

# QUETTA VOICE

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## Chief Minister Proposes Parliamentary Committee for Balochistan's Share in CPEC

Manan Mandokhail:

QUETTA: In an effort to ensure Balochistan receives its fair share of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has suggested forming a parliamentary committee. This proposal was presented during a Balochistan Assembly session on Monday evening, chaired by Speaker Captain (Retd) Khaliq Achakzai.

Chief Minister Bugti stressed the importance of a unified approach to advocating for Balochistan's interests at the federal level. "We want to include the op-

position and achieve consensus to effectively represent Balochistan's case in CPEC projects," he said. Bugti recommended that the parliamentary committee comprise members from both the treasury and opposition benches to collectively address the province's issues and ensure its participation in the profitable CPEC initiatives.

### Asad Baloch Lashes Out At The Government

Nevertheless, the ses-

sion revealed significant discontent among opposition members. Asad Baloch, leader of the Balochistan National Party (Awami), condemned the government for allegedly sidelining the province in the CPEC projects. "This is a clear injustice to the people of Balochistan. We demand justice and a platform where our voices can be heard," Baloch declared passionately.

Opposition leader Mir Younas Zehri also voiced his concerns. He pointed out that the opposition had not been involved in discus-

sions regarding the proposed parliamentary committee. "The opposition was not taken into confidence about the formation of this committee. This lack of communication contradicts the consensus the government claims to seek," Zehri remarked. The session highlighted the urgent need for dialogue and cooperation between the government and opposition to ensure Balochistan's fair participation in CPEC. The success of the proposed parliamentary committee will depend on genuine collaboration across party lines.

## Power Outage Halts Balochistan Assembly Session, Highlighting Widespread Energy Crisis

Syed Ali Shah:



QUETTA: During a session of the Balochistan Assembly, a sudden power breakdown caused the entire house to plunge into darkness, bringing the proceedings to an abrupt halt. Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly, Captain (R) Khaliq Achakzai, highlighted the irony of the situation by noting that the chief of the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) had been

summoned to the assembly to explain the ongoing issue of unannounced load shedding in the province. The unexpected blackout underscored the very problem the assembly aimed to address. Mir Sadiq Umrani, a central leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the provincial minister for irrigation, used the incident to emphasize the dire conditions faced by residents in

various parts of Balochistan, including Naseerabad and Sibi, where temperatures are typically high. Umrani pointed out that if the power situation in the assembly was this poor, the situation for ordinary citizens must be even worse. He urged the media to critically report on the inefficiencies and issues plaguing QESCO to draw attention to the broader problems affecting the region.

## 17 terrorists killed, 5 soldiers martyred in separate KP operations: ISPR

RAWALPINDI: Seventeen terrorists were killed and another two were injured on Monday in two separate operations conducted by security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military's media affairs wing said. In a press release, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that in an operation conducted in Tank

District on Monday, "own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location, as a result of which ten terrorists were sent to hell". Another engagement occurred in the "general area [of] Bagh, Khyber District, wherein the security forces sent seven terrorists to hell while two terrorists were injured", the ISPR said. However, "during

the intense exchange of fire, five brave soldiers" — Naik Muhammad Ashfaq Butt, 32, resident of district Kahuta; Lance Naik Syed Danish Akbar, 30, resident of district Poonch; Sepoy Taimoor Malik, 32, resident of district Laysah; Sepoy Nadir Sager, 22, resident of district Bagh; and Sepoy Muhammad Yasir, 23, NEWS/DE/28K.

## Ziarat's Untapped Potential for Tourism and Job Creation

Syed Ali Shah:



In a strategic move to bolster tourism, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has announced ambitious plans to develop Ziarat into a premier tourist destination in Pakistan. During a review meeting of the Ziarat Development Authority, Bugti emphasized the need to adopt successful strategies from the Galiyat Development Authority to ensure effective tourism planning. This initiative is poised to unlock Ziarat's immense potential, creating job opportunities and promoting the lush green valley renowned for its natural beauty.

Ziarat, home to the world's second-largest juniper forest, requires special attention to preserve its unique ecosystem while promoting sustainable tourism. The region's cold weather, rugged mountains, ancient juniper trees, and abundant fruit orchards make it a natural magnet for tourists. With the right infrastructure and strategic planning, Ziarat can be transformed into a top-tier destination that attracts both domestic and international travelers.

Chief Minister Bugti highlighted the necessity of cre-

ating a pilgrimage tourism project modeled after the scenic Galiyat region, known for its tourist-friendly infrastructure and natural allure. He directed the project director to integrate these insights into Ziarat's development blueprint, ensuring that the region benefits from tried-and-true tourism strategies.

On arrival, Chief Minister Bugti was received by Commissioner Sibi Division, Bashir Ahmed Bangulzai, along with other high-level officers.

During the meeting, Bugti reiterated his commitment to introducing practical policies aimed at promoting tourism across Balochistan, with a special focus on pilgrimage tourism.

"Resources will be provided without delay for viable tourism projects," assured Bugti, underlining the provincial government's dedication to supporting and accelerating tourism initiatives.

The development of Ziarat as a premier tourist destination is not just about attracting visitors; it's about creating sustainable economic growth for the region.

Tourism can serve as a catalyst for job creation, providing employment opportunities for local residents in hospitality, tour services, retail, and other supporting industries.

