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QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti along with officials of the Zamindar Action Committee addresses to media persons during press conference held at CM House in Quetta.

Zamindar Action Committee ends protest sit-in outside Balochistan Assembly: All agricultural tube wells of Balochistan to be converted on solar energy in one month, announces CM

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has accepted all demands of zamindars of the province and as such all the agricultural tube wells would be converted on the solar energy in one month time.

The Chief Minister said that electricity would be supplied to zamindars for six hours till one month. As long as the tube wells are converted on the solar energy, increase in the duration of electricity

would cost Rs. 4 billion, he added. The Chief Minister was addressing a hurriedly called press conference along with the provincial ministers and representatives of Balochistan Zamindar Action Committee here in his chamber of provincial assembly on Wednesday. The Chief Minister said that our zamindars protested for their demands outside the provincial assembly, what's good that they didn't take law in their hands during the protest. He said that the delegation of zamindars held meet-

ing with him after negotiations. He said that the demands of zamindars are genuine. On this, he went to Islamabad and met with the Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif on the issues and demands of zamindars of the province. He put forth the issues of zamindars before the Prime Minister who gave patient hearing to them, as mentioned by the Chief Minister. He said that the Prime Minister has accepted all demands of zamindars of the province. Besides, the arrears of QESCO against the zamindars are under consideration and the issue would also be resolved in due course of time. Referring the educational related issues including the financial ones of the public sector universities of the province, Chief Minister said that there is a need to improve the educational system in the province. He said that we are looking into the issues of employees of the universities.

Continued on page 2

Pakistan, China agree to promote CPEC with third-party participation

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and China on Wednesday agreed to advance their joint project - China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and endorsed finalizing the modalities for third-party participation. Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at a joint press stakeout expressed satisfaction over the steady pace of CPEC and vowed to "further upgrade and expand this cooperation".

Haq hails PM Shahbaz's efforts to resolve AJK protesters' issue

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq while paying tribute to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's swift response to the demands of protesters has categorically denounced the malicious propaganda that AJK was being turned into a province of Pakistan. Addressing a crowded press conference along with all members of his cabinet here on Wednesday, Prime Minister Haq said nobody was expecting the huge



package announced by the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif for the people of AJK despite the economic constraints in the country. He said the AJK gov-

Two-day Pakistan Literary Festival begins at BUITEMS Pakistan Literary Festival to become source of enlightenment, says Speaker BA

Independent Report
QUETTA: Two-day grand Pakistan Literary Festival commenced at the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS) here on Wednesday. The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai was the chief guest at inauguration ceremony of the Literary Festival held at the Arfa Karim Hall of the BUIEMS. The Provincial Minister for Culture, Sindh, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah as well as



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai and others addressing Pakistan Literary Festival at BUIEMS.

PM directs addressing issues, concerns of Sindh govt. over development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed for removal of issues and concerns of the Sindh government with regard to development. He also directed for expediting work on the ongoing federal funded uplift projects in the province. The prime minister issued these directives during a meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah who called on him. Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahmad Khan Cheema and Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Deputy Chairman



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Government calls on President Asif Ali Zardari

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail called on the President Asif Ali Zardari in President House Islamabad on Wednesday. During the course of meeting, different matters including those related to the federal development projects were discussed. Besides, the matters of mutual interests were also discussed during the meeting. The President on the occasion congratulated Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail on assuming the office of Governor Balochistan. He also expressed best wishes for the Governor. Moreover, both the leaders stressed on strengthening the relations between the federation and provinces.

PTI founder gets bail in £190 million scam reference

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB)'s Special Prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz had adopted the stance that the trial court had testified 39 witnesses in the cases. As the trial was at the final stage, the accused could not be granted bail, he said and prayed the court to instruct the trial court for early conclusion of the trial. He stated that the said amount should have been shifted to the government's account instead of the account of Supreme Court (SC). He said that the top court had also stated that the money was wrongly sent to its account.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

ECC grants Rs. 23 billion for AJ&K government

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on Wednesday approved the summary for "Provision of Rs. 23 billion as an additional grant for the Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJ&K) government." Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC).

