

Independent

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Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XIX No. 70, Shawwal 07, 1445 AH Tuesday April 16, 2024, Pages 04, Price Rs.15

CM chairs online meeting with Commissioners, DG PDMA: Govt. enforces rain & urban flood emergency in rain affected areas of Balochistan

Mir Sarfraz Bugti assures wholehearted support and resources to all field officers

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has enforced rain and urban flood emergency in the rain affected areas of the province. Following the rain and urban flood emergency, leaves of all concerned officers and staff including those serving in the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) have been cancelled, stated the spokesman, Government of Balochistan here. According to the spokesman, the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti chaired online meeting with all divisional commissioners and high ups

of PDMA on late Sunday night. The Principal Secretary to Chief Minister and Director General PDMA briefed the meeting about overall situation of rains besides relief and rescue activities in the province. The Chief Minister expressed anguish over the public complaints about the sewerage and sanitation issues in the metropolis. He said that the government would provide wholehearted support and resources to the field officers in the rain situation as it is our responsibility to steer the people out of the hardships and miserable situation.



ISLAMABAD: President, Asif Ali Zardari congratulating Aseefa Bhutto Zardari on taking oath as Member of the National Assembly

CM forms fact finding committee for inquiry of urban flooding & damages caused to masses

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has constituted a fact finding to probe into the urban flooding and damages caused to the masses at large scale in Quetta city. According to the spokesman, Government of Balochistan, the Member of Chief Minister Inspection Team would be the Chairman of fact finding inquiry committee. The members of committee are included: Chief of Section, Planning and Development and Superintending Engineer, P&D. The spokesman of provincial government said that the fact finding com-

mittee would ascertain the reasons behind the urban flooding in Quetta city. Besides, the committee would pinpoint the flaws that caused urban flooding in Quetta city. The committee would also inspect all the development schemes of roads and sewerage during last three years in the city. In addition to this, the committee would also propose steps for preventing the urban flooding in future, the spokesman said. The committee would give access to the relevant record and staff by the concerned departments, offices and officers so as to conduct comprehensive fact finding inquiry.



QUETTA: Spokesman Government of Balochistan Shahid Rind and MPs Haji Wali Muhammad Noorzai, Mir Liaquat Lehri, Malik Naeem Bazai, Bakhar Muhammad Kakar, Mir Samad Khan Gorgage and Ejaz Sanjrani briefed mediaperson about rain situation and government initiatives

Seven districts badly affected due to recent heavy rains in Balochistan: Shahid Rind

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has stated that seven districts of the province have been badly affected due to recent rains. The districts affected due to the heavy rains are included: Quetta, Pishin, Killa Abdullah, Chaman, Chaghai, Kech and Gwadar. He said that seven people were reportedly killed in different incidents of lightning and roof collapse in the province. Five of them lost their lives due to lightning in different areas of the province while two died due to collapse of roofs. However,

the rescue and relief activities are continued in the rain affected districts of the province including Quetta, the work of assessment of losses would be started after relief operation. These and similar other details were shared by the spokesman of provincial government while briefing the media persons about the situation of rains and relief activities here at the office of PDMA on Monday. The members of provincial assembly belonging to Quetta including Wali Muhammad Noorzai, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Malik Naeem Bazai and Liaquat Lehri were also present on the occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level review meeting regarding power sector

PM directs for vital measures to reduce power price per unit for common man

Emphasizes maximising renewable energy utilization, improving transmission system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for drastic measures including shifting of imported coal-run plants, improvement in power supply system, setting up cost effective and renewable energy plants, and functioning of solar projects to reduce cost of electricity per unit thus benefiting the ordinary people. The prime minister chaired a high level review meeting regarding the power sector. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Attallah Tarar, Sardar Awaish Ahmed Khan Leghari and Dr Mussadik Malik, former minister Muhammad Ali, Member of the National Assembly Bilal Zaheer Kiyani, Rana Ahsan Afzal, Salman Ahmed and relevant authorities, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister directed for shifting of the coal-run power plants from the imported fuel to local coal, besides improvement in the power supply system. He said that in future, only clean, cost effective and renewable power plants should be set up in the country. The meeting was apprised of the 600MW solar power project and the prime minister directed for expediting work on the foreign investment in this regard. The prime minister also asked for proposals for

better utilization of the current surplus power generation capacity in industries. He observed that wheeling price of electricity should be reduced for the industrial consumers so that power supply at reduced price could be made possible, besides the industrial development and increase in export, grid stations should be installed near big industries. The process of auction of those power plants of Generation Companies (GENCOs) that were lying dysfunctional and defective should be accelerated, he further directed. The prime minister said that the government was taking all measures to reduce price of power per unit for the common man whereas to reduce circular debt, reforms in the power sector were being carried out on priority basis. The meeting was briefed over the existing power generation capability, supply system, government's steps and proposals. It was also apprised of the future power demand and supply. The meeting was told that by shifting the coal-run plants from the imported fuel would not only save the precious reserves but also would make it possible to reduce power price by Rs 2 per unit for the consumers.

Aseefa Bhutto takes oath as MNA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, daughter of late former prime minister Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and sister of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday took oath as a Member of the National Assembly (MNA). Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq administered the oath to her, who later signed the registration roll. Aseefa Bhutto was elected unopposed in the by-election in NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad. Her father President Asif Ali Zardari had won the seat in the general election 2024 on February 8 and later vacated it after his election as President of Pakistan.



RAWALPINDI: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud received by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar upon his arrival at Nur Khan Airbase

China ready to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation with Pakistan: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): China has stressed for implementing a holistic approach to national security in building the Pak-China community with shared future. In an article, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Ambassador Jiang Zaidong said China stands ready to work hand-in-hand with Pakistan to defeat the evil attempt at disrupting our cooperation. He said we are also ready to work with Pakistan to safeguard development with security and to promote security with development. The Ambassador said we should take the promotion of international security as a support, and further enhance China-Pakistan counter-terrorism and security cooperation. Quoting the President Xi Jinping's vision of Global Security Initiative, he stressed that all countries need to work together in addressing various security challenges for win-win results. The Ambassador further said we should take economic security as foundation, and continue to promote the building of an upgraded version of CPEC. For this purpose, he said, China stands ready to further strengthen counter-terrorism and security cooperation with Pakistan, to maintain high pressure and rigorous operation, so as to decisively strike the terrorism.

CS directs concerned high ups to make preparations before more rains

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has directed all concerned high ups to make advance preparations well before more rains in the province. He also directed to the administration to discharge their duties regarding rescue and relief activities well before the time. Moreover, the measures should be taken to remove encroachments and hurdles from the nullahs. All administrative officers should also remain alert to cope with any emergent situation and shift the people to the safer places. These directives were issued by the Chief Secretary while chairing meeting held to review relief activities in the rain affected areas of the province on Monday. The meeting discussed the situation caused due to the rains besides the situation likely to be created following the expected heavy rains from Wednesday next.

