

QUETTA VOICE

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All 11 Coal Miners Found Dead In Sanjaid Quetta Mines Area

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: Tragically struck yesterday in Sanjaid, approximately 40 kilometers from Quetta, where an explosion in a coal mine resulted in the deaths of 11 workers. The incident, caused by a gas filling mishap, was confirmed by Shahid Rind, the spokesman for the Balochistan government.

Rescue teams, comprising the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), the district administration, and the mines department, worked tirelessly through the night. However, despite their best efforts, all 11 miners were found dead.

"This is a devastating loss," stated Rind. "We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims. The entire community is mourning this tragic event."

The explosion caused significant structural damage within the mine, leading to the collapse of several sections and trapping the workers. Rescue operations were initiated immediately, but the severity of the explosion and subsequent cave-ins hampered efforts to reach the miners in time.

The Balochistan government has announced an immediate investigation into the incident to determine the exact cause and to prevent future occurrences. "We are committed to ensuring the safety of our miners," Rind emphasized. "This tragedy highlights the urgent need for stricter safety protocols in the mining industry."

As the community grieves, the provincial government has promised support for the families affected by this disaster. Further updates will be provided as the investigation proceeds and more information becomes available.

2 Coal Miners Killed In Dukka Attack

Hussain Zarkoon:

DUKKA: In a tragic incident, armed assailants attacked the Tribal Coal Mines area, resulting in the deaths of two workers and injuries to another. According to police sources, the attack led to a fierce exchange of gunfire between the assailants and civil security personnel, after which the attackers fled the scene.

The deceased have been identified as Karamullah Dularzai and Naem, son of Jalal Khan from the Sulaiman Kheil tribe. The injured worker, Fazal Rahman, son of Abdul Ghani, was immediately shifted to the Civil Hospital in Dukka for treatment. Among the deceased was also a coal mine engine driver, highlighting the broad impact of the attack on the mining community.

Following the incident, coal miners and the heirs of the deceased staged a protest outside the deputy commissioner's office in Dukka. The demonstrators demanded swift action and the arrest of those responsible for the brutal attack. Their protest reflects the deep-seated anger and frustration within the community over the ongoing security issues that plague the mining sector.

The protestors called on local authorities to enhance security measures to protect workers in the area and ensure such incidents do not recur. Their demands underscore the urgent need for effective law enforcement and the protection of laborers who work in hazardous conditions.

As investigations continue, the local administration has pledged to take stringent action against the perpetrators. The community awaits justice and a stronger security presence to prevent future tragedies in the region.

Empowering Balochistan's Youth – A Step Towards a Brighter Future

Quetta Voice Special Report:

In a landmark move that promises to transform the educational landscape of Balochistan, the Government of Balochistan has entered into a historic agreement with the University of Oxford to offer scholarships under the Benazir Scholarship Program. This initiative, aimed at empowering the province's talented youth, marks a significant stride towards elevating educational standards and providing exceptional opportunities for students to compete on an international level.

The signing ceremony, graced by Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti and Nobel laureate Malala Yousofzai, showcased the government's unwavering commitment to education. The presence of Malala, a global ambassador for girls' education, underscored the profound impact this initiative is poised to have on underrepresented regions. Her words, "I am thrilled to see the Government of Balochistan taking steps towards promoting education and empowering the youth of the province," resonate with the aspirations of countless students and educators alike.

Full Scholarships To Students From Balochistan

The Benazir Scholarship Program, named in honor of the late Benazir Bhutto, offers full scholarships to students from Balochistan to study at one of the world's most prestigious institutions, Oxford University. This program is not merely about providing financial support; it is about nurturing the intellectual and leadership potential of Balochistan's youth, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to become future leaders.

Chief Minister Bugti, in his address, eloquently captured the essence of this initiative. "We are proud to provide our students with the opportunity to study at Oxford University, and we are committed to providing them with the best opportunities." His words reflect a visionary approach to human capital development, recognizing that education is the cornerstone of progress and empowerment.

Another Milestone Achieved: Sarfaraz Bugti

This initiative is a testament to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government's dedication to education, under the leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. CM Bugti rightly pointed out, "It is yet another milestone achieved by the incumbent PPP government, striving hard under the supervision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The government's relentless efforts to prioritize education as a means to drive socio-economic development are commendable and deserve widespread recognition."

