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dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Hub

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SIFC Apex Committee focuses on ways to improve business environment

Ministers brief media over steps discussed in 5th meeting of SIFC's apex committee presided over by PM Kakar; Caretaker gov't continues to implement int'l agreements, Consultation with IMF underway for relief in electricity bills - Solangi; Caretaker gov't adopts holistic approach to revive economy-Shamshad; -Solangi; IMF will give response on relief plan in a day or two-Power Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): The fifth meeting of the Special Investment Facilitation Council's (SIFC) Apex Committee held here on Friday with a special focus to improve the overall business and investment

economic growth. The committee deliberated upon various measures to be taken in short, medium and long terms to reap the envisaged dividends. Various practical steps were approved by the

conference here after the first session of two-day meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the minister said deliberations were held on the measures which were essential for reducing the government's expenditures and circular debt.

He was flanked by Caretaker Minister for Finance Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali, and Minister for Industry and Production Gohar Ijaz. Solangi said discussions were also held on working out a schedule for implementing the decisions already taken to carry out privatization of some departments.

He said measures to stop misuse of international agreements, if there is any, also came under discussion. Restructuring of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), measures for removing bottlenecks in foreign direct investment, including visa policy reforms, and steps to improve performance of different departments were also part of extensive discussion held on the first day of the SIFC meeting. He said an issue of smuggling of commodities, petroleum products and dollars were discussed at length.

prime minister that will be operationalized as soon as possible.

The prime minister asked the ministries to deliver optimal results irrespective of the time that was available with the caretaker government and emphasized to lay a strong foundation for the future government.

Meanwhile Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Friday said the caretaker government respected the international financial agreements and would continue to implement them in true letter and spirit. Addressing a news



environment in the country being imperative for 'economic revival'.

The meeting was chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and attended by Chief of Army Staff, Federal Cabinet members, provincial chief ministers and high-level government officials.

The ministries concerned presented their plans/roadmaps to overcome the macroeconomic challenges, governance related impediments and voids in regulatory mechanisms in a bid to attract both foreign and domestic investment, and stimulate

NEPRA notifies surge in electricity tariff

ISLAMABAD (INP): National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Friday approved the increase in tariff for electricity consumers by Rs 1.46 per unit. As per the issued notification, the power regulatory authority approved the increase in power tariff under fuel adjustment charges (FAC) for the month of July.

The notification stated that the surge in power tariff would be applied to the bills of September, meanwhile, the hike will not be applicable to Lifeline and K Electric customers.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs the 5th Apex Committee Meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council.

Caretaker CM directs to expand circle of investigations against corruption in govt. departments

Mir Ali Mardan Domki says Balochistan can't afford wastage of official resources and corruption

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has categorically stated that the province can't afford wastage and corruption in the official resources and as such, adding he directed to expand the circle of investigations in the government departments.

The caretaker Chief Minister was chairing a meeting held to review performance of the Balochistan Anti-Corruption Establishment here on Friday.

The Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan was also present in the meeting.

Secretary Services and General Administration Department, Babar Khan and Director General Anti-Corruption Establishment,

Sohail Anwar Hashmi briefed the meeting about the related issues. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Domki made it clear that there would be zero tolerance for corruption in the era of caretaker government.

He stressed that the impression of financial corruption would also have to be removed about Balochistan. He issued standing directives to the departments correct the irregularities by improving their financial matters.

He also asserted that the concept of punishment and reward would be ensured in the province. He said that while the good officers would be encouraged, stern action would be taken against those involved in the corruption and corrupt practices.

PPP reiterates demand for general elections within 90 days

Bilawal hopes ECP will hold free and fair elections within 90 days; Says PPP does people-friendly politics and governance;

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Friday reiterated his demand to hold general elections in the country within the constitutionally mandated period of 90 days.

Bilawal repeated his party's firm stance on polls days after reports emerged in a section of mainstream media claiming that the PPP would "adjust" its position on elections in 90 days.

On March 5, the PPP chairman's statement was

shared on its official handle X, formerly known as Twitter: "Chairman [of the] Pakistan Peoples Party @BBhuttoZardari has urged that the general elections should be held according to the Constitution, so that the democratic government can solve the problems of the people."

Referring to the tweet, a local publication claimed that it was the first time in recent weeks that the PPP called for adhering to the Constitution, without referring to the 90-day deadline.

Rabbani accuses outgoing president of unconstitutional actions

ISLAMABAD (INP): Mian Raza Rabbani, the former Chairman of the Senate, on Friday issued a scathing press statement, highlighting a series of alleged unconstitutional actions taken by President Dr Arif Alvi as his term comes to an end.

In his press release, Rabbani accused the outgoing president of failing to uphold the Constitution, 1973, and violating its provisions on multiple occasions.

Rabbani's statement

outlined the following key allegations against President Arif Alvi:

The former Senate chairman accused the president of promulgating ordinances without due consideration, violating Article 89(1) of the Constitution, 1973.

Rabbani alleged that President Alvi unlawfully appointed two members of the Election Commission of Pakistan, bypassing established procedures and the Constitution, 1973.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki chairing a meeting held to review performance of the Balochistan Anti-Corruption Establishment

Govt objections on bench tantamount to attack on judiciary independence: SC

Throws out PDM gov't's plea challenging bench

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while rejecting PDM government objection to bench hearing audio leaks commission case has termed it an attack on independence of judiciary.

The former government had constituted a commission into the alleged audio leaks of Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial's mother in law, wife of Khawaja Tariq

Rahim, son of former chief justice Saqib Nisar, Justice Mazahir Naqvi, Abid Zuberi and Parvez Elahi.

The chief justices of Balochistan and Islamabad high courts were included in this commission.

However Abid Zubairi challenged this commission.

Upon it the SC constituted a 5-member bench under the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Hasan Azhar and Justice Shahid Waheed.

SC bench held two hearings of this case and restrained the audio leaks inquiry commission from functioning.

However the former government filed a miscellaneous petition for removal of three judges from this bench on the basis of clash of interests.

The government raised objections on three judges of this bench including CJP Umar Ata Bandial, justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Muneeb Akhtar.

The court had reserved judgment on June 06 after hearing government petition whereby objection was raised on bench.

After 3 months, Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan announced this decision Friday.

The SC rejected government miscellaneous petition over raising objections on three judges.

The court while announcing short judgment declared government objections on bench an attack on independence of judiciary.

Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan while announcing the decision remarked objection on judges is tantamount to attack on court. The court will announce detailed judgment later.



ISLAMABAD: President, Dr. Arif Alvi exchanging views with Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan and Saad Bin Masoud Al-Harthi, Muslim World League Regional Director in Pakistan during meeting held at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad.

Constitutional term of President Alvi completed

ISLAMABAD (INP): The five-year constitutional term of President Dr Arif Alvi has completed.

Dr Alvi assumed the presidency on September 9, 2018. He will not vacate the office and will continue to perform his duties until the election of a new president.

Under the 1973 Constitution, a president is elected by the National Assembly, provincial assemblies and the senate jointly. At present, the electoral college does not exist in the country as the assemblies ceased to exist after completing their constitutional term last month.

