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Chief Justice of Pakistan says

Zulfiqar Bhutto reference an opportunity for judiciary, army to restore reputation

Decision to impose martial law rests with individuals, not army as institution

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has wondered whether the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto reference is an opportunity for the Supreme Court and armed forces to rectify their past mistakes and restore their reputation.

"Isn't this an opportunity for both institutions to get rid of the accusations hurled against them," the top judge remarked on Tuesday during a hearing of a presidential reference related to the death sentence awarded to the former PM Bhutto in 1979.

The apex court larger bench — led by CJP Isa and comprising Justice Sardar

Tariq Masood, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Musarrat Hilali — heard the presidential reference seeking to revisit the "controversial" death sentence awarded to former PM Bhutto in 1979.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and amicus curiae with expertise on the criminal and constitutional sides attended today's hearing.

CJP Isa also said that imposing martial law is a decision of an individual and not of an institution of

the army.

"Isn't the verdict in the Bhutto reference draw a line for the judiciary and the army," he added.

The Supreme Court also decided to hear the heirs of the late PPP founder and complainant Ahmad Raza Kasuri in the presidential reference.

CJP Isa directed all respondents to keep their arguments short and said that the top court wanted to conclude the hearing of the case before the retirement of a judge part of the larger bench. Amicus Curiae Makhdoom Ali Khan told the bench that the interviews of former judges Naseem Hassan Shah,

Dorab Patel, and Aslam Riaz were on record to prove the biases of the judges who awarded capital punishment to the PPP founder.

He said former judge Qaiser Rashid Khan had said that "even a cat cannot be awarded death penalty based on the evidence" present in the ZA Bhutto case.

Khan also said that the court can announce the verdict in the ZA Bhutto case under Article 187.

During the hearing, Justice Shah remarked that the court could not examine the merit of the case since the verdict had already been announced. However, the



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar witnesses the signing ceremony between Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation and Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc. (USA) for joint venture agreement for the value addition and export of pink salt.



ISLAMABAD: Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman, Asif Ali Zardari in a group photo along with independent candidate Bakht Muhammad Kakar, who won from Balochistan provincial constituency PB 39 after joined the PPP, in Islamabad.

'Mother of all rigging' has made Pakistan laughing stock globally, says Imran

Monitoring Desk
RAWALPINDI: PTI's founder Imran Khan has said that the "mother of all rigging" must end now because Pakistan has become a laughing stock globally, as per his sister Aleema Khan.

What exactly does he mean by "mother of all rigging"? It was dismantling the PTI, snatching its iconic election symbol of bat, not allowing the party's candidates to submit nomination papers, coercing candidates into withdrawing from elections and denying the party the right to canvass.

While speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail, where Imran is incarcerated, Aleema Khan said that her brother wants the culture of impunity to end and the mandate of the people must

be respected to salvage the country's reputation internationally. Imran also ridiculed his arch nemesis, the PML-N, which willingly bartered away its narrative to grab power. "Instead of honouring the vote, the 'selected ones' have honoured the boot," Aleema quoted Imran. "The selection was so blatant and blind that corruption cases were dropped by the selectors against the 'selected ones'," she further stated quoting her brother. "Instead the PTI chairman was sentenced to 32 years in jail after marathon trials on trumped up charges."

Imran said that pre-poll, election day, and post-election rigging denied the people of Pakistan their democratic right to choose their representatives.

If martial law is imposed then there will be damadam mast qalandar: Bilawal Bhutto

Calls for political parties to come together to steer country out of difficulties
LAHORE (Online): PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said if martial law is imposed in the country then there will be "damadam mast Qalandar."

"People of Pakistan has not given mandate to any political party. Those who claim to be of largest party they have not to talk to any one. Later we decided to talk to PML-N. The only way to steer out of prevailing situation is that we should sit together. Historical case is pending with Supreme Court (SC). The justice will be delivered to the grand son if not to daughter. We want history is set right, he said this while talking to

media men outside SC here Tuesday. He went on to say today once again the hearing of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto has been held. I think it is an historical case. Dictatorship ruled during the 50 percent of history of the country. Powers of parliament and power are linked to it. This judiciary will administer justice to founder of constitution.

Judicial murder of Bhutto took place in dictatorship regime. We hope judiciary will give us justice and wash the taint. We hope this presidential reference will help set right history so that we could draw a line that wrong was done in the past.



QUETTA: Activates of four Political Party Ittihad hold sit-in in front of RO office for recent General Election.

Formation of govt: Shehbaz meets Nawaz, Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif held separate meetings on Tuesday with three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. Sources divulged that Shehbaz called on Nawaz Sharif in Murree to discuss the matters in line with the formation of government in the centre and Punjab.

Prominent among those who attended the meeting were Ishaq Dar and members of the coordination committee. The PML-N's committee had briefed the bigwigs about the talks with the PPP. Meanwhile, Shehbaz had also held a meeting with Bhutto-Zardari on his return to Islamabad. Both leaders had held talks over moving forward on the talks in line with the formation of a government.

According to the sources, Shehbaz and Bhutto-Zardari were of the view that both parties should have to show flexibility in terms.

Another independent lawmaker from Balochistan joins PPP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Another independent newly-elected lawmaker from Balochistan, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, joined the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Tuesday.

The development came after Kakar called on PPP co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari. Prominent among those who attended the meeting were Sarfaraz Bugti, Sadiq Umrani, Malik Shah, Jamal Raisani, Aijaz Jakhriani, and Ali Madad Jattak.

Utilisation of human, mineral resources will lead to a stable, rising Pakistan: PM

PMDC, American firm sign agreement to increase value of Himalayan Pink Salt

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday reassuring the government's all-out support to the investors, said the effective utilisation of human as well as mineral resources would lead to a stable, prosperous and rising Pakistan.

"Our human resource is more important than our mineral resource. The human resource coupled with the mineral resource will lead to stable, prosperous and rising Pakistan," he said addressing the signing ceremony of a joint venture agreement between Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) and the US-based Miracle Salt-

works Collective Inc for establishing a dedicated facility for crushing and packaging of pink salt for the export purposes.

Managing Director of the PMDC Asad Ahmed and President of Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc Ahmed Nadeem Khan signed the agreement that was witnessed by the Prime Minister Kakar, Energy Minister Muhammad Ali and relevant senior authorities.

The prime minister said the practice of exporting raw materials should come to an end as the export of the products after value addition was direly needed. "This is the path for Pakistan."



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presenting appreciation certificate to Adil Naseer Ghilzai, XEN Communication and Works Department Kharan on his best performance

Situation in Chaman under control of administration: Protestors arrested on taking law in hand and blocking NADRA office in Chaman: Jan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that at least 10 protestors have been arrested in Chaman on taking law in hand and blocking the NADRA office.

