

Independent

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9 soldiers martyred, 5 injured in suicide attack in Bannu

ISPR says "such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve", vows to eliminate menace of terrorism

RAWALPINDI (APP): Nine soldiers of Pakistan Army on Thursday embraced martyrdom after a motorcycle-borne suicide bomber exploded himself while targeting a military convoy in general area Jani Khel of Bannu District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Among the nine soldiers Naib Subedar Sanobar Ali also embraced shahadat (martyrdom), while five soldiers were injured, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The area was cordoned by the security forces and sanitation was being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area.

"Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said.

Reacting to the terrorist incident, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that he was "heartbroken" by the loss of nine "valiant soldiers" to a cowardly terrorist act that injured many.

"Such acts are utterly reprehensible. My thoughts are with the families of the martyred and injured. Pakistan stands resolute against such terrorism," the interim premier added.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, Dr Nadeem Jan, calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Depletion of water table has turned serious in Balochistan especially in Quetta city, says Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has expressed deep concern over the depleting underground water table in the province saying that the situation has turned serious especially in Quetta city.

He said that if we didn't take prompt steps for overcoming the shortage of water in Quetta, then we may face numerous issues in near future.

He said that it should be kept in mind that we would be needing help and guidance of international organizations to grip the depleting water table in the province.

The Governor was speaking to the Managing Director Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA), Hamid Rana, who called on him on Thursday.

The Governor was equally concerned over use of clean drinking water for the plants and saplings in the developed area even and that we don't have the capability of reuse of used water.

He noted with contentment that WASA is working on several small projects on use of the recycled water, which would surely yield positive results. However, there is a need to expand such projects.

Joint venture under Public-Private Partnership: BMRL and PMC ink Rs. 3 bn agreement for mining and production of fluoride

Independent Report

QUETTA: An agreement of worth Rs. 3 billion was signed between Balochistan Mineral Resource Limited (BMRL), Government of Balochistan and a private company, Platinum Mining Company (Pvt) Limited here on Thursday.

The Rs. 3 billion joint venture has been signed under the Public Private Partnership for mining and production of fluoride in Mekhtar area of Loralai district.



The signing ceremony was held at the office of BMRL in which the Advisor to Chief Minister for Mines and Mineral Development, Umar Muhammad Hassani was also present. The head of BMRL, Saeed Sarparah signed on behalf of BMRL and provincial government while the Chief Executive Officer of PMC Private Limited and President Lasbela Chamber of Commerce signed on behalf of his company.

Speaking on the occasion, the Advisor for Mines and Mineral Development said that the caretaker provincial government is taking all necessary steps for ensuring provision of desired facilities to the foreign investors in the mining and mineral sectors in Balochistan.

Solangi takes notice of alleged torture, arrest of senior journalist from Swat

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi has taken notice of the alleged torture and arrest of Fayyaz Zafar, a senior journalist from Swat.

Discussing the incident with relevant authorities, he emphasized the importance of conducting an impartial investigation into the incident.

The caretaker federal minister of information has sought a report of the torture and arrest of Fayyaz Zafar, said a press release.

He asserted that the authority of the office must not be employed to stifle the voice of journalists.

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar talking to Anchors and Journalists in a meeting at the Prime Minister's House.

Govt of Balochistan disappointed over "making politics on issue of missing persons"

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan has expressed strong disappointment over what he termed making politics constantly on the issue of missing persons.

In a statement issued here on Thursday night, the government strictly advises against using the sensitive issue of missing persons for political benefit.

This very statement of the government has come in response to some political parties which have raised the issue of missing persons during their election campaign and blamed that government is responsible for these disappearances.

In the statement, the government strongly contradicted these allegations and expresses its firm resolve to trace all the missing persons and recover them.

Moreover, the govern-

ment emphasizes on its zero tolerance policy for making the matter political. It was also stated that the issue of missing persons is mostly used as vote gaining method by the political parties, which otherwise become a controversial topic during the election periods.

However, the government made it clear that it has not received any substantial complaint about the missing persons.

Moreover, the government exposes the propaganda regarding missing persons for India, human rights industry, leftist groups and racial nationalists are responsible.

It was stated that the objective behind this propaganda is nothing but to exert pressure on the incumbent caretaker government and law enforcement agencies.

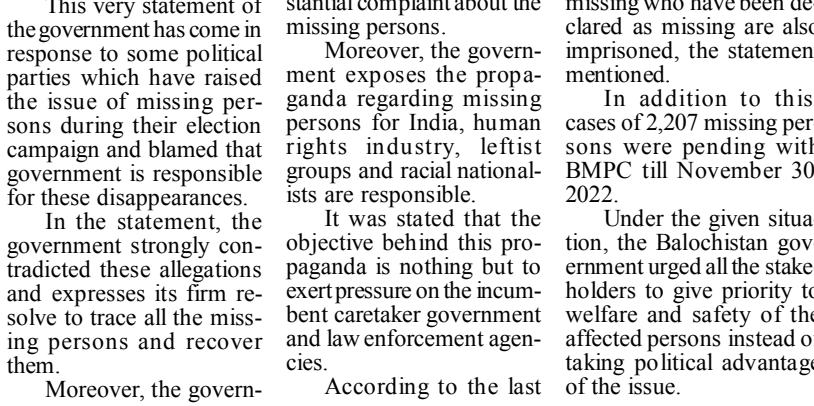
According to the last

report of Balochistan Missing Persons Commission, a total of 9,231 complaints have been received to the commission. Out of them, 5,574 cases have been solved and 3,743 missing persons have been recovered.

It was also told by the BMPC that bodies of 241 missing persons have been recovered while 974 persons are in custody. 616 missing who have been declared as missing are also imprisoned, the statement mentioned.

In addition to this, cases of 2,207 missing persons were pending with BMPC till November 30, 2022.

Under the given situation, the Balochistan government urged all the stakeholders to give priority to welfare and safety of the affected persons instead of taking political advantage of the issue.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior, Sarfraz Ahmad Bugti chairing meeting regarding anti smuggling measures.

Pakistan's total foreign reserves reach at \$ 13.17 b

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 13,171.1 million while reserves held by the central bank reached \$ 7,849.3 million. The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves decreased by \$ 81 million to \$ 7,849.3 million on account of debt repayments during the week ended on August 25, 2023.

Bugti seeks briefing to cope smuggling of goods

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti on the directions of Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar on Thursday sought a briefing from provincial governments on the stoppage of smuggling of goods.

The minister was chairing a meeting regarding anti-smuggling measures here. Secretary Interior Abdullah Khan Sumbul, Director General Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Mohsin Hassan Butt and officials from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), ministries and provincial offices participated in the meeting.

Minister Bugti stressed the need to make a comprehensive plan to curb the smuggling of fertilizers and sugar from the country.

Required amount transferred in QPC bank account: Commitment of caretaker CM about financial assistance of ailing & late journalists fulfilled: Jan Achakzai

Independent Report

QUETTA: The commitment made by caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki about financial assistance for treatment of two ailing media persons and the bereaved family of a deceased media person has been fulfilled.

This was announced by the caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai in an official statement issued here on Thursday.

According to Jan Achakzai, the promise made by the caretaker Chief Minister for financial assistance of two journalists and the family of a late media person has been fulfilled. The caretaker Information Minister recalled that the caretaker Chief Minister had taken notice of the treatment of two media persons and financial assistance being faced by family of a late journalist. Jan Achakzai further told that the required amount has been transferred in bank account of Quetta Press Club.

He said that the amount would be spent on medical treatment of two ailing journalists and financial assistance of the family of late media person.

The caretaker Provincial Minister Information maintained that the provincial government is serious in resolving the issues of media persons besides having firm belief on the freedom of press.

