

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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Deputy Commissioner Chaman visiting various parts of the district to review security arrangements for the ongoing polio campaign: Photo provided by the author

DC Chaman Reviews Security for Anti-Polio Campaign

Sardar Muhammad Khondai:

CHAMAN: Deputy Commissioner Chaman, Habib Ahmed Bangulzai, conducted a district-wide inspection to review security measures for the ongoing anti-polio campaign. This effort aligns with Balochistan's broader initiative to eradicate polio, focusing on safety and support for polio teams.

During his visit, DC Bangulzai engaged with female polio workers and local parents, assuring them of full security and support throughout the campaign. He emphasized the importance of a safe working environment to ensure the campaign's success and encouraged community participation to protect children's health.

The anti-polio drive in Chaman is part of a province-wide effort, underlining Balochistan's commitment to a polio-free future. The province has so far reported 21 polio cases, the highest number across Pakistan.

The Balochistan government has already declared an emergency to eradicate the crippling virus.

CM Maryam Nawaz to reach out to Indian Punjab's CM over worsening smog crisis

NEWS DESK: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has indicated plans to write a letter to the Chief Minister of Indian Punjab regarding the urgent smog crisis affecting both regions.

Speaking at a Diwali celebration in Lahore, she underscored the necessity of diplomatic engagement with India to address this pressing environmental issue, describing it as a humanitarian rather than purely political concern.

During the festive event, held on 30th October 2024 at 90 Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam, Maryam Nawaz hosted over 1,400 Hindu families, distributing checks of Rs 15,150 each to support their celebrations.

The event was vibrantly decorated with lights and traditional Rangoli designs, highlighting the cultural significance of Diwali.

The celebration drew participation from diplomats representing the United States, the United Kingdom,

and other nations, signifying the importance of international ties and community integration.

Balochistan Reports 22nd Polio Case in 2024 Amid Criticism of Failed Eradication Efforts

Dawood Ahmed:

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported its 43rd case of Wild Poliovirus Type-1 (WPV1) for 2024, confirmed by the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health. The latest case involves a child from Chagai District, Balochistan, marking Chagai's first polio case this year. So far, Balochistan has recorded 22 cases, Sindh 12, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa seven, with one each in Punjab and Islamabad. As a nationwide polio vaccination campaign runs from October 28 to November 3, aiming to vaccinate over 45 million children, con-

cerns over ineffective strategies and repeated campaign failures have reignited. Critics argue that despite substantial funding and resources, anti-polio efforts have stalled due to mismanagement, lack of innovative strategy, and what some call mere "lip service" from those responsible for overseeing polio eradication. Polio advocates urge parents to cooperate with vaccinators to ensure every child receives two drops of the oral polio vaccine (OPV). With new cases on the rise, voices calling for accountability are growing louder, demanding that officials respon-

sible for Pakistan's prolonged polio crisis be questioned and held accountable. Genetic testing of the latest samples is underway as health experts continue to seek solutions to the persistent threat of polio. Meanwhile, an intensive nationwide polio vaccination campaign is underway from October 28 to November 3, aiming to immunize over 45 million children, including 2.6 million in Balochistan alone. Health officials urge parents to ensure their children receive two drops of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) to protect them from the devastating effects of polio.

Embezzlement Scandal: Rs. 203 Million Fee Fund Misappropriated in Zhob, Balochistan

Ali Khan Mandokhal:

ZHOB: In a major scandal, a clerk from the education department in Zhob, Balochistan, has allegedly embezzled a staggering Rs. 203 million that was meant for students' admission fees for intermediate examinations. Education department sources confirmed that the clerk, whose name remains undisclosed, misappropriated the funds and reportedly squandered them on gambling. This serious incident has prompted Deputy Commissioner Zhob to take immediate action, leading to the transfer of Wazir Khan Nasar, the principal of the implicated school. The decision to transfer the principal has sparked outrage among students, resulting in large-scale protests. Hundreds of students blocked the main road in Zhob, demanding the cancellation of the principal's transfer and call-



ing for strict punishment for the clerk responsible for the embezzlement. The protests have caused significant traffic jams in the area, affecting daily commuters and raising concerns among local residents. The ongoing demonstrations underscore the negative impact on students' education, as many fear delays in their admission processes due to this financial mismanagement.

