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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar distributing awards among the survivors of Battagram Chairlift incident for their bravery during a ceremony

Friendly countries keen to invest in Balochistan's mineral sector: Domki

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The mineral sector of Balochistan is expected to attract billions of dollars soon while more agreements of investment with friendly countries are also being finalized. This very crucial information was shared with the caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki during a briefing conducted for him on the departmental affairs of Mines and Mineral Development, here at the CM's secretariat on Thursday. The caretaker Chief Minister was briefed about the details of agreements made in the mineral sector of the province. Those who were in attendance at the meeting were the Advisor to Chief Minister for Mines and Mineral Development, Umair Muhammad

Hassani, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Principal Secretary to CM, Lal Jan Jaffar, Secretary of Mines, Saidal Khan Luni, and other concerned high ups. The Secretary Mines briefed the meeting about the departmental and other related matters. The caretaker Chief Minister described the initiatives for promotion of investment in the mineral sector as an important development. He said that the precious minerals of Balochistan are guarantor of the economic future of the province and country, as such there's a dire need to adopt effective strategy for enhancing investment in the mineral sector. He also said that the world is eyeing at the resources of the province,

which has more mineral resources like Reko dik. These resources need to be brought before the world, adding he stressed. He also stressed that the trust of investors would have to be strengthened by providing them the conducive environment for investment in the province. Referring the Reko dik project, Mir Ali Mardan Domki noted that more investors are attracted towards Balochistan to make investment after the Reko dik project. He underlined the need to go for partnership instead of mere royalty as was done in the agreement of Reko dik project. In addition to this, interest of the local population as well as the province and country should be ensured in the future agreements, he maintained.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki attending a briefing conducted for him on the departmental affairs of Mines and Mineral Development

Conducting general elections in due period responsibility of ECP, says Akhtar Mengal

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The President Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sardar Akhtar Mengal has stated that it is constitutional responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to conduct general elections in the country, it is to see whether it complies with its constitutional obligation. He expressed his concern over the decrease in population of the province in the recent population census as during the meeting of Council of Common Interests (CCI) as a "highhandedness" with the province. The BNP chief was addressing a news conference at a local restaurant here on Thursday. A senior lawyer Raja Jawad Advocate announced to join the BNP along with his companions. Also present in the press conference were the central deputy secretary general of

BNP, Malik Naseer Ahmed Shahwani, central Finance secretary and former MPA, Akhtar Hussain Langove, former MPA Ms. Shakeela Naveed Dehwar, Musa Baloch, Ghulam Nabi Marri and other leaders. Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that Balochistan is like an orphan child, whom everyone tries to loot, but no one gives shelter or care. He said that the population of Balochistan was increased in the recent population census to some extent, but it was decreased by 7 million by calling an emergent meeting of the CCI. He said that the province was always exploited in the name of least population in the country. We had never objected to any population census in the past, and it was the only census in which all political parties of the province wholeheartedly took part.



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party (BNP) Chairman, Sardar Akhtar Mengal addresses to media persons during press conference

Saudi envoy calls on Jalil Abbas Jilani

Independent Report
 ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malkiy called on Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani here on Thursday and discussed matters relating to mutual interests. The ambassador congratulated the foreign minister on assuming office and conveyed best wishes on behalf of the Saudi leadership. During the meeting, bilateral ties, with special emphasis on trade and investment were discussed.

Jaranwala Incident: 10 JITs constituted for investigation

Independent Report
 FAISALABAD (INP): To probe into the Jaranwala incident, 10 Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) were constituted on Thursday. The JITs constituted for the investigation include CTD, police, and CIA police officers. Furthermore, the JIT teams will conduct investigations separately in cases related to the Jaranwala incidents. Earlier on the day, the police claimed to have arrested 17 more suspects in the Jaranwala incident after geofencing. Police said the arrests were made with the help of the videos of the nominated suspects in the Jaranwala and geofencing of the crime scene.

PM commends heroes who rescued trapped chairlift passengers in daring operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday awarded commendation certificates to the valiant commandos, armed forces personnel and local residents who rescued eight trapped passengers of a dangling cable car in Battagram. The prime minister, addressing the commemorative ceremony held at the PM Office, said the recognition was well-deserved by every individual involved, who exhibited remarkable prowess in orchestrating the mission to a triumphant conclusion. He emphasized that the entire nation shared the concerns for the safety of the trapped children, who remained stranded on the chairlift for hours. He remarked that the successful endeavour was a collaborative achieve-

ment, acknowledging that recognition was also due to those who, from the confines of their homes, prayed for the safe and successful rescue operation. He said being a father, he could feel the pain of stranded children's parents but the teamwork based on prudent efficient planning ensured their safety. "Hats off to all of you who did an immaculate job. The biggest credit goes to those who were carrying out the planning," he remarked. Sharing their emotions with the prime minister, the children said they were extremely worried but had a sense of satisfaction after coming to know that the Pakistan Army had launched the rescue operation. The prime minister said that the paramount duty of the state encom-

passed providing quality healthcare and education, and an atmosphere for a dignified life. Referring to the martyrdom of security personnel in South Waziristan, the prime minister said that those trying to obstruct the State's functioning through their ill intentions must remove their misunderstanding. He reiterated that the nation would never forget the sacrifices of the martyrs of the war against terrorism, including politicians, police services, Pakistan Army, journalists, PAF (Pakistan Air Force), and common citizens. "This is our home. We know how to run it," he remarked. The prime minister said the pains of the terror victims' families could not be expressed in words. He said the salaries being given to the security

forces personnel were just meant to suffice their needs as their sacrifices could only be recognized through respect. "We revere them. We respect them," he commented. Prime Minister Kakar reassured that the state affairs were in the hands of highly capable individuals. The caretaker setup had limited time and mandate to facilitate the forthcoming general elections, he added. Earlier, the prime minister also distributed commendation certificates among the security forces personnel as well as the local experts who took part in the rescue operation. The rescued children, who also attended the event, were also given souvenirs. In his address, Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. General Inam Haider Malik said the effective coordination among all

relevant departments led to the success of the difficult operation. He said the safety audit of all the cable cars in the region had been ordered and a report would be presented to the prime minister. He, however, emphasized the capacity building of the local rescue departments to deal with such emergency situations, which, he said, was also being worked out. Caretaker federal ministers Murtaza Solangi, Jalil Abbas Jilani, Jamal Shah, Sarfaraz Bugti, Anwar Ali Hyder, Ijaz Gohar and Madad Ali Sindhi also attended the ceremony. Talking to APP, Ali Swati, the local expert who rescued the trapped passengers through the zipline, said that while carrying out the mission, he had concerns about the strength of the wire the cable car was dangling on.

CEC says Election date discussion to have 'scant consequences' due to recent law changes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja on Thursday informed the president that the discussion about selecting an election date would have "scant consequences" owing to recent changes in the election law. The CEC, in a two-page letter addressed to President Dr Arif Alvi, expressed the Commission's profound respect for the president's office. "Meeting and seeking guidance on national matters from the president has always been regarded as an honour, when the circumstances are suitable. However, the Commission's view is that participating in the meeting will lead to negligible consequences." President Alvi wrote a letter to CEC Sikandar Raja on Wednesday, inviting him

for a meeting to fix a date for general elections. He asserted that since the National Assembly was dissolved on August 9, 2023, therefore under Article 48 (5) of the Constitution, he (as the president) was obliged to appoint a date not later than 90 days from the date of dissolution for the holding of general election of National Assembly. The CEC, in his letter, stated that since the Elections Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 was enacted into law, announcing the date for polls was the sole prerogative of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). He pointed out that Section 57 of the Election Act of 2017 had recently been amended and, unlike the previous position, now the Commission was empowered to announce the date(s) for elections.