Court allows Imran Khan to talk to his sons

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (Online): Special court established under secret act has allowed PTI chairman Imran Khan to talk to his sons by telephone.

Chairman PTI filed petition in the court through his counsels Umair Niazi and Shiraz Ahmad seeking permission to talk to his sons Qasim and Suleman.

The petitioner took the plea in the petition that he wants to talk to his sons Qasim and Suleman by telephone or through whatsapp.

Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain of special court accepted the plea besides issuing directives to make arrangements for telephonic talks between chairman PTI and his sons.

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Govt to come up with solution for inflated electricity bills: PM

Says caretaker Govt trying to resolve electricity bills issue without defiance of IMF agreements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-Haq Kakar Thursday said the government minutely looked into the problem of inflated electricity bills and would come up with a solution within next 48 hours.

Talking to senior journalists and news anchors here on the current challenging economic conditions, he said the government was considering various options to provide relief to the people.

The people had protested against increased electricity bills and the government realized their problems, he added.

To a question, he clarified that the Pakistan army, navy and air force were not using a single free unit of electricity and their bills were paid from the allocated financial budget.

While employees of

WAPDA were using free electricity units and their usage would be rationalized, especially of the higher grade officers some of them were getting huge quantity of free electricity, he added.

He said perception should not be that the government would take any strict measures causing difficulties for the people.

He pointed out that the power sector had been a very challenging issue since the 1990s and the governments of that time signed agreements with independent power producers to overcome loadshedding which proved costly for consumers.

Over the years, he said, the generation and transmission system of electricity was flawed and the government had to deal with serious issues of line losses,

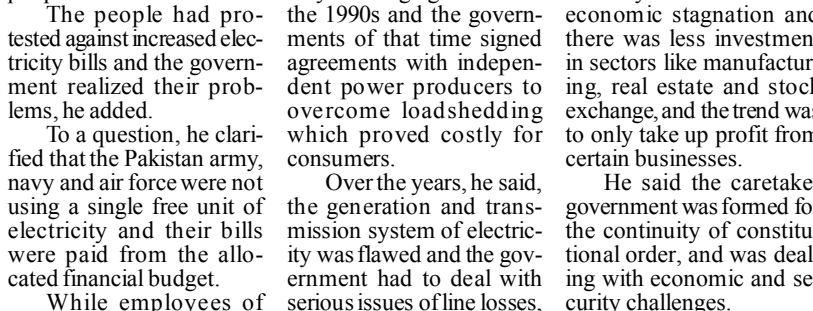
power theft, high circular debt, use of expensive imported fuel and capacity payments to electricity companies.

"These issues cannot be ignored by just closing eyes. We need to diagnose treatment for the disease."

He made it clear that the government would fulfill its agreements with the international financial institutions.

He lamented that the country was faced with economic stagnation and there was less investment in sectors like manufacturing, real estate and stock exchange, and the trend was to only take up profit from certain businesses.

He said the caretaker government was formed for the continuity of constitutional order, and was dealing with economic and security challenges.



QUETTA: Administrator Quetta Metropolitan Corporation Jabbar Baloch and others meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki.



Health minister calls on President Alvi

Govt 'prepares' relief plan for electricity consumers

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Caretaker government has 'prepared' a relief plan for the electricity consumers after countrywide protests against inflated bills, sources said on Thursday.

From Karachi to Khyber, people belonging to various walks of life are protesting against soaring electricity bills.

Sources having knowledge of the development said Pakistan has shared the plan with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in writing seeking Rs250 billion relief in electricity bills.

The plan has been prepared by keeping the consumers who use up to 400 electricity units, monthly, the sources said.

Pakistan in its recommendations has suggested taking back the recent hike of Rs7 per unit in the basic tariff of electricity and doing the same phase-wise, later.

Furthermore, Pakistan has also sought the IMF's nod to give installment facilities to electricity consumers.

The Finance Ministry will give a guarantee to the international lender in writing for the collection of August and September's bills in installments, the sources said.

Earlier on Wednesday, Caretaker Finance Minister Dr. Shamsad Akhtar ruled out room for additional subsidies within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreements.

Health minister calls on President Alvi

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, Dr Nadeem Jan called on President Dr Arif Alvi here on Thursday and discussed matters relating to national health in the country.

The president emphasized special focus on issues of breast cancer, growing population and mental health in the country.

President Alvi and the minister discussed the proposals regarding nutrition, rehabilitation of differently abled persons, and mental and physical weakness among the children.

The president stressed the need to provide consultation facilities to improve mental health in the country.

He said the basic treatment of mental health could be provided with the help of modern technology, Artificial Intelligence and Chatbot.

Court allows Imran Khan to talk to his sons

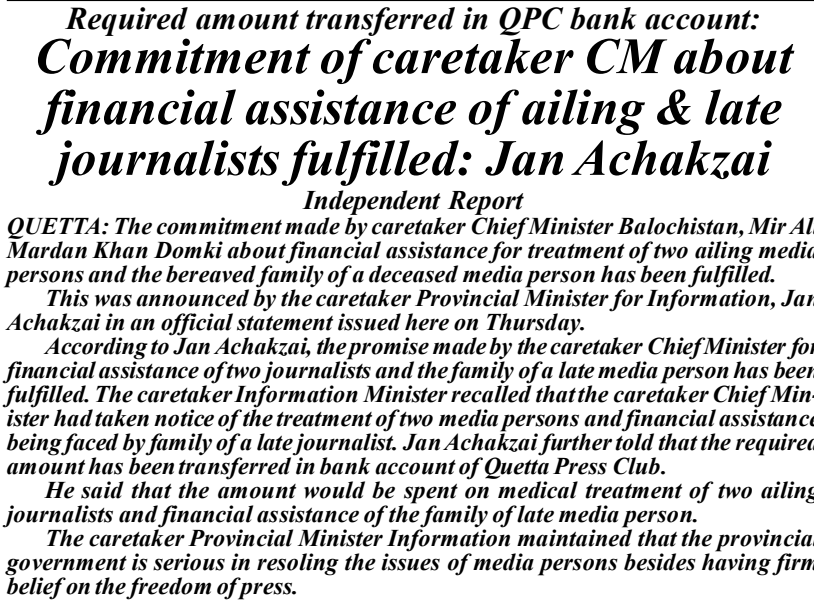
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QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Mir Muhammad Zubair Khan Jamali being briefed by Director Levies Abdul Ghafor Magsi. DG Levies Naseebullah Kakar is also present



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

Caretaker Minister Home visits Levies Directorate: Services of Levies force for restoring peace valuable, maintains Zubair Jamali

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Muhammad Zubair Jamali has stated that the services of Levies force for restoring peace in the province are valuable.

He expressed the hope that the Levies force would continue to perform their duties regarding protection of life and property of the masses in the same manner.

The caretaker Minister was speaking on occasion of the visit of Balochistan Levies Force directorate on Thursday.

He maintained that it is top priority of the present government to restore law and order in the province. No stone should be left unturned in protection of life and property of the masses.

He said that the martyrs of Levies force are our heroes, who rendered sacrifice of their lives in the line of duty.

Appreciating performance of the Levies, the Minister said that it is because of the sacrifices of Levies and other law enforcement agencies that law and order situation has been improved in the province.

The Director General Levies force briefed the caretaker Minister about overall performance and functioning of the force besides its strength and other related matters.

He informed that special attention is being given on discipline in the force. He said that the Levies officers and personnel are determined to protect the life and property of the masses.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Friday September 01, 2023

Beyond reason

The violation of fundamental rights — including the right to due process, to freedom of association and speech — across the country, is now beyond farce. There is not even the pretence of adhering to the law, only a relentless determination to erase all dissent through whatever means can be conjured up to illegally deprive recalcitrant individuals of their liberty, and to silence them.