It may be recalled that he held "consultative meetings" last week and agreed to continue until a new president is elected.

Pak expresses concern over availability of modern military equipment in Afghanistan

Asks India to stop human rights violations in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has expressed concern over availability of modern military equipment in Afghanistan saying leftover military equipment has come into the hands of terrorists.

"Pakistan and its security institutions are being attacked with this state of the art military equipment, this was said by Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch in weekly press briefing here Friday.

Responding to the queries of media persons in Islamabad today regarding the recent terrorist attack on military posts in Chitral, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan has communicated its concerns about the latest incident to the interim Afghan authorities.

The spokesperson said Pakistan and the United States have a robust dialogue on multiple areas including security and counter terrorism matters.

She said we have been communicating with the US and other partners both inside and outside the region about Pakistan's security concerns. She hoped

our friends and partners will understand the security compulsions that Pakistan has in this region including the threat of terrorism and the security situation because of the difficult and aggressive posture from our eastern neighbor.

She reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to eradicate the menace of terrorism.

Responding to a question, the spokesperson said we have invited our partners especially in the Gulf to come and invest in Pakistan. She said we are in touch with them in this regard.

Reacting to Indian foreign affairs minister statement she said Indian leadership should stop giving statements. The human rights violations are underway in occupied Kashmir under illegal occupation of India.

The international organizations of human rights have diverted attention of G-20 countries towards ongoing human rights violations in occupied Kashmir.

International human rights organizations have informed G-20 countries by writing them letter.

Governor lays stress on paying heed to means of formal and non-formal education to increase literacy rate

Kakar regretfully points out lakhs of our children aged between 5-15 deprived of education having no access to the schools in Balochistan; stresses need to know how many schools out of total 12,000 functional

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stressed the need to pay attention to all means of formal and non-formal education in order to increase the literacy ratio in the province, and in this regard, the importance and benefits of the mother languages can't be denied.

The Governor said that no doubt, there are over 12,000 schools in the province, but it is necessary to ascertain that how many are functional out of them.

He also stressed that it is quite better to educate the people and learn modern skills instead of

giving some alms and charity.

The Governor expressed these and similar other views while addressing a seminar on the International Literacy Day here at a local hotel on Friday morning. The seminar was arranged by the Literacy and Non-Formal Education directorate in collaboration with different national and international organizations.

The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali, Senator Sana Jamali, Fauzia Arshad, Shaheen Khalid Butt, caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Zubair Jamali as well as representatives of different international orga-

nizations and provincial government departments participated in the seminar.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor mentioned that the objective behind observance of the International Literacy Day is to steer the society out of darkness of the ignorance at the public level, and spread the beacon of light.

He regretfully pointed out that lakhs of our children aged between 5-15 are deprived of the light of education, and they have no access to the schools.

He expressed sorrow over the situation that our children remain in search of livelihood in the garages and garbage dens just because of the poverty.

Gas tariff to be increased on IMF demand

ISLAMABAD (INP): After the approval of relief to electricity consumption, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) demanded Pakistani government a significant 45-50 percent rise in gas prices.

According to the details, the IMF demanded an increase in gas tariff from 45 to 50 percent in the account of 'Fuel Adjustment Charges' from July 01 while emphasizing a crackdown on electricity and gas theft to improve recovery.

It is pertinent to mention here that any alteration in gas tariffs is subject to the approval of the federal cabinet.

Pervaiz Elahi sends to Adiala jail on judicial remand

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC), Islamabad, on Friday sent former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi to Adiala jail on judicial remand.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar addressing a seminar on the International Literacy Day at a local hotel

4,500 bags of sugar, 1,200 of Urea recovered as crackdown against hoarders continues

Independent Report

QUETTA: The crackdown against the profiteers and hoarders of sugar and Urea fertilizer remained continued in different parts of the provincial metropolis on Friday.

During the crackdown, a total of 4,500 bags of sugar and 1,200 bags of Urea were recovered from different godowns located in the Link Badini road, Sariab.

During the raid, a total of 65 solar panels and 1,000 plastic bags were also seized. The godowns of hoarders were also sealed after the recovery of sugar,

Urea and other items. Needless to mention here that the crackdown was started on directives of the Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat.

Meanwhile, the resolve has been expressed by the district administration to continue action against the hoarders and smuggling of sugar and Urea.

The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Muhammad Zubair has appreciated the performance of district administration on successful action taken against the hoarders.

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Waking up

Six hundred billion rupees is not pocket change; not for a country stumbling from one crisis to another as it tries to keep ahead of a possible default.

In a responsible government's hands, such a sum could be utilised for immense public good, such as funding hospitals, establishing schools, creating roads or, simply, paying off national debt.

Yet, if our caretakers are to be believed, this is the ballpark figure for annual theft and recovery losses in the country's power sector.

Just the scale of it makes it seem like the ultimate scam: how else does one describe some groups of people being allowed for years to consume electricity worth hundreds of billions for free, while the government subsidised this theft either with public funds or by burdening honest citizens with higher costs to pay for others' misdoings.

As long as the government was picking up most of the tab, few were bothered. Now that the burden has started shifting to the public, the inflation-weary are asking difficult questions, which the authorities are struggling to answer.

The caretaker government on Wednesday blamed the "jet-black integrity" of some officers in the power distribution network, as well as the politicised management of power distribution companies, for facilitating this daylight robbery of public resources.

It was a rather incriminating statement to make. The citizenry has a right to know why nothing was ever done to bring such elements to book, especially when hundreds of billions of rupees in losses were being recorded.

The government has finally resolved to go after the parasitic elements in the power distribution network, and it is hoped that there will be no further delay in securing results.

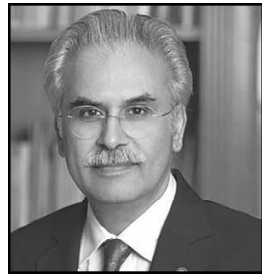
Meanwhile, it is also promising a three-pronged strategy to minimise theft and recovery losses, which includes mobilising the police and administration to launch a crackdown in high-theft areas. All of these look good on paper, but their efficacy can only be gauged once there are results to discuss.

It must be highlighted that it will not be easy to overhaul the power sector's recoveries in a short period. The availability of 'free' electricity has likely created significant distortions in local economies where theft and refusal to pay are endemic.

The sudden imposition of high electricity bills in these areas during what is an already fraught economic climate will, therefore, cause considerable upheaval, and police alone may not be able to contain the resulting social fallout.

However, this cannot be the reason to keep putting off the exercise. Theft and recovery losses have grown to the hundreds of billions because successive governments kept kicking the can down the road.

The authorities must now ensure that bill-payers will no longer be cheated out of their hard-earned money by unscrupulous elements.



Zafar Mirza

My quest for quality primary healthcare (PHC) continues. I see it as a panacea for health development in my country. We will never be able to improve our worst national health indicators without paying serious, sincere and sustained policy and fiscal attention to PHC. We have abysmal health indicators because we have abysmal PHC.

PHC is the foundation of universal health coverage. Without this footrest, UHC would remain a dream.