US reaffirms support for free, fair elections in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome on Thursday met with Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja to reaffirm the United States' support for free and fair elections conducted in accordance with Pakistan's laws and constitution. The Ambassador reiterated that choosing Pakistan's future leaders is for the Pakistani people to decide, and that the United States remains committed working to broaden and deepen the U.S. Pakistan relationship with, whomever the Pakistani people choose.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Caretaker PM due to arrive in Quetta on three-day official visit today

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The caretaker Prime Minister, Anwarul Haq Kakar is due to arrive in the provincial metropolis on three-day official visit today (Friday). During the visit, the caretaker Prime Minister would meet the Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar and caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki besides other dignitaries. He would also be chairing high level meetings on the development projects and law and order situation in the province. Moreover, the delegations comprising tribal elders and different political parties would also be meeting the caretaker Prime Minister in Quetta. According to the sources, Anwarul Haq Kakar is also expected to visit his native area, Kan Mehtarzai, Muslim Bagh during the visit.

Dinner hosted by Governor for caretaker CM

Independent Report
 QUETTA: Dinner-reception was hosted by the Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar in honour of the caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki and his cabinet members here on Thursday. The dinner was also attended by the caretaker provincial ministers and Advisors, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Saleh Muhammad Nassar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Lal Jan Jaffar, Principal Secretary to Governor, Hashim Khan Ghilzai and other dignitaries.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmad Bugti in a meeting with the Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi.

Solangi, Bugti reaffirm commitment to assist ECP for polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Ministers for Interior and Information and Broadcasting Sarfraz Bugti and Murtaza Solangi on Thursday reaffirmed the government's commitment to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in holding General Elections. The ministers expressed the resolve during a meeting held here at the Ministry of Interior. Upon arrival at the Ministry, the minister for interior accorded warm welcome to Murtaza Solangi. During the meeting, both the ministers dis-

cussed matters related to the assistance of the ECP in conducting the general elections in the country. They also discussed the overall situation in the country. Meanwhile Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said the government would hold the general election in accordance with the time-line of the Election Commission of Pakistan. "The election will be conducted on the date which the Election Commission will announce," the minister said while talking to the media.

Bright future of Pakistan linked with Balochistan, maintains Governor

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that bright future of the country is linked with the province, therefore, it is necessary to benefit from the prospects of profitable investment in the province. The Governor stated so while speaking to the caretaker Minister Information, Jan Achakzai who called on him here at the Governor House on Thursday.

During the course of meeting, overall political situation, ending of the economic status quo, paving way for international investment, promotion of border trade and creation of new opportunities were discussed between the Governor and Information Minister. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that economy is the base of every society and it is fact that positive results can't be produced without economic stability.

We have to get complete grip on modern information technology to compete world: Jan Achakzai

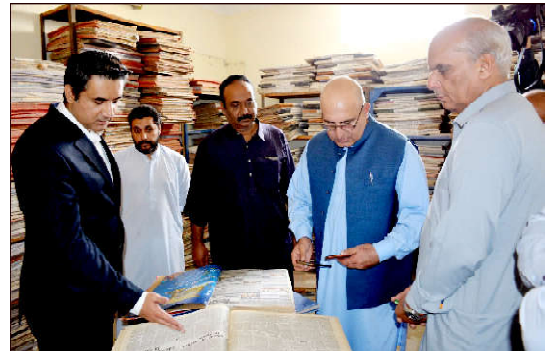
Independent Report
 QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has emphasized that we would have to get complete control on the modern information technology and system in order to compete the world. He said that the ambit of Information department has been expanded and vast in the present modern era. No matter and thing is concealed all over the world just because of the social media. This and similar other views were expressed by the caretaker Information Minister while speaking on occasion of his visit to the Directorate General of Public Relations here on Thursday. Also present on the occasion were Secretary Information, Hamza

Shafqaat, Director General Public Relations, Kamran Asad and other senior officers of the department. Jan Achakzai said that Balochistan has great importance economically and politically due to its specific geographical location, and we should not ignore this fact that Pakistan especially Balochistan is being given priority in the economic and political policies. This is why most of the countries of world especially the neighbouring ones are willing to take advantage of the strategic location of the province, and this would be possible only when we would be able to bring at par the world improving our system. He on the occasion stressed the need to make the sections of social me-

dia, publicity, press and record of the DGPR more digital and assured that he would put these sections on modern lines during his Ministership. He said that while the department would be provided more funds, the young officers and staff would also be imparted training. He on the occasion directed to start work on the project of making the record of old newspapers digital for archive. He also stressed that the department should also highlight the issues of common men besides highlighting the government policy. He said that the caretaker government would encourage the efficient officers and staff of the department and would also give them awards in recognition of their services.

Earlier, the DGPR Kamran Asad briefed the caretaker Information Minister about the overall performance and functioning of the department. Meanwhile, president

of DGPT officers welfare association, Inayatullah Rehman and other office bearers also met the Information Minister and apprised him the issues being faced by the employees.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai visiting newspapers record room during his visit to DGPR. Secretary Information Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat and DGPR Kamran Asad are also present

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Friday August 25, 2023

Battagram rescue

Tragedy was averted in KP's Battagram area on Tuesday when eight individuals, mostly children, were rescued after the wires of their cable car snapped high above the ground.

While all those involved in the daring rescue effort deserve much praise for saving lives, the incident highlights the need for better, safer infrastructure in remote locations such as Allai, where the event occurred, to facilitate citizens.

The occupants of the cable car were travelling to school when the accident happened, leaving them dangling precariously several hundred feet above a river. Combined efforts lasting around 14 hours involving military personnel, rescue workers, and locals were ultimately successful. While earlier attempts to retrieve the stranded occupants of the car by helicopter saw only limited success, rescuers continued the operation after nightfall and brought the terrifying saga to a close by safely retrieving all the occupants after putting their own lives at risk by sliding down the remaining cables. Such feats are often witnessed in the movies, but these real-life heroes deserve the nation's gratitude for their selflessness and bravery in the face of an extremely challenging situation.

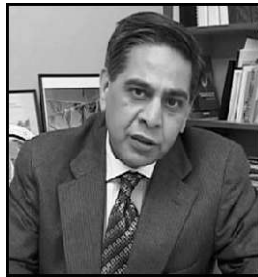
The event should prompt the state to resolve the communication issues of communities living in remote areas with difficult terrain, like Allai. In fact, due to limited infrastructure including roads and bridges, such cable cars are often the only practical option for traveling in parts of the mountainous north, especially in KP, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir.

While safety features may leave much to be desired — many cable cars are built by locals on a self-help basis — this form of aerial transport is a lifeline for residents of remote valleys and hamlets.

They cut both travel time and cost, as a road journey taking hours and costing a few thousand rupees can be made in a few minutes for very little money. But the threat of an accident is ever-present, as Tuesday's episode showed. In 2017, a similar accident in Murree resulted in several deaths.

Critical infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, is needed to connect settlements in remote places. But if this is too expensive, cable car systems built and manned by professionals can be installed, with bodies like Rescue 1122 and PDMA, KP, hiring trained cable car rescuers in hilly areas such as Battagram, Shangla, Kohistan, and Chitral for prompt response.

The respective local administrations must ensure that safety inspections of such structures are an ongoing process. Moreover, the state needs to provide basic facilities such as schools, clinics, etc. closer to people's settlements so that they do not have to traverse long distances and treacherous terrain to get an education or visit the doctor. Better telecommunications infrastructure can also facilitate online learning and telemedicine in remote communities.