150 Delegates Attended The Ceremony

The ceremony, attended by 150 delegates including prominent figures such as Senator Amirul Haq Kakar,

Amir Ibrahim, Muhammad Kheshti, Farooq Sheikh, and Professor Kamal Munir, highlighted the collective support and enthusiasm for this groundbreaking initiative. Their presence underscores a shared vision for a future where the youth of Balochistan can access world-class education and emerge as leaders in their respective fields.

This historic agreement is more than just an educational partnership; it is a beacon of hope for the youth of Balochistan. It signifies a commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment, where every student, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to achieve greatness.

This Partnership Embodies The Spirit Of Progress And Empowerment

As we celebrate this monumental achievement, let us also recognize the broader implications of such initiatives. Empowering the youth of Balochistan to compete on an international level is not just about academic excellence; it is about fostering a generation of innovators, thinkers, and leaders who will drive the future of our nation.

The Government of Balochistan, the University of Oxford, and all stakeholders involved have set a remarkable precedent. This partnership embodies the spirit of progress and empowerment, and we look forward to witnessing the remarkable achievements of Balochistan's students on the global stage.

IHC acquits Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi in Cipher case

KARACHI: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday acquitted the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan and PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the Cipher case.

The court suspended their 10 year sentence as it heard the appeals by the incarcerated ex-PM Imran and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Chief Justice Amir Farooq and Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb announced the verdict.

On January 30, the special court established under the Official Secrets Act awarded Imran and Qureshi 10 years imprisonment in the high-profile cipher case.

On March 19, the IHC noted that the speeches delivered by Imran and Qureshi at a public rally in Islamabad on March 27, 2022, "appear to be political in nature."

A division bench comprising the IHC Chief Justice Ameer Farooq and Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the appeals.

The PTI's lawyer informed the court that in the case, Imran and Qureshi were accused of illegally possessing the secret document, disclosing classified information to the public, and manipulating it for personal gain.

"However, even the special court judge [who convicted the PTI leaders] was not shown the said diplomatic cipher," he said.

Chief Justice Farooq remarked, "If the information has been twisted then it should be known what the information was."

Barrister Safdar stated that the PTI leaders were accused of holding and misusing classified information for their purposes. However, in this case, the prosecution failed to link the alleged crime with revealing secrets concerning the armed forces and sensitive areas to foreign powers.

Justice Aurangzeb inquired, "What was written in the cipher?"

"The lawyer replied, 'I haven't seen the cipher, so I can't tell what is written in it.' He said the cipher code or its text has not been shared anywhere. "On one hand, it is said that if the cipher is shown, it will become public. On the other hand, it is said that if the cipher is shown, it will become public."

The court asked what was communicated from Washington in the cipher. It said the person who had sent that communication must have purposed what might compromise our security if it fell into the hands of India. The bench noted there was nothing unusual in the information shared with the court. The FIA prosecutor reminded the court that they were awaiting the court's permission to present arguments against the maintainability of the appeal.

The bench noted that it would deliver a verdict on the merit of the appeals as well as their maintainability at the same time.

At the next hearing, Imran Khan's counsel, Barrister Salman Safdar contended before the IHC that registering the cipher case only against his client was an "act of retaliation" as others had not returned the copies of the diplomatic cable until it was filed.

Safdar maintained that the requirements of a fair trial under Article 10A had not been fulfilled. The lawyer told the court that the diplomatic cable was not shown to the investigation officer (IO) termed it "secret".

The bench observed that the judge could have ordered under the Official Secrets Act that the document should be shown after removing all the people from the courtroom.

The case originated from Imran's public display of a paper during a rally in Islamabad on March 27, 2022, claiming it was evidence of an "international conspiracy" before a vote of no-confidence led to his government's ouster. The FIA initiated its probe into the so-called "cipher-gate" on July 19, 2023, after the previous coalition government announced an official inquiry against Imran and his close associates for violating the OSA.

NEWS DESK:

Inflation slows to 11.8pc in May, lowest in 30 months

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's consumer price index (CPI) in May rose 11.8pc from a year earlier, data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed on Monday, the lowest reading in 30 months and below the finance ministry's projections.

The lowest reading came a week before the central bank meets to review the rate which has remained at a historic high of 22pc for seven straight policy meetings.

Pakistan has been beset by inflation above 20pc since May 2022. Last year in May, inflation jumped as high as 38pc as the country navigated reforms as part of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme.

However, inflation has since slowed down.