Moreover, the influx of tourists can spur investment in infrastructure, including better roads, hotels, and recreational facilities, further enhancing the region's appeal. In addition to economic benefits, promoting tourism in Ziarat will help raise awareness about the importance of preserving the unique juniper forests, which are a critical part of

the region's natural heritage. Eco-tourism initiatives can be developed to educate visitors about the ecological significance of the juniper trees and the need for conservation efforts.

The Chief Minister's proactive approach is expected to pave the way for significant advancements in Balochistan's tourism sector. However, to realize this vision, continuous focus and investment are essential. The government should prioritize the following actions:

**Infrastructure Development:** Invest in improving transportation, accommodation, and recreational facilities to make Ziarat more accessible and comfortable for tourists.

**Marketing and Promotion:** Launch marketing campaigns to promote Ziarat's unique attractions to a broader audience, both domestically and internationally.

**Sustainable Practices:** Implement eco-friendly tourism practices to preserve the natural environment and promote conservation efforts. Community involvement: Engage local communities in tourism projects to ensure they benefit from and support the development initiatives.

By focusing on these areas, the government can transform Ziarat into a landmark destination that not only attracts visitors but also fosters sustainable economic growth and environmental preservation. The development of Ziarat is not just a tourism initiative; it's a comprehensive strategy for regional development that promises to bring prosperity and recognition to Balochistan.




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EDITORIAL

Editor: Asim Khan

Urgency and Impact of Balochistan's Child Marriage Prevention Bill

In a commendable and transformative move, the Balochistan Cabinet has approved a bill aimed at preventing child marriages in the province. Announced by government spokesman Asim Khan during a press conference in Quetta, this significant legislative step is a testament to the government's dedication to the protection and development of its youngest citizens. This initiative, part of a comprehensive 30-point agenda, stands as a beacon of hope and progress in the region.

Child marriage is a deeply rooted issue that has long plagued many parts of the world, including Balochistan province of Pakistan. It robs children, particularly girls, of their childhood, education, and the opportunity to grow into healthy, educated, and empowered adults.

The physical and psychological impacts of early marriage are profound and often devastating. The delay in addressing this critical issue has allowed these harmful practices to persist, compromising the future of countless children. The urgency of this bill cannot be overstated. Early child marriages violate fundamental human rights, exposing minors to increased risks of health complications, abuse, and unwelcome pregnancies. The bill signals a bold stance by the Balochistan government against this harmful practice, ensuring a safer and more promising future for its youth. It is a necessary and laudable step that sets a precedent for other provinces to follow.

Spokesperson Rind emphasized the government's commitment to child welfare, stating, "The Balochistan government is committed to ensuring the protection and development of our youth. This bill will help us address a serious issue that affects the future of our children." Such a proactive approach to child rights is essential for fostering a society where every child can thrive.

The cabinet's agenda didn't stop at the child marriage prevention bill. Several other key initiatives were approved, reflecting a holistic approach to governance and development.

These include the establishment of a forensic laboratory, the creation of a women police station in Sibi, and measures to ensure merit-based police appointments, among others. In conclusion, the Balochistan government's recent decisions demonstrate a steadfast commitment to progress and development. The approval of the child marriage prevention bill is a monumental step towards safeguarding children's rights, ensuring they have the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives. This initiative, along with other measures, positions Balochistan as a model of proactive governance and a beacon of hope for its people.

Boiling point

By Huma Yusuf:

ANOTHER heatwave, another slew of alarming headlines. We are better prepared than we were in 2015, when over 2,500 people lost their lives to soaring temperatures. Public awareness has improved, and emergency measures such as relief camps have been mobilised in urban areas. But Pakistan is still a long way from building the resilience—in all respects, sociopolitical to infrastructural—that will need to endure the ravages of climate change, particularly extreme heat.

Concern about extreme heat has largely been driven by economic considerations. The Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research has estimated that global warming will reduce global income by 19 per cent by 2049. The ADB has found that extreme heat results in 650 billion hours of annual labour losses globally (equivalent to 148 million full-time jobs). Of immediate relevance to Pakistan, 2022 research from Dartmouth University found that an annual increase in the temperature of the five hottest days of the year can reduce economic growth by a percentage point.

This economic fall-

out is driven by decreases in labour productivity and supply as the working poor become unwell, supply chain disruption, and agricultural loss. A recent policy report by LSE's Grantham Institute on the impact of high temperatures on Bangladesh's workforce found that without proactive measures, supply would decrease by 46.2pc by 2080 in a world with a three-degree temperature rise.

But extreme heat is not about GDP alone. Evidence is mounting that heatwaves amplify inequality. Women, the rural and urban poor, marginalised groups and those with less education are more likely to die in heatwaves. These are typically groups that have the least access to physical and poor healthcare. And we cannot ignore the demographic: 1.2bn urban and rural poor will be coping without cooling solutions by 2030. Extreme heat means extreme stress. Women are especially hard hit by exhaustion and dehydration. An FAO report published in March, female-headed households lose 8pc of their ability to heat stress; in the case of female farm

labour—a key working constituency in Pakistan—each day of extreme high temperatures reduces the value of crops produced by women by 5pc as compared to men. This is because when the mercury rises, women focus more on unpaid domestic work—sourcing water, caring for heat-affected dependents, and cooking under prohibitive conditions. The physical toll of extreme heat on women, particularly pregnant ones, is also more adverse.