Consider the travails of lawyer and vocal critic of enforced disappearances, Imaan Hazir Mazari. Her 'original sin', a fiery speech made at a PTM rally in Islamabad, has been used to file three FIRs against her. She was first arrested on multiple charges, including sedition, rioting and dacoity, etc — by law-enforcement personnel who reportedly barged into her residence in the early hours without an arrest warrant.

Granted post-arrest bail in one case, Ms Mazari was kept in custody until she obtained bail in the second one as well. Shortly after her release, she was rearrested outside the prison gates — this time on far-fetched allegations of 'terror financing' — an arrest that her lawyer has claimed violated the Islamabad High Court's orders.

Outspoken PTM leader Ali Wazir, arrested alongside Ms Mazari, is yet to be granted bail. The former South Waziristan MNA was an exception earlier for having been kept behind bars on various pretexts for over two years, despite being acquitted and granted bail several times. But post May 9, there is a sinister predictability to the pattern of repeated incarceration at the pleasure of the authorities.

Ms Mazari's mother, former PTI MNA Shireen Mazari, was subjected to the same until she announced she was leaving her party. Many other PTI leaders — including Shehryar Afridi, arrested an outrageous 10 times — have been made to go through this 'revolving door imprisonment', which makes a mockery of the courts. Those turning their backs on the party 'won' their freedom.

While PTI's lawyers are preoccupied with defending Imran Khan, the legal troubles of other party leaders — not to mention ordinary PTI supporters — are getting scant attention. Several of them are in the security establishment's custody and facing trials in military courts.

The Punjab caretaker government informed the Lahore High Court that the detainees are not allowed to meet their families or legal counsel of their choice. Are these foreign enemy agents or citizens of Pakistan?

The flagrant abuse of power being witnessed today leaves Pakistan looking like a country virtually unmoored from the universal principles of justice on which its Constitution and its international human rights obligations are based. One wonders whether the centres of power are cognisant of how this affects the country's global standing. Or is that not a priority in these times? As for the caretakers, pleading helplessness is not an option. They are complicit.

**Asma Humayun**

"A 50-year-old man presented with myalgia, headache, loss of energy and appetite. He has lost seven kilograms in the last five months. He is sad with weeping episodes. He has difficulty waking up early in the morning and has lost his concentration. He has two handicapped children, ages seven and five, both completely blind. He is always thinking about them."

The case above was reported by a doctor in Lower Dir last week after being trained to identify common mental disorders and offer pharmacological and psychosocial interventions in primary care. The training is part of a comprehensive, evidence-based and scalable model developed by the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives

(MoPDSI). In collaboration with the health department, KP, and the International Medical Corps, over 50 primary care doctors and clinical psychologists have been trained in five districts across KP thus far. The trained staff is now connected to a web portal through a mobile application, which allows them to confidentially send in data and seek supervision from experienced mental health specialists.

The intervention, designed to build the capacity of healthcare providers by implementing Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) guidelines, is recommended by the World Health Organisation as a key strategy to integrate mental health at the primary healthcare level to overcome the gigantic treatment gap that exists in countries like Pakistan.

Consider: there are an estimated 1.5 million people in Lower Dir. It is estimated that 300,000 (20 per cent) of them are likely to suffer from a common mental disorder. Like 26 other districts in KP, there is no qualified psychiatrist in Lower Dir. In a few of

these districts, there are either self-proclaimed psychiatrists with no formal qualification, or those with minimal qualification (diploma/MCPS) after one or two years of training at most, and practising mainly in the private sector.

KP has 37 districts. Peshawar, like other major urban centres, has high specialist resources with at least a dozen qualified psychiatrists in the public sector and an even higher number in the private sector. Then there are nine other districts that have a teaching hospital with at least two qualified psychiatrists. These districts can be said to have a moderate level of specialist resources. As far as clinical psychologists in the public sector are concerned, there are no posts outside teaching hospitals. The indigenous burden of mental disorders in KP is compounded by security-related conflicts, economic crisis and climate hazards. The districts of Chitral and Kurram, for instance, are a troubling example of where high rates of suicide have been reported. Some parts of the province comprise a difficult terrain, which creates

problems for residents to safely commute for accessing healthcare. The recent chairlift scare in Battagram is likely to induce severe post-traumatic reactions for affected families. But with a severe dearth of specialist resources and no existing services for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) within the community, the only options for residents brave enough to seek help is to front the expenses and travel hundreds of miles for medical consultation in major cities, or resort to faith and faith healers.

It is not just the dearth of services but also the quality of care that is a concern. In our recent training workshops, it was evident that psychiatric practice, even in tertiary care hospitals, centres on a cursory biomedical approach. An average consultation lasts a few minutes, followed by a prescription heavily dictated by irrational polypharmacy. As is the case in the rest of the country, a powerful pharmaceutical industry seems to be subsidising these worrying trends.

Psychiatric outpatient clinics, both in the public

and private sector, are overwhelmingly marked by throngs of despondent families, aspiring for scientific care but unlikely to get any. One example is the widespread practice of prescribing benzodiazepines (sleeping tablets), which are highly addictive. There is no regulatory system to check these practices. A particularly worrying case is that of a well-established institution in the province which offers in-patient care to a large number of patients supervised by unqualified staff — the ethics of which is highly disputable.

Across the province, the concept of psychological care barely exists. International humanitarian agencies have been investing in MHPSS services over the last few decades. These initiatives are project-based and time-limited, thereby unable to sustain or create any meaningful impact. Psychologists serving in these projects face job insecurity and few opportunities for supervision to strengthen their skills. Despite an alarming rise in the use of illicit substances, including methamphetamine crystals (ice), opioids, cannabis and alcohol, neither

doctors nor psychologists are equipped to respond with basic psychosocial interventions. Worryingly, this gap is steadily being filled by unreliable commercial, often criminal, detoxification services.

Our experience of working with primary care physicians in KP showed that, depending on their parent institution, their knowledge and skills about mental disorders varies greatly. It is also not uncommon to find doctors who have graduated from Russia, China or Afghanistan with limited clinical skills. This is particularly challenging, unless the role of psychiatrists in the teaching units is redefined.

The MHPSS plan by the MoPDSI is designed to offer evidence-based trainings on a large scale, provide ongoing supervision to the trained doctors and collect valuable relevant data. This can help change the landscape of mental healthcare in the province. To scale up this intervention, a strong coordinating mechanism is needed where all available resources can be utilised in a meaningful way. — Courtesy Dawn

Closing the mental health gap**Grand national bargain, anyone?****Husain Haqqani**

Pakistan is dangerously polarized. Pakistanis are divided between supporters and opponents of a charismatic leader deemed a messiah by his followers and a scary demagogue by his detractors. There are other critical divisions within society as well, not least of which is the divide between those seeking civil supremacy and those more accepting of an expanded role for the military. Moreover, there is a longstanding ideological divide between those seeking greater Islamization, according to their own sectarian interpretations of Islam, and those aspiring for a tolerant homeland of Muslims run as a normal democracy. Ethnic cleavages between and within Pakistan's provinces have also existed for years as has the gap between the rich and the poor.

Given these cleavages, how likely is it that Pakistan can maintain its already weak semblance of democratic order before the powers that be proclaim that the rules of the political game need to be rewritten?

The last time the country witnessed similar polarization was in 1977. Then, after the March 1977 general election, opponents of the incumbent prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, took to the streets to demand his resignation amid assertions of election rigging. These protests escalated into a violent campaign for an Islamic government, which in turn led to the imposition of martial law by General Ziaul Haq.