Month-on-month consumer prices fell 3.2pc, the biggest such drop in more than two years.

In its monthly economic report issued last week, Pakistan's finance ministry said it expected inflation to hover between 13.5pc and 14.5pc in May and ease to 12.5pc to 13.5pc by June 2024.

"The inflation outlook for May 2024 continues on a downward trajectory, attributed to elevated inflation levels (in the pre-

vious year and improvements in (the) domestic supply chain of perishable items, staple food like wheat and (a) reduction in transportation costs," the report said.

The actual readings have come in even lower due to a sharper dip in food prices, said Amreen Soorani, head of research at JS Global Capital.

The items whose prices saw the increase on a month-on-month (MoM) basis included Potatoes (14.73pc), Meat (4.06pc), Beans (3.91pc), Eggs (1.60pc), Vegetable Ghee (1.27pc), Cooking Oil (1.26pc), Dental Services (14.64pc), Doctor (MBBS) Clinic Fee (5.48pc), Transport Services (3.35pc), Hospital Services (2.75pc) and Text Books (2.33pc).

The items whose prices decreased the most over the previous month included Tomatoes (51.23pc), Onions (51.15pc), Chicken (35.28pc), Wheat (22.17pc), Wheat Flour (20.12pc), Fresh Fruits (8.06pc), Liquefied Hydrocarbons (9.45pc), Electricity Charges (4.50pc), Motor Fuel (3.18pc) and Communication Apparatus (2.53pc). The items whose prices saw the increase on a MoM basis included Potatoes (22.49pc), Meat (2.18pc), Milk Powder (1.52pc).



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Attack on Polio Team in Chaman Leaves Four Injured

Sardar Muhammad Khondaj:

CHAMAN: In a distressing incident, baton-wielding attackers assaulted a polio vaccination team in Chaman, Balochistan, injuring a female polio worker, two Levies personnel, and a policeman. The perpetrators, identified as members of a local sit-in committee, violently disrupted the ongoing anti-polio campaign, exacerbating the difficulties faced by health workers in the region.

The attack occurred while the polio team was conducting their duties as part of the national polio eradication initiative. Deputy Commissioner Raja Adhar Abbas reported that the attackers not only assaulted the team but also attempted to seize weapons from the Levies personnel providing security.

Sadiq Khan Achakzai, a key leader of the Chaman sit-in, denied these allegations, stating that the protesters were not responsible for the attack on the polio team. "We only demand that people should not be forced to adopt polio drops to their children," Achakzai remarked.

"Additional personnel have been dispatched to the area to ensure the safety of the polio workers and to maintain the vaccination drive," Abbas stated. He assured that legal measures would be pursued against those obstructing the polio campaign.

The attack has been widely condemned, with Balochistan government spokesman Shahid Rind denouncing the violence. Rind confirmed that actions are being taken to apprehend the attackers.

"An attempt was made to snatch weapons from the Levies personnel and vaccines from the

polio team. The district administration is taking strict action against those involved in the attack, and a case will be registered under anti-terrorism laws," he said.

The incident comes at a crucial time when the anti-polio campaign has been initiated in sixty-six specific districts nationwide, including fourteen in Balochistan.

The campaign aims to vaccinate over 1.8 million children against polio. Despite the attack, the campaign will proceed with enhanced security measures. Vaccination efforts in the affected districts are now scheduled to begin on June 8, following a five-day delay caused by the incident.

The assault on health workers highlights the significant challenges in eradicating polio in Pakistan. Ensuring the safety and security of these workers is essential to achieving the goal of a polio-free nation.

The government and local authorities must intensify efforts to protect these frontline workers and swiftly bring the perpetrators to justice. The polio eradication campaign remains a vital public health initiative, and incidents like these underscore the need for continued vigilance and support for the dedicated individuals working towards this cause.

Reserved seats case: Justice Mandokhail notes people voted for party nominees, not individuals

NEWS DESK: As the Supreme Court on Monday took up the case of reserved seats, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail noted that the public did not vote for independent candidates but those nominated by the PTI in the February 8 general elections.

Justice Mandokhail noted, "This was the people's right; the public voted for the PTI." He added that the public "did not vote for an independent candidate but rather the nominated candidates belonging to a political party."

His remarks came as a full bench of the Supreme Court heard the Sumi Ritehad Council's (SRC) plea against the denial of reserved seats in assemblies for women and minorities.

