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Audio leaks commission case: Govt objections on bench tantamount to attack on judiciary independence: SC

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, Jus-

tice 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.



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.

Pak expresses concern over availability of modern military equipment in Afghanistan

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 on 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.

Tarar, Donald discuss matters of mutual interest

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Communications, Railways and Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarar and United States (US) Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome on Friday discussed matters of



mutual interest. In a meeting, the minister said that Pak-US bilateral relations had evolved from security to other fields such as trade and investment, science and technology, climate change and sustainable development, health and education.

He expressed his profound desire to strengthen the relations based on development cooperation. He affirmed that the Pakistan Railways had been benefiting from General Electric locomotives provided by the US, and based on their vitality, another order had been placed recently.

Similarly, Tarar mentioned, Tarbela and Mangla dams were also symbols of Pakistan-US cooperation.

He further stated that the Karachi-Peshawar railway line had been affected by floods at certain vulnerable points and the US could cooperate with the Pakistan Railways to reclaim the tracks and secure them from future devastation.

He further apprised that Pakistan had entered into successful international agreements in Gwadar and the country was attracting foreign investments from global partners.

Tarar said Pakistan had played a vital role in COP-27, and was striving to comply with the environmental standards issued by the Climate Conference, in all sectors.



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

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 govt continues to implement int'l agreements, Consultation with IMF underway for relief in electricity bills - Solangi

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 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 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 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 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.

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

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.

During an interaction with journalists in Karachi today, Bilawal said: "The PPP demands that the elections be held within 90 days."

The PPP — which had been the most vocal among all parties in calling for elections within three months — demands that elections should be held at the earliest and as per the Consti-



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

tution, he added.

Bilawal says that the PPP does people-friendly politics and governance. "Our contest is with inflation, unemployment and poverty." Without taking the name of the establishment, the PPP's top leader said that he wanted to give a message to the "puppet makers" that they should stop experimenting on the people of Pakistan.

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.

Meanwhile, President Alvi returned to Islamabad on Thursday night after a visit to Lahore.

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.



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

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Jirga of notables and elders of Chitral and Swat held on Friday at Darosh fort vowed 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.

The participants paid tribute to the Shuhada of Chitral Scouts. They assured that the local community will stand by security forces.

They also assured zero tolerance against the social media activists floating negative sentiments. The local population of Chitral had come out in support of Pakistan army and was helping in transporting weapons, ammunition and food to the forward posts of the army.

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 Sanobar 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.

PTI demands President 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.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Finance Minister Shamshad Akhtar, Commerce Minister Gohar Ejaz, Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and Power Minister Muhammad Ali addressing the joint press conference after the SIFC Apex Committee meeting.

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

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.

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.



LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed posing for group photo along with others after visits Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) in Provincial Capital.

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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.

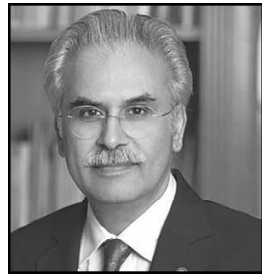
Meanwhile, it is also promising a three-pronged strategy to minimise theft and recovery losses, which includes mobilising the police and administration to launch a crackdown in high-theft areas. All of these look good on paper, but their efficacy can only be gauged once there are results to discuss.

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.

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

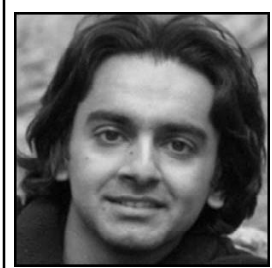
2015. Matters are worse given the magnitude of the economic crisis. Egalitarianism remains utopian for those who dream of equal distribution of wealth in society. While the underprivileged starve, their rulers travel with large entourages at state expense in a show of wealth to impress their patrons. 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-rts. 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.

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 DIKhan

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.

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.