All evidence pointing towards Indian involvement in Lahore gun attack: Naqvi

LAHORE (Agencies): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday indicated that there was evidence of Indian involvement in the Lahore gun attack on Amir Sarfraz Tamba—the man who allegedly killed Indian prisoner Sarabjit Singh in Kot Lakhpat prison in 2013. Tamba was critically injured in an attack on Sunday, according to police officials. While media reports had initially claimed that he was killed, Lahore Senior Superintendent of Police Operations Syed Ali Raza had clarified that he was alive, although critically injured. Tamba was at his residence in Lahore's Islampura area when two masked armed men forcefully entered his home in Ganga Street and fired multiple shots. They fled the scene, leaving the victim in a pool of blood. He was rushed to a local hospital, where he was being treated. The interior minister was questioned on Monday about the incident during a press conference at the Federal Investigation Agency's regional office in Lahore and asked to comment on the veracity of the reported Indian involvement. "India was directly involved in two to four events like this before in assassinations inside Pakistan. The police are still investigating but till now their suspicion is exactly the same as yours," he said in response to a reporter's questions. "At this time, all evidence is pointing towards them (India), it is inappropriate to say more before the investigation is completed but the pattern [of killings] is almost the same."



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Raza Naqvi talking to media persons in Lahore

Saudi FM arrives on two-day visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, leading a high-level delegation, on Monday arrived here on a two-day visit. Upon arrival at the airport, the Saudi Foreign Minister was received by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and other senior officials. The Saudi Foreign Minister is heading a high-level delegation comprising Saudi Minister of Water and Agriculture Eng Abdul Rahman Abdul Mohsen Al-Fadley, Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar Ibrahim AlKhorayef, Deputy Minister of Investment Badr AlBadr, Head of Saudi Special Committee Mohammed Mazyed Al Towaibri, and senior officials from Ministry of Energy and Saudi Fund for General Investments. "The visit takes place essentially to expedite follow up on the understanding reached between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Mohammad bin Salman, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during their recent meeting in Makkah Al Mukarramah to enhance bilateral economic cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia," the Foreign Office, in an earlier press release, said.

Patrolling of security institutions to be increased at national highways, decides in meeting

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The meeting chaired by Commissioner Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat has decided to increase patrolling of the security institutions on national highways in the Quetta division. The meeting was attended by the Additional Commissioner Quetta, Soban Dashti, Deputy Commissioner Quetta, Lt. (Retd) Saad bin Asad, Secretary PTA, besides representatives of police, FC, transporters and others. The meeting decided to review the present security situation on the national highways besides determining the issues and challenges and improving security. In this regard, recommendations and proposals would be prepared for improving security at the national highways. In this regard, gunnars would be deployed in the passenger coaches within seven days. Moreover, the CCTV cameras would be installed in the coaches, it was also decided. All the vehicles would in day hours while these would be run with convoy in night, it was decided further. No vehicle would carry zayeen without prior permission of the administration. Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Quetta stressed the need on protection of the passengers besides importance of security at the national highways. In this connection, the close cooperation and understanding is necessary between the concerned institutions and transporters, he maintained.

Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim takes oath as Acting CJ PHC

PESHAWAR (Online): Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim took oath as Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court in Peshawar today. Senior Judge Justice Ijaz Anwar administered the oath to him.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding situation arises after recent rains in the province and relief activities

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Tuesday April 16, 2024

Iran's counterstrike

The Middle East, indeed, the entire international community, was on tenterhooks after Israel struck the consular section of Iran's embassy in Damascus on April 1.

While Tel Aviv has been striking Iranians and their allies in Syria for over a decade, since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, this incident was different, and was seen by Tehran as a declaration of war.

It was the first time Israel hit an official Iranian facility, killing several members of the Sepah-i-Pasdar, including two senior generals. Tehran's response to this provocation was expected, and it came late on Saturday, in another 'first', as the Islamic Republic rained a barrage of drones and missiles directly on Israel.

From here, it is into the unknown: either diplomacy and de-escalation can kick in and bring the region, and the world, back from the brink. Or a catastrophic conflagration can ensue, resulting in more devastation, bloodshed and global economic misery.

Israel's Western friends — particular the US and many European states — have used sanctimonious adjectives to denounce Tehran's 'reckless' counterstrike, and have reiterated their 'ironclad' commitment to Israel's defence.

The rest of the international community, including UN Security Council members China and Russia, have taken a more measured approach, emphasising de-escalation. Pakistan has also highlighted the need to "stabilise the situation and restore peace". The fact is that Israel, by attacking Iran's diplomatic facilities and violating Syrian airspace, is largely responsible for this dangerous situation. And its recklessness must be reined in.

There was, of course, tremendous domestic pressure on the Iranian government to retaliate, and Tehran appears to have taken the pragmatic route by demonstrating its deterrence capability, while stepping back from all-out war. Iranian officials have said the matter is "concluded", though top generals say if Israel responds, Iran will again hit back.

This is a very dangerous moment for the international community. Instead of mollycoddling Israel, the Western bloc needs to prevent it from taking more provocative steps. If Tel Aviv does take further military action against Iran, then all bets are off, and a full-scale war could be inevitable. The path towards de-escalation is clear. Israel must immediately end the slaughter in Gaza, which is the key driver of the current confrontation in the Middle East.

Moreover, it must cease its roguish acts of targeting sovereign states including Iran, Lebanon and Syria. If the West keeps talking tough, it will embolden Israel and could drag the US and Europe into a shooting war with Iran and its regional allies. This is what Benjamin Netanyahu may actually want, to take the world's attention away from the massacre in Gaza, and to fight Iran to the last American. Deft statesmanship is the need of the hour to prevent a devastating showdown.

Maleeha Lodhi

The global debate over governance continues — what constitutes good governance and how it helps to determine the fate and fortunes of nations.

It is axiomatic that effective governance and competent leadership are what make the difference between successful and unsuccessful states. Economic development, in fact, depends on good governance. And this, in turn, has much to do with the quality of governance institutions, their responsiveness to public needs and people's faith in them.

In an increasingly complex world, governance challenges have become more daunting. New technologies have created unprecedented flows of instant information to heighten the challenge. Technology has empowered citizens and increased their expectations of what governments should deliver. But governments are seen to lack agility in a fast-moving world.

The international debate on governance in the 21st century has produced

a rich body of literature. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this conversation intensified as assessments were made of which countries managed the health crisis better and whether democracies did a more efficient job than authoritarian systems. Fareed Zakaria, in his book *Ten Lessons for the Post-Pandemic World*, argued that while democracies had a better record, it was a "competent, well-functioning, trusted state" and quality of governance that were instrumental in tackling the pandemic effectively.

Similarly, the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama asserted it was not the type of political system that determined capable management but an effective state. In a 2020 essay, he argued the crucial determinant in efficient crisis response is state capacity and trust in government. "What matters in the end is not regime type but whether citizens trust their leaders, and whether those leaders preside over a competent and effective state."

The unsettled post-Covid period saw unprecedented, overlapping chal-

lenges confront countries across the world. This prompted the World Bank to call for reimagining governance. Its *Future of Governance* report (2022) focused attention on the need for governments to tackle unresolved governance problems.