Worse, high temperatures also correlate with an increase in gender-based violence. A 2023 study by JAMA Psychiatry based on research in Pakistan, India and Nepal found that a one degree Celsius increase in the average annual temperature linked to a 6.3pc increase in incidents of physical and sexual abuse. Again, this is no surprise when temperatures rise, crops fail, daily wage earners struggle to work, health and medical products are in short supply, and the pressures resulting from these realities kick in just as families are trapped indoors to escape the sun. Extreme heat means extreme stress, driving not only domestic violence but also mental health. Research from the

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

Chandni Kakar:

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

Impact on Agriculture

Decreased rainfall and disrupted rainfall patterns, particularly affecting vulnerable populations, including infants and young children. Overexploitation of Tubewells and Falling Water Levels: Balochistan faces the challenge of over 50,000 legal and illegal tubewells extracting large quantities of groundwater daily, leading to a rapid decline in underground water levels, exacerbating the water crisis.

Migration and Economic Consequences:

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

Deforestation and Substandard Fuel:

Primary Causes Experts attribute large-scale climate change in Balochistan to deforestation, especially the cutting of juniper forests in Ziarat, and the use of substandard fuel in winter.

Health Implications During Severe Droughts:

Past severe

These practices have increased carbon levels in the atmosphere and disrupted rainfall patterns. Impact on Agriculture: Decreased rainfall and disrupted rainfall patterns, particularly affecting vulnerable populations, including infants and young children.

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

Pakistan's Role in the Global Climate Crisis:

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

Impact on Weather Systems and Melting Glaciers:

Climate change has disrupted weather patterns, affecting monsoon rains and winter lies in the region. The rapid melting of glaciers, partly caused by a deadly heatwave, has further strained water resources.

Multiple Factors and the Way Forward:

Provincial Secretary of Environment and Climate Change, Niaz Ahmed, emphasizes that climate change is a global problem. Balochistan

authorises the government to appoint tribal members (drawing on a pool solicited from the chief justice of the high court) and other elements higher than currently being done by the judiciary. This represents a significant encroachment of executive authority on judicial functioning, leaving the door open to misuse and version for a wide range of political purposes.

Overall, the bill has solicited an outcry from media and rights-based civil society, along with the expected opposition from PTI-SMC members in the legislature. This alone should give the government reason to consider an alternative version for a wide range of political purposes.

While there is no doubt that social media disinformation has been a key plank of the PTI's strategy, such a punitive legal instrument in the hands of state authorities can only induce coercive intention.

Finally, the structural critique of setting up a parallel judicial structure, raised forcefully by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, is also worth raising here.

As the rights body has stated in a recent statement, the 180-day tender norms that govern proceedings, while possibly well-intentioned, undermines the quality of the legal process, may lead to large penalties in relative haste. It also weakens the provisions of existing laws in the country.

Last year, Russia also became China's top source of oil supply, overtaking Saudi Arabia, providing discounted, cheaper crude. China is Russia's biggest trading partner, exporting a range of products from cars and machinery to electronics.

Both countries face pressure and sanctions — on different grounds — over their growingly increasing dependence on each other, even if Western actions against Russia are of a different order. This has created a greater incentive and common interest for China and Russia to join forces to resist US pressure. While there will be limits to the Sino-Russian economic relationship over time because the interests of the two countries don't completely align in many counts, for now, US policies have ensured they will maintain a close alignment that they can counter Washington's pressure.

In defamation's name

By Umair Javed:

LAST week, the Punjab Assembly hastily passed a defamation bill, despite grave concerns raised by journalists, unions and rights bodies, as well as opposition legislators. The bill, which now only needs the governor's assent before coming into force, proposes special tribunals to deal with cases of fake news, and a new offence of "purposeful 'misinformation'", with punishments ranging from a fine of Rs3 million to imprisonment for up to 10 times that amount as punitive damages.

There are several reasons why the passage of this bill is a worrying development. It provides a pretext for the state to clamp down on speech in the name of fighting fake news; it opens up a new route to victimise opposition politicians; and it empowers unaccountable, single-member platforms outside the existing legal apparatus to determine what constitutes defamation.

Before getting into these in detail, there is sufficient ground to wonder about the constitutionality of this new law of this nature helps in addressing its targeted problem in the first place. The bill is denying that the widespread use of social media outlets has created an overabundance of information, much of which is free from the burden of

critical voices (such as those of the opposition). This point was subtly demonstrated by representatives of the Lahore Press Club who pointed out the double standards of the current government, which sided with journalists against the Peca amendments while it stepped into power.

Such a punitive legal instrument in the hands of state authorities can only induce coercive intention, and sees segments of its population as a source of insecurity and risk. In this vision of citizens, the imbalance between civil and security apparatuses within the structure of the state itself.

A second reason for caution lies in the timing of the proposed law, in which this bill has been drafted. The last two years have seen a proliferation of rights violations, culminating in the suppression of the PTI through a variety of legal and extra-legal means. The opposition party's use of

social media is frequently cited as a key reason for its enduring popularity, which allowed it to wage an unprecedented, insurgent election campaign and emerge as the largest party in the country.

This defamation bill places the regulation of social media as one of its central objectives. In other words, it is reasonable to think of this as a key legal instrument that can be deployed against an already suppressed political entity, further limiting its ability to play its role as an effective opposition.