The SRC had earlier been joined by PTI-backed independent candidates after they won the Feb 8 elections as their party had been deprived of its electoral symbol "bat" in an SC ruling.

On May 6, a three-member SC bench had suspended the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) verdict denying the SRC — the new home for PTI lawmakers — elect—



Justice Mandokhail in court

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reserved seats.

Later the same month, the PPP — a major beneficiary along with the PML-N of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) March 3 verdict to distribute the seats among other parliamentary parties — nominated senior counsel Farooq H. Naek to represent the party in the case.

In accordance with the apex court's May 6 ruling, the ECP had then suspended victory notifications of 77 lawmakers allocated reserved seats in addition to the ones distributed earlier, causing the ruling coalition to lose its two-thirds majority in the National Assembly.

Last week, a full court had been formed to hear the case, comprising all judges except Justice Musarat Hilali.

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

Editor: Asim Khan

Editorial:

In a crucial stride to fortify its polio-free status, Balochistan launched an ambitious anti-polio campaign, reaching out to over 2.5 million children below the age of five.

However, amidst this proactive effort, unsettling news surfaces. Environmental samples from Quetta, Hub, Dera Bugti, and Chaman test positive for the virus, casting a shadow on the region's hard-won progress.

Syed Zahid Shah, Chief of the Emergency Operation Cell, passionately calls upon parents to actively cooperate, underscoring the urgency of ensuring that their children receive the indispensable anti-polio drops.

The collaborative spirit demonstrated by the government, UNICEF, WHO, and various organizations is commendable. However, the recent environmental samples pose a looming threat, demanding intensified efforts and collaboration.

This editorial urges the government and relevant organizations to intensify their efforts, pooling resources and expertise to confront and eliminate this newfound challenge.

Global gangsters

BY Zarrar Khuhro:

REMEMBER the letter written by six judges of the Islamabad High Court alleging interference by intelligence agencies and state apparatus?

The mission was to derailed a possible war crime investigation by Israel by the ICC, and then chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda was a prime target. The mission was to enlist Bensouda and, if that failed, to compromise her.

Over at the ICC, Be-n-souda was replaced by Karim Khan. She was appointed Israel in-Initially welcomed. Karim also seemed to be playing ball with the Israelis.

A detailed investigation by The Guardian and Israel's 972 magazine has unveiled a decade-long operation in which Israel to undermine, intimidate and compromise

to simultaneously deal with more than one hot front. Today, the country has troubled relations with three of its neighbours and hot borders with at least two of them.

It is against this backdrop that the current state of strained relations with Afghanistan needs to be assessed. Stable ties with Kabul were a marked escalation in border tensions and terrorist attacks targeting Pakistan's security forces.

thought and futile attempt by the Pakistani authorities to end the armed group's 14-year war on Pakistan. The outlawed group never observed the truce, only leveraged it to expand its reach in Pakistan.

Pakistan tried to craft a more nuanced and stick-policy to deal with Afghanistan's Taliban rulers. Pakistan's efforts to persuade Afghanistan's Taliban rulers over the past two years to take action against the TTP yielded little. In countless instances, Pakistani officials urged the Taliban to disarm the TTP, detain its leaders and rein in its violent activities.

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Ziarat Juniper Forest in Peril: Ancient Trees Face Deforestation Threat

Summan Ismail:

The Ziarat Juniper Forest, nestled in Pakistan's Balochistan territory, stands as a testament to nature's splendor and history's embrace. This ancient forest is renowned for its towering, thousand-year-old Juniper trees, which rank among the world's oldest and tallest.

A Global Ecological Gem In recent years, the Ziarat Juniper Forest has garnered international recognition for its unique and vital ecosystem. It is an integral part of the region's biodiversity, hosting a diverse array of plant and animal species.

A Glimpse into History The story of the Ziarat Juniper Forest is a journey through time. Once inhabited by nomadic tribes, these Juniper trees served as versatile resources. They provided fuel, construction materials, and medicinal remedies, ingraining themselves in the local culture.

The Dark Side of Progress While the past decade has brought comfort and progress to the region, it has come at a steep price. One industry that has thrived at the expense of the forest is the furniture sector, leading to extensive deforestation.

Alarming Trends: A Deforestation Study A recent report titled "Observing Carbon Stock and Land Use Change in 5000-Year-Old Juniper Woods Stand of Ziarat, Balochistan, through a Synergistic Methodology" conducted a comprehensive analysis of the forest's decline in agricultural land in the same period.