**Ali Tauqeer Sheikh**

The Christian communities of India and Pakistan are under attack by those representing the saffron and green parts of their respective flags. Saffron is particularly ruthless towards poor Muslim neighbourhoods in India, while the green is unforgiving to young Hindu girls in Sindh. Perhaps there is no other region of the world where the colours of flags have been interpreted in such exclusionary terms.

A key difference is that while in India vigilantism symbolises the state-sponsored reign of Hindutva ideology, in Pakistan, it shows the weakness of the state that has neither the moral compass nor the willingness to stand up for the rights of the vulnerable segments.

Equally important, we

have failed to develop a vision to lift the minorities and other marginalised groups from ghettos and katchiabadis, where half the urban population lives, to a level where they can lead dignified lives through inclusive and climate-smart development.

We know that the Christian minorities mostly live in congested neighbourhoods that are informal or illegal, located on unproductive tracts of land in low-lying and disaster-prone areas, mostly without civic amenities and environmental services, and often in worse conditions than their poor Muslim counterparts. Without recognising these fundamentals, the principles of climate justice cannot be delivered. The recently adopted National Adaptation Plan has identified several points of intervention for urban adaptation that can help reduce the socioeconomic and climate vulnerabilities of such marginalised communities.

Since the perpetrators and victims are typically from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, it is imperative to develop a long-term view. Delivering fundamental rights to marginalised

groups is an intricate and complex process requiring multiple interventions by various organs of the state and other stakeholders. Let's see if we are prepared to tackle the issue head-on.

The white strip on our flag, one-fourth of the total, represents the existence of religious minorities in the country. Yet, violence against minorities in Pakistan started in 1948 when a synagogue in Karachi was torched.

The community it represented was largely a bystander during partition, as were the Christians of Jaranwala. Since then, many minorities have faced varying degrees of harassment or outright violence: Jews, Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Bahais, Ahmadis, and even Muslim sects including Shias and occasionally Ismailis, Bohris and Zikris.

Some groups have engaged in relentless ethnic cleansing of the Hazara community in Balochistan. Clearly, the white strip has been dishonoured and discoloured. It is now soaked in not just the tears but also the blood of religious minorities.

The number of minorities has diminished; some

have almost disappeared. In 1951, for example, the Hindus formed 22 per cent of the population of East Pakistan and 15pc of Sindh. The minority percentage dropped drastically in 1971 with the separation of the eastern wing.

In Sindh, the Hindu population has reduced to 1pc, even if the Pakistan Hindu Council claims it is 8.7pc. But we have retained the size of the white part of the flag because symbolically, it reflects the rights of religious minorities, and not necessarily their size.

According to Nadra, there is one person who identifies himself as Jewish in the country. In principle, the white colour in our flag stands for the rights of this single individual.

White has been interpreted as the colour of peace, purity and paradise in Islamic history. It is about time we viewed the significance of the white strip in our flag in much broader terms than just the rights of religious minorities. The views of minorities in our daily lives are equally important.

A civilised society plays a pivotal role in allowing itself to become tol-

erant and accommodating of diverse views. A minority view in the corporate boardroom, cabinet deliberations, parliamentary debates, or on the Supreme Court benches, deserves no less respect and consideration than the majority view.

While the majority view prevails in a democratic dispensation, it cannot deny the right of minority views to exist, nor the space they deserve. Societies become innovative by using minority views as sources of learning and reflection, sometimes for reform or mid-course correction.

The delivery of the promise of the green colour in the flag, therefore, hinges on the collective, consensual meaning of the white part. Regrettably, the white strip has been violated since the late 1970s with policies that trivialised the religious principles of jihad and blasphemy.

The white in the flag needs to be the primary source of societal peace and harmony. It must be based on compassion that is inseparably linked to truth and justice. It must take the form of a politics that, as

Akmal Hussain has summed up in his newly released book *Pakistan, Institutional Instability & Underdevelopment*, "aims to change the social order that systematically generates poverty and inequality, and injustice inherent in these economic phenomena". In Pakistan, poverty and climate vulnerability are two sides of the same coin. The Christian colony in Jaranwala is a prime example. Here are four ways to give solace to mainstream minorities. And finally, support asset formation for poverty alleviation, without which it is difficult to lift people out of poverty. Recent examples provide guidance. The Sindh government is awarding land ownership documents to flood victims for the construction of climate-proof houses. Instead of disbursing cash, the government should give victims of injustice land titles to restart their lives. The formation of assets can serve as an example of affirmative action in the region through climate adaptation, poverty alleviation, empowerment, and restoring dignity to the victims of prejudice and exclusion. -- Courtesy Dawn

Colours of the flag**PFM Act: a missed opportunity****Syed Asad Ali Shah**

In accruing tale of mismanagement, governments at various tiers in Pakistan have frittered away trillions of rupees on fruitless endeavours, leaving the populace bereft of desired socio-economic outcomes.

Continuing my articles on the theme of "creative destruction", aimed at fundamental structural changes and improvements required to reverse the drift to self-destruction, this article delves into the ramifications of the poor state of Public Financial Management (PFM) in Pakistan, which is considered a cornerstone of effective public sector governance.

Astonishingly, despite serious resource constraints, the critical issue of PFM has remained conspicuously unaddressed by successive governments at both the federal and provincial levels,

resulting in enormous waste of taxpayers' money and causing huge unsustainable fiscal deficits for decades. Further, such deficits are also inaccurately measured and reported to the nation.

Recognizing its critical need, Pakistan's quest for a credible PFM started in the 1990s with counsel and financial assistance from prominent donors like the World Bank. Over decades, the country's governments, both federal and provincial, have been purportedly working to revamp public financial management systems and practices.

Programmes like the 'Project for the Improvement of Financial Reporting and Auditing' (PIFRA), aimed to modernize accounting, budgeting, and auditing systems. After completion of three phases of the PIFRA, the federal government established the Financial Accounting and Budgeting System (FASB) under the department of the controller general of Pakistan. As per its website, it claims "FASB represents one of the largest SAP-based public-sector implementation of an integrated MIS in the world. The budgets and financial reports of federal, provincial and district tiers

of government are processed through FABS. Monthly salaries, GP Fund payments and pensions of nearly [three] million public sector employees and thousands of contingent payments and receipts of government entities are also processed."

However, notwithstanding the above claims, the level of automation and implementation of SAP, despite over a billion dollars in investment in such programmes, remains largely restricted to a few modules, as a significant proportion of accounting, budgeting, and auditing functions continues to be operated manually. Most alarmingly, the adoption of a basic double-entry accrual-based accounting system, essential for comprehensive transaction recognition, classification and reporting, tracking, recognition and reporting of public's assets and liabilities, has been disregarded by all governments.

As a consequence, the governments do not prepare and report reliable financial statements that report accurate results of its policies and actions in terms of fiscal deficits, assets and liabilities. For instance, in the most recent budget approved by the National As-

sembly last June, the government reported the fiscal deficit for FY23 (outgoing year) as Rs5.94 trillion, but as I reported in my budget article, the increase in public debt in just nine months reported in the Economic Survey was Rs10 trillion. By adding the estimated expenditure of the last quarter, the expected increase in public debt was around Rs13 trillion.

A recent publication of the State Bank of Pakistan has now corroborated that the increase in public debt during FY23 was Rs12.9 trillion, while the Ministry of Finance has recently reported a further revised figure of overall fiscal deficit of Rs7.2 trillion. There is no reconciliation or explanation of how the overall fiscal deficit could be Rs7.2 trillion when the increase in public debt in the same period is Rs12.9 trillion reported by SBP?

Thus, despite the staggering investment of over a billion dollars through various programmes, over three decades of time spent and the passage of PFM Acts by both parliament and provincial assemblies, the state of public financial management remains desultory.

