

# Independent

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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

## 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 commemoration 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 em-

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 be-

ing 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, emphasised 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 Sindh 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 of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

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.

"Article 48(1) of the Constitution stipulates that the president follows the prime minister's advice. Article 48, Clause (5), carries a non-obstante clause. Notably, the National Assembly dissolution was advised by the prime minister, rendering Article 48(5) inapplicable in this context," he asserted.

Prior to the amendment of Section 57(1) of the Act, the CEC said, the president was required to consult the ECP before appointing a date for election. However, after the amendment in Section 57, the Commission had been empowered to announce the date or dates for the general elections.

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 elec-

## Saudi envoy calls on Jalil Abbas Jilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki 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

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.

## 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 discussed 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 elec-

tion 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.

"We stand by the Election Commission's stance, as we do not have any intention to take its powers back," the minister maintained. In accordance with Article 218(3) of the Constitution, he said the caretaker government would provide all-out support to the ECP for holding free, fair and transparent elections. The ECP was bound to carry out delimitation exercise under Article 51, he said, adding the election watchdog had already issued a plan in that regard.

He said it was clearly stated in the Constitution that the country would be run by the elected representatives of the masses.

## 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.



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

## Toshakhana case till IHC order SC adjourns hearing of Imran petition against his conviction

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has adjourned hearing of PTI chairman petition against his conviction in Toshakhana case till Islamabad High Court (IHC) order.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial is hearing Toshakhana case.

At the inception of hearing the CJP remarked hearing is still underway in IHC. Chief Justice (CJ) IHC is hearing the case which is appreciable. I appreciate efforts of CJ. IHC is seeing the matter, it will be better to let IHC give decision on this matter.

CJP Umar Ata Bandial

inquired has any one come from Attorney General (AG) office. We will ask about the situation of staying of PTI chairman in jail in today's order. We will ask from AG in what condition chairman PTI has been kept in jail.

The SC sought report about facilities to chairman PTI in jail.

Sardar Latif Khosa counsel for chairman PTI said arguments have been given on all points in high court.

The CJP remarked it was your complaint that you were not being heard. Your all arguments have been heard. You should hope from IHC that it would give decision on your points.



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.

## 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 was briefed on 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 co-ordination 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.

## Pakistan to continue moral, political support to Kashmir: PM Kakar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-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.

## 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.



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

## 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 infrastruc-

ture. " \$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.



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



ISLAMABAD: Leader of JUI F Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri talking with media persons after the meeting with Chief election commission of Pakistan Sikandar Sultan Raja, outside Election Commission of Pakistan, in Federal Capital.

# 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.

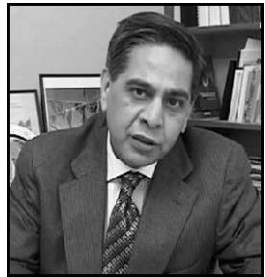
The event should prompt the state to resolve the communication issues of communities living in remote areas with difficult terrain, like Allai. In fact, due to limited infrastructure including roads and bridges, such cable cars are often the only practical option for travelling in parts of the mountainous 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 remorse 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

## PFM Act: a missed opportunity



Syed Asad Ali Shah

In a recurring 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

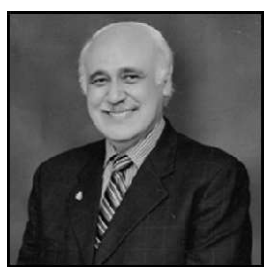
time, the nation has yet to reap the benefits of a modified, transparent, and efficient PFM system.

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 kikar 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 Jamaati-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-----ers were emblazoned with screaming hea-d--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 Bh-i-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. Jogezaei

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 Curri-

culum 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.

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 determination to foster an 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 organized 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 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 Morajo 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.

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

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.

Shuaib Khan Tareen, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan Julien Harneis, UN Representative 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

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 brandishing 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 (retd) 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, Sheikhupura, 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.



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.

## Strategy devised to purge corruption in LG&CD Department

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.

## 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

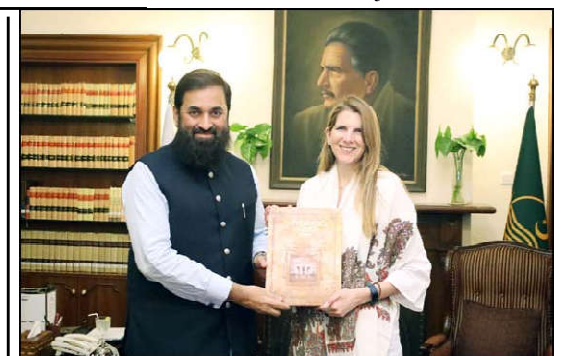
took notice of a jirga held at Ubauro, District Ghotki to settle an old dispute of love marriage in which a minor girl was given as a penalty for marriage to the opponent party.