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

PUC urges Saudi Crown Prince to champion minorities' rights, Kashmir resolution at G20 Summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) on Friday appealed to the leaders of G20 nations, with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Salman imploring to play a role in addressing the injustices against India's Muslims and minority populations, as well as the long-standing issue of Kashmir, during the upcoming G20 summit in India, emphasizing the importance of self-determination.

The PUC central figures, including Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Asad Zikria Qasmi, Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Muhammad Shafiq Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Maulana Zubair Abid, Maulana Mohammad Ashfaq Pitafi, Maulana Tahir Aqil Awan, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui, among others, in a joint statement, called upon G20 member states, particularly Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, to engage in discussions with Indian leadership during the G20 summit to end the injustices against minorities and seek a resolution for the disputed Kashmir, in accordance with United Nations agreements.

The scholars asserted that the issues of Kashmir and Palestine were fundamental to the Islamic world, and their resolution could contribute significantly to global peace.

As Saudi Arabia holds a central position in the Islamic world, they expressed hope that during his visit to India, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman would demonstrate the same commitment to global peace that he had shown previously.

They believed that his active role in addressing the plight of oppressed Muslims in India, specifically minorities, was of paramount importance.

Furthermore, the scholars underlined that there was no doubt that India had become a living hell for minorities, particularly Muslims. In this dire situation, Saudi Arabia's role was crucial in extricating them from this predicament, they added.

They commended Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman for his commendable efforts for world peace and stressed that Pakistan and Islamic scholars worldwide would always remember his contributions to peace and security. They expressed their admiration for his past and future endeavors as a leader of peace and security.



ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker, Raja Pervez Ashraf witnessing the election process of Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA) held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

Pakistan all set to organize world's first Global Health Security Summit, Shallwani

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan will be the first country in the world to host the Global Health Security Summit later this year. This was shared by Federal Secretary Health Itikhar Shallwani while chairing a meeting to launch the preparations for the global moot on Thursday. The meeting was attended by senior health officials, leading public health experts and representatives of partner agencies. The Prime Minister has accorded approval to holding the summit later this year which will bring together 500 participants including around 70 country delegates.

Pakistan is the current chair of Global Health Security Agenda and hosting this conference will enable us to showcase our strong resolve and commitment to the cause of saving our people and the global community from the pandemics, said the Secretary Health while addressing the participants. We are a resilient nation and have together done remarkably well in fighting the covid pandemic. There is a great deal that Pakistan can contribute to the knowledge and experience of the global community in the fight against pandemics, he added. Pakistan has most recently faced the ravages of unprecedented floods and the resultant spread of disease, highlighting the urgent need to strengthen disease response and surveillance systems. The recent pandemic has shown that spread of infectious disease in any part of the world is a threat to the entire global community. Therefore it is a shared responsibility, the meeting was told.

The meeting agreed on the thematic areas to be discussed in the summit which will include several panel discussions.

Ministry of OP&HRD increases minimum pension to Rs10,000

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) recognizing the hardships of retired senior citizens in prevailing era of inflation has increased the minimum pension from Rs 8,500 to Rs10,000 per month.

The Overseas Pakistanis Ministry on Friday issued the directions in exercise of the powers conferred by Sub-Section (a) of Section-2 of the Employees Old Age Benefits Act, 1976, increased the minimum pension from Rs 8,500 per month to Rs10,000 per month along with 17 percent increase in formula pension to the existing pensioners that would be in effect from July 1.

It also issued the instructions to implement the order to process the increase in the rate of the existing pensioners and the pending pension.

All pensioners drawing minimum pension of Rs 8500 would be allowed minimum pension Rs 10,000, with effect from July, 2023.

Moreover, the pensioners drawing formula pension as on June 30

would be allowed 17 percent in their existing rate of pension with effect from July, 2023. It also underlined that the 17 percent increase in rate would be applied only on pensioners awarded pension till June 30, 2023.

