

# QUETTA VOICE

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File Photo of Balochistan High Court building

## Government set to deregulate petroleum prices

**NEWS DESK:** The federal government has decided to transfer the authority to set petroleum prices from the state to oil marketing companies, sources revealed on Wednesday.

Insiders said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has instructed the cessation of the government's role in determining petroleum prices, prompting Petroleum Minister Musaddik Malik to call a crucial meeting scheduled for tomorrow.

The government is preparing to delegate the pricing authority to oil marketing companies in phases.

The Chairman of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has been tasked with assessing the impacts of deregulating petroleum prices and developing a strategic framework.

The final framework for deregulation will be presented to the prime minister for approval.

Sources indicate that petroleum dealers have opposed giving pricing authority to oil marketing companies, arguing that it could lead to profiteering.

Previously, the Oil Marketing Association of Pakistan (OMAP) had appealed to PM Shehbaz to intervene immediately and facilitate the recovery of foreign exchange losses of the petroleum industry.

In that regard, OMAP Chairman Tariq Wazir Ali wrote a letter to the prime minister to draw his attention to the unrecoverable exchange losses of the petroleum industry, which had been pending for a considerable time period.

He stressed that prompt action would help safeguard the petroleum industry from further crisis and ensure its continued contribution to the national economy.

He praised the government's policies for putting the country back on the right track, adding that the "commitment to economic stability and growth is a beacon of hope for many industries, including the petroleum industry."

Earlier, oil refineries also called on the government to make full recovery of the actual currency exchange losses.

## Civil Administration Capable of Maintaining Law and Order, BHC Rules

Manan Mandokhail

**QUETTA:** The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has determined that the civil administration possesses the capacity to effectively manage law and order in the province. This ruling came from the Divisional Bench, comprising Mr. Justice Abdullah Baloch and Mr. Justice Rozi Khan Bardich, following the review of detailed reports from key authorities on Wednesday.

The court's decision was informed by comprehensive reports submitted by the Additional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem, Inspector Gen-

eral of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and Director General of Levies, Naseebullah Kakar. These reports indicate that the Balochistan Police and Levies are progressively developing the capability to handle law enforcement duties.

Currently, over half of the check posts have been transferred from the Frontier Corps (FC) to the civil forces, with the remainder still in the process of being transferred, the key Balochistan officials informed the court.

The court emphasized that

the civil administration's ability to maintain order will not only save considerable financial resources but also offer greater convenience to the public.

Additionally, the court instructed that general transport should not face unnecessary checks at all check posts, aiming to alleviate vehicle congestion. The bench directed the FC to expedite the complete transfer of powers to the police and levies, signaling a move towards increased civil control over law enforcement in Balochistan.



## PTI's propaganda against COAS and family intolerable: PM Shehbaz Sharif

**NEWS DESK:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday denounced the propaganda against the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir and his family on the PTI website, calling it intolerable and heartwrenching.

He expressed these remarks during a federal cabinet meeting today. The premier condemned the actions of the group responsible for the events of May 9, accusing them of using new tactics to disrupt the country.

"The May 9 group left no stone unturned in shaking the

foundations of the country. Today, they are committing new offences with new tactics," he added. PM Shehbaz also expressed his concerns about the ongoing atrocities in Palestine, stating that Israel has killed 40,000 Palestinians and that UN resolutions have had no impact on Israel. He emphasised that the situation must be condemned as much as possible. Read Ruling alliance wants PTI founder punished after 'confession'.

Regarding recent attacks on the Pakistani consulate in Germany and London, Shehbaz de-

scribed these incidents as deeply unfortunate. He stressed the importance of ensuring the protection of Pakistani diplomatic missions and indicated that the foreign minister has taken immediate action. He called for the relevant countries' ambassadors to be summoned and urged them to take responsibility for protecting Pakistani embassies. Highlighting Afghanistan's role in the recent surge of terrorism, the Prime Minister stated that the government has been engaging with them, including a visit by Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

## Justice Minallah expresses desire for open courts during martial law threats

**NEWS DESK:** Justice Athar Minallah of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has expressed his desire for courts to remain open whenever there is a threat of martial law in the country.

Speaking at the New York City Bar in New York, he said, "I want the courts to be open whenever there is a danger of martial law."

Justice Minallah criticised certain television channels for creating an environment suggestive of imminent martial law in Pakistan, although he refrained from naming any specific channels.

"A martial law atmosphere is being created. I don't want to

name the TV channel, but it is making it seem as if martial law is about to be imposed," he remarked.

Reflecting on historical events, he lamented that the courts were not open on key dates when martial laws were imposed.

"I wish the courts were open on 12 October 1999, when Pervez Musharraf ousted the elected prime minister. I wish the courts were open on 5 July 1977, when Ziaul Haq removed the elected prime minister," he said.

He further added that any attempt to unconstitutionally remove former prime minister Imran Khan would have been a test for the Islamabad High Court.



## CM Gandapur accepts demands of Bannu jirga leaders

**NEWS DESK:** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Azam-é-Istekham has agreed to all the demands put forward by the Bannu Aman Jirga, as reported by Geo News. The agreement was reached in a meeting held earlier this week, sources revealed on Wednesday.