I saw the world at an inflection point due to growing demands, economic headwinds and mistrust, as well as persistence of chronic failures such as the learning crisis and job insecurity. The report called for a new social contract supported by an elite bargain by which elites committed to outcomes to benefit society at large and not just themselves. It proposed a "government of the future" with a clear vision of its role — innovative, trusted, prepared for crisis and responsive to the demands of citizens.

Over the years, the World Bank also advanced the governance debate by its efforts to evaluate and measure the quality of governance of countries. Its worldwide governance indicators represent a compilation of data that captures perceptions of the quality of governance in over 200

countries and territories. They measure six dimensions of governance — voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption.

In the global rankings based on assessment of these dimensions, Singapore, Finland, Norway and Denmark were among top performers in the 2022 rankings, with Pakistan among the bottom group of countries.

A different contribution to the governance debate was made by an insightful book published some years back titled *Intelligent Governance for the 21st Century: A Middle Way between West and East* by Nicolas Berggruen and Nathan Gardels. The authors examined whether there was a need to reimagine government as political systems were not delivering effective governance. They offered a compelling idea that both East and West should learn and adapt from one another to combine "knowledgeable democracy" with "accountable meritocracy".

For the authors, the question was not if Western-style democracy would triumph over rule by a meritocratic Mandarinate rooted in China's ancient "institutional civilisation", or the other way around. Instead, they asked whether a "middle way" between them could be evolved.

By this, they meant finding a balance between meritocracy and democracy, and between authority and freedom to create the most "intelligent form of governance".

They suggested drawing on the 'best practices' from both to evolve hybrid institutional arrangements that fused elements of popular democracy with the Confucian tradition of a learned meritocracy.

But they stressed the need for reform in Western and Eastern political systems alike, as both faced challenges. They argued that polarisation, dysfunction, decay and ideological rigidity afflict governance systems in much of the West. Without reform, electoral democracy anchored in a consumer culture of instant gratification is headed

towards "terminal decline". This is because it prioritises short-term interests, unmitigated by robust deliberative institutions, which have become weaker and unable to pursue the public good. In the US, democracy appears unable to self-correct.

On the other hand, China adopts a long-term governance perspective, can take tough decisions, and robustly implement them. China's operative system is predicated on the meritocratic tradition of learned and experienced elites and reflected in the modern Mandarinate of the Communist Party. This enables it to chart a long-term path, which explains its extraordinary rise. But the Chinese system is also under stress and needs correction because it "lacks accountability" and faces mounting demands from its people for democratic checks on arbitrary authority and cronyism.

This discussion leads the authors to contend that the best attributes of both Eastern and Western systems can help to produce a template of "intelligent governance".

After neoliberalism

Umair Javed

Slowly but surely, the signs of a global political and cultural realignment are becoming apparent. Several commentators trace the origins of this realignment to events of the last two and a half decades — the so-called war on terror and its impact on Muslim societies, the global financial crisis and the concurrent growth in Asian economies, and greater migratory flows, especially to the West.

A number of these varied trends are clubbed together and summarised as the end of neoliberal globalisation. Trade wars between the US and China, the fracturing of peace in Europe, the rise of right-wing nationalist and populist movements, the breakdown of the (admittedly) thin consensus on open borders, and the resurgence of the state as a coordinator of economic activity all show a world quite different to the one envisioned by the Davos crowd in the 1980s and 1990s.

On the economy front, quite a lot has already been written about the decoupling of trade and

the rise of state interventions in the economy, even in the West. Drawing on China's successful implementation of political capitalism — ie, a system where political power of the state is used to fulfil economic goals — even countries generally reluctant to embrace any form of state intervention (such as the US), have switched to some variant of industrial policy, especially in key sectors like battery and green technology and semiconductors. In her recent trip to China, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen suggested, almost ruefully, that the (neoliberal) mantra of free trade championed by her and her predecessors in office had been detrimental to American workers.

These economic shifts will become more apparent as countries across the Global South attempt to catch up using a variety of different interventionist approaches. Selective engagement with the world, rather than an unencumbered embrace, is likely to be the pattern in the years ahead.

However, neoliberal globalisation was not just an economic project. It

came armed with a range of political and cultural ideals whose task was to generate mass consensus, especially among the so-called losers of globalisation.

A primary one was the ideal of liberal democracy, supposedly guaranteed globally by the US. The simple fact, though, is that the commitment to this ideal remained selective at best, contingent on US foreign policy goals. The West was comfortable working with dictatorships of all stripes as long as its interests in a particular region were guaranteed. However, even this superficial consensus seems to be fraying. With the rise of far-right and populist movements in the West, democracy is eroding in its supposed heartlands.

Simultaneously, the (selective) success of autocracies in generating popular support and consensus through economic growth makes them seem an attractive alternative. Regardless of the extremely specific factors that allow some autocracies to generate growth, every aspiring autocrat, such as those frequently found in Pakistan, seems to think that limit-

ing popular representation is a key ingredient in delivering growth.

In an insightful recent exposition, sociologist Cihan Tugal cites the case of Erdogan and Turkey's AKP, which have deftly used targeted state welfare, interventions in the economy and authoritarian politics to create a durable ruling arrangement. These arrangements have proven to be somewhat successful in limiting, though by no means finishing, challenges to its rule over the last two decades.

Finally, the cultural agenda of neoliberalism is also being challenged, both in the West and abroad. This agenda was based on the extremely selective co-optation of ideals of inclusion and representation. It found its clearest manifestation in places like the US, where check-box tokenism became the basic mode of dealing with racial and gender minorities without any actual accompanying reordering of economic and social hierarchies.

The slowdown of economic growth, especially in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, has led to an upsurge of racial, nativist, and chauvinist

politics, which sees even these watered-down efforts of social justice to be an affront that need to be done away with. In a throwback of sorts to the inter-war period of the 20th century, minorities and immigrants are being scapegoated for the unmet aspirations of the majority.

This retreat towards primordial loyalties is also increasingly apparent in migrant communities, especially conservative Muslim ones across the world. The genocidal acts of Israel in Gaza, and the blatant encouragement provided by Western governments, have created a major schism with Muslim communities and dealt another blow to liberal political rhetoric and its talk of multicultural societies. Anecdotally, conversations with Pakistani migrants in the West reveal a range of anxieties; not just with regard to the rise of racial and Islamophobic politics, but also with prevalent modes of gender and sexual politics that are seen to be antithetical to conservative belief systems. This is particularly true for young, first-generation migrants who are raising families in the West.

One outcome of this

is an even further rise in the attractiveness of the Gulf monarchies, especially for high-skilled, high-credentialed Muslim migrants. There is now renewed appeal of greater cultural conformity, alongside the usual economic advantages associated with life abroad. Global transformations rarely level themselves in one, clearly distilled moment. Instead, they become apparent through various, drawn-out and slow-moving processes. In the present, these shifts in the global economy, political systems, and cultural values are all important indicators of such a transformation. Some of these shifts may be read as broadly positive. A focus on state-led national economic growth is one such example, which may help fix the inequities created by neoliberalism.