On the directives of the caretaker chief minister, the Ghotki police arrested two accused, Naser and Madad Bhutto, and made efforts to arrest other accused. The chief minister expressed deep sorrow over a road accident that took place at Jhirk-Mulaktari 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.

Highlighting 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.



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.



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."

## Pakistan's public sector covers only 20% in health, rest borne by private sector: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at the first-ever national health security workshop held here on Thursday said in Pakistan, public sector covered only 20 percent in health, and rest of the 80 percent was borne by the private sector that demanded a public-private partnership to harness and limit private sector through an effective way of utilizing the private sector. A one-day workshop on Health Security was jointly organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and SehatSahulat Program (SSP) where health professional and experts highlighted the present status of healthcare in Pakistan, and stressed upon the need for making it a universal service across the country, a news release said.

The participants were: Dr Nadeem Jan, Federal Minister for Health; Dr Abdul Bari Khan, CEO Indus Hospital Network; Hassan Akbar, senior policy specialist NSD; and Muhammad Arshad, CEO Federal SehatSahulat Program (SSP).

Among others were Dr Shahzad Ali Khan, Vice-Chancellor Health Services Academy; Lt Gen Asif Sukhera, Vice-Chancellor Mohiud-din Islamic Uni-

versity; Dr Zakiuddin Ahmed, Executive Director Ripah Institute of Health Care Improvement and Safety; Dr Faisal Sultan, former SAPM on NHS and Maj Ren Aamer Ikram, former Executive Director NIH.

President IPRI Amb. Dr Raza Muhammad opened the discourse, and pointed out at the need for pooling in more resources and making healthcare an assured entity in national life.

The distinguished panel was of the view that no security is complete without human security, and no human security is possible without health security.

"Without good health, every blessing becomes tasteless," it was noted.

It has been a low social agenda and it should be prioritised.

The citizens should also highlight the importance of health security, especially, when an election is around the corner and parties would be boosting their election manifestos.

The workshop was told that four essentials of health security are mandatory: coverage, quality, equity, and efficiency.

They said that the problem was not always

about funding and resources. Immunization and healthy life style should be secured instead of securing the diseases.

Ensuring availability of a healthy environment and organic food is vital to health security.

Pakistanis are living in a sick care system. Doctors have become medical managers where they react to the diseases and treat them instead of intervening and stopping their origin.

The experts were of the view that patient safety and quality treatment is not about technology and funding only, but a more humane attitude toward the patients and the diseases.

Dr Abdul Bari argued that the creation of an effective safety net is essential to support vulnerable populations.

The workshop was informed that Pakistan is planning a Global Health Security Summit in October and November this year to work towards a Global Health Security Charter, including a financial support mechanism at global and regional level to support vulnerable nations in times of health crisis.

Hasan Akbar emphasized on technological adoption for better health security prospects.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning and Development Muhammad Sami Saeed chairing a meeting to review social sector initiatives.

## Aneeq for socioeconomic, ethical issues solutions in light of Quran, Sunnah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed on Thursday urged the religious scholars to present solutions for socioeconomic and ethical challenges through the lens of the Quran and Sunnah.

A delegation of prominent religious scholars called on the minister which resulted in insightful discussions on various national issues.

Minister Aneeq Ahmed expressed his aim to contribute positively during his tenure at the ministry, emphasizing his deep connection with the Quran and Sunnah and his respect for esteemed scholars.

He revealed that the nationwide conference on

Seerat-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) would be convened this year on the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal, promoting religious unity and understanding.

However, the authors who would contribute significantly to the annual competition in Seerat literature, articles, and Naat to be rewarded with accolades and recognition, he said adding that the practice of inviting scholars to write on various societal issues through the lens of Seerat continued every year.

Religious scholars highlighted that Seerat literature competitions provided valuable support for the propagation of the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) as these com-

petitions are a commendable initiative by the ministry.

The meeting was attended by Council of Islamic Ideology Chairman Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Professor Dr. Jameela Shaukat, Dr. Iqbal Haq Yasir, Professor Baqir Khakwani, Dr. Sahibzada Sajjad ur Rahman, Dr. Muhiuddin Hashmi, Dr. Muhammad Sajjad, Professor Dr. Riaz Majeed, Dr. Junaid Mughal, and Dr. Yousuf Farooqi.

In another meeting with a delegation from the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabhak Committee, Minister Aneeq Ahmed stressed the importance of collective efforts to promote interfaith harmony in the country.

## 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 and properties.

Ambassador Masood Khan thanked Ilyas Masih and All Neighbors Association for its efforts to promote inter-faith harmony.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister Madad Ali Sindhi paid a surprise visit to Islamabad College for Girls ICG F-6/2.

