

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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dquettavoice@gmail.com



A long queue of oil tankers in the aftermath of Highway blockade in Noshki Balochistan: Photo Riaz Baloch

Govt calls in Pakistan Army for SCO Summit security in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Army has been called in to provide security for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, scheduled to take place in Islamabad on 15-16 October. The deployment was approved under Article 245 of the Constitution, according to a notification issued by the Interior Ministry on Friday. The notification confirmed that the army will oversee the security of key government buildings and the Red Zone in Islamabad. While the Rangers are already stationed in the capital, the military will take over security duties from 5 to 17 October, ensuring heightened protection during the summit.



The federal government has completed its preparations for the event, which will be attended by the heads of state and delegations from the eight member countries of the SCO. The organisation, established in 2001, promotes political, economic, and security cooperation in the region. Its current members include China, Russia, Pakistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In 2023, Iran became a full member of the SCO. Several other countries participate as observers or partners, cooperating with the regional bloc. Significantly, Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will also be attending the summit, marking the first high-level visit from India to Pakistan since 2015. The last visit by an Indian foreign minister to Pakistan was in December 2015, when then-minister Sushma Swaraj attended the 'Heart of Asia' conference in Afghanistan in Islamabad. This visit is seen as an opportunity to ease tensions between the two neighbours, which have been strained in recent years.

Blocked Highway in Noshki: Protesters Demand Reopening of Iran-Pakistan Trade Route

Riaz Baloch:

Noshki, Balochistan: A major protest erupted in Noshki on Friday as locals blocked the main highway connecting Pakistan to Iran, demanding the reopening of the trade route and the release of oil tankers carrying petroleum products from Iran. The blockade has resulted in long queues of vehicles and containers, causing significant disruptions to traffic and trade. Leading the protest were prominent figures from the Balochistan National Party (BNP), including Mir Khurshid Jamaludini, Haji Jehanzab Badini, and Farooq Baloch. The protesters vowed to intensify

their demonstrations until their demands are met, highlighting the economic and social impact of the closed trade route on the region. The closure of the Iran-Pakistan border has had far-reaching consequences for both countries, impacting trade, energy supplies, and regional stability. The protesters' actions reflect the growing frustration and concern among local communities over the ongoing disruptions to their livelihoods. Meanwhile, in Mashkail, a small town near the Iranian border, residents held a press conference at the Quetta Press Club. They called upon the government

to allow tribes living near the border to freely move and trade with Iran, arguing that the restrictions imposed on the petroleum containers have severely impacted their livelihoods and economic well-being. The detention of the Iranian petroleum tankers has had far-reaching consequences for both countries, impacting trade, energy supplies, and regional stability. The growing protests in Noshki and Mashkail reflect the increasing frustration and concern among local communities over the ongoing disruptions to their lives.

Mountain Fire in Musakhail Brought Under Control

Abdul Rehman Musakhail:



Musakhail, Balochistan: A major fire that broke out in the mountainous regions of Drug Shukra area of Musakhail district yesterday has been successfully contained by joint efforts of the District Administration, FC Levies, Forest Department, and PDMA. The blaze, which spread rapidly across a sensitive area, posed a serious threat to the local environment. However, tireless work from emergency response teams managed to extinguish the flames

and prevent further damage. According to the District Administration, the situation in the affected area has now returned to normal. Deputy Commissioner Musakhail, Captain (R) Jumadad Mandokhail, led the rescue operation alongside the Levies force. Scores of concerned locals also gathered to witness the efforts to combat the fire. The PDMA Government of Balochistan commended the swift response and effective coordination among the various

agencies involved. Their timely intervention was instrumental in preventing the fire from causing widespread destruction. The incident underscores the importance of preserving forests, which play a crucial role in combating climate change and maintaining ecological balance. Forests act as carbon sinks, absorbing greenhouse gases and helping to mitigate the effects of global warming. Protecting these vital ecosystems is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of our planet.