The ECC gave approval to the summary for "Provision of Rs. 23 Billion as Additional Grant to the AJ&K Government" through Technical Supplementary Grant as proposed by the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, said a press release issued here. Secretary Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan briefed the Committee that during a high-level meeting held on Monday, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Shehbaz Sharif, had authorized an additional grant of Rs. 23 Billion to the Government of AJ&K, in the paramount national interest. The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presided over a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet.

PTI to face consequences if refuses to apologise over May 9 mayhem, warns Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has warned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of consequences if the "non-serious party" refuses to tender an apology over May 9 riots. "No one should be permitted to commit terrorism," Bilawal said while

Pakistan successfully tests Fatah-II rocket system

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Pakistan Army on Wednesday conducted the successful training launch of Fatah-II Guided Rocket System with a range of 400 kilometres.



According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the launch was aimed at perfecting the launch drills and procedures. Equipped with the state-of-the-art navigation system, unique trajectory and manoeuvrable features, Fatah-II is capable of engaging targets with high precision and defeating any missile defence system. Fatah-II is being inducted in the Pakistan Army's artillery divisions for stand-off and precision engagement of deep targets. The rocket system will significantly upgrade the reach and lethality of Pakistan Army's conventional arsenal.

Massive decrease in petrol, diesel price announced

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: In a move aimed at providing relief to the public, the federal government has announced massive reductions in the prices of petroleum products. According to a notification issued by the Federal Ministry of Finance, the price of petrol has been slashed by Rs 15.39, while the price of high-speed diesel sees a reduction of Rs 7.88. Additionally, the price of light diesel oil has been decreased by Rs 7.54. Following these adjustments, the new prices stand at Rs 273.10 for petrol, Rs 274.08 for high-speed diesel, and Rs 161.17 for light diesel. "New prices of petroleum will be effective for next fortnight from May 16," it added.

CM expresses contentment on successful operation of security forces in Zhob

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed his satisfaction over the successful operation of security forces against terrorists in Sambaza area of Zhob. In a tweet on his social media account on late Tuesday night, the Chief Minister expressed satisfaction over the successful operation against the terrorists, however, expressed grief over martyrdom of Major Babar Khan in the operation. He said that the martyrdom of Major Babar Khan can't be forgotten in the history. He said that the successful operation by the security forces against terrorists is commendable. He said that our brave jawans are embracing martyrdom for protection of the motherland. He said that it is responsibility of the government to protect life and property of the masses besides maintaining law and order in the province. He said that the people of Balochistan are security forces are united for establishing peace in the province.

SC seeks progress report on appointment of VCs in universities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday sought progress report from authorities regarding appointment of vice chancellors in public sector universities. The court also sought details of percentage of academic and non-academic staff in universities and di-

Continued on page 2

Pakistan, Kazakhstan agree to speed up work on bilateral tourism & economic integration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Kazakhstan on Wednesday agreed to speed up work on bilateral tourism and economic integration for opening new avenues of bilateral cooperation.

tegic importance. Tourism and sports could help strengthen bilateral relations and for which the two countries should frame comprehensive plans, he added.

collaborating with each other, which was step towards strengthening bilateral cooperation in indoor sports, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

Pakistan qualifies for Central Asian Volleyball League final

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan team has reached the final of the Central Asian Volleyball League here at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex on Wednesday.

PTI to face consequences if...

Continued from page 1 Law makers sloganeering, the former foreign minister took a dig at the PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) lawmakers.

(PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday demanded the federal government to announce special incentives for farmers in the upcoming budget and provide direct relief to small farmers by subsidizing the agriculture sector.