General Zia built upon the demands in the street for 'Nizam-e-Mustafa' to rule the country for the next ten years, claiming that he was Islamizing the country's legal and political system. But it was his initial two or three years in power that might offer a key to understanding how political irreconciliation can actually lead to greater authoritarian control. After the street violence by the Pakistan National Alliance

(PNA) had brought the country to a standstill for months, Zia argued that Pakistan needed breathing space without politics. In other words, the military was managing affairs of the state as a stop-gap arrangement so that the overheated political space could cool down.

Much has changed in Pakistan since 1977, of course. Some might argue that what worked 46 years ago cannot work again. The media and social media environments are vastly different today, as is the national view of the military's role as the final arbiter of the country's destiny. But it is important to remember that chaos and polarization are not effective tools for keeping the military out of politics. If anything, the failure of civilian institutions to function, for whatever reason, and the inability of politicians to compromise, paves the way for a greater not lesser military role in politics.

To state that polarization threatens democracy, even as it might add to a single politician's popularity, is not the same as deeming the breakdown of democracy as desirable. But it is important to re-

mind everyone of the old maxim that describes democracy as a system wherein 'the majority has its way, and the minority gets its say.' If the majority has a tendency to be intolerant of the minority's right to have its say, as has often been the case in Pakistan, half of democracy's essence is denied. Once the minority figures out a way to deny the majority's right to have its way, the end of democracy arrives. Today, Pakistan seems to be witnessing both prongs of failure of democracy at work.

Democracy requires a civil opposition as much as a government limited by norms and rules, and Pakistan currently has neither. The judiciary is unable to resolve disputes because it is also polarized and has become politicized over the decades. Past experience suggests that recent developments have, at best, prolonged hybrid rule or, at worst, paved the way for another extra-constitutional intervention. Either way, the prospect of full democracy has been indefinitely postponed due to the polarized environment.

As a political system, democracy functions best

in an environment of compromise and mutual respect. It requires adherence to the ethic of sport. Many parties and individuals contend for popular support, the winners form the government, and the losers sit in opposition, but only until the next round. Unfortunately, Pakistani politics functions under the ethic of war. One side sets out to vanquish the other and losers are seen as having no rights.

Democratic contestation for power should involve securing votes on the basis of contending policy ideas, not just appealing to sentiments of an emotive people.

If one side wants high taxes on the rich, for example, and the other seeks reduction in taxes across the board as a way of expanding economic activity, there is room for compromise and negotiation. But if political actors paint politics as a battle between good and evil, in which they represent good and the other side evil, then differences become irreconcilable.

The idea, drawn from religion, of political confrontation being a battle between Haq (eter-

nal truth) and Baatil (eternal falsehood) in Pakistan's political sphere has made compromise impossible and has contributed to the diminished democratic space. But the current march to catastrophe is not inevitable. A grand national bargain, involving all political forces and the all-powerful army, could strengthen constitutional democracy.

The bargain would involve some consensus on three crucial areas — economics, foreign relations, and national security — and agreement on political rules of the game. Politicians would have to accede to working with one another instead of looking for covert deals to undermine each other.

"The honourable gentleman/lady from the other side" would have to be the preferred mode of address within parliament, instead of 'traitor,' 'crook,' 'thief,' or 'dacoit' at rallies.

Cooperation would have to replace confrontation and polarization. But will it happen soon enough to avoid the disaster that awaits Pakistani democracy? — Courtesy TheNews

Inflation and devaluation**Khurram Husain**

For more than two and a half years now, at least, the country has been seeing relentless and unending pressure on the exchange rate and the price level. The present bout of exchange rate volatility began in May 2021 and has continued unabated since then. The dollar had moved around 150 to the rupee for two years until that month. Less than 30 months later, its value doubled versus the rupee, and still the pressure is refusing to subside. It took 10 years for the dollar to double in value from 75 to 150 rupees, from 2008 till 2019. It took less than two and a half years for it to double again from May 2021 till the present.

As the same time, inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index skyrocketed only a few months after May 2021, and rose relentlessly till our time, with a few interruptions along the way.

The question to ask is: what is driving this relentless surge for almost two and a half years now, punctuated with brief moments of what seems like stability? Why this persistent surge in pressure on prices over such a long period?

To find the answer, do a simple exercise. This gets a bit technical, so let me explain it first. Take the money supply projections contained in the IMF staff reports of April 2021, February 2022 and September 2022. Take the overall broad money supply, called M2, as well as the aggregates called Net Domestic Assets (NDA) and the Net Foreign Assets (NFA), and put the

projections into an excel sheet. Underneath each of these projections, take the data reported by the State Bank for the same period, and calculate the difference between reality and projection.

The projection represents the path to stability. It tells us how the money supply and its aggregates need to move in order for the mounting external sector pressures on the economy to be dissipated. The real figures, reported by the State Bank, tell you what actually happened in reality. The difference — reality minus the projection — tells you how far the economy moved from its projected path to stability.

When you do this exercise, you will notice something. Overall, broad money growth remains more or less within a narrow band of where it is supposed to be. So far so good. But notice how the compositional aggregates are moving relative to where they are supposed to be. The IMF projected a certain level of money supply growth in each staff report. But in its projections, the bulk of the growth was supposed to come from rising NFAs, with NDAs either growing slowly (as per the April 2021 projection) or contracting slightly (as per the February 2022 projection).

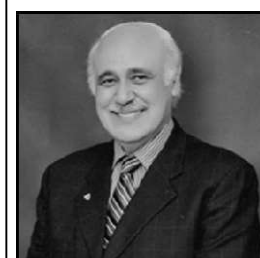
In reality, the exact opposite happened. If you plot the difference (reality minus projection) you will notice that NFAs are falling sharply while NDAs are rising. This is the diametric opposite of what was envisioned in the projected path to stability. And this divergence not only continues in both periods covered by the April 2021 and February 2022 staff reports, it also aggravates. By the time of the September 2022 staff report, the difference between where we are supposed to be by programme end (Q4FY23) and where we actually

were is so large that it is difficult to fathom how it is going to be rectified.

Now, look at the staff report for the latest Stand-by Arrangement. You will notice that the projections for the monetary aggregates do not even envision a path back to stability. All they do is arrest the deterioration. The previous three staff reports envisioned NFAs becoming positive within a quarter or two. In the SBA, they remain negative throughout the programme period. All that the government is being asked to do is to go into a holding pattern, arresting further deterioration in the money aggregates.

This is the crux of the matter. Serious malfunctions on the balance of payments and fiscal accounts are throwing the monetary aggregates far from their projected path to stability. This malignant movement in the monetary aggregates, in turn, is fueling inflation and exchange rate pressure. Endless rounds of devaluation are failing to arrest or dissipate the pressure, because the underlying movements keep producing more pressure even after every devaluation. It will take years, but it can still be done. The State Bank will have to build reserves by starving the interbank market of dollars, while the state will have to mobilise a massive tax effort the likes of which it has not done in decades. Or a fresh exogenous event that results in a new shower of foreign exchange coming upon us appears.

In the meantime, to get a sense of where things are moving, keep an eye on the broad money, NFAs and NDAs as they shape up, and see whether they are trending towards or away from the projection in the SBA. And best of luck to everyone! The scale of what is coming should not be underestimated. — Courtesy Dawn

On disobedience**F.S. Aijazuddin**

It began with Adam. John Milton blamed him for the world's woes in this fiery opening to his epic poem Paradise Lost: "Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit/Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste/Brought Death into the World, and all our woe."

With woes, disobedience came with some compensating virtues. The playwright Oscar Wilde contended that "Disobedience ... is man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made [.] and rebellion".