Somewhere in our minds we have all accepted that PHC means poor healthcare for poor people. And that this poor healthcare can be provided by any untrained health professional. In that sense, poor attention to PHC also reflects the elite nature of our

health sector and society. The elite mindset is pervasive and hence the neglect of PHC is systemic. Governments spend relatively little on PHC; we don't teach PHC to our medical students, nor expose them to its facilities; the discipline of family medicine is not developed enough. In most cases our young doctors have never set foot inside a PHC facility even after completing their house jobs.

When I took over as a special assistant to the prime minister in 2019, I personally visited BHUs and RHCs — 18 of them — in the rural areas of Islamabad Capital Territory. None of them had ever seen a properly appointed doctor and the required staff. Many were deserted or being operated at a very sub-optimal level by whatever staff was available. This was within the radius of a few kilometres from the seat of the federal government. We took some remedial measures. Through PC-Is, the buildings were upgraded and staff was appointed and now the situation is much better. But if this could be the situation in the capital, one can only imagine the situation in the remote parts of Balochistan

and Gilgit Baltistan.

In the last two years I have travelled within the country and have visited many kinds of public and private health facilities, health projects and emergency situations. In all this, I have been mainly driven by my quest to see and learn from good practices in PHC.

In the public sector, PHC is developing at a snail's pace and continues to suffer from lack of all kinds of resources. In the commercial private sector, our general practitioners are on their own except for a handful of NGOs working with a few of them on preventive care. Commercial private hospitals, barring a few big ones for the very rich, are outright exploiting the patients.

Unnecessary prescriptions on the behest of corrupted pharmaceutical marketing, unnecessary and expensive diagnostic tests with set rates of kickbacks for doctors who order them, and even unnecessary and unsafe surgeries are so common in the private health marketplace that it is now considered an accepted norm about which there is no need to even feel guilty!

However, there is a huge though unquantified

not-for-profit sector in health. This sector is unfathomable and comes in all shapes, forms and scale. I have had the privilege of visiting some of them in the last two years. These initiatives are driven by passion fuelled by local and foreign philanthropy and development funds. Most of them are driven so much by a passion for service that they leave behind quality considerations and proper staff training, as well as give attention to developing systems.

In a recent visit to Karachi en route to Cairo for a WHO expert consultation on PHC, I had the privilege to visit two not-for-profit PHC projects and one not-for-profit hospital. Visiting these organisations and spending hours in their facilities has given me a great sense of satisfaction and promise and has reinforced my belief that quality PHC can be organised and delivered to poor people in Pakistan, by respecting their dignity and in accordance with their needs.

First, I visited the Sina Health, Education & Welfare Trust which has matured the art of delivering quality PHC services over the last 25 years. Currently, they are operating 39 PHC centres in the slums of Karachi. All are purpose-built well-designed PHC facilities with a well-trained PHC team and a dedicated facility manager.

All operations are managed through an electronic medical record system. There is an in-house pharmacy and diagnostics services are offered. Special emphasis is put on mental health and there are dedicated teams for quality assurance, continuous staff-training, monitoring and research. Two aspects of this operation particularly impressed me: continuous development for improved systems and consciousness of the importance of developing a model of care that is replicable.

Secondly, I visited a similarly high-quality PHC organisation, Shine Humanity, which specialises in delivering quality health services in rural areas. Founded in 2009 by a few Pakistani doctors in the US, the organisation has gradually developed its system and

currently operates 12 facilities, which include purpose built-fixed facilities, satellite clinics in the more remote rural areas of Sindh and mobile clinics. They also digitally manage the whole operation and have almost all the attributes of the Sina Trust.

Lastly, I spent half a day at the 200-bedded Koochi Goth Women Hospital in Landhi. It is now much more than a hospital — a sprawling healthcare complex over 14 acres. It is a labour of love. It now houses the largest programme for free midwifery training and a school of nursing. A new 100-bed children's hospital and a medical college are under construction. All health services are completely free and resources are raised through local philanthropists.

Each one of the above examples is so inspiring and promising that they deserve separate articles. Most importantly, I have witnessed quality PHC at work for the underprivileged in Pakistan. How public-sector PHC can incorporate best practices from these PHC models should be the next discussion. -- Courtesy Dawn

In pursuit of quality PHC

Are Pakistanis really leaving?



Dr Ayesha Razaque

Coming so soon after the tragic news of the sinking of a migrant boat with around 750 souls on board, 350 of them Pakistanis, in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Greece, people took them as uncaring and out-of-touch with the prevailing public sentiment that drives migrants, legal or illegal, to attempt to escape tough economic conditions at home. Whether the soundbite was purposefully cut, or the point was inartfully made, it kicked off a public debate on the merits and demerits of emigration in a country like ours.

In the last few years, as the local economy gradually turned from bad to worse, more people have been heading for the doors. That frequently brings out a low-level panic about "brain drain". In the most recent iteration, that fear was

underscored by claims of record emigration in 2023 (never mind the fact that that year is not over yet) and that this time the stream of emigrants is qualitatively different, comprising an unprecedentedly large proportion of educated people.

Fortunately, we do not have to take anyone's word because these are the kinds of claims that can be quantified and for which reasonable authoritative data is available. The Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) of the Government of Pakistan maintains and publishes detailed data about emigrants. In the first seven months of this year, 450,000 people have already emigrated. If the current rate holds steady, that is projected to bring the number of emigrants for this year to around 770,000. That would still be significantly less than last year's 832,000. Even if the rate accelerates and the total comes out above that, it would still not be a record. That was in 2015 when 947,000 people left the country.

There is also another factor to consider: emigration numbers in both 2020 and 2021 were at their lowest since 2006 because

Covid travel restrictions had ground all travel, including emigration, to a halt. After travel restrictions were lifted in 2021, the backlog of migrants stuck in the pipeline, which must have been sizable, gradually began working itself out of the system. With oil prices at highs again, post-Covid Gulf economies have been doing very well. Given that more than half of Pakistani migrants move to the Gulf, the 2022 figures should have made a new record. So much for the total volume of emigrants.

But what about the claim that a disproportionate portion of emigrants today are white-collar professionals? Here again, the BEOE distinguishes between five categories: highly qualified, highly skilled, skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled. In order to not overwhelm the reader, let me collapse the three middle categories into one and call it 'skilled'.

What then is the breakup across highly qualified, skilled, and unskilled workers? Among emigrants so far this year, emigrants break across highly qualified, skilled, and unskilled categories 3.0 per cent, 53 per cent, and 44 per cent, respectively. That is almost

the same as 2022's breakup of 2.0 per cent, 55 per cent, and 43 per cent — hardly any difference. It is also very similar to what we saw in 2015, that record-breaking year, when the breakup was 2.0 per cent, 59 per cent, and 39 per cent, respectively. So, counter to public claims, up until July of this year at least, professionals seem to make up the same proportion of emigrants as they have in years past.

Broken down by professions, the largest number by far is contributed by those classified as labourers, followed by drivers, masons, carpenters, technicians, electricians, painters, mechanics, etc. Doctors, engineers, managers, and accountants are almost invisible by comparison. Bottom line: As of July 2023, there is no visible change in the composition of the migrant outflow from Pakistan.