Simultaneously, initiatives aim to promote sustainable tourism, allowing visitors from around the world to appreciate the forest's natural beauty and ecological significance.

Federal funding for universities

BY Muhammad Ali Shaikh:

UNIVERSITIES IN Pakistan are again in the news — once again for a wrong reason. On this issue this time is that the federal government has decided to stop giving annual security grants to provincially chartered universities, ending a practice that had been in vogue since independence.

Accordingly, the federal government asked the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on May 24, 2024, to re-submit the budget proposal, reducing the demand to less than one-fifth of the original amount asked — from Rs22.5 billion to Rs2.5 billion — catering for only the federally chartered universities.

The cited logic behind the federal government's decision is that, as education has been devolved to the provinces under the 18th Amendment, it is now the responsibility of the provincial governments to foot the bill of universities established and chartered by them.

This decision sends shockwaves across the country, particularly among students and academics of several affected universities. On their part, the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Associations sprang into action and held their executive council's meeting to discuss the issue.

First of all, the most striking aspect of the decision is its abruptness. The practice of federal funding to all chartered universities, both federal and provincial, has been going on for a very long time. Even the 18th Amendment was passed with 14 years ago.

If the federal government had been serious about the matter, it could have gradually eased itself out in a phased manner, after the passage of the 18th Amendment. Now, expecting universities, which are fully dependent on the state, to create alternative financial resources on such short notice — just a few months before the start of the next financial year in July — is not under-

standable. Another aspect is the federal government's legal competence to take unilateral decisions in such matters. Constitutionally speaking, the forum for resolving issues involving the interests of the federation and the provinces is the Council of Common Interests.

Before taking any action, the federal government would be well advised to raise this issue in the CCI and have it resolved there. It is also very important to involve other stakeholders in the decision-making process.

In the present case, these stakeholders are students, their parents, universities, representative faculty bodies and staff of chartered universities, as well as the general public.

Here, it is pertinent to see what is happening across our borders, particularly in India and Bangladesh, because the three of us share the same cross-border terrorism with our higher education systems.

In the case of India, the union (federal) government allocated an amount equal to \$5.6bn for the higher education sector in fiscal year 2023-24, in addition to the state governments' share to their respective academic staff associations. For example, Pakistan, most recently in April, in a department from the past, when un-

declared kinetic actions were undertaken, this time Islamabad announced Pakistan had carried out air strikes against militant sanctuaries. This met with a toughly worded response from Kabul and border tensions. But Islamabad warned such actions would continue unless the Taliban changed course.

The second element of coercive policy were restrictions on transit trade, which involved the ban imposed last October on a number of items that could be imported by Afghanistan via Pakistan. While the action aimed to curb the smuggling of narcotics, it also served as a political posture — to ratchet up pressure on Kabul. The message was clear: "If you don't stop the Taliban, we will continue to strike on hideouts of the militant group in Afghanistan, most recently in April. In a department from the past, when un-

government would be to not only continue with federal grants to all universities until the matter is discussed and decided by the CCI, but also consider enhancing the allocation to a level that matches at least the figures for Bangladesh — the rupee equivalent of \$1bn.

On their part, the provinces should also shoulder their responsibilities towards higher education and contribute their bit, following the pattern in India. In the current context, Sindh is the only province that has provided grants amounting to Rs26bn to its universities, an action that needs to be followed by the rest of the provinces.

simultaneously, initiatives aim to promote sustainable tourism, allowing visitors from around the world to appreciate the forest's natural beauty and ecological significance.

The Call to Action The allure of the valuable Juniper wood has led to its exploitation, with reports even implicating authorities in the illegal trade. To secure the future of this ancient species, immediate action is essential. It is imperative that we collectively embrace sustainable practices, raise awareness, and curb deforestation. Only by doing so can we ensure the preservation of this unique species and its vital role in our natural world.

Protecting Wildlife and Promoting Sustainable Tourism Conservation efforts are underway to protect the diverse wildlife within the Ziarat Juniper Forest. Endangered species such as the Asiatic Mountain Bear, Snow Leopard, and Markhor call this forest home, and preserving their habitat is paramount.

