

QUETTA VOICE

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Tragic Attack in Turbat Leaves Three Dead, One Injured

From Our Correspondent: Turbat, Balochistan: In a tragic incident, armed men attacked a house and detonated a bomb, resulting in the deaths of three people, including a woman and a child, and injuring one person. The incident occurred in Gabon, a suburb of Turbat.



Sources reported that Muhammad Ali, son of Shay Dilli, was injured by unknown assailants last night. As his family prepared to take him to Turbat Hospital, a bomb exploded near their home, killing Ayesha daughter of Muhammad Ali, Nazir Jan son of Hasil, and Asia daughter of Hasil. The incident has shocked the local community.

Government cannot justify tax exemption

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has criticised the tax exemption granted to civilian bureaucrats and military personnel in the latest budget announced by the government. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Monday, the former premier, flanked by fellow Awami Pakistan party member Miftah Ismail, criticised Pakistan's latest budget, labeling it as the worst in the country's history and lamenting it as the third consecutive disappointing budget under the current government. **NEWS DESK**



Bugti's Surprise Visit to Mufti Mahmood Hospital Unveils Alarming Issues

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: In an unannounced visit to Mufti Mahmood Hospital in Kuchlak, Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti exposed a series of alarming issues, sending the hospital staff into a frenzy. The Chief Minister expressed his severe disappointment over the absence of doctors and medical staff and the deplorable sanitation conditions within the hospital premises.

As soon as Chief Minister Bugti arrived, the hospital staff were seen scrambling, indicating an apparent lack of readiness and orga-

nization. The Chief Minister's unexpected inspection was aimed at evaluating the hospital's operational efficiency and the quality of healthcare services provided to the people of Balochistan.

During his visit, Chief Minister Bugti directly addressed the Medical Superintendent (MS) of Mufti Mahmood Hospital, urging for transparency and accountability.

"Don't cover up, tell the facts," he demanded, pressing the MS for an honest account of the hospital's

deficiencies. In a stern directive, Chief Minister Bugti ordered the immediate suspension of absent staff. Accompanied by Special Secretary Health Majeed Qanbani, he emphasized the necessity for drastic improvements. "Billions of rupees are allocated for the treatment of poor people, yet the results are unsatisfactory," the Chief Minister lamented.

The Chief Minister mandated a two-day ultimatum to enhance the attendance of doctors and medical staff and to rectify the

sanitation issues. He warned that strict action would follow if significant improvements were not observed within the stipulated time.

This surprise visit underscores Chief Minister Bugti's commitment to ensuring that public healthcare facilities operate efficiently and that the funds allocated for the welfare of the poor are utilized effectively. The residents of Kuchlak and the broader Balochistan region now await the promised reforms, hopeful for a tangible enhancement in their healthcare services.

Special Anti-Polio Campaign Launches in Balochistan Amid Concerns

Health Desk:



QUETTA: A seven-day special anti-polio campaign commenced on Monday, across 16 districts of Balochistan. The campaign aims to vaccinate 951,048 children against polio. More than 3,000 teams will participate, with 326 fixed sites and 222 transit sites established for the effort.

The Balochistan Emergency Operations Center highlighted the urgent need for this campaign due to the confirmed presence of the polio virus in the environment, specifically in the sewage water of Quetta. This poses a significant threat to the health of children under five, prompting the launch of this extensive vaccination drive.

Despite the comprehensive planning, the campaign faces several challenges. These include ensuring the reach of vaccination teams to all targeted children, especially in remote areas, and maintaining effective cold chain management for the vaccines.

Additionally, security concerns for the vaccination teams remain a critical issue, re-

quiring stringent measures to safeguard the health workers.

The campaign will cover districts such as Loralai, Killa Saifullah, Dukkri, Osta 951,048 children against polio. Muhammad, Mastung, Sibi, Nasirabad, Kalat, Zhab, Sherani, Barkhan, Musakhel, Lasbela, Chaman, Killa Abdullah, and Sanjawi of Ziar. Preparations, including the formation of teams and security arrangements, have been completed.

The Emergency Operations Center's statement revealed that this year, Pakistan has reported eight polio cases, with six of them in Balochistan.

The widespread detection of the polio virus in sewage highlights the risk of more children contracting this debilitating disease.

Authorities have urged parents to ensure their children receive the polio vaccine during this campaign to prevent any further cases. The cooperation of media and scholars has also been sought to raise awareness and encourage participation in the vaccination drive, aiming for no child to be left unvaccinated and vulnerable to polio.

Balochistan's Agriculture Sector Under Income Tax Net: IMF Recommendations

News Desk:



QUETTA: Reliable official sources reveal that ongoing review meetings between the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pakistan, and the four provincial governments are focusing on reforms in agricultural income tax. The IMF has long urged Pakistan to reduce non-developmental expenses, prioritize health and education sectors, and avoid provincial budget deficits to achieve economic stability.

In the wake of the 18th Amendment, provinces are responsible for collecting income tax on agriculture. The IMF insists that provincial governments should align their agricultural income tax systems with the federal income tax regime. The aim is to improve public revenue by integrating and enhancing the agricultural tax framework. Sources indicate that these necessary amendments to the Agricultural Income Tax Act should

be completed promptly, with a new regime potentially being implemented by 2025.

The IMF emphasizes the need to increase tax revenue from the agriculture sector, highlighting that although agriculture contributes 25 percent to Pakistan's GDP, the tax collected from this sector is minimal. The international organization believes that significant potential exists to increase tax collection from agricultural incomes, which would aid provincial economic conditions and reduce financial deficits.

In 2015, Balochistan

collected only 43 million rupees in agricultural income tax, a figure deemed insufficient by the IMF. Implementation of the new tax regime is expected to stabilize Balochistan's economy by bringing high-income earners within the tax net.