Saudi Arabia's \$600m tranche boosts total investment in Pakistan to \$2.8b

NEWS DESK: Saudi Arabia announced an additional \$600 million investment in Pakistan, increasing the total to \$2.8 billion. This development follows a productive meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, during which the number of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) was raised from 27 to 34. The announcement was made by Saudi Investment Minister Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Falih at



a joint press briefing with PM Shehbaz. The two leaders discussed bilateral cooperation across various sectors, including trade, finance,

agriculture, technology, and skilled labour. During his two-day official visit, PM Shehbaz addressed the 8th Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh, highlighting how investment can drive sustainable growth. Al Falih noted that this increased investment is "only the beginning of something very special." PM Shehbaz expressed optimism about ongoing projects and future collaborations, stating, "When I come back,

Balochistan CM Reviews Textbook Board's Performance, Emphasizes Curriculum Reform

Education Desk:

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti presided over a performance review of the Balochistan Textbook Board, focusing on curriculum alignment with national standards and modern needs. The briefing reported a budget saving of one billion rupees in textbook publishing this year. Chief Minister Bugti directed that all textbooks for the upcoming academic year be printed and ready by December, stressing the importance of timely delivery to schools.

He emphasized ensuring the distribution of books to Union Councils, tasking the Directorate of Schools and Textbook Board to develop an efficient delivery system. CM Bugti ad-

vocated for a curriculum grounded in modern research, aiming to equip Balochistan's students to compete with those in Islamabad and Lahore. In recognition of outstanding performance, Chairman Textbook Board Gulab Khan Khalji received a Good Performance Certificate from the Chief Minister. Notably, reforms from the Balochistan Textbook Board are being adopted by the Punjab Textbook Board, a testament to the initiative's success. Chief Minister Bugti vowed to continue and safeguard these educational reforms for the future, applauding the cross-provincial recognition as a new milestone in education for Balochistan.



PAC Criticizes Balochistan Irrigation Department for Cost Overruns and Delays

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC), led by Chairman Asghar Ali Tareen, raised concerns over delays and budget overruns in Balochistan's Irrigation Department projects during a review of audit reports for 2021-22, 2022-23, and accounts from 2016-2019. PAC highlighted inefficiencies leading to billions in excess costs and unfinished projects, with Tareen questioning, "Who will cover these losses?"

The committee specifically criticized the department's delay in removing bushes and canal construction in Hub, pointing out that a necessary letter to the P&D Department was only is-

sued days before the PAC meeting, despite being agreed upon two years ago by the Departmental Accounts Committee (DAC). Fazaal Qadir Mandokhal demanded immediate recovery from contractors for using inferior materials on a dam project, warning of strict action if funds aren't recovered within a month. Echoing these concerns, PAC member Zabab Ali Riki called the misuse of public funds "a crime that must be addressed." The meeting was attended by PAC members Zabab Ali Riki and Fazaal Qadir Mandokhal, DG Audit Shuaib Ali, AG Balochistan Nasrullah Jan, and other senior officials.



'Mistreatment' of Imran will blow up in govt's face: PTI

PESHAWAR/ISLAM-ABAD: Imran Khan's sisters complained about the treatment being meted out to him after meeting him in prison for a second straight day, prompting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to threaten to bring the entire country to a standstill if Imran Khan is subjected to any mistreatment. For weeks, the PTI had been claiming that Imran Khan was being mistreated in jail amid a ban on visitors to Adiala jail (which was recently lifted), which also compelled Jemini's gold-smith—ex-wife of the PTI chief—to express concerns about his condition. Subsequently, a team of doctors visited the former premier in jail and found him in "good health." However, concerns about the

health of the founder persisted within the party and the government subsequently allowed Mr Khan to meet his sisters Aleema and Uzma Khan on Monday. In a media talk after that meeting, Aleema alleged that the power supply to Imran Khan's cell had been disconnected since Oct 3 and the food given to him induced nausea. She had claimed that newspaper and television facilities for Mr Khan had been suspended as well. On Tuesday, however, both sisters skipped the media talk after their meeting with Mr Khan in Rawal-pindi's central prison. Meanwhile, a statement shared on Imran Khan's official X account, claimed that he had been subjected to mental torture by being confined to his cell.

