

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Friday, October 04, 2024.

dquettavoice@gmail.com



People gathered at the site of bus accident in Quetta

Deputy Commissioner Sherani Survives Deadly Attack

From Our Correspondent:

SHERANI: Deputy Commissioner Sheran, Sana Mahjabeen, escaped unharmful after her vehicle came under gunfire attack in the Sherani district of Balochistan.

"Bullets targeted her vehicle, but fortunately she and her security guards were safe," Levies sources confirmed.



The incident occurred on Thursday. Authorities have launched an investigation. No group has claimed responsibility. The motive behind the attack remains unclear.

Mahjabeen has pledged to continue serving the people despite the attempt on her life.

President Zardari awards Nishan-e-Pakistan to Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday conferred the Nishan-e-Pakistan, the country's highest civilian award, on Malaysian Prime Minister Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The award was given in recognition of his unwavering support for Islamic causes and his strong friendship with Pakistan.

The special investiture ceremony, held at Awan-e-Sadr, was attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, federal ministers, military chiefs, diplomats, and senior government officials.

During the event, it was noted that Anwar Ibrahim, an admirer of Allama Iqbal, has found inspiration in the philosopher-poet's works. Anwar's career has been distinguished by his advocacy for humanitarian causes and Islamic values, with a focus on social justice and addressing issues facing the Muslim world. The Malaysian prime minister has been a strong supporter of self-determination movements, speaking out against global oppression. He continues to fight against Islamophobia and promotes interfaith harmony by encouraging understanding and respect among different cultures and religions.

President Zardari later hosted a state dinner in honour of Prime Minister Anwar and his delegation.

Tragic Bus Accident Leaves 7 Dead Dozens Injured In Quetta

Syed Muhammad Qaseem:

QUETTA: In a tragic incident at the Western Bypass in Quetta, a bus overturned and fell into a ditch, resulting in the death of 7 people and leaving 53 others injured. The accident occurred on Thursday, with rescue teams from MERC 1122 Saryab and the Airport teams responding swiftly. A total of 8 injured and 2 deceased were rushed to BMC Hospital and the Civil Hospital Trauma Center.

Eyewitnesses attributed the crash to the poor condition of the road and reckless driving, factors that contributed to the bus losing control. Heart-wrenching scenes unfolded at the site of the tragedy, as locals and rescue teams worked tirelessly to assist the victims.

Balochistan Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar visited the trauma center to assess the care being provided to the injured, and an

emergency was declared at the facility to ensure immediate medical attention. The Balochistan government expressed grief and sorrow over the incident and extended condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. Authorities have launched an investigation, with increasing demands for road safety improvements and stricter enforcement of traffic regulations to prevent future accidents.

Govt lacks two-thirds majority for constitutional amendments: Bilawal

NEWS DESK: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has stated that the judiciary must remain completely apolitical, noting that the government lacks the two-thirds majority required for constitutional amendments and is attempting to bring Maulana Fazlur Rehman on board regarding this issue.

In an interview with a private television channel on Wednesday, Bilawal expressed that it would have been more beneficial if the government had consulted the PPP regarding judicial reforms before making announcements. He criticised the government for not approaching the party first and highlighted that the law minister had announced reforms in the Supreme Court without prior discussions.

Bilawal pointed out that direct intervention had been made in the judicial reform process, reiterating that the PPP has long opposed military coups, as stated in their manifesto. He remarked that while the founders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) may choose not to engage with politicians, the public will hold them accountable during elections. He further noted that both the PPP and the government agreed on the necessity of judicial reforms, but he suggested that the amendments could have been presented in a better manner. "If the government has different proposals for judicial reforms, it should be discussed openly," he added.

Continuing his critique, Bilawal stated that political stability can



only be established by political forces. He accused the PTI founders of rejecting the Charter of Democracy, viewing it as a compromise, and claimed they lack interest in improving democracy and governance.

He asserted that Pakistan has become a democratic country, free from past issues, and highlighted that the PTI leadership had previously stated they would accept accountability and imprisonment if necessary. Bilawal condemned the PTI's portrayal of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) as a positive institution, accusing the PTI leadership of seeking support from the establishment to regain power. He further criticised the PTI's approach to politics, asserting that it is undemocratic and that political dialogue should be conducted within the framework of democratic norms.

He reiterated that the PPP is not a hindrance to political stability

and is ready to engage in discussions regarding electoral reforms, acknowledging existing objections to the electoral process. He concluded by stressing that the PTI's provincial government has a responsibility to address issues effectively. While he welcomed constructive criticism from the PTI in Parliament, he reminded that the parliamentary committee was not established solely for one agenda, and there was an opportunity to engage with PTI and other parties. Bilawal also accused the PTI founders of making baseless allegations against the Army Chief and Chief Justice of Pakistan, asserting that their economic policies have had a detrimental impact.

He accused Imran Khan of undermining every IMF agreement and stated that the PTI left Pakistan's economy in a precarious state, leading to a crisis and rising inflation.