In an official statement issued here on Tuesday, Jan Achakzai said that the protestors were apprehended by the police along with other law enforcement agencies in Chaman.

He mentioned that the protestors had been allowed to lodge peaceful protest for last few months. However, the local police was forced to interfere after the provocative action of blocking the Passport office in Chaman, he added.

The caretaker Minister Information asserted that the condition of enforcement of passport and legal documents for across the border movement is the decision of state and as such no hurdle

would be tolerated in this regard.

He also warned that stern action would be taken against those taking law in their hands.

Meanwhile, in another official statement issued the same afternoon, the caretaker Minister said that the situation in Chaman is under control of the local administration, which would not allow anyone to challenge writ of the government.

He said that the protestors are being dispersed by the local administration after removing hurdles created for blockage of the NADRA office in Chaman.

He said that local elders are holding talks with the protestors to remain peaceful.

While on the other hand, the passage of main Kozhak pass is also being cleared for the ambulances as well as other traffic.

Meanwhile, Jan Achakzai said that four under custody protestors were released on surety of the local tribal elders.

Solid stance of interim Balochistan Govt. accepted: OGDCL hints at paying billions of rupees to Balochistan on account of royalty

Outstanding amount of royalty to be paid by OGDCL to provincial Government on monthly basis; caretaker CM Domki says amount to be spent on well being of general public

Independent Report

QUETTA: In a major development on economic front, the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has finally hinted at paying the billions of rupees to Balochistan province, which otherwise payable against it on account of royalty for around three years, thanks to the solid stance adopted by the interim provincial government.

According to the senior high ups of the Chief Minister's secretariat on Tuesday, the OGDCL and provincial government has agreed upon the formula of payment of the outstanding amount of royalty.

It may be men-

tioned here that the OGDCL had stopped payment of the royalty to Balochistan since September 2021 mainly because of the extraordinary increase in the circular debt of the power purchasing companies.

However, the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki took up the matter of dues of the royalty at the national forum.

Then, OGDCL expressed its willingness on payment of the Rs. 12.5 billion to the province while accepting the stance of interim provincial government.

The official sources of CM secretariat informed that the payment of arrears of royalty would be made to the provincial govern-

ment on monthly basis. Meanwhile, on the important development, caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki said that Alhamdulillah, we remained successful in getting the province's stance accepted from OGDCL, which was otherwise pending for last three years.

He said that the royalty is right of people of Balochistan and as such the amount to be received from OGDCL on account of arrears of royalty would be spent on the public welfare.

The caretaker Chief Minister also said that the companies working in the province are bound to make payment of the royalty in accordance with the rules and regulations.

ECP issues notice to Nawaz amidst rigging allegations in NA-130

LAHORE (INP): The Election Commission has stirred controversy by issuing a notice to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif following a request from PTI-backed independent candidate Yasmin Rashid in NA-130. The Election Commission's directive comes amidst allegations of electoral misconduct, with Yasmin Rashid's lawyer and PTI leader, Advocate Ahmed Owais, decrying what he calls "the worst rigged elections in the history of Pakistan."

Owais, speaking at a press conference at Lahore Press Club, cited discrepancies in voting numbers, alleging that Sharif had hastily secured a difference of 74,000 votes.

PTI demands CEC Raja to step down over rigging in Feb 8 polls

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has demanded "immediate resignation" of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja for "failing" to hold general elections 2024 in a free, fair and transparent manner.

"Incumbent CEC [Sikandar Sultan Raja] has now become a controversial personality as he failed to stop rigging in elections; PTI demands CEC Raja to resign immediately," Barrister Gohar Ali Khan told journalists after meeting party's founder Imran Khan in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail.

He further said that all the inquiries into election

discrepancies should be impartial and without any interference. "We want the election results to be in accordance with the mandate of the public," Gohar added.

He also demanded that the polling authorities issue election results in line with Form 45 after several political parties alleged discrepancies in the results based on Form 47. Gohar Ali Khan pointed out that former Rawalpindi Commissioner's revelations affirmed the PTI's stance regarding rigging in the elections, saying that "non-transparent" elections could also hamper International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme with Pakistan.



LAHORE: Independent candidate from Balochistan Haji Wali Khan Noorzai and Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai announcing to join PML(N) during a meeting with Shabbaz Sharif.

Quetta-Chaman highway restored: Shutter down strike observed against arrest of dharna participants in Chaman

Independent Report
CHAMAN: The shutter down strike was observed against arrest of participants of dharna including its spokesman Sadiq Achakzai in Chaman on Tuesday.

According to reports, the police arrested organizers of dharna continued at Pak-Afghan border road in Chaman when they blocked the passport office as a mark of protest against enforcement of passport at the Chaman border.

However, the local administration and Frontier Corps raided the protest camp and arrested Sadiq Achakzai and some other protesters. On this situation, convener of dharna Maulana Abdul Manan and other leaders given call for shutter down in Chaman.

Following the call, shutter down strike was observed and the Chaman-Quetta highway was blocked for all kinds of traffic.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Open the books

The knocking on its doors keeps growing louder. How long can the ECP ignore it? Over the weekend, Pakistan's most prominent elections monitoring body as well as its top human rights watchdog have added their voices to calls for an audit of election results.

On Saturday, the same day a senior bureaucrat had 'confessed' to his involvement in results tampering, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan expressed its reservations regarding the "integrity and credibility" of the Feb 8 exercise, noting a range of issues that it said had "cast a shadow over the democratic process".

A day later, the Free and Fair Election Network urged the ECP to take immediate action and address complaints regarding illegalities committed in the compilation of election results. It also proposed a three-phase process to comprehensively address the widespread allegations of rigging, which is based on an audit of each step in the results consolidation process.

In Pakistan, it is almost customary for election candidates to refuse to acknowledge their defeat. Except a few, most are generally quick to cast aspersions and question the integrity of any election which does not go in their favour.

This time, however, certain irregularities have been so widespread that even otherwise impartial observers are joining the chorus of voices demanding a recount and investigation into the post-poll results compilation process.

For example, there are ample witnesses to the fact that both election laws and the rules governing how vote counting and compilation is supposed to be done were not adhered to by many returning officers on election day. Many independent observers, candidates and accredited media personnel reported being excluded or evicted from the Form 47 compilation process which was completed at ROs' offices, indicating that the most important check on the process was bypassed without any convincing explanation being given.

Compiled behind closed doors, many results later issued by ROs did not match the consolidated results from Form 45s issued to different candidates' polling agents. Fortunately, there is an extensive paper trail for each constituency, which can still be used to verify them. Fafen has called for an audit led by the ECP that starts by closely examining this paper trail. The monitor notes that the ECP still has power to adjudicate results "before the expiration of 60 days after publication of the name of returned candidate in the official gazette". It suggests that independent observers as well as election candidates be invited to participate in this audit, so that all controversies can be resolved satisfactorily. As such, these suggestions are not unreasonable or outside the law. They might show the ECP a way to redeem its image. Will it choose to assert itself as an independent, principled body, or continue to look the other way?