Going forward, is it possible that a lot more people and a lot more white-collar workers are expressing their wish or intention to emigrate? That might very well be. Economic conditions right now are the toughest I can remember.

Although white-collar workers continue to make up only a tiny fraction (3.0

per cent) of all emigrants, this segment has set off fears of brain drain. The IMF's World Economic Outlook puts Pakistan's unemployment rate at 7.0 per cent. A study by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) put the unemployment rate among Pakistani graduates in 2021 at 16.1, what we can now refer to as the good old times. Another 2022 report by PIDE put the unemployment rate of university graduates among urban youth at a staggering 31 per cent. Surely, things have only gone further downhill since then, as evidenced by the rocketing rate of inflation.

Obviously, the availability and retention of talent is an advantage that opens opportunities. But that advantage by itself is worth nothing if you do not create the right environment to put it to use. A large public university in Islamabad has been making waves on social media recently for a record number of resignations from its faculty members across departments this year. If we let recent history be our guide, many of them (maybe deemed unproductive) will move abroad and

go on to have successful careers; that has been the trend. This goes to show that it is not a dearth of talent but an un conducive environment that is to blame.

It is not the job of public servants and representatives (caretakers and elected) to encourage or forcibly stop migration. It is also not their job to post streams of pictures of themselves with all the trappings of government. We do not need grand pre-announcements of things about to happen before they have happened. We do not need to see pictures of (usually) men with stern expressions huddling at conference tables until we see something come from it.

If this or any future government is truly concerned about brain drain, it needs to fix the conditions that drive people to leave — tax agriculture, real estate, and other un/dertaxed sectors, collect electricity bills where they have never dared to collect them (but continue supply), start the long job of fixing public schools and hospitals, etc. It is time to put its head down and do the unglamorous hard work. -- Courtesy TheNews

Crow and the swan



Zubeida Mustafa

In his highly readable book *Slaughtered Without A Knife*, retired chief justice of Pakistan Jawwad S. Khawaja gives an account of his oath-taking ceremony in Islamabad in August 2015. I reproduce excerpts as readers would find his own words poignant and also appreciate the author's views on austerity and ostentation:

"[My] oath-taking ceremony was held at the glaringly incongruous Presidential Palace. This was on Aug 17, 2015. A couple of days before that, a steel trunk was delivered to my chamber. It contained outlandish, ornate robes, a pair of shoes with metal buckles, a wig and other paraphernalia... The crow trying to mimic the swan, as the Seraiki saying goes. The strange, out-of-place attire reminded me of the occasions when I had attended the oath-taking ceremonies of the two chief justices who immediately preceded me. They had worn these same robes... I found the regalia to symbolise obsequious servility to the pre-independence British era which continues to awe us and enchants our imagination..."

"I, therefore, had the trunk with its contents sent back... there was a law on our statute books prescribing a dress code for judges... It was worn by me at my oath-taking... [What was] apparent from this incident was the unnecessary emphasis on ritual and form over substance. The pomp, show and extravagance of the whole ceremony made me think: 'can

this attitude be justified when our governments are approaching all and sundry, with begging bowl in hand?' It is a question all public officials, being trustees for the people of Pakistan, need to think about..."

"I had gone to the Presidential Palace for the oath with my friend and driver, Sardar Ali Hasan, in my official car; very functional, though somewhat old... For now, after the oath, when I came out of the front entrance of the Presidential Palace, I was surrounded by many fawning officials, but I did not find Sardar..."

"I inquired about him and my car, and was shown a large and obviously very expensive one; a top-of-the-line bullet-proof Mercedes Benz. I was informed that this now was my official vehicle. It was to be accompanied by a convoy of vehicles... full of security personnel, an ambulance, a vehicle fitted with equipment to detect and disable explosives and a few other vehicles. So, within the two hours or so between my arrival and my departure from the Presidential Palace, I had been transformed from a mortal into a demigod with entitlement..."

"I told whoever was in charge that I did not want this car and security detail. So, Sardar came with my perfectly functional car in which I returned to the Supreme Court. It is such things as cars, convoys, security details and fawning sycophantic officials, which may help explain how, at times, a perfectly normal and sensible person starts behaving like a megalomaniac. In my view, such showy and pretentious displays at the state's expense cannot be justified. A more frugal ceremony would have been better and more dignified..."

The ostentation Khawaja Sahib writes about continues to be as relevant today as it was back in

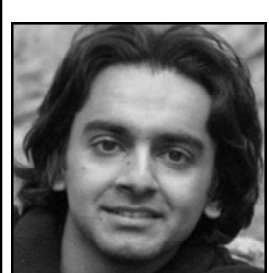
2015. Matters were worse given the magnitude of the economic crisis. Egalitarianism remains utopian for those who dream of equal distribution of wealth in society. While the underprivileged starve, their rulers travel with large entourages at state expense in a show of wealth to impress their patrons. But all they manage to do is demonstrate their insensitivity.

Today, when inflation stands at an astounding high of about 30pc, oil is the biggest chunk of Pakistan's impo-rters. Were this to be regulated it would make a profound impact. Are the huge cavalcades as described by the author really necessary? Are the lavish perks (bribe, should we say) that include petrol allowances running into hundreds of litres for senior civil servants essential? My activist friend Naem Sadiq calculates that the petrol perks to our administrators cost Rs216 billion annually. Is so much petrol needed to transport the high and mighty from one office to another? Obviously this allowance is grossly misused.

More than three decades ago, a prime minister who doesn't figure much in our current political discourse addressed the issue of austerity in official transport. He was Mohammad Khan Junejo who is credited with the words "Mein generals ko bhi Suzuki mein biha doon ga" ("I'll also seat the generals in Suzukis"). He didn't succeed in his mission and lost his job.

Times have changed and we face an existential crisis today. There must be people in our administration who are equally concerned. They must show the moral courage and integrity to emulate Khawaja Sahib. He rejected the luxury offered to him and continued to perform his duties efficiently and honestly, without losing the respect and affection of the people of Pakistan. -- Courtesy Dawn

Why caretakers?



Syed Saadat

When the PTI government was ousted through a vote of no-confidence, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari exclaimed: "Welcome to purana Pakistan." Little did we know that the clock would be turned back a little more than desired and we would end up in a very purana Pakistan that closely resembled the Gen Zia era when basic rights were constantly under threat, general elections remained elusive and the will of one man became the law.

Caretaker set-ups are a brainchild of the same era. Gen Zia introduced the idea, which was later endorsed by political governments and passed into law. The reason given then was that a sitting government could manipulate elections in its favour, and therefore, a caretaker government should conduct the elections.

This argument is faulty because a caretaker set-up can be used to engineer elections even more as it is much easier to manipulate hand-picked individuals than elected ones. The fact that by-elections take place without any such set-up further highlights the redundancy of caretaker governments.

Ironically, it seems redundant in either case, ie, when an electoral body is fully empowered and independent and when it is not. When the electoral body tasked with conducting the elections is fully empowered, the constitution of the land guarantees enough powers for it to go about its business independently, and when it is not fully

empowered — which is often the case in Pakistan — then a caretaker set-up would naturally be under the influence of the same power centre that controls the election commission.