The key objectives of the PFM acts were to fortify management of public finances with the view to improve implementation of fiscal policy for better macroeconomic management, clarify institutional responsibilities related to financial management, strengthen budgetary management and oversight of finances, internal controls and cash management so as to achieve overarching objective of reducing public debt.

However, a review of the state of implementation of the above Act highlights that significant shortcomings persist in its execution, as most of its requirements remain unimplemented. Below I have discussed just some of the non-compliance of the PFM Act. A similar situation exists in the provinces, not covered in this article.

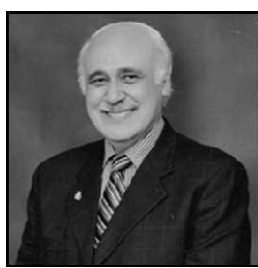
In conclusion, Pakistan's ongoing struggle to overhaul its Public Financial Management has remained superficial, largely in the hands of expensive consultancies with very little commitment from those responsible for its implementation. Despite substantial investments of both financial resources and

time, the nation has yet to reap the benefits of a modernized, transparent, and efficient PFM system.

For genuine transformation to ensue, robust implementation, stringent oversight, and heightened accountability are imperative, which are not possible without genuine commitment from those charged with governance by the electorate — the political leadership responsible for executive function (the prime minister and finance minister) and the legislature that is responsible for appointment and accountability of the executive.

As the nation endeavours to recover from its insolvency, revitalizing its PFM framework is non-negotiable for a prosperous and accountable future.

For this purpose, there is a need for an independent review of the entire spectrum of the PFM framework at all tiers of government — the investments made, systems developed and outcomes being produced through budgeting, accounting, funds management, internal control and audit by a credible international professional firm. -- Courtesy TheNews

Another Ice Age**F.S. Aijazuddin**

Another Ice Age is spreading across our continent. The last occurred 20,000 years ago. This time it is a political one, freezing relations between India and Pakistan.

No one is more aware of it than Mani Shankar Aiyar, a former cabinet minister, a close confidant of Rajiv Gandhi, and a tireless champion of Indo-Pak conciliation. Mani's advocacy should not be ignored, as were once the warnings on global warming by former vice president Al Gore in his documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006).

Mani's latest book *Memoirs of a Maverick* (2023) was launched in New Delhi yesterday (Aug 23). It will have a wide readership in India amongst Congressites, less so amongst BJP diehards. Even fewer copies will be able to penetrate the saffron curtain into Pakistan.

Mani's memoirs cover the first 50 years (1941-1991) of his hyperactive life — at Cambridge University, then his service in the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) at Brussels, Vietnam, Baghdad, and finally as consul general in Karachi from 1978-1982.

Landing in Karachi in December 1978, Mani found the four-storeyed Indian consulate building on Civil Lines "dilapidated and utterly neglected". It had been ravaged during the 1971 war. He started work with two clerks deputed from Islamabad, "huddled into a small room with one telephone between us". It was an ironic replay

of August 1947 when Pakistan's fledgling Foreign Office began work in the musty Mohatta Palace in Karachi, using one typewriter and thorns from kihar bushes in lieu of paper clips.

I first met Mani and his wife Suneet in 1979 at their elegant residence in Clifton. My first book — *Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits* in the Lahore Museum — had just been published and I called on them with a copy as an ice-breaker. That proved to be the first of many meetings — in New Delhi, Kasauli, and Lahore.

Mani's official remit as consul general restricted him to Sindh but boundaries could not contain his gregarious personality nor limit his effusive hospitality. Within a year, Mani and Suneet had made their mark on Karachi society. They threw "a really big party" to which they invited everyone they knew. The spectrum included bibulous bon vivants who constituted the majority of their guests, with the sobering antidote of two Jamaat-e-Islami MNAs for Karachi.

Mani discovered that the demand for visas to India grew exponentially to the numbers issued. Mani mentions that "by September 1979, within six months of our opening, we were edging towards one hundred thousand." By the end of my term [in 1982], we had issued over 3 lakh visas.

Mani researched a thesis *Towards a Revival of the Pakistan Economy*. He had it reviewed by one of Pakistan's top economists and shared it with his ambassador Shankar Bajpai.

On April 3, 1979, Mani was in Karachi, in attendance upon the visiting Indian chief of army staff, Gen O.P. Malhotra. Disappointed that Gen Malhotra was received only by a brigadier, the following morning, on

April 4, Mani realised why: "No higher ranking officer was available as they were busy hanging Bhutto."

Mani admits surprise that "while the pa-p-----ers were emblazoned with screaming head-lines, the streets were subdued. There were no rivers of blood flowing." The revolution had choked. Zia had got away with murder.

After leaving Karachi in 1982 and quitting the IFS, Mani began a second career in politics. Close to his friend Rajiv Gandhi, he proposed to him that he should visit Mohenjodaro and the shrines of Shahbaz Qalandar and Shah Abdul Bhi-tai. Rajiv was not convinced that this would inspire an entente cordiale between India and Pakistan. Rajiv did visit Pakistan in 1988, but remained confined to the diplomatic birdcage of Islamabad.

Two years later, in August 2006, Bugti was killed in his cave "where he was gunned down by Musharraf's troops". Mani was told that Bugti died with Mani's book pinned to his chest.

Mani's earlier book *Pakistan's Papers* (1994) focused on Mani's years as consul general, Karachi. His latest *Memoirs of a Maverick* contains a chapter on those years. Peaceniks and jingoists on both sides of the border should read and reread them both.

When I die, I want to be buried with copies of these two books by Mani pinned to my chest. I want Mani's "uninterruptible" words of good neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence to be interred in the soil of Pakistan. In time, the seeds of his humanism will germinate, allowing future generations of more enlightened Indians and Pakistanis to reap their harvest. -- Courtesy Dawn

Education trap**Nazir A. Jogezi**

Power dynamics in society influence the impact of education on social mobility, cohesion and equality. Power dynamics, especially in authoritarian societies, significantly shape the societal ecology and formal education system. Cristina Groeger's book *Education Trap* challenges the notion that access to education combats poverty and fosters social equity, as education has evolved into a form that, sadly, 'legalises' social inequalities.

An education system is the product of a distinctive set of historical, political, social, cultural and economic features, and schools coexist with these. Education entails all the experiences individuals observe or are a part of in society; schooling, on the other hand, is a designed set of processes and experiences for different age groups to attain specific learning standards.

The objective of learning stems from the relevance, interests and curiosity of learners, which are compromised in polarised societies. Power centres influence school-level learning experiences to maintain class segregation. Public and elite private schools present stark differences in resources, curricula, learning environments, and pedagogy. There are distinct aims for each: to produce future leaders for the latter and obedient citizens for the former. Likewise, religious education contributes to their representation in the power structure.

One may argue that the Single National Curriculum

and a rebranded Pakistan National Curriculum are remedies to class-based education, but they, in fact, fuel it further. They cannot be equally implemented across the country with well-equipped schools on the one hand, and those with one room on the other. The curriculum needs to be responsive to diversity, and the country must have a variety of curricula along with certain core areas, as seen in successful education systems elsewhere in the world.

In a stratified education system, devised along vested interests, we must determine whether or not the policy of enrolling every child in public schools is a mirage.

The lack of access that justifies the construction of new buildings and campuses to increase capacity and employment opportunities is detrimental to quality. In the calculation of the ruling elite, brick-and-mortar projects, that are visible, will win them plaudits. The recent approval of a law to build a number of new universities is a relevant example. This occurs at a time when universities' research capability and knowledge capital are in question, the faculty of existing institutions are denied salaries, and scandals of mismanaged universities are surfacing one after the other. Redundant curricula, outdated pedagogy, and an environment where students cannot participate meaningfully are the hallmark.