PTI Rallies Continue Amid Arrests and Internet Restrictions

Dawood Ahmed:

Islamabad: At least 30 protesters have been arrested and mobile networks and internet services have been suspended in Islamabad and Rawalpindi as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) prepares for a planned rally at the capital's D-Chowk. Despite a ban on public gatherings and calls from the government to refrain from participating in the rally, the PTI has continued to mobilize its supporters. Party founder Imran Khan, currently imprisoned, has urged his followers to gather for a peaceful protest, while the party has stepped up preparations

for the event. The PTI has organized numerous rallies across Pakistan in recent weeks, protesting the government's "illegal" detention of Imran Khan, the Election Commission of Pakistan's delay in implementing the reserved seats verdict, and the perceived erosion of constitutional rights. Prior to the rallies in Islamabad and Lahore earlier this month, the government issued a set of strict guidelines that the PTI failed to fully comply with, leading to clashes between party workers and the authorities.



SZABMU MDCAT Reconduct or Grace Marks: What to Expect from IHC

Analysis by

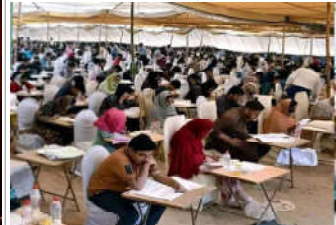
Syed Muhammad Yaseen:

Through years wrong keys and out of syllabus questions have become a common practice in the Medical and Dental Colleges. Admission test (MDCAT) injustices by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) have left many students in chaos and depression. The Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABMU) MDCAT 2024 has been marred by allegations of wrong keys and out of syllabus questions, similar to previous years. Over 165,000 students appeared for the test nationwide, with a significant number of Islamabad students protesting against irregularities.

SZABMU Aspirants Hope for MDCAT Reconduct. The IHC's decision has provided a glimmer of hope for SZABMU aspirants. Who are demanding a re-conduct of the MDCAT due to the alleged irregularities. Batool Kazmi, an aspirant, expressed her relief at the court's order and her expectation for a fair resolution. Evidence Presented to IHC Falls Short of Reconduct Criteria. While the evidence presented to the IHC supports the claims of irregularities, it may not be sufficient to warrant a complete re-conduct of the MDCAT. The court may instead consider awarding grace marks to affected students.

Following the protests, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) temporarily suspended the SZABMU MDCAT 2024 results for 10 days. The court also directed the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) to establish a complaint cell specifically for SZABMU aspirants.

PMDC's Role in Addressing the Issue. The PMDC will play a crucial role in investigating the allegations and determining the appropriate course of action. The outcome of the PMDC's investigation will significantly impact the future of SZABMU MDCAT 2024.



One Killed in Kalat District Firing Incident

Abdullah Lehri:

Kalat, Balochistan: A tragic incident occurred in the Narmok area of Kalat district on Friday, resulting in the death of one person. According to Levies sources, a firing incident took place, claiming the life of Khair Jan Lehri, a local tribesman. The victim's body was subsequently transported to a nearby hospital. Levies forces have ar-

rived at the scene to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident. The motive behind the shooting remains unclear at this time.

Public-Private Partnerships: A Solution to Balochistan's Education Crisis

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

Continued to page 2

Under PM Shehbaz, country's foreign policy upswing: Tarar

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Public-Private Partnerships: A Solution to Balochistan's Education Crisis

Editor: Asim Khan

Editorial:

The recent dismissal of 114 absentee teachers in Balochistan marks a pivotal moment in the province's long-overdue effort to address the crisis in its education sector. With an inquiry underway against an additional 2,000 teachers, the Balochistan government is sending a clear message: education is no longer to be taken lightly. Chronic absenteeism has plagued the region's schools for years, compromising the quality of education for countless children. The actions taken by the provincial government, under the leadership of Education Minister Rabeela Hameed Khan Durani, reflect a commendable commitment to accountability, transparency, and educational reform.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti deserves appreciation for upholding the banner of merit in teachers recruitment and directing the education department to make sure out of school children are in schools.

This bold move is not an isolated effort but part of a broader strategy that includes reopening 400 previously non-functional schools, enhancing educational infrastructure, and establishing School Management Committees (SMCs) to engage local communities in governance. These initiatives are critical in a province where vast rural areas and underdeveloped regions have long suffered from a lack of access to quality education. Reopening these schools, particularly in remote areas, will expand educational opportunities and bring long-term benefits to underserved communities.

