

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Thursday, September 05, 2024

dquettavoice@gmail.com



Heroin Excavator Driver Mohibullah meeting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

Fazl urges parliament to hold dialogue with people of Balochistan, KP on security issues

NEWS DESK: Jamaat Ulema-Islamiyat-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman urged parliament on Wednesday to hold a dialogue with the "people of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" to address their security concerns.

Fazl's suggestion comes amid a precarious security situation in Balochistan after the deadly terrorist attacks on August 26 and discontent over the enforced disappearances issue.

Terrorist attacks across the country surged to 59 in the month of August.

Compared to July's 38, according to a digital database maintained by the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), an Islamabad-based think-tank.

The majority of the attacks occurred in K and Balochistan.

A Call for Justice and Restoration After the Tragic Fire at Government Science College

QUETTA: The recent fire that devastated the historic Government Science College in Balochistan is a tragedy of immense proportions, not only for the faculty and students but for the entire province. This institution, a cornerstone of education in Balochistan for generations, has now been reduced to ashes, and with it, the hopes and dreams of thousands of students who relied on its resources. The loss is not just of a building but of a national asset, a sanctuary of knowledge that nurtured countless minds and served as a beacon of learning in the region.

Science College Is Not A Building But A National Asset

The Balochistan government, led by Education Minister Raheela Durrani, has taken the initial step of forming an inquiry committee headed by Secretary of Higher Education Hafiz Muhammad Fahir to investigate the cause of the fire.

However, this move, while necessary, falls short of addressing the deep concerns and fears that have gripped the educational community and the broader public.

As professors like Raziq Ullah Kakar and Khalil Khan have poignantly expressed, the college was more than just a building. It was a home for educators and students alike. Their voices, filled with grief and a deep sense of loss, echo the sentiments of the entire community.

The anguish they feel is not just personal; it is shared by all who understand the value of education and the irreplaceable role that institutions like Government Science College play in society.

PM Welcomes Heroic Flood Rescuer at Prime Minister's House

Dawood Ahmed:

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif warmly welcomed excavator driver Mohibullah at the Prime Minister's House, acknowledging his heroic efforts in saving lives during the recent floods in Qila Abdullah.

Mohibullah, who displayed immense courage by rescuing people without regard for his own safety, was lauded by the Prime Minister for his bravery and dedication.

National Pride:

"The entire nation, including myself, is proud of you," Prime Minister Sharif expressed during the meeting.

"I appreciate your love for humanity from the bottom of my heart. You are the hero of the

nation, and you have saved precious lives through your courageous actions."

The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of such bravery in times of crisis, stating, "It is a brave act to save human lives by risking your own life in such difficult situations.

You have fulfilled your national duty by rescuing people in distress."

Recognition and Rewards:

In recognition of Mohibullah's bravery, Prime Minister Sharif awarded him a cash reward of Rs 2.5 million on behalf of the Government of Pakistan. Additionally, the Prime Minister announced free education for Mohibullah's children up to the university level and free

healthcare facilities for his family.

A Moment of Honor:

Expressing his gratitude, Mohibullah said, "It is a matter of honor for me that I am meeting the Prime Minister of the country."

I never thought that the Prime Minister would meet me. At the time of saving people's lives, I certainly did not think that this would become famous throughout the country."

Mohibullah thanked the Prime Minister and the government for recognizing his efforts, saying, "I am deeply grateful for being honored by the Prime Minister on his arrival at the Prime Minister's House."

Balochistan CM Vows to Tackle Terrorism, Strengthen Governance

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, reaffirmed his government's dedication to combating terrorism and enhancing governance in the province during a Provincial Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday at the Chief Minister's Secretariat.

Highlighting the government's firm stance against terrorism, Bugti remarked, "These terrorists haven't just taken lives; they've attacked Pakistan as a whole."

He pointed out the contrast between the government's efforts to educate the youth in prestigious institutions like Oxford and Harvard and the terrorist groups that are luring them into destructive activities.

Bugti made it clear that the government would not allow armed groups to challenge the state's authority, ensuring that the rule of law remains intact.

During the meeting, the Provincial Cabinet also took significant steps to stimulate economic activities, with a particular focus on the fisheries sector.

The Cabinet approved the recruitment of experts to determine the location of a new fish harbor, emphasizing the inclusion of

local fishermen in the decision-making process. Additionally, a policy was endorsed concerning the Fisheries Department's endowment fund, aimed at increasing resources for the welfare of fishermen.

The Cabinet further resolved to deploy 100 Levies personnel to the Fisheries Department for patrol duties and sanctioned an appropriate increase in fees related to solid waste management in Balochistan.