This policy could enhance provincial revenues and address economic challenges.

The IMF asserts that with collaborative efforts, Pakistan and its provinces can enhance tax revenues from agriculture, thereby contributing to the nation's broader economic stability.

Jl emir announces July 12 rally in Islamabad against tax-laden budget

KARACHI: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on Monday announced a protest in Islamabad for July 12 against "high taxes and exorbitant electricity tariffs".

The JI announced its Haq Do Awam Ko (give rights to the masses) movement in a post on social media platform X, adding that Rehman would lead the rally.

President Asif Ali Zardari assented to the government's tax-heavy Finance Bill 2024 for the new fiscal year on Sunday.

The government had presented the budget two weeks ago, drawing sharp criticism from opposition parties, especially the PTI, as well as coalition ally PPP. Addressing a press conference in Karachi today, Rehman spoke at length about the economic challenges faced by the citizens, stating that the JI could not see the people suffer under such a "circus".



He said the government and the ruling classes were not ready to abandon their perks and privileges but had no problems pushing the nation into "a greater difficulty".

Terming the budget "cruel", he said it was insufficient to fulfill the government's "greed" and alleged that it wanted to levy further taxes on the populace. Rehman said the tax burden was falling on the salaried classes while landowners and the elite were "exempted". "We think all

these issues need to be dealt with genuinely," he said, adding that the party's leadership from all over the country decided after consultation to hold a grand rally in Islamabad on July 12.

"This protest rally will be for a decrease in the electricity bills and taxes" **NEWS DESK.**

3 Million Out-of-School Children: Urgent Action Needed for Balochistan's Education Crisis

Editor: Asim Khan

Editorial:

The education system in Balochistan is facing an unprecedented crisis, with over 3 million children currently out of school. This alarming statistic is disclosed by Rabeela Hameed Khan Durran at the recent launch of the National Achievement Test (NAT) by the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), underscores the urgent need for immediate and effective remedial measures. This revelation comes amid a national crisis, as Pakistan holds the dubious distinction of having the highest number of out-of-school children globally, exceeding 26 million.

In Balochistan, an education emergency has been declared, reflecting the broader national problem. Despite the constitutional guarantee of free and compulsory education for children aged 5 to 16 under Article 25-A, the reality on the ground remains bleak. Durran emphasized that the staggering number of out-of-school children represents the biggest challenge for the current government in Balochistan. While the government has committed to ensuring maximum enrolment, Durran's frustration over the lack of action on proposed solutions, such as solarizing government-run schools to protect children from extreme weather conditions, is palpable. These crucial recommendations, aimed at creating a more conducive learning environment, have yet to receive cabinet approval.

The situation is even more dire for girls in Balochistan, with increasing dropout rates described as "alarming." In an effort to combat this trend, the government plans to provide transportation facilities to girls, thereby reducing dropout rates and improving access to education. This initiative is commendable, but it must be implemented without delay to make a tangible impact.

The 2023 NAT survey results for Balochistan further highlight the severity of the situation. Fourth graders scored an average of 40 percent in maths, while eighth graders scored 31 percent. Scores in English and Urdu were slightly better, with averages above 50 percent, consistent with national figures. These dismal scores reflect the urgent need for comprehensive educational reforms and effective intervention strategies.

Dr. Shahid Soroya, Director General of PIE, rightly emphasized the importance of collaboration with the Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission (BAEC) and the School Education Department, Government of Balochistan (SEC). Efforts towards partnerships and concerted efforts are crucial to addressing the educational challenges in the province. However, these partnerships must translate into concrete actions and tangible results.

The situation in Balochistan calls for immediate and comprehensive action. With over 3 million out of school and the highest national dropout rate, the crisis is undeniable. The government's commitment to education must be more than rhetoric; it must be translated into concrete actions to ensure that all children in Balochistan receive the education they deserve.

We urge all stakeholders—government officials, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the international community—to join hands in addressing this critical issue. The future of Balochistan's children hangs in the balance, and the time to act is now. Delaying action or allowing bureaucratic inertia to hinder progress is not an option. The stakes are too high, and the consequences of inaction too severe. Let us come together to create a brighter, more educated future for Balochistan before it is too late.

New year, old vows

By Arooj Waheed Dar:

WITH elections on the horizon, there has been an upsurge in political activity, marked by relentless campaigning through power shows and big speeches. Out of curiosity, we decided to analyse the content of some of the speeches to understand what is being promised this time round.

For what they're worth, the speeches are rife with promises, making abundant references to legacy yet notably missing talk of action.

The PML-N's persistent emphasis on hard infrastructure for a country grappling with inequality and a human capital crisis is a point of concern; the PPP's commitment to increasing social spending in the absence of sufficient resources seems hollow; and the PTI's sole focus on mobilising the youth through the politics of revenge carries the risk of further escalating intolerance in an already polarised society.

Every election cycle unfolds with a familiar script: politicians make grand promises, assume power, and then cite

resource constraints as the reason for their lack of performance, attributing the blame to the preceding government's development agenda. It's crucial for political agendas to shift towards practical solutions and effective governance to tackle the economic challenges the country faces.

This time round, the country is on the verge of default, and politicians are no longer merely vying for public office. In election manifestos, instead of focusing on how they are going to spend 'public money', they need to tell us how they are planning to generate the revenue to afford those expenditures.

There needs to be a focus on a few key structural reforms that can pave the way for economic growth and correction. Going over the election manifestos, one notices that every political party has been cooking the same broth since 1999—merely varying the spice level. The content focuses on the same sector-specific discussions without necessarily translating into practical, actionable plans for implementation.