Sources familiar with the discussions indicated that the jirga called for dismantling armed groups in the province, empowering the police with enhanced night patrols, allowing the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) to conduct search operations, and ensuring that missing persons are presented before courts.

During a meeting held late Monday, CM Gandapur addressed the concerns of the Bannu jirga members. He clarified

the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) position on Operation Azm-é-Istekham, describing it as a strategic approach rather than a conventional military operation.

"The ISPR has clarified that the jirga called for dismantling armed groups in the province, empowering the police with enhanced night patrols, allowing the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) to conduct search operations, and ensuring that missing persons are presented before courts."

The session will outline the terms of reference (ToRs) for establishing a committee to investigate the Bannu incident, according to sources. The forthcoming apex committee meeting will include K-P chief secretary, additional secretary home, corps commander Peshawar K-P inspector general (IG), and other senior officials.

## Women Lawmakers Raise Concerns Over "Baloch Raji Machi" Rally's Impact on Development Projects

Staff Reporter:

**QUETTA:** During a press conference, Farah Azim Shah, a member of the Balochistan Assembly, expressed concerns about the potential impact of the upcoming "Baloch Raji Machi" rally in Gwadar on critical development projects, including CPEC and the Green Balochistan Project.

Other women parliamentarians joined Shah in highlighting issues related to the rally and broader political challenges.

Provincial Parliamentary Secretary for Women, Rababa Buledi, addressed a recent incident in the assembly, calling for respect and decorum. She

underscored the right to peaceful protest within constitutional limits, while Meena Majeed Baloch suggested alternative rally locations to minimize disruptions.

Deputy Speaker Ghazala Gola emphasized the importance of dialogue in resolving issues.

Advocating for constructive engagement and expressing confidence in addressing concerns through discussions.

The parliamentarians stressed the need for maintaining democratic principles and ensuring peaceful resolutions to political disputes.



Sindh CM launches revival of natural route of Dhoro Puran at Shaqoor Lake

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Climate Tides and Raising Injustices: The Climate-Gender Nexus in Balochistan

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Climate Tides and Raising Injustices: The Climate-Gender Violence Nexus in Balochistan

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Editor: Asim Khan

## Shelterless schools in Balochistan and CM Sarfraz Bugti

### Editorial :

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti announcement about the construction of buildings for shelterless schools appears to be a positive stride. As per the statistics of the education department, the number of shelterless schools across the province is more than 2,900. However, independent sources put the number much higher than what is being quoted by the department. The CM needs to translate his words into action in terms of the construction of buildings and boundary walls for the government-run schools. Although, the construction of buildings has not been reflected in the public sector development program (PSDP) for the current financial year. However, the government can evolve a strategy and mechanism to include all shelterless schools in the forthcoming budget.

UNICEF, EU should go beyond inaugural sessions

Mir Sarfraz Bugti made this announcement while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Balochistan Education Support Program (BESP). Representatives of the European Union (EU) and UNICEF were also in attendance. As far as UNICEF and EU are concerned, they have to go beyond inaugural sessions and take steps for the promotion of the education sector.

Yes, first it is the responsibility of the government of Balochistan to make sure provision of education to every child in the province. UNICEF and EU should not be confined to a private hotel or their heavily-guarded offices. It has almost become a tradition that once in a year these organizations hold such seminars.

8,188 schools have no toilet facility

According to the statistics of the education department, 8,188 schools have no toilet facility. This is a matter of serious concern. The number of government-run primaries, middle and high schools across Balochistan is more than 15,000. Statistics show that 11,775 schools have no facility for drinking water and nearly 8,000 schools have no boundary walls. It is good to see representatives from the UNICEF and EU discussing education in Quetta. But still, a lot needs to be done.

Their attractive signboards and banners should match their performance on the ground. As far as the government is concerned, it must announce an emergency to make sure the enrollment of more than 1 million children in schools and improve the state of facilities in schools.

## Climate Tides and Raising Injustices: The Climate-Gender Violence Nexus in Balochistan

Chandni Kakar:

Throughout history, crisis situations, be they wars, natural disasters, or extreme economic downturns, inevitably unmask the ugly face of social inequality. Among the different types of inequality, gender-based violence (GBV), often considered a shadow pandemic, regrettably seizes these crisis situations as a breeding ground, leveraging emotions of fear and uncertainty. Strikingly, in the windswept terrains of Balochistan, menacing outbreaks of climate change and GBV rises like a monstrous specter, particularly in the flood-prone areas.

### Catastrophic Climatic Events and GBV-Mysterious Puppets on the Same String

Here's the curious case: aggravated climate change, leading to increased flooding events, and a rising tide of GBV are not isolated in-

stances of social trauma but deeply interlinked phenomena in Balochistan. Officially reported in 2022, a disturbing trend of 157 cases of domestic violence were reported in Balochistan in 2022, with 55 individuals being killed on the pretext of Karo Kari, half of whom were women, and 40 women economic victims of sexual abuse.