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Tightening embrace

By Malecha Lodhi:

WITH election politics dictating current US foreign policy moves, Washington's actions are driving China and Russia much closer in strengthened strategic partnership. The unintended consequences of American policies were laid bare by the outcome of the recent meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing.

This was Putin's first overseas visit since he secured a fifth term as president. It took place against the backdrop of tough US warnings to China not to support Russia's war effort in Ukraine, where Russian forces are reported to be advancing in an offensive in the northeast. Washington imposed sanctions earlier this month on several Chinese companies for allegedly supplying Russia with components for military use. This happened

immediately after Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Beijing, where he raised US concerns about China's military dealings with Russia. This meeting was a sharp response from Chinese officials, who dismissed US accusations as "groundless". Foreign Minister Wang Yi shot back, saying "China is neither the creator of the Ukraine crisis nor a party to it".

Subsequently, the Biden administration significantly raised tariffs on Chinese imports including electric vehicles, computer chips and medical products. The statement criticised the Biden administration's strategy and also expressed the US' "strong disapproval" around the world that "pose a direct security threat to China and Russia".

Both pledged to counter America's "destructive and hostile policies" that they cast as undermining global peace and stability. China and Russia have a common interest to resist US pressure but ties have limits. The lengthy, comprehensive statement also listed the steps the two countries planned to take to solidify military ties and scale up economic relations while identifying other areas of cooperation for a "new era of partnership". Both reiterated their recognition of Taiwan as an "inalienable" part of China. China joined the Russian-led "Group of Nations" activities in Europe. The statement also expressed their shared view on North Korea. Conspicuous by its absence was any Chinese endorsement of Russia's "new era of partnership" with Ukraine. China has adopted a "neutral" position on the Ukraine conflict and offered to

be a mediator in the crisis. From the outset, it had misgivings about Russia's 2022 invasion. It often communicated these to Moscow and occasionally even publicly voiced them in a veiled manner. In the meeting between Xi and Putin, the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in 2022, the Chinese leader conveyed his reservations over escalation of the Ukraine crisis. Putin later acknowledged that "questions" were raised by the Chinese president. China's repeated calls for a ceasefire and negotiations for a political solution reflects its strong view on North Korea. Last year, it also offered a 12-point plan for a potential settlement of the Ukraine crisis.

But hostile US actions and its trade and technology embargoes only deepened the ties between the two. China and Russia have engaged in transactions that can aid Russia's military machine have appeared even more cautious. Nevertheless, Beijing has responded strongly to US trade and technology embargoes by supplying critical weapon components. It has counteracted US charges by insisting it is

closely with Russia and relegated differences with Moscow on Ukraine and other issues to the background. To be sure, China-Russia interests do not converge on many issues especially as China, as a rising global power, has nothing to gain by upending or destabilising the international system, while Russia has few companies to act responsibly. Moreover, they confront different challenges and have different stakes in global stability.

US threats of sanctions against China and Russia have engaged in transactions that can aid Russia's military machine have appeared even more cautious. Nevertheless, Beijing has responded strongly to US trade and technology embargoes by supplying critical weapon components. It has counteracted US charges by insisting it is

not supplying lethal arms and it "prudently handles the export of dual-use items in accordance with laws and regulations". Mounting US pressure on this count has led Beijing to rebuff Washington by strengthening its military relations with Russia.

Their deepening strategic cooperation has in turn perturbed Western nations. Uneasy China may be with Putin's Ukraine adventure, but what the war has done is to significantly deepen its economic ties with Russia and tied the economies of the two countries more closely. For Russia, facing Western sanctions, growing economic relations with China have enabled it to mitigate the impact of Western financial and trade curbs. In 2023, two-way trade between them reached a record high of \$240 billion. The bulk of this trade is conducted in rubles and renminbi.

Last year, Russia also became China's top source of oil supply, overtaking Saudi Arabia, providing discounted, cheaper crude. China is Russia's biggest trading partner, exporting a range of products from cars and machinery to electronics. Both countries face pressure and sanctions — on different grounds — over their growingly increasing dependence on each other, even if Western actions against Russia are of a different order. This has created a greater incentive and common interest for China and Russia to join forces to resist US pressure. While there will be limits to the Sino-Russian economic relationship over time because the interests of the two countries don't completely align in many counts, for now, US policies have ensured they will maintain a close alignment that they can counter Washington's pressure.

Over 1,000 students rescued amid Haripur School Inferno

HARIPUR (INP) - In a harrowing incident on Monday, over 1,000 students and teachers were safely rescued from a devastating fire that engulfed the Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Sirikot, Haripur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The fire, caused by an electrical short-circuit, rapidly spread through the building due to the presence of flammable materials, including wooden furniture in classrooms. As the fire broke out, quick-thinking locals and rescuers sprang into action, managing to evacuate all students and staff members before the flames consumed the entire structure. Despite strong winds complicating the firefighting efforts, the community's swift response ensured that no injuries were reported. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's power distribution system, leading to an increase in short-circuit-related fires. The rising temperatures have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of Pakistan's power distribution system, leading to an increase in short-circuit-related fires. The heatwave is expected to persist for another two days, raising concerns about the adequacy of current summer vacation schedules. Traditionally, summer breaks in Islamabad, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa start from June 1 to August 15. However, the shifting weather patterns suggest an urgent need to reconsider this timing to better align with the new climate realities. In a related tragic incident, a fire at a home in the Andromeda Gate neighborhood of Dera Ismail Khan claimed the lives of two children and severely burned four other individuals. This further underscores the pressing need for improved safety measures and infrastructure to cope with the increasingly harsh climate conditions.