Sardar Ayaz meets Ambassadors of Turkmenistan, Belgium

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Ayaz Sadiq here on Wednesday held separate meetings with the Ambassadors of Turkmenistan and Belgium, at the Parliament House.



ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, Mohamed Yahya, presenting his credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Sardar Ayaz meets Ambassadors of Turkmenistan, Belgium

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Ayaz Sadiq here on Wednesday held separate meetings with the Ambassadors of Turkmenistan and Belgium, at the Parliament House.

Govt seeks Rs4.16 rise in electricity tariff for next fiscal year

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) on Wednesday has sought a hefty increase in power tariff for the next financial year while the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has fixed May 23 for conducting hearing of CPPA application.

Sultan directs establishment of Kashmir Studies Institutes in AJK varsities

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): AJK President Barister Sultan Mohammad Mahmood Chaudhry has ordered the establishment of fully functional Kashmir Studies Institutes in each university of Azad Kashmir to highlight various aspects of Kashmir culture and Kashmir dispute to the outside world.

All agricultural tube wells...

Continued from page 1 He said that the new buildings of universities were built and new departments were established on one hand while funds were not available for the salaries of employees on the other hand, he regretfully pointed out.

SC seeks progress report on...

Continued from page 1 basic rules. The CJP asked the AAG that from where he got his degree of law and whether he pleaded a case?

Pakistan Literary Festival to...

Continued from page 1 cellor of BUITEMS, Dr. Khalid Hafeez besides others.

Table with 3 columns: S.No, Name of Items, Quantity. Items include Ceiling Fan, Water Dispenser, Air Conditioner With Stabilizer.

شماره: (1) تینڈر بلوچستان کیلئے پبلک پروکوریٹ ڈیولپمنٹ فنڈ (BPPRA) 2014ء کے مطابق ہوگا (2) قابلیت (نرم) انٹرنیٹ اور ایلیکٹرونک بڈنگ سسٹم کے ساتھ مزید ہائیڈرو پاور سے لیا جائے گا

He emphasized that such measures would significantly contribute to the country's development. He underscored the necessity for the government to restore the confidence of wheat-growing farmers by announcing support measures.

He paid homage to Major Babar Niazi on martyrdom in Zhob saying that he is grieved over his martyrdom and share grief with the bereaved family.

Justice Isha remarked that the whole country would come on right track if the education sector is streamlined. The court also expressed wonder on the stay orders by Lahore and Peshawar high courts.



QUETTA: Commissioner and Administrator Quetta, Hamza Shafiqat along with officers of Metropolitan Corporation are inspecting the cleanliness during his inspection visit, at Mahmoodabad area in Quetta.

He highlighted that Pakistan's annual import of agricultural goods exceeds Rs. 10 billion and stressed the importance of facilitating small farmers to minimize this dependency.

He emphasized that all major parties have consistently recognized agriculture as the backbone of the country in their manifestos.

He spoke about the details of his meeting with the Prime Minister in Islamabad on issues of zamindars of the province.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Gloria Bibi with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Shahbaz Mashid citizen number 5440003344965

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Khalil Ullah with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Arif Bakhshi citizen number 5440021356166

TENDER NOTICE TSE-232405415403 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required.

TENDER NOTICE TSE-232405414653 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.

TENDER NOTICE TSE-232405414683 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.

1 CONSTRUCTION OF DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FOR FLOOD CANALS MOOSA WAH, BULEDI WAHANG MUHARAM ON NARI RIVER TEHSIL BHAG DISTRICT KACCHI

1 CONSTRUCTION OF PCC RAIN CHENNELAT GOLAIAGHA SB & 1500 FT KLILIL HAMDABAD MANZAKI TEHSIL PISHIN DISTRICT PISHIN

The Upscaling of green pakistan programme forest component quetta (M&E) invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-232405414691 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required.