We need to think more about how to facilitate learning in schools. We have narrowed down learning to earning, and high expectations from schooling include economic well-being as a return on investment from parents. Despite education traditionally being described in spiritual terms, it has turned out to be more material in practice and closely linked to social status and power.

It is obvious that the recent spike in living costs will result in higher dropout rates. Our traditional response would be alternative learning pathways and tuition options to speed up the graduation process. The current price hike is dragging the middle class into poverty and parents may be unable to afford even alternative pathways for their offspring. They would rather engage them in businesses to earn a living because a job after graduation is not guaranteed.

Responsible for poor education is also the teachers' incapability, as we attract less qualified individuals to the profession. We also find a great deal of professional stratification, where teaching is not seen as a worthy career. Teachers hardly feel comfortable introducing themselves as such, whereas professionals in other sectors with the same or even lower rank have personalised vehicle number plates and roam around with security protocol. The system mostly favours graduates of English-medium institutions.

Education for social development must be about quality. It must be equitable. It should not be a tool for oppression and dominance by the elite. It is about strengthening the broader social system and opening up avenues for learning and making choices to empower everyone. It is not about making the masses obedient creatures, serving the interests of the elite. We should not forget that most of our population comprises the youth, who are vulnerable to knowledge deficit because of an impoverished system of education. That is even more serious than a sovereign default, as without an educated youth, there is no way of escaping our grim condition. -- Courtesy Dawn

Civil Servants must execute duties without succumbing to external pressures: Azam

PESHAWAR (Online): Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan, chaired a significant meeting on Thursday with high-level civil officers to discuss the essential role of civil servants in upholding the principles of meritocracy and independence from political influence. During the meeting, the Chief Minister highlighted the timeless wisdom of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, during his address to civil officers in Peshawar in April 1948, who emphasized the importance of civil servants in maintaining a transparent and efficient administration.

The meeting held at Cabinet room of the civil secretariat was attended by Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Muhammad Zubair Asghar

Qureshi, Senior Member Board of Revenue and all Administrative Secretaries. The caretaker Chief minister stressed that government officers must execute their duties without succumbing to external pressures, ensuring that decisions are made solely on the grounds of competence, fairness, and the welfare of citizens. The Chief Minister reaffirmed his commitment to providing a conducive environment for civil officers to perform their duties independently and efficiently. The meeting showcased the government's administration that prioritizes transparency, accountability and the public's best interests. Referring to Quaid Speech he said that "it is the responsibility of the civil servants to work with utmost dedication,

integrity, and impartiality. They should serve the nation without any bias, fear, or favor." During the meeting Chief minister shared insights into the critical function of the caretaker government in ensuring free and fair elections. He acknowledged that the role of the caretaker government is pivotal in providing a level playing field for all political parties, safeguarding the democratic rights of citizens. The Chief Minister emphasized upon the officers for ensuring transparency in matters particularly related to financial issues, posting/transfers and general administration. Chief Minister issued directions for prompt reporting of corruption cases to CM office and Chief Secretary Office. All irregular postings be discouraged and looked into.



KARACHI: Consul General for the US Conrad Tribble meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor's House.

Sindh govt urged to empower peasants, sharecropper

NAWABSHAH (APP): The participants of a policy dialogue expressed deep concern over the disregard for the rights and well-being of sharecroppers, landless peasants, and rural workers across all sectors of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries in Sindh. This significant discussion was organised by the Hari Welfare Association (HWA), which highlighted that although Sindh has introduced several laws aimed at protecting the rights of peasants and rural workers, however, unfortunately, these laws have largely remained dormant in terms of actual execution by the government.

The association underscored that although the District Vigilance Committees were responsible for overseeing

the enforcement of the Sindh Bonded Labour System Abolition Act which has been established and notified in 19 out of the 29 districts of Sindh, they remain dysfunctional. Yaseen Morjo a PhD scholar and lecturer of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU) said that rural women were marginalized and deprived of their basic rights and there is no health and safety measures and awareness for cotton picker women, they are paid less than minimum wages which against minimum wage policy, literacy ratio in rural women is very low, hence there is a dire need to educate girls. Peasant woman Haleema Kolhi said that they are living in miserable conditions.



KARACHI: Members of Employee Action Committee District Council Karachi are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held in Karachi.

Speakers at dialogue highlight ways to achieve SDGs in South Punjab

MULTAN (APP): The Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) in collaboration with South Punjab Secretariat and the United Nations here on Thursday organized a dialogue to prepare a set of recommendations for the provision of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, youth employment, gender equality and to eradicate violence against women, to achieve the goals of sustainable development in South Punjab.

Representatives of civil society, public and private sectors, international partners, business community, religious scholars and university students participated in the dialogue. Secretary Services South Punjab Amjad

Shuaib Khan Tareen, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan Julien Harneis, UN Representatives Shah Nasir Khan, Laila Rabab Jaskani, President Multan Chamber of Commerce Mian Rashid Iqbal also participated in the dialogue. Addressing on the occasion, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Pakistan Julien Harneis said that the opinions of all the stakeholders in the dialogue would be included in the recommendations and would be presented in the international conference on sustainable development. He said the UN would extend full support for the development of the South Punjab.

Secretary Services South Punjab Amjad Shuaib Khan Tareen.

Ban imposed on rallies by candidates of LG elections

SWAT (APP): The district administration Swat under Section 144 has imposed ban on carrying out rallies by winning candidates of Local Government (LG) elections and branding of arms as part of enhancing security measures.

According to a statement issued by office of District Magistrate here Thursday, the ban has been imposed for a period of ten days hence forthwith and the violators would be prosecuted under Section 188 of CrPC.

The District Intelligence Coordination Committee during its meeting held on August 24, also suggested imposition of ban to avert any untoward incident, said the statement.

ACS South Punjab terms biofloc fish farming a 'blue revolution'

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Captain (ret'd) Saqib Zafar has said the pilot project of bio-floc fish culture technology is an important contribution to the fisheries sector. The pilot project of bio-floc fish culture technology is being completed in Bahawalpur at a cost of Rs 18.2 million, he said while inspecting the bio-floc fish project here Thursday. The Additional Chief Secretary termed this project "Blue Revolution". He said that with the help of this technology, water would be saved, pollution would be eliminated and the set goals for sustainable development in the form of green energy would also be achieved. After the completion of the pilot project, this technology will be promoted in the fisheries sector. It will reduce the cost of fish farming, he added.

On this occasion, the Deputy Director of Fisheries told him that water was getting dirty due to the fish waste in the fish farms and some part of the food was also wasted. Therefore, water polluted with fish waste and the food is replaced. He said that through biofloc fish culture technology, eco-friendly chemicals were added to the fish farms. With the help of chemicals, the bacteria will eat wasted food and after that, this bacteria becomes food for the fish.



PESHAWAR: KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali presides over the meeting of PESCO Officials regarding load shedding in Peshawar and suburb areas.

Governor Punjab says: UK is Pakistan's most important trade partner in Europe

LAHORE (Online): The newly appointed British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman here today at the Governor's House, Lahore. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest, trade and climate change were discussed in detail. Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that UK is Pakistan's most important trade partner in Europe. He said that Pakistan's inclusion in the UK Preferential Trade Scheme is a welcome move, and this will give further boost to bilateral trade.

Governor Punjab said that there are vast opportunities for British investors to invest in textile and agriculture

sector in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan has been greatly affected by climate change, adding that last year different parts of country were hit by devastating flash floods due to climate change. He said that climate change is having a bad effect on Pakistan's agriculture as well. Governor Punjab said that he is grateful for the British government's assistance to the flood victims and appreciates British cooperation in the field of education.