LAHORE: Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed unveiling the plaque at Superior University Lahore.

Israeli airstrikes kill at least 35 in Rafah, Gaza authorities say

GAZA (INP) - Israeli air strikes killed at least 35 Palestinians and wounded dozens in an area in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah designated for the displaced, Palestinian health and civil emergency service officials said. The Israeli military said its air force struck a Hamas compound in Rafah and that the strike was carried out with "precise ammunition and on the basis of precise intelligence." It took out Hamas' chief of staff for the West Bank and another senior official behind deadly attacks on Israelis, it said. "The IDF is aware of reports indicating that as a result of the strike and fire that was ignited several civilians in the area were harmed. The incident is under review." The spokesman for the health ministry in Gaza, Ashraf Al-Qidra, said 35 people were killed and dozens others, most of them women and children, were wounded in the attack. The strike took place in Tel Al-Sultan neighborhood in western Rafah, where thousands of people were taking shelter after many fled the eastern areas of the city where Israeli forces began a deadly attack over two weeks ago. The International Committee of the Red Cross said its field hospital in Rafah was receiving an influx of casualties, and that other hospitals also were taking in a large number of patients. Senior Hamas officials said the attack in Rafah was a "massacre", holding the United States responsible for aiding Israel with weapons and money. "The air strikes burnt the tents, the tents are melting and the people's bodies are also on fire," said one of the residents who arrived at the Kuwaiti hospital in Rafah. Israel says it wants to root out Hamas fighters held up in Rafah and rescue hostages it says are being held in the area, but its assault has worsened the plight of civilians and caused an international outcry. Nearly 36,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive, Gaza's health ministry says. Israel launched the operation after Hamas attacked southern Israeli communities on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people and seizing more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. An official with knowledge of the matter said a decision had been taken to resume the talks this week based on new proposals from Egyptian and Qatari mediators, and with "active U.S. involvement." However, a Hamas official played down the report, telling Reuters: "It is not true."

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At least 15 dead in United States (US) tornadoes, storms

TAXAS (INP) - At least 15 people were killed across the central United States as tornadoes and other extreme storms hit several states including Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma, officials said. Rescue efforts were ongoing and hundreds of thousands of customers were without power after the storm struck the Southern Plains region beginning late Saturday in Texas, Cooke County Sheriff Ray Sappington told a press conference that seven people were dead after a tornado ripped through the Valley View area, north of Dallas, according to local ABC affiliate WFAA. Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed a decree for four counties that frees up money and staff to help people whose homes were damaged or destroyed. The twister destroyed homes and a gas station, and overturned

vehicles on an interstate highway. Sappington called the damage "pretty extensive," in an interview with The Weather Channel. In Oklahoma, at least two people were dead after a tornado hit Mayes County late Saturday, the county head of emergency management Johnny Janzen told the Fox News affiliate in Tulsa. And in Arkansas, five people were killed in storms in the early hours of Sunday, authorities confirmed to local ABC station KATV. Power lines and trees were downed, and some areas experienced flash flooding. Another death was reported in Louisville, Kentucky. Craig Greenberg said, as far north as Indiana, the start of the Indianapolis 500 was delayed for four hours Sunday due to storms in the area, with fans asked to exit the bleachers and seek shelter. A crowd of 125,000 was expected for the race, one of the most emblematic car races in America.



QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti addressing on Balochistan Assembly session.

Govt needs to realize auto parts industry in upcoming budget: PAAPAM

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts and Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) has urged the government to realize the struggling auto parts industry supporting millions of families across the country in the upcoming budget. In the budget proposals submitted to the government, the PAAPAM stressed the need of practical measures in this connection. In a joint statement on Monday, Chairman PAAPAM Abdul Rehman Aizaz, Senior Vice Chairman Mumshad Ali, and Vice Chairman Tufiq Sherwani stated that the PAAPAM has presented key budgetary recommendations to revitalize the industry, focusing on boosting exports and encouraging the localization of engineering activities, particularly within the auto parts sector. They highlighted the critical importance of conserving and earning foreign exchange to address the economic crisis, as well as a ten-year plan to support the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) alongside localization efforts, shifting the import assessment of new auto parts from a weight-based to a unit-based system, and ensuring that imported used auto parts are not used for safety reasons. The PAAPAM also stressed the need for a consistent AIDEP policy, under which all 13 assemblies over 90% of locally produced volumes.