1 CONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD PROTECTION WALL FOR SHAMS ABAD & KHAIR ABAD TEHSIL PISHIN DISTRICT PISHIN (PSDP # 4325-2023-24)

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Thursday May 16, 2024

Reserved seats

After the Supreme Court took exception to its decision to hand over reserved seats claimed by the Sunni Ittehad Council-PTI alliance to its rival parties, the ECP has suspended the notifications of 77 lawmakers belonging to the different assemblies. Following the development, any plans that the ruling coalition had about tinkering with the Constitution without seeking the opposition's buy-in lie dead in the water — at least for the time being.

Also in question is the fate of the senators who were voted in in the most recent round of elections to the Upper House. The 77 lawmakers who have been suspended from office had participated in the senatorial election, thereby colouring its results. Given what is at stake and the consequences for Pakistani democracy, it is hoped that the apex court will not dally on the matter.

Since it has taken up the case as one which requires constitutional interpretation, a bench comprising at least five judges has to decide how the Constitution intended for reserved seats should be divided. The court must announce a bench at the earliest so that the functioning of parliament is not affected for any longer than is absolutely necessary. It is a shame that more than three months after the general election, we still do not have a clear picture of where things stand politically. The stability which, it was hoped, the exercise would bring remains a pipe dream. Though some leader or the other regularly appears on TV to assure the people that the nation has turned a corner and better days are not too far off, it is difficult to put much faith in such words, especially since it is clear that the various institutional conflicts that have shaped our polycrisis are far from being resolved.

The role played by the ECP in perpetuating this sorry state of affairs, in particular, deserves strict scrutiny. Despite being vested with all the powers it needed to responsibly steer the country through a democratic transition, it could only manage an election that fell far short of the promise of being 'free, fair, impartial and inclusive'. It then bungled the management of election results, which gave rise to serious controversies regarding the 'fixing' of final results.

Since then, the ECP has been either unwilling or unable to address the deluge of post-election complaints: for example, it defies understanding why it refuses to notify more election tribunals for Punjab despite being in receipt of nominees from the Lahore High Court. Its decisions and actions clearly need to be reviewed in light of the country's laws, and its controversial decision regarding reserved seats seems to be a good place to start. The nation deserves to understand what its motivations have been thus far.

Dubai Leaks: Will Everyone Get Away?

By Qamar Bashir

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

The politicians, parliamentarians, and members of both civil and military bureaucracy create a formidable force to shield one another from the fallout of leaks like Wikileaks, the Panama Papers, or revelations concerning Dubai properties. This network safeguards those in positions of power through compliant Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and rubber nose accountability bodies to minimize or completely neutralize the adverse effects of such leaks. Notwithstanding the fact that serious concerns about the origins of these funds and potential illicit practices such as corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion not only undermine the integrity of financial systems but also deprive the government of essential revenue needed for public services and infrastructure.

Drawing from my experience of working as Deputy Commissioner Income Tax for more than ten years (1994-2005) I can tell with certainty that the entire accountability framework, including the FBR, would already have started rectifying the gaps in the income tax and wealth tax records of prominent Pakistani figures including three children of President Asif Ali Zardari, Hussain Nawaz Sharif, the spouse of Interior Minister Mohsin

Naqvi, Sharjeel Memon, Senator Faisal Vawda, Farah Gogi, Sher Afzal Marwat, several members of the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies, the late Gen Pervez Musharraf, former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, over a dozen retired generals, as well as a police chief, an ambassador, and a scientist.

I can also assert with certainty that tax authorities across Pakistan will be diligently examining the records of individuals beyond politicians and civil and military bureaucracies to determine if the properties leaked were declared, undeclared, or undervalued. Taxpayers and their lawyers have likely already been summoned to negotiate the cost of rectifying their records, a process that benefits themselves, their legal representatives, and the tax officials, ensuring that not a single penny goes to the government exchequer.

For those individuals whose wealth statements are available in the public domain and who either failed to declare the mentioned properties or undervalued them, they and their income tax lawyers are likely scrambling to initiate damage control measures.