They all talk of the same issues: universal education, universal healthcare, infrastructure development, devolution, tax reforms, women empowerment, energy sector reforms, accountability for all, SOE reforms, agricultural reforms, poverty alleviation, development of IT sector, industry and trade, digital and financial inclusion, social protection, (and not to forget) youth empowerment. They pretty much cover all which bases. Yet, action in the past to bring about these reforms has been so lacklustre that it prompts one to ask: what measures will the incoming government take this time knowing that resources are scarcer than ever?

There seems to be an obvious disconnect between the politicians' words and actions; they well understand the need for expanding the tax base, yet they continue to bring unsustainable tax reforms to protect themselves and their cronies; they speak of accountability, yet they adeptly navigate the bureaucratic landscape to secure personal advantages.

Various tricks and devices used to achieve this end, the most fascinating being the one not accepted by Persian emperor Darius' troops.

Finally, he hit on a simple yet clever technique: he shaved the head of one of his servants and had a secret message tattooed onto his scalp. Then, after waiting for the hair to grow back and cover the message, he dispatched the servant across enemy lines and when he arrived at his destination, his head was

shaved once again and this message was delivered. Closer to home, we have a similar example in the revolt against colonial British rule in 1857. As discontent against the British grew, the need to coordinate actions and resistance between Indian rebels to police contacts and spies—grouped into a network—was the pervasive surveillance system set up by the Raj and how it was used to monitor and control the movement of the British, this led to the

birth of the 'chappati movement', beginning in the town of Mathura, started making and distributing small chapatis which were then delivered under the cover of darkness to homes and villages across north India, and the recipients were instructed to make more such chapatis and pass them forward. The British were unable to discover the true intention as to the movement, though many protesters

believe that the intentions were two-fold: one, to create an atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty, leading to the expectation of some major event to take place down the line; and two, to use some of the chapatis to deliver secret messages. In the latter scenario, the sheer number of chapatis being distributed meant that at least some of the (no doubt coded) messages would get through. While the jury is still out on the exact intention behind

this, I tend to favour the latter theory just because it sounds so cool. We find many other examples throughout history, like Ann Strong using hanging laundry to convey secret messages to spies working for George Washington in the American revolutionary war, or the grandmothers sympathetic to the resistance in German-occupied Belgium in World War II, who reportedly used codes embedded in knitting to let their counterparts know about German troop movements.

By Anwar Mansoor Khan:

ONE is astonished to see, that despite the clear stipulations of the Constitution on the issue of the caretaker government, whether federal or provincial, are mentioned in the consolidated fund for a period exceeding four months, which the governments mentioned totally ignore.

It was in the case of 'Khawaja Muhammad Anwar versus Federation of Pakistan' where the learned judges held: "The caretaker government also lacks the mandate of the majority of people, which is to be acquired by elected government through the general elections. Therefore, if a caretaker government is allowed to exercise complete powers available to an elected government, it may make attempt to continue to remain in office for a longer period of time or may take such decisions which may cause problems for the future elected government."

The Election Act 2017 in Section 230 clearly details the functions of a caretaker government, specifying what the caretaker government shall not do. It categorically provides that day-to-day working of the government shall be performed by the caretaker government but that it could not take any major policy decisions or make policies or enter into major international negotiations, etc.

However, by an amendment amongst the various made in the Election Act by the Election Commission (Second Amendment) Act, 2023, Section 230 was amended to the extent that subsection (1) and (2) would not apply to the caretaker government where they need to take action or decisions regarding existing bilateral or multilateral agreements or projects already initiated or international commercial transactions, and under the Privatisation Commission Ordinance.

Thus, the government in its caretaker capacity was, except for the proviso, restricted from taking actions as provided in sub-section (2) (a) to (g) of Section 230 of the Election Act. We see numerous transfers and postings, raises in pay and salaries, taking policy decisions undermining not only the Election Act but also the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Importantly, the Constitution was not amended nor was the Election Act, 2017 amended to bring in the power and authority of the caretaker government to go beyond the period as prescribed by the Constitution, namely, either 60 days or 90 days

By Maleeha Lodhi:

ELECTION activity has swung into high gear in the country with the filing of nomination papers by candidates and mobilisation of supporters by leaders. The election date of Feb 8 is now cast in stone. But there are more unknowns than known levels. If there was the election play out.

The first unknown is the PTI factor. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf is engaged in legal actions aimed at securing a level playing field in the poll. It has contested the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to deprive it of its election symbol — which is how most voters identify who they support. A candidate belongs to the ballot paper.

Court dramas are likely to continue on the PTI front and other courts, including petitions challenging Khan's disqualification. What is the legal outcome, the key political question is whether the perception that PTI is being persecuted will translate into a 'sympathy wave' to boost its electoral support or deter its supporters from showing up at the ballot box.

With most of its leaders and major activists incarcerated, it will be hard for the party to mobilise its base. But the party has also shown a knack of using social media and communication technology to overcome such obstacles. Whether this will work

in the complex environment of individual parliamentary constituencies remains to be seen. This brings up the second unknown — the impact of traditional allegiances often override the personal popularity of the leader at the national level. If there was a presidential system, a leader's popularity would be a determining factor in the outcome. But parliamentary elections are a different matter where dynamics are more complicated.

The phenomenon of 'all politics is local' regarding voting preferences of older parties that have long dominated Pakistan's constituency-based politics still pivots around transactional patterns of behaviour and traditional allegiances to determine the result at the constituency level — hence the importance of so-called electables, who are local power brokers. This makes the overall outcome of the election uncertain.

The third unknown is the impact of the urban-rural balance, which in the past has long tilted in favour of the countryside and reinforced traditional allegiances. But greater urbanisation is altering this picture. Although urban Pakistan is still underrepresented, many rural constituencies are now having urban features.

In the battleground province of Punjab, this shift is most evident. In

for the conduct of the election to either the National Assembly or the provincial assembly.