They also emphasized the central role of the automobile industry, which the aftermarket is dependent. The supply chain reaches the grassroots level interdependently. PAAPAM leadership called for reduced duties, tax markups, and increased production to promote the leasing culture of cars in Pakistan. PAAPAM strongly advocated for the relaxation of certain duties on locally unavailable raw materials to reduce production costs. Additionally, they demanded the removal of federal excise duty on the automobile industry to help achieve economies of scale. Former PAAPAM Chairman Syed Nabeel Hashmi criticized the import of used cars under flexible terms, noting that such models, including

Jason Holder ruled out of T20 World Cup, replaced by Obed McCoy

ANTIGUA (INP) - All-rounder Jason Holder has been ruled out of the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 and has been replaced by left-arm pacer Obed McCoy, confirmed Cricket West Indies (CWI). Holder, who led the West Indies in the ODI World Cup 2019, suffered an undisclosed injury during the County Championship, where he is part of Worcestershire. "Jason is an experienced player in our set-up. His absence will undoubtedly be felt, both on and off the field," chief selector Desmond Haynes said. "We look forward to having a fully fit Jason with us again soon." "While it is unfortunate to lose a player of Jason's calibre, we are confident in the abilities of Obed McCoy." Obed has shown remarkable skill in his performances, and this opportunity will allow him to further showcase his talent on the international stage. We believe he will bring a fresh and dynamic energy to the squad. McCoy featured in the recently concluded T20I series against South Africa, taking five wickets in three games. Prior to that, he was the highest wicket-taker for West Indies A on the tour of Nepal, claiming eight wickets in five

games at an average of 18. CWI also announced five reserve players for the mega-event, which they will host with the United States of America (USA) from June 1. Kyle Mayers, Matthew Forde, Fabian Allen, Hayden Walsh and Andre Fletcher will be reserve players for West Indies. "We are fortunate to have such depth and quality in our current head coach Daren Sammy said. "Our reserve players are all A-class talents who have proven their abilities in various formats of the game, but certainly T20. Each one of them is fully capable of slotting into the team seamlessly should the situation arise." West Indies will start their campaign against Papua New Guinea (PNG) on June 2 before taking on Uganda, New Zealand and Afghanistan respectively in the group stage. West Indies Squad for T20 World Cup 2024: Alzarri Joseph (vc), Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Shannon Hetmyer, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Nicholas Pooran, Shai Hope, Andre Russell, Romario Shephard, Obed McCoy, Akeal Hosein, Gudakesh Motie, Sherlane Rutherford

NOTICE INVITING TENDER. The office of the Executive Engineer, CWP&H (Roads) Department, District Jhal Magasi invites sealed percentage rates tenders based on Composite Schedule of Rates, 2023 Government of Balochistan... 1. WIDENING & REHABILITATION OF BLACK TOP ROAD FROM KHARI 99.0134 M 1.901 M... 2. CONSTRUCTION OF REMAINING PORTION OF BLACK TOP ROAD FROM KHARI 69.3334 M 1.307 M... ONLY ELECTRIC BID WILL BE SUBMITTED. NO PHYSICAL BID IS REQUIRED. The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Rules, 2014 & Pakistan Engineering Council By-Laws. BASIC ELIGIBILITY: The contractors must have valid Registration of firm with PEC in category C4 and above with specialization codes CE81 and CE16 Code in relevant discipline and registration along with 91 date renewal with Tax Authorities i.e. NTN, Sales Tax Department and BURA, where applicable. The prospect bidder(s) must meet the eligibility / qualifying criteria as mentioned in the bidding document. I. BIDDING METHOD OF PROCUREMENT: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure. BIDDING/TENDER DOCUMENTS ISSUANCE: The bidder(s) can obtain the bidding documents from the office working hours on production of green challan form for an amount of Rs.2000/- (NON REFUNDABLE) deposited in NBP Gandwaha Branch under the head of account CWP&H (Roads) Government Treasury National Bank of Pakistan. Bid can be downloaded from website of BPPRA: www.bppra.gov.pk, under 'TSE No. green against each work above from the date of publication of this invitation in newspapers till the last date of submission i.e. 14/06/2023 until 12.00 hrs. Bidding documents can be obtained from the BPPRA website and will be required to produce deposited green challan form of above mentioned fee. The bids must have accompanied Bid Security with 'Technical Bid' for the work in the form of CA at Deposit above in the name of BPPRA. Bid security if not found in technical bid envelope the bid will not be taken into account for evaluation and will be rejected straightaway. DEAD LINE OF SUBMISSION: The bids must be submitted against above TSE No. at BPPRA website / online as per the deadline of closing of bids or before 14/06/2023 at 12.00 hrs. Furthermore, the (Technical and Financial) in two separate sealed envelopes clearly marked with work Title & Type of Proposal, prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the bidding document must be provided as when the authority asked for scrutiny and verification of documents by hand. OPENING OF BIDS: Envelope containing 'E-Technical Bid' along with bid security will be opened on the same day i.e. 14/06/2023 at 13.00 hrs before Procurement Committee in the presence of bidder(s) and their Authorized representatives. Financial Bid will be opened from the bidding document. Second Envelope containing 'Financial Bid' of technically qualified bidder(s) will be opened later, the date of which will be communicated after evaluation of the E-Technical Bid. Financial Proposals of technically non-qualified bidder(s) will automatically be rejected from the financial step of opening. Place of Issuance, submission, inquiries and opening will be Address - Executive Engineer CWP/PP&H Department (Roads), District Jhal Magasi, Gandwaha. TELEPHONE NO. - 0837-420999. E-Mail: info@bppra.gov.pk, www.bppra.gov.pk, www.bppraonline.gov.pk BID VALIDITY PERIOD: Ninety (90) days. TERMS & CONDITIONS - Terms and conditions are mentioned (incorporated) in detail in bidding documents. A procuring agency may cancel the bidding process at any time prior to acceptance of tender proposal, as per provisions of BPPRA, July 2014.