Chief Minister Bugti stressed that these measures are intended to elevate the quality of life for the people of the province and to ensure sustainable development through effective governance.

The Cabinet also passed the Code of Criminal Procedure Amendment Bill, aimed at enhancing governance.

This amendment grants administrative officers managerial powers to curb inflation, improve municipal services, and serve the public interest. Additionally, the Chief Minister instructed the formation of three distinct categories for compensating the families of Levies Force martyrs and called for comprehensive recommendations on the matter.



Govt, PTI beseech Akhtar Mengal to recent resignation, continue to act as Balochistan's voice in NA

NEWS DESK: The government and the PTI beseeched Balochistan National Party-Mengal chief Akhtar Mengal on Wednesday to take back his resignation as an MNA and continue to be a voice for Balochistan in the National Assembly.

Mengal resigned from the National Assembly a day ago citing frustration and lack of freedom in parliament as well as the apathy of lawmakers towards insecurity faced by the people of Balochistan.

He was elected as an MNA from Khuzdar (NA-256) in the February 8 elections. He was also elected as an MNA in 2018. Mengal also served as the chief minister of Balochistan.

The veteran politician's resignation came amid a precarious security situation in Balochistan following recent deadly attacks and a rise in protests against enforced disappearances over the last few months.

A government delegation led by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs and Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah visited Mengal at the Parliament Lodges today to convince him to retract his resignation.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Sanaullah said: "We requested him to remain a part

of parliament and to continue his struggle in the same way as he always has within the ambit of the law and the Constitution to talk about Balochistan's rights and deprivation."

"The bravery with which he has fought the case of the people of Balochistan, all of us are appreciative of him and we are with him."

Sanaullah said Mengal had "registered our review petition" and hoped that it would be accepted by the veteran politician.

"We respect him immensely and he has a very powerful and strong voice and role in Balochistan's rights and deprivation and it should remain in parliament."

Sanaullah said the concerns that Mengal had expressed were a "keepsake" with the delegation and would be forwarded to the "concerned quarters".

Meanwhile, Mengal himself had a different take on the meeting. (Questioned on whether the government delegation convinced him to review his resignation, he said: "They tried to convince me but I think I convinced them. I have no intention of retracting my resignation.")

Reterring his concerns, he said he had raised the issues of injustices in Balochistan such as missing persons.

Syed Ali Shah Analysis:



mand for justice.

The destruction of this college has struck at the heart of education in Balochistan, and the government must recognize that this is about more than just bricks and mortar—it is about the future of our next generation.

As professors like Raziq Ullah Kakar and Khalil Khan have poignantly expressed, the college was more than just a building. It was a home for educators and students alike. Their voices, filled with grief and a deep sense of loss, echo the sentiments of the entire community.

The anguish they feel is not just personal; it is shared by all who understand the value of education and the irreplaceable role that institutions like Government Science College play in society.

College Home For Educators And Students

The government must prioritize the immediate reconstruction and repair of the college. This is not a task that can be delayed or half-heartedly undertaken. The province's educational future hangs in the balance, and the restoration of this institution must be swift and complete. But beyond rebuilding, there must be a commitment to transparency and accountability. The formation of an independent inquiry is crucial to uncover the true cause of the fire and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable. This is the only way to prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

The Government Science College was not just a local treasure; it was a national asset. Its destruction

is a loss for the entire country, and the response must reflect the gravity of that loss. The government owes it to the people of Balochistan, to the students whose education has been jeopardized, and to the memory of what this institution stood for, to leave no stone unturned in its investigation.

We call upon the government to take immediate and decisive action. Rebuild the college, restore its facilities, and, most importantly, ensure that the investigation into this tragedy is independent, transparent, and thorough.

The future of our children and the legacy of our educational institutions depend on it. Let this fire be a wake-up call for us all—a reminder of the importance of safeguarding our national assets and the future of our next generation.



Wisdom and Vision: Shaping Balochistan's Future in the 2024 Elections

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JUI-F Chief calls for focus on domestic responsibilities amid terrorism concerns

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Strategic Urban Planning in Balochistan: A Blueprint for Sustainable Development

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EDITORIAL

Editor: Asim Khan

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

Editorial:

The education system in Balochistan is facing an unprecedented crisis, with over 3 million children currently out of school. This alarming statistic, disclosed by Raheela Naeem Khan Durani 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.

Durani 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 enrollment, Durani's frustration over the lack of action on proposed solutions, such as subsidizing 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 math, while eighth graders scored 31 percent. Scores in English and Urdu were slightly better, with averages around 50 percent, consistent with national figures.

These dismal scores reflect the urgent need for comprehensive educational reforms and effective intervention strategies.