Balochistan Border Protest Resolves Call for Free Trade Amid Poverty

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Climate finance: a complex puzzle at COP29

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Overseas Pakistani Faisal Sami wins 'UK Volunteer of the Year 2024'

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Balochistan Border Protest Renews Call for Free Trade Amid Poverty

Editorial:

QUETTA: In a powerful show of solidarity, a large number of people from Balochistan's impoverished border districts gathered under the Balochistan Assembly on Monday, calling on the government to open trade routes with Iran and Afghanistan. Facing persistent economic hardships, protesters emphasized that unrestricted trade is essential for their survival, with many families relying solely on border commerce for income.

Prominent leaders joined the protest, including Asad Baloch of the Balochistan National Party (BNP) Awami, Zabit Reki from Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), and Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman, all underscoring the urgency of this demand.

"Free trade is not just a policy issue here; it's a matter of livelihood," stated Asad Baloch. "We are with our people in calling for their right to work and live with dignity."

Provincial ministers Mir Sadiq Umran, Mir Zahoor Buledi, and Saleem Khan Khoso also attended, pledging to champion the cause within government corridors. Minister Umran expressed his commitment, saying, "We will advocate tirelessly for the trade rights of our people," while Buledi assured that the issue would be prioritized in upcoming assembly sessions.

Balochistan's border regions endure the highest rates of poverty, unemployment, and hunger in Pakistan, a situation exacerbated by limited economic options and restrictive trade policies. Allowing free border trade with Iran and Afghanistan, protesters argued, is not merely a solution but a lifeline, and they urged the government to address these deep-rooted economic issues.

With Balochistan ranking highest in poverty across the nation, ignoring the demands of these border residents risks further entrenching these historical challenges. Protesters called for decisive government action, stressing that without open trade, their struggles will only deepen. For Balochistan, they argued, it is time to move beyond restrictive policies and enable sustainable economic growth for its most vulnerable communities.

The Palestinian factor

By Rafia Zakaria:

THE state of Michigan sits in the upper Midwestern portion of the United States. Once the hub of the American auto industry, the state has since become part of what Americans call the Rust Belt. It is rusting because the American auto industry and the jobs that came with it have shifted elsewhere.

Rust, perhaps a better word than rot, is a metaphor for the fading job landscape and the general feeling of malaise that surrounds many of the state's residents as they look at their future. Apart from all of this, two other facts about Michigan are important in its contemporary context. Firstly, Michigan is defined as one of the swing states that will decide next week's presidential election in the US. Secondly, it is only saying it was "deeply concerned" rather than calling out the ban for the gross humanitarian violation that it is.

The Muslim-Americans of Dearborn, Michigan, are largely from the Middle East and the 2023 figures put them at around 110,000. In 2020, President Joe Biden won the state by 154,000 votes.

In the current poll estimates, former president Donald Trump is leading in Michigan. This indicates that the Muslim-Americans, including the large African-American population, in the American voting demographic in the state, are likely going to decide the election in Michigan in his favour, as at the present moment, most of these crucial Michigan voters are not inclined positively towards the

Democratic Party. In the Michigan Democratic primary, when the present incumbent, Michigan Governor Whitmer, was pitching for Harris against a substantial number of second-term number voted "unknown" because of the disapproval of US support for Israel's war in Gaza. The situation in the Middle East has worsened since then with the Israel war machine dropping bunker buster bombs on Gaza and Lebanon, besides expanding its missile strikes to Iran.

On Tuesday, when the Israeli Knesset voted to ban the United Nations' Relief and Works Agency, which provides humanitarian aid to Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, the Biden-Harris administration could not even manage meaningfully to say only saying it was "deeply concerned" rather than calling out the ban for the gross humanitarian violation that it is.

The choices before the American voters is between the genocide and genocide.

Presidential nominee and Vice President Kamala Harris likely knows this and has probably decided to either naively hope for the best or feel that she can make up the votes in other places — notably from the state's large African-American population. The Obamas have been out in full force and are crowd favourites.

Former first lady Michelle Obama has been campaigning with Harris all of this past weekend. Singer

Beoncé was present at a Kamala Harris rally in Texas and even Taylor Swift, the other American congresswoman, is pitching for Harris against the spectre of a second-term Trump. Their collective project has become a matter of had the American electoral map not been as warped as it is. Not every vote actually counts — it is where the votes are that matters and a few hundred thousand more will pick the next American president.

It is not just Arab and other Muslim-American voters who are annoyed at Harris's support for Israel and the near annihilation of Gaza and the latest round of hostilities aimed at Lebanon now. In a telling move, the young interns at the American effort magazine The Nation published a piece in which they condemned the older editors of the magazine who have endorsed Kamala Harris.