BISP and WFP Partner to Fight Malnutrition in Pakistan

News Desk:

The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and the World Food Program (WFP) have joined forces to combat the pressing issue of malnutrition in Pakistan. The two organizations have renewed their partnership to expand the Benazir Development Program, which aims to provide additional cash assistance to pregnant and lactating women and their children. With nearly 40% of children in Pakistan suffering from malnutrition, this initiative is crucial for ensuring a healthy

start in life for the country's youth. Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of BISP, emphasized the importance of this collaboration in addressing the nutritional needs of vulnerable populations. Under the second phase of the Benazir Development Program, 157 districts will be covered by 562 facility centres. WFP will continue to implement the program with a focus on quality and adherence to approved standards. The partnership is set to extend until June 2026.



Rotary Club Quetta Plants 300 Trees in Bohra Community Graveyard

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: In a significant step towards their "Quetta Go Green Initiative," the Rotary Club Quetta, in collaboration with the Forest and Wildlife Department and the Bohra Community, planted 300 trees on October 3, 2024, at the Bohra Community Graveyard in Shahbaz Town. The initiative aims to plant 10,000 trees in Quetta between July 2024 and June 2025.

The event was graced by Mr. Dostan Khan Jalalmani, Secretary of the Forest and Wildlife Department, as the Chief Guest. Professor Ahsan Achakzai, the President of the Rotary Club, played a key role in organising the event.

Other notable attendees included representatives from various organizations and communities. Forty children from the Institute of Special Children (ISC) participated in the plantation drive, learning about the importance of trees and their role in environmental conservation. The Forest and Wildlife Department provided technical support and supplies for the project. Rotary Club Quetta encourages the people of Quetta to join their efforts in making the city greener by planting and caring for trees. They are open to collaborating with institutions and residential areas that are willing to participate.



Members of Rotary Club planting trees in Quetta; Photo Ismail Attal

No cooperation with govt on Constitutional Package at any cost: Fazlur Rehman

NEWS DESK: Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam-Fazl (JUJ-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Thursday said that he will not cooperate with the federal government on the Constitutional Package at any cost, stating that such an amendment could not be rushed through parliament and requires consensus.

The Supreme Court earlier today unanimously accepted a review petition against its 2022 verdict related to the defection clause under Article 63-A of the Constitution. The verdict, pronounced by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Ishaq, could potentially provide major relief to the government in its attempts to garner the required support to make a set of amendments to the Constitution, multiple of which pertain to the judiciary. Fazl previously hinted at supporting the proposed formation of a constitutional court and did not reject the government's proposals to fix the tenure of the CJP at three years or to increase the age of a judge of the apex court. He added that the Package should not be "person-specific".

One of Fazl's main points on the issue was the need for consensus among political parties.

"We want constitutional amendments to be made with consensus, ensuring they do not trigger political unrest in the country," he said.

"I would like the government to postpone this amendment," the JUJ-F chief said at a press conference today. "Political differences need to be resolved and the opposition should cease protesting."

Fazl also questioned the "urgency" with which the government was trying to rush the amendment.

"I don't understand the haste; there is no emergency," he said. "In its current state with its details and rules, it is incapable of being passed and supported." Turning to history, the JUJ-F chief recalled that constitutional amendments have taken time to implement and cannot be rushed.

"Even the 18th Amendment took nine months to pass," he added. "They are asking to pass a Constitutional Amendment within a single day. This is not possible."

Pakistan's Tax Reforms: A Daunting Task Under IMF Conditions

Continued to page 2

Misplaced Priorities In Balochistan

Continued to page 2

SC strikes down 2022 ruling on defection clause under Article 63-A

Continued to page 4

Editorial

Misplaced Priorities In Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan

Editorial:

QUETTA: The ongoing hunger strike by professors and lecturers from the University of Balochistan and BUTEMS outside the Quetta Press Club is a sobering reflection of the government's misplaced priorities. As these dedicated educators protest unpaid salaries and rampant corruption within their institutions, the Balochistan government has inexplicably allocated Rs. 5 billion for the construction of a new provincial assembly. This stark contrast raises fundamental questions about the government's commitment to education and the welfare of its citizens.

Education is the backbone of any society, and the deteriorating conditions in Balochistan's universities signal a growing crisis. Faculty members, led by esteemed professors such as Kalemullahi Areech, Fared Achakzai, and Haseem Hussain Shah, are fighting not just for their livelihoods but for the future of education in the province. Months without salaries have left these educators struggling to support their families, while institutional corruption further cripples the academic environment. Yet, the government's response has been indifferent at best, neglecting the very people responsible for shaping the next generation of leaders.

Professor Barch's poignant statement, "We have not received our salaries for months. How are we supposed to sustain our families and continue our work under such conditions?" echoes the frustrations of many across the province. Meanwhile, Professor Achakzai's allegations of corruption within the universities, where funds intended for academic development are being siphoned off, only add to the sense of injustice. These are not minor grievances, they are symptomatic of a failing system that urgently needs reform.