A recent rebel — Edward Snowden of WikiLeaks fame — argued: "Sometimes to do the right thing, you have to break a law [.] You have to make sure that what you're risking, what you're bringing onto yourself, does not serve as a detriment to anyone else."

In Pakistan, disobedience is the fourth injunction, omitted from our national motto. Disobedience has become the new norm — whether to the laws of God, to the Constitution, to man-made laws, Rules of Business, or to the orders of a superior.

Hameed obeyed his chief's orders and left the ISI. To some, such independence of action constituted disobedience to a higher institutional authority.

More recently, the principal secretary to the president, Waqar Ahmed, questioned the orders signed by his employer for reversion to the Establishment Division. The dislodged principal secretary retaliated with a confidential letter, which, though marked "For the Eyes of the President", somehow leaked into the media. In it, he complained: "The decision to surrender my services isn't based on justice." He urged the president to "initiate an investigation into the matter through the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) or any relevant agency to uncover any misconduct", adding, with misplaced bravado, that he was "prepared to testify before the Supreme Court or any other court".

As if that disobedience was not bitter enough for the beleaguered president, Ms Humaira Ahmad, identified by the president as the replacement principal secretary, declined his offer even before orders for her transfer had been processed. President Arif Alvi will complete his five-year term on Sept 9, 2023. All too conscious of the shelf life of his constitutional powers, he invited the chief election commissioner, Sikandar Sultan Raja, to meet him for consultation on the next election date. The CEC declined, fobbing him off with the humiliating rebuff that in his "considered view, participation in the meeting would be of scant consequence".

However, the CEC did find the time the following day to meet the US ambassador Donald Blome to hear him pontificate on "the United States' support for free and fair elections conducted in accordance with Pakistan's laws and Constitution". Perhaps His Excel-

lency detects a faint pulse in our Constitution and something still twitching in the laws of Pakistan that the Pakistani public no longer discerns. For them, the Constitution is no more than a perforated filigree of a once noble intent. Our laws, after 76 years of abuse and misuse, have become a discoloured Rubik's cube, manipulated by legislators, politicians and lawyers alike to yield meanings of their choice.

Disobedience is now endemic in Pakistan. Traffic rules are disobeyed. Tax laws are disobeyed. Jail manuals are disobeyed. Rules of Business are disobeyed. Orders in civilian ink and military khaki are disobeyed. Judicial orders, even up to the eminence of the Supreme Court, are disobeyed. And now, we see the tra-vesty of our president — the constitutional symbol of 240 million Pakistanis — reduced to the level of an ineffective supplicant, like "an old Arab prematurely blind, whom the caravan has left behind". Two hundred and fifty years ago, in April 1774, the British parliamentarian Edmund Burke warned his myopic colleagues in Westminster: "Reflect how you are to govern a people, who think they ought to be free [.] Yourscheme ... yields nothing but discontent, disorder, disobedience".

In today's stygian gloom, where churches are desecrated, the homes of our Christian brethren torched and Bibles burned, it might serve as a palliative to recall St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians in the New Testament: "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." Those who arrogate to themselves control of the destiny of 240m Pakistanis should not ignore these words. They do so — at our peril. — Courtesy Dawn

Madad terms quality education key to development of nation

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindi, on Thursday, terming quality education as key to the development of any nation assured that the government will take every possible measure to further enhance the quality of teaching and research in universities.

The federal minister was chairing a meeting with vice-chancellors of public sector universities of Sindh at the Higher Education Commission's Regional Office Karachi. Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar Ahmed was also present at the occasion.

In the brainstorming session on the improvement of the quality of higher education, vice chancellors of universities spoke in length on the performance of their universities, financial and other issues being faced and measures taken to deal with them and also presented suggestions for enhancement of quality of teaching and research in the higher education institutions.

Madad Ali Sindi, addressing the occasion said that Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar has directed him to visit educational institutions to look into their issues and take measures for their resolution.

The minister said that he had conducted visits to schools in Islamabad and issued directives for resolving issues and now he was having a meeting with vice-chancellors of universities of Sindh.

All the issues including quality of education and shortage of resources were discussed in detail in the meeting

and a series of engagements would continue he would also pay visits to the universities to review the situation and find solutions, the minister added.

Inviting suggestions from the vice-chancellors for improvements in higher education institutions, he said that universities were the highest places of learning and it was his basic responsibility to resolve the issues being confronted by them.

Chairman HEC, speaking at the occasion, said that universities in the country had complete autonomy in administrative and educational affairs but concepts of responsibility and accountability were also attached to it. HEC is responsible for setting and ensuring minimum standards for education and research in higher education institutes and providing guidance and resources for the purpose while it was also ensured that universities get their share in resources on the basis of prescribed criteria.

He said that universities could forward their recommendations for updating the curriculum and HEC would extend cooperation in this regard.

Vice-chancellors of different universities suggested that measures should be taken for the training of newly inducted teachers, improving teaching methodology, starting foundation semester for new students, establishing academia-industry linkage, focusing on ethical education, technology transfer, exchange programs of academia and scholars with foreign universities and preventing external pressures on university administration.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindi chairing a meeting with vice chancellors of public sector universities of Sindh at Higher Education Commission's Regional Office.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor, Muhammad Balighur Rehman presenting gifts to Pakistani-born renowned reciter of Holy Quran and teacher (Madris) at Masjid Nabawi (PBUH) Al-Sheikh Qari Saad Nomani after a meeting at Governor House

Sheikh Saad Nomani performs Qirat at Governor's House

LAHORE (APP): Sheikh Saad Nomani, the miracle reciter of the Holy Quran from Madina, performed Qirat (recitation of the Holy Quran) at the historic Darbar Hall of the Governor's House, here on Thursday.

Visiting Lahore on the invitation of Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman, Sheikh Saad Nomani is of Pakistani descent and lives in the Holy city of Madina where he teaches at the Masjid-e-Nabwi. He has the unique ability to render recitation in the manner of 99 world renowned qaris.

Sheikh Qari Saad Nomani recited Holy Quran in the manner of different Qurra at the Darbar Hall and mesmerized the audience with his miraculous recitation of the Quran. The audience listened to the qirat with rapt attention.

Qari Ahmed Mian Thanvi, Hafiz Abdul Wahab Ropri, Maulana Muhammad Umer Makki, Mufti Intikhab Alam Noori, former MPA Majid Zahoor, renowned Qurra and Naat Khawan were conspicuous among the audience.

The Governor Punjab welcomed Sheikh Qari Saad Nomani to the corridors of Governor's House, adding his presence was a moment of honor and blessedness.

Sheikh Saad Nomani stressed the need to introduce Quranic education to the children at an early age, adding that Quran is the path to success and redemption in this world and the life hereafter.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman presented souvenirs to Sheikh Qari Saad Nomani at the end of the ceremony.

PRCS provides cash assistance to landslide victims of Muzaffarabad

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Following the tragic incident of a landslide in Damishi Abhiyal, Muzaffarabad district, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) once again showcased its unwavering dedication to promptly assisting and aiding those affected.

Following the directions from Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Muhammad Ubaidullah Khan, the Secretary General of PRCS, presented a cheque amounting to PKR 760,000 to Mr. Ejaz Raza, Chairman PRCS AJK Chapter, to provide assistance to the victims and their families.

In light of this, a sum of PKR 40,000 per family will be distributed among the 19 householders from the impacted community. These funds are intended to support the victims in recovering and rebuilding their lives and homes after the devastating incident in Damishi Abhiyal.

Speaking on the occasion Chairman of Pakistan

Red Crescent Society National Headquarters Islamabad Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari said that PRCS will continue its support to the most vulnerable segment of societies without any discrimination.