However, while these steps are vital, Balochistan faces deep-seated structural challenges that will require more comprehensive solutions. The province's shortage of educational facilities, coupled with the continued lack of qualified and committed teachers, underscores the need for further innovation. In this context, an approach recently introduced by the Punjab government could offer a promising model. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has announced plans to hand over thousands of government-run schools to public-private partnerships (PPPs) to improve the quality of education. This initiative seeks to leverage the expertise and resources of the private sector to address inefficiencies within the public system. Balochistan, with its unique challenges, could benefit greatly from such a strategy.

The PPP model could provide much-needed support in teacher training, curriculum development, and school management. By incorporating private sector efficiency with public accountability, it could address the chronic problems of absenteeism and infrastructure development. It also allows for innovative educational approaches, as well as better oversight through community involvement, echoing the role SMCs are already playing in Balochistan.

While the province's government has made significant strides in improving the educational landscape, adopting and adapting the PPP model could be a game changer. Public-private partnerships have the potential to create a sustainable system, offering both modern educational resources and stringent oversight to ensure that students receive the education they deserve.

Rabeela Hameed Khan Durani's vision of a robust, effective education system is laudable, and the ongoing reforms are a step in the right direction. But if Balochistan is to truly turn the page on its troubled education sector, it must embrace innovative solutions like public-private partnerships to bring about the transformative changes that its children so desperately need. Only by doing so can the province ensure a brighter, more promising future for the next generation.

Loaded dice

BY Adeel Wahid

HEADS I win, tails you lose. The amendments made to the Election Act, 2017, on the fly, to paper over the various discrepancies in the elections held on Feb 8, 2024, change the entire electoral dynamic ex post facto. After the elections, and the top court upheld the results of the purported 'winners' are being given a free pass to change the rules of the game, to maintain their claim of being the winners, upending the manner by which those seeking to question the winning status could have brought that challenge before neutral arbiters. As in the case of many elections held before, the ones that were held earlier this year were tainted. Concurred with the numbers in the Forms-47 was the new modus operandi.

In the past, elections have been managed through other means as well. In recent memory, in the 2021 Daska by-elections, almost a couple of dozen presiding officers simply went missing, and re-

mained so for an entire night. They emerged in the morning, in present figures to the Returning Officer that were entirely different from the ones they had before they went missing. At that time, the Election Commission of Pakistan had to be changed to the top court upheld the ECP's directions for a re-poll in the entire constituency. The returned candidate after the re-poll was from the PML-N — and not a favoured horse then. More than that, this is not the intrusions of that time were not kosher, we are told. The intrusions of today, they say, are not only kosher, but are, in fact, necessary. It appears that if the meddler took place in the past, it gives a complete carte blanche for meddling in the present, though probably in the future.

Fairness dictates that the rules not be changed once the game has been played.

An election is a competition of sorts. And in any competition,

changing the rules ex post facto, that is, after the fact, is considered to be completely out of bounds. In systems where fairness matters, the rules of the game are decided before the game is played. Fairness also dictates that the rules not be changed once the game has been played. In a race, the winner is to be determined in accordance with the rules that exist before the race begins, and in keeping with those rules.

But in our system, where fairness has limited value, the reality played out like this: a bunch of candidates were said to be elected. When contesting against the presumed successful candidates challenged the 'win' the ECP members initially twiddled their thumbs, buying time so that the issue could be punted to the election tribunals.

According to the rules existing at the time, the election tribunals were to comprise the justices of the high courts.

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, but its demands have often been seen as a double-edged sword. 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 revenue 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 chal-

lenging. 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 pays income tax, as many individuals do not file returns and tax agencies have 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 rates.

Tax evasion is another major obstacle to reform. It creates an unfair system that undermines confidence and fuels opposition to reforms. The IMF has urged the government to improve tax enforcement, introduce disclosure mechanisms, and combat corruption within tax offices. While high-income earners and large corporations to avoid paying their fair share of taxes, the vast majority of individuals who are not registered in the tax system face a complex and often intimidating process of compliance. 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 chal-

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Act of conscience

BY Zubaida Mustafa:

In the pain has often been understood how his people had been brutalised by their White saviours and how bitter they felt.