Governor Punjab further said that the government believes in giving equal rights to all minorities according to the constitution of Pakistan. On this occasion, Governor Punjab presented a souvenir to the British High Commissioner.

DCs directed to launch crackdown on polluters

LAHORE (APP): The caretaker Punjab government has issued instructions to all deputy commissioners to start a crackdown on polluters for controlling smog.

The instructions were issued by Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman while presiding over a meeting held at the Civil Secretariat, here on Thursday.

The Senior Member Board of Revenue and secretaries of departments concerned attended the meeting while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

The chief secretary ordered that stern action should be taken against stubble burning, the industries and vehicles causing air pollution and special anti-smog squads be formed in Lahore, Sheikhpura, Gujranwala and Sialkot.

He said that preventive measures are indispensable to overcome the smog, adding that the responsibilities would be reassigned to the departments. The CS mentioned that all the departments should make collective efforts to control smog.

Strategy devised to purge corruption in LG&CD Department

HYDERABAD: View of water level increasing in the Phuleli Canal while many nearby residents evacuate from their homes due to increased water level and overflowing canal water, in Hyderabad.

LAHORE (APP): Under the guidance of the Provincial Minister for Information and Local Government Amir Mir, a comprehensive strategy has been devised by the Local Government & Community Development (LG&CD) Department to eradicate corruption and a three-member committee has been constituted to scrutinise departmental matters.

According to a spokesperson for the department, the municipal officers from the planning offices of the nine zones of Lahore have been

instructed to provide a complete record of the initial three months of the ongoing fiscal year. The record will encompass details of illegal constructions, notices issued by the local government department, FIRs, and demolished and sealed buildings. Additionally, details of approved and unapproved maps for commercial, residential, and industrial constructions in all zones of the city, along with an assessment of revenues and fees collected in the past three months are being evaluated.



LAHORE: A group photo of Douglas John (US Consulate) with the participants of seminar on "Principles of Extrusion and Technology for Feed and Food Production & Financing Options."

CM Sindh orders action against medicine hoarders

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice @ Maqbool Baqar, while taking serious notice of the shortage of life-saving medicines in the market, directed the health department to ensure the availability of the medicines and take strict action against the hoarders. In a statement issued here on Thursday, the chief minister discussed the matter of the shortage of life-saving medicines and the circulation of substandard medicines in the market with Health Minister Dr Saad Niaz. It was decided that the health department would start a campaign against the

medicine dealers involved in hoarding.

It was also decided that the health department would go hard against the manufacturers/dealers and even stores involved in making and selling substandard medicines.

Justice Baqar said that the people who were playing with the lives of innocent people must be dealt with iron hands.

The chief minister also discussed the issue of Dengue and malaria with the health minister. It was decided to activate both programs further and the local govt was directed to start anti-mosquito spray in their respective areas.

The Chief Minister

took notice of a jirga held at Ubauro, District Ghotki to settle an old dispute of love marriage in which a minor girl was given as a penalty for marriage to the opponent party.

On the directives of the caretaker chief minister, the Ghotki police arrested two accused, Naser and Madad Bhattu, and made efforts to arrest other accused. The chief minister expressed deep sorrow over a road accident that took place at Jhirk-Mulakatiar Bridge which claimed seven lives. He directed the district administration to help the victims' families and provide proper treatment to the injured.

GCWU Sialkot inks MoU with University of Okara

SIALKOT (APP): The Govt College Women University (GCWU) Sialkot inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of Okara to collaborate in various areas of academics and research. GCWU Sialkot Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof. Dr. Zarin Fatima Rizvi and Okara University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Wajid signed the agreement. The partner institutions will work together to achieve the United Nation's SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), facilitate students regarding the use of laboratories and equipment and hostels, organise joint lectures/seminars/ workshops/conferences, develop a bilateral culture of research and innovation.



LAHORE: Newly appointed British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, presenting historical book of Governor House to Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman at Governor's House.

Senate body informed Establishment of EPZ in private participation mode under consideration

KARACHI (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production Thursday was informed that Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA) was working on establishment of EPZs in Private/Public Participation Mode and process for amendments in the relevant ordinance was underway.

The meeting of the committee held here at EPZA was presided over by the committee Chairperson Khalida Ateeb while Senator Fida Muhammad, Senator Zeeshan Khanzada and Senator Imam ud din Shouqeen attended the meeting.

Chairman EPZA Dr. Saifuddin Junejo in his briefing to committee informed that final draft of Private/Public Participated EPZs Rules 2023 has already been submitted to the ministry of Industries and

Production while consultation with stakeholders was also made.

He said that the zones would be developed and operated by private sector and they would have private boards with representation to EPZA.

High lighting the importance of export sector in overall economic performance of a country, he said that EPZA was playing a proactive role in increasing the exports and several incentives and facilities were being provided to industries and investors in the EP zones.

The EPZA offered industrial and trading units exemption from custom and other duties on import of raw materials, equipment and machinery while laws and regulations pertaining to import export, foreign exchange, labour and banking were not applicable in the EP zones.

Two men shot dead in Drosh Jungle

CHITRAL (APP): At least two people were shot dead by unknown attackers in Shah Nigar Jungle of Drosh area in Lower Chitral, police informed on Thursday.

The police of Drosh area said, two men belonging to Shah Nigar area were in Kaldam Gol area of the Drosh jungle to collect firewood when unknown assailants shot them dead.

Bodies of both the men, identified as Ehsan Uddin, son of Mehrab Uddin and Ashraf Ali, son of Gul Nayab were later placed by the relatives on Drosh Road, blocking it for vehicular traffic for hours.



SARGODHA: Students sapling plants at Khabib Girls School and College Ground during tree plantation campaign.

CCPO Lahore holds meeting for making Lahore drug-free

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana chaired a meeting of the Operation and Investigation wings' officers of the Lahore police at his office to review measures to make Lahore a drug-free city.

The huddle deliberated on steps to rehabilitate addicts and to clamp down on the sale of narcotics.

The CCPO ordered a crackdown on big fish involved in the narcotics trade to save the youth from the menace. He asked the divisional officers to ensure stringent actions against drug peddlers, adding that strong measures be taken to remove drug peddlers from

educational institutions' surroundings. He also called for close monitoring of the activities of drug pushers by SHOs within their jurisdictions and suggested enhanced collaboration with the public prosecution department to ensure strict punishments for them.

The CCPO proposed seeking the assistance of respected scholars to instill a societal hatred for narcotics in alignment with Islamic teachings. He suggested organising lectures against drugs in mosques and educational institutions to sensitise the youth about the menace. He also highlighted the role of the media in saving society from the curse of narcotics.

Briefed on Zainab Alert Act President underlines need for raising awareness to stop incidents of disappearance of children

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi Thursday held a meeting with the implementation of Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act.

The briefing was attended by Secretary Human Rights and officials of Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Agency.

Amin Ansari, father of Zainab Ansari, also attended the meeting.

The president called for coordinated steps for stopping the incidents of kidnapping and torture of children. He underlined the need for raising awareness to stop the incidents of disappearance of children.

"Awareness is needed to be provided to parents and teachers about protection of children and for saving them from disappearance," he added.

President Alvi said

strong coordination was very important among the law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders.

There was a need to create a system of effective coordination between the provincial police departments and relevant institutions, he said, adding police had a critical role to play to stop incidents of disappearance of children and their early recovery.

He asked the police to ensure registration of cases of disappearance and kidnapping of children.

He said suggestions should be sought from non-governmental organizations in a consultative meeting to improve the system regarding reporting about disappearance of children.