Moreover, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari also expressed deep sorrow over the losses caused by the landslide tragedy and also assured that the National Headquarters Islamabad will continue to provide full support to the Azad Kashmir branch and other branches so that, immediate and timely assistance can be provided to the victims as a result of any disaster throughout Pakistan.

"PRCS remains dedicated to its humanitarian mission, providing assistance and relief during times of crisis, and ensuring that no one is left without support", added Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari.

The Chairman PRCS AJK Chapter extends heartfelt gratitude to the National Headquarters

Islamabad and Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari for their invaluable support in aiding the victims of the devastating landslide incident.

The Chairman PRCS AJK acknowledges the unity and collaborative effort that underline the mission of PRCS in alleviating human suffering and helping communities rebuild.

Previously recognizing the distress faced by families due to this tragedy, Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari directed immediate measures to extend aid to the affected community.

It's important to note that the unfortunate landslide incident at Union Council Patreend resulted in the complete destruction of 12 houses and partial damage to 7 houses. Additionally, over a hundred people were displaced.

Minister launches tour packages for families

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Caretaker Minister for Tourism, Museum, and Archaeology, Syed Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel here Thursday launched tour packages under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority for families and females.

Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), Barkatullah Marwat, General Manager Planning KPCTA, Hayat Ali Shah, GM Culture, Sajjad Hameed and Commandant Tourism Police were also present at the inaugurating

ceremony. The tour packages include the City Tour which would cost Rs 3000 per person, Takht Bahi which would cost Rs 1000 per person and Khanpur Lake Tour would cost Rs 3500 per person.

Addressing the ceremony, the minister said that KPCTA would also start a bus service enabling tourists to visit and enjoy the beauty of famous tourist destinations of KP and historic places of Peshawar City. He said that the city tour would include visit of Sethi House, Namak Mandi, Museum, Ghor

Ghatri and other famous places.

He said that KPCTA has also arranged various recreational events including paragliding, boating, and jet skiing for visitors on Khanpur Lake.

He appreciated the efforts of KPCTA to promote tourism and facilitate visitors and said that the hospitality of KP people in well known in the world. He also highlighted the steps of KPCTA to boost tourism and said that the government would provide all the needed assistance and cooperation to visitors.



MULTAN: View of business activities seen closed while market gives desert look during the shutter down strike called by trader community against inflation price hiking and the highly inflated electricity bills, in Multan.

'Encroachments a serious problem in Karachi'; says Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that encroachments are a serious problem in Karachi and KMC is also affected by it.

The land department has been directed to take action against people wherever they are occupying KMC land without legal documents and KMC is not getting revenue from that place, he said this while presiding over a meeting of Land Department officials on Thursday.

On this occasion, Municipal Commissioner Syed Afzal Zaidi and Mayor

Karachi's spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi were also present.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that all the records related to the acquisition of lease and revenue recovery have been brought from the land department. According to the preliminary information, the most important information has been found regarding Cattle Colony Landhi, where about seven hundred and fifty or eight hundred acres of land belong to Cattle Colony and about 250 acres of land is used for washing area.

Tourism Bus Tours launched to boost tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Minister for Information and Tourism, Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel Thursday said that efforts were underway to enhance tourism in the province, focusing on improving the security situation. He made these remarks during the inauguration of the Tourism Bus Tour service.

He mentioned that tours of Peshawar, Khanpur Dam, and Takht-e-Bhai had commenced, allowing tourists to explore various attractions

via a tour bus. The cost of the Peshawar city tour is Rs 32,000, Takht-e-Bhai is Rs 1,000, and Khanpur Dam is Rs 3,500. The minister also highlighted the historical significance of Peshawar and the ongoing work to attract tourists by preserving Buddhist sites and ancient relics.

The government also focused on addressing issues related to inflation, petrol prices, and electricity bills through discussions held with the federal government for funding allocation.

Summary for live streaming of court proceedings to be moved to CM: Law minister

HYDERABAD (APP): Provincial Caretaker Minister for Law, Religious Affairs and Human Rights Muhammad Umar Soomro has said that a summary would be moved soon to the Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister for live streaming of the proceedings of all courts of the province.

The move would help streamline the court proceedings with detailed information of the cases being heard in all courts of the province, he said while addressing a ceremony organized by District Bar Association Hyderabad here on Thursday.

The minister said that the main objective of running court proceedings online was to resolve the problems of litigants at the earliest and save precious time for lawyers.

He said that the Sindh Government was trying its best to resolve genuine is-

ssues of the lawyer fraternity and providing facilities to them so that they could run court proceedings amicably.

Umar Soomro also announced the provision of books and laptops to the lawyers of Hyderabad. About the issues being faced by the lawyers community, the minister assured that all genuine issues will be resolved on priority. Earlier, the President of the District Bar Association Khuda Bux Leghari, Naeem Ahmed Qureshi and other office bearers warmly welcomed the honourable guest and presented him with traditional gifts of Topi and Ajrak.

Khuda Bux Leghari expressed gratitude to the minister who graced the event as a chief guest and said that the Law Minister was not only his mentor but a trendsetter personality.



MUZAFFERABAD: People burn tyre during protest by Awami Action Committee against unjust price hike of electricity and unbearable inflation in the Capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Chairman MTI Policy Board visits KTH

PESHAWAR (APP): Medical Teaching Institute (MTI) Policy Board Chairman, Prof. Dr. Zia-ul-Islam on Thursday visited Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) Peshawar and attended a meeting about the institution's current infrastructural and human resource development.

He was accompanied by Prof. Dr. Azer Rashid, KP Policy Board Member, Chairman Board of Governors (BoG) KTH, Prof. Dr. Nadeem Khawar welcomed him and highlighted the institution's current infrastructural and human resource development.

The meeting was also attended by Management Dean KMC, Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, Dean Khyber College of Dentistry (KCD) Prof. Dr. Syed Nasir Shah, Prof. Dr.

Muhammad Ayaz Khan, Medical Director and Dr. Zafar Afridi Hospital Director, Nursing Director, Asmat Pasha and Director Finance, Abdul Waheed.

Chairman BoG KTH gave a briefing regarding key milestones including a Strategic Plan of five years from 2021 to 2025, Employee Service Regulation 2022, Grading Structure, Clinical and Non-Clinical Department Policies, Faculty Rationalization, Development of Sub-Specialties, Renovation of 7 Stories Building at KCD.

Governor condoles over demise of Hafeez Ulfat

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Thursday expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of senior journalist, founder and Chief Editor of Daily Sarhad, Hafeez Ulfat.

In his condolence message, the governor expressed sympathy and solidarity with members of the bereaved family.

The governor prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and courage for the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with fortitude.

CEO KP-EZDMC inaugurates tree plantation drive in Hattar

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Javed Iqbal Khattak Thursday inaugurated tree plantation drives in Hattar Economic Zone and Hattar Special Economic Zone (SEZ). More than 500 saplings have already been planted so far in the plantation drive in both zones.

The CEO also inaugurated the information desk in Hattar EZ in collaboration with the University of Haripur for the development of linkages between academia and industry, accompanied by Chief Zones Management (CZM), Fakhar-e-Alam Sahibzada and Chief General Operations (CGO).

PID Dera role for disseminating accurate information lauded

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Vice Chancellor Gomal University Professor Dr Shakibullah on Thursday lauded the role of the Press Information Department (PID) Regional Office, here, for disseminating accurate and timely information to the masses.

During his visit, the VC took around different sections of the PID where he was briefed about its role and other relevant matters by In-charge PID Muhammad Fazlur Rehman.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the revival of the PID office was a welcome initiative for the journalists of Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, South Waziristan, Lakki Marwat and Bannu districts besides local newspapers operating in those areas to get timely information and news about public welfare projects of the government.