The Constitution's Article 86 in relation to the federation and Article 126 in relation to the province provide that the federal government in relation to financial matters, at any time when the consolidated fund, as the case may be, to the caretaker government for a period not exceeding four months in a financial year. The Punjab Assembly was dissolved on Jan 14, 2023. The period of four months expired on May 14, 2023.

The Punjab government continues to draw money beyond the authorised period for over six months without constitutional authorisation or power.

The said Punjab government has not approached any judicial forum for financial withdrawal and continues to sit without authority, despite the judgement in the case of Muhammad Siddique versus the ECP. Similar is the case with the KP government which continues to do so under the Constitution without authorisation.

The case of the federal government and the Sindh and Balochistan governments also fall within the same category,

namely Articles 86 and 126 of the Constitution, which restrict the expenditure from the federal or provincial consolidated fund for a period beyond four months.

The command of the Constitution is absolutely clear when Articles 86 and 126 use the words, "... in respect of estimated expenditure for a period not exceeding four months [italics added] in any financial year...". In this case also, the governments continue to violate the Constitution, namely that they continue to go beyond the mandate given by Section 230 of the Election Act, 2017, when they, instead of taking care of day-to-day matters, are indulging in those prohibited by Section 230(2).

Further the mandate and authorisation for drawing from the consolidated fund has not expired.

The question is whether withdrawals of funds from the consolidated fund can be termed as lawful, especially when the Constitution categorically provides that such authorisation does not exceed four months.

Elaborate provisions in the Constitution cannot be looked into further Article 86. It further

stipulates that the outgoing government could authorise expenditure to the caretaker set-up for a period of four months. Thus, it is that the elected government can authorise the withdrawals, but not beyond four months.

The Constitution thus presumes that elections would take place within the prescribed period of 60 or 90 days, and therefore, the period of four months has been prescribed. The caretaker set-up has no jurisdiction to cause the withdrawals from the constitutional fund. The set-up thus continues to violate the provisions and goes beyond its mandate.

The judgement of Khawaja M. Ais referred to above basically relates to transfer and postings, but also provides that no civil servant would be transferred or posted except in extraordinary circumstances; further that as the state must be run by the chosen representatives, no decision which causes permanence including policies impacting the future of the country is to be taken.

The drawing of funds by the present government and the taking of decisions which are impacting the future of the country, without the elected members of parliament is surely a serious violation of the law but they continue to do so without remorse.

on key policy issues or offer detailed programmes on what they will do if elected. One party has made extravagant and utterly unrealistic promises while ignoring the dire state of the economy. At a time when the economy is still in the critical stage of recovery, the need for policy ideas and options has never been greater. However, this has yet to figure in the election campaign that has so far been mostly about ticket distribution and 'seat adjustment' deals.

Pointing out that Pakistan needs urgent fiscal and structural reforms to restore macroeconomic stability and growth is not a new slogan for sustainable growth", the lack of attention to economic issues and expressions of commitment to reform probably urged the World Bank to publicly issue concern about fiscal-electron policy reversals in critical areas of reform by powerful vested interests. This, it said, is what is most macroeconomic risks to Pakistan, especially as the next government's priorities and commitment to structural reforms are not known.

While people want to hear from their political leaders about how they plan to address pressing economic issues what is clear is that prevailing in the electoral contest will be in vain if the battle for Pakistan's economic recovery and renewal is lost.

What should be among election 'knowns' by now is where contesting parties stand on the consequential issues and challenges facing the country. But with elections just a month away, voter participation, it articulates their positions

Election unknowns

Hide and seek

Third Doha Talks: Pakistan and US hold consultations on Afghanistan

DOHA (INP): In Doha, Qatar, Pakistan and the United States held consultations on Afghanistan during the third 2-day Doha talks, reported on Monday.

The consultations between Pakistan and the US took place in Doha, where US Special Representative for Afghanistan, Thomas West, and his delegation met with the Pakistani delegation.

The Pakistani delegation included Special Representative Asif Durrani, Pakistan's Ambassador to Qatar, Dr. Muhammad Ijaz, and Head of Mission in Kabul Obaid-ur-Rehman Nizami.

According to the report, before the

United Nations-sponsored conference in the capital city of Qatar, the Pakistani delegation had significant meetings Sunday.

Diplomatic sources said that the parties discussed the matters related to the situation in Afghanistan, the third Doha conference, and options.

The Pakistani delegation also had meetings with delegations from other countries, including a meeting with Russian Special Representative Zamir Kabulov.

Additionally, the Pakistani delegation met with the European Union delegation, led by Special Representative Tomas Niklasson.

The two-day, UN-hosted meeting in Qatar is the third of its kind in the gas-rich emirate in just over a year but the first to include Taliban authorities who seized power in Afghanistan in 2021.

UN officials and over 20 envoys, including the US special representative to Afghanistan, were expected to meet with the Taliban government's delegation led by spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

The talks in Doha were due to discuss increasing engagement with Afghanistan and a more coordinated response to the country, including economic issues and counter-narcotics efforts.

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ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja arrives in China to participate in Global Digital Economy Conference 2024 being held.

Caribbean braces for powerful Hurricane Beryl

BARBADOS (INP): Hurricane Beryl plowed toward the southeast Caribbean late Sunday as officials warned residents to seek shelter ahead of powerful winds and swells expected to arrive overnight from the Category 4 storm — the first ever recorded in June.

The US National Hurricane Center (NHC) warned residents that Beryl — currently churning in the Atlantic Ocean about 150 miles (240 kilometers) southeast of Barbados — would remain an "extremely dangerous Category 4 hurricane" when it reaches populated islands in the southeast Caribbean early Monday.

"Life-threatening winds and storm surge expected to begin late Sunday for portions of the Windward Islands," the NHC said in its 11:00 pm (0300 GMT Monday) advisory.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as well as Grenada were at the highest risk of being at the center of the storm's core beginning early Monday, the NHC said.