The Los Angeles Times, one of the larger newspapers in the US, refused to endorse Harris because of her support for the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Young people, who had mobilised on campuses earlier this year, are one of the key constituencies that Democrats are counting on. They think that their votes don't matter, then the result could be dire.

This is not to say that former president Donald Trump, if elected, would be good for making any kind of change in US policy towards Israel. If anything, he and his supporters have espoused even stronger support for Israel.

Climate finance: a complex puzzle at COP29

By Mirza Mujtaba Baig:

THE 29th World Climate Conference (COP29), taking place in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 11th to 22nd November, aims to assess global progress on the Paris Agreement and accelerate efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This year's conference will prioritise establishing concrete frameworks for climate finance, developing carbon markets, operationalising loss and damage, and addressing the needs of vulnerable countries. As COP29 approaches, climate finance remains a central issue, with debates over the nature of funding mechanisms and the diversification of financing instruments — loans, grants, concessions — making it difficult to track total contributions from developed countries. Consequently, the GCF, founded with the intention of addressing climate change as outlined in the Copenhagen Accord, has struggled to meet its financing goals. After 15 years of establishment, the GCF has only distributed \$15 billion to developing countries. Only about \$100 billion annual commitment, has only dispersed \$15 billion to developing countries. The GCF was originally slated to be fully operational by 2020. However, its progress has been slow, with various stakeholders having impeded its progress.

Many least developed countries (LDCs) prioritise grant-based financing to avoid debt burdens. This preference often leads to competition among projects seeking grants, while donors may favour a mix of grants, loans and concessions. To address this, a clear mechanism for determining appropriate financing modes for each project is essential and should be incorporated into the NCOG. If adopted at COP29 with a robust framework and universal support from Paris Agreement signatories, the agreement could significantly advance our progress toward net-zero by 2050.

Countries like China, India and Brazil face a unique challenge as being major emitters and vulnerable to climate change simultaneously. While they have the right to offset their emissions by financing their own adaptation efforts, it's unclear how climate finance mechanisms will address this. The principle of additionality ensures that funds support new and additional climate actions that would not have occurred without the funding. Some countries may attempt to claim their regular climate budgets as contributions to their adaptation projects, violating this principle. To safeguard the integrity of climate finance, strict adherence to the principle is essential. Project selection criteria for mitigation and adaptation funding also raises concerns. While mitigation projects can be evaluated based on greenhouse gas reductions, assessing the effectiveness of adaptation projects is more complex. Traditional methods often rely on post-disaster assessments, which are impractical and inadequate. A clear criterion should be established to prioritise funding for adaptation projects in highly vulnerable areas like Pakistan.

Redefining the judiciary via constitutional amendments

By Mohsin Saleem Ullah:

ON October 21, 2024, the parliament swiftly passed the 26th Constitutional Amendment, which has been endorsed by the President the same day. Touted as a breakthrough reform to increase judicial transparency and promote citizens' welfare, the amendment has stirred vigorous debate, especially among advocates for judicial independence. This sweeping constitutional amendment introduces an array of changes intended to recalibrate Pakistan's judicial framework. Amongst provisions are the abolishment of the judicial council, a landmark provision in the insertion of Article 9A into the Constitution-making process, which shrines the right to a clean and healthy environment as a constitutional guarantee. By embedding environmental protection within the country's legal structure, Pakistan joins a growing list of nations

recognising environmental rights as fundamental. This measure reflects the government's commitment to sustainability goals in light of Pakistan's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which marks a significant step toward ensuring future generations' access to natural resources and a pollution-free environment. One of the most contentious aspects of the 26th Amendment is the overhaul of the judicial appointment process. Modifying Article 175A, the amendment revises the criteria for appointing the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP). Moving away from a traditional criteria for appointing the CJP from a shortlist of three nominees. It is challenging to discern the intent behind this amendment that may ensure that merit, expertise and experience are prioritised over internal politics when appointing the top justice. Additionally, this amendment has curtailed the judiciary's suzerainty powers, often used to initiate cases in the public interest. By requiring a three-member judicial committee to authorise such actions, the judiciary has been impeded from rendering justice by not interfering in political and administrative matters of the government. It is uplifting to observe that judicial accountability and transparency are now a part of the judicial landscape through the latest amendment. This measure aims to elevate standards within the judiciary, giving judges the opportunity to improve their performance while ensuring transparency and accountability.