Dr. Shahid Soorya, 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). Effective partnerships and concerted efforts are indeed 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 children 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.

Strategic Urban Planning in Balochistan: A Blueprint for Sustainable Development

By Manzoor Magsi:

Integrated Approach to Urban Development

In a bid to chart a course for the future, the provincial government of Balochistan has undertaken a transformative initiative—the "Development of Master Plans for 32 District Headquarters/Towns of Balochistan." This comprehensive scheme aims to revitalize urban centers, ensuring an integrated approach to urban development.

From Housing & Urban Development to Traffic & Transportation and from Economic issues to Disaster Risk Management, each facet is meticulously addressed. The development of Master Plans involves the creation of Inception Reports, Topographic Surveys, Digitized Base Maps, Draft and Final Master Plan Reports, as well as sales and guidelines to manage future growth effectively.

By Umar Farooq:

POST-COP28, it is imperative to examine Pakistan's unique stance in the climate change dialogue.

Pakistan now faces a new kind of challenge—one that is environmental in nature but deeply rooted in its sociopolitical fabric. Pakistan, despite its minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, is at the forefront of climate change impacts.

The country's vulnerability to environmental disasters is not solely due to global climate changes; it is also profoundly exacerbated by local factors. Rapid urbanization, characterized by subpar housing practices and an obsession with cars and expansive urban high-rises, along with rampant deforestation and excessive reliance on fossil fuels, have collectively precipitated a series of environmental crises.

These developments, while possibly stemming from bureaucratic and enabling policies, have led the country towards a situation that is nearly irreparable.

By Arifa Noor:

DECADE ago, in the course of election day in 2013, I, along with colleagues visited a polling station in Rawalpindi. Established in a government school, the venue was filled with people, papers and the hum of conversations.

At one point, a colleague, who kept a close eye on politics in the city, had a quiet exchange with a man there; and later said that the man was a PPP worker who was now coordinating with the teams of PTI people. "Many of them are helping PTI in this election," he said, because their own party's candidates were in a weak position to make a difference.

This was the year Imran Khan's party was able to make inroads into Rawalpindi, a PML-N stronghold, by winning seats in the district.

Over the next five years, many of the PPP's leaders, supporters and

Involvement Of Key Stakeholders Crucial

One crucial aspect of this initiative is its emphasis on inclusivity. Authenticated data collected from the field and secondary sources play a pivotal role in the development of qualitative master plans.

In this regard, the involvement of stakeholders such as government departments, non-government organizations, academia, and the general public is deemed crucial.

Collaboration with these entities ensures that the master plans are not only comprehensive but also reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of the communities involved.

NGOs continue to re-

At the heart of these challenges lies Pakistan's persistent dependence on inefficient and hazardous fossil fuels.

Additionally, environmental protection regulators, run by an ad hoc team, have failed to establish procedures to control emissions effectively.

The problem with Pakistan's approach to environmental issues is a deeply ingrained dependence on fossil fuels. Traditionally, the country has sought external aid to address its problems. While bureaucracy and

workers followed the same routine as their own party seemed to take no interest in Punjab, those associated with it flew the flag of the PML-N in the nest of the PTI.

One of the reasons for this was obviously the old tradition of dharras in Punjab; as those in the PPP were the ones who belonged to the PML-N-associated dharras, they had no choice but to join the PTI.

A second reason was that PPP supporters could not stomach the idea of voting for the PML-N and hence chose the PTI. This has also been used to explain the leanings of Sanam Javed, the incarcerated PTI supporter who is implicated in May 9 cases. Her father was a PPP supporter and this, it is argued, had made the family so averse to the PML-N, that her decision to support the PTI was inevitable.

On the surface, it seems as if the PPP chairman is reverting to the old PPP tradition of be-

tracking a train coach packed with voters. It so happened that India's political cookie is baked from caste and regional interests. Kumar's departure could be set back for the anti-Modi grouping, but it has its own contradictions. Kumar was not further away from the Modi camp than a Modi ally abroad. From Bihar's 40 seats, and Kumar got 16. In 2019, allying with Kumar's party the BJP's toll dwindled to 17 seats, from 2014's 42. His gain is not necessarily the BJP's advantage.

The equation may thrive on BJP's persuasion, more likely, by affecting the optics adversely for INDIA. Else, Bihar is not doing well. On the contrary, the BJP with Shiva Sena won 42 seats of Maharashtra's 48 last time. That alliance col-

Liaisons With District Administrations Important

The ongoing activities, including liaisons with district administrations and the submission of Inception Reports and initial drafts of survey and maps, showcase the commitment to a consultative and iterative approach.