Will the Supreme Court Nullify the Elections 2024?

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Today, both the Supreme Court and the Islamabad High Court voiced their profound concern over separate yet crucial issues. The Supreme Court took a stern stance regarding a petition filed to declare the 2024 Elections null and void, emphasizing the gravity of such a legal move and expressing dissatisfaction with the subsequent withdrawal of the appeal. Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court addressed the disappearance of 12 Baloch students from Islamabad, expressing deep frustration and dismay over the violation of their fundamental human rights enshrined in the constitution and the law of the land.

Interestingly, both cases are intertwined, albeit in different ways, with the establishment. In the Supreme Court case, a retired Brigadier filed the appeal to declare the 2024 election null and void, implicating the country's electoral process. Conversely, in the High Court case, the nation's esteemed spy agencies were implicated regarding the disappearance of individuals. While the issue of missing persons warrants attention, let's delve into the Supreme Court

case concerning the election appeal.

Delving into the motives behind the retired Brigadier's petition before the Supreme Court of Pakistan reveals a concern for the fairness and integrity of the electoral process, especially amidst allegations of widespread rigging. However, in filing the application, the retired Brigadier may not have fully grasped the financial implications of the re-elections to the state, political parties and the candidates, and the complex political dynamics at play within Pakistan, potentially underestimating the nuances of the situation.

He may have overlooked the broader implications of nullifying the elections, such as the potential impact on investor confidence, trade relations with friendly countries, and the stability of the stock exchange. Additionally, withdrawing support from organizations like the IMF and creditors could exacerbate economic challenges, leading to increased inflation and hardship for the common populace.

He might have erred in grasping the dynamics of allegations of rigging by PTI, JUI, GDA, and JI which in fact are emblematic of the broader landscape of partisan politics in Pakistan, where accusations of electoral misconduct are commonplace and often wielded as political leverage.

The futility of the petition became evident as major parties

like PML(N), PPP, and MQM accepted the election results. PTI, while forming the government in KP and opting for opposition roles elsewhere, is concurrently engaging in legal and political battles to contest the alleged electoral malpractices. Despite serious reservations about the fairness of the process, parties like GDA, JI, and JUI have refrained from demanding the nullification of the elections. Instead, aggrieved parties are pursuing their grievances through legal avenues, such as Election Tribunals and the Supreme Court of Pakistan, or through political activism.

These realizations may have dawned on the Brigadier later, may be coupled with pressure or intimidation, either personally or from external forces, prompting him to withdraw the petition. Alternatively, he may have reconsidered the implications of pursuing the case further and decided to step back for personal or strategic reasons. However, the Supreme Court's decision to proceed with the hearing indicates that they saw merit in investigating the allegations of rigging, regardless of the petitioner's withdrawal.

Alternatively, the latest confession of the Commissioner Rawalpindi where he implicated the chief election commissioner and the Chief Justice in the alleged massive and blatant riggings

might be the actual reasons which might have prompted to the Supreme Court to take up this petition on its guise discuss the commissioner's confession and allegations in an attempt to clear the chief justice from his alleged involvement in the rigging.

As the legal battle would unfold, the Supreme Court would face the arduous task of navigating complex political terrain. Though the petitioner's plea raises fundamental questions about the credibility of the electoral outcome, none of the political parties, the legal fraternity or civil society have ever voiced their intention to declare the elections null and void. All of them have preferred to resort to the legal battle and wage democratic campaigns to seek justice.

In this scenario, if the supreme court proceeds with the hearing, it might first determine the competency of the retired Brigadier to file any appeal to nullify the elections. This typically involves demonstrating a personal stake in the outcome of the election, such as being a candidate who lost due to the alleged irregularities.

Moreover, the petition must be based on specific and verifiable grounds, such as evidence of widespread irregularities, rigging, or violations of electoral laws. The court may consider mere dissatisfaction with the elections as

insufficient reason to petition the supreme court.

The Supreme Court may also take into account that major political parties like PPP, PTI, PML(N), or MQM have accepted the election results and may be hesitant to become parties to the petition. Conversely, smaller parties that were marginalized in the elections, as well as individuals or civil society organizations advocating for electoral transparency and accountability, may step forward to defend the petition. They may argue that the pervasive irregularities have undermined the legitimacy of the results, warranting judicial intervention to nullify the elections.

The aggrieved political parties like PTI, JI, GDA and JUI if summoned by the SC may argue that though the election process was replete with irregularities, the overall integrity of the election was not compromised to the extent that would warrant nullifying the results. Additionally, they may stress the importance of addressing the genuine grievances by alternative avenues such as legal challenges or democratic campaigns.

The Supreme Court after meticulously weighing the arguments may consider various options while deciding the case. If the evidence fails to substantiate widespread rigging or irregularities that significantly undermine the election's integ-

riety, the supreme court might dismiss the petition. And if credible allegations warrant further investigation, ordering a recount or an inquiry in specific constituencies to rectify concerns without nullifying the entire election.

However, in the event of irrefutable evidence of systemic fraud that fundamentally compromises the election's fairness, declaring it null and void may be the necessary course of action, ensuring democratic principles prevail and future electoral integrity is maintained.

The Supreme Court's determination to proceed with hearing the petition, even after its withdrawal, underscores the gravity of the situation surrounding the 2024 elections. It reflects an attempt by the Chief Justice to clear his name and may reflect the Court's commitment to address the widespread allegations of rigging that have garnered attention nationally, regionally, and internationally.

The direction taken by the Supreme Court in this pivotal case could significantly impact the outcome of the controversial elections. Its findings have the potential to guide the country out of its current political, economic, and financial challenges or further entrench it in political and legal turmoil. Therefore, the Supreme Court's actions carry immense weight and importance in navigating the country's future course.

Commerce News

Farhadov vows to foster Azerbaijan-Pak trade relations

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov emphasized Azerbaijan's strong commitment to fostering bilateral trade relations with Pakistan during his meeting with business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) on Tuesday.

He highlighted the commencement of direct flights between the two countries since last year by AZAL and PIA, and wished to expand flight connectivity, ultimately aiming for daily flights from various cities. The Ambassador stressed the key role of private sector

in driving economic ties. LCCI President Kashif Anwar extended a warm welcome to Ambassador Farhadov and acknowledged the enduring diplomatic, historical, and cultural ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Ambassador Khazar Farhadov expressed optimism regarding the significant increase in trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, attributed to the introduction of direct flights.