The properties worth \$11 billion in Dubai starkly contrasts with the economic realities facing

the nation. With foreign exchange reserves far below this figure and a significant portion of the population living below the poverty line, this vast wealth disparity underscores systemic challenges in income distribution, governance, and economic development. In a country where over 40% of the populace struggles amidst inflation rates exceeding 35%, the concentration of such immense wealth abroad not only widens the gap between the rich and the poor but also exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities, hindering efforts to uplift marginalized communities and foster inclusive growth.

The \$11 billion worth of leaked properties is merely the tip of the iceberg. Countless other properties have been discreetly acquired and stashed away in various countries worldwide, potentially totaling billions upon billions of dollars. This rampant acquisition of assets abroad significantly contributes to the impoverishment of our nation. It's a stark representation of the systemic corruption and greed that plagues our society, draining resources that should be invested in uplifting our people and developing our nation.

As a senior civil servant who retired as the Press Secretary to the President in BS 21, I can attest

to the fact that throughout their entire service, whether civilian or military, any bureaucrat can only afford a modest house and a middle-class car with their legal income. Similarly, my experience as Director General of the Minister's Office for four Federal Ministers confirms that politicians can barely sustain their household expenses with their legitimate earnings, let alone accumulate significant assets.

Any wealth beyond these modest means is likely obtained through illicit means or illegal sources of income as civil and public servants are prohibited from engaging in business activities during their service.

How they launder black money through an intricate web of financial transactions is intriguing. The illicit funds are injected into the financial system through depositing cash into third-party bank accounts, acquiring high-value assets, or establishing shell companies. These funds undergo a series of transactions to obscure their origins, including transfers between accounts, investments across different markets, and international wire transfers through multiple jurisdictions. Subsequently, laundered funds are reintroduced into the economy disguised as legitimate assets, often through the sale

of initially purchased high-value assets at deflated prices followed by reinvestment in legitimate businesses or the acquisition of real estate and other valuable assets.

Moreover, politicians and civil servants frequently exploit their positions of authority and leverage legislative influence to create loopholes or favorable conditions for concealing illicit wealth. They may also utilize personal connections and influence to access offshore banking systems or establish intricate corporate structures, further complicating the tracing of asset ownership.

The parliament and the executive often collaborate to introduce Tax amnesty schemes. They declare previously undisclosed assets or income, often attributing them to gifts received from friends, relatives, or loyal party supporters. Through paying nominal taxes, which are often a fraction of the true value of their assets, they effectively launder their illegal wealth freely, use or invest it without fear of legal repercussions.

Let us create a hypothetical scenario that individuals implicated in illegal asset acquisition were US citizens. They could have faced various legal ramifications under U.S. law. This includes potential charges for money

laundering, stemming from transactions involving proceeds of corruption or bribery. This would have led to hefty fines and lengthy imprisonment upon conviction on two accounts, failing to report income or assets gained through illicit means, subjecting them to IRS prosecution and civil penalties and violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) carrying fines and imprisonment and forfeiture to seize properties and assets acquired illegally.

Let us create another hypothetical scenario in which the politicians, bureaucrats, civil and military implicated in the Dubai leaks were US citizens and had acquired assets as gifts from friends, supporters or well wishers. They could face charges of bribery targeting both the giver and recipient for exchanging something of value for official favors. They could face honest services fraud charges for compromising their public duties. Failure to disclose the gift or avoid decisions benefiting the giver could lead to conflict of interest violations requiring to forfeit the gift, facing civil penalties and reputational damage with added consequences of legal risks, potentially tarnishing careers and undermining public trust. But we all know with certainty that in Pakistan everyone will get away.