However, to achieve truly sustainable urban development, a continued and robust partnership with stakeholders is necessary. This collaborative effort will not only validate the collected data but also enhance the adaptability of the master plans to the evolving needs of the communities. Pakistan Grapples With Rapid Urbanization And Popula-

tion GrowthAs the country grapples with the challenges of rapid urbanization and a growing population, Balochistan's initiative stands as a model for strategic, inclusive, and sustainable urban planning. By considering all aspects of development, from infrastructure to environmental conservation, the province is not just preparing for the future—it is actively shaping it. The success of this endeavor will not only benefit Balochistan but may serve as a beacon for other regions seeking innovative solutions to the complex issue of urbanization in the 21st century. The writer is a former Press Secretary to Chief Minister Balochistan, currently working as Assistant Director of Public Relations at the Government of Balochistan

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NGOs continue to re- towards 'green conditions' poses a new challenge for countries like Pakistan. With the carbon credit market more competitive and stringent, without regulations we are out of the park.

Another emerging dimension in the global environmental paradigm is the focus on natural capital. European and UK policymakers are currently developing new codes that place the greater emphasis on ecosystem services, such as tokens and credits derived from river catchment areas and the blue economy. For countries like Pakistan, this presents an opportunity and a challenge.

Triggered by the greenwashing concept, the country, there is focus on a more stringent approach that prioritizes substantial emission reductions before considering the trading of carbon credits.

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— Prioritising youth

By Arooj Waheed Dar:

FOR the last decade or so, development economists have been sounding the alarm about Pakistan's youth demographic, saying that if not leveraged as an opportunity, it could turn into a ticking time bomb.

Ominously, the ticking time bomb appears set to explode, pumped with ammunition in the form of propaganda and action against, arguably, the only politician in recent times that the youth have resonated with.

Banning the PTI founder's mention on the media, confiscating the party's electoral assets, imprisoning its leadership, and obstructing its election campaign are measures that have not only imprisoned its leadership, but also turned a major party into a victim in the eyes of a large part of the electorate.

Those responsible for these actions perhaps forgot the power of sympathy votes. Had the PTI been allowed to

complete its term, its poor economic performance would have been enough to keep it from returning to power. But that was not an option for its powerful detractors.

There are concerns that in this situation the party's leadership will have few qualms about resorting to violence, propaganda, or other extreme measures if encouraged in this direction by the politicians they support. This is the danger that we need to realize: the impact of the controversial economic policies implemented by the PTI when it was in power.

To counter the negativity propagated by the PTI government, we need a well-thought-out strategy in place. This is not the 20th century where censorship, media

crackdowns, arrests, and other intimidatory tactics are going to silence people. Stifling and suffocating the voice of the youth is only going to make them more rebellious.

In fact, it is for this very reason that they have come to see the PTI as a symbol of resistance against injustices and the absence of equal opportunities over the years.

With elections coming up, there is a serious need for policymaking circles to reconsider the direction they want to take the country in, especially with regard to the youth. Addressing the youth at conferences to emphasize the importance of democratic governments simply doesn't cut it. What is needed is a strategic policy to address the issues of growing intolerance in society by focusing on the three E's: education, employment, and entrepreneurship.

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The equation may thrive on BJP's persuasion, more likely, by affecting the optics adversely for INDIA. Else, Bihar is not doing well. On the contrary, the BJP with Shiva Sena won 42 seats of Maharashtra's 48 last time. That alliance col-

lapsed. The Congress-Shiv Sena NCP grouping against Modi could damage the BJP more than he can afford. In Punjab, the BJP-AK alliance won six of 13 in 2014 and four in 2019. The snapped Akali Dal proved to be a further setback for the BJP. In Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP unseated the Congress of the six seats last time. Clearly, the BJP would have to excel itself in Bihar from against a prepared opposition.

This is where the Congress needs to do damage control and make Mamata Banerjee feel more secure as a bulwark in West Bengal. Congress and CPI-M both assert where the opposition needs to work hard to cement its alliance. Facts on the ground could guide the way forward.

In 2014, the BJP won two seats of the state's 42. Banerjee won 34. But in 2019, the BJP's tally jumped to 18 seats. Banerjee won 22 to 22 with 43 per cent votes and BJP coming menacingly at 40pc. Congress got two seats from 5.61pc votes and the CPI-M with 6.28pc couldn't get a single MP. Banerjee's alliance won two seats to the Congress. What should the allies do? Currently, it's their unity that matters for a greater number of seats that threatens the alliance. The Congress and CPI-M both assert where the opposition needs to work hard to cement its alliance. Facts on the ground could guide the way forward.