He noted a substantial rise in the number of Pakistani students studying in Azerbaijan, underscoring the

importance of private sector engagement in fostering robust economic ties. The Ambassador emphasized the need for market exploration, partnerships, and reciprocal investments between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, citing successful trade relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey as a model. He highlighted Azerbaijan's position as a key international transport corridor and said that Azerbaijan's Socar Trading company provides LNG to Pakistan. Farhadov stressed the importance of people-to-people contact and the accessibility of the

Azerbaijani Embassy, expressing Azerbaijan's consideration in participating in possible joint projects also under Pakistan's SIFC.

He advocated for the establishment of preferential and transit trade agreements between the two countries and identified tourism as a promising area for collaboration, citing Azerbaijan's reception of tens of thousands Pakistani tourists every year. The Ambassador highly appreciated ten times increase in direct and indirect, with contribution of SOCAR Trading, trade turnover in last two years.



RAWALPINDI: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the members of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, at National Health Summit on Dental Hygiene.



Engagement with Provincial Government Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on February 20, 2024 for the conduct of 7th integrated digital agricultural census.

CCP approves acquisition of Fauji Cereals business by Fauji Foods limited

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the acquisition of M/s Fauji Foundation's Fauji Cereals Business by M/s Fauji Foods Limited. The Fauji Foundation, established as a charitable trust for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families, submitted a pre-merger application to the CCP under Section 11 of the Competition Act, 2010.

The proposed transaction involves the acquisition of the Fauji Cereals Business by M/s Fauji Foods Limited through a Business Transfer Agreement. M/s Fauji Foods Limited is a publicly listed company incorporated in Pakistan, primarily focused on the production and sale of dairy and allied products.

CCP's assessment of the pre-merger application indicated that there were no overlaps between the merging parties in the areas of business activities such as Breakfast Cereals and Wheat, Barley & Porridge. Therefore, the CCP concluded that market conditions will remain unchanged post-transaction.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships, MSC Spring and Evrialicarrying Containersand Wheat, berthed at Container Terminal and Grain Terminal respectively on Monday. Meanwhile four more ships, Maersk Brooklyn, Siamisam, Stefanost and Agia Eirini Force carrying Containers, LNG Wheat and Coal also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours. A total of six ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, two ships, MSC Spring III and Evriali left the port on today morning, and another ship Haj Mohammad is expected to sail on today afternoon.

FPCCI, SCWEC jointly organizing trade fair from March 7th to 9th 2024

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) & the SCWEC, jointly organizing a three-day event comprising a trade fair named "SAARC Bazaar" from March 7th to 9th, 2024 at Expo Center Lahore, Pakistan.

The SAARC Bazaar aims to empower South Asian entrepreneurs and SMEs, particularly the women entrepreneurs in the cottage industry of Pakistan. This three-

day exhibition will serve as a platform for women, artisans and craftsmen engaged in cottage industries in South Asian countries to showcase their products.

The Women's Business Conference, themed 'Invest in South Asian Women: A Path towards Regional Progress' will be held on March 7, 2024, on the eve of International Women's Day in Lahore, Pakistan at Pearl Continental Hotel.



Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, is presenting the commemorative shield to Mr. Riffat Mukhtar Raja, IG Sindh Police. Mr. Aman Paracha & Mr. Asif Sakhi, VPs FPCCI, were also present on the occasion.

Pakistan's regional exports increase 21.68% in 7 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 21.68 per cent in the first seven months of the financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$2614.021 million, which is 14.54 per

cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$17977.963 million during July-January (2023-24), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Pakistan carried out its border trade with the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.

Pakistan's exports to

China witnessed an increase of 44.53 per cent to \$1726.679 million in seven months of this year from \$1194.639 million last year while exports to Afghanistan witnessed a nominal decline of 0.08 percent from \$285.177 million to \$284.927 million.

The country's exports to Bangladesh also decreased by 23.27 percent to \$367.776 million this year from \$479.357 million whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 24.65 percent to \$227.254 million from \$182.313.

SMBR reviews reforms for Revenue Academy

LAHORE (APP): Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR) Nabil Javed conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing reforms taken for the Revenue Academy during a meeting held here on Tuesday. Revenue Secretary Shafiqatullah Mushtaq provided a detailed briefing to the SMBR, highlighting that over 4,000 employees underwent training at the academy within a year.

DGAARI inaugurates early cotton cultivation

FAISALABAD (APP): Ayub Agricultural Research Institute's (AARI) newly appointed Director General (DG) Malik Allah Bukhs has inaugurated early (Aget) cotton cultivation here on Tuesday and said that early cultivation would play a pivotal role in obtaining bumper production.

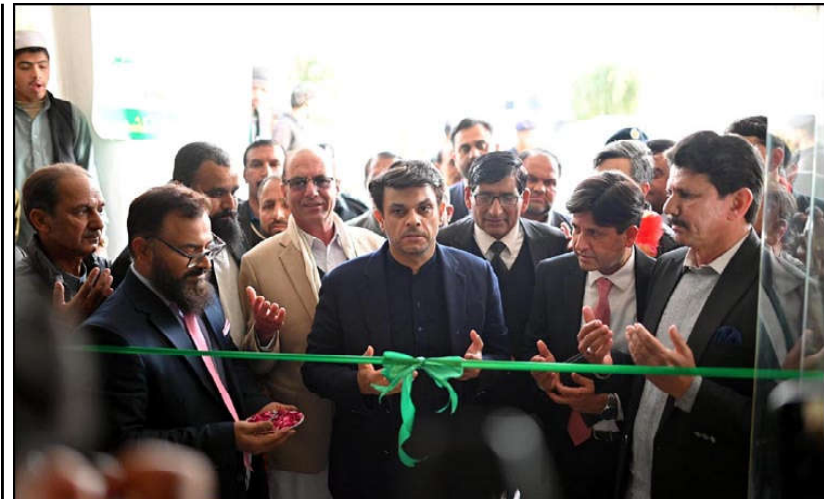
During inaugural ceremony at Cotton Research Station Faisalabad, he said that cotton is a precious crop of Pakistan which not only provide raw

material to the local textile industry but also help in stabilizing national economy by fetching precious foreign exchange up to Rs.30 billion. He said that Agriculture department has activated its entire field staff to persuade and guide the farmers for ensuring early cotton cultivation over maximum space of their lands because early cultivated crops gives maximum production as chances of pest and disease attack on early cultivation are less than the late sowing.

Important to focus on character building of children along with education and training: Baligh

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman inaugurated three new programs for education and training of children at Children's Library Complex Lahore. Secretary School Education, Muhammad Ahsan Waheed, Chairman Board of Governors Children Library Complex Dr Nasir Javed, Managing Director Punjab Textbook Board, Naveed Shehzad Mirza, Managing Director Children Library Complex, Ahmed Khawar Shehzad

and other personalities were present in the ceremony. Governor Punjab inaugurated Knowledge Value and Skill Based Education, Space Race Pakistan and Virtual Reality Platform. Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that it is very important to focus on the character building of children along with education and training. He said that the future of the country and the nation hinges on good education of children. The Punjab



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis, Jawad Sohrab Malik Inaugurating First Protectorate Offices in Bagh and Rawalakot, AJJK.