Dr Shakibullah said that it was a matter of pride and heartening that a number of Gomal University graduates had proved their mettle through hard work, dedication and competency, effectively contributing their valuable services in various departments in the country and abroad.



THATA: Villagers of Coastal belt near Ketibandar district Thatta sits with tool kits and NFIs kits, during distribution of Emergency kits for survival in disaster, by Welfare Foundation with collaboration with IOM (International Organization for Migration, a part of UN).



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning and Development Muhammad Sami Saeed in a group photo during the launch of Annual Corporate Report 2022 of NDRMF project "Optimizing Impact-Investing in Resilient and Adaptive Future of Pakistan".

Foreign minister stresses safe, secure environment for UN peacekeepers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani on Thursday said ensuring a safe and secure environment for United Nations peacekeepers who tirelessly maintain peace around the globe should be the foremost priority. Addressing the 2023 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Preparatory Meeting on "Safety and Security of Peacekeepers" here, the foreign minister said Pakistan's participation in UN peacekeeping, spanning over six decades, was a tangible manifestation of its contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, in line with the UN Charter.

He said legal frameworks and adequate accountability mechanisms were paramount for peacekeeper safety. "We must stand firm in holding accountable the perpetrators - individuals and groups that harm or threaten UN peacekeepers."

Medical care for peacekeepers is also essential, he said adding "Our peacekeepers deserve the best care including mental health support. Standardized training, first aid provisions, and enhanced medical facilities are crucial for that".

The FM maintained that addressing challenges, including language barriers and administrative obstacles, should also be one of our top priorities.

He said the spectre of the threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to peacekeepers' security needs a commensurate response. "We must intensify pre-deployment

training; equip our peacekeepers with cutting-edge technology; and augment their capabilities for countering the IED threat."

The minister highlighted that leveraging technology was vital to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. "The Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping underscores the need to enhance situational awareness, counter disinformation, and optimise the use of technology. By doing so, we empower our peacekeepers to make informed decisions and fulfil their mandates more effectively."

Jilani Abbas Jilani said while Pakistan was proudly contributing over 4,000 troops to various ongoing UN peacekeeping missions, the attention should also be focused on the realm of peacebuilding. "Just as we have established a state-of-the-art facility for the training of peacekeepers - the Centre of International

Peace and Stability (CIPS), where we are gathered for this meeting - we also hope to collaborate with the UN Secretariat and our international partners to create an Institute for Peacebuilding," he remarked.

He also urged the finance contributing partners to embrace a more equitable distribution of the burdens associated with peacekeeping missions.

The challenges faced by peacekeepers, he said were universal in their impact, and it was imperative that the financial responsibilities reflected this shared endeavour for global peace and security. "Open and constructive dialogue between TCCs and FCCs is essential to harmonize our efforts, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and fairly. Transparency in financial commitments and decision-making processes is key to building trust and enhancing mission efficacy," he added.

BHC asks candidates claiming to have paid illegal gratification for jobs to submit affidavit

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court has asked the candidates who claim to have paid or have been asked to pay illegal gratification by the government officials, or anyone else on their behalf, to submit affidavit in this regard. The Court also directed to Director General Public Relations to publish a notice for information of general public in the national and local daily newspapers and anyone either candidate himself / herself or his / her / their relatives aware or witnessed the payment or demand of any illegal means shall submit their affidavit before the Registrar of this court.

directed to compile a list of those individuals and receive the affidavit (s) for the court's perusal. The Court comprising Mr. Justice Kamran Khan Mulakhail and Mr. Justice Iqbal Ahmed Kasi passed the order in a petition filed by one Bayazid Khan versus Secretary Secondary Education, Balochistan and others. As per the court judgment, after hearing the learned counsel for the applicants, the petitioner and keeping in view the issue raised in this petition, all these applications are accepted and the petition is directed to amend the petition by arraying the applicants / interveners as respondents and applicant / intervener Muhammad

Naeem as petitioner to the petition. Suffice to observe here that this petition was admitted for regular hearing, when this news became talk of the town that vacancies in the Government departments in general and in the Education department in particular are offered to be sold out against illegal gratification and even during course of hearing of this petition along with connected petitions, a number of litigants are appearing before the court and lamenting complaining about the issue, therefore, it appears that the recruitment process in the public sector departments are neither transparent nor impartial. Even today some of the individuals were ready to file their affidavit and to swear on oath, that their relatives / off springs / siblings have been asked to arrange payment for appointment on the subject posts.

PM directs maximum facilitation of overseas Pakistanis at airports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday directed the Immigration and Customs authorities to extend maximum facilities to overseas Pakistanis at airports. "The overseas Pakistanis are a valuable asset for the country and their services for economic stability are laudable," the prime minister said chairing a meeting to discuss the matters related to the national economy. In the meeting, the prime minister was apprised of the current economic indicators as well as the present situation. The meeting held consultation to devise a strategy to curb smuggling of different items besides re-

viewing the progress in the barter trade with Iran. The representatives of the business community assured the government of their all-out support for revival of the national economy. A detailed discussion was also held regarding the dollar appreciation as well as the steps to curb the illegal business of the foreign exchange. Caretaker Ministers Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Gohar Ejaz, Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti and Murtaza Solangi, Advisor to PM Ahad Cheema, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed, Federal Board of Revenue Chairman Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana, federal secretaries and senior officials attended the meeting.

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QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

Minister Communication visits NHMP, pledges support to improve traffic safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Caretaker Federal Minister for Communications Shahid Ashraf Tarar visited the National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) headquarters here on Thursday and pledged to extend maximum support and cooperation to the force to improve traffic safety. The minister was given a briefing on the NH&MP's working strategy and the challenges. He said that he was impressed with the force's efforts to reduce traffic accidents and pledged to make sure that the NH&MP has the resources it needs to continue its work efficiently.

Tarar also made several suggestions for improving traffic safety, including making anti-doing devices mandatory for drivers of public service vehicles, increasing the rates of traffic violation fines, and solving the shortage of manpower in the NH&MP. The minister said that he would work to increase the salaries of NH&MP employees, who are currently underpaid compared to other law enforcement agencies. Tarar's visit to the NH&MP headquarters was a positive sign for the force and its efforts to improve traffic safety in the country.

CEO of Islamic Relief meets Chairman Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani Thursday appreciated Islamic Relief's unwavering commitment to humanitarian efforts in Pakistan, particularly in the wake of the floods that wreaked havoc across the country. Chairman Senate during a meeting with CEO of Islamic Relief Raja Waseem Ahmed emphasized the need for collaborative initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by these regions. The chairman highlighted importance of focusing on the most vulnerable regions of Pakistan, urging a concentrated effort in impoverished areas such as Balochistan, said a news release issued here.

Pak, Iran for enhancing economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Iranian Deputy Minister for Economics and Finance Reza Bakhshi Thursday called on Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs Humair Karim and discussed cooperation between Pakistan and Iran, with a focus on enhancing economic ties for the mutual benefit of both countries. Karim extended a warm welcome to Bakhshi and underscored Pakistan's commitment to nurturing the historic and amicable relations shared between the two neighbor-

ing countries. He expressed Pakistan's desire to strengthen these relations further, fostering increased trade and economic opportunities. The acting secretary appreciated the substantial progress achieved following the 21st Joint Economic Committee (JEC) meeting held between Pakistan and Iran in August 2022. Both sides agreed to hold bilateral talks and follow-up meetings to implement the decisions made during the 21st JEC and prepare for the 22nd JEC to be held in Iran.