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The universities should also find ways to boost their own resources, on the pattern of countries like China, Turkey, Malaysia, etc. One good way to do this is to rationalise their fee structures on the basis of needs and interpretations. One such exposition states that the move is intended to benefit the alienated students. This, at least, is an urgent need to bring extreme prudence and transparency to university spending processes and enforce a mechanism of accountability to graduate funds.

That is how we shall be able to help our universities and help them play their due role in national development and prosperity.

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Inquiry ordered after Karachi ASF cuts woman pilgrim's hair over suspicion

KARACHI: The Ministry of Aviation has ordered an inquiry into an incident in which staff of the Airport Security Force (ASF) had cut the hair of a woman pilgrim over some suspicion on Karachi airport on Saturday.

Established procedures and protocols for passenger screening and scanning at the airport, and examine the responsibilities of government entities associated with passenger screening and scanning.



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari meet President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Saqib Rafiq at Chamber House Islamabad.

India's Modi eyes election victory, top opponent back behind bars

NEW DELHI (INP): A top opponent of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to keep fighting "dictatorship" before he returned to jail following elections widely expected to produce another landslide victory for the Hindu-nationalist leader.

detained in March over a long-running corruption probe. He was later released and allowed to campaign but ordered to return to jail once voting ended.

Jashan-e-Baharan sports festival organized collaboratively by Pakistan Army, civil administration conclude

NEELUM VALLEY (INP): The Jashan-e-Baharan Sports Festival, organized collaboratively by the Pakistan Army and Civil Administration, recently concluded in the popular tourist destination of Arang Kel.

Cricket tournaments and polo matches added to the excitement, drawing athletes from all over Azad Kashmir.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme, Mrs. Rubina Khalid engages in a productive dialogue with UNICEF Country Representative, Mr. Abdullah Fadil, at BISP HQ.



Ahead of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China from June 4, hopes are high in Islamabad that the flagging multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be revived.

Assam flood: Death toll surges to 18; more than 5 lakh people affected

GUWHATTI (INP): Assam is still facing severe flooding and three more people have died, while the number of affected people has gone down slightly, new areas are now flooded. Rivers are overflowing, and those affected are seeking shelter in relief camps.

193 relief camps across various districts, with an additional 82 relief distribution centers operating. Various agencies, including NDRF, SDRF, and local authorities, are conducting rescue and relief operations.

Over 906,011 children to be immunized during anti-polio drive

RAWALPINDI (INP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Aamir Khatak Monday inaugurated the Second Sub National Immunization Drive (SNID-II) by administering polio drops to children under five years of age.

negligence would be tolerated in that regard. Meanwhile, District Superintendent Vaccination, Dr Muhammad Nadeem told APP that over 160,000 children would be administered against the Polio virus on the first day of the campaign.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a Group Photo with the Delegation of World Football and Pakistan Football League (UK) at Parliament House.

Rain to subside heatwave conditions during this week: PMD

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast dust-thunderstorm rain in upper parts of the country from June 04-07 that will reduce the intensity of hot weather conditions.

Heatwave conditions will subside following the rain this week and citizens will get relief from the sweltering hot weather conditions.

Under the influence of this weather system, rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Gilgit-Baltistan including Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Murree, Galiyat, June 05 (Evening/night) to June 07 with occasional gaps.

Critical Anti-polio Campaign Kicks off across Sindh Province

KARACHI (INP): A critical anti-polio campaign begun on Monday across Sindh province, including Karachi. The drive aims to vaccinate over 540,000 children under the age of five between June 3rd and 9th. More than 35,000 health workers will be administering the polio vaccine, with over 4,000 security personnel ensuring their safety.

This campaign coincides with similar efforts in Punjab, where Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Multan, Mianwali, and Okara are also launching anti-polio drives. Health officials warn that summer heat creates ideal conditions for the polio virus to spread, making this vaccination campaign crucial. Everyone in Sindh is urged to cooperate with health work-

ers and ensure that all children under five receive the life-saving polio drops.

Meanwhile, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a five-day anti-polio drive in 23 districts started on Monday, with more than 3.5 million children expected to be administered anti-polio drops during the campaign.

In Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, a seven-day anti-polio campaign began in 14 districts during which over 1.8 million children would be administered anti-polio drops.