Governor stresses students of read books, play role for country's development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali stressed youngsters to divert their attention towards habit of books reading in existing era of social media and said the habit would change mindset and lives of young generation.

He was addressing the inauguration ceremony of Grand Book Fair in Khyber Medical College as a chief guest. The event was also attended by Dean KMC, Dr. Mehmood Aurangzeb, Chairman Board of

Governor, Dr. Umar Ayub, Dr. Fakhre-Allah, faculty members and students.

The governor who inaugurated the book fair said that significance of book reading could not be undermined in existing age of social media and internet adding that students should spare time for book reading keeping in view its importance for their personal grooming. He said that books can change mindset of youngsters besides nurturing their vision and improve capabilities.

PTI decides to move HC against social media website X

PESHAWAR (Online): PTI leader Ali Muhammad Khan has decided to resort to high court against closure of social media website X. Ali Muhammad Khan has said in a statement it is fourth day since the closure of social media platform X. I being a lawyer am going to challenge the dictatorial act of this fascist regime in Islamabad High Court (IHC) because this dictatorship is not acceptable. He said freedom of expression is basic human right. These dictatorial tactics of previous century can not run in this modern era. Closing internet or social media platform is not solution to problems.

Traffic restored at Malam Jabba, Lowari Tunnel

SWAT (Online): Traffic has been restored at Malam Jabba and Lowari Tunnel by removing snow from several kilometers of the nearby roads.

In this regard, rescue teams of Pakistan Army and district administration remained active throughout the night. Due to heavy snowfall yesterday, many passengers and tourists were also shifted to safe places.

CM inaugurates upgraded Mayo Children's Hospital

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, accompanied by children Masooma Fatima and Ibrahim suffering from kidney disorders, inaugurated the upgraded Mayo Children's Hospital, here on Tuesday.

The upgradation of Mayo Children's Hospital has been completed in record time, showcasing exceptional speed and quality. The hospital's bed capacity has been increased to 360 beds.

The CM inspected various wards of the state-of-the-art hospital and commended the high-quality work of the

upgradation. The Secretary Communication and Works provided a briefing on the project, while the Secretary Health highlighted the improved treatment facilities.

Talking to media after the inauguration, Mohsin Naqvi stated that the first phase of the upgradation, totaling 360 beds, has been completed. The Mayo Children's Hospital was part of the Mayo Hospital Upgradation Plan, which has a total cost of Rs 10 billion. He mentioned that Mayo Hospital currently has 2,484 beds and 1,763 doctors, and human resource problems have been addressed by Secretary Health Ali Jan.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan giving away shield to Retired Secretary Excise and Taxation GB Momin Jan at CM Secretariat.

Providing protocol Nawaz LHC sends application to IG Punjab seeking action against CCPO Lahore

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has referred to IG Punjab application seeking initiation of action against CCPO Lahore for providing protocol and saluting to PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif on his return from London to Pakistan.

The court directed IG police Punjab to take action as per law. Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh heard the petition filed by citizen Kamran whereby the step of not initiating action

against CCPO Lahore Bilal Kamyana was challenged.

The petition said Nawaz Sharif was convicted and declared proclaimed offender and he was given protocol on October 21 last year. Moreover CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana saluted a convicted person which runs contrary to police rules. He submitted application to the concerned authorities for taking action but it was not addressed.

Irshad inaugurates child protection unit at Kohat

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education and Prisons, Justice Retd. Irshad Qaisar on Tuesday inaugurated a child protection unit at Nishtar Special Education Center, Kohat. The function was arranged by the Child Protection and Welfare Commission Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in assistance with UNICEF.

The minister on the occasion said the caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was committed to discharge its national and international responsibility by providing protection to its children and people looking after them. For this purpose, she said all available resources were to be utilized. Likewise, she said in collaboration with UNICEF, the provincial

government was making efforts to establish child protection committees at district level and devising a comprehensive policy for child protection units besides, working on constancy of helpline 1121 of child protection. She also praised the efforts of UNICEF towards this end.

She said the children were our future and providing them with best possible opportunities and welfare initiatives was the need of the hour. She said the KP has surpassed other provinces in child protection endeavors. The function was also addressed by the Chief Protection Officer, Ejaz Ahmad, Child Protection Specialist of UNICEF, Suhail Ahmad, Professor of Kohat University, Mehmood Khattak and Program Manager, Muhammad Wasim.

EC notifies names of candidates returned from PK-20, PK-21

PESHAWAR (APP): The Election Commission (EC) of Pakistan has notified the names of candidates returned on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial assembly constituencies including PK-20 Bajaur II and PK-21 Bajaur III.

According to the notification, Anwar Zeb Khan and Ajmal Khan have been returned on Bajaur PK-20 and PK-21 respectively. Anwar Zeb Khan secured 12917 votes while Ajmal Khan secured 16712 votes.

The number of votes polled in PK-20 is 40507 and 39827 in PK-21. Both the candidates have contested elections as independents.

Pak-Korean Nutrition Centre holds training on dietary issues at BZU

MULTAN (APP): Pak-Korean Nutrition Centre organized a training session aimed at addressing prevalent dietary issues in Pakistan especially malnutrition among kids and, rising trend of diseases.

The event was organized under the supervision of Chairman of the Department of Human Nutrition at Baha Uddin Zakariya University, Professor Dr. Tauseef Sultan. Dean Faculty of Food Sciences and Nutrition Dr Saeed Akhtar was special guest at the

event. The session focused on equipping students with the necessary skills to tackle societal nutritional challenges and providing comprehensive training on nutritional diagnosis and counseling. The session also emphasized on the importance of dietary management in various health conditions. Addressing the session, Dr Tauseef Sultan stated that Pakistan urged students and other experts to play an important role in highlighting and addressing the issues linked with food.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurating Grand Book Fair Festival at Khyber Medical College.

International News

WHO completes second Gaza hospital evacuation amid fighting

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The World Health Organization said on Tuesday it had completed a second evacuation mission from Gaza's Nasser Hospital but voiced concern for nearly 150 patients and medics who remain at the site amid continuing fighting.

The Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest, stopped working last week after a week-long Israeli siege followed by a raid, the U.N. agency said. WHO staff and other aid groups have so far evacuated a total of 32 critical patients including injured children and those with paralysis, but

the agency is concerned for those left behind with supplies dwindling.