Yet, instead of addressing these pressing concerns, the government has chosen to funnel an astonishing Rs. 5 billion into constructing a new assembly building. While the need for infrastructure in governance is understandable, it pales in comparison to the immediate and critical needs of the education sector. What message does it send to the people of Balochistan when their educators must resort to hunger strikes to receive what is rightfully theirs, while such vast sums are spent on a building that, in all likelihood, will benefit only a few?

Professor Hasrat's concerns about the impact on students should be a wake-up call for the authorities. The students of Balochistan are the ones who will ultimately pay the price for the government's neglect. With teachers protesting on the streets and administrative failures plaguing the universities, how can we expect students to receive a quality education? The long-term damage to Balochistan's higher education system will be profound if these issues are not addressed swiftly.

The government must rethink its priorities. Rather than pouring billions into grand construction projects, it should focus on resolving the immediate crises facing the education sector. This means paying the salaries owed to the professors and lecturers, launching investigations into the corruption allegations, and ensuring that funds meant for academic development are used for their intended purposes.

If the government continues down this path, it risks not only alienating the academic community but also undermining the future of the province itself. The education of Balochistan's youth is compromised for the sake of short-term monuments. It is time for the government to act decisively, meet the demands of the protesting faculty members, and invest in the future of education in Balochistan. Anything less is a betrayal of the province's students and educators.

Modern facsimiles

By F.S. Aijazuddin:

MUSTAFA Kemal Atatürk was born in Turkey, in 1881. Since then, facsimiles have been spawned many times: Soekarno in Indonesia, Lt-Col Rawlings in Ghana, Col Nasser in Egypt, Field Marshal Ayub Khan et alia in Pakistan. Each wore the uniform of a patriot, tailored for him, as he believed, by destiny.

Patrick Kinross' definitive biography, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation* (1964) is a must-read for anyone (in jail or out of it), with time on his hands and thwarted patriotism smouldering in his heart.

Atatürk's political ideas assumed a "coherent shape" early in his life, while he was still a lieutenant at the military training school at Montasir. "He began to devour history as he had previously devoured mathematics and poetry. He read all he could about the career of Napoleon who became famous (with qualifications) one of his heroes."

Like Napoleon, Atatürk suffered from the highest form of narcissism. "In so far as Atatürk

was capable of love," tweaked his communist hosts: "I do not see among us any of the men who prepared this feast." Within minutes, the cook turned to Atatürk and called to the "classless table".

Daringly for his time, Kinross advocated gender equality. In a national meeting of teachers, he taught the organisers: "Why did you make them sit apart from the men? Don't you trust yourselves, or have you no faith in the virtue of these ladies?"

Regarding religion, Kinross tells us that Atatürk was not for the eradication of Islam. What he sought was "to disengage it from the condition of being a political instrument, which it had been for centuries of habit".

Kinross describes Atatürk's tortuous efforts to reform the Turkish alphabet. Atatürk spent hours poring over old and new dictionaries in search of "pure Turkish words". "The aim was to purify the language of Arabic and Persian intrusions. Eventually, it was given by 'naturalising' words that had no Turkish equivalent.

Two incidents in Kinross's biography present little-known facets of Atatürk's innate egalitarianism. One day in Sofia, Atatürk notices a peasant being denied service at a tea house. He chides the waiter: "As long as the peasant is not master of the country, there can be no progress in the world." "It was this slogan: 'The peasant is master of this country.'" "In another, at a dinner in their embassy, he

was not a cliché but constitutions are, in fact, the glue that normally hold a country and its people bounded to oneness. As such, they are a life-giving source to statehood, constitutions are and should be venerated as a solemn social contract overarching the existence of the state, its institutions and the people.

However, not being divine or holy scriptures, constitutions ordinarily provide a mechanism for amendments to incorporate new and unanticipated events or to correct course based on experience and usage.

Pakistan recently witnessed an attempt by the coalition government to pass a constitutional package which it wanted to introduce for approval in the National Assembly and the Senate on one fateful Sunday without any prior notice of the proximity of the amendments to the members of the NA or the Senate.

Had it succeeded in the numbers game that Sunday, the Constitution, adopted in 1973, with the informed consent of all the provinces through a protracted process of deliberations and debate, would have been transformed, some would say mutilated or disfigured, by the far-reaching changes of its basic structure, by the constitutional package. All without notice, without disclosure of the content of the constitutional package and all without the informed participation of the people of Pakistan and their representatives in the NA and the Senate. Could there be a more grotesque tragedy for the people of Pakistan and for the country?

This may be a good opportunity to reflect on some guidelines for constitutional amendments.

The first is that the amendments should be in the national and provincial

Pakistan's Tax Reforms: A Daunting Task Under IMF Conditions

Subhan Dotani:

Pakistan has been grappling with a myriad of economic challenges, exacerbated by fiscal mismanagement, debt burdens, and external factors. To address these underlying financial imbalances, the country has repeatedly sought assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). While IMF agreements provide short-term relief, they often come with stringent conditions, particularly emphasizing structural reforms in taxation. These reforms, driven by the need to increase revenue and reduce fiscal deficits, present both opportunities and significant challenges.