## Minister for National Health holds meeting with Chairman Senate

ISLAMABAD (Online): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health, Dr. Nadeem Jan, held a meeting with Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, at the Parliament House today.

The discussion revolved around the pressing matters within the health sector. During the meeting, the caretaker health minister provided a comprehensive overview of the health facilities currently available to the public. He highlighted the effective strategies that have been adopted to combat polio in Pakistan, emphasizing the importance of protection for polio workers during the administration of polio vaccine.

In his remarks, Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, stressed the significance of ensuring basic health facilities across all regions of the country. He expressed the view that the

state has a responsibility to provide adequate healthcare services to its citizens. The chairman also called for concerted efforts to address health disparities, particularly in the underdeveloped areas like Balochistan. The eradication of polio remained a central theme of the discussion, with both parties reaffirming their commitment to working collaboratively to eliminate this debilitating disease. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani underscored the urgency of this mission and urged for effective measures to tackle polio. The meeting also highlighted the need for a proactive approach to prevent the spread of diseases such as dengue. Chairman Senate emphasized the importance of devising an effective strategy to control and treat dengue, especially in areas affected by recent rains.

## Contempt of court case: IHC accepts unconditional apology from police officers

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has accepted unconditional apology of the police officers in contempt of court case for appearing in court without making preparations in important cases.

The court withdrew the contempt of court show cause notices against SP police and SDPO Industrial area.

A single bench of IHC led by Justice Tariq Mehmoos Jahangiri took up the case for hearing Thursday. SP and SDPO have filed written reply under court's orders.

Justice Tariq Jahangiri remarked "you are young officers. The court does not want to ruin your career. This is not appropriate that I say I will send SP or IG to jail. If I impose contempt of court on you then your career will be ruined."

Justice Tariq Jahangiri remarked Investigation officers don't work. You should tell how the system will be corrected. Such incident can occur with any relative of mine and yours tomorrow. The police station is located nearby high court but the record has not been produced so far.

The learned judge remarked should we let any person to remain in jail due to non bringing of record by investigation officer.

## Sarfraz Bugti says: Won't allow conspirators to damage country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti on Thursday stated that the interim government would not allow any conspirators to damage the country and if anyone tried to take the law into their own hands would be dealt with iron hands.

"The law will take its course as it is the responsibility of the state to maintain law and order", he said while talking to a private news channel.

He said that for a better future for Pakistan, the federation, provinces, and all political parties should unite against terrorism, adding, that we would not rest until terrorism is eradicated and will try to control terrorism despite the many challenges facing the coun-

try. He said the whole nation needs to stand united alongside our security forces to extirpate the menace of terrorism forever.

Minister said our armed forces are not alone in this need of time we all firmly stand with them and will fight to counter terrorism.

Replying to a question, he said under the policy, the values of peace, tolerance, and diversity will be promoted in the society and social, electronic, and print media would be used proactively to counter violent extremism.

The minister further reiterated the national resolve to eliminate terrorism and extremism as it has caused irreparable damage to the country in the past.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Gulbar Khan calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Over 1.9m individuals accommodated under PBM's initiative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) Shelter Homes and Roti Sab Key Liye program provided lodging for approximately 1.9 million people between May 2022 to March 2023, an official document revealed on Thursday.

Giving a breakup of 1.9 million, the document indicated that Shelter Homes and the Roti Sab Key Liye program facilitated lodging for approxi-

mately 0.309 million individuals and provided meal services for around 1.592 million people during the period. "PBM manages 28 Shelter Homes across the country and also has 28 operational Roti Sab Key Liye food vehicles to distribute meals."

"Likewise, the Roti Sab Kiyee food vehicles have supplied meals to 1.44 people along diverse routes within prominent cities," it added.

## Education Minister directs to release funds to ICG F-6/2 for maintenance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi directed the relevant officials to immediately release funds for the maintenance of Islamabad College for Girls (ICG) F-6/2, here Thursday.

During a surprise visit, the minister expressed satisfaction with the infrastructure and gave directions regarding the issuance of funds for maintenance purposes.

The minister expressed astonishment that in the same sector, the con-

dition of one school was bad and the other was good.

Despite all the facilities, only one position in the intermediate result announced the other day was from Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) run colleges.

This college was established in 1968 but still could not achieve the required results.

The minister called for a briefing from FDE officials to know the reasons and decide on a future course of action so that these issues could be resolved immediately.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Dr. Nadeem Jan, Caretaker Federal Minister for Health during meeting held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

## Islamabad police ensures robust security measures in high security zone

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police is ceaselessly dedicated to preserving law and order within the federal capital and has ensured robust security measures in high-security zones.

In a dedicated effort to bolster security within the high-security zone, a police spokesperson said that personnel stationed at the Margalla Road checkpoint diligently carry out their duties.