Barbados, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Tobago were all under hurricane warnings, the latest NHC advisory said, while tropical storm warnings or watches were in effect for Martinique and farther along the storm's path, in southern Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

A state of emergency has been declared in Tobago, the smaller of the two islands that make up Trinidad and Tobago, with schools ordered closed on Monday, the latest Farley Augustine said.

Grenada Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell urged his citizens to

quickly seek shelter and to respect an island-wide curfew ordered for 7:00 pm to 7:00 am until Tuesday morning.

A meeting this week in Grenada of the Caribbean regional body postponed due to the hurricane.

In the Barbadian capital of Bridgetown, cars were seen lined up at gas stations, while supermarkets and grocery stores were crowded with shoppers buying food, water and other supplies. Some households were already boarding up their properties.

Beryl became the first hurricane of the 2024 Atlantic season early Sunday morning and quickly strengthened to Category 4, the first ever to reach that level in the month of June, according to NHC records.

A Category 3 or

higher on the Saffir-Simpson scale is considered a major hurricane, and a Category 4 storm packs sustained winds of at least 130 miles per hour (209 kilometers per hour).

Beryl was packing maximum sustained winds that were estimated at 130 mph, the NHC said around 5:00 pm (2100 GMT) Sunday.

Beryl is expected to remain powerful as it moves across the Caribbean, the NHC said, warning residents and officials in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and the rest of the northwestern Caribbean to carefully monitor its progress.

Such a powerful storm forming this early in the Atlantic hurricane season — which runs from early June to late November — is extremely rare, experts said.



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Belgium to Pakistan, Mr. Charles Delogne, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Awan-e-Sair.

UK gov't, British Airways sued over 1990 Kuwait hostage crisis

LONDON (INP): Passengers and crew of a British Airways flight who were taken hostage in Kuwait in 1990 have launched legal action against the UK government and the airline, a law firm said Monday.

People on BA flight 149 were taken off the Kuala Lumpur-bound plane when it landed in the Gulf state on August 2 that year, hours after Iraq's then leader Saddam Hussein invaded the country.

Some of the 367 passengers and crew spent 11 months in captivity, including as human shields against Western attacks on the Iraqi dictator's troops during the First Gulf war.

Ninety-four of them have filed a civil claim at the High Court in London, accusing Britain's government and BA of "deliberately endangering" civilians, said McCue Jury & Partners.

"All of the claimants suffered severe physical and psychiatric harm during their ordeal, the consequences of which are still felt today," the law firm added.

The action claims that the UK government and the airline "knew the invasion had started" but failed to allow the flight to land anyway.

They did so because the flight was used to "insert a covert special ops team into occupied Kuwait," the firm added.

"We were not treated as citizens but as expendable pawns for commercial and political gain," said Barry Manchester, who was on the flight and is taking part in the claim.

British Airways has always denied accusations of negligence, conspiracy and a cover-up.

The airline did not respond to a request for comment from media but said last year that the records released in 2021 "confirmed British Airways was not warned about the invasion."

McCue Jury & Partners had announced in September its intention to file the suit, saying then that the hostages "may claim an estimated average of £170,000 (£213,000 each in damages)."

In 2003, a French court ordered BA to pay £1.67 million euros to the flight's French hostages, saying it had "seriously failed in its obligations" to the hostages by landing the plane.

The UK government refused to comment on ongoing legal matters.

"A victory over years of cover-up and bare-faced denial will help restore trust in our political and judicial process," he added.

British government files released in November 2021 revealed that the UK ambassador to Kuwait informed London about reports of an Iraqi incursion before the flight landed but the message was not passed on to BA.

There have also been claims, denied by the government, that London knowingly put passengers at risk by using the flight to deploy undercover operatives and delayed take-off to allow them to board.

The UK government refused to comment on ongoing legal matters.

Gov't must avoid decisions to benefit any sector harming another: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has asked OGRA and Ministry of Energy to avoid controversial decisions that will benefit one sector harming another.

Interacting with business community on Monday, he said that the decision taken to give cross-subsidy to the fertilizer sector in the heat of the budget should be withdrawn as it will have disastrous effects on the employment and the economy.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that government institutions should avoid such disastrous decisions that will benefit one sector harming another.

He said that the textile sector is the most important sector of the country's economy, providing the most foreign exchange and employment after agriculture.

The textile industry contributes around 65% of our national exports, 46% of industrial production, 38% of industrial employment, and 9% of the Gross National Product.

The business leader said that textile value chain consists of multiple industrial sub-sectors. The value chain was quite long, from cotton picking to a finished garment of the latest fashion.

The end product of one sub-sector was the raw material for the other. Each sub-sector in the value chain contributes to value addition and employment generation.

Therefore, the decision to cross-subsidy the fertilizer sector at the cost of the textile sector should be reversed, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the decision to extend the subsidy to the fertilizer sector had been made at a time when the industrial sector was forced to buy the most expensive electricity in the region, gas prices were skyrocketing, and interest rates were ruing the business.

Illegal imposition of Rs 50 billion cross-subsidy to the fertilizer sector, including the added differential of Rs 27 billion from November 2023 through March 2024 and the monthly differential of Rs 3.8 billion from April 2024 through September 2024 through ring-fencing RLTG prices and ensuring no additional or undue changes are made to consumers, he observed.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the government should ensure that no additional or unnecessary charges were taken from the consumers, but this was not happening.

Important government institutions should bring stability through justice in all sectors of the economy. Otherwise, there will be instability among the main pillars of the economy, which was the outcome of every's interest.

permission of the Petroleum Product (Petroleum Levy) Ordinance of 1961 and the Petroleum Product (Petroleum Levy) Rules of 1967, has assigned the responsibility of determining the price of RLTG.