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Punjab CM Maryam declares Lahore's two mega projects open for traffic

LAHORE, Sept 04 (NP): Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday inaugurated Lahore's 7.5 kilometers long Controlled Access Corridor Band Road and Ravi Bridge expansion projects...

on the occasion, also ordered further expansion of the Bund Road's service lane in order to facilitate the movement of people residing in adjoining localities. She also planned a sampling on the side of Bund Road.

Briefing about the Ravi Bridge, they informed it was 540 meters long and had four lanes. The officials told the CM that the project's completion would benefit the residents of Shahdara, Kot Abdul Malik, Sheikhupura, Kala Shah Kaku, Lahore Ring Road and other nearby localities.

While the completion of the Bund Road project, they went on to say, would benefit the people living in Sherokot, Gulshan-e-Ravi, Sanda, Chohan Road, Saggyan, Shafiqabad, Rasulpur, Rastulpura, Bili, Miraj, Munshi Hospital, Ameen Park and other suburban areas of the city. Black gram also saw an increase in prices rising from Rs305 to Rs345 per kilogram.



ISLAMABAD: Representative of UNICEF in Pakistan, Abdullah A. Fadil calling on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam.

7th Annual UK-Pakistan Investment Conference held in Birmingham to boost trade ties

BIRMINGHAM (INP): To enhance trade and investment between Pakistan and the UK, the 7th Annual UK-Pakistan Investment Conference was held at the City Council Hall in Birmingham. The event was organised in collaboration with the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce.

The conference was hosted by Dr Nasir Awan, President of the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, and saw participation from various companies, business professionals, and representatives from the UK and Pakistan.

Key attendees included Pakistan's Trade Minister Shehzad Shafiq, Consul General Kamran Ahmed Malik, Vice Consul Bakhtawar Mir, and Vice President of Peshawar Women Chamber of Commerce Anila Khalid, along with a large number of British and Pakistani investors from the West Midlands region.

Representatives from Pakistan highlighted that 35% of the country's population consists of educated youth skilled in information technology, making Pakistan an attractive market for quality trade. The speakers stressed the abundance of natural resources in Pakistan and the need to introduce Pakistani products to the global market.

Contributory Pension Fund Scheme introduced for new employees

ISLAMABAD (INP): The government has officially introduced a Contributory Pension Fund Scheme for newly recruited government employees, according to a notification issued by the Finance Ministry.

This new scheme, set to take effect from July 1, 2024, marks a significant shift in the pension structure for civil servants and is aimed at managing the growing financial burden of pensions on the federal budget.

The Contributory Pension Fund Scheme will be applicable to all new civil servants from July 1, 2024. For existing employees whose salaries are drawn from the defense budget, the scheme will come into effect a year later, on July 1, 2025.

Under the new scheme, newly recruited employees will contribute 10% of their basic salary to the pension fund. In contrast, the federal government will contribute 20% to the same fund. The introduction of the Contributory Pension Fund Scheme follows the approval of amendments in the pension structure by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), based on recommendations from the Pay and Pension Commission.

BEFORE THE JUDGE BENKING COURT QUETTA OFFICE AT DISTRICT COURT/KACHEHRY SHARA-E-IQBOL QUETTA. SUIT NO.17/2024. Plaintiff: Askari Bank Limited, M.A Jinnah Road Baranch Quetta. Defendant: Gulifan Khan S/o Gulistan Khan, 1. Municipal Colony, Mohallah Badani Baagh, Loracai Cantt, District Loralai. 2. Office Address: District Health Office Killa Saifullah. Cell: 0333-6593814/0334-2323548. CNIC: 56302-4776354-5.



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan, Mr. Mehmet Pacaci, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

DR Congo jail break attempt leaves 129 dead

KINSHASA (INP): An attempted jail break from DR Congo's largest prison has left at least 129 people dead and led to women being raped, the interior minister said Tuesday. The circumstances around the bid to bust out of the Makilingo in the capital Kinshasa, which holds 10 times the number it is meant to house, are still unclear.

On Monday, witnesses said they heard gunfire at around 2:00 am that lasted for several hours in the area of the prison, a popular and residential neighbourhood. Democratic Republic of the Congo Interior Minister Jacquemain Shabani in a statement released by video on Tuesday announced a provisional state of emergency in the area.

He also said that the streets in the area were cordoned off with police and soldiers on patrol. Daddi Soso, an economist in his forties, said he had seen security forces vehicles taking bodies away in the early hours of Monday. Police confirmed that at least 129 people were shot after warnings, he said, and 59 others had been wounded and receiving care, he said, adding that many people had been crushed or suffocated and a number of women had been raped.