"WHO fears for the safety and well-being of the patients and health workers remaining in the hospital and warns that further disruption to lifesaving care for the sick and injured would lead to more deaths," the WHO said on the social media site X, saying those remaining included 130 patients and 15 medics.

Israel says Hamas, the Islamist group that has run Gaza since 2007, uses hospitals for cover. Hamas denies this and says Israel's allegations serve as a pretext to destroy the healthcare system.

The WHO's Tarik Jašarević told reporters in Geneva that WHO staff who were part of the rescue mission had to navigate through pitch-black corridors with flashlights to find patients against a backdrop of gunfire.

Help had to arrive on foot because a deep, muddy ditch near the site made the road impassable, the WHO said.

"It's very difficult to see these scenes of people just being cut off," he said, saying food supplies were limited. "It's heartbreaking to see that there are people in health facilities who are not able to be treated correctly," he said.



Displaced Palestinians gather to receive food at a government school in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, amid ongoing strikes by Israeli forces.



Ambassador of Qatar to Russia Sheikh Ahmed bin Nasser Al Thani and Russia's presidential commissioner for children's rights Maria Lvova-Belova (unseen) interact with Ukrainian children, at the Qatari embassy in Moscow.

Germany summons Russian envoy over death of Navalny

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: The German Foreign Office is summoning the Russian ambassador on Monday over the death of Alexei Navalny, a ministry spokeswoman said.

The politically motivated proceedings against Navalny and numerous other critics of the Russian government, as well as the inhumane prison conditions, show how brutally the Russian judiciary acts against dissidents and the means used by President Vladimir Putin to suppress freedom of expression, the spokeswoman said.

"We condemn this in the strongest possible terms and expressly call for the release of all those imprisoned in Russia for political reasons," she said.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's spokesman separately called on Russia to fully clarify the circumstances of Navalny's death in a Siberian prison camp and also to release his body to his family.

Beijing criticizes proposed US sanctions

BEIJING (Online): Beijing has responded to reports that Washington is planning to impose "broad" sanctions on the country, vowing to defend Chinese businesses from measures intended to target firms for allegedly helping Russia.

The proposed sanctions were discussed on Monday by CNBC, which interviewed a number of Congress members about the plans. Democrat Gerald Connolly, who sits on the House Committee on Foreign Relations, claimed "the very threat" of sanctions from the US and potentially the EU "ought to clarify

some thinking in Beijing." However, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Tuesday that Beijing rejects unilateral economic restrictions as a matter of principle and will defend the interests of its businesses.

"China has the right to conduct normal cooperation with countries around the world," Mao said during a daily briefing. "We have always opposed unilateral sanctions and 'long-arm jurisdiction' that have no basis in international law and are not authorized by the UN Security Council."

South Africa asks World Court to find Israeli occupation illegal

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: South Africa on Tuesday urged the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to issue a non-binding legal opinion that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is illegal, arguing it would help efforts to reach a settlement. Representatives of South Africa opened the second day of hearings at the ICJ, also known as the World Court, in the Hague. The hearing follows a request by the U.N. General Assembly for an advisory, or non-binding, opinion on the occupation in 2022.

German defence minister calls Red Sea mission 'important signal'

Monitoring Desk
RED SEA: German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius has emphasized the importance of the planned deployment of a German frigate in the Red Sea as part of an EU naval mission to protect shipping from Houthi militants in Yemen.

"We will protect international security and freedom of navigation. The impact will not be underestimated," the minister told public broadcaster ZDF on Tuesday.

The vessels will have orders only to fire on the militants if they attack first and will not be authorized to shoot pre-emptively.

Swedish PM to visit Hungary on Friday ahead of NATO vote

Monitoring Desk
HUNGARIAN: Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson will travel to Budapest on Friday ahead of the hoped-for approval from the Hungarian parliament, the last holdout, for the Scandinavian nation's entry into NATO. At the invitation of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Kristersson will visit the Hungarian capital, the Swedish government announced on Tuesday. The agenda for the two leaders includes talks about security and defence policy cooperation.

Palestine urges ICJ to declare Israel's occupation of their territory illegal

HAGUE (Online): Palestine has urged the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to declare Israel's occupation of their territory illegal to pave the way for a two-state solution to the conflict for a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki told the 15-judge ICJ panel in the Hague that his people have been suffering colonialism and apartheid under the Israelis.

Israel's open-ended military occupation has violated the prohibition on territorial conquest and the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and has imposed a system of racial discrimination and apartheid, say the Palestinians.

"This occupation is annexation and supremacist in nature," Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki said on Tuesday.

He called on the court to uphold the Palestinian right to self-determination and declare that "the Israeli occupation is illegal and must end immediately, totally and unconditionally".

Oral proceedings continue at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. South Africa, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Bangladesh and Belgium present early arguments.

More than 50 states and at least three international organisations will address judges at the United Nations' top court until February 26. A nonbinding legal opinion is expected after months of deliberation by the judges.

Putin promotes high ranking prison officer after Navalny's death

Monitoring Desk
GAZPROM ARENA: Russian President Vladimir Putin has promoted a high-ranking prison officer several days after the death of leading opposition figure Alexei Navalny.

The deputy head of the FSIN prison authority, Valery Boyarinev, was promoted to colonel general of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The director of the Anti-Corruption Foundation, which was established by Navalny, wrote on his Telegram channel on Tuesday that Boyarinev was personally responsible for Navalny's torture in prison.

"This must be understood as Putin's open reward for the torture," Ivan Zhdanov said of Boyarinev's promotion.

In July 2023, an order by Boyarinev to restrict the opposition politician's ability to buy food and daily necessities became known during a court hearing

against Navalny. Prisoners can normally use their money to supplement their own meagre rations in the prison shop.

According to Zhdanov, the newly appointed colonel general was also responsible for further harassment of Navalny.

Boyarinev's promotion became known on Monday when the presidential decree was published in the legal database. In addition to Boyarinev, three other law enforcement officers were promoted to the rank of general. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied any connection between Navalny's death and the promotions, downplaying it as a normal procedure. Navalny, 47, died on Friday in a Siberian prison camp. Weakened by repeated solitary confinement, Navalny is said to have collapsed during a tour of the icy prison yard and died despite attempts at resuscitation.



Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif cutting ribbon to inaugurate Data Center at PTA Headquarters in Islamabad.