Malmö mixtape

Mahir Ali

Seldom before has the annual festival of schmaltz and schlock known as the Eurovision Song Contest been subject to so much controversy as it was in the run-up to this year's edition in Sweden last weekend. Not surprisingly, it revolved around the global issue du jour: Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Russia was excluded after its invasion of Ukraine — the latter won the 2022 contest. It needs to be noted, though, that the complex voting rules, which have evolved since Eurovision's inception in 1956, allow room for manipulation, which is invariably guided by political concerns. As far back as 1968, Spain's fascist Franco regime reportedly lobbied for vote rigging to score a victory that relegated Cliff Richard's popular Congratulations to second place.

The Iberian Peninsula was Europe's last fascist stronghold, but Portugal has a somewhat different relationship with Eurovision: its 1974 entry, E Depois Do Aeus by Paulo de Carvalho, was deployed to serve as a signal for a coup by younger officers that presaged Portuguese democracy and the liberation of Lisbon's colonies — from Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau to East Timor.

Fifty years after Sweden's Abba became the first Eurovision victor to transform its win (Waterloo) into global acclaim, few other acts have scored the same level of global success, including the four Israeli performers since 1973, when members of the European Broadcasting Union were admitted, regardless of their geographical standing.

Controversy, however, has often reared its head. In 2019, Ukraine withdrew from Eurovision after its shortlisted acts refused to commit to not touring Russia. Ten years ear-

lier, Georgia's entry, I Don't Wanna Put In, was rejected on the grounds that it could be construed as a derogatory reference to Russia's ruler.

Much of that fades into relative insignificance after Israel's initial entry this year, October Rain, was deemed problematic because of its references to last year's Hamas-led outrage (but none to the ensuing atrocities in Gaza). Israel was miffed, but it modified the lyrics and came up with Hurricane — not to be confused with Bob Dylan's anti-racist song of the same name.

The Israeli performer, Eden Golan, was surrounded by Shin Bet-sponsored armed guards throughout her stay in Malmö, and not allowed to mingle with fellow artists, who might have enlightened her with their views on Israel's military excesses. Ironically, Golan was until recently a pop star in Russia who performed for its troops in Crimea.

None of that seemed to matter once her family moved back to Israel and she shifted her allegiance to the equally deplorable Benjamin Netanyahu. According to the Washington Post, she faced "loud boos throughout her performance [on Saturday] and finished fifth" — despite considerable efforts by countries such as the UK to manipulate yet another win for Israel.

The popular mood in Sweden was reflected in huge pro-Palestinian mobilisations and impromptu concerts in Malmö that dwarfed the tiny Zionist gathering in the run-up to the extravaganza.

Among the performers, antagonists of Israeli fascism stretched from the unfairly disqualified Dutch singer Joost Klein to Ireland's Bambie Thug, whose dress rehearsal included facial make-up that

spelt out 'cea-sefire' and 'freedom for Palestine', which they were obliged to remove before the rehearsal.

The latter's home nation, meanwhile, staged Shine on Palestine: An Alternative Eurovision in Galway on the eve of the finals in Malmö.

I confess I have never taken Eurovision seriously as a musical proposition, and on the few occasions I have been obliged to witness parts of it — the first time was in 1981, when I was a baby-sitting a niece who was thrilled by Bucks Fizz gaining the top slot on the basis of an execrable tune — I held back my opinion.

Years later, I watched segments to placate my own kids, but my impression was always the same: with occasional exceptions, it was a load of codswallop — expertly choreographed bilge. That impression only deepened when all too many of the acts began performing mostly in English rather than in their native tongues. Back in 1982, France described it a "monument to drivel" and refused to send an entrant that year.

This year's French contestant, Slimane, declared: "We need to be united by music, yes, but with love for peace." Many of the contestants appeared to share his view, even if they didn't withdraw from Eurovision.

Music has for millennia provided a soundtrack to distress, disillusion, revolt and revolution. Eurovision was never intended to be a part of that — and, by and large, that reactionary impulse has been sustained. But in recent days one is reminded yet again that the real world can't be excluded, with the drivel-fest's "united by music" signposts in Malmö being graffitied over to spell "united by genocide". -- Courtesy Dawn

Courts unburdened

Mirza Moiz Baig

As Pakistan endeavours to attract foreign investment amidst dwindling reserves, the legal system's ability to enforce contractual disputes and protect investors from capricious regulatory changes is under the scanner again.