Justice Minister DRK's former colonial administrator announced on X that inquiries under way "to identify and severely punish the sponsors of these acts of violence" as "under control". The ambassador of Belgium, the DRK's former colonial ruler, branded the events "tragic" in a post on X and said that the investigations had to "shed light" to determine those responsible. As well as the human toll, the escape attempt caused damage to buildings, with part of the prison, mainly housing the administrative offices, set on fire, the government said. The prison was already badly damaged during an attack in 2017 that led to more than 4,000 prisoners escaping, some of them described as "dangerous" by police. The Makala prison has capacity for 1,500 inmates, but it is overcrowded and rights organisations regularly complain about the conditions of detention at the jail. It holds 14,000 to 15,000 prisoners, according to official statistics. "The conditions are deplorable," Emmanuel Cole, a defender of prisoners' rights who regularly visits the prisons, said. Cole warned of a possible "revolt" in the prison and said the situation in Makala could "degenerate" after authorities banned visits following the escape attempt.

Trump pleading not guilty to revised 2020 election charges. WASHINGTON (INP): Donald Trump is pleading not guilty to the charges in a revised indictment of the federal government seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 US presidential election. Trump, in a filing with the US District Court in Washington, waived his right to be present at his arraignment on the charges and instructed his attorneys to plead not guilty.

Special Counsel Jack Smith filed a new indictment of Trump, which retains the same core charges that he tried to subvert the results of the election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden. The superseding indictment retained the same four charges against Trump as in an earlier version but takes into account a recent Supreme Court ruling that a former president has broad immunity from criminal prosecution.

District Judge Tanya Chutkan granted Trump's request not to appear in person at the arraignment and said it will be held at the same time as a status conference in the case on Thursday. The new indictment of the 78-year-old Trump removes material affected by the presidential immunity ruling from the conservative-leaning indictment. Trump retains the same core charges, stating that Trump lost in 2020 but "was determined to remain in power" and attempted to subvert the results.

The Supreme Court ruled in July that an ex-president has broad immunity from prosecution for official acts conducted while in office, but can be pursued for unofficial acts. Trump's lawyers have been seeking to delay a trial until after November's election by filing claims that he won the 2020 election. He was originally scheduled to go on trial on March 4, but that was put on hold while his lawyers pushed his claim of presidential immunity.

TENDER NOTICE table with columns: S.No, Class of Object, Bid Security. Row 1: Medical Equipment and Accessories, 3%.

TENDER NOTICE. The procurement of works listed below for which Inviting Tender on sealed percentage rates based on CPW 2018 Book of Specifications are invited from interested Contractors. Firms with valid forms of bid security are invited. The tender fee will be Rs. 100,000/- (One Lakh Rupees) only. The bid security must be submitted in the form of Cash Deposit. The bid security must be submitted in the form of Cash Deposit. The bid security must be submitted in the form of Cash Deposit. The bid security must be submitted in the form of Cash Deposit.

Ready to remove reservations of IMF on electricity bills relief, asserts Azma Bokhari

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari asserted to talk and clear reservations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on subsidy in electricity bills.

Addressing a press conference, she highlighted the Punjab government's Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar under which interest free loans were being provided to build homes. Citizens could get a loan with a monthly installment of Rs 14,000 to pay back in seven years.

She revealed that more than Rs 78,000 citizens had applied for this project and around 0.2 million calls had been received for information and guidance of this project.

She stated that banks and other financial organisations take service charges for such projects but the government will pay the service charges and tax for the Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar program.

Bokhari added that CM Maryam Nawaz herself balloting this program every month for strict scrutiny and to avoid inclusion of convicted and criminals in this program.

She also clarified that projects were being announced after finalisation of programs funding and all details.

Punjab information minister berated other provinces for copying Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz and her projects and also issuing statements against

her. Azma Bokhari highlighted key projects of Punjab CM including lowering rates of Roti (Bread), decreasing fares of transportation and introducing air ambulance service.

Talking about surge in crime rates, Punjab info minister stressed for a zero-tolerance policy against any gang war and lawlessness.

She also criticised political opponents for doing politics on electricity bills relief for two months.

Azma Bokhari informed that there was no emergency situation caused by rain however, crops had been affected and dengue was also under control in Punjab.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, Chairs a meeting on Workplace harassment under the Ministry's newly established Gender Unit.

Different parts of country again lashed by heavy monsoon showers

LAHORE (INP): Different parts of the country, including Lahore, received heavy showers during the last 24 hours due to a monsoon system that is currently present in northern India. Power supply to several localities of Lahore was suspended after 177 feeders tripped following light to heavy rain, accompanied by winds blowing at the speed of 40 kilometers per hour, lashed different areas of the provincial capital early in the morning.