Some might argue that if the concept was so useless, why did no elected government get rid of it through appropriate legislation? On the contrary, the recent PDM government enhanced the powers of the caretaker set-up. One can only comment that everything legal is not legitimate and that everything legitimate is not necessarily legal. Also, there is a built-in conflict of interest in politicians empowering the caretaker government, as these set-ups usually allow their lesser politically active relatives to enjoy the perks of being in government if they are hand in glove with the powers that be.

Now let us come to the caretaker alternative, keeping in mind the ground realities of the country. To explore that, we must consider the following questions: who are the people with hands-on experience in running the government? The civil servants obviously. They say bureaucracy is the steel frame of government and composed of unglamorous, boringly dressed individuals who do not have guns or golf courses under their sway — but who do make important decisions and keep things from going haywire. Imagine if an empowered bureaucracy had been in place at the time of the IPP agreements; we would not have been crying foul over the botched deals today.

The secretary of a ministry who happens to be a bureaucrat is the person that advises the politically appointed minister in running the ministry. The secretary in turn is advised by his whole team comprising seasoned individuals who have spent a lot of time dealing with government affairs in

their career. Most of this consultation is written and very well recorded, because that is how the bureaucracy works.

So, in the absence of a political government, like at the end of the term of an elected one, the powers of the minister's office should be delegated to the secretary. Since the individual has a career spanning decades and a reputation to protect, he will not comply with illegal orders. He remains accountable even after his stint is over as he would still be part of the civil service, unlike the selected caretaker ministers who are answerable neither to the public nor to any institution.

Similarly, the powers of the chief minister should be delegated to the provincial chief secretary. The highest political offices should remain vacant till the elected representatives of the people occupy them. This arrangement would also ensure the sanctity of the highest office of the government. Just like the army chief or the chief justice of the Supreme Court cannot be selected from a pool of absolutely random individuals, the highest political offices in the country should stay vacant till the representatives of the people are elected. One can argue that any outgoing political government will appoint civil servants of their choice in such positions but since the Election Commission is fully empowered to make transfers and postings, this can be easily reversed.

Lastly, a question for all readers. Who is more likely to make better caregivers, those who are actually selected, trained and groomed for such a role over the course of their careers, or any Tom, Dick and Harry selected on the basis of individual loyalties and sycophancy? I rest my case. -- Courtesy Dawn

Universities must allocate 5pc income for scholarships: Baligh

Urges teachers to play their role in developing students abilities as well as making best human beings

Independent Report
FAISALABAD: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that universities must allocate 5 percent of their income for scholarships, exclusively for the deserving students in order to utilize their talent for the expeditious growth of Pakistan. He expressed these views while presiding over the 50th meeting of the Senate of University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). In the meeting, the budget of UAF for the financial year 2023-24 worth Rs 20 billion was approved.

Addressing the UAF Senate meeting, the Governor said the youth are valuable assets who have to take up the rein of the future of the country. He said the government was taking all possible

steps for ensuring quality education and knowledge-based economy. He said that atmosphere of intolerance in society was increasing for which "we have to promote an environment of tolerance, love and respect for differences of opinion."

He said that in 2008, the then government allocated a budget of Rs13 billion for education, which was increased to Rs120 billion by 2018. However, in 2019, it was reduced to only Rs61 billion.

He said that the Technology Transfer Fund had been established in 2013-14 to provide indigenous solutions to the industry as well as promote innovation, which was essential towards knowledge-based economy.

UAF Vice Chancellor

Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that the university was providing scholarships to more than 7,000 students while teaching assistants, on-hour working and other facilities are also available for those students who were facing financial difficulties.

He said that in UAF, no student leaves education due to financial constraint, as ample educational scholarships are available. He said that the UAF was taking all possible measures to find a local solution to the problems of agriculture. He said that the University of Agriculture is working not only at the national level but also with international institutions on education and research issues and running international projects like Center for Advanced Studies.



FAISALABAD: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman presiding over the 50th meeting of the Senate of University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

Dollar to gradually come down during next few day: Governor

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Friday said that the economic situation was improving due to the caretaker government's decisions in the country.

He said, "The value of the dollar will gradually come down in the next few days."

While addressing a press conference at Goernor House here, he said that efforts were being made to resolve the issues of the business community and measures were being taken to provide relief to the people.

Chief Executive of the

Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) Zubair Motiwala was also present on the occasion.

The governor said that if the confidence of the industrialists and traders was restored, the economic activities would improve.

Karachi had been ignored for the last several decades, he said, adding that the armed forces were ready to fight economic terrorism along with border terrorism.

The governor said, "I will stand by the business community."

Tessori said that that PIA was in loss and

keeping in view that thing preparations had been completed for its privatization.

He said that if the investment came to the country, the economy would improve.

The governor said that he had requested the Caretaker Prime Minister to go to Islamabad for follow-up of assurances on Monday.

He said that diplomats could be taken into confidence to resolve the problem of IPPs. He hoped that the caretaker Prime Minister would give relief up to 300 units.

Govt making efforts to facilitate tourists: Feroze Jamal

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting of Galiyat Development Authority (GDA) was held under the chairmanship of Caretaker Provincial Minister for Tourism, Culture, Archaeology and Information & Public Relations Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakel here on Friday. During the meeting, the Director General (DG) GDA Wasif Saeed briefed the minister about the performance of the authority and its functions. Speaking on this occasion, the minister said

that the tourism department was making all-out efforts to provide the best facilities to the tourists. He said that the department should provide various opportunities to the public so that tourists could enjoy the facilities of the northern region. He said that good governance should be followed and proper sanitation campaigns should be made a priority for a clean and green Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He directed the elimination of the culture of nepotism.

Sadiqabad police arrest two robbers, street criminals

RAWALPINDI (INP): In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police have busted a gang and arrested two robbers and street criminals besides recovering Rs 520,000 cash, a motorcycle, and other items from their possession.

According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad Police arrested two accused namely Hamdan and Aqib Rasheed, who were allegedly involved in various robberies, and street crime cases.

Caretaker CM distributes financial assistance in tribesmen

PESHAWAR (APP): The caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Friday distributed financial assistance from his special funds amongst the deserving people of the newly merged districts.

It is pertinent to mention here that certain deserving people had requested the Chief Minister for financial assistance during his weekly meetings with the people of tribal districts, and he had decided to assist the needy people from special funds on compassionate grounds.

Talking on the occasion, the chief minister said that he was fully aware of the issues and difficulties being faced by the people of newly merged districts, and the caretaker provincial government was taking all possible steps to resolve

their problems on priority. He maintained that progress is being made on resolving the issues pointed out during the weekly meetings adding that all the genuine problems and issues would be resolved one by one.

The tribal people have faced a lot of hardships and multiple challenges for a long time, he remarked and assured that the provincial government is going all out to address the issues of merged areas.

He made it clear that the government is committed to continue to support the tribal people as well as to resolve their problems on a sustainable basis adding that no stone would be left unturned to this effect. The tribal people on this occasion thanked the Chief Minister for taking a keen interest in resolving the problems of the tribal districts.