The government, via ECC decisions on June 6, 2015, and June 14, 2016, has also identified pricing components and parameters of RLTG to OGRA through the DG Gas office, effectively ring-fencing RLTG prices and ensuring no additional or undue changes are made to consumers, he observed.

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Important government institutions should bring stability through justice in all sectors of the economy. Otherwise, there will be instability among the main pillars of the economy, which was the outcome of every's interest.

Outgoing ambassador calls for persevering efforts to fortify Pakistan-US relations

NEW YORK (INP): Outgoing Pakistan ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, on Sunday called for persevering efforts to strengthen Pakistan-US relations, despite periodic ups and downs.

Pakistan on Friday decided to replace Khan and appoint Additional Foreign Secretary (Middle East and SIFC) Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh as envoy to the United States.

At a farewell dinner organized in honour of the outgoing Pakistani envoy, United States Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Horst Friday praised Khan, for his services towards building "bridges between Islamabad and Washington."

"On behalf of the State Department, I just want to note that the US-Pakistan relationship is in the best place it's been in years, in part, in large part to what Ambassador Masood Khan has

done to represent Pakistan, to build bridges between Islamabad and Washington," said Horst.

On behalf of the State Department, the US official acknowledged that the ties between the two countries, like any long-standing relationship, have experienced friction at times, but "because of you, we know how to talk through this and we have a framework to talk through friction," she added.

Khan was given agreement by the US Department of State for serving as ambassador to Washington in February 2022.

He was nominated for the post by the then prime minister Imran Khan in November 2021.

In his farewell note, Khan wrote, "A robust relationship between our two nations is work in progress, backed by a history of nearly 77 years."

As he completed his assignment as the ambassador of Pakistan to the US, he said since March 2022,

after taking charge of the office, they had tried to build strong Pakistan-US relations.

The envoy thanked a host of entities including "American friends" from the administration, Congress, state governments, assemblies, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), think-tanks, media, civil society and the private sector, as well as the diaspora community for the support in building the bilateral ties.

"I am indebted to the influential Pakistani-American professional organizations that have helped me, our missions, and our two nations to navigate through challenging but promising landscapes," he maintained.

Khan said he was confident that the same would extend full support to his successor as well. "As I leave, I wish you all success and prosperity. Have faith in Pakistan and keep nurturing Pakistan-US States ties," he concluded.

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

The Executive Engineer, Irrigation Division Jhal Magsi, invites through B-PPRA Electronic Public Procurement System (EPPS) sealed tenders for the following Bidding Schedule (BS) based on composite schedule of rates 2023 Government of Balochistan from interested contractors/firms for the works listed below:

| S.# | Name of work | Estimate | Estimate | Estimate |
|-----|---|----------|-------------|----------|
| 1 | LRING OF PAKJUK CANAL, PHASE II (FISH, GANDAKHAR) DISTRICT JHAL MAGSI/PSPP/2024-25/AT S/NO 3038 TSE-232404647023 | 70.00 M | 1,400,000/- | |
| 2 | CONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD PROTECTION BLIND FOR NIGRORE VILLAGE TOSHI, JHAL MAGSI/PSPP/2024-25/ S/NO 3071 TSE-232404647163 | 80.00 M | 1,600,000/- | |
| 3 | DE-SALTING OF PAKFEEDEER CANAL, RD-600 TO RD-500 DISTRICT JHAL MAGSI/PSPP/2024-25/AT S/NO 3282 TSE-242507487283 | 65.00 M | 1,300,000/- | |

ONLY ELECTRONICALLY BID WILL BE SUBMITTED. NO PHYSICAL BID IS REQUIRED

Eligibility of Bidders: A. Procurement shall be made under B-PPRA Rules 2014 amended up-to-date. Bidding is open to bidders who meet the following Basic Eligibility Criteria: 1. An individual/banker having Valid PEC registration in the relevant Category or above with specialization codes in CE94 Irrigation Only. 2. Is a company or firm (not a sole proprietorship or partnership) and is a Contractor (not an Sub-Contractor) during last 05 (five) years with completed contracts. 3. Has an average turnover of 70% of Project Cost during last three years. 4. Active registration certificates from Income Tax Authority (FBR (NTN)) and Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA). 5. Has a minimum Bank Credit Line Facility (Available-Account Cash equivalent at least 20% of the project cost). 6. Each duly certified Bank Certificate. 7. The contractor has not been blacklisted earlier by any government agency or private organization. No Litigation Affidavit, in case of Litigations, history should be enclosed (Attach Affidavit on Rs. 100 non-judicial stamp paper duly attested by the Head of account/G.O. 8. The amount of Bid Security shall be in the form of Project Cost under CCR or a Bank Guarantee issued by a Scheduled Bank in Pakistan in favour of the Employer valid for a period of 28 days beyond the Bid Validity date. 9. Submission of an application on firm letterhead accompanied with Original tender/contract documents shall not be entertained. 10. Method of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure. The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed upon payment of bidding document fee through Cash Cheque in the HRP under Head of account/G.O. 11. The bidding documents will be delivered in sealed envelopes by hand or through registered mail before 10th July 2024 at 11:30 PM at the office of the mentioned below. Tender opening/envelope opening technical bid will be opened on 10th July 2024 at 12:30 PM on EPPS System. 12. Value envelope containing financial bid of technically qualified bidder will opened later. Financial proposal of technically non-qualified bidders will not be opened and thus will be unopened. Bid Validity: Ninety (90) days. Address: Irrigation Quarter, Gandamak Bypass Road, Jhal Magsi, District Jhal Magsi. Phone: 0636-33002/Fax No: 0632-43048/Email: ssa@irrigation.gov.pk

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
IRRIGATION DIVISION, JHAL MAGSI

PRQ No. 07101-07-2024

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-242507487163 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, it is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered An Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PROVICINAL, BSR DISTRICT JHAL MAGSI invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Payment Basis. Tender Fee Rs. 2000/- and Bid Security 2%.