Areas such as Lakshmi Chowk, Darya, Islampura, Shimla Pahari, Canal Road and The Mall were completely drenched, while the minimum temperature dropped to 27 degrees Celsius.

The humidity level in the air was recorded at 90 per cent. Moderate to heavy rains were also reported from Karachi, Tharparkar, Islamabad,

Mithi, Diplo, Umakot, Daharki, Tangwani, Kandhok, Shikarpur, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Multan, Faisalabad, Murree, Bahawalpur, Peshawar, Manshera, Nowshera, Abbottabad, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Kohat, Bannu, Waziristan and Dera Ismael Khan.

In Tharparkar, 70 millimeters of rain, recorded during the last 24 hours, left villages under knee-deep water, while rain-water mixed with sewage inundated low-lying localities in other parts of Sindh.

The weather department, on the other hand, forecast more rain for these areas and Sindh during the next 24 hours; however, saying that the present spell affecting the upper parts of the country would be over today.

It said that rains would lash different cities of Sindh,

especially those in the south-east of the province.

Changing its prediction, it said that the chances of rain in Karachi were not bright. "Mostly it will drizzle, however some of the suburban areas may receive rain," Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz said, adding that the weather would remain hot in the city in September.

Similarly, the department predicted downpours for parts of Balochistan such as Musakhel, Sibbi and Nasserabad and mountainous areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that could lead drains and streams to burst their banks.

Likewise, it said Islamabad and different cities of central Punjab namely Lahore, Sialkot, and Multan were likely to receive showers during the aforementioned period.

Senate Body on NFS&R visits NARC to review its operations, performance

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security & Research (NFS&R) panel on Wednesday conducted a visit to the National Agriculture Research Center (NARC) to review its operations and performance. The committee members toured various scientific laboratories and received briefings from the Chairman of NARC during the visit. The Chairman detailed the functionality of the labs and the processes involved in the preservation and cultivation of different plant types before they are harvested.

The Chairman NARC also provided insights into the historical evolution of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), its establishment as the National Food Security and Research Division, and its affiliation with the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R). Both organizations collaborate on research across various fields to enhance produc-

tivity. The committee was informed about the governance structure, which includes a board of governors, a chairman, an executive committee, and the IPARCC committee. Additionally, they learned about PARC's technical divisions, such as the PSD, NRD, ASD, and SSD.

Financial briefings included details of the budget over the past three years. For the fiscal year 2023-24, the total budget was Rs. 6,575.65 million, with Rs. 1,062.25 million allocated for operational expenses and Rs. 5,512.40 million for establishment costs. The staff at PARC/NARC includes 2,135 individuals, comprising 544 scientists and 435 para-scientific staff. The committee also reviewed research achievements, including advancements in plant genetic resources and the development and release of new varieties and hybrids. Financial updates since 2013 highlighted a research budget increase to Rs. 300 million in 2023-24, an educational stipend

increase to Rs. 1.135 million, and a direct pension credit system raised to Rs. 7 million for 44 widows. Total liabilities cleared amounted to Rs. 989 million.

Critical issues discussed included the low investment in agricultural R&D, with Pakistan allocating only 0.12% of its agricultural GDP, the lowest among SAARC countries. The committee also noted challenges related to international collaboration for securing grant-in-aid projects and the need for an extension of NARC's land lease by the CDA, which has not been extended since 2005, impeding the establishment of research infrastructure. The meeting was attended by Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan (Chairman), Senator Poonjo Bheel, Senator Dost Muhammad Khan, Senator Prof. Sajid Mir, Senator Rahat Jamali, Senator Abdul Wasay, and Senator Danesh Kumar. The Chairman of NARC and senior officials from related departments were also present.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with a delegation of International Investors.



ISLAMABAD: Mohib Ullah Kakar, an excavator driver who saved a family stranded in flash flood in Qila Abdullah calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

'Govt has sent 860,000 Pakistanis abroad in 2023 for employment'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Parliamentary Secretary for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Ehsan ul Haq Bajwa Wednesday informed the National Assembly that the government has sent 860,000 Pakistanis abroad in 2023 for employment.

In response to a calling attention notice regarding the involvement of individuals traveling abroad through agents or mafias in engaging in begging activities, particularly in Gulf countries,

which tarnishes Pakistan's image, he assured that individuals sent abroad under the Ministry's programs are thoroughly vetted.

The selection process adheres to strict criteria, ensuring that only qualified candi-

dates are chosen and minimizing the possibility of their involvement in begging, he added.