Step afoot to provide all kinds of training to medical staff for improving treatment: Abdullah

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Secretary Health Abdullah Khan said that it was the first effort of Balochistan Health Department to provide its medical staff with all kinds of skills in the field of health and IMNCI training for the first time in Balochistan would improve the treatment of children. He expressed these views while addressing a two-day training on Early Childhood Development, Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness (IMNCI) as chief guest. The training was started with contribution of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Program, Health Department and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Provincial Head of UNICEF Dr. Amiri, Provincial Coordinator MNCH Dr. Gul Sabin Azim Ghorizi, Pediatrician Dr. Ismail, UNICEF Dr. Saba, Finance Officer MNCH Kamil Ahmed Qumbrani, Section Officer Tahoor Khan, Nutrition Officer UNICEF Imran Jatoti, IT In-charge Sikandar Zeb, Staff Officer Shaikat Zehri, others assistants, 20 doctors from 4 districts of Balochistan participated in the training. Provincial Coordinator MNCH Dr. Gul Sabin Azim Ghorizi (IMNCI) explained the aims and objectives of the training. Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan said that the training would promote early childhood development which would reduce infant mortality, disease and disability and improve healthy development of children in five years of age. Nationally, more than 80 percent of deaths among young children are due to neonatal conditions and infectious diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, measles and meningitis, he said. He said that the IMNCI strategy aims to improve the skills of health workers and health systems to prevent common childhood diseases, including in the neonatal period, and support healthy child development. Pediatrician Dr. Saima said that the baby should be breastfed immediately after birth due to mother's milk, the newborn child is protected from many diseases. UNICEF's Dr. Saba told the training participants that the IMNCI's strategy promotes accurate identification of childhood illnesses in outpatient settings and ensures appropriate combined treatment of all major conditions affecting the young child.

IHC orders for not harassing, taking adverse action against Sher Afzal

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered for not taking adverse action and harassing PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat. Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz took up for hearing petition filed by Sher Afzal Marwat for issuance of orders by the court for not harassing him besides providing him details of cases against him. Sher Afzal Marwat appeared in the court. Sher Afzal Marwat took the plea in the court during hearing of the case he staged protest and took out rally and later raid was conducted on my house. The door of my house was broken and we were harassed till 1 o'clock at night. The respondents be issued notice and details of cases be sought from them. The petitioner told the court he knows about one FIR in which I have been granted bail a day before. Government has started a new job now several cases are registered against opposition leaders. Details of cases be sought from police and FIA. Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz remarked first of all we issue notice and seek reply. Sher Afzal Marwat requested we cannot make expectation. You please issue order for not harassing and entering into house without warrants. Later the court while issuing notice to the respondents ordered for providing details of cases against Sher Afzal Marwat, not harassing and taking adverse action against him. The court while adjourning the hearing of the case till February 26 sought report.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan Dr. Shafiqur Rehman meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Terrorist killed in DI Khan IBO: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (INP): Security forces killed a terrorist in an exchange of fire during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail (DI) Khan district on Tuesday. "During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between our troops and terrorists as a result of which terrorist Muhammad Sohail was killed," the ISPR said. It added that he remained "actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, including target killing of innocent civilians". Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from him. According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), security forces conducted the IBO in Dera Ismail Khan District based on the reported presence of terrorists.

PTI withdraws case for specific seats after joining SIC

PESHAWAR (INP): PTI has opted to retract the case filed for specific seats following its Ittehad with the Sunni Ittehad Council. PTI's lawyer, Shah Faisal Advocate, confirmed that the party's decision aligns with the newfound Ittehad, rendering the case obsolete. The petition, scheduled for today's hearing at the Peshawar High Court before Justices Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Atiq Shah, sought specific seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. PTI had initially approached the court in pursuit of securing these seats and integrating independent candidates into the party. Emphasizing PTI's stance, the petition underscored the party's entitlement to specific seats, asserting that the Supreme Court holds the authority to delist parties, not the Election Commission. However, in light of the Ittehad with the Sunni Ittehad Council, PTI has opted to withdraw the case. The Sunni Ittehad Council, meanwhile, has also petitioned the Election Commission for specific seats.

President underlines need for combined efforts to overcome education, health, economic issues

RAWALPINDI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that the entire nation had set a precedent in the world with their collective efforts during Covid-19 pandemic and stressed that such a display of unity was critical to address disconcerting issues in education, health and economic sectors. Addressing a National Health Summit organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), the president said that during Covid-19 pandemic when the deadly wave was hitting the globe, Pakistan emerged as the third best performing country in the world to avert the damages in health and economic sectors. He said it was all possible due to the collective efforts and cooperation of the people and all stakeholders who displayed unison in their efforts to ward off the spread of the pandemic. "That precedent has carved a path for the future which can guide us in our endeavours to overcome the contemporary challenges," he opined. Highlighting the importance of physical hygiene, the president said that from the Islamic teachings, it stood proved that personal hygiene was linked with spiritual purity. He said about 90 percent dental cases could be cured if prevention habits were developed by the people including regular brushing of teeth, similar was the case with communicable diseases. The president urged all the stakeholders and the business community to play their parts in creating awareness among the masses over health-related issues including mental stress and population growth. The serious issue of 26 million out-of-school children required combined efforts and mosques could be utilized to impart education to these children, he added. The president mentioned Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka where the literacy rate among the children was higher than Pakistan. He also cited the precedent of China that lifted about 700 million people out of poverty by focusing on health and education sectors. "The State can show the path but it is the responsibility of all stakeholders of the society to share the responsibility by addressing issues in the education and health sectors," he added. President Alvi further stressed upon focusing on priorities and continuity of policies which required public involvement. The provincial governments in the country only spent 25 to 30 percent on education out of their allocated budgets which was not suffice to address issues in this sector, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking with media persons after the attending hearing of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto case at Supreme Court in the Federal Capital.

PTA launches data center to enhance service delivery

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), inaugurated its Tier 3 compliant data center here on Tuesday. The ceremony was attended by Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology & Telecom, Dr. Umar Saif, said a news release. On this occasion, the caretaker Federal Minister said that this initiative aligns with our vision for a digitally stronger Pakistan and underscores the government's dedication to providing advanced and secure digital services. Chairman PTA, Major General (Retd) Hafeez Ur Rehman, appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders involved in the successful establishment of the data center which will serve as a centralized platform for managing and provisioning a diverse range of e-services to consumers and telecom operators. The newly established data center is engineered to deliver efficiency and reliability, boasting 24x7 Network Operation Center (NOC) and Security Operation Center (SOC) to ensure seamless operations and robust security measures.

Aneeq stresses national harmony, positivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed stressed the importance of reducing hate and delivering good news to foster trust and belief among the people. Talking to PTV, he urged individuals from all walks of life, including political leaders and bureaucrats, to contribute to the country's development and prosperity. He emphasized the need for a collective effort guided by ethical and religious values. The minister said that the ministry made a significant reduction in the Hajj package for 2024, reducing the financial burden on pilgrims. This reduction, from Rs 11,75,000 to Rs 10,75,000 marked the first time in the country's history that the upcoming Hajj had become cheaper than the previous year's Hajj, he added. In addition to affordability, the minister highlighted improvements in Hajj facilities, including the introduction of short-duration Hajj, allowing pilgrims to return after completion in 22 days.