| S.# | Name of Work | Estimate |
|-----|---|----------|
| 1 | WIDENING & REHABILITATION OF B/RT ROAD 69,911.00M FROM HARJI TO KOTRELAN GH 3,500.00M DISTRICT JHAL MAGSI/PSDP/16/94 2324-04647 | |

Procurement shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in most 20% of the project cost. (Each duly certified Bank Certificate). 2. The contractor has not been blacklisted earlier by any government agency or private organization. No Litigation Affidavit, in case of Litigations, history should be enclosed (Attach Affidavit on Rs. 100 non-judicial stamp paper duly attested by the Head of account/G.O. 8. The amount of Bid Security shall be in the form of Project Cost under CCR or a Bank Guarantee issued by a Scheduled Bank in Pakistan in favour of the Employer valid for a period of 28 days beyond the Bid Validity date. 9. Submission of an application on firm letterhead accompanied with Original tender/contract documents shall not be entertained. 10. Method of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure. The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed upon payment of bidding document fee through Cash Cheque in the HRP under Head of account/G.O. 11. The bidding documents will be delivered in sealed envelopes by hand or through registered mail before 10th July 2024 at 11:30 PM at the office of the mentioned below. Tender opening/envelope opening technical bid will be opened on 10th July 2024 at 12:30 PM on EPPS System. 12. Value envelope containing financial bid of technically qualified bidder will opened later. Financial proposal of technically non-qualified bidders will not be opened and thus will be unopened. Bid Validity: Ninety (90) days. Address: Irrigation Quarter, Gandamak Bypass Road, Jhal Magsi, District Jhal Magsi. Phone: 0637-33002/Fax No: 0632-43048/Email: ssa@irrigation.gov.pk

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ROAD
CHIEF DEPARTMENT
JHAL MAGSI

PRQ No. 07101-07-2024

Fair re-election is impossible with incumbent ECP, asserts Barrister Saif

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Advisor for Information Barrister Dr. Saif has claimed that the conduct of fresh fair and transparent election was impossible in the presence of incumbent Election Commission (ECP).

He issued his response on the statements of Maulana Fazlur Rehman who opined for fresh polls. Barrister Saif suggested Maulana Fazlur Rehman to start movement against forged government.

Barrister Saif insisted that suitable circumstance were inevitable for conduct of fresh election.

He termed the country's development in the destruction of fake government formed on

forged Form-47. KP information advisor claimed that the February 8 polls were sabotaged through Form-47.

He demanded the penalties for incumbent ECP commissioner and government of Form-47.

Barrister Saif alleged that mandate-theft government has trapped the country in the crisis.

He stressed that country couldn't develop without the release of PTI founder Imran Khan, party leaders and political workers.

He described that the fresh polls were incomplete and unacceptable without the release of Imran Khan.

PTI leader Barrister Saif

stated that propaganda group (government) must be accountable for stealing mandate in Feb 8 polls.

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting the Attaullah Tarar on Sunday said that the general elections would be held in 2029 upon completion of the constitutional tenure of the incumbent government.

While reacting to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman's presser, he said the parliament was an appropriate forum to do politics in the current circumstances.

"Solution to all the problems in politics lies in negotiations and dialogue," the minister said.



QUETTA: EX Provincial Minister Amajd Rasheed addressing on mass wedding ceremony.

SC directs provinces to submit report on climate change measures

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday ordered provinces to submit report about steps taken to tackle the climate change.

A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah heard case with regard to constitution of the climate change.

The court demanded Punjab and Balochistan governments to provide details of steps taken over the climate change. "There is policy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh but what practical steps have been taken," the court questioned.

The bench ordered the

provinces to submit their reports about practical steps taken to address the climate change by July 15. Advocate General Punjab told

the court that steps being taken in the province to address the issue.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah directed the province to submit report in writing on practical steps instead of oral statement. Chief Secretary Sindh

informed the bench that the province has made a comprehensive policy. "How much budget has been allocated to tackle climate change issues, come to the court with complete plan"

Justice Shah said. Chief Secretary told the court

that two million homes will be built in Sindh with regard to the climate change adding that 1,50,000 homes have already been constructed.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah observed that budget not allocated in Sindh for climate change. Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also appeared in the court and informed the bench that the province has allocated budget for climate change issues and the government taking further steps. The bench adjourned further hearing of the case until July 15.

SC resumes hearing on SIC plea challenging denial of reserved seats

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court has resumed the hearing on the petition filed by the Sunni Ittehad Council an ally of the PTI challenging the denial of reserved seats in the national and provincial assemblies.

A full-court bench, led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, is conducting today's proceedings. Other judges on the bench are Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhtail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan.

Lawyer Sikandar Bashir, representing the Election Commission (ECP), is presenting his arguments before the 13-member full court.

Pakistan Peoples Party lawyer Farooq H Naek is also scheduled to advance his arguments.

The PTI had, after losing its electoral symbol 'bat', directed the independent candidates who won election with its backing to join the SIC.

In March, the ECP ruled that the SIC was not entitled to claim quota for reserved seats "due to having non-curable legal defects and violation of a mandatory provision of submission of party list for reserved seats".

Later, the ECP accepted applications of the opposing parties and decided that the seats in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies would not remain vacant and would be allocated by a proportional representation process on the basis of seats won by political parties.

The development resulted in the PTI-backed SIC losing a total of 77 reserved seats - 23 National Assembly seats (20 women and 3 minorities), 25 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly seats (21 women and 4 minorities), two Sindh Assembly seats (women) and 24 Punjab Assembly seats (24

women and 3 minority).

The PTI dismissed the ECP verdict as unconstitutional. The SIC then challenged the ECP ruling in the Peshawar High Court, but its plea was dismissed.