The president welcomed the establishment of Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Agency

(ZARRA) in Islamabad, saying it would help in timely search of children and exchange of information.

President Alvi was briefed about the Zainab Alert Act, mandate of the agency and its performance.

It was told that the agency was working in coordination with all stakeholders and with the help of Zainab Alert complaints about disappearance of 2153 children were registered.

Some 1247 children were successfully searched while 430 reports about disappearance were fake. Complete action was taken on 1837 complaints while 319 complaints were being looked into. Efforts were also afoot to improve coordination between the federal and provincial departments.

LHC says: President bound to give date for holding election in 90 days

LAHORE (Online): Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh of Lahore High Court (LHC) has remarked holding election in 90 days is constitutional requirement and president is bound to give date for holding election in 90 days.

He further remarked efforts should be there that elections are held within 90 days.

The petition filed by a citizen against notification on new delimitation of constituencies came up for hearing before single bench of LHC led by Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh Thursday.

During the hearing of the case Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh remarked holding election in 90 days is a constitutional requirement. There should be efforts that election takes place within 90 days. I am issuing notice to Election Commission (EC) on the date of election.

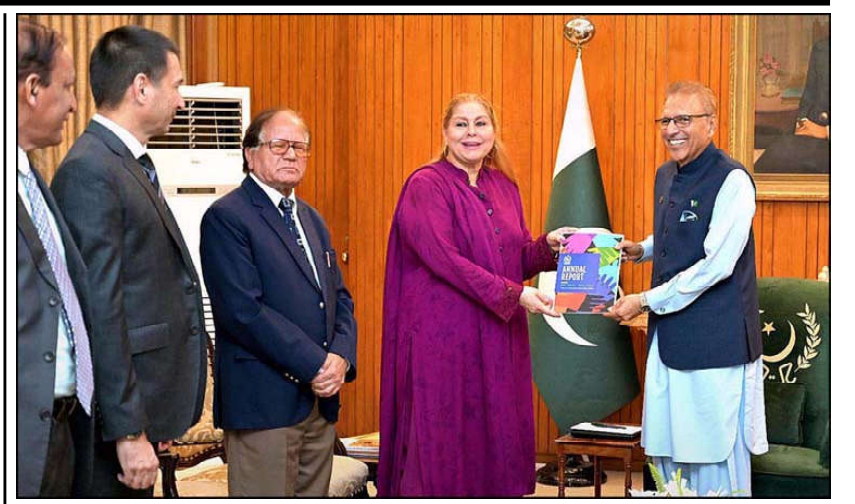
If the population census had taken place in June then why it was not approved till 2 months. Reply to this question should come.

The counsel for federal government said new delimitation of constituencies within four months is next to impossible.

The court inquired president is bound to give date for holding election within 90 days.

Counsel for the federal government said delimitation is must after population census. This matter has gone to Supreme Court.

The court inquired you should appear in the court next after obtaining directives in this connection. The court while issuing notice to election commission, federal government and others adjourned the hearing of the case till September 06.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), Ms. Rabiya Javeri Agha, presents the Annual Report of NCHR for year 2021-22 to President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

US provided \$215m flood relief assistance to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States has provided flood relief, disaster resilience, and food security assistance of more than \$215 million to Pakistan since the beginning of the calamity.

According to a news release, more than \$80 million in US humanitarian assistance was given through USAID to provide urgently needed supplies for those most affected, including support for food, nutrition, health, security, safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and shelter.

An additional \$100 million of recovery and reconstruction funding was announced at the January 9 International Conference on Climate-Resilient Pakistan in Geneva, Switzerland, while \$10 million was given as food security assistance

to provide urgent supplies to help farmers recover in terms of seeds and fertilizer, and helps repair damaged critical irrigation infrastructure.

"\$2 million was given in humanitarian assistance for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) flood response in Pakistan to provide lifesaving resources to Afghan refugees and host communities in Pakistan."

More than \$1.9 million was provided in US Department of Defense funding to help airlift USAID supplies while \$3 million for new early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience funding to support Pakistan's ability to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters such as floods.

An additional \$16.4 million in nutrition and food

security support, early recovery, resilience, and risk reduction assistance was announced in June 2023 to provide life-saving food and nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance to more than 4 million people in flood-affected communities.

"Private American citizens and US companies have donated food, medicine, and other relief supplies, and at least \$37 million dollars to help the people of Pakistan in this time of need," the press release added.

"US flood relief assistance complements the efforts of the US-Pakistan Green Alliance, which advances cooperation in agriculture, clean energy, and water to support climate resilience, energy transformation, and inclusive economic growth," it said.



CHAKWAL: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi performs the ground breaking of Bahria Foundation College at Chakwal.

Pakistan to continue moral, political support to Kashmiris: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar Thursday held a meeting with Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq.

The AJK prime minister congratulated him on assuming the office of caretaker prime minister and expressed his best wishes for him.

The caretaker prime minister assured the AJK prime minister of unconditional support of Pakistan

to Kashmir.

He said Pakistan stood shoulder-to-shoulder with people of Kashmir in their struggle for right to self-determination.

The PM said Pakistan would continue the diplomatic, political and moral support of Kashmiris till the Kashmir issue was resolved according to the United Nations Security Council Resolutions and as per wishes of the people of Kashmir through a plebiscite.

DGAIMH visits BTTN office

QUETTA (APP): Director General, Army Institute of Military History (AIMH) Agha Masood Akram visited the Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) office here on Thursday.

In his welcome remarks, the Head of BTTN introduced DG AIMH to the Faculty of Research and the workplace. Executive Director, Dr. Zafar Khan briefed on BTTN's progress, aims, objectives and achievements.

He provided a detailed account of BTTN's organizational structure and framework of research.

He pointed that BTTN is currently focusing on strategic, political, economic, and most specifically the socio-economic issues of Balochistan. BTTN has produced numerous research articles, policy papers and a considerable number of opinion articles on contemporary issues.

Perpetrators of Jaranwala incident will be brought to justice: Masood Khan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan's Ambassador to United States Masood Khan has strongly condemned the horrendous incidents of Jaranwala and said that perpetrators of this heinous crime would be brought to justice. Addressing leaders of all faiths and denominations in Washington, he said that entire leadership of Pakistan and civil society has stood by Christian brothers and sisters who suffered because of arson and vandalism. Masood Khan termed the incident a conspiracy to disrupt social harmony and religious bonds between followers of two faiths.

He said Islam doesn't allow any kind of discrimination and persecution, incitement to hatred and violence against other religions is proscribed.

The Ambassador said Prime Minister of Pakistan visited Jaranwala and expressed solidarity with the traumatized victim and the Government of Pakistan has not only condemned the incident in the clearest and strongest manner but has also announced compensation for the affected people. Highlighting the efforts to compensate and rebuild worship places and homes of the affected people, Masood Khan said that the community has stepped forward to help rebuild damaged houses.

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ISLAMABAD: US Congressman Darlin Lahood accompanied by US Ambassador Donald Blome exchanging views with Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani.

Siraj calls for constituting national commission on minority affairs

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has called for the establishment of a national commission dedicated to minority affairs. While speaking to the media after chairing a "Peace Conference" at Mansoorah on Thursday, he said that this commission's primary purpose would be to safeguard the rights of minority religious groups, including Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and others. Sirajul Haq said the JI plans to hold a national convention for minorities in Islamabad this coming September. The goal of this convention, he added, is to formulate comprehensive recommendations concerning the rights of the minorities. The event, organized by the JI's Punjab central chapter, attended by the leaders from various minority groups. They condemned the recent incidents in Jaranwala including the burning of Holy Quran, demanding transparent inquiry into all.