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Protest is the silent voice of the people's conscience. Hence I had to be peaceful. If it were not for the protesters, the world would not have been what it is today.

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Renegotiating the treaty

BY Hassan Abbas:

FROM a hydrological perspective, the water distribution and management plan of the Indus Waters Treaty is one of the most unscientific strategies when it comes to the world's largest transboundary river basins. Consequently, it has not been able to succeed — legally, environmentally, economically or politically. Before the damage already done becomes irreversible, the IWT must be re-evaluated through the lens of rigorous science.

The IWT is unique in the sense that it was devised to divide the waters of the Indus basin between Pakistan and India at a time when no country was facing a water shortage in the basin area, which was divided by a political boundary in 1947. The Standstill Agreement of 1947, signed between

Pakistan and India to keep the Indus basin waters flowing the way they were before the 1947 partition, is a testimony to this fact. However, after the expiration of the agreement in 1948, East Punjab began shutting down the canals that flowed into Pakistan territory under its control — not because India was running short of water but out of political malice — thus depriving the civilian population of Punjab (Pakistan) of life-giving water supplies for irrigation.

Water, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works." In 1948, the chief minister of East Punjab, Dr Gopi Chand Bhargava, ordered the closure of canals, and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian prime minister, supported him. Thus began a water conflict, which had nothing to do with water scarcity in India or Pakistan. Before the damage already done becomes irreversible, the Indus Waters Treaty must be re-evaluated.

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public services, more stable economic growth, and greater inclusivity. However, realizing these benefits requires careful management of short-term costs and ensuring that reforms are implemented fairly.

Key factors for successful tax reforms include: Improved tax administration. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms, combating corruption, and utilizing digital technologies to increase transparency and efficiency. Stakeholder involvement. Building consensus and support from various stakeholders, including businesses, trade unions, and civil society.

Tax system simplification. Reducing the complexity of tax laws and procedures to make compliance easier for taxpayers. Implementing tax reforms in Pakistan is a complex and challenging task, but it is essential for achieving fiscal balance and addressing the country's dependence on foreign funding. By addressing the economic, political, and social challenges, the government can create a more sustainable and equitable tax system that benefits the country in the long run. The writer is a Legal Intern at FBR and a Legal Intern at J&Q Law Firm. He can be contacted at Email: shahidulhaq09@gmail.com

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Another is Drakshan kee katar bund karo' (stop cutting trees), which earned him the wrath of the KMC's former chief, who eventually attacked him. Yet another says, 'Sindh budget dugna, Karachi ka hissa kahani?'

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Sindh ready to take over Karachi's Green Line bus service operations

KARACHI (INP) The Federal government will transfer the Green Line BRT to Sindh government in December 2024 as the latter has completed all preparations to take over Karachi's first bus rapid transit project.

The Green Line BRT project, which was made operational in December 2021, currently serves with 80 buses operating on its dedicated route with an average ridership of 55,000 people per day over a 20.9-kilometre route.

The first phase of the federally funded project took almost six years to complete and became operational in 2021.

However, the service still remains incomplete as the construction of the last phase — Numaish to Municipal Park near Jama Cloth Market — was abandoned in late 2020 after the contract with the NLC was cancelled by the federal government.

A high-level meeting was held in Karachi today under the chairmanship of Sindh Senior

Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon to look over the Green Line BRT matters.

The meeting was attended by Transport Secretary Asad Zamin, Managing Director of Sindh Mass Transit Authority Kamal Hakeem Dayo, Trans Karachi CEO Shumaila Mohsin, and other officials.

In the meeting, the operations of the Green Line Bus Service were thoroughly reviewed where in Sharjeel Inam Memon received a comprehensive briefing on the Green Line project.

A detailed discussion was also held on the plan to connect the Green Line with the Orange Line project.

During the meeting, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon directed the swift completion of the project connecting the Green Line with the Orange Line.

The meeting also covered discussions on the Sindh Government's ongoing operations in the public transport sec-

tor, utility services, and subsidies for the Green Line Bus Service.