Kabir Afghan condemns torture on protesters in Chaman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pak-Afghan border in Chaman. He said that we fully support the protest dharna being staged in Chaman and demand of the authorities to accept their genuine demands. Kabir Afghan also mentioned that trade is being done without passport via Taftan border. Therefore, the people of Chaman should also have permission to do trade without passport. Kabir Afghan announced that the protest dharna would remain continued in Chaman till acceptance of the demands of the protesters. The Provincial Secretary of Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Kabir Afghan has condemned the alleged torture on protesters staging dharna (protest sit-in) in Chaman. The PkMAP's provincial leader was addressing a hurriedly called press conference here at Quetta Press Club on Tuesday. Other local leaders of the party were present on the occasion. Kabir Afghan said that the people have been lodging protest against the condition of passport at the



QUETTA: Commandant BC Sarfaraz Ahmed Falki meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Mir Muhammad Zubair Khan Jamali.

Petition lands at SC Lahore Registry seeking probe into poll rigging

LAHORE (INP): A petition was moved in the Supreme Court (SC) Lahore Registry on Tuesday seeking investigation into the alleged rigging in the recently-held general elections in the country. The application was filed on behalf of citizen Mian Shabbir Ismail. The federal government, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the chief secretaries of the four provinces were made respondents in the petition. The applicant requested the apex court to clear the dust regarding rigging allegations and reveal the facts. It may be mentioned here that a similar kind of petition was first submitted at the apex court in Islamabad. Despite the fact that the mover seeking annulment of the general elections due to complaints of rigging, withdrew his petition on Monday, but Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa insisted he would still hear the case. "Bring the petitioner back. Dial the cellphone number he has given in his application. We will hear the plea," the CJP ordered the SHO of the concerned police station after the petitioner did not show up in court. A three-member bench of the apex court, headed by the CJP, and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Halali, had been constituted to hear the petition filed by a retired brigadier, Ali Khan. Calling withdrawal of the petition a "joke", CJP Isa remarked that he would not allow this to happen again. "Do these people file petitions just for the sake of publicity," he said.

Annual exams of Matric commences in Balochistan today

Independent Report QUETTA: The annual examinations of matric is due to start in Balochistan from today (Wednesday). According to the Chairman of Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Quetta, around 143,000 candidates are taking part in the examinations. Over 430 examination centers have been established for conducting the examinations all over the province. The Chairman BISE informed that special arrangements have been made for prevention of cheating in the matric examinations.

PPP to return any seat, if proved won with rigging: Taj Haider

ISLAMABAD (INP): People's Party Senator Taj Haider on Tuesday told the Senate that the party will return any seat if proved to be won with rigging. "Bring the form 45, we are prepared to return a seat if proved to be won by the party with election rigging," Senator Taj Haider speaking in the house said. He said the People's Party standing with all those persons whose rights have been usurped at any place. He advised political parties to take a legal path instead of opting for chaos, "we want solution of problems" PPP senator said.

Governorship in Sindh our right, will not give up: MQM-P

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has clarified that Governorship in Sindh was right of the party and it will not give up. According to details, MQM-P assuring Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) of its support in formation of government has sought support on three-point constitutional amendment.



SUKKUR: Leaders and supporters of Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, at Moro National Highway road in Sukkur.

PCP calls on leaders to focus on population-resource balance

By Anila Ejaz QUETTA: The Population Council Pakistan expressed hope that from the outset, both the new Prime Minister and the chief ministers of the four provinces would prioritize addressing the challenge of balancing population growth with available resources, starting with their inaugural speeches and agendas. At a media meeting by Population Council Pakistan, senior Director Programs Dr. Ali Mir, Project Director Samia Ali, Senior Communication Officer Ikram Ahad, and Central Vice President of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists Saleem Shahid, along with participants from all provinces stressed the importance of balancing population growth and resources at all government levels. The participants stressed that attaining the Sustainable Development Goals will establish a durable policy framework, guiding all future governments in a positive direction. The Population Council Pakistan has presented the analysis of the election manifestos of the four major political parties of the country.



The participants emphasized the importance of harnessing the growing population to create economic opportunities for diverse groups of people. They also warned that the increasing, unmanageable population in Pakistan is straining the country's resources, particularly its limited natural resources, and could lead to a crisis soon. The participants stressed that the forthcoming government will lay the foundation for a lasting policy towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals which will set a positive direction for all future governments. The participants emphasized that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will lay the foundation for a lasting policy that will set a positive direction for all future governments. The participants stressed that the forthcoming government will lay the foundation for a lasting

Zafar demands issuing of production order of Senator Ejaz Chaudhry

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Ali Zafar ignited a fiery debate in the Senate as he presented a resolution demanding the production order of Senator Ejaz Chaudhry, amidst allegations of election malpractice and unfair treatment towards PTI leaders. Addressing the Senate on Tuesday, Senator Ali Zafar voiced concerns over what he perceived as injustice against PTI leaders following the recent elections. He highlighted instances of arrests and restrictions on rallies, lamenting the alleged theft of the people's mandate and calling attention to the stifling of media coverage and communication channels. The session witnessed heated exchanges as senators expressed frustration over perceived electoral irregularities. Warning of dire consequences if electoral grievances remain unaddressed, Zafar underscored the potential for widespread unrest should the legitimacy of the mandate be disregarded. Meanwhile, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed echoed Zafar's sentiments, demanding the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner over allegations of incompetence and bias. Ahmed criticized the Election Commission for purportedly failing to ensure transparent elections and accused it of facilitating a "fake government" through fraudulent practices. The session witnessed heated exchanges as senators expressed frustration over perceived electoral irregularities. Warning of dire conse-

quences if electoral grievances remain unaddressed, Zafar underscored the potential for widespread unrest should the legitimacy of the mandate be disregarded. Meanwhile, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed echoed Zafar's sentiments, demanding the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner over allegations of incompetence and bias. Ahmed criticized the Election Commission for purportedly failing to ensure transparent elections and accused it of facilitating a "fake government" through fraudulent practices. The session witnessed heated exchanges as senators expressed frustration over perceived electoral irregularities. Warning of dire conse-

SHC directs early removal of obscene contents from social media

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) has directed the authorities concerned for immediate removal of obscene content from social media. Chief Justice Sindh High Court, Aqeel Abbasi on Tuesday heard the petition against obscene content on social media, during which the petitioner's lawyer in his arguments said that obscenity was being promoted in the name of family v logging. During the hearing, PTA's counsel told the court that PTA does not have the authority to remove content on Facebook, YouTube or any other website, and to remove objectionable content, it has to write to the concerned authorities. Meanwhile, PTA's counsel sought time to submit the reply, on which the court said.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding provision of water in Gwadar.