They carefully verify the credentials of individuals seeking access to the high-security zone and meticulously record vehicle information.

The high-security zone encompasses critical government and private institutions, diplomatic missions, and other vital assets, emphasizing the need for unwavering protection.

Government employees entering this zone are now required to visibly display their departmental identification cards.

Furthermore, individuals with business interests within this area are strongly encouraged to carry their necessary documentation and cooperate fully with the on-duty personnel.

Senior officers have issued directives to the personnel on duty, emphasizing the importance of upholding the highest standards of diligence and professionalism while fostering positive interactions with citizens.

A sincere appeal is made to all citizens to promptly report any suspicious activities or individuals to the "Pukar-15" helpline, a police spokesperson added.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iraq to Pakistan H.E. Hamid Abbas Lafta called on Adviser to Prime Minister on Aviation Air Marshal (R) Farhat Hussain Khan at Ministry of Aviation.

## SC allows the girl to go with her husband in alleged kidnapping, marriage case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has ordered due to her own will the girl is allowed to go with her husband in an alleged abduction and marriage of underage girl case.

A two members bench of SC comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and Justice Athar Minallah issued the order on Thursday.

The medical report of affected girl was presented before the SC.

The investigation officer told the court Farzana Bibi has now become about 18 years old.

The CJP inquired from affected girl she is living with her parents.

Farzana Bibi said she is living with her parents

but she wants to live with her husband.

The CJP remarked what incident happened, it is sorrowful. But their marriage has taken place. The affected girl wants to go with her husband. If order is given for initiation of action against the husband then future of both of them will stand ruined.

The court remarked now they have two children. The court also ordered to hand over the two children to the husband of the girl.

It is pertinent to mention here that during previous hearing the SC had handed over the affected girl and her two daughters to the petitioner father of the girl till the completion of investigation.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the heavy machinery on the sight of the Khayaban-e-Margalla as the construction work of next part is being completed very efficiently in Federal Capital.

## Secretary Planning reviews performance of NDRMF, technical assistance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Syed Zafar Ali Shah on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the performance of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) and its key activities. The performance was reviewed during a meeting with the delegation of World Bank (WB) in which the technical assistance on various projects was also discussed, a news release said.

The meeting was attended by Lead Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Specialist WB Raja Rehan Arshad, NDRMF Chief Executive Officer Bilal Anwar and Company Secretary Muhammad Mehran Afzal, and Member Climate Change and Food Security at the Planning Commission Nadia

Rehman. The meeting also discussed the four strategic pillars of NDRMF, which include Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change/Climate Finance, Knowledge Creation & Communication, and Disaster Response & Resilient Recovery. During the meeting, the technical assistance on setting up an agreeing Green Financing Bureau to tap green funds was discussed. The technical assistance for the Ministry of Climate Change with ideas to follow up on the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) was also agreed upon after due discussion. Secretary Planning Syed Zafar Ali Shah said that the floods-2022 had affected the country badly, following which a Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework.

## FIA starts inquiry against corrupt practices in WAPDA

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has sought records of alleged illegal recruitments, purchase of bulletproof vehicles and uniforms in WAPDA.

According to the documents available with Online, FIA Lahore has sought the records of recruitment, purchase of uniforms and purchase of bullet proof vehicles.

FIA's Anti-Corruption Circle Lahore is investigating the matter, investigating first informed the WAPDA General Manager Human Resources by writing a letter and then FIA team visited WAPDA headquarters.

FIA wrote a letter to WAPDA asking that the record of recruitment of security staff of Dasu project should also be presented, the answer sheet and interview record of the recruited staff should also be brought.

The Ministry of Defense has also stopped WAPDA from purchasing uniforms resembling the uniforms of sensitive organizations, due to the incompetence of WAPDA officials, uniforms of prohibited colors were being purchased from Nishat Mills Limited.

While in WAPDA, there is an allegation of mis-using the powers to recruit people of their choice

## ICT admin clears encroachments, held 5 person

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration held five persons hampering pedestrian movement during its ongoing anti-encroachment drive across the city, said its spokesperson here on Thursday.

He said all the assistant commissioners were directed to clear pathways in markets and public places following Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon's direction for hassle-free movement of visitors into the markets.

Meanwhile, in another action against profiteers, the assistant commissioners scrutinized 100 locations, resulting in fines of Rs15,500 to vendors for not displaying an official rate list and selling edible items at exorbitant rates.

Similarly, the ICT teams also sealed an unauthorized LPG filling, besides confiscating 28 kg of polythene bags, the spokesman added.



ISLAMABAD: Co-Founder Carnelian and School of Leadership Kamran Rizvi speaks during the seminar entitled "Breaking the Silence" at local hotel in Federal Capital.