Justice Yahya Afridi, who has been sworn in as CJP, is faced with one of the judiciary's most chronic issues — a significant backlog of cases. With the new amendment providing structural reforms like constitutional benches and streamlined procedures for the judiciary, there is hope that the judicial process may become more efficient. The 26th amendment comes at a transformative moment in Pakistan's judicial history. While critics caution that it risks compro-

missive judicial independence by giving the parliament influence over judicial appointments, others argue that the changes align with broader democratic and institutional objectives. The measure aims to elevate standards within the judiciary, giving judges the opportunity to improve their performance while ensuring transparency and accountability.

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By Dr Rakhshinda Pervan:

AN era dominated by data-driven initiatives and tech-infused solutions, I often find myself questioning how much of this genuinely contributes to a world free of violence against women and girls. How effectively does it enhance their safety? While men can also suffer from sexual and partner violence, it is women who disproportionately bear the burden. Research consistently indicates that women are more likely to experience repeated sexual violence, more severe physical assaults and long-term psychological trauma. This violence does not exclusively emanate from intimate partners or spouses; it extends to other family members, including in-laws. Inequality, agency empowerment and women's rights should be central to the value

system of all those who can make a difference. Yet, it perplexes me that issues like Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), or even the concept of gender equality itself must be framed as a business case to command attention. According to the UN, approximately 47,000 women and girls were murdered by intimate partners or family members in 2020, translating to a woman of girl being killed every 11 minutes by someone within her own family. These alarming figures have seen little change over the past decade. Even more disturbing is the fact that such information rarely makes news headlines and fails to disturb those who control resources and power.

What is occurring in our own communities? How many of us truly recognise the deeply entrenched practice of dowry violence? This form of violence is often buried under the broad umbrella of domestic violence, denying it the attention it desperately requires. Having worked on this issue for over two decades, confronting dowry demands, extravagant weddings and societal pressures and demonstrating the direct impact of this Institutionalisation of Dowry Systems on the status of women, feminists are created to reject the existence of such violence. Reporting the violence is another uphill task and procedures are seldom survivor friendly. Dowry violence is prevalent across regions and socio-economic strata in Pakistan. Dowry violence is distinct from normalised, socially endorsed and legally ignored, devastat-

ing not only women but entire families. Throughout the years, I have witnessed resources diverted to those with limited efforts to spotlight this crisis, but elite feminism, elite activism and corporate feminism in media and social development business have pushed it aside, preventing it from being the focus it deserves in discussions of VAWG or GBV.

Ironically, many policymakers in Pakistan still regard feminism as a donor-driven issue. Thus, more and more barriers are created to reject the existence of such violence. Reporting the violence is another uphill task and procedures are seldom survivor friendly. Dowry violence is prevalent across regions and socio-economic strata in Pakistan. Dowry violence is distinct from normalised, socially endorsed and legally ignored, devastat-

In my years in the non-profit sector, I have witnessed resources diverted to those with limited or even incorrect understandings, while exclusionary practices by women's organisations and UN agencies remained unchecked. Civil society, vibrant yet selective, often fears consequences or embraces "pragmatism".

The diplomatic shortcomings of women's commissions are rarely addressed. We must acknowledge that these platforms, designed to empower and elevate all women's status, often serve as political proxies, primarily enhancing the status of influential women. As a result, so-called changemakers in social development frequently operate within narrow, self-interesting lobbies, if not outright mafias.

How can we expect real impact under these conditions? Dowry demands are deeply embedded in societal expectations, fueling violence against women to meet commercial needs.

Tragically, we continue to rely on ineffective interventions and societal indifference that is hard to dismantle. One of the most harmful responses to dowry violence has been the reliance on charity-driven models and low-political promises. Politicians and charitable organisations frequently offer temporary financial aid or fleeting ceremonial initiatives as solutions to gender-based violence, including dowry-related abuse. However, this approach is not only ineffective, it is deeply insulting. Women's rights are non-negotiable. Treating

them as optional favours does nothing to challenge the structural patriarchy that underpins dowry violence.

Women in Pakistan deserve more than token gestures; they deserve dignity, justice, and the assurance that they will not be subjected to violence due to outdated societal norms.