Speaking at the meeting, Memon said that the Green Line project is a vital component of Karachi's public transport system. He confirmed that the Green Line project will be transferred to the Sindh government by the federal government in December 2024.

He stated that the Sindh government aims to complete the project connecting the Green Line to the Orange Line before December 2024.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon noted that the Federal Government is currently providing an annual subsidy of 2 billion rupees for the operations of the Green Line, which the Sindh Government will review.

After the transfer of the project to the provincial government, additional buses will be introduced to enhance the efficiency and quality of transport services for the citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar addressing a Press Conference.

Under PM Shehbaz, country's foreign policy upswing: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaulah Tarar has said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the foreign policy of the country is on heading up ward trend.

While addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Friday, he said that the visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to Pakistan was highly successful and productive as many agreements and MoUs were signed to increase cooperation and trade between the two brotherly countries.

Attaulah Tarar said that Pakistan enjoyed brotherly and friendly relations with Malaysia and Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim during his visit to Pakistan took forward matters regarding trade and investment.

He said that Premier Shehbaz Sharif had invited Malaysian counterpart to visit Pakistan on the occasion of the World Economic Forum in Riyadh.

The information minister further stated that Halal meat and rice exports from Pakistan to Malaysia will be increased and initially one hundred thousand tons of rice will be exported.

He said it was worth appreciation that Malaysian PM stated that his country supported Pakistan's demand for implementation of the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir dispute.

About national economy, Tarar said it was improving and it will become more stable with the visits of world leaders to Pakistan. He said Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan during his meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at UN General Assembly session, had acknowledged that Pakistan's economy was improving. He said the government was now focusing on promoting trade with other countries which will boost the economy. "Pakistan will prove to be an excellent trade market for the world," he added.

The minister said it was an honour for Pakistan to host upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Or-

ganization summit in Islamabad which will be attended by 12 heads of governments from various countries.

He said that beautification process of the federal capital was going on ahead of the SCO summit.

Tarar remarked that Islamabad had achieved many milestones on foreign policy front as many countries were giving positive views about Pakistan.

About Prime Minister's address to the United Nations General Assembly, he said Shehbaz Sharif, as representative of Muslim Ummah raised his voice for Palestine and Kashmir in the most effective manner. He said Shehbaz Sharif's speech was one of the best speeches ever made in the United Nations.

The minister said even the opposition had praised the Prime Minister's speech at the United Nations which was most watched speech globally.

The Prime Minister, he added also highlighted the adverse effects of climate change being suffered by Pakistan in shape of floods. He also raised the issue of terrorism and the sacrifices offered by Pakistani citizens and its security agencies. The minister said that the loan agreement with International Monetary Fund was finalised during UN GA session which will help further strengthen the economy. He said that both the IMF and World Bank had lauded the steps taken by the government for economic growth.

Tarar recalled that after coming to power in February, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had promised reforms in Federal Bureau of Revenue and now its digitization process was in process. He said the number of filers was doubled due to the efforts of the government which will prove helpful in increase in tax collection. He said Pakistan's stock exchange was achieving new landmarks as reputed financial journal Bloomberg had termed it most emerging market in entire Asia.

He said that it was the priority of the government to provide

maximum facilities to the people. The information minister said all economic indicators were positive and Pakistan's exports increased and trade deficit decreased and inflation had come down to 6.9 per cent which was not even projection of the experts.

He said now it was responsibility of the provincial governments to take steps to reduce transport fares, prices of edibles as was being done by Marian Nawaz Sharif in the Punjab.

He advised the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to fulfil his responsibilities and take steps for price control in his province including land and order situation.

Responding to queries of the media persons, Tarar said that it was unfortunate that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf held a sit in when Chinese President was due in 2014 which resulted in delay in launch of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Similarly now when Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim was in Islamabad, PTI founder chairman gave call for March towards D Chowk. He alleged that during the PTI rally Pakistan's relations with all friendly countries affected adversely and Islamabad was isolated on foreign policy front.

He said SCO summit was a great honour for Pakistan and agitation on this occasion would give a negative message about the country. "We have to show the soft and positive identity of Pakistan to the world," he said adding the opposition should protest on the floor of Parliament.