### Before this, in 2021, the number of reported cases of domestic violence was 127, with 30 women being victims of sexual violence.

In 2021, according to the Balochistan Gender-Based-Violence Case Management System, close to 3726 cases of GBV were reported. The following year, in 2022, this figure swelled to 4082, illustrating a staggering increase of nearly 9%. Digging deeper reveals an uncanny coincidence. An upward

trend in extreme climate events in this same timeline correlates with this rise, painting a chilling picture. This correlation isn't incidental but consequential, a nexus amplified by the continuous environmental changes and socio-economic fallout they induce.

### Climate Change in Balochistan: More Than Just an Environmental Issue

Climate change in Balochistan isn't calming down, like a seemingly ceaseless sandstorm that obliterates ways of life. In July 2022, unprecedented torrential rains in Quetta led to alarm bells within communities, damaged infrastructure, and homeless families. Similarly, Naseerabad faced devastating floods in August, with farmlands, the vital backbone of their economy, laid to waste.

This consistent harsh climate rattles the socio-economic bal-

ance, where women, due to systemic patriarchy and gender biases, bear the heavy toll. Societal roles designate farming, household work, and gathering water as women's duties, all of which become perilous with fluctuating climatic conditions.

### Recent Case: An Appalling Tale from Naseerabad

Consider the heart-wrenching drama that unfolded in Naseerabad. Amidst the devastating floods, several women and girls reported being victims of horrific violence when they went out to collect clean water or seek shelter. A specific case that sounds like a horror story from a seventeen-year-old girl, who, seeking refuge during the floods, was brutally assaulted by her neighbor.

### The Future: Deciphering the Complex Jigsaw Puzzle

Climate change comes not just with raging winds but also with silent whispers of rising injustice against vulnerable sections of society.

So, how do the convoluted cogs of climate change and GBV work in unison?

A deeper scrutiny suggests, that with rising environmental instability, women are forced into vulnerable situations, escalating GBV rates.

Additionally, the diversion of resources and law enforcement focus to disaster relief further aggravates these incidences.

The growing climate crisis in Balochistan is more than an environmental problem.

It is a socio-economic menace, a catalyst for gender-based violence, and a glaring testament to the intricate relationship between humanity and Mother Earth. A multi-faceted approach that intertwines climate strategy with gender justice is the need of the hour. The time is ripe to refine our lenses.

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## Life on the brink

By Rafia Zakaria:

In June of this year, the Pakistani government had issued two tenders to buy LNG on the international market but didn't receive any bids. Pakistan's devaluing currency and lack of foreign exchange, coupled with the inflation rate in Pakistan, has apparently made it a bad risk. This means what it always means, which is that there is likely to be an even worse-than-usual shortage of gas in the country as it makes its way towards the winter months.

One way to cushion the perpetual bad news of life in 2023 is to present the bad news first so that even slight improvements can be touted as successes. In the spirit of that kind of spin, I am happy to report that in July there was a bidder: the commodities trader Trafimex.

Although there are no reports to indicate a deal, a buoyed caretaker government issued two new tenders for LNG recently. It expects to receive bids because of the slight improvement of the economic condition

post the IMF agreement. When things have been hopeless for so long, even a tiny dilution of misery works worth celebrating. And there is a chance that things in the future will not be quite as bad as this summer has been. Even though inflation rose in Pakistan over the month of September, and is now at an all-time high of 31.4 percent, some respite came this week in the lowering of petrol and diesel prices. Prior to this, prices had been at a record high and would likely have remained at that level had not been for a decrease in global oil prices.

Together, the hope for cigarettes will reduce the petrol prices may point to a less miserable road ahead. Inflation, according to the Ministry of Finance may be required to deal with the high, but if you do have a place to live, despite housing prices being inflated, you might be able to cook inside it, and if you have a job, it may become marginally easier to commute to office and back. Given the way things have been, this almost seems like a vast

improvement to a lot of people.

High inflation is not always a bad thing. Going by the sectors that have seen an increase in inflation, tobacco is one of the goods whose price has increased hugely.

Given that tobacco consumption is the cause of devastating health problems — everything from breathing problems to cancer — for so much of the population, one hopes that this increase will force some of those who are addicted to tobacco, to give up the habit altogether. It is not a pretty way to quit smoking, but quitting is quitting and whatever the reason, those who can no longer pay for cigarettes will stop. There is opportunity here for those looking for an evening out and some excellent people watching to boot. Crashing these events, especially the ones that host nearly 1,000 people, can provide nice evening entertainment without a price tag. If anyone asks, the truth must be told: inflation has not touched the hosts and so they must pardon the uninformed guests.

These conversations and meetings this year leading up to COP28 so far have not been good for either a fair or safe world. From the Bonn talks in May to the UNGA Climate Summit in September, the emphasis has remained on the need to do more, without any concrete action plan to achieve the elusive target of decarbonising the economy through deep, rapid and immediate cuts in emissions.