The IMF has played a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's fiscal policies for decades. However, recent IMF agreements, such as the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), have placed a renewed emphasis on tax reforms. The country's low tax-to-GDP ratio compared to global standards hinders its ability to mobilize sufficient resources for essential services, development, and public expenditures. The IMF has advocated for expanding the tax base, combating tax avoidance, and reducing tax incentives that contribute to revenue shortfalls. However, implementing these measures can be politically

challenging. One of the most significant challenges facing Pakistan's tax reforms is the narrow tax base. A large portion of the economy, especially agriculture, remains exempt from taxation. Moreover, a small percentage of the population, primarily in the upper echelons of society, pays income tax, with many individuals not filing returns and tax agencies having limited coverage. The informal economy, which constitutes a substantial portion of Pakistan's economic activity, is difficult to integrate into the formal tax net due to weak record-keeping and low compliance risks.

Tax evasion is another major obstacle to reform. Ineffective law enforcement, inadequate disclosure mechanisms, and corporate tax offsets enable high-income earners and large corporations to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. This creates an unfair system that undermines confidence and income, particularly in the "super tax" on large companies has been particularly controversial. The business community in Pakistan has been critical of certain tax measures implemented under IMF programs. The "super tax" on large companies has been particularly controversial, with businesses arguing that such taxes introduce uncertainty and reduced investment. Businesses argue that such taxes reduce revenue generation from existing taxes and hinder investment and economic development.

significant revenue, they disproportionately affect lower-income households, leading to inflation and exacerbating economic inequality. The IMF has advised Pakistan to shift towards direct taxes, including income tax and corporate tax, but these reforms are fundamental changes in tax administration, enhanced compliance, and greater efforts from the upper echelons of society. IMF-backed tax reforms can have negative economic shocks in the short term. Measures like reducing subsidies, devaluing currencies, and increasing taxation can lead to higher prices, inflation, and reduced investment. While these measures may be necessary for long-term economic growth, they can impose social costs and create challenges for businesses and consumers. The business community in Pakistan has been critical of certain tax measures implemented under IMF programs. The "super tax" on large companies has been particularly controversial, with businesses arguing that such taxes introduce uncertainty and reduced investment. Businesses argue that such taxes reduce revenue generation from existing taxes and hinder investment and economic development.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face unique challenges in complying with complex tax measures. The costs of compliance can outweigh the potential benefits, especially for smaller businesses. While the government has introduced simplified regimes and tax pardons, these measures do not address the underlying structural obstacles. Many SMEs, especially those operating in the informal sector, view tax reforms as an imposition rather than a positive development.

The middle class and salaried workers are also significantly impacted by tax reforms. While the IMF emphasizes the importance of direct taxes, those within the tax base often bear the brunt of new measures. Civil servants and individuals with pay-as-you-earn arrangements have fewer opportunities for tax evasion and may experience significant cuts to their discretionary income, particularly in the face of rising inflation.

Despite the challenges, successful tax reforms can yield long-term benefits. Increased reliance on personal income taxes and improved tax administration can strengthen the fiscal foundation, reduce dependence on borrowing, and enable the government to invest in critical sectors. This

By Khurram Husain:

THE news is not all bad, though the outlook remains gloomy. The take at least a year to rectify. The stabilisation plan of economic management is drawing to a close.

The government is making the right moves to raise the tax base. The backstop to a large amount of maturing Treasury bills, although one hopes this won't simply be swapped with one debt instrument or another. The sheer size of the domestic debt, standing at slightly below 50 per cent of the total GDP (at current market prices), certainly makes it the elephant in the room, and it seems the government's aim was finally to turn its attention to bringing this under control.

Inflation dropping to below 7pc, based on the year-on-year increase in the Consumer Price Index, is also a welcome development. This was supposed to happen in the second half of next year as per projections, but tightly controlling money supply has managed to nip the problem in the bud. As an aside, this should put to rest the questions raised in May 2024, which came at the conclusion of the last Stand-By Arrangement.

Here are some examples of what was projected for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 in May. Reverse grants were seen coming in at 12.5pc and 12.4pc of GDP, while the current account projected at 12.6pc and 15.4pc, respectively. The primary balance, which has ever succeeded in putting out inflationary pressures, is projected to show a surplus of 0.4pc of GDP for both fiscal years back in May.

In the latest projections for the same fiscal year, these have come down to 0.2pc and 0.9pc

Mixed developments

approval. The final report has still not been released, so we'll have to wait a few more days for the finer details. Broadly speaking, though, almost all projections show some improvement in the current fiscal year, but something is driving us back up again next year.

To find out why it is projected to rise in the next fiscal year, we will have to wait for the staff report.