The formula pension awarded with effect from July, 2023 would not be allowed increase in rate of pension. However, such pensioners would be allowed formula pension as per schedule. It also underlined that the pension allowed from July, 23 would be treated as normal with regards to minimum pension of Rs. 10,000 and formula pension 17 percent increase in rate would be applied only to pensioners who were awarded pension till 2023.

The pensioners drawing reduced pension would be allowed pension reduced by one half per cent for each completed month by which age falls short of 60 years (55 years in case of woman) for minimum pension i.e. Rs. 10,000.

All reduced formula pensions settled on June 30, 2023 would be allowed 17 percent increase in their existing rate of pension, it added.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah chairing a meeting regarding revival plan of cultural and literary heritage.

Agriculture University of China recruiting talent from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The research group of Prof. Dr. He Cheng at China Agriculture University (CAU), Beijing is offering PhD and post-doctoral positions to Pakistani candidates in "Control of major livestock disease in Pakistan using China-aid technologies of key veterinary vaccines and diagnostic assay".

According to Gwadar Pro, the project aims to develop and promote key vaccines and diagnostic technologies by using cell fermentations and molecular biology techniques, in order to control major livestock diseases and contribute to animal products exported to international markets. A Chinese Professor at College of Veterinary Medicine, CAU told

Gwadar Pro that Pakistan and China are leading more than 50 collaborative projects in agriculture and animal husbandry. However, the livestock sector does not contribute to GDP with its full strength and still needs a lot of improvement. He said that this is basically due to the challenges of devastating diseases faced by Pakistan such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Avian Influenza, Salmonellosis and currently new emerging Lumpy skin disease (LSD).

The coordination in mutual trade can only be achieved to develop and implement a feasible technology-based project between the two countries.

NH&MP recovers stolen car from Swabi

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) recovered a car stolen from Rawalpindi near Swabi on Friday.

According to the details, Motorway Police was informed about a white Corolla stolen from Saddar Police Station Rawalpindi which started the search for it.

During search operation, the NH&MP found a vehicle abandoned near Karmel Sher Khan Interchange on Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway. After investigation, it was found that it was the same vehicle that was stolen from Rawalpindi and a fake number plate was installed on the vehicle. The vehicle was taken into possession and the search for the accused was started.

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 Gurunank 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 be mosque, temple or Gurdawar. 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 us 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.



WASHINGTON DC: Ambassador Masood Khan in a group photo following meeting a group of over thirty media persons of international correspondents committee of the National Press Club Washington DC.

Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs convenes

ISLAMABAD (Online): The meeting commenced with a comprehensive briefing provided by the Caretaker Foreign Minister, Jilil Abbas Jilani, regarding Pakistan's efforts to secure full membership in BRICS. He delved into the historical context and objectives of BRICS, highlighting its recent expansion to include member states such as KSA, UAE, Argentina, Egypt, and Ethiopia. He emphasized that BRICS expansion relies on unanimous member consensus. Pakistan is actively exploring the possibility of joining this group due to its goals of reshaping the International Financial Architecture and reducing dependency on the US dollar. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has initiated a consultation process with relevant stakeholders to streamline Pakistan's entry into BRICS.

During the session, concerns were raised by Senators about potential vetoes from India regarding Pakistan's inclusion in BRICS. Minister Jilani reassured that any member resorting to such a veto jeopardizes its own standing within the group. He also emphasized Pakistan's commitment to not engaging in regional power bloc politics, aiming instead for positive relations with all nations. Responding to questions about Pakistan's relationship with the United States, the Foreign Minister highlighted the global ramifications of conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine situation. He underscored Pakistan's policy of maintaining positive relationships with all nations, given the interconnectedness of today's world.

The Committee Chairman inquired about the advantages and disadvantages of joining BRICS, to which the Foreign Minister explained that Pakistan's membership would grant it a voice on an important international forum and facilitate trade and economic relations with member countries.