Environmental ministers from G20 nations, representing countries that account for 80pc of GHG emissions failed to agree on ways to curb the short of projecting other crucial matters at the Delhi Summit, stresses that even under a very low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions scenario, global warming is likely to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, increasing the risk of food insecurity, extreme weather and conflict. At current warming levels, communities are already experiencing landslides, flash floods, storm surges, wildfires, droughts and the drying up of springs among other disruptions caused by climate change.

By Aisha Khan:

THE IPCC A6 Synthesis Report, which draws together the scientific body's work over the past eight years, stresses that even under a very low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions scenario, global warming is likely to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, increasing the risk of food insecurity, extreme weather and conflict. At current warming levels, communities are already experiencing landslides, flash floods, storm surges, wildfires, droughts and the drying up of springs among other disruptions caused by climate change.

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The pivot shift from Paris to Dubai comes at a time when much has changed since the 2015 Paris Agreement. It urges the need for keeping temperatures below 1.5°C, capping emissions by 2025, reducing GHGs by 2030 to stay within the safe threshold of planetary boundaries, higher technologies. All eyes will now be on Dubai to see how the presidency leverages the stocktake to course correct and transition to a safer trajectory with a rapid response plan. As always, finance will dominate the negotiations, and the issues of drastic cuts in emissions, doubling adaptation finance and operationalising the loss and damage fund along side the need for reform in the global financial architecture will be key determinants in setting the future agenda. So far, all the climate reports have one thing in common: all serve as a wake-up call for moving past statements, advisories and prose that use climate as a glossary to list thematic areas or high light threats that are already being experienced by people, but fail to provide timely solutions.

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## A surge in terrorist attacks

By Zahid Hussain:

THE bloodbath in Mastung last week was yet another grim reminder of the relentless rise of militant violence that is threatening national security.

The suicide attack on a Rabul Awwal congregation in the Balochistan town left almost 60 people dead. At least five people were killed in a targeted attack in KP on the same day, swelling the number of fatalities.

It was one of the bloodiest days of the current year that has already recorded the highest number of casualties over security forces in the past eight years. Terrorist attacks have become almost a daily affair. The return of terrorism presents a most serious challenge to a nation mired in multiple crises. The state of killings across the country demonstrates the expanding capacity of militant groups to carry out increasingly audacious operations.

While the administration silently watches the situation drift towards anarchy, armed marauders carry out their deadly attacks with impunity. The pattern and seriousness of violence indicate that the

militants are better armed than before and well organised.

A report recently released by the Islamabad-based Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) reveals a staggering 57 per cent escalation in militant violence nationwide over the last quarter.

It's an extremely alarming situation, raising questions regarding our counterterrorism strategy that appears to be faltering as militants of all stripes continue to operate. The latest wave of violence highlights the inability of the security agencies to deal with the rising militant threat.

Almost 11,000 people, including 386 security personnel, lost their lives in militant violence in the first nine months of the year, according to the CRSS report. The report notes that the number of fatalities from terrorist attacks this year has increased, with KP and Balochistan having suffered 92pc of all fatalities since the beginning of the year.

While a reinvigoration of the state security apparatus in Pakistan (TTP) has reportedly been involved in most of the terrorist attacks, notable exceptions are the growing presence

and activities of the Islamic State-Khorasan group. Several recent militant raids have been traced to the group. Although no one has claimed responsibility, the suicide attack in Mastung last Friday bears all the hallmarks of an IS-K attack.

It is not for the first time that Mastung, which houses madrassas known for their association with outlawed extremist sectarian outfits, as well as transnational militant groups, has been targeted in a bloodbath. There has been a marked escalation in sectarian violence, with the town becoming a hub of religious radicalism.

One of the most traditional madrassas was established by the family of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, an Al Qaeda leader and mastermind of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The connection was revealed after a suicide attack on a Mahajir procession in Quetta in 2004 was traced to the facility.

The investigations showed that the mastermind of the attack were Mosaib al Baluchi and Dawood Badami, close relatives of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who were later arrested and taken to Guantanamo by American forces. It was the first time that an Ashura procession was attacked by militants here, lending a new and dangerous dimension to sectarian terror in the province.

Over the years, Mastung, located some 50 kilometres from Quetta, has become the main centre of extremist sectarian groups. The focus of the escalation in attacks on rival Sunni groups. In 2017, a suicide bomber targeted a JUI-F leader Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, who was then deputy chairman of the ruling PPP, in the killing of several people.

Many madrassas in the region have become the focus of the outlawed Lashkar-i-Jhangvi which has now reportedly taken up the banner of IS-K. The latest attack in Mastung with NATO spreading its wings to Finland and, potentially, Sweden, also comes at a time when several attacks in IS-K activities in KP. In the past three months, the terror group has been involved in several attacks in the province.

By Mahir Ali:

EARLY last month, US State Department, have been aware since at least the 1990s that Nato's eastward expansion was a red line for Moscow. Mikhail Gorbachev verbally promised it wouldn't occur, and regretted not insisting on a written declaration in the autumn of 2021, and actually sent a draft treaty that they wanted Nato to sign, to promise no more Nato enlargement.

That was what he sent us. And [it] was a precondition for not [invading] Ukraine. Of course, we didn't sign that."