## Emergency Medicine Day being observed across the world

ISLAMABAD (INP): Emergency Medicine Day was observed across the world on Monday.

This year's day is dedicated to the impact of climate change on Emergency Medicine. Emergency Medicine Day aims to raise awareness and the need for well developed, well prepared, and well organized emergency medical systems to increase the chances of survival or reduce the impact of an emergency situation.

It is worth mentioned here that emergency Medicine Day is observed every year on May 27. The Day is observed to raise awareness about the crucial

role of emergency medicine and to advocate for better support, resources, and training for emergency medical professionals.

Underscoring the vital contributions of emergency medical professionals and the essential services they render and seeking to raise awareness among the public and government about the challenges they face and their critical impact on patient outcomes, Emergency Medicine Day is observed on May 27.

Emergency Medicine Day was initiated by the European Society for Emergency Medicine (EUSEM) and was first

observed on May 27, 2019. The goal of establishing this day was to raise awareness about the crucial role of emergency medicine and to advocate for better support, resources, and training for emergency medical professionals.

Emergency Medicine Day advocates for high standards, continuous training, and improved resources for emergency medical services, ensuring accessibility for everyone. Furthermore, it encourages public engagement in emergency preparedness and fosters collaboration among healthcare stakeholders to enhance coordinated responses to emergencies and disasters.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Interior Mohsin Naqvi presiding allotment letter of home to mother of a martyr.

## KP gov should assist Centre for a successful IMF deal: Mian Zahid Hussain

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and Ali Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the efforts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to spoil the relationship between the IMF and Pakistan are condemnable.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he said that during past some elements have tried their best to bankrupt Pakistan several times but they have failed and will fail again.

Mian Zahid Hussain said rulers should take strict action because the country's interests cannot be sacrificed for someone's political wishes.

He said that the government had improved the economic situation with great difficulty, for which the people had to make huge sacrifices. Still, some unscrupulous elements want to frustrate these efforts for cheap fame, he added.

He further stated that conspiracies were being hatched in this regard; therefore, authorities should remain vigilant and cautious.

The business leader said that participation of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur in the SFC meeting and assurance of cooperation on na-

tional issues are welcome. Still, it was inappropriate for the provincial government to present the budget before the federal government, he noted.

He said that to get the country out of its difficult economic situation, the IMF needs to provide a long-term package. The IMF wants to guarantee the implementation of its policies and ensure that the whole country is on the same page.

Implementing the IMF's preconditions fully was necessary to promote goodwill and allow PTI to return to the national mainstream.

Mian Zahid Hussain stated that further aggravating the situation would not yield any benefits, and added that the provincial government of KPK can secure facilities for PTI leadership by making positive contributions to national affairs.

According to him, 70 to 80 percent of the KP province's expenses were dependent on the funds received from the federation. How can the province estimate its ongoing expenses and development costs before the federation makes its final financial decision, he questioned.

The business leader said that these circumstances could jeopardize the staff-level agreement with the IMF, as the government must implement several condi-

tions before concluding the agreement.

Because our rulers repeatedly fail to deliver on their promises, lenders also impose preconditions, he observed.

Now, the IMF was not ready to work with us on formal assurances. It wants the provinces to implement its conditions, and if any province obstructs them, the whole country will have to pay the price.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the country was currently suffering from a huge economic crisis, and irresponsible politics in such a situation was against national interests.

Inflation has come down slightly, but people were yearning for more relief. People must aside their political differences, unite and agree on the people's broad interests, and refrain from taking an aggressive stance at this time.

Under these circumstances, despite their political differences, the provincial governments need to work together with the centre to address the challenges facing the economy.

Mian Zahid Hussain stated that it would be a great national service if the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government sent a message to the people in power that they were no longer associated with the May 9 events.

## Music a timeless art, plays key role in various aspects of life: Prof Arshad

ATTOCK (INP): Deputy Director Colleges Prof. Arshad Khan has said that the Music is a timeless art that plays an important role in various aspects of human life.

He was speaking as chief guest of the prize distribution ceremony of First Punjab Music Competition organized by Punjab Arts Council (PAC) at Government Post Graduate College Attock. Dozens of candidates aged between 14 and 30 participated in the music competition.

Addressing the participants, Prof. Arshad Khan said that the Music was not only a source of entertainment but also expresses human emotions, thoughts, and spiritual condition. He said that government of Punjab, Depart-

ment of Information and Culture and Punjab Arts Council were rendering valuable services for the promotion of art and culture in the province.

The music competition held today in Attock is a link to nurture singing talent in the district, he added.

The chief guest further said, "Punjab is a land of beautiful cultural colors. The changing lives here share love, if it is said, it will not be out of place that Punjab's regional customs, traditions and cultural traditions are the backbone of the society. The role of Punjab Arts Council in providing healthy entertainment to the citizens is exemplary."

Director Arts Council Sajjad

Hussain said that the identity of any nation was its civilization and culture, and those nations progress that were connected to their culture. He said that where the purpose of culture was to connect the past with the present and gain an understanding of one's identity, its purpose was also to create the best society, because the existence of cultural values and their growth and development creates warmth and balance in life. Artists were considered as the message of peace all over the world, there was no shortage of talent among Pakistan artists, he added.