The economy has not seen a period of stability like this since at least 2019.

Calm is returning to the markets, to the outlook, to the macro indicators, the fiscal equation, and the monetary aggregates after a period of intense volatility that ran at least from 2021 to 2023. This may be undesirable, and it needs to be said.

However, another thing also needs to be said. This is a fragile calm reached after a hard-fought struggle.

must be supported by a robust process anchored in transparency, full and time-bound disclosure, adequate notice, and facilitating right to comment and meaningful participation of the provinces, bar associations, CSOs and professional bodies. It would be helpful to evolve a mechanism for the review of comments and suggestions through an open national conversation.

The seventh stage, built on the edifice of the preceding six factors, would be open and free debates in the NA and Senate in full view of our national news, print and electronic media, to the requirement of a two-thirds majority in both Houses. The Constitution requires the approval of two-thirds membership of each of the NA and Senate for passing the package and it would be a travesty of justice if such a holistic approach is without a full disclosure

Constitutional amendments

By Parvez Hassan:

IT is not a cliché but constitutions are, in fact, the glue that normally hold a country and its people bounded to oneness. As such, they are a life-giving source to statehood, constitutions are and should be venerated as a solemn social contract overarching the existence of the state, its institutions and the people.

However, not being divine or holy scriptures, constitutions ordinarily provide a mechanism for amendments to incorporate new and unanticipated events or to correct course based on experience and usage.

Pakistan recently witnessed an attempt by the coalition government to pass a constitutional package which it wanted to introduce for approval in the National Assembly and the Senate on one fateful Sunday without any prior notice of the proximity of the amendments to the members of the NA or the Senate.

Had it succeeded in the numbers game that Sunday, the Constitution, adopted in 1973, with the informed consent of all the provinces through a protracted process of deliberations and debate, would have been transformed, some would say mutilated or disfigured, by the far-reaching changes of its basic structure, by the constitutional package. All without notice, without disclosure of the content of the constitutional package and all without the informed participation of the people of Pakistan and their representatives in the NA and the Senate. Could there be a more grotesque tragedy for the people of Pakistan and for the country?

This may be a good opportunity to reflect on some guidelines for constitutional amendments.

The first is that the amendments should be in the national and provincial

assemblies and the earlier bold stance of the six judges of the Islamabad High Court alleging interference/dictation by the security establishment, which has been alleged that the real objective of the constitutional package was to neutralise or sideline against an upcoming "hostile" leadership of the Supreme Court.

And the perception of a person-specific guideline for seeking constitutional amendments, that is, the proposed amendments do not erode the basic structure of the Constitution. The 1973 Constitution and the earlier constitutional dispensations in the reserved seats in Pakistan have established the Islamic character of our state, the separation of powers, the trichotomy of powers, the independence of the judiciary, rule of law and constitutionalism, fundamental human rights as included in the durable framework for our nation's existence. These cannot be amended, directly or indirectly.

The need-assessment is the next, fourth, guideline for seeking constitutional amendments. It is also recommended to approach in the field is minimalism and proportionality, that is, each objective should be achieved through alternative effective mechanisms, if possible, and with the least violence to the existing text of the Constitution if such an intervention is unavoidable. It is also recommended to have measured responses avoiding overkill.

An example could be first try strengthening

the use of constitutional benches in the Supreme Court already enabled by the Constitution instead of the surgical solution of the establishment of a constitutional court, which will violate the basic structure of the Constitution.

Fifth, each proposed amendment should be supported by fact-based data. Thus, it is useful to suggest and evaluate the number of pending cases in the civil courts, the high courts and the Supreme Court and to determine the different delay factors in each category.

This analysis might reveal that remedial measures at each level may improve the efficiency of the Supreme Court without the need of amendments in the Constitution for this purpose.

The sixth guideline: whatever the resultant reform agenda based on a holistic approach including the above factors

of the amendments and providing adequate time for their consideration and discussion. International practices have moved from "consent to comment" to "consent as a condition to each approval."

It is shameful to highlight the eighth condition of the constitutional amendments: the voting and its counting must be done in accordance with law and the decisions of the superior courts, totally free from the coercive apparatus of the establishment that has become, increasingly, a regular feature of our political governance.

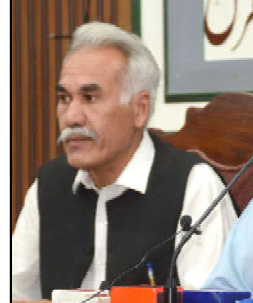
A verdict for the adoption of the amendments will be legally and morally acceptable only if it is fair and abides by the common-sense of the people. This is the condition of the constitutional amendments: the voting and its counting must be done in accordance with law and the decisions of the superior courts, totally free from the coercive apparatus of the establishment that has become, increasingly, a regular feature of our political governance.

A verdict for the adoption of the amendments will be legally and morally acceptable only if it is fair and abides by the common-sense of the people. This is the condition of the constitutional amendments: the voting and its counting must be done in accordance with law and the decisions of the superior courts, totally free from the coercive apparatus of the establishment that has become, increasingly, a regular feature of our political governance.