Efforts afoot to introduce short & long-term Hajj packages

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed has said efforts are being made to introduce short and long-term Hajj packages under the government Hajj Scheme. Chairing a meeting in Islamabad, he said proposals would be sought from Pakistani cellular companies for the provision of affordable calling and data packages to pilgrims during their stay in Saudi Arabia. The Minister said a QR code will be introduced to prevent missing of luggage.

SC dismisses review plea against order for elections in 90 days of assembly dissolution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday dismissed a review petition of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against the verdict for holding elections within 90 days of the dissolution of Punjab Assembly. The three-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar announced the verdict after hearing arguments from the respondents. During the course of proceedings, the CJP said that the top court would act whenever the constitution was violated. The review appeal could not be accepted in current circumstances and therefore, it was being terminated, he said. The chief justice observed that previously, the ECP was of the view that it could hold elections if funds and security were provided, but now it was saying that the polls were not possible due to some certain reasons.

Justice Munib Akhtar remarked that the top court had proposed a solution to the ECP in the verdict that could file a constitutional petition if it could not hold elections in said time period. The ECP had no authority to take the election schedule beyond the time limit of 90 days as it was its mandate, he added. Justice Munib said that no one could violate the Constitution, and the institution concerned should approach the court if there were any difficulty in implementation of it. Giving arguments, the ECP's lawyer Sajeeb Swati said that he wanted to submit more relevant documents in light of the court's order. The Commission had been empowered to fix a date for the general elections after amendments in sections 57 and 58, he said and prayed the court to grant one-week time for case preparation. The lawyer said that the Constitution entrusted the responsibility to the ECP to holding fair elections in the country. The elections were not possible due to the incident of May 9, he added.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shaheel Qadir Khan presiding over meeting of Allowance Committee

Steps afoot to provide health facilities to patients in BMCH: Dr. Nadir

QUETTA (APP): Medical Superintendent (MS) of Bolan Medical Complex Hospital (BMCH), Dr. Nadir Khan Achakzai Thursday said that practical measures were being taken to provide health facilities to patients in the hospital. He expressed these views while talking to media persons here. The MS said that steps had been taken to make functional tube-well on an emergency basis and water supply was started in the hospital, nursing, doctors' hostels, including the operation theatre. The people were requested to take special care of cleanliness in the hospital, wait for their turn for X-ray, ECG and lab tests and cooperate with hospital staff, he said. Dr. Nadir Khan said

that with team work, the problems of the hospital would be solved and the cleanliness and security of the hospital and attendance of the paramedical staff to be ensured for maintaining quality of treatment in the hospital. "My door is always open for doctors, nursing staff, pharmacists, paramedical staff and other supporting staff to solve their legal problems", the MS said. He said that in addition to emergency in the hospital, in the OPD, specialist doctors were busy serving the public with TB, Hepatitis, AIDS, HIV, treatment and medicines were being provided under other projects including leishmaniasis treatment saying that vaccination process was going on at Corona Vaccination Center.

PIA accounts frozen again

KARACHI (Online): Federal Board of Revenue has frozen 13 bank accounts of Pakistan International Airline (PIA) in Thursday. According to a media report, FIBR officials said that action was taken on non-payment of federal excise duty of Rs. 8 billion. The bank account linked to Ayata will also be frozen. Officials further said that it has been decided to register a case against the PIA officials for not submitting the (Federal Excise Duty) FED. The dues were not submitted, even though the accounts were opened last month.

Tahafuz Khatm-e-Nabuwwat conference held in Quetta

QUETTA: Tahafuz Khatm-e-Nabuwwat (SAW) conference was held here at the spacious Railway Hockey ground here on Thursday evening. The conference organized by Aalmi Majlis-e-Tahafuz Khatm-e-Nabuwwat (AMTKN). The central Ameer of AMTKN, Maulana Pir Nasiruddin Khakwani presided over the conference. The other office bearers and senior members of

the AMTKN besides a large number of other people participated in the conference. Among prominent them were the Naib Ameer of the Majlis, Khawaja Aziz Ahmed, spokesman of PDM and leader of JUI, Hafiz Hamdullah and others. The speakers including Maulana Pir Nasiruddin Khakwani, Khawaja Aziz, Hafiz Hamdullah and others addressed the conference.

Zain Qureshi stopped from going to Dubai

LAHORE (Online): Zain Qureshi son of PTI leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi has been stopped from going to Dubai at Lahore airport. According to sources names of several PTI leaders were included in stop list after May 9 incident. Zain Qureshi was stopped from going to Dubai due to inclusion of his name in stop list. According to FIA sources Zain Qureshi was interrogated for six hours at Lahore airport and then he was sent back.

Anti-malaria spray drive launched to control diseases in Lasbela

QUETTA (APP): On special directive of Caretaker Balochistan Minister Prince Ahmad Ali Ahmadzai, Lasbela District Health Department launched the indoor residual anti-malaria spray campaign with the aim to control diseases in the area on Thursday. Chairman Municipal Committee Othal, Waseem Khas Khail, District Supply Chain Officer Amjad Ali Shah visited various places of Othal city and reviewed the performance of Hari mosquito spray teams. On the occasion of the visit, District Health Officer Lasbela Dr. Abdul Hameed Baloch said that by doing the current spraying, the breeding of mosquitoes could be controlled for six months. This will manage various diseases in the area, especially malaria and mosquito-borne diseases, he said and added that the launch of IRS in Lasbela was positive step as it was everyone's primary responsibility to keep the environment clean according to health norms.

EU Ambassador calls on Ahmed Irfan

ISLAMABAD (APP): European Union Ambassador Dr. Rima Kionka on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Ahmed Irfan Aslam and discussed mutual interest issues. The ambassador felicitated Ahmed Irfan Aslam on assuming the charge of the federal minister, said a news release. The minister said that Pakistan had always given importance to its bilateral relations with the European Union and GSP Plus status.



UK Ship HMS LANCASTER arrives at Karachi port

Royal Navy Ship visits Pakistan for bilateral exercise

KARACHI (APP): The Royal Navy Ship HMS LANCASTER with embarked helicopter, visited Karachi and conducted bilateral exercise WHITE STAR IV with Pakistan Navy on Thursday. Upon arrival at Karachi Port, Royal Navy Ship was warmly received by senior officials of Pakistan Navy and British High Commission, a Pakistan Navy news release said. On completion of the port visit, Pakistan Navy Ships TAIMUR, ASLAT, Pakistan Navy Maritime Patrol Aircraft, helicopters and Pakistan Air Force (PAF) fighters carried out two-day bilateral exercise with Royal Navy Ship and helicopter.

Gwadar Safe City Project on upward trajectory

GWADAR (INP): In a significant development, the Gwadar Safe City Project (Phase I) has seen substantial progress with the establishment of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the submission of technical and financial feasibility reports, all under the framework of the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan 2025. With an estimated cost of Rs 3,325.6 million, the Gwadar Safe City Project (Phase I) is being spearheaded by the Ministry of Homes and Tribal Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Technology under the Government of Balochistan. Key aspects of the project include the installation of optical fiber cables spanning up to 190 kilometers and the placement of multipurpose cameras at 411 locations. AbdulRazaq, Gwadar Development Authority's Deputy Director of Town Planning, informed Gwadar

Pro that the project, which has been long overdue for completion, is now expected to be expedited. It aims to cover the entirety of Gwadar City, encompassing vital buildings, roads, neighborhoods, the airport, bus stands, parking areas, educational institutions, health centers, and other government infrastructure. An official from the Ministry of Homes and Tribal Affairs also shared with Gwadar Pro that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in January 2022 between the Chief Operating Officer of the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) and the Project Director of Gwadar Safe City. As per the agreement, a technical team from PSCA will visit the Gwadar Safe City project to assist the installation of Safe Cities Cameras, Networking and Communication, and the establishment of a Command Center.