Nawazish Ali Khizravi, Afzal Latifi, and Rubina Khanum served as judges for the competition.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain offering condolence with Iranian Ambassador to tragic demise of Iranian President and Foreign Minister in helicopter crash incident.



LAHORE: Former Federal Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Plan to use tariffs hike to reduce circular debt not implementable: President PEW

LAHORE (INP): President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), Dr. Murtaza Mughal has said the plan to use tariff hike for eliminating circular debt is not implementable.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he stated that persistent tariffs hike has worsened theft, lowered power use, and compromised national development therefore failed policy should be reversed and a new workable plan should be prepared.

Dr Murtaza Mughal demanded that officials who messed up the Neelum Jhelum project should be dealt in accordance with according and must not be pardoned.

The continuously increasing price of electricity was strangulating the masses and the economy therefore it should be reconsidered, he urged.

The business leader said that consumers should not be made to pay the price of the

power bureaucracy's incompetence and corruption, which was unacceptable.

The IMF was assured to keep the circular debt below Rs2.31 trillion, which reached 2.7 trillion in November last year and may now reach around 3 trillion, he informed.

Dr Mughal said that the increase in circular debt includes insufficient collection of bills, rampant theft, line losses, high production costs, capacity payments and other issues that need to be addressed on priority.

He said that residential consumers were the most affected by rampant corruption in the power sector. They have to pay for pilferage, system losses, subsidies to influential manufacturers and similar

charges for each unit of electricity they consume, he added. At present, the majority of people are unable to afford the electricity. Starting in

July, the general public will not only have to pay higher base tariffs but also bear the costs that will result from a significant reduction in tariffs for influential industries.

He warned that a further hike in energy prices may result in violent protests in many parts of the country, as recently seen in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The President PEW demanded that due to high inflation and a decline in real wages, the income of the common people was no longer enough to meet their needs, which authorities should pay attention to.

Dr. Mughal said that in July 2022, the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) was shut down for thirteen months due to technical problems. If those responsible for this incompetence had been punished, this problem would not have arisen again in the current month, he added.

## Pakistan's economic downfall, Indian default started in 1990s: Shahid Rasheed

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt has said that the journey of Pakistan's economic downfall and Indian development started in the early 1990s.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he said India went almost bankrupt in 1991 and borrowed against the entire country's gold to start a serious economic development effort.

However, Pakistan, which was much better than India in many respects by then, began a downward journey as politicians were more interested in corruption and hiding stolen funds than economic development.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that good laws were made in India to promote industry, agriculture, and services sectors and to lure investments, while in Pakistan, legislation was enacted to protect the stolen funds.

Such laws were made in Pakistan to safeguard the corrupt, which shocked the civilized world, he underlined.

The business leader said that our politicians made laws prohibiting investigation about the source of the capital coming to Pakistan under various pretexts, including investment.

The movement of capital into and out of the country was made very easy, and money changers were given a free hand, which resulted in a massive flight of capital.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the politicians in Pakistan continued to dig the foundations of the country for their interests. At the same time, the various institutions that have to keep an eye on such important matters also remained surprisingly silent spectators,

which encouraged the corrupt elements.

He said Black money was also whitened through rampant amnesty schemes promoting and encouraging tax evaders while disheartening honest taxpayers.

At that time, the Prime Minister and Ministers of India used vehicles that no taxi driver in Pakistan would like. But their policies proved fruitful, and now India has the fifth largest economy in the world, the size of which has exceeded four trillion dollars, the business leader added.

In contrast, the debt-driven Pakistani economy was barely three hundred billion dollars and shrinking rapidly.

Due to continued corruption, Pakistan has become so weak that international institutions and investors dictate it, and despite its desire, it cannot import even gas from Iran, he observed.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chaired a meeting on the Home-Grown Economic Agenda.

## Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) warns of severe heat wave across Punjab

MULTAN (INP): The Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a warning, confirming the persistence of the ongoing heat wave across Punjab.

According to a spokesperson from the PDMA, temperatures are expected to soar between 45 and 50 degrees Celsius, intensifying the heatwave's impact on the region.

The spokesperson further highlighted that certain districts, including Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Multan, may experience particularly severe conditions. In response, the PDMA is actively working to ensure the provision of clean water in affected areas, with special attention given to districts like

Cholistan.

In anticipation of the extreme heat, the PDMA has taken proactive steps to mitigate its effects on public health. Heatwave counters have been established in all hospitals across Punjab to provide immediate assistance to individuals affected by heat-related illnesses.

Additionally, the PDMA has issued guidelines to ensure the availability of relevant medicines for the prevention and treatment of heatstroke. Authorities are urging residents to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions to protect themselves from the heat. This includes staying hydrated, avoiding prolonged exposure to the sun, and seeking medical attention if experiencing symptoms of heatstroke.

Despite assurances from the Punjab Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) that today would mark the end of the current heat wave in Lahore, weather forecasters warn that the extreme temperatures may persist for several more days.

The ongoing heat wave has wreaked havoc across the city, sending dozens of citizens to hospitals with heat-related ailments. The intense heat has affected not only people but also animals and birds, with many showing signs of distress.

The searing heat is not confined to Lahore alone but continues to torment much of the country. The past 24 hours saw affected areas to the sun, and Mohenjodaro record a blistering 53 degrees Celsius, the highest temperature nationwide.