Singapore ex-minister sentenced to 12 months in prison in rare graft trial

SINGAPORE (INP): A Singaporean former minister was sentenced Thursday to 12 months in prison for obstruction of justice and accepting illegal gifts, local media reported, in the city-state's first political graft trial for nearly half a century.

In a resignation letter at the time, he said he would clear his name in court. Iswaran has paid back around \$295,000 in financial gain to the government and gifts including a Brompton bicycle were also seized from him, the attorney general's office said.



QUETTA: Central Executive Committee Member of Traders Kashif Haiiri addressing a press conference.

Israel kills six in heart of Beirut despite calls for restraint

BEIRUT (INP): Israel bombed central Beirut in the early hours of Thursday, killing at least six people, after its forces suffered their deadliest day on the Lebanese front in a year of clashes against Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah.

A dozen Israeli strikes on Wednesday. A day after Iran fired more than 180 missiles into Israel, Tel Aviv said on Wednesday eight soldiers were killed in a ground combat in south Lebanon as its forces thrust into its northern neighbour.



QUETTA: Bazai Tribe head Taj Muhammad Bazi addressing a press conference.

Hezbollah said it targeted a building in central Beirut's Bachelour neighbourhood close to parliament, the nearest Israeli strikes have come to Lebanon's seat of government. At least six people were killed and seven wounded, Lebanese health officials said. A photo being circulated on Lebanese WhatsApp groups, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed a heavily damaged building with its first floor on fire.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Egypt Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

Malaysian PM Anwar given guard of honour at PM House

ISLAMABAD (INP): Visiting Prime Minister of Malaysia Anwar Ibrahim on Thursday was given the guard of honour as he arrived at the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad to meet his counterpart Shehbaz Sharif and hold delegation-level talks.

Shehbaz Sharif and his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim are set to hold talks in Islamabad today aiming to boost bilateral cooperation in multiple areas and deepen the long-standing 67-year friendship.

US will not support Israeli attacks on Iran nuclear sites: Biden

WASHINGTON, Oct 03 (INP): US President Joe Biden said Wednesday he would not support a strike by Israel aimed at wiping out Iran's nuclear facilities in retaliation for its latest missile attack.

"The answer is no," Biden told reporters, when asked whether he would back strikes against Iranian nuclear sites. "We'll be discussing with the Israelis what they're going to do," he said, adding that all G7 members agree Israel has a right to respond, but they should respond in proportion.

PAKISTAN RAILWAYS
Divisonal Office, Quetta
INVITATION OF BIDS THROUGH E-PADS
Notice No. 133/10-2024
Divisional Superintendent, Pakistan Railways, Quetta, invites sealed bids for execution of below works...

Decision reserved on admissibility of petition against ECP Chief's appointment

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) reserved its decision on the admissibility of the application after arguments against the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja.

Chief Justice IHC Ameer Farooq heard the petition of Akram Bari, the petitioner who appeared in the court with his lawyer.

The petitioner's lawyer argued that Sikandar Sultan Raja was a serving bureaucrat when he was appointed and according to the Supreme Court decision, senior civil servants cannot be appointed, but a retired officer of grade 22. The current or former judge of the Supreme Court could also be appointed.

The lawyer for the petitioner said that there was an amendment made in 2016 and after that a retired officer was appointed because a retired officer is not subordinate to anyone. However, the current Chief Election Commissioner is an in-service employee.

Chief Justice Ameer Farooq inquired if he had attached something to it. How does he know what happened? The petitioner's lawyer said it was on their website.

The Chief Justice remarked that please satisfy me and prove something. If I know something, I will inform further, right? The lawyer of the petitioner asked for some time for briefing.

Election Commission counsel came to the rostrum without notice and said that he

had a notification of retirement of Sikandar Sultan Raja before becoming Chief Election Commissioner.

The Chief Justice while talking to the lawyer of the ECP said that you were not called and you were not noticed yet, it seems that you are in a hurry.

ECP lawyer said that Sikandar Sultan was made Chief Election Commissioner on January 24, 2020, while he had retired in November 2019. Chief Justice Ameer Farooq remarked that he had already retired, ok, thank you! Let's see it.

Later, the IHC reserved its decision on the hearing of the petition after arguments against the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja.



ISLAMABAD: Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman meet Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Big relief for Pervaiz Elahi family; LHC orders to remove their names from PCL

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has provided significant relief to Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and his family, ordering the removal of their names from the Passport Control List (PCL) on Thursday.

Justice Shams Mehmood Mirza presided over the hearing, which involved petitions filed by former Punjab speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, his son Razaq Elahi, and daughter-in-law Zahra Elahi.

During the proceedings, Assistant Attorney General Shiraz Zaka, representing the Ministry of Interior, presented the government's report and opposed the petitions.