Until then, any Western politician who hinted at any kind of provocation behind Russia's military being labelled as aggression by Vladimir Putin. The unreasonably hawkish Stoltenberg obviously does not fall in that category, and he went on to remind his audience about how Moscow's venture into the Baltic region with NATO spreading its wings to Finland and, potentially, Sweden, also comes at a time when several attacks in IS-K activities in KP. In the past three months, the terror group has been involved in several attacks in the province.

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US State Department, have been aware since at least the 1990s that Nato's eastward expansion was a red line for Moscow. Mikhail Gorbachev verbally promised it wouldn't occur, and regretted not insisting on a written declaration in the autumn of 2021, and actually sent a draft treaty that they wanted Nato to sign, to promise no more Nato enlargement.

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war appears not to have troubled his conscience.

None of this detracts from the fact that Russia was the aggressor in February 2022, and Ukraine the victim. The provocation that Stoltenberg has belatedly acknowledged by no means adds up to any justification for Putin's "special military operation".

Put simply, Putin's military operation is a violation of international law, and it is a crime. It is a crime to invade a sovereign state, and it is a crime to occupy its territory. It is a crime to use force to resolve a dispute. It is a crime to use force to resolve a dispute.

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Zardari, Nawaz on the wrong side of history: Fawad Chaudhry

LAHORE (INP): Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry said on Wednesday that Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif were on the wrong side of the history. He made these remarks during his appearance in an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in a case registered against him. He said the cabinet meeting would deliberate on banning the

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, adding that whoever was siding with Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari won't be able to survive in politics in future. Speaking about PTI founder Imran Khan, he said the 14-month long illegal incarceration of Imran Khan couldn't achieve anything for the government as people had voted for his party without the PTI having a party symbol for the polls. He warned the government against rampant human rights abuses which may lead to anarchy. "The world is watching everything happening in Pakistan where even court orders are brushed under the carpet," he cautioned. Underscoring the need for strengthening the judiciary, the former minister said people should obey court orders. He also criticised those who were maligning the armed forces from abroad, cautioning that it won't do them any good. "The PTI is not spreading digital terrorism as anti-Pakistan people are involved in it. We have to bring stability in Pakistan, which isn't possible without Imran Khan being in the saddle," he concluded.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi visiting the Saint Jan Cathedral Church in Cantt area.

United State (US) concerned' over PTI leaders' arrests

WASHINGTON (INP): The US State Department has expressed concerns over the arrests of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, urging the South Asian nation to respect human rights and uphold democratic principles. We have seen the reports of the arrests of PTI leaders. We are always concerned when we see arrests of opposition leaders," said US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller while speaking at a press briefing in Washington on Tuesday. Washington's reaction comes against the backdrop of PTI Information Secretary Raouf Hasan's arrest for allegedly heading a digital media cell involved in running propaganda against Pakistan and its integrity. Hasan, a prominent PTI official, was taken into custody by

Islamabad Police on Monday from the party's Central Secretariat in the federal capital and handed over to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on a two-day party remand by a district and sessions court on Tuesday. A First Information Report (FIR) has been registered against 12 PTI officials and workers including Hasan under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act's sections 9 (glorification of an offence), 10 (cyber-treason), and 11 (hate speech). Meanwhile, authorities have also sealed the party's Central Secretariat building citing violations of relevant fire safety regulations. The party has faced mass arrests and a nationwide crackdown since the May 9 riots which were triggered after the arrest of its founder Imran Khan in a graft case and saw several military and state installations being vandalised. The party's leadership, including Khan and other senior leaders with the likes of Shah Mahmood Qureshi and others, are already behind bars owing to their alleged involvement in various cases. Reacting to Hasan's arrest, Miller said: "I'm always personally concerned when I see the arrest of a spokesperson." He further reiterated Washington's support for the peaceful upholding of constitutional and democratic principles, including the rule of law, equal justice under the law, and respect for human rights like freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly. "We urge that these principles be respected in accordance with Pakistan's constitution and laws," he added. Last week, US President Joe Biden's administration had expressed concerns over the government's announcement of its decision to ban the former ruling party and lodge treason cases against its founder and other leaders. Earlier this month, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar revealed that announced that the federal government was planning to impose a ban on its political rival PTI over its alleged involvement in anti-state activities. In response, Miller referred to the media reports and the Pakistani government's announcement, saying the development "is a beginning of the complex process," certifying banning of the political party would be of great concern to us," he remarked.

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrests two human traffickers in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested two suspects involved in human trafficking from Tariq Road. According to the FIA, the suspects were sending people abroad under the name of a fake company. The spokesperson stated that the suspects had provided a UK employment visa to a citizen by falsely representing a healthcare firm. The FIA revealed that the suspects had extorted a total of 7 million rupees from the citizen. Additionally, the suspects had issued visas to a total of 40 citizens under the name of the fake company. The FIA has recovered checkbooks, laptops, mobile phones, travel documents, and other items from the suspects. The FIA is

conducting raids to arrest other suspects involved in this case. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Human Trafficking Circle on Friday reportedly arrested six human traffickers in Rawalpindi. The FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle has intensified its operations against individuals involved in human trafficking and visa fraud. The FIA spokesperson disclosed that six human traffickers, identified as Manwar Butt, Tahir Muzammil, Zeeshan Sadiq, Abdullah, Liaqat Hussain, and Muhammad Rizwan, were apprehended in a series of raids in Rawalpindi. The arrested individuals reportedly extorted large sums of money from citizens on the pretense of employment abroad.