On the other hand, ethnic, cultural and racial insularity, and the ongoing retreat towards such identities can be seen as a more worrying trend. As seen in the past, the biggest fallout of heightened nativism is usually further exclusion and discrimination of gender and racial/ethnic minorities.

Childcare challenge

Huma Yusuf

During a spell of what feels like endless school holidays, a working mother's mind inevitably turns to childcare. When faced with the great juggling act that is work and life, it is not surprising that the West is grappling with declining birthrates and millennials are taking to TikTok in droves to swear off having children. Readers may dismiss working mothers and childcare as a Western problem, but it is increasingly a Pakistani one. The country must tackle it quickly if it is to be an equitable, inclusive and prosperous society.

Admittedly, there has been good news on the childcare front. In her inaugural speech as Punjab Chief Minister, Maryam Nawaz pledged to develop day care centres in workplaces to enable working women. This comes on the back of a spree of day care centre launches in Punjab in recent years, including at police stations. Last year, the then president signed the Day Care Centres Bill, which requires workplaces to establish crèches. It has also made news headlines each time a provincial assembly has established a childcare facility, setting a positive precedent.

But these largely symbolic acts amount to little in a country with a female population of 109 million (2021). At 24 per cent, Pakistan's female labour participation rate is among the lowest in the world, and well off our own Vision 2025 target of 45pc. The lack of childcare is a key driver for this low participation: according to a 2019 ILO study, Pakistani women do more than 90pc of unpaid care work.

ing statistic, the impetus to push for adequate childcare for Pakistani women seems more like lip service than a top priority. This highlights the state's short-sightedness, given that female workforce participation is constantly cited as a golden key to unlock Pakistan's economic potential. Indeed, a 2018 IMF study concluded that Pakistan could boost its GDP by 30pc if it closed the gender gap in its workforce.

There are various barriers to additional childcare provision, the key one being the failure to recognise the massive demand for such support. The nostalgic fantasy of joint families, where infants are left in the care of doting grandmothers, persists. In reality, care is provided by elder female siblings or cousins, themselves denied schooling because of childcare obligations, fuelling a vicious cycle of female poverty and marginalisation. Or it's a maid — likely underpaid and underpaid — who herself will struggle with childcare when the time comes to start a family. Improving formal childcare provision for one woman would likely improve the lot of many others. The childcare demand is set to grow exponentially. High inflation means dual-income households, particularly in urban areas, will grow in number. Some of this will hopefully also be spurred by positive pull factors, as more workplaces seek to be gender inclusive.

Pakistan is also likely at a tipping point for female rural-urban migration, and potentially at risk of having its female labour force participation decline if it cannot solve the childcare puzzle. This is because women in rural areas who participate in agricultural activities

are considered employed (leading to a rural-urban discrepancy of 28.9pc against 10.2pc in 2016).

Rural-urban migration has been dominated by men seeking employment or education in cities, with women moving in smaller numbers, largely due to marriage. But as climate change leads to more stress on agricultural production, expect women to migrate in much larger numbers due to economic necessity. With climate migration will come greater demand for childcare, particularly in urban areas, as women leave behind the proverbial village it takes to raise a child. Failure to cater to this demand will worsen the prospects of female labour participation.

The solution is not merely legislative: laws such as the 1934 Factories Act mandate childcare provision by employers after reaching a threshold of female employees. A 2021 IFC/Pakistan Business Council report found that these laws were poorly implemented because of lack of awareness and resources both among enforcement agencies and employers.

This will have to change. But solving for the supply side without addressing valid and material safeguarding concerns will be as good as doing nothing. Given the horrific stories about child abuse that make it to the news with sickening frequency (those are just the cases that are reported), childcare provision will have to be delivered with a complete infrastructure of regulation, monitoring, robust law-enforcement and timely inspections.

We cannot afford to wait. The fate of legions of working women and their children depends on our state prioritising the childcare conundrum.

Criminalising hate

Bina Shah

There is a Stephen Spielberg movie called *Minority Report*, based on a Philip K. Dick science fiction novella set in the year 2054. Tom Cruise plays a police officer who heads a special unit that uses Pre-Cogs, people with psychic powers who can see the future and predict crimes. When Cruise is accused of a crime he is going to commit 36 hours from now, it is merely the vision of a psychic that plunges Cruise into a desperate fight to clear his name and not be killed.

I thought of this film when I read about a new law enacted in Scotland called the Hate Crime and Public Order Act. Hate crime laws had already existed in Scotland; the new law adds more categories to the group of protected minorities: age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or being intersex. It also abolishes the crime of blasphemy, which most developed nations consider to be outdated.

The hate crime law, passed in 2021, came into effect on April 1, 2024. It does not include protections for biological women. Instead, the Scottish government, led by First Minister Humza Yousuf, proposes to enact a separate law criminalising misogyny at a later date. This has caused tremendous controversy, as duelling groups argue that women's rights are being trampled in favour of transgender rights.

Confusingly, it is not meant to "stifle criticism or debate", or even to stop people from "expressing controversial, challenging, or offensive views" (quotes from a Scottish government spokesperson speaking

to CNN). On social media, people are posting controversial statements just to test its boundaries. In the law's first week, police received over 7,000 complaints, of which only 240 were officially recorded, and the rest deemed as false complaints. Described as an "unmitigated disaster", the law is causing more problems than it hoped to solve.

Hate speech laws that get it right must serve as a balance between public safety and order, and the right for people to express themselves freely — hence the classic example, that you can't go into a crowded theatre and shout "Fire!" because of the harmful consequences of that act. Most hate speech laws criminalise speech that incites people to violence and physical harm. The Scottish law takes this even further; if your speech incites hatred, not even actual violence, against a protected group, you are criminally liable.

Hate speech laws engender a debate about what we want our societies to look like, and how we want our citizens to behave versus how much freedom of thought and expression we want them to have. They also attempt to make it mandatory to treat others with respect and dignity.

But you can't truly legislate against hatred as a felt human emotion, any more than you can make it enforceable by law to love against someone's will.

We are trying to legally intervene in the delicate space between emotion, ethics, and action, by acting as a barrier to human beings racing along the signal-free corridor of the amygdala, the part of the brain that generates impulses. Your

pre-frontal cortex, which weighs the consequences of those impulses, may decide that a little hatred in the right time and the right place is actually a good thing, as Aristotle described the relationship between hatred and virtue. But just in case, the Hate Crime Law, with its attendant punishments, is there to guide you to the better choice of keeping your hateful thoughts to yourself.

In George Orwell's dystopian classic 1984, laws against thoughtcrime, or having negative thoughts against the ruling government, was the most extreme type of hate speech law. Thoughtcrimes did not have to be acted upon, nor did they have to cause physical or material harm. Merely a person's beliefs, expressed to another or written in a diary, could bring a citizen of Oceania such as Winston Smith into the reach of the ThinkPol, or thought police, though he avoided the ultimate fate of vaporisation.