The law officer informed the court that the names had previously been removed from the Exit Control List (ECL) but were added to the PCL on July 8.

However, the court was not satisfied with the government's arguments.

Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi's lawyer argued that their names were initially removed from the list but were later included again due to bad faith.

After hearing the arguments from both sides, the court declared the inclusion of their names in the PCL invalid and ordered their removal.

Last month on August 28, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, along with his son Razaq Elahi and daughter-in-law Zahra Elahi, has challenged the inclusion of their names in the Pakistan Consolidated List (PCL), seeking permission to perform Umrah with his family. The family filed an application in the Lahore High Court to have their names removed from the PCL, which restricts their ability to travel abroad.

The petition named the Federal Government, the Ministry of Interior, and other relevant authorities as parties to the case.

In a recent decision, the Lahore High Court allowed the removal of Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi

and his family's names from the PCL, thereby permitting them to travel abroad. Following this ruling, the concerned authorities temporarily withdrew their names from the PCL.

However, the names of Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, Razaq Elahi, and Zahra Elahi were subsequently re-included in the PCL, prompting the family to file another application.

Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi requested the court again to issue definitive orders to permanently remove their names from the PCL, enabling him and his family to undertake their Umrah pilgrimage without further restrictions.

Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi emphasized the importance of performing Umrah and appealed to the Lahore High Court to uphold their right to travel. He requested that the court ensure the removal of his and his family members' names from the PCL, allowing them to go abroad for their religious obligations.

PTI protest at D-Chowk: 4,000 personnel to be deployed for security measures

ISLAMABAD (INP): In anticipation of a potential protest by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party at D-Chowk, 4,000 officers police personnel to be deployed.

PTI founder Imran Khan has called for a protest at D-Chowk on October 4 (Friday). In response, Islamabad has implemented strict security measures, while police and relevant agencies in Rawalpindi have also been put on high alert.

The Rawalpindi police are actively conducting raids to apprehend known and unidentified leaders and activists involved in cases registered on September 28.

Sources indicate that over 150 leaders and workers have already been arrested, and special tasks have been assigned to the Rawalpindi police to deal with the upcoming protest.

It has been decided to seal off the entry points to Rawalpindi

and the routes leading into Islamabad, deploying a heavy police presence in these areas. Key locations at the intersection of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, such as Rawat Chowk, Khanna Bridge on the Islamabad Expressway, Gulzar-e-Quaid, and Faizabad Interchange, will see police barricades and containers set up. This operation will begin on Thursday night.

CPO Rawalpindi Khalid Hamdani stated that all necessary security arrangements have been completed to maintain law and order during the potential protest.

Over 4,000 police officers and personnel will be on duty, ensuring the security of all major thoroughfares and entry/exit points in the city. Specially trained activists will be deployed to deal with any disruptions to peace, and legal action will be taken against those damaging public or private property.

CPO Hamdani emphasized that any disruption of peace or damage to property will not be tolerated, and the rule of law will be upheld at all costs. He urged parents to ensure their children do not participate in any unlawful activities.

It is noteworthy that during the September 28 protests, over 30 locations in Rawalpindi were blocked with containers, and 34 police checkpoints were established with a significant police presence. Following these protests, PTI founder and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur was named in three cases under the Anti-Terrorism Act and other charges, with over 400 unidentified activists implicated in five separate cases across five police stations. Over 150 arrests have been made, and further raids are ongoing.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan presents Exploring Pakistan tourism guide to Malaysian Minister Tengku Zafrul.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Prime Minister of Malaysia YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim at Malaysia-Pakistan High Level Business Dialogue.

SC strikes down 2022 ruling on defection clause under Article 63-A

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday annulled the decision on Article 63-A and admitted the review petitions for hearing. A five-member bench announced the short order after hearing parties and admitted pleas for review.

Article 63-A aims to restrict the voting powers of lawmakers by making them bound to the decision of the "Party Head" who ever is formally declared the head of the party.

The penalty for violating Article 63-A is disqualification from the National Assembly and the vacation of the defecting lawmaker's seat, the Constitution states.

A five-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Quazi Faiz Isa and also including Justices Naeem Akhtar Alghamdi, Aminuddin Khan, Jamal Khan Mandokhail, and Mazhar Alam Khan Mamdani—resumed the hearing today the review plea filed by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in June 2022.

At the outset of the hearing, CJP Isa inquired Zafar if he was able to meet Imran as per the court's directives, to which the lawyer replied in the affirmative. "Yes, I met him yesterday but it was not in private. There were jail authorities present during the meeting," Zafar lamented. He stated that Imran wanted to speak before the court himself and present his arguments via video link.

"Okay, let's move forward. You may present your arguments," the chief justice said, addressing Zafar, who replied that Imran be allowed to put forward his contentions first. "Ali Zafar sahib, you are a senior lawyer and a senator as well. You know how court proceedings work," Justice Isa noted.

The PTI senator then stated that Imran had objections on the bench. "If the permission for the PTI founder to appear via video link is not granted, then he has told me to state a few things before the court," Zafar said.