Business-friendly policies vital to overcome prevailing crisis: Bakhtawari

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has called for a forensic audit of Independent Power Producers (IPPs), decrying the annual payment of Rs.2000 billion in capacity charges as "daylight robbery." This, he argues, deprives consumers of their hard-earned income and putting them severe hardships to meet their day to day affairs. Ahsan Bakhtawari emphasized that the Rs.2 trillion being paid to 40 companies in capacity charges is severely hampering the national economy, even when no electricity is generated or supplied.

Public notices section containing multiple small notices from various departments and organizations, including notices about government tenders and public information.



QUETTA: Provincial Irrigation Minister Mir Sadiq Umrani is meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti.

Chinese auto giant to promote battery technology in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chinese auto giant has entered into new arrangements to promote battery technology in Pakistan. Pakistan is gearing up to promote battery technology following the announcement of a strategic distribution partnership between BYD, a Chinese auto giant and world's second battery manufacturer, and Diwan International Pvt Ltd, Pakistan's largest solar component distributor. It aims at to supply premium Lithium ion batteries for solar systems in Pakistan. The battery V Flex Lite is a self-developed Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) battery technology that has been safety proved by millions of electric vehicles across the globe. The new partnership signifies a milestone in the country's renewable energy sector, as Diwan International expands its portfolio of world-renowned partners, including but not limited to Huawei Solar Inverter, Jinko Solar, Trina Solar, Longi Solar.

Pakistan, like many other developing countries, faces challenges related to air pollution and rising greenhouse gas emissions. This endeavor is anticipated not only to meet the needs of the local EV battery market gradually, but also make an indispensable contribution to Pakistan's sustainable development goals by curbing carbon emissions and promoting clean energy solutions. According to a report, BYD surpassed Tesla last year to become the world's largest electric vehicle manufacturer, showcasing its prowess in the field. By now, overseas business of this auto giant has covered Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Costa Rica and many other countries, and its electric vehicles have covered six continents, more than 50 countries and regions, and more than 200 cities around the globe. Pakistan's growing emphasis on reducing carbon emissions and embracing eco-friendly transportation solutions coincides with BYD's ambitious global rollout plans. Furthermore, BYD's decision to develop electric vehicle production within Pakistan opens avenues for exporting Right Hand Drive (RHD) vehicles, catering to broader markets.

One person dies in flash floods in district Khyber's Tirah Valley

LAHORE, PESHAWAR (INP): Different parts of Punjab again received light to heavy rain on Wednesday morning, increasing fears of flash floods in some of these areas, while on the other hand, one person died due to flash floods in Tirah Valley of district Khyber, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Light rain and drizzle reported from different localities of Lahore increased humidity and made the people feel suffocated. On the other hand, it rained cats and dogs in Sialkot and Narowal, increasing risks of flash floods in these cities besides deluge in local nullahs like Pakhu, Aik and others. A rain drain burst its banks in Nikanur, a town on the outskirts of Narowal, due to which the only road link between the town and other areas was severed, creating a lot of inconvenience for the locals, who demanded Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to take notice of their predicament. Heavy rain was also reported from Gujrat, Sheikhpura, Arifwala, Pakpattan, Chuniyan, Okara, Sarai Alamgir and Manawala, inundating low-lying areas and resulting in the suspension of power supply. In some cases, water entered people's homes. Floods forced 30-year-old record in Khyber. One person died and dozens of shops were washed away by floods in district Khyber's Tirah Valley that broke 30-year-old record. Locals demanded the government to declare the area a calamity-hit area. The Met Office, on the other hand, said it was not over yet as more rains were expected.



QUETTA: Representatives of social organization Dutch Private Limited is being meet by Provincial Adviser for Women's Development Department, Dr. Rababa Khan Buledi.

Advertisement for Electricity supply from Iran suspended for Makran, including a table of equipment for sale and a notice inviting tenders for a Chief Officer District Council Chagai. The table lists items like Tractor, Mower, and various pumps with their respective prices. The notice invites tenders for a Chief Officer District Council Chagai, detailing the job requirements and application process.

## IHC seeks interior secy, police, NAB, FIA reply in Bushra Bibi's case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday issued notices to the secretary interior and senior officials of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the police and sought their replies in the former prime minister Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi case.

Bushra, in her petition, had prayed to the court to order the concerned departments to provide her with details of the cases registered against her as well as not to arrest her in any new case besides allowing her to approach a relevant court for justice.

IHC Chief Justice (CJ) Justice Aamer Farooq heard

the former first lady's petition. The court then adjourned the case's hearing until next week.