But rather than 1984 or the Minority Report, I look at Pakistan as a prime example of hate speech laws gone wrong, where the mere suggestion of sacrilege results in pogroms, desecration, and death before the legal process against it has even begun.

Meanwhile, vulnerable populations — women, khwaja siras and intersex people, the disabled, non-Muslims and minority sects — continue to experience hatred, discrimination and violence freely expressed in thought, words, and action. In Pakistan, this kind of hatred is not banned; instead, it is weaponised. When will we come up with the kind of laws to protect our citizens from that?

Alem Khan says: Increase in exports to help enhance foreign reserves, stabilise economy

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Alem Khan on Monday said that increase in exports was imperative for enhancing foreign reserves and stabilising the national economy.

The private sector should come forward and explore different fields to enhance exports, he said during a meeting with businessmen and investors here at the Governor House.

The minister stressed the need to take special measures, especially in view of Pak-Saudi investment and export agreements.

Alem Khan said, "We have to further expand by investing in export sectors which will ultimately create more jobs".

He urged the private sector to find new opportunities to invest domestically and abroad, for which the government would provide them all possible

facilities. The minister welcomed the visit of a high-level delegation from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He expressed the hope that the private sector would take full advantage of the opportunity, which would also boost bilateral trade between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Federal Secretary Commerce Saleh Farooqui briefed the meeting regarding the export situation.

He said that there was a wide scope in the fields of agriculture, textile, information technology, pharmaceuticals, mobiles, sports equipment, minerals and other sectors.

The meeting was attended by important business personalities, investors and leaders of the business community who announced their full support to the present government.

The participants also expressed their commitment that they would fully cooperate with the high-level delegation from Saudi Arabia.



Finance Minister Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb met with US Pakistan Business Council @ USPBC delegation in Washington D.C. Highlighted govt's commitment to improving business climate & attracting foreign & domestic investments in key sectors including agriculture, IT, mining, & energy.



LAHORE: Chicken retailers protesting for their demands in front of the press club in the Provincial Capital.

China allows buffalo embryos import from specific regions of Pakistan

BEIJING (APP): China has allowed specific regions of Pakistan to export buffalo embryos that meet its quarantine requirements.

The latitude and longitude coordinates provided in the recent joint announcement of China General Administration of Customs and Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs correspond to the buffalo epidemic-free ranch of Royal Group in Punjab, Chinese media reported.

This marks the first ranch in Pakistan and the only one in the world capable of exporting high-yield buffalo embryos to China.

As one of the first agricultural projects initiated

under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Royal Group's "Buffalo Breeding Project" has made significant progress.

The importation of buffalo embryos into China can significantly shorten the cycle of improving dairy buffalo breeds from 12 years in the past to three years. Additionally, the milk production of a single buffalo can be increased by more than threefold.

In addition, Royal Group has established an in vitro embryo production factory and pastures in Pakistan.

They have also recruited and trained local researchers and farm managers, and provided high-quality

germplasm resources of milk buffalo to Pakistan. This has helped solve the issue of maintaining the local super buffalo resource.

In 2021, the Royal Group established Royal Cell Biotechnology (Pakistan) and officially launched the "Milk Buffalo Provenance Chip" strategy. In the following year, the Royal Cell in vitro embryo production plant was formally inaugurated. Now, local technicians in Pakistan can produce hundreds of high-quality buffalo embryos in a week. The embryos will breed high-yielding milk buffalo herds and greatly increase buffalo milk production once they are introduced to China.

Steps afoot to cut essential commodities prices: Ch Shafay

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said here Monday that the government under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is making all out efforts to end inflation and dearness, besides reducing the prices of essential commodities after the historic Ramadan package.

The reduction in the prices of wheat bread (Roti/Naan) is a mega step providing relief to the people, he said and added that all the districts administration have also been directed to ensure the implementation of the decision to reduce the

prices of Roti and Naan. The price control committees and other relevant institutions should also play their active role to ensure the sale of Roti at Rs 16 and Naan at Rs 20, he asserted. The Provincial Minister said that measures would be continued to make life easier for the people, citing that welfare schemes are being rapidly promoted across the province.

He vowed that economy would be stabilized by bringing about an industrial revolution in Punjab. "We will increase employment opportunities by bringing new investments," he mentioned.

Visit of Saudi delegation will be a milestone for Pak's economy: Atif

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: President of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Shaikh termed the visit of the Saudi delegation as a milestone for the economy and hoped that it happens in response to the recent visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan's to the capital of the brotherly kingdom. The focus is on a positive continuation of the investment projects in Pakistan. The pledge to complete the five-billion-dollar investment

trail would soon begin restoring the confidence of investors from all over the world.

Atif Sheikh said investment of this denomination from the platform of the SIFC in the Reco Deq prospect was a positive step for the bolstering the economy. The role of the Investment Council is significant and timely, he added. There is a need for a framework to help widen the possibilities of cooperation in different fields of the economy.

IMF urges Pakistan to boost revenue via taxing non-essential items including cigarettes

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has been urged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to overhaul its tax machinery through taxing non-essential items including cigarettes to boost revenue and improve public health.

Health advocates have highly appreciated a set of recommendation and taxing non-essential items including cigarettes given by the global lender.

Head of Zaman Research Center at Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Prof Muhammad Zaman said, "This is a crucial time for the government to fix economic problems and implement the IMF recommendation."

The IMF report has

referred to a phenomenal study on this subject conducted by Capital Calling, an Islamabad-based think tank, which says the cigarette consumption has decreased due to increase in prices, he added.

Prof Zaman said there was a need to bring into account the cost of morbidity and mortality that smoking inflicts on the society. "Smoking is injurious to health regardless of the cigarette brand," he said.

The head of Zaman Research Center at QAU pointed to critical flaws within Pakistan's tax system particularly the cigarette industry, which have facilitated a loss of Rs567 billion during last seven years, as revealed by the

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

The study further exposed the influence of multinational cigarette companies on policymakers, particularly evident in the introduction of a three-tier excise duty structure in 2017, which prioritized revenue collection over public health considerations. However, subsequent analysis proved this approach to be ineffective and misleading in revenue generation.

The SDPI research highlighting global best practices and how high and middle-income countries have successfully used high cigarette taxes to reduce consumption and boost government revenues.

Finance Minister meets USPBC delegation in Washington

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday met a delegation of the US Pakistan Business Council (USPBC) in Washington DC to discuss the government's commitment to improving the business climate in the country.

According to a Finance Ministry press release, the minister during the meeting highlighted.



LAHORE: Chairman Kisan Etihad Khalid Hussain Butt addressing a press conference at press club in the Provincial Capital.

Pak poised for economic growth with strong support from S. Arabia: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Monday said that Pakistan was poised to make economic growth with the strong support of the brotherly country of Saudi Arabia.

He attributed the country's positive economic trajectory to the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, particularly in fostering friendly relations with Islamic nations to bolster investment and business opportunities in Pakistan.