HYDERABAD: A large number of Hindu community members are joyfully celebrating the Ramakrishna festival on the banks of the Indus River.

Health minister reveals successful completion of prisoners' screening

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Dr Jamal Nasir has revealed that the department had successfully completed the critical task of blood screening for AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases for a substantial cohort of 52,000 inmates in 43 prisons throughout the province.

In an address during the inaugural ceremony of a seven-day training camp at the Health Services Academy here on Friday, he shared the remarkable achievement by the Punjab Health Department. This ambitious initiative reflected the commitment of the department to enhancing healthcare services being provided to incarcerated individuals

and to curbing the spread of infectious diseases within correctional institutions. Dr. Nasir also unveiled the upcoming training, which will equip field teams to collect vital data on the social profiles of individuals affected by hepatitis and AIDS. Furthermore, these teams will conduct essential blood tests in selected districts across Punjab and Balochistan. Dr. Nasir elaborated on a pioneering pilot project underway, aiming to completely eliminate hepatitis within four union councils in Rawalpindi. He emphasised that the survey results regarding AIDS and hepatitis patients would serve as a litmus test for the effectiveness of existing preventive measures.

KP IGP inaugurates Command & Control Center in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Khan Friday inaugurated the Command and Control Center established at District Police Officer in Dera Ismail Khan.

Regional Police Officer Dera Nasir Mehmood Satti gave a detailed briefing to Inspector General of Police KP Akhtar Hayat Khan

about the Command and control center.

RPO while giving the briefing said that with the help of 300 cameras equipped with modern technology in the command and control center. A wide network has been established, through which 24-hour sensitive places of Dera city, security of government offices, central jail, police lines, four bazaars in the center of the city, markets.



KARACHI: A view of traffic jam at Hasan square.

May 9 violence: ATC remands 8 accused in police custody

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday handed over eight accused, involved in the Askari Tower attack case, to police on 6-day physical remand.

Earlier, the police produced the accused, Irfan Ahmad, Yar Gul, Raja Samiullah, Muhammad Ahmad, Altaf Hussain, Tayyab Ansari, Muhammad Umar and Mirza Arslan Baig, before ATC Judge Abher Gul Khan on completion of their identification process.

The investigation officer submitted that the accused were involved in the case but they had gone into hiding to avoid arrest.

He submitted that after arrest, the accused were sent to jail for identification, wherein they had been identified. He pleaded with the court to grant physical remand of the accused for investigations.

At this, the court allowed the plea and handed over the accused to police on 6-day physical remand. The court directed the police for producing the accused on the expiry of the remand term, September 14.

The Gulberg police had registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders and workers over attacking Askari Tower during the May 9 violence.



PESHAWAR: MOU signed between SBBWU and Dosti Welfare Organization during the launching ceremony of Dosti Peshawar's Women's Literature Festival 1st Edition at Governor House.

CM praises arrangements for urs, chehlum events

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi extended his commendation to the provincial ministers, administration, police and associated departments for their exceptional arrangements concerning the chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) and cricket matches.

He specifically lauded Provincial Minister Azfar Ali Nasir and his team for their remarkable efforts in facilitating devotees during Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh urs.

Acknowledging the relentless commitment of Inspector General of Police and his force in ensuring foolproof security, the chief minister also praised the commendable performance of the Cabinet Committee for Law and Order, Commissioner of Lahore Division, CCPO, DIG Operations, Deputy Commissioner of Lahore, and the dedicated staff

involved. He further highlighted the round-the-clock efforts of commissioners, RPOs, deputy commissioners, and DPOs throughout Punjab in maintaining a peaceful atmosphere.

Mohsin Naqvi noted a historic moment, emphasizing that Provincial Minister for Auqaf Azfar Ali Nasir stayed at Data Darbar for an uninterrupted three days, overseeing the urs arrangements.

He attributed the peaceful conduct of chehlum processions, congregations, urs celebrations, matches, and Defence Day commemorations to the grace of Allah Almighty and the wholehearted endeavours of the Punjab government.

In reflection, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed the belief that effective coordination and teamwork invariably yield positive outcomes.



LAHORE: Members Kisan Rabta Committee holds protest in the favor of their demands outside press club in Provincial Capital.

Relief cheque for Jaranwala incident victims handed over to George Ghulam

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Executive of Paraplegic Center Peshawar, Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, during a simple but impressive ceremony at Hayatabad Peshawar on Friday, handed over a donation cheque to George Ghulam, priest of the Diocese of Peshawar, for the victims of the Jaranwala tragedy.

These donations were collected by the employees and volunteers of the Center during a campaign for helping out the affected Christian brethren. A large number of Christian community leaders and center employees participated in the event.

On this occasion, Dr. Ilyas clarified that the purpose of the ceremony was to express solidarity and brotherhood with the

Christian community over the tragic incident of Jaranwala, because, he said, as humanity, the hearts of people of both religions beat the same.

He said that the officers, doctors, junior staff and volunteers of the Paraplegic Center collected donations beyond their means to heal the wounds of their Christian sisters and brothers in today's era of extreme inflation, which was a bright example of sacrifice.

Dr. Ilyas said that the homes and properties of many Christian people were damaged in this incident and the entire Muslim Ummah in general and the Muslims of Pakistan in particular were deeply grieved on it.

AC approves physical remand of Bhatti

LAHORE (Online): Accountability Court approved the physical remand of Chaudhry Parvez Elahi's right-hand man Mohammad Khan Bhatti till September 13 in Rs100 billion corruption scandal.

Court has also sought investigation report of accused on next hearing. Judge Naseem Ahmed Virk, Admin of Lahore Accountability Court heard the application of NAB for physical remand of Mohammad Khan Bhatti. NAB Lahore had requested for physical remand of Mohammad Khan Bhatti. Court approved physical remand of Mohammad Khan Bhatti till 13th September.

The court ordered accused to appear before court again on September 13 and also called investigation report of the accused. While talking to journalists informally in courtroom Mohammad Khan Bhatti said that I am innocent. I have told all facts to investigating officers and honorable court will also do justice to me.

LHC orders de-sealing of 10 theatres

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday ordered the de-sealing of ten commercial theatres of Lahore division.

The court ordered to de-seal theatres including Naz theatre, Mahfil theatre, Sitara theatre, Virsa theatre, Sangam theatre, Gulistan theatre, Ravi theatre and Nagina theatre.

The court also ordered relevant authorities to decide the application of theatre owners within 7 days, while observing that theatres should be opened till decision of relevant authorities and if there were any complaints against them, then action should be taken in accordance with the law.

Justice Raheel Kamran passed the orders on a petition filed by theatre owners challenging the closure of theatres by the provincial government.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Punjab government had sealed the theatres over violation of the Drama Act, in the last week of August. The government had initiated a crackdown against 'vulgarity' in commercial theatres and sealed them over hosting unethical dances.



KARACHI: Commander JNB Cdre Misnah U Amin interact with students of Bahria College during their visit to Jinnah Naval Base Omara on Commemoration of 58th anniversary of 'Navy Day'

LHC directs CS Punjab to decide within 15 days the application seeking constitution of JC

LAHORE (Online): On the plea seeking constitution of Judicial Commission (JC) to inquire into Jaranwala incident, Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed chief secretary Punjab to take decision within 15 days.