On the other hand, hinting at the formation of a larger bench to hear the petition filed by PTI leader Ali Bukhari against the Election Amendment Act, the IHC CJ on Wednesday summoned the attorney general of Pakistan (AGP) to assist the court in deciding the case.

Justice Farooq also issued notices to the Ministry of Law and the Election Commission of Pakistan and sought their replies within 10 days.

Giving arguments on behalf of the petitioner, his counsel Shoab Shaheen Advocate

said that a section had been inserted in the Act so that a retired judge could head the tribunal formed to hear the complaints of losing candidates in the general elections held on February 8, 2024. "Under the section, consulting a high court's chief justice for the appointment of a retired judge is no longer mandatory," he said, and requested the court for the formation of a larger bench or division bench to hear the case.

The chief justice asked him to wait till the respondent submitted his reply following which he would form a larger bench. The court then directed that the case's next hearing be fixed after 10 days.



BADIN: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah unveils the plaque to inaugurate LBOB system to revive the natural waterway of Dhoro Puran, up to Shakoor Lake.

## Sindh CM launches revival of natural route of Dhoro Puran to Shakoor Lake

HYDERABAD (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated the restoration of natural water channels from Dhoro Puran to Shakoor Lake to save 1.27 million acres of land. He said that the federal government constructed the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOB) during the 1980s, but the excavation of its Spinal blocked the natural waterways.

As a result, the lands of Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar and Nawabshah started submerging during floods and degraded, turning saline, the wetland ecosystem was completely damaged, and livelihood opportunities shrank. Keeping in view these problems, particularly the livelihoods and the damaged wetland ecosystem, the Sindh government has decided to revive the natural route of Dhoro Puran to Shakoor Lake and rehabilitate Dhoro Puran up to Shakoor Lake, he added.

CM expressed this while speaking at the public gathering after inaugurating the LBOB system, Sindh minister for irrigation

Jam Khan Shoro, Secretary Irrigation Zareef Khoro, elected representatives of the area and the notables attended the program.

The CM, sharing the background of the LBOB project, informed that from 1984 to 1997, the LBOB Stage-1 project was executed by Wapda to relieve waterlogging and salinity in 1.27 million acres of land in Shaheed Benazirabad, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar and Basin Districts.

He maintained that the LBOB spinal drain connects the drainage network to the sea through a 26-mile-long canal, called the Tidal Link. The LBOB spinal drain collects surplus drainage and distributes it through a weir to two branch drains, the Kadhan Pateji Outfall Drain (KPOD) and the Dhoro Puran Outfall Drain (DPOD). He added that the spinal drain system was designed to direct the high salinity drainage into the KPOD and then to the sea. The KPOD connects to the sea via a 26-mile-long canal, called the Tidal Link.

The CM said that 204 drains from three divisions, totalling 1735

miles in length, would discharge into the LBOB. These include 108 drains from Badin, spanning 813 miles, 51 drains from Mirpurkhas, covering 454 miles and 43 drains from Sanghar, extending over 336.6 miles.

He recalled that the Wapda handed over the LBOB Spinal to the Sindh irrigation department in 1993, but the system could not perform and caused damage during the heavy rains of the 1994 monsoon. Therefore, the system was returned to WAPDA in 1995. WAPDA handed over the LBOB System again to the Sindh irrigation department in February 2002.

Murad Ali Shah stated that the LBOB project includes a Spinal Drain of 261.12 km, KPOD of 99 km, Tidal Link of 43 km, Surface Drains of 1666 km and 1673 Drainage wells. Its benefited area was spread over 1.27 million acres. Talking about the conceptualization and problems, Shah said that on July 4, 2022, heavy rain began and the LBOB's drainage network efficiently carried storm water to its outfalls.

## Maryam, German Ambassador reiterate commitment to strengthen mutual relations

LAHORE (INP): The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Alfred Granas, met Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, in which they reiterated their determination to strengthen mutual relations.

Maryam Nawaz appreciated the immediate action of the German authorities to the attack of terrorists on the Pakistani embassy in Germany.

The promotion of bilateral relations was discussed in the meeting, while economic cooperation and cooperation in technical education were also discussed.

Chief Minister Punjab appreciated Germany's ongoing collaboration and investment in the development sectors of Punjab, while possibilities of further cooperation in various sectors including renewable

energy, vocational training, and information technology were also reviewed.

German Ambassador Alfred Granas reiterated his commitment to strengthen mutual relations with Punjab and appreciated the efforts of the provincial government in creating a favorable environment for foreign investment in Punjab. Cooperation in promoting technological development was agreed upon.

In the meeting between the two leaders, the possibilities of partnerships in health, education, and other sectors were reviewed. Measures to enhance education and vocational training programs were also discussed.

Talking about the Germany incident, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam expressed

hope that the people involved in the Germany incident will be brought to justice and such incidents will not happen in the future.

The Chief Minister of Punjab said that they want to equip the youth with skills that meet the requirements of the job market.

Germany is a global leader in renewable energy issues and has served humanity by taking environment-friendly measures. A solarization project has been launched to provide clean and green energy to the citizens.