Emphasizing the gravity of the situation, the JI Chief labeled the incident as a deliberate plot aimed at sowing discord and disrupting peace and order. He raised concerns about the actions of both the local police and administration during the outbreak of mob violence, stressing that their handling of the situation had been questionable at best. He further asserted that these events were orchestrated to tarnish the nation's identity. In light of the violence, he also praised the locals who provided shelter to elderly and young members of the Christian community. Pointing to a broader perspective, Sirajul Haq highlighted the presence of Islamophobia in the Western world, which he noted was deeply hurting the sentiments of millions of Muslims.

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PMA announces boycott service in govt. hospitals

YDA demands de-notify Hasni as caretaker provincial minister

QUETTA: The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) has announced to observe boycott of the services in the government hospitals in Quetta and other parts of the province from today (Friday).

The boycott would be observed against the alleged torture of the private guards of Advisor to caretaker Chief Minister for Mines, Umair Muhammad Hassani on the medical staff and security guards of Trauma Center of the civil hospital on Thursday, as announced by the General Secretary of PMA, Dr. Aftab Kakar.

According to the PMA's senior official, the guards of Umair Muhammad Hassani attacked and tortured the medical staff and guards of the Trauma Center while he (Umair) was also present on the occasion. They also harassed the staff at Trauma Center and created panic, Dr. Aftab and other staff present on the duty alleged. On this uncalculated misbehavior, the PMA has announced to observe strike in the hospitals, and if no action was taken against the Advisor and his guards, the services would remain suspended in the hospitals, the PMA leader announced. Meanwhile Young Doctors Association (YDA) has demanded of the authorities to lodge FIR against caretaker Provincial Minister Umair Muhammad Hasni and de-notify him as caretaker provincial Minister. In a statement issued here

on Thursday, YDA said that caretaker Provincial Minister Umair Muhammad Hasni and Amanullah Notezai along with about fifteen body guards tortured doctors and healthcare workers of Trauma Center, Sandeman Provincial Hospital, Quetta on August 24, 2023.

It said that entry of political personalities with armed body guards into hospitals was creating problems not only for doctors but also for patients, adding that Secretary, Health Department and Director General, Health Services, Balochistan had time and again been requested to take action regarding banning the entry of political personalities and social leaders with bodyguards in government run hospitals.

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4th meeting of BCSW Board held

Independent Report

QUETTA: The 4th board meeting of the Balochistan Commission on Status of Women (BCSW) was held with its chairperson, Ms. Fauzia Shaheen in the chair here on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by the members of BCSW and representatives of concerned departments. The Advisor to Chief Minister for Women Development and Social Welfare, Ms. Shahina Khan also participated in the meeting.

The meeting discussed the related matters about the BCSW and its objectives. Addressing the meeting, Chairperson of BCSW said that the commission was formed in 2017 with the aim to frame policies for rights of the women and getting them implemented. She said that strategic plan of the commission has been chalked out with the UNDP for next three years. Under the project, it has been attempted to share the act of BCSW.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zaabi called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan.

Razzaq Shar murder case: Order for not arresting Imran will stay: SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has said its order for not arresting chairman PTI in lawyer Abdul Razaq Shar case will stay.

A 3-members bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial took up for hearing the matter of nomination of chairman PTI in murder case of lawyer Abdul Razaq Shar Thursday.

The court adjourned the hearing of the case on the plea of Imanullah Kinrani counsel for complainant.

Investigation report in lawyer Abdul Razaq Shar murder case against chairman PTI was filed in the court. IG Balochistan filed the said investigation report. It has been said in investigation report that chairman PTI has not joined investigation so far despite

several notices.

The report further said that a 7 members Joint Investigation Team (JIT) was constituted by interior ministry on June 8 during investigation. 8 meetings of JIT have taken place so far under DIG CTD. It was decided to include 4 accused including chairman PTI in the investigation of the case.

The statements of wife of deceased lawyer and his two brothers have been recorded. Chairman PTI has not joined the investigation despite several notices.

The report said the threats were being hurled on victim Abdul Razaq Shar due to filing application under article 6 against chairman PTI by him.

It is pertinent to mention here SC changed the bench hearing the lawyer murder case on the appeal plea of chairman PTI.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki meeting with Caretaker Provincial Minister Prince Ahmed Ali Baloch.

Flood affected area Residents of Hanna Urak urge govt to launch rehabilitation plan

QUETTA (APP): The residents of Hanna Urak on Thursday urged the government to execute the rehabilitation and resettlement plan in the area to provide relief to the flood affected people.

The affected people whose houses, agricultural land and water channels were washed away and faced other financial losses due to last year's flash floods, still waiting for the government's package of rebuilding.

Malik Nasir Kakar, one of the flood affectees from Hanna valley, said that almost a year had been passed since the flash floods had wreaked havoc in famous tourist point of Hanna Urak Quetta. He

stressed that the government should take practical steps to assess the damages and initiate reconstruction plan in the area.

The abnormal heavy rains last year badly affected the roads in the area that caused major difficulties for the locals to shift patients to hospitals, fruits and vegetables to markets, he told while talking to APP.

He requested the provincial government to prepare a complete comprehensive plan to compensate the affected population, rehabilitation and restoration of damaged infrastructure in the area.

"The area is at risk of being inundated again, but despite the devastation it suffered.

Two killed in road accident

QUETTA: Two persons died due to collision of Rickshaw with Mazda in Bakhtiarabad Domki area of Balochistan province on Thursday.

According to rescue sources, Rickshaw collided with Mazda in Bakhtiarabad Domki area of the province, resultantly, two men namely Irfan son of Shah Mir Gola and Allah Dita son of Sarung Khan Gola died on the spot. The bodies were shifted to hospital where after completion of necessary medico-legal formalities, the bodies were handed over to heirs.

Dr. Mirwais inquires after health of injured Levies man

QUETTA (APP): Director Operation of Balochistan Levies Force, Dr. Mirwais Khan Kakar on Thursday visited Quetta Civil Hospital's Trauma Center to ask about the health of Levies driver Mustafa Khan Bareach was injured in the firing of bandits at Circle near Chagai last night.

Mirwais Khan Kakar said that on the special instructions of Director General Balochistan Levies Force Naseebullah Khan Kakar, better medical aid is being provided to the injured Levies personnel.

Underprivileged's inclusion in development process, vital for national progress: Sami

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Thursday said inclusion of underprivileged segments of society in the development process was pivotal in achieving a sustainable national growth trajectory.

Chairing a progress review meeting of the initiatives taken in the social sector, he remarked that no country could tread the

path of progress without the inclusion of underprivileged strata of society in the development process.

"The initiatives in social sector will pave the way for the social uplift of low-income groups of society by offering them equitable opportunities," he added.

Sami Saeed emphasized that transparent criteria should be adopted for selection of deserving persons and targeting social benefits.

Kanwar Dilshad says: President is not authorized to write a letter to ECP under Article 48 (5)

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former Secretary Election Commission (EC) Kanwar Dilshad said that delegation of Election Commission (EC) will not meet with President.

If President of state gives date of elections then Election Commission (EC) should reject it.

While reacting to President Letter, former Chief Secretary said that President is not authorized to write a letter to EC under article 48 (5).

It is illogical for President to write a letter to EC without advice of Prime

Minister (PM).

Chief Election Commissioner has the authority to set date of elections under Election Act.

Former Secretary EC said that if Supreme Court rejects notification of census then elections will be held in 90 days. He said that Article 51 is the biggest obstacle in conducting elections in 90 days.

The power of consulting the President has been abolished under Election Act.

EC will respond to President Letter but its delegation will not meet.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shaked Qadir Khan presiding over meeting of Board of Directors of Lawyers Endowment Fund