The petition came up for hearing before single bench of LHC led by Justice Sajid Mehmood Sethi here Friday.

The learned judge inquired from the state counsel has any JC been constituted on the incident so far.

The state counsel replied no commission has been constituted so far.

The petitioner has taken plea in the court basic constitutional rights of the Christians were affected in Jaranwala incident.

The procedure adopted for investigation in this incident is slow paced. Christian community does not expect justice from the procedure in place.

It is requested that court should order to constitute JC for the sake of justice.

13 drug peddlers, bootleggers arrested

RAWALPINDI (INP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers here on Friday arrested 13 accused besides recovering 1620 grams heroin, over eight kg charras, 30 bottles of liquor, a pistol and other items from their possession.

According to a police spokesperson, during the crackdown launched against drug peddlers and bootleggers, Rawalpindi district police arrested 246 accused and recovered over 200 kg charras, 788 liters liquor, 470 grams heroin and 50 grams Ice drug during the last two weeks.



HYDERABAD: Workers PPP Release Committee hold a protest against officials of Highways Division, in City.

Apex Court says: It is responsibility of govt to respect guarantees given to minorities in constitution

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has remarked it is responsibility of state to respect the guarantees given in the constitution to minorities.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan took up for hearing the incident of torching church in Jaranwala here Friday.

The petition was filed by minority leader Samuel PYARE requesting the court to take notice of Jaranwala incident.

Sardar Bushna Singh chairman Baba Gurunak welfare society appeared in the court.

The court inquired one issue of target killing was raised in your application. The OTHER issue you raised that decoration work and repair work in Gurudwaras are not being done.

Bushna Singh said Qabza group sees nothing

may it be mosque, temple or Gurudwar. Auqaf department should construct four walls of Gurudwaras and save them from illegal occupations.

The court remarked we are seeking report from all departments. You should give list of affected gurudwaras.

The court issued notice to secretary religious affairs, chairman Auqaf, attorney and advocate generals.

The court remarked the state needs to take practical steps to ensure security of Sikh community.

The court sought detailed report from IG KP on recent incidents of target killings.

The court summoned report from advocate general and IG Punjab regarding Jaranwala incident besides seeking report from home department Punjab on the steps taken after the incident.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani witnessing the election process of Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA) held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

Energy Minister stresses oil & gas exploration to reduce import bill

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Energy, Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali on Friday stressed the need of exploring oil and gas reserves in order to reduce the import bill. Addressing a news conference along with Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Minister for Commerce and Industry Dr Gohar Ejaz and Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs and Privatization Dr Shamsad Akhtar, he said matters related to power generation and petroleum were also discussed in the meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The minister said since 2013 work on the exploration of gas and oil had been lessened while annual import bill to meet their shortage persistently increased with rising circular debt. "We have to focus on exploration of oil and gas so that we can reduce our dependence on the imported fuel," he added.

Muhammad Ali said the SIFC discussed ways and means to control the cost of electricity generation and it theft, and save capacity charges payment (to independent power producers) in the winter.

"We want to give industries such a tariff in incremental supply so that we don't face losses in capacity charges payment even if they use more electricity as compared to previous years," the minister added.

He said matters related to governance and functioning of distribution companies (discos) and their privatization also came under discussion in the meeting. "We have to strengthen their governing boards and management, which will in turn help stop power theft and start recoveries," he said.

The SIFC reviewed the possibility of evolving a mechanism under which the power plants could supply electricity directly to the industry after paying the wheeling charges, he added. The minister said the gas sector was also facing alarmingly high losses. "We have to improve the gas pricing structure in order to save the government from losses."

Ali Mardan Domki calls for more efforts to improve literacy rate

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Ali Mardan Khan Domki on Friday called for more efforts to improve the literacy rate and to enrol a maximum number of out-of-school children to promote education for a better and prosperous future of the country.

In a statement on the occasion of International Literacy Day, the chief minister said the nation which wanted to develop, focused on the promotion of education.

He said the purpose of celebrating this day at the global level was to enlighten the world with the benefits of education and create awareness to promote literacy.

Ali Mardan stressed that optimum resources and efforts should be utilized to introduce the modern modes of education besides imparting the best digital training to the students.

He said millions of children are deprived of education every year due to economic, social and other reasons in the country.

He called for collective efforts by all the stakeholders to strengthen non-formal education besides formal one to impart technical education and skills among the youth to overcome the difficulties as many of them were unable to get education to matric level.

He said the role of the non-formal education department is also important to reduce the illiteracy ratio and ensure education for all in the province.

The literacy rate in Balochistan has increased over the past two decades due to educational awareness among the people.

Ali Mardan said efforts should be taken to reduce the dropout rate from schools and ensure a suitable environment for learning.

He added that according to an estimate, 2.5 million children are deprived of education in the country.



QUETTA: A representative delegation of Sibi, Babur, Kach led by Mir Hamza Marri meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Domki

President pays tribute to martyrs of Bannu attack

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Dr. Arif Alvi has paid rich tribute to the martyrs of Bannu terrorist attack who laid down their lives for the sake of the motherland.

The President on Friday telephoned the heirs of Naib Subedar Sanoobar Ali, Havaladar Aftab Ahmed, Havaladar Muhammad Arif, Havaladar Muhammad Imran, Sepoy Ahmed Ali, Sepoy Muhammad Haseeb Akbar, Sepoy Zeeshan Nazakat, Abdul Rasheed and Waris Ali, who were martyred in Jani Khel, Bannu terrorist attack on 31st of August. Dr. Arif Alvi paid homage to Shuhada and prayed that Almighty Allah may grant higher ranks to the martyrs in heaven. He also prayed for the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss with equanimity.

PML-N ready to enter in Sindh politics

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N is ready to enter in politics. Many important personalities of Sindh can also join PML-N.

According to media reports, PML-N vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif also expected to visit Sindh this month. The schedule of visit to Karachi and Hyderabad is also being prepared. According to PML-N, the announcement of new officials of PML-N Sindh is expected during visit of Maryam Nawaz while PML-N Sindh has started to activate workers before expected visit of Maryam Nawaz.

According to sources, The PML-N leadership is also communicating with like-minded political parties regarding Sindh.

Maryam Nawaz is likely to visit Karachi before leaving for London. Maryam Nawaz will also hold important political meetings during visit to Sindh.

On the other hand, it is being told that PML-N supreme and former Prime Minister (PM) Mian Nawaz Sharif will reach Pakistan on October 15 from London by normal flight and he will land at Lahore Airport.

According to PML-N sources, supreme Mian Nawaz Sharif has decided to reach Lahore from London by normal flight and his daughter and Chief Organizer of party Maryam Nawaz is busy in preparations to welcome him.

Party sources said that Nawaz Sharif has decided to come to Lahore instead of Islamabad, and his return home will be on a normal flight.