The minister said at a time when entire world was appreciating economic development of Pakistan, the opposition also should acknowledge it.

Tarar asked KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur that instead of marching towards Islamabad, he should go to Peshawar take steps to reduce transport fares and price of daily use items in the markets. He asked Gandapur to take measures to revamp Counter Terrorism Department and police department in the province.



JAMSHORO: VC LUMHS Prof. Ikrum Din Ujjan offering Dua after laying foundation stone construction of girls Hostel at LUMHS, INP



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Parliamentary leader Senator Irfan Siddiqui calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan, China ink material transfer agreement to boost citrus industry

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan, China inked a material transfer agreement to boost citrus industry. The Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) signed between Huazhong Agricultural University, Wuhan (HZAU) and the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF).

According to Gwadar Pro on Friday, the signing ceremony for citrus rootstock and scion budwood was held at UAF on September 30.

Prof. Dr. Liu Yongzhong, a collaborative scientist from HZAU, handed over nine citrus varieties budwood to Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor of UAF under the Higher Education Commission-funded project (CEPC-CRG-447).

The agreement marks a major step in the ongoing collaboration between the two universities aimed at enhancing the citrus industry in Pakistan.

Last year, UAF and HZAU signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a China-Pakistan Horticulture Research and Demonstration Center with the urgent objective of improving citrus production and fruit quality

and ultimately increasing profitability.

Citrus holds a prominent position among the thirty fruit crops grown in Pakistan, ranking first in terms of area (approximately 200,000 hectares) and production (2.29 million tonnes).

In 2021, Pakistan generated \$171 million through citrus fruit exports, accounting for one-third of the total value of fruit exports. Punjab stands out as the largest citrus producer in the country, contributing over 95% of the total production.

The mandarin fruit 'Kinnow' is the most cultivated citrus variety in Pakistan, accounting for over 80% of other citrus genotypes, due to its attractive peel color, size, ease of peeling, high juice content, and excellent taste and aroma.

However, citrus trees are sensitive and prone to both biotic and abiotic stresses.

Climate change poses serious challenges to citrus growth and productivity due to abiotic stresses.

Additionally, recent years have seen an increase in insect pest infestations on fruit planta-

tions.

Pakistan's citrus production per unit area is significantly lower (11.4 tonnes/hectare) compared to developed countries (25 tonnes/hectare), with reduced tree lifespan and compromised fruit quality adversely affecting export potential.

Only 10% of the total citrus production is exported, leading to severe financial constraints for citrus producers who must sell their produce locally at lower prices.

Moreover, the Kinnow mandarin, a late variety, has a short harvest window of 2-3 months, further limiting production and export opportunities.

The MTA signed between UAF and HZAU aims to address these challenges by introducing new citrus varieties and technologies that can improve productivity, manage diseases, extend the harvest window, and diversify varieties to reduce the risk associated with Kinnow monoculture.

This collaboration is expected to have a significant positive impact on the citrus industry in Pakistan, ultimately benefiting farmers and the economy.

Two-day ban imposed on pillion riding in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): Effective from Friday, a two-day pillion riding ban has been imposed in the federal capital Islamabad to maintain public order and ensure safety.

The spokesman of ICT administration stated that keeping in view the prevailing situation, the decision was taken to prevent potential disruptions to public peace and safety.

Meanwhile, in an official notification, the ban applies to all motorcyclists in Islamabad. No more than one person will be allowed to ride a motorcycle at any

time during the ban.

The authorities have warned that strict legal action will be taken against anyone found violating this order.

The ban has been issued under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPc).

The Additional District Magistrate of Islamabad, Usman Ashraf, has stated that the measure is necessary to prevent threats to public peace and safety. The authorities believe that some individuals riding in pairs on motorcycles may engage in activities that could harm public life and

property.

The notification explains that the ban is meant to provide immediate protection to the public and avoid any violent incidents.

Furthermore, law enforcement agencies will monitor the situation closely, and violators will face legal consequences.

The ban will be in effect throughout Islamabad district and will apply for the next two days, with the primary goal of maintaining order in the city.

The authorities have urged citizens to comply with the restrictions to help ensure public safety.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi talking to media persons at D Chowk.

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