It is pertinent to note that during the meeting between Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and the German Ambassador, Senator Pervaiz Rasheed, and other officials were also present.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

## Federal cabinet again defers decision to ban PTI, invoke Article 6 against Imran and Alvi

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal cabinet on Wednesday once again deferred the decision to ban the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

This was announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif while addressing the participants in the meeting.

The cabinet finally met after twice postponing the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office here. The meeting could not reach a decision to proceed under Article 6 against former president Dr Arif Alvi, PTI founder Imran Khan, and former National Assembly deputy speaker Qasim Suri.

According to sources, the ban on the PTI was to be considered in the cabinet meeting, but the issue was not taken up.

The prime minister mentioned Palestine situation and said the Israeli forces have killed more than 40,000 people. The United Nations adopted resolutions for ceasefire and the International Court of Justice has condemned the genocide but the Israeli gov-

ernment paid no heed to voices against it. Premier Shehbaz said that the cabinet has approved visa-free entry to businessmen and citizens of friendly countries. The approval was given on the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior for visa-free entry to residents of 126 countries.

He said there has been a surge in terrorists' activities in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recently. Our brave soldiers laid down their lives in defense of the country. "These terrorist acts are a systematic conspiracy against Pakistan," he continued.

The premier also talked about "serious" economic challenges to the country. He said a staff level agreement has finally been reached with the IMF. The poor have been hit hard due to inflation. He urged politicians and stakeholders to work in unison to resolve economic crises.

Information Minister Atta Tarar, in the meantime, said at a

TV programme on Tuesday said that the government has decided in principle to ban the PTI.

Earlier, on July 15, the information minister said the ruling coalition had decided to ban the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He told a press conference that the federal government would file a case to ban the PTI.

The government would keep the current situation in mind before taking a step in this regard, he added.

"The PTI and the country cannot go together," he categorically stated.

The government's earlier stance was that consultations were underway among the ruling allies regarding the decision to ban the opposition party.

The PPP seems to be the fence, though it has approached the Supreme Court to challenge the July 12 verdict that awarded reserved seats to the PTI and recognised it as a parliamentary party.

## Mian Zahid warns of public & power producers clash over inflated bills

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, as well as former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has warned that the risk of confrontation between the public and electricity companies is increasing due to exorbitant bills.

Talking to business community on Wednesday, he said that people now have to pay electricity bills that exceed their income, leading to quarrels in their homes.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that inflated bills were breaking relationships, and people were shedding blood over it.

He claimed that capacity payments were penalizing the general public and the industrial sector.

Public anxiety and agitation could spiral out of control at any time, so the government should act quickly to stabilize the situa-

tion, he warned. The business leader stated that the elites and the government own 80 percent of the IPPs established in the country, receiving far more in dollars than their rightful share.

He warned that this plunder of resources should end; otherwise, the country will plunge into lawlessness and will soon become bankrupt.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the government can do a lot in this regard. The Prime Minister has also issued directives to lower the cost of electricity for industries, yet a permanent solution to the losses and capacity payments in the electricity sector remains unattainable.

He stressed that the government's non-developmental expenditures are skyrocketing, making it impossible to fool the people as they perceive everything.

The business leader said that following violent incidents, the

power tariff has been reduced in some areas, implying that those living in other areas should also resort to violence for relief.

According to him, forty percent of people have already fallen below the poverty line, and more are falling below it. If the government fails to correct the economy's direction and arrange a fair distribution of wealth, it will not only impact the people but also the upper classes, who will struggle with insufficient resources for their princely lifestyle.

Mian Zahid Hussain added, "If the IPPs agreement was not a mistake, why is the country and nation suffering a loss of two thousand billion rupees annually, and why is this money only reaching a few people?"

He stated that it's crucial to conduct a forensic audit of IPPs, noting that some individuals have profited greatly from the looting, and it's now time to put an end to it.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Board of Investment, Abdul Aleem Khan meets with the Chinese Ambassador, His Excellency Jiang Zaidong to Bolster Economic Cooperation.

## Karachi's Natha Khan Bridge once again prone to collapse

KARACHI (INP): The middle part of the dilapidated Natha Khan Bridge in the Shahra-e-Faisal area of Karachi has been prone to collapse again, for long a huge population shuttling between the international airport and a vast territory of this metropolis.

A lack of proper and regular maintenance, as well as a strict check on unscrupulous elements, has turned the vital installation into a dangerous path for commuters and pedestrians alike.

Once strong, smooth and architecturally attractive, the bridge now stands without a complete railing, smooth road and safe pavement.

It had lost its colour years back and no official has since bothered to pay attention to the defaced structure.

Earlier, about 100-foot portion of the concrete railings on both sides of the bridge had fallen down or been damaged by unscrupulous elements.

Recent heavy rains had caused considerable damage to certain portions of the bridge prompting the authorities concerned to fill up the wide cracks that had developed in its walls as well.

However, the repair work was confined to the 'heavily damaged' portions.



QUETTA: Secretary Population Abdullah Khan brief media on occasion of World Population Day.