Party sources said that Nawaz Sharif has given task to central leadership for reception.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for PHE Sardar Ejaz Ahmed Khan Jaffar meeting with Secretary Finance Zahid Saleem

Pak and China sign MoU for addressing climate change

BEIJING (INP): In a major step to jointly work towards environment protection, Pakistan and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) titled "Provision of Goods Under South-South Cooperation for Addressing Climate Change".

Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Moin-ul-Haque, and Zhao Yingmin, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China signed the MoU at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) recently.

Under the MoU, according to Gwadar Pro on Friday, China would support Pakistan through the provision of 5,000 sets of Solar Home Systems; a set of Integrated Meteorological Observation Station; and a set of Integrated Cloud-based Early Warning Systems.

In addition, China would offer capacity-building programs for the officials of the Government of Pakistan.

The MoU would complement Pakistan's efforts to promote renewable energy and enhance its disaster management capabilities, especially in the areas of early warning, forecasting, monitoring, and disaster preparedness response systems.

While signing the MoU, Ambassador Moin-ul-Haque thanked the Chinese side and commended the ongoing collaboration between China and Pakistan to tackle the common challenge of climate change.

In this regard, he highly appreciated the Global Development Initiative (GDI), which aimed to strengthen partnerships between developing countries for the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the efforts to promote climate action.

He also recalled the 'timely' Chinese support to Pakistan following the climate-induced floods of 2021.



QUETTA: Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai talking with participants of Social Media Training held at Department of Public Relations

Chairman Senate commends PRA election process

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani along with the members of the Senate visited the polling area setup at Parliament House to observe the election process being held to elect the office bearers of Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA).

During his visit, Chairman Senate was impressed by the organized and efficient manner in which the PRA elections were conducted. He commended the democratic values and principles upheld during the election, affirming his belief in the importance of fair and open processes in all aspects. Furthermore, Chairman Senate acknowledged the invaluable role played by the PRA in providing comprehensive and accurate coverage of Parliamentary proceedings. He praised their commitment to keeping the public informed and promoting transparency in government affairs.

AC for implementing control price lists of edible items in Gwadar

QUETTA (APP): In light of the instructions of the provincial government, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Gwadar Muhammad Naveed Alam chaired a price control committee meeting to ensure the implementation of the control price lists of edible items on Friday.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of Anjuman-e-Tajiran and other relevant officers.

In the meeting, the Price Control Committee reviewed the prices of essential commodities in detail and instructions were also issued to ensure the implementation of the official price list.

Addressing the meeting, the AC said that the measures taken frequently to ensure the availability and quality of essential commodities in the city at fixed rates are providing relief to the people. The price Magistrate should continue the ongoing action against the wholesalers and ensure the sale of grocery items as well as fruits and vegetables as per the rate lists issued by the Market Committee, he said.

AC said that to save people from the current wave of inflation and to ensure the sale of essential items at fixed prices, the Tehsil administration and related institutions should coordinate and manage measures so that people could get relief in this regard.



QUETTA: Inspector General Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh presiding over a meeting regarding prevention of smuggling in the province.

NAB summons Gandapur in £190m corruption prove against Imran Khan

RAWALPINDI (INP): The National Accountability Bureau on Friday summoned former federal minister Ali Amin Gandapur to be involved in the investigation of corruption of 190 million pounds against former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan.

Through the office of Dera Ismail Khan DPO, the Rawalpindi NAB sent a call-up notice to Gandapur to appear before the bureau's Central Investigation Team on September 13.

PTI demands Alvi to announce poll date

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) core committee has demanded President Dr Arif Alvi to announce election date without a delay and unanimously passed a resolution during a session.

The PTI core committee members said that the country is facing constitutional, political, democratic, administrative and economic crises as the state infrastructure was shaken after the 'unconstitutional move' of April 2022.

The committee said that the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies had been dissolved on January 14 and 18 respectively but the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government did not fulfil its constitutional duty to organise polls in 90 days besides violating the Supreme Court's April 4 order. The political party urged for concrete steps to establish a democratic government to resolve the crisis. The PTI core committee said that Article 48 bounds the president to finalise the election date in 90 days.



QUETTA: Nawabzada Mir Ziaullah Khan Zehri meeting with Caretaker Provincial Minister for Sports and Culture Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani

Operation started against narcotics production and factories in K. Abdullah

Independent Report
QUETTA: The grand operation has been started against production of narcotics and factories in the Killa Abdullah district of Balochistan on Friday.

According to official sources, the Pak army, Frontier Corps, Anti-Narcotics Force, Levies and other law enforcement agencies are taking part in the operation, on directives of the Corps Commander Balochistan.

During the operation, a total of 15 factories having 938 kilogram charas were destroyed in the district.

It may be mentioned here that the plan of operation had been given final shape in a meeting held in the 12 Corps Headquarters on August 28, 2023.

Afterwards, a Jirga was also held under the anti-narcotics campaign in Killa Abdullah on August 30, 2023.

The local elders had demanded action against the narcotics factories and stop its production in the Killa Abdullah and Gulistan.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Captain (Retd) Muhammad Zubair Jamali checking quality of different items

Awareness raising & sensitization sessions on women rights and gender-based violence held

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Ministry of Human Rights organized an awareness-raising and sensitization sessions on women rights & Gender-Based Violence (GBV) for the local communities of Quetta. The objective of the event was to enhance the understanding of communities regarding the rights of women and GBV, its negative impact on society and ways in which it can be addressed through community-based measures and the role of Ministry of Human Rights in addressing these issues.

The event focused on areas like women's rights, pro-women laws, institutional, rehabilitation, referral & other protective measures in place for the survivors of GBV. More than 145 participants from various communities including women, students, transgender, civil society representatives, lawyers, education officers, health officials, district administration officers and media participated in the session.

Ms. Ambreen Gul and Ms. Rubina Zehri from Women Development Department, Quetta said that violence isn't only physical, there are other kinds of Violence as well, like Economic and Psychological violence.

Mr Shahzad Ahmad Khan, Director-IC, Ministry of Human Rights explained in detail the laws for protection against GBV, their sections, offences and punishments. He said that women constitute more than half of the population of Pakistan. Economic, physical and psychological violence prevents them from joining the formal or informal economy which not only causes harm to the victims and their families but it also hinders the economic progress of the nation as a whole. Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women and Ms. Farkhanda Aurangzeb NCHR, Member Balochistan explained various laws in the province related to women's rights and GBV. Mr Alauddin Khilji, Resident Director Aurat Foundation explained in detail the facilities/remedies available for women survivors, punishment for perpetrators and other GBV related issues.

Tax, electricity, gas thieves be declared 'terrorists': Asif

SIKALKOT (INP): Former Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has stated that the people of Chitral particularly youth were ready to fight along the Pakistan army and security forces. They condemned the terrorism of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and expressed solidarity with Pakistan army.

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Jirga of notables, elders in Chitral vows to fight along Pakistan security forces

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Special task force formed for crackdown against illegal tubewells

Independent Report
QUETTA: A special task force has been formed to launch crackdown against the illegal tube wells and defaulters of WASA in Quetta city.

The task force would comprise the officers of WASA in light of the decision made in the meeting held under the chair of caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki.

According to an offi-