Due to expected heatwave in Naserabad, Sibi, Jaffarabad, Usta Muhammad, Dera Bugti and Sohbatpur, the anti-polio drive will begin on 8th of this month," said. Prime minister's coordina-

tor on national health services, Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, on Sunday urged parents and caregivers to ensure their children

received the best care possible. "Poliovirus has paralyzed 04 children this year and is consistently being detected in sewage samples, which means the risk

to children remains very high," he said in a statement. "We are resolved to end polio from our country and the support of parents and communities is critical in helping us achieve this goal," Bharath added. Pakistan's efforts to contain polio have often been met with opposition, especially in KP, where militants have carried out attacks against vaccinators and security teams guarding them.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaulah Tarar addressing a press conference

Heatwave persists in country, rain forecast in some areas

ISLAMABAD (INP): Heatwave continues to dominate most parts of the country, particularly in the southern districts, according to the latest forecast

from the Meteorological Department, with a mix of hot and humid conditions and sporadic rain in some areas. The southern districts remain under an intense heatwave, with temperatures soaring to extreme levels. Coastal areas, including Karachi, are experiencing hot and humid weather, though there is a slight possibility of drizzle along the coastline, offering minor relief.

In contrast, northeast Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) have a chance of rain accompanied by thunderstorms at a few places.

Specifically, Islamabad and its surrounding areas are expected to stay partly cloudy with intermittent rain, providing some respite from the heat.

Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa may also experience rainfall in select areas, while the majority of Balochistan will remain hot. However, the coastal belt of Balochistan might see a drizzle, slightly tempering the heat.

The upper districts of Sindh are forecast to endure very hot conditions, maintaining the trend of soaring temperatures.

Residents in the plain areas of Punjab, including Murree, Galiyat, and Rawalpindi, can expect some rainfall, which could bring down temperatures momentarily.

The Met Department advises residents to stay hydrated and take precautions against the intense heat. People in areas with rain forecasts should be prepared

for sudden weather changes and plan their activities accordingly.

Meanwhile, the Met Department forecasts a decrease in the intensity of heat this week in Karachi. The current weather in the city is partly cloudy, with sea breezes providing much-needed respite. Winds are blowing from the southwest at a speed of 22 kilometres per hour, helping to moderate the temperature. Despite this, the maximum temperature is still expected to reach up to 36 degrees Celsius.

LESCO deploys additional staff during heat wave

LAHORE (INP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has arranged additional staff in view of the heat wave, pulling out the staffers from construction, GSE and streetlight sections, and deploying them to circle operations to minimize response time and maintain customer convenience.

According to LESCO spokesman here Monday, the company is ensuring enough stock of transformers and related equipments on priority basis to restore power supply in the shortest possible time in case of any emergency. He mentioned that special instructions have been passed on to the Complaint.

The Chief Engineer (Operations) is also maintaining constant liaison with all the field staff, officers and officials for maintenance of supply at all times, while emergency vehicles have been

specially arranged and necessary instructions have been issued to the respective sections.

During the last 12 hours, he said, out of 2169 feeders of LESCO, only 44 feeders have been affected due to technical failure, adding that two percent feeders were affected at different times due to technical reasons, which were rectified in time.

The spokesman said that for the convenience of its customers, LESCO is also releasing the data related to feeders every hour on electronic and print media, besides updating its official social media accounts.

The damaged feeders were restored within 20 minutes to four and half hours and during last 12 hours, power supply was restored on time on 41 feeders, he said, asserting that currently power supply is suspended on only

three feeders of LESCO.

At present, load-shedding is not being done anywhere except on high-loss making feeders, and load-shedding of three hours is being done on 131 feeders of Category-3; four-hour on 57 feeders of Category-4; and five hours on 37 feeders of Category-5.

The spokesman mentioned that LESCO is responsible for power distribution in five districts: Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana, Qasur and Okara.

The company serves a total of 6.5 million customers with 86 percent domestic, 1.4 percent industrial, 1.1 commercial and 1.1 percent agricultural category.

He added that LESCO with its total of 18,000 employees maintains 202 Sub-Divisional offices, 42 X-En (Executive Engineer) offices and eight offices of SE (Superintending Engineer).



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with Regional Head of Technology and Tax, McKinsey & Co, Tom Isherwood.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on preparation of his upcoming visit to China.

PBC condemns PTI's demand of CJP recusal from party's cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) has strongly condemned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) demand for Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP)

Qazi Faez Isa to recuse himself from hearing cases related to the party.

According to the official statement, the PBC termed the demand as "unfortunate and unacceptable" saying that it was an attempt to pressure the CJP and

undermine the independence of the judiciary. The council emphasized that the CJP is a highly respected and impartial judge, and his integrity is beyond question.