Who cares about peoples' miseries, Sheikh Rashid questions key politicians

RAWALPINDI (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) president Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has held leaders of all political parties responsible for destroying lives of the poverty-stricken masses by getting involved in their mutual fight for power struggle.

"The PPP and Maulana Fazlur Rehman are blaming the PML-N for creating economic mess in the country, but actually the people of Pakistan are paying the price of inefficiencies of all of them [political leaders]," he said in his latest post on X (formerly known as Twitter).

He said real challenges the masses were facing were poverty and unemployment which were not a priority for political leaders.

Taking jibe at the PML-N president, the seasoned politician said Shehbaz Sharif, being in public office, used to attend seven events a day, but after quitting public office always fell ill after reaching London. He went on to say that Nawaz Sharif had been suffering political illness for the last several years.

Prof. Dr. Iqbal invited to address inaugural session of 78th UNGA Science Summit

ISLAMABAD (PR): Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General of COMSTECH/ Director ICCBS has been invited to address the inaugural session of the 78th United Nations General Assembly Science Summit.



This esteemed global event, set to take place in New York from September 12 to 29, 2023, will host an impressive lineup of 1450 speakers across the world, making it a momentous occasion in the realm of science and diplomacy.

Prof. Choudhary's selection as speaker during the inaugural session of this prestigious event speaks volumes about his outstanding contributions to the field of science and his commitment to advancing global cooperation in scientific endeavors. His address on the opening day of the Science Summit UNGA78 will undoubtedly set the stage for insightful discussions and collaborations that have the potential to shape the future of science and innovation on a global scale.

This moment of pride not only reflects Prof. Choudhary's exemplary achievements but also underscores the significance of international collaboration in addressing the world's most pressing scientific challenges. We look forward to his inspiring address and the positive impact it will have on the global scientific community at this historic event.

Inflow, outflow of rivers, reservoirs level report

ISLAMABAD (INP): The position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoirs levels and the barrages on Friday was recorded as under:

Rivers: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 114000 cusecs and Outflows 113200 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 23700 cusecs and Outflows 23700 cusecs, Khairabad Bridge: Inflows 95000 cusecs and Outflow 95000, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 133000 cusecs and Outflows 40000 cusecs, Chenab at Marala: Inflows 36800 cusecs and Outflows 5900 cusecs.

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 146800 cusecs and Outflows 138800 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 142200 cusecs and Outflows 150000 cusecs, Tauna: Inflows 127100 cusecs and Outflows 107600 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 139800 cusecs and Outflows 110800 cusecs Sukkur: Inflows 98400 cusecs and Outflows 45900 cusecs Kotri: Inflows 134700 cusecs and Outflows 93400 cusecs Trimmu: Inflows 21500 cusecs and Outflow 5900 cusecs Panjnad: Inflows 67000 cusecs and Outflows 50400 cusecs.

Reservoirs (Level and Storage): Tarbela: Minimum operating level 1402 feet, present level 1550.00 feet, maximum conservation level 1550 feet, live storage today 5.809 MAF. Mangla: Minimum operating level 1050 feet, present level 1241.10 feet, maximum conservation level 1242 feet, live storage today 7.283 MAF. Chashma: Minimum operating level 638.15 feet, present level 648.00 feet, maximum conservation level 649 feet, live storage today 0.227 MAF. The inflows and outflows of River Indus at Tarbela, Jinnah and Chashma, River Kabul at Nowshera.

International literacy day observed

ISLAMABAD (INP): International Literacy Day is observed on September 8 every year to promote literacy and raise awareness of its importance in building more inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable societies. The day's theme for 2023 was "Promoting literacy for a world in transition: Building the foundation for sustainable and peaceful societies."

Literacy is the ability to read and write. It is essential for communication, learning, and participating in society. People who are literate are better able to access information, improve their job prospects, and make informed decisions about their lives.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), about 774 million adults lack the minimum literacy skills. This means that they cannot read and write a simple sentence about their everyday life.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Farooq Hamid Naek, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.