The lawyer insisted that he has to work according to the directors of his client, at which the top judge remarked, "You are not only your client's counsel but also an officer of the court."

Justice Mandokhail also recalled: "We have also been lawyers [but] we did not listen to every directive of our client. We only followed what was as per the law."

Here, CJP Isa observed that five minutes had been "wasted" over the issue, at which Zafar said he would be done with his argument and out of the courtroom in seven minutes. "Very good, we also want the same," the CJP replied.

Zafar then pointed out that the government wanted to bring some amendments, referring to the proposed constitutional package for which the ruling coalition is trying to garner the required support after a failed first attempt to introduce its draft in

the parliament.

"If you have to talk about this, then start from the beginning," Justice Mandokhail said. "You are not letting me say what I want to," the lawyer replied, at which CJP Isa remarked that Zafar was speaking about politics "so that there could be headlines tomorrow" about it.

Continuing with his arguments, Zafar said the proposed amendments had given an "impression that horse-trading was being allowed", reiterating Imran's earlier statements.

At this, the top judge said the court could initiate contempt of court proceedings against Zafar for saying so. "We respect you, you should respect us as well. By claiming horse-trading, you are making a huge statement," CJP Isa stressed. "What is horse-trading? You would be embarrassed if we told you," he added.

Imran's counsel argued that the court's ruling on Article 63-A "prevented horse-trading", at which Justice Mandokhail clarified that the apex court had "given an opinion, not a judgment."

Zafar then announced boycotting the proceedings: "PTI founder has said the constitution of the bench is not right. Therefore, we will not be part of this case." He went on to say that if the CJP was part of the bench deciding on the review petition, it would be a "conflict of interest."

"Whatever you are saying, we will neither listen to nor make it part of the case record," Justice Isa observed.

Punjab launches scholarship program of Rs 130bn over 30,000 annual awards

LAHORE (INP): Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat announced the government's commitment to educational empowerment with the launch of the "Humar Scholarship Program." The initiative, aimed at providing extensive educational opportunities, will distribute over 30,000 scholarships annually, with a budget of Rs 130 billion set aside for this purpose.

This landmark event marks the first of its kind in Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan, and aims to showcase local talent. The program marks a significant step in fulfilling the government's promises, surpassing previous schemes like the laptop initiative.

The program will support students from limited financial backgrounds, with scholarships available for 30 public, 7 private, and 5 federal universities, as well as 331 public colleges and 14 medical colleges across the province.

The meeting discussed strategies for awarding scholarships and ensuring merit-based selection. Minister Hayat directed universities to host awareness seminars to inform students about the program.

He noted that 43,000 students have already logged into the scholarship portal, and over 1,100 applications have been received.

with 178,000 students having accessed information about the program. A quota for minority students will also be implemented, and private institutions will play a larger role, especially in districts without public universities.

Rana Sikandar Hayat highlighted that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is personally invested in the program, reviewing its progress daily. Scholarships will be offered across 67 different programs, and students from families earning less than Rs300,000 annually are eligible to apply.



ISLAMABAD: Maulana Fazal-Ur-Rehman, head of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan addressing a press conference.

First Punjab Premier League kicks off tomorrow at Jinnah Stadium

ISLAMABAD (INP): The inaugural First Punjab Premier League (PPL) is set to commence tomorrow Friday at Jinnah Stadium in Gujranwala, featuring eight teams, including the Rawalpindi Markhor, led by seasoned cricketer Kamran Akmal.

This landmark event marks the first of its kind in Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan, and aims to showcase local talent. The league will operate with a commitment to meritocracy, after trials involving 900 players, each team will select 20 players based solely on their performance, with no recommendations allowed. Hasan Raza, a respected figure in cricket, will serve as the mentor and coach for the Rawalpindi Markhor.

Public entry for all eight matches will be free, allowing fans to enjoy what is anticipated to be a thrilling series of games. The matches will be played under floodlights, taking advantage of Gujranwala's favorable pitch conditions. The Punjab Premier League, endorsed by the Pakistan Cricket Board, aims to discover 10 to 12 standout players who could potentially be selected for the national team.

With cricket leagues gaining global popularity, this initiative reflects Pakistan's commitment to developing its rich pool of cricketers talent.

The pitch of Gujranwala is very favorable and people will get to see good cricket, players from all over Pakistan are eligible to play in this league, all the matches will be played under flood lights

and this league will generate good revenue, Pakistan Cricket Board said.

The NOC of the league has been released, it is hoped that 10 to 12 good players will be found from this league who will be able to be selected in the national team.

Chaudhry Nadeem Manzoor Bega serves as the owner of the Rawalpindi Markhor, while Waqar Ahmed Khan is the director of operations for the league. Organizers plan to host the PPL annually in different cities across Punjab, ensuring the continuation of competitive cricket in the region.

As excitement builds, fans and players alike are eager to witness what promises to be an extraordinary celebration of cricket in Punjab.