Despite the numerous lives shattered by dowry violence, government interventions in Pakistan remain woefully inadequate. Dowry demands, injuries and deaths are neither recognised nor cognisable, and existing not so tough anti-dowry laws are seldom enforced. Survivors are left without meaningful legal recourse to pursue justice, while public discourse surrounding dowry violence is eclipsed by other issues. It is time for real change cannot arise from mastering algorithms and numbers, hiring so-called experts who lack empathy for the traumas of violence, or commissioning glamorous ambassadors. True change necessitates stepping beyond our comfort zones. We need advocacy that holds power to account, that breaks the chasm between political rhetoric and actual policy action. This is not merely a favour to be granted, but a right that must be unwaveringly upheld. I wonder if this year's 16 Days of Activism will take into account dowry violence with authentic stakeholders, or if the story of inaction and unacceptable solutions will remain hidden beneath the dazzling campaigns of expensive fashion designers apparently promoting anti-dowry marriage agreements supposedly meaningful platforms.

Overseas Pakistani Faisal Sami wins 'UK Volunteer of the Year 2024'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Syed Muhammad Faisal Sami, UK Head of Faizan Global Relief Foundation (FGRF), (Dawood-Iskhan) has won the 'UK Volunteer of the Year 2024', in recognition of his dedicated humanitarian efforts both in the UK and internationally.

His efforts include food distribution, health services, drug prevention, and disaster relief worldwide.

Awarded by Charity Today, he was recognized for his exceptional contributions to supporting vulnerable communities in the UK and globally.

Faizan Global Relief Foundation (FGRF) is well-known for its dedication to humanitarian efforts, addressing relief needs both locally and globally. Its initiatives cover a broad spectrum, including disaster relief, food distribution, educational programs, and health services.

FGRF aims to empower communities, alleviate poverty, and foster social welfare through its

outreach programmes and charitable projects.

Under the leadership of Syed Muhammad Faisal Sami, FGRF UK has made significant strides in addressing pressing social issues. Syed has been instrumental in leading projects that provide essential support to those in need.

In the UK, Syed has worked above and beyond to support individuals.

During COVID-19, he set up food parcels and supported in delivering thousands of food parcels to those struggling. Syed also led a dedicated team of FGRF volunteers to tackle holiday hunger, ensuring that "no child goes hungry in the holidays."

Under his leadership, the team has successfully provided meals and support to families during school breaks. He has collaborated with West Midlands Police to run drug awareness programmes, establishing prevention workshops that empower local communities to combat drug-related challenges.

Additionally, Syed has addressed county lines issues by implementing prevention strategies and raising awareness in the community.

To further support public health, Syed has established free health check camps, offering attendees BMI assessments and blood pressure checks. This initiative eases the pressure on NHS services, helping to reduce wait times and queues for vital health checks.

This initiative eases the pressure on NHS services, helping to reduce wait times and queues for vital health checks. Moreover, Syed has initiated tree-planting projects in the UK and participated in worldwide plantation programmes, promoting efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, in an effort to try mitigating the global warming crisis. These initiatives not only enhance local environments but also contribute to a more sustainable future.



ISLAMABAD: Italian Ambassador Marijina Arnelin called on the Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain.

Pakistan-China Fisheries Business Conference strengthens bilateral ties: Report

QINGDAO (INP): The inaugural Pakistan-China Fisheries Business Conference took place in Qingdao, marking a significant milestone in economic collaboration between the two countries.

The event gathered key representatives from both public and private sectors, launching a major business-to-business (B2B) initiative to promote investment in Pakistan's fisheries sector. China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday.

In his opening address, Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalid Hashmi, expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Commerce of China (MOCOM), the Municipal Government of Qingdao, and the Qingdao Oceanic Bureau for their support in organizing the conference.

He described the gathering as a crucial step in strengthening economic ties and enhancing bilateral trade, focusing on leveraging Pakistan's rich marine resources, extensive inland freshwater systems, and strategic location to drive growth in fisheries, aquaculture, and food processing.

The fisheries industry contributes nearly 1% to Pakistan's GDP, with 64% of seafood production from marine fishing and 36% from inland sources.

As marine stocks deplete, we are shifting focus to aquaculture, which grew at 15% from 2000 to 2018," he noted.

The Ambassador highlighted ongoing government efforts, including a pilot project in Punjab launched in 2019 that is expanding to Sindh and Balochistan, aiming to increase aquaculture farms from 3,500 to 10,600 by 2024.

Under the "Blue Transformation" initiative, Pakistan seeks to develop its fisheries sector on an industrial scale and establish sustainable partnerships with Chinese companies.

