party gather outside the National Assembly Hall. This is Parliament House, not Mochi Darwaza or D Chowk," he remarked.

The session was adjourned indefinitely, marking the conclusion of the fifth session of the National Assembly.

On Thursday, PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) claimed that PML-Q MNA Cheema abusive language with SIC lawmaker Zartaj Gul.

Apart from opposition members, Cheema's behaviour was also termed inappropriate by the government benches. Women members of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) expressed solidarity with Zartaj Gul. Tariq Bashir Cheema went to Zartaj Gul and said obnoxious words to PTI-backed SIC MNA Zartaj Gul.

Punjab Finance Minister announces interest-free loans for farmers

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Finance Minister Mujtabi Shujaat Rehman has announced the provision of interest-free loans to farmers during the crucial crop sowing season for bolstering agricultural endeavors. This financial assistance seeks to empower farmers and facilitate their agricultural activities.

Furthermore, Minister Rehman emphasized the need to ensure swift financial support, within a timeframe of three months, to the wives and children of employees who tragically lost their lives during their tenure of service. This measure reflects the government's commitment to providing comprehensive support to the families of deceased employees. These announcements were made during the fourth session of the Standing Committee on Legislation and Privatization of the Cabinet, presided over by Minister Rehman. The meeting was attended by notable figures in-

cluding Provincial Minister for Law and Communications Malik Sohob Bharat, Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Malik, and key officials from related departments.

During the session, a nine-point agenda was deliberated upon, encompassing crucial matters such as agreements with financial institutions, approval of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with governmental bodies, and a review of pertinent legislative acts.

Minister Rehman directed relevant authorities to expedite processes related to the issuance of Kisan Cards in collaboration with the Bank of Punjab and the implementation of the Jalalpur Irrigation Project in partnership with Pakistan Railways.

Moreover, discussions revolved around amendments to the ordinances and acts, including the Social Security Ordinance 1965 and the Punjab

Heritage Act 2005. Minister Bharat commended proposed amendments by the Punjab Employees Social Security Institute, particularly in facilitating the establishment of a medical college in Faisalabad.

Additionally, Minister Malik stressed the importance of tax compliance as a national duty, urging citizens to fulfill their obligations.

Minister Bharat highlighted the significance of promoting religious tourism in Punjab, emphasizing the need for effective utilization of resources by the Tourism Department to showcase the region's rich cultural heritage.

The session concluded with a directive from Minister Rehman to relevant authorities to ensure meticulous planning and execution of proposed initiatives, underscoring the government's unwavering commitment to fostering socio-economic development in Punjab.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin chairing a meeting at NADRA Headquarters.

Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination Ahsan Iqbal vows to uplift sports

SIALKOT (INP): Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination Ahsan Iqbal vowed to uplift sports in the country.

Addressing the national conference in connection with the revival of sports, Iqbal said: "2025 has been declared the year of revitalization of the sports in the country."

He emphasized the need for mental strength in a bid to emerge victorious, saying, "The victory not only comes from the field but from the mindset."

The steps are being taken to also promote institutional sports," he said. Iqbal said: "The premier has given me an addi-

tional portfolio of sports. The conference is quite important."

"Two countries [Pakistan and India] will be held accountable for their completion of 100 years of independence in 2047," he said. Taking an indirect jibe at the political opposition, Iqbal said: "If any nation is deemed corrupt, it really faces defeat."

Pakistan hockey captain Ammad Butt said that the Green Shirts were ready to beat Japan in the next event. Expressing his thoughts during the event hosted by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Butt expressed satisfaction with the team's performance in the re-

cently held Azlan Shah Cup. "The team showed good performance. I do not feel that my team lacked something."

Meanwhile, Sufyan Khan said: "There was no difficulty during the tournament with the inclusion of the senior players and skipper."

"I am feeling that I am watching a dream. The previous premier had closed all the departments," Sufyan said.

On the other side, expressing his thoughts, Abdul Rehman said: "The Azlan Shah Cup was my first international event. It was a heart-breaking moment to get dubbed at the hands of Japan."



ISLAMABAD: IHC country representative Mahmood Akhtar Cheema presenting an annual monitoring and evaluation report on UGP & forestry to the PM's Coordinator on climate change Romina Khurshid Alam.