In May, a three-judge bench of the apex court took up a petition filed by the SIC. The court suspended the ECP decision to allocate SIC's reserved seats to other parties.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, during the proceedings, remarked that the mandate given by the people should be properly represented in parliament.

The court sent the matter of reserved seats to the Judges Committee to decide whether the case would be heard by the same bench or a larger bench would be constituted.

The court also ordered the ECP to suspended victory notifications of 77 lawmakers (on reserved seats), causing the ruling coalition to lose its two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. In late May, a full court was constituted to hear the case.



MANSEHRA: TIKA Vice President Umit Naci Yorulmaz inaugurating lab at department of architecture in Hazara University.



ISLAMABAD: Businessman and member of Economic Advisory Council Jahangir Khan Tareen along with MNA Aoun Chaudhary called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Minar-i-Pakistan assault case: TikToker victim pardons all suspects

LAHORE (INP): The female TikToker victim in the 2021 Minar-i-Pakistan assault case has pardoned all suspects, it emerged on Monday.

In August 2021, Lahore police had booked hundreds of unidentified persons for assaulting and stealing from the TikToker and her companions at the city's

Greater Iqbal Park on Independence Day.

The incident had come amid renewed focus on violence against women in Pakistan, following the murders of Noor Mukadam and Quratul Ain in July 2021. Videos of the incident had circulated widely on social media, causing huge uproar among celebrities and politicians alike.

Additional session judge Gul Abbas issued an order today of the hearing held on June 25, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com.

According to the order, the victim appeared before the court on June 3 and submitted her affidavit, following which the judge sought arguments at the hearing scheduled on August 26.

In her affidavit statement

filed on June 3, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, the victim said she did not wish to pursue the case further as she had forgiven

"all her suspects for the sake of Allah and his Holy Prophet (PBIH)".

The female TikToker added that she had "no objection to the suspects" being acquitted". She stated "she wanted to record the said statement "of her own consent and without any fear or threat".

Lorry Adda police had registered the first information report (FIR) against 400 unidentified persons for assaulting, molesting and stripping the TikToker on the eve of Aug 14, 2021. Later, the police also arrested an associate of the victim after she accused him of blackmail.

In his media statements, the associate had alleged that it was the TikToker who had been blackmailing him. He had also alleged that the woman implicated him in the FIR after he rejected her idea of minting money from the arrested persons for their release.

Sections 354-A (assault or use of criminal force against a

woman and stripping her of her clothes), 382 (theft after preparation made for causing death, hurt or restraint in order to commit the theft), 147 (rioting) and 149 (unlawful assembly) of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) had been included in the FIR.

More than 100 suspects had been taken into custody in August 2021. However, 98 of them had been released within weeks after the victim and her team members failed to identify them during an identification parade in Lahore's Camp Jail.

After six suspects were remanded into police custody, another eight suspects were arrested in October 2021 and were also sent on physical remand.

In Jan 2022, a Lahore sessions court had granted post-arrest bail to a suspect accused of playing a key role in the blackmail and assault in connivance with the principal suspect.

The next month, the Lahore High Court (LHC) had granted post-arrest bail to four suspects, including the main suspect.

Petroleum dealers announce country-wide strike on July 5

KARACHI (INP): The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association has announced a countrywide strike on July 5, against the government's decision of 0.5% advance tax, says in media reports.

According to Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) chairman, Abdul Sami Khan, stated that talks are scheduled with the government in Islamabad on Monday, but if they fail, the petrol pumps will be shut down across Pakistan as planned.

Expressing his concern over the advance turnover tax, he said that the strike may be extended

beyond a day if necessary.

The chairman urged the government to withdraw the tax immediately as it will make impossible for the petrol dealers to run their businesses. Yesterday, the federal government increased the petrol price in the country by Rs 7.45 per litre for the next fortnight.

The Finance Division has officially issued a notification, fixing the new price of petrol at Rs265.61 per litre, Rs7.45 up from the previous Rs258.16 per litre, burdening the inflation-hit public. Similarly, high-speed diesel (HSD) will now be available for

Rs277.45 per litre. Rs 9.56 up from the previous rate of Rs 267.89 per litre.

It is important to mention here that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led federal government proposed a 33 percent increase in the petroleum levy on petroleum products.

Similarly, the proposal sought a 50 percent increase in the levy on high-octane, light diesel, and ethanol has been increased. After approval of the proposal, Rs 50 would be charged on per litre high-octane, light diesel, and ethanol.



QUETTA: AI Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association information secretary Rana Asif addressing a press conference.

CPI-based inflation clocks in at 12.6pc for June

ISLAMABAD (INP): Headline inflation for June clocked in at 12.6 per cent on the year, data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed on Monday.

The reading is higher than the 11.8pc year-on-year rise in May, but is well below the average reading of 23.4pc for the financial year which ended June 30.

Month on month, the headline consumer inflation, measured by a basket of goods and services called the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose 0.5pc in June.

The June CPI reading is in line with the forecasts of both the State Bank of Pakistan and

the finance ministry, which had spoken of an uptick due to spending

linked to Eidul Azha holiday. The index has eased from a historic high of 38pc in May 2023, a slowdown that has provided relief for an economy beset by high

inflation and low growth.

The central bank last month cut the main interest rate by 150 basis points — the first cut in nearly four years — bringing it down from a historic high of 22pc. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said he expects further cuts this year in the face of falling inflation.

Rate cuts are key for the

government as it seeks to rein in its fiscal deficit to 5.9pc of GDP, of which interest on local debt is a big part.

Fiscal tightening is a key part of bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The government is pushing for a long term bailout in the region of \$6-\$8 billion, and says it wants an agreement this month after it passed a tax-heavy budget on Friday.

However, in its monetary policy statement last month, the State Bank also warned of an uptick in inflation beyond the seasonal rise — pointing to expected taxation measures in the annual budget.