"We aim to enhance our capacity to produce, process, and export high-quality seafood, benefiting both our economy and China's food security," he added.

Main Saeed Ahmed Fareed, CEO of Legend International PTY Ltd and vice chairman of the Pakistan Fisheries Export Association, remarked that China is the largest importer of Pakistani seafood, with around 60% of exports going to China.

"We need to enhance B2B collaboration with China to facilitate our growth in seafood," he said. Wang Zhi, Honorary Investment Counselor and Deputy Director General of the Pakistan (China) Economic Cooperation Centre (PECC), noted that this partnership could position Pakistan as a key player in global seafood markets, particularly as China's demand for processed seafood rises.

He emphasized that Pakistan's connectivity through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) makes it an ideal hub for seafood export.

This event is the first of six conferences planned through early next year to foster increased investment from China into Pakistan's fisheries industry.

Final bidding process for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) privatization tomorrow

ISLAMABAD (INP): The final bidding process for the privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is scheduled to take place tomorrow (Thursday) in Islamabad.

Preparations for the bidding process have been finalized at a private hotel in the capital. Of the six potential bidders, only the Blue World City consortium has submitted an advance payment, confirmed by sources from the Privatization Commission.

Both the bid submission and opening for Pakistan International Airline's purchase are set to occur on the same day, as per aviation sources.

The privatization process will adhere strictly to the regulatory framework and guidelines, ensuring full compliance with legal requirements, the sources added.

As the government proceeds with the PIA privatization, new conditions from potential buyers have emerged re-

Farmers advised to grow wheat seeds till November 10

PESHAWAR (INP): The Cereal Crop Research Institute (CCRI), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has said that wheat cultivation season has started in the province and advised the farmers and growers to plant recommended wheat seeds of the institute till November 10 to get best production. Senior Research Officer CCRI Dr. In Amin Khalil told this agency that keeping in view the changing weather pattern and climate change, the institute has introduced two types of wheat seeds for both arid areas and lands being irrigated with canal water. He said that both types of the seeds yield double production as compared to traditional seeds and were resistant to weather conditions and diseases. Dr Khalil said that the new seeds were developed carefully to get maximum production from minimum land, adding that the new seeds for arid areas included Shakkhar 2013, Wadan 2017, Pirsabaq 2015, 2019, 2021, 2023 and Tarkin 2022 while for seeds for areas being irrigated through canal water included Gulzar 2021, Zarghun 2021, Kharista 2017 and Khyber 2023.

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Apart from this, he said Pamina 2017 and Abasim 2021 seeds have been developed for later growers. He said that if these seeds are cultivated in time, the productivity would double to the normal seeds, adding that the grain size of the seeds was also bigger than the normal seeds while it was less affected by diseases thus reducing the additional cost of pesticides on farmers and growers.



RIYADH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh of Vietnam on the sidelines of the 8th Future Investment Initiative (FII) Conference.

To control tobacco usage, funding from Tobacco tax is necessary

ISLAMABAD (INP): For an effective control of tobacco usage in Pakistan, a small part of tax revenue from tobacco industry can play a vital role. It will also reduce the reliance on the international funding for tobacco control programs in the country, said Syed Ali Asif Naqvi.

He said, "Around 24 million people in Pakistan are consuming tobacco in different forms, causing over 160,000 deaths annually. Including healthcare cost, tobacco usage is instigating productivity losses measured about PKR700 billion. The said amount is more than twice the total tobacco tax revenue."

Talking to INP, he said that Pakistan rely on international funding to control the tobacco usage. In the long run, it is not suitable. Political or economic shifts in donor countries could reduce funding streams, leaving Pakistan's tobacco control efforts underfunded and unsustainable.

Ali Asif Naqvi who is the Head of Policy Advocacy and Outreach working at Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad said, "Annually, PKR 300 billion are addressed concerning the tobacco taxes. A mere 0.05% of the said amount (around PKR 150 million) can be

dedicated for tobacco control. It is necessary to cut reliance on the international funding for the continuity of tobacco usage control efforts. In this way, not only the tobacco control sequence in Pakistan will be streamlined but it can make the country an example regarding sustainable health financing.

He said that a domestic funding model, on the other hand, would increase national ownership, bolster public trust, and ensure the continuity of programs regardless of international political dynamics. Often, international donor agencies and non-governmental organizations have to face the bureaucratic hurdles, legal challenges, and political and tobacco industry resistance in carrying out their programs. It complicates the implementation of tobacco control initiatives.