He said that there is ongoing communication between the ministry, relevant authorities and embassies. To date, no institution has reported data suggesting otherwise, he added.

If any Pakistani, he said, is found engaging in begging abroad, strict action will be taken under the 1979 Ordinance, with cases referred to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for further investigation and legal proceedings.

He further explained that the Ministry is responsible solely for sending individuals abroad who meet legal require-

ments and have no connection with those traveling for purposes such as Umrah, student visas, visits, or pilgrimages.

The Bureau of Immigration, he said, has launched a campaign to combat this issue, and the Ministry of Interior, along with the FIA, is taking action against agents involved in such activities.

Highlighting the economic contribution of overseas Pakistanis, he said that they contribute \$30 billion annually to the country's economy and are considered a valuable asset.

He assured the assembly that a robust legal framework exists for sending Pakistanis abroad.

employment, making it unlikely for them to be involved in begging activities.

Aseefa reaffirms commitment to combat Tuberculosis in country

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Aseefa Bhutto Zardari has reaffirmed her commitment to combat Tuberculosis (TB) in Pakistan and on the global stage.

In a high-level meeting with the leadership of the Dopsi Foundation and a delegation of parliamentarians, led by Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, the discussion centered on addressing Pakistan's TB burden and identifying solutions for closing persistent gaps in TB care, especially for underprivileged communities.

According to a press release issued by the party secretariat, the delegation from the Dopsi Foundation, led by CEO Ms. Kinzul-Eman, included key figures such as Dr. Usman Rasool Lodhi, Program Manager; Dr. Tilal Asif, Director of Programs; Ms. Mishaal Javed, Manager of Communications; along with Dr. Syed Karam Shah, Senior Technical Advisor and head of the Stop TB

Partnership Pakistan.

Parliamentarians in attendance included Dr. Mehreen Bhatti, Schari, Kamran, Khurshid Junejo, and Musarat Rafique prominent voices in the fight against TB.

The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on Pakistan's progress since the United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB in 2023, while exploring new strategies to tackle ongoing challenges in TB notification and treatment. In a landmark commitment, Bhutto Zardari announced her role as a champion for TB advocacy, pledging to lead national and international efforts.

"I am proud to lend my voice to the fight against TB. The fight against Tuberculosis is not just a health issue, but a matter of dignity and justice for the millions affected by this preventable disease. Together, we can create a future where no one is left behind, and every individual has access

to the care and support they deserve," she said.

During the meeting she was briefed on the upcoming Regional Leaders' Summit 2024 on TB and Climate Change and the TB Survivors event, where she graciously accepted the role of chair for the Survivors Event.

She vowed to advocate for the rights of TB survivors and push for equitable access to quality healthcare across all provinces.

She also praised the work of the End TB Parliamentary Caucus, led by Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, which is hosted by Dopsi Foundation in partnership with the Stop TB Partnership.

The initiative promotes cross-provincial collaboration to strengthen TB advocacy.

Aseefa Bhutto urged broader participation from parliamentarians across the country to create a unified and strong response to TB.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohnsin Naqvi in a meeting with Chairman Central Recte-Hilal Committee Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khaiber Azad.

JUI-F Chief calls for focus on domestic responsibilities amid terrorism concerns

ISLAMABAD (INP): Maulana Fazlur Rehman, head of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), has urged that instead of blaming Afghanistan for terrorism, Pakistan should focus on its own responsibilities.

Speaking in the National Assembly, Rehman criticized the current approach to border security, emphasizing that Pakistan, not Afghanistan, is responsible for managing its own borders.

Rehman expressed frustration over the lack of serious discussion in the assembly regarding attacks on the military and institutions. He warned that escalating tensions and extreme rhetoric from both sides are jeopardizing national security. Rehman pointed out that the failure to address these

issues seriously is exacerbating the situation.

He further criticized the sidelining of experienced political leadership in favor of less experienced, emotional newcomers, arguing that this shift is contributing to the complexity of the issues. Rehman called for empowering politicians to resolve matters and warned against the risks of centralizing power and undermining parliamentary and political processes.

The JUI-F leader highlighted the geopolitical challenges facing Pakistan, including the impact of the US-China rivalry and disruptions to major projects like CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor). He expressed concern over the lack of development in

CPEC areas and the deteriorating situation in Balochistan, where national symbols are reportedly being restricted.

Rehman also voiced concerns about the security situation in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, urging the government and parliament to engage directly with affected communities to address these issues effectively. He stressed the importance of national unity and warned against undermining the role of parliament and political leaders.

He concluded by addressing the issue of cross-border terrorism, questioning the assumption that attackers always come from Afghanistan and emphasizing the need for Pakistan to take responsibility for its own security challenges.