The PBC also highlighted that the CJP has always upheld the rule of law and the supremacy of the Constitution, and any attempts to malign him or the

judiciary would be rejected. The council reiterated its commitment to upholding the principles of an independent judiciary and the rule of law.

Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) demanded Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa recuse himself from benches hearing cases related to party and

its founder Imran Khan. A statement issued after the PTI core committee demanded the

recusal of CJP Qazi Faez Isa from cases related to PTI and founder Imran

Khan, citing concerns over bias and impartiality.

The PTI alleged that the Chief Justice's hearing of their cases has a "negative impact" on the fair trial. The demand came as the Supreme Court is hearing Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) reserved seats case on

June 3. Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa would head the bench. It is pertinent to mention here that Imran Khan appeared before Supreme Court bench, led by CJP Isa, in a case pertaining to amendments to National Accountability (NAB) Ordinance 1999.

CAP advocates tax reform for retailers to boost economy

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Consumer Associations of Pakistan (CAP) has urged for sweeping reforms in the taxation system for retailers, emphasizing the

necessity to spur economic growth and ensure sustainable tax compliance.

In a recent statement, CAP's Chairman Tariq Mehbob Rana and Senior Vice-Chairman Asfand Yar Faruq highlighted the pivotal role played by over 200 tax-compliant Tier-1 Retailers integrated with the FBR-POS system in Pakistan's formal economy.

These retailers not only contribute significantly to the economy but also provide direct employment to over 2,000,000 individuals, with numerous more jobs created indirectly.

Despite efforts to streamline taxation in the retail sector, an increasingly imbalanced

environment has led to the closure of several integrated Tier-1 retailers and a reduction in physical retail networks over the past two years. Rana stated, "This downturn has resulted in decreased employment opportunities and a stagnation in domestic investment in branded retail."

To address these challenges, CAP proposed several measures including restoring the 12% GST rate for Integrated Tier-1 Retailers and reviving the POS Prize Scheme for consumers.

They argued that a rationalized GST rate would incentivize faster integration of Tier-1 Retailers, who currently bear a

disproportionate tax burden compared to unincorporated retailers.

Additionally, CAP recommended transforming the Tajir Dost Scheme (TDS) into a

simplified tax registration scheme for all retailers, unlinked from cumbersome advance tax payment obligations. They suggested that retailers should be subject to normal taxation rather than additional advance tax payments, which often prove burdensome.

Furthermore, CAP proposed implementing a fixed sales tax rate of 3% on retail transactions conducted via digital payments to curb the practice of fake invoices and encourage digital transactions, reducing cash usage and increasing documentation.

As a reform-oriented trade body, CAP expressed its commitment to supporting the government's efforts to improve the economic situation and requested a

meeting with the Finance Minister to discuss these proposals in detail, offering their full cooperation in implementing effective taxation policies.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit-Balistan Haji Gulbar Khan offering Fataha after condoling with Ambassador of Iran, Reza Amir Moghadam over the sad demise of the President of Iran Dr. Seid Ebrahim Raisi at the Embassy of Iran.

Senate committees formation stalled by disagreement

ISLAMABAD (INP): The formation of Senate Standing Committees has hit a deadlock due to a heated disagreement between the government and the

opposition. The tussle centers on the allocation of key committees, with the government coalition seeking control over crucial areas such as foreign affairs,

finance, and interior.

Despite an important meeting between Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani, Leader of the House Ishaq Dar, and Leader of the Opposition Shibli Faraz, no resolution was achieved.

According to sources, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has requested the Finance Committee and the Law and Justice Committee,

insisting on the chairmanship of Saleem Mandviwala being handed to Farooq H. Naik.

However, Shibli Faraz has firmly rejected the government's proposed distribution formula. He argues that the standing committees, which have traditionally

been chaired by the opposition for the last 12 years, should continue to be allocated to them. Faraz emphasized the role of these committees in

monitoring government policies and ensuring parliamentary accountability, accusing the government allies of attempting to undermine this process.

"The unfair allocation of committees is a weak and undemocratic practice that threatens the integrity of our parliamentary system," Faraz stated. He further criticized the current administration, claiming that the PDM-2 government has significantly damaged the country's institutions.

As the impasse continues, the Senate's ability to function effectively remains in jeopardy, with both sides showing no signs of backing down.