Talking to the media, Ashrafi said a high-level delegation led by Saudi Foreign Minister was expected to arrive in Pakistan on Monday evening, marking a significant milestone in bilateral ties, adding the

visit would underscore the country's appeal as an investment destination among the Muslim states.

The PUC chairman highlighted that both the prime minister and army chief had effectively garnered support and commitments from key stakeholders, including the Saudi leadership and prominent businessmen.

He said concerted efforts made during the last two months to strengthen Pak-Saudi relations, culminated in successful meetings of Pakistan's leadership with top Saudi officials, including Defence Minister Khalid bin Salman and Muslim World League Secretary-General Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa.

Ashrafi said the visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, accompanied by representatives from vital ministries and business sectors.

Pak rupee stable against US dollar in interbank market

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani rupee stayed on course against the US dollar as business resumed in the interbank market on Monday after long Eid break.

As per the information obtained from the forex dealers, the local currency appreciated by 16 paisas against the greenback and was currently being traded at Rs277.78.

On the last business day before Eid, the Pakistani rupee had remained largely stable against the US dollar, settling at Rs277.93 on Tuesday.

In a key development, Pakistan's economic team led by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb had left for Washington on Sunday to hold talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new bailout programme.

Talks between Pakistan and the IMF are scheduled for this week in Washington, wherein the government team will request the Fund for approval of a new loan programme. The main ministerial meetings and events will be held from April 17-19.



Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications, Abdul Alem Khan presiding over a meeting of business community in Karachi.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): A ship 'Nicholas' with 56,277 tonnes of Coal, berthed at Pakistan International Bulk Terminal on Sunday.

Meanwhile, four more ships, Fast, MSC Nilgun, High Trader and Navigation Vega also arrived at outer-anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them an edible oil carrier 'TTC Vishaka' left the Port today morning while another ship 'Lusail' is expected to sail today.

Cargo volume of 103,652 tonnes, comprising 9,419 tonnes of export cargo carried in 441 Containers was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 8 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Fast, Gall and MSC Nilgun & two more ships, MSC Vilda-X and XT Brightness are scheduled to load/offload Cement, Palm oil, Container and Chemicals are expected to take berths at MW-2, LCT, QICT and EVTL.

Pakistan's regional exports increase 20.57% in 8 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 20.57 per cent in the first eight 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 \$2,912.102 million, which is 14.17 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$20,537.900 million during July-February (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 its farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.

Pakistan's exports to China witnessed an increase of 42.02 per cent to \$1,895.720 million in eight months of this year from \$1,334.804 million last year while exports to Afghanistan witnessed a nominal decline of 7.68 per cent from

\$346.522 million to \$319.887 million.

The country's exports to Bangladesh also decreased by 19.63 per cent to \$421.939 million this year from \$525.017 whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 32.31 per cent to \$266.164 million from \$201.165.

The exports to India increased to \$0.230 million from \$0.161 million in the previous year.

Exports to Nepal increased by 5.66 per cent to \$2.164 million from 2.048 million while to Maldives increased by 8.11 per cent to \$5.548 million from 5.998 million, it added.

Eid Festival Bazaars to be organized in all markets from next year

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner appreciated the ICCI and the Traders Welfare Associations for organizing Eid Festival Bazaars for the benefit of the consumers. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the Aabpara Market is the oldest market of Islamabad and is playing central role in improving the economy by promoting trade activities and that ICCI would continue to work with relevant government departments to resolve the issues of the business community.

He was also impressed by Capital Development Authority that focused on the beautification of the market.

Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves reach \$13.44 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan reached US\$ 13,441.7 million in the week ended on April 5, 2024 while foreign reserves held by State Bank stood at \$ 8,040.3 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Monday, informed that foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank decreased by \$0.1 million to \$ 8,040.3 million during the week under review.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were recorded \$ 5,401.4 million, it added.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on March 29, 2024, were \$13,378.9 million.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 229 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 229.86 points, a positive change of 0.33 percent, closing at 70,544.58 points against 70,314.72 points the previous trading day.

A total of 555,214,972 shares valuing Rs.21,986 billion were traded during the day as compared to 389,396,548 shares valuing Rs.17,273 billion the last day. Some 353 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 180 of them recorded gains and



MULTAN: Labourers are busy in spreading sheep wool for drying at their workplace.

Industry in grip of deep economic crisis amid high marks: SVC FRIA

LAHORE (INP): Senior Vice Chairman (SVC) Ferozpur Road Industrial Association (FRIA), Shahbaz Aslam has said that the country is in the middle of a deep economic crisis amid interest rates hikes and soaring inflation with its major debt sustainability indicators witnessing marked deterioration.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he said that amid the crippling economic crisis, the govt will have to return \$77.5 billion as external debt in the next three years. Quoting the media reports, he noted that a major portion of the \$77.5 billion is owed to China, and has to be paid in June when a \$1 billion Chinese SAFE deposit and a roughly \$1.4 billion Chinese commercial loan would mature.

Shahbaz Aslam stated that the total public debt and liabilities of the country has presently been standing at Rs68 trillion in FY22-23, expressing the fear that it would go up further by Rs11.8 trillion in the current fiscal year.

He pointed out that the total public debt and liabilities would go up manifold mainly because of the rising fiscal deficit and it is estimated that fiscal deficit would escalate by Rs8,227 trillion for the current fiscal year, equivalent to 7.8 percent of GDP. The SVC FRIA said that the government will have to manage budget financing to the tune of Rs7.5 trillion through domestic avenues and only Rs1 trillion would be made available as budgetary support from foreign avenues.



LAHORE: Farmers are busy in harvesting wheat crop near Ravi River.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor University of Loralai Dr. Ehsanullah Khan Kakar and acting Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan Dr. Zahoor Bazai meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

MQM-P warns of taking to streets if crimes in Karachi not stopped

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has warned of taking to the streets if the government fails to curb the rampant scourge of street crimes in Karachi.

"We would raise our voice [on the issue] in the Sindh Assembly and in the National Assembly [...] and would protest on the streets if our concerns are not addressed," MQM-P's Ali Khurshidi said while addressing a press conference in Karachi.

His remarks come as Karachi has witnessed a significant surge in street crimes in recent months which have resulted in dozens of injuries and fatalities.

Since January 1, at least 59 people have lost their lives while 200 were injured due to resisting robbery this year so far in the metropolis.

According to Geo News, as many as 6,780 crimes were committed in

Karachi in the holy month of Ramadan alone in which 20 vehicles were snatched and more than 130 others stolen.

Moreover, 830 motorcycles were also snatched with 4,200 others stolen in the same month. Meanwhile, 19 people lost their lives in Ramadan while 55 were injured.

The two parties, both of whom are key allies of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) government in the Centre, have been engaged in a verbal spat in recent weeks over the issue of street crimes in the city.

Last month, Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar termed crime a "part of a daily life" saying that the issue of the law-and-order situation in Karachi was being "exaggerated".

The remarks drew ire from various sections of society and political parties, most notably the MQM-P which has even

called for the country's financial hub to be handed over to the Pakistan Army for three months.