He said, "To cope with the said issue, the model of such countries can be followed where domestic funding mechanisms were established to support tobacco control - Thailand Government has introduced 'Thai Health Promotion Foundation'. It is funded by a dedicated surcharge on tobacco and alcohol taxes. The said foundation is playing a key role in controlling tobacco usage

and is also funding various public health programs."

Quoting the example of Australian Government, Ali Asif Naqvi said, "they spare a portion of tax revenue for public health especially tobacco usage control. Brazil is also an example to dedicate a part of the tax revenue to fund the National cancer institute and tobacco control programs. It resulted in a great decline in smoking rate over the last two decades."

He said that Pakistan must replicate the said global examples for its tobacco control program. Funds generated in Pakistan through tobacco taxes can support other tobacco control activities - public awareness, cessation Services, strengthening the enforcement of existing tobacco control laws including a ban on tobacco advertising, sales to minors, smoke-free public spaces, to broader health sector, and monitoring the tobacco industry's tactics to undermine regulations.

Critics may argue that dedicating funds to tobacco control from tax revenues may reduce the flexibility of government spending. However, the long-term economic benefits of reducing tobacco consumption far outweigh the initial costs.

President Zardari signs bill establishing special courts for overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD (INP): President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday signed a bill establishing special courts for property matters concerning overseas Pakistanis.

Under the new law, special courts will be set up to address property disputes for overseas Pakistanis, ensuring their cases are resolved within 90 days.

President Zardari also approved the Deposit Protection Corporation Amendment Bill 2024, granting both approvals under Article 75 of the Constitution.

On October 17, the Senate passed the bill for establishing special courts to safeguard the property rights of overseas Pakistanis. Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik presented the bill, which was unanimously approved, though PTI's Ali Zafar requested it be referred to a committee, citing concerns about potential false cases.

The special court will have jurisdiction over the entire Islamabad Capital Territory. Overseas Pakistanis can file petitions through modern devices, including e-filing.

Read more: Overseas Pakistanis to get urgent passports within 7 days, announces Naqvi

The special court will be disposed of within 90 days, thereby providing a speedy remedy, preventing delays in justice, and ultimately safeguarding the interests of overseas Pakistanis.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins.

<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration by the Successor Certificate by Mr. Faisal Sami with regards to the estate of deceased Mr. Faisal Sami (D.O.B. 19/01/1962) has been received. Following are the legal heirs:</p> <p>1. Mrs. (Suzanne) Sami (Wife)</p> <p>2. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>3. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the dependents of public at large are invited to approach in person the undersigned at any time within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SPTI NADRA INCHARGE SPTI NADRA</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration by the Successor Certificate by Mr. Faisal Sami with regards to the estate of deceased Mr. Faisal Sami (D.O.B. 19/01/1962) has been received. Following are the legal heirs:</p> <p>1. Mrs. (Suzanne) Sami (Wife)</p> <p>2. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>3. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the dependents of public at large are invited to approach in person the undersigned at any time within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SPTI NADRA INCHARGE SPTI NADRA</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration by the Successor Certificate by Mr. Faisal Sami with regards to the estate of deceased Mr. Faisal Sami (D.O.B. 19/01/1962) has been received. Following are the legal heirs:</p> <p>1. Mrs. (Suzanne) Sami (Wife)</p> <p>2. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>3. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the dependents of public at large are invited to approach in person the undersigned at any time within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SPTI NADRA INCHARGE SPTI NADRA</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration by the Successor Certificate by Mr. Faisal Sami with regards to the estate of deceased Mr. Faisal Sami (D.O.B. 19/01/1962) has been received. Following are the legal heirs:</p> <p>1. Mrs. (Suzanne) Sami (Wife)</p> <p>2. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>3. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the dependents of public at large are invited to approach in person the undersigned at any time within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SPTI NADRA INCHARGE SPTI NADRA</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration by the Successor Certificate by Mr. Faisal Sami with regards to the estate of deceased Mr. Faisal Sami (D.O.B. 19/01/1962) has been received. Following are the legal heirs:</p> <p>1. Mrs. (Suzanne) Sami (Wife)</p> <p>2. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>3. Mr. (Syed) Faisal Sami (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the dependents of public at large are invited to approach in person the undersigned at any time within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SPTI NADRA INCHARGE SPTI NADRA</p>
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