Flanked by Nasreen Jilil and others, Khurshidi lamented police's failure saying that no street in Karachi was safe.

Claiming that more than 1,000 mobile phones are snatched daily in Karachi, the member of the Sindh Assembly called out the Pakistan Peoples Party-led provincial government for blaming the law-and-order situation on the caretaker government despite its 15-year rule in Sindh.

"Mobile phones worth more than Rs10 billion are snatched every year [...] If crimes are not stopped, then we [are forced to] question whether the criminals are being supported by the police."

"We have held two press conferences so that the government machinery may come into action [...]"

Governor calls for providing new vision to make public sector universities financially self-sufficient & stable

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stressed that heavy responsibility rests on us to provide new vision for making financially self-sufficient and stable with consensus and mutual understanding.

It would contribute a lot for bringing improvement in higher education in the province.

He said that self-sufficiency of all public sector universities and educational development requires from us to make daring decisions.

The Governor directed all the concerned vice Chancellors of the public sector universities to ensure merit in recruitments and promotions and visit different classes during the studies.

The Governor was speaking to the Vice Chancellor of University of Balochistan, Dr. Zahoor Ahmed Bazai, Vice Chancellor of University of Loralai, Dr. Ehsanullah Kakar, Vice Chancellor, Engineering University of Khuzdar, Professor Dr. Mazood Ahmed and Vice Chancellor, Turbat University, Professor Jan Muhammad Baloch, who called on him here separately on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor made it clear that the big objectives can be made possible with big resolve and determination.

He said that it is high time to adopt national thinking and approach remaining above the petty differences and personal interests.

He said that universities are not mere educational and research institutions rather lives of our future generations are linked with these higher educational institutions.

Therefore, there is a need to prepare comprehensive strategy to resolve their financial, administrative and academic related issues on permanent basis in order to set our national priorities, adding he stressed. He said that contacts have been made at the federal and provincial levels on the financial issues of the public sector universities especially nonpayment of salaries to their employees. He expressed the hope that they would play their wholehearted role for resolving the issues on permanent basis.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding provision of clean drinking water to people of Gwadar

Action being taken against encroachments on nullahs: PDMA and QMC teams engaged in post-rain situation, say DG PDMA, Commissioner

Independent Report
QUETTA: The field teams of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) are engaged in post-rain situation in the provincial metropolis.

The action is also being taken against the encroachments established on nullahs located in different parts of the metropolis.

This was informed by the Director General PDMA, Jahanzaib Khan and Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat while speaking to the media persons at the

PDMA office on Monday afternoon.

The DG PDMA said that heavy rains were recorded in and around Quetta city during last few days.

He pointed out that there are several encroachments on the drainage nullahs in and around Quetta.

He said that if the action was not taken against encroachments, then similar situation would have to be faced in future.

Speaking on occasion, Commissioner Quetta mentioned that total 156 millimeter rain was recorded

during past few days in Quetta.

He said that the width of drainage nullahs have been squeezed from 40 feet to 20 feet only due to the encroachments.

He said that the damages have been caused due to the encroachments on the nullahs.

He said that only solution to escape from the damages following rains is to take action against encroachments.

The Commissioner said that we would be able to remove encroachments if there was no hurdle in the operation.

Govt taking steps to provide facilities to those affected by recent rains: MPA Samad

QUETTA (APP)-Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA), Sardarzada Samad Khan Gorgage said that the government was taking all possible measures to provide facilities to those affected by the rains.

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)'s leader Samad Khan Gorgage said that Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and other concerned organizations were busy working with heavy machinery for rainwater drainage.

He expressed these views while talking to the citizens on the occasion of his visit to different areas of Quetta affected by the rains immediately after reaching Quetta from Larkana on Sunday and Monday night.

On this occasion, Deputy Director of PDMA Faisal Tariq and Pakistan

Peoples Party leader Sanaullah Jatak were also with him.

Sardarzada Samad Khan Gorgage said that due to climate change, there has been more rain than expected due to which the low-lying areas have been flooded.

He said that on special directive of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, PDMA, Quetta Municipal Corporation and other organizations were busy with efforts to ensure water drainage with heavy machinery.

He said that citizens should also avoid encroachment on rivers and drainage channels saying that the provincial government would ensure all possible assistance to the victims of the rains and would not leave them alone in this hour of trouble.

Post-rains situation being monitored: Gwadar coastal highway restored for traffic, says Lasbela administration

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Gwadar coastal highway has been restored for traffic in Lasbela district on Monday morning.

According to the district administration of Lasbela, the traffic has been restored on the coastal highway near Princess of Hope, which otherwise was affected due to heavy rains in the area.

The link of Lasbela with Gwadar and rest of Makran and province was disconnected due to the heavy rains and flashflood hit the coastal highway.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Lasbela, Syed

Yaseen Akhtar told that all concerned departments and staff are alert in the area with heavy machinery also placed in the rain affected areas.

He said that the district administration is fully alert to cope with any emergent situation in the district.

He said that the situation of ongoing spell of rains is being monitored closely so as to give response in case of any emergency.

He has asked the general public to call to the control room at 0853-610251 in case of any emergency.

However, he urged the people to refrain from unnecessary travelling on the Gwadar-Karachi route.

DC inspects rain drains of Sirki Road, directs to construct 24 drains holes

QUETTA (APP)- Deputy Commissioner (DC) Quetta Lieutenant @ Saad bin Asad inspected the rain drain of Sirki Road along with the relevant contractor and issued orders to construct 24 drain holes in the next 7 hours.

He said that due to non-availability of workers, the work was being

hampered, additionally, cleaning would be done with heavy machinery at 11 pm because vehicles were parked at these points.

He gave instructions that traffic has been ordered to divert vehicles from the left and right sides of the road from Bareach Market to Lehari Chowk.

Four die as roof collapse in Bara

PESHAWAR (APP): At least four people of the same family including women and children were killed and six others injured when roof of a room, collapsed due to heavy downpour in Shin Drang area of Bara tehsil in Khyber district on Monday. Rescue 1122 officials said the unfortunate incident occurred near Abaseen School in Shin Drang where the roof of a room.

ANP Balochistan chapter election to be held on April 26

QUETTA (APP): The Awami National Party (ANP) Balochistan chapter intra-party election will be held on April 26 at 10 a.m. under the supervision of Central Election Commission Chairman Mian Ifikhar Hussain.

In a meeting of the Provincial Election Commission of ANP, in which Secretary Provincial Election Commission Sanaullah Kakar, members Malik Mehrab Khan Kakar and Anwar Khan Mandukhail discussed the ANP intra-party elections and the steps taken so far was declared satisfactory.

It was decided in the meeting that the district elections of Awami National Party district Qila

Abdullah will be held on April 23 at 10 a.m. (Tuesday), while the provincial elections will be held on Friday, April 26 at 10 a.m., in which Central Election Commission Chairman Mian Ifikhar Hussain and other members will participate.

In the meeting, the steps taken so far related to the provincial elections were reviewed and the preparations for the holding of elections were discussed in detail.

Chairman of the Provincial Election Commission Obaidullah Abid called the meeting of the Provincial Election Commission on Wednesday, April 17 at 2 p.m.

Alem visits Chinese Embassy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan visited the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad on Monday.

He called on Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong and expressed his deep sorrow over the recent accident of Chinese engineers, said a press release.

Abdul Aleem Khan while talking to the Chinese Ambassador said that Pakistan-China friendship is a symbol of economic stability and peace in the region.



SLAMABAD: Aseefa Bhutto Zardari addressing National Assembly session after taking oath as MNA.

Commissioner monitors drive to drain out sewerage & rain water in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat monitored the campaign continued to drain out the sewerage and rain water from different localities of Quetta city on Monday.

The campaign, it may be mentioned here, the drive has been started under supervision of Commissioner and Administrator Quetta on special directives of the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

During the visit, the Commissioner visited dif-

ferent localities and inspected the post-rains situation there. Besides, he also inspected the ongoing work for draining out the rain and sewerage water.

He expressed satisfaction over the performance of field teams besides appreciating functioning of the teams of PDMA.

He urged the people to remain vigilant and not pay heed towards the rumors being spread in the city.

He said that it is our responsibility to protect every person, and it would be fulfilled anyway.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta and Administrator Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat chairs a high level meeting regarding rain emergency.

Eight killed, 12 injured due to rains in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday issued a report on the loss of life and property in the province due to heavy rains during the last three days. According to preliminary reports, eight people were killed and 12 people were injured. Four children, three men and a woman are among the dead persons, while the injured include four women, six men and two children.

According to the report, a total of 85 houses

were damaged due to the collapse of walls and roofs in different districts, of which 15 houses were completely damaged and 70 houses were partially damaged. Due to heavy rain, life and financial accidents took place in different districts of Dir Upper, Chitral Lower, Swat, Malakand and Bajaur. The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa directed the concerned district administration to provide immediate assistance to the affected family and provide the best medical facilities.

Opp. unable to lead protest against govt: Gabol

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly (MNA) and Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) leader, Sardar Nabil Ahmed Gabol on Monday scrapped the Opposition claims of leading a protest movement against the ruling coalition government and claimed it unable to start the protest campaign due to division within its factions. Talking to APP outside the Parliament House, the PPPP policy maker categorically stated that the Opposition was divided within its ranks and files which had further diluted its strength within the House.



QUETTA: View of destruction due to stagnant rainwater causing of poor sewerage system creating problems for commuters and residents after heavy downpour, at Hazarganji area in Quetta.

SIFC starts improvement in national edu. policy as per modern needs

ISLAMABAD (Online): Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has started collaborations with stakeholders at federal and provincial levels to improve national education policy in line with the demands of international market.

Under the initiative, suitable institutions will be established for technical and vocational training along with basic educational standards.



HUB: Heavy machineries and laborers busy in construction work of Causeway crossing road completely destroyed after flood in Hub River during recent heavy downpour of monsoon, under supervision NHA, located on Gwadar Coastal Highway.

Pervez Khattak mulls joining politics again

PESHAWAR (INP): Former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Pervez Khattak has decided to join politics again, Dunya News learnt.

According to family sources, the seasoned politician is in contact with the PPP and other parties. He also held several meetings with key political leaders during the last few days.

Speaking to Dunya News, the veteran politician said he would take a decision after analysing the po-

litical situation. "I am silently observing the performance of the government nowadays," he said.

He said the development schemes of Rs10 billion were approved for Nowshera but they had been reverted. "The people of Nowshera will now realise their deprivation," he lamented.

"I am away from mainstream and social media these days but can take decision to enter politics again soon," he added.

Fawad granted interim bail till April 20 in 4 cases

LAHORE (Online): The Anti-Terrorism Court granted the bail to Fawad Chaudhry till April 20 in 4 cases relating to May 9.

On Monday, Judge Arshad Javed heard the bail application in the Anti-Terrorism Court. Earlier, Fawad Chaudhry filed an application for interim bail in four cases of May 9. The court also asked for the records of the cases from the police on the next hearing. Earlier, the hearing of the fraud case against former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry was adjourned without proceeding.

Irrigation official says Dams located in vicinity of Quetta city safe, there no danger from recent rains

QUETTA (APP)-All dams located in the vicinity of Quetta city are safe and there is no danger of from recent rains, currently, 10,000 acre feet of water have been stored in the dams. Citizens should avoid going into the water in view of any danger, the Irrigation Department is constantly monitoring the dams. These views were expressed by Official of the Irrigation Department on Monday.

He said that the dams located in the vicinity of Quetta city were completely safe and there was no danger from the recent rains. He said that the dams located in the outskirts of Quetta city have the capacity to store 25 thousand acre feet of water, at present, more than 10,000 acre feet of water have been

stored. Official said that some people were busy trying to create panic among people by sharing pictures of flood water after rains in August 2022, saying that citizens did not listen fake of news panic, none of the dams were in danger.

He said that a rumor was spread last night that Karkhsa Dam was full of water and may break any time after which Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat, Deputy Commissioner Sad Bin Asad and Irrigation officials visited Karkhsa Dam.

He said that they were told that the dam has a capacity to store 850,000 feet of water,

while up to 300 acre feet of water has been stored in the dam so far, water could be stored up to 55 feet in the dam, currently, the

water has been stored up to 20 feet.

Official said that the Wali Tangi Dam has a capacity of 380 acre feet which was fully filled, Spinkariz Dam has a storage capacity of 2500 acre feet of which 1200 acre feet has been stored.

Some dams have a storage capacity of 650 acre feet of water which is fully filled, after which the water is going to Sara Ghargai Dam through the spillway, in which 250 feet of water has been collected, while the dams in Aghbarg have a capacity of 2,200 acre feet of water storage, he said. He said that out of which one dam has been completely filled, while one dam has collected 1000 feet acre while the other has stored 800 feet acre of water.

Adil stands exposed after losing legal battle in UK court

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Controversial YouTuber Maj @ Adil Farooq Raja has been exposed after losing a legal battle in the United Kingdom. The false narrative he constructed has also been dismantled, with the British High Court rejecting all of his claims that Pakistan is an authoritarian state where the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) controls both the judiciary and the government. He had also alleged that the February 8 general elections in Pakistan were rigged.

High Court Judge Richard Spearman KC dismissed all applications made by the YouTuber, including his request to halt a defamation trial brought against him by former senior military officer Brigadier @ Rashid Naseer.

The judge determined that Raja had posted seriously damaging remarks about Naseer in nine social media posts across platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and X [formerly Twitter]. Imposing a penalty on Raja, the court ordered him to pay £5,000 to the now retired brigadier for the dismissed application to halt the defamation trial. It also instructed him to make an interim payment of £5,000 towards the costs incurred for the failed security for costs application.

Raja attended the court remotely via video-link, accompanied by his lawyer and PTI UK leader Mahtab Anwar Aziz, who also represents PTI activist Shayan Ali.



CHAGAI: An old man sitting on debris of his house destroyed in recent rains