While traditional pipelines of justice are clogged due to archaic procedures, paucity of judges, and capacity constraints, alternative forms of dispute resolution too have borne little fruit. With domestic arbitrations still governed by the Arbitration Act, 1940, the purpose of resorting to arbitration is often defeated, given that the Act compels parties to repeatedly approach courts through various stages of arbitration.

In the realm of international arbitration and investor disputes, the ghosts of the Chaudhry court entangling itself in investment projects continues to haunt Pakistan's image, despite the adoption of the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards. Still, even as political disputes have dominated the politico-legal landscape, Pakistan is also witnessing a silent revolution in the realm of dispute resolution.

The Arbitration Law Review Committee constituted by the Supreme Court (SC) under Justice Mansoor Ali Shah last week, submitted its proposed Arbitration Bill, 2024, to the federal law minister.

Departing from the 1940 Act which primarily envisages ad hoc arbitrations, thus necessitating frequent judicial intervention, the draft bill paves the way for the creation of specialised arbitral institutions. Such

institutions have a designated panel of arbitrators for the parties to choose from and their own institutional rules to govern various stages of the arbitral process.

Second, unlike the 1940 Act, which vests courts with the discretion to stay proceedings in respect of matters that are the subject of an arbitral agreement, the draft bill mandates courts to stay such proceedings.

Third, juxtaposed with the previous Act, it dispenses with the requirement of making an award the order of the court. The draft bill, thus, obviates judicial intervention in arbitral proceedings, streamlines the arbitral process, unburdens courts from micromanaging arbitrations, and promises the swift disposal of arbitral disputes.

The draft bill follows the Lahore High Court (LHC) and the SC's landmark judgements in the Tradhol and Taisei cases. Laying the ghosts of Reko Diq to rest, the judgements entrenched the doctrine of 'pro-enforcement bias', assuaging investors' concerns about Pakistani courts' recalcitrance to enforce arbitral agreements and foreign arbitral awards.

However, while developments in the arbitral regime are likely to facilitate the resolution of commercial disputes, the expenses involved in arbitrations often mean that the fruits of such endeavours may not be availed by most litigants. Nonetheless, the judiciary's contemporaneous focus on mediation promises to ameliorate the systemic and structural issues which contribute to delays and pendency.

The LHC and Sindh High Court's recent pronouncements in the

Faisal Zafar and Shehzad Arshad cases, where they held that the judiciary possesses the power to compel unwilling parties to participate in and share the costs of mediation, underscore the judiciary's awareness regarding the unviability of our existing dispute resolution framework.

Such endeavours are supplemented by the draft bill, Section 33 of which provides that an arbitral tribunal may employ mediation or conciliation at any time during the arbitral proceedings.

With the proposed changes to the arbitral regime and recent judicial pronouncements, the future of dispute resolution particularly in the realm of commercial disputes is witnessing a sea change. However, the road to reform ought to be paved with more than good intentions.

The success of mediation would ultimately depend on imparting training, revamping the legal curriculum, collaborating with bar associations, and evolving an ecosystem where alternative dispute resolution can thrive. Most importantly, the judiciary will have to spearhead a cultural shift to preclude courts from being used as tools for the abuse of process.

Just as it is the law of life, change is also the law of law.

With Pakistan standing on the edge of the precipice with more than two million cases pending in courts, will the legal community reinvent itself and embrace change, or will it continue to arrest any attempt to unburden our courts? Will we choose the forest over the trees before the flood of pending cases ravages the entire forest? -- Courtesy Dawn

PM for PSDP programs ensuring sustainable development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stressed upon initiation of such projects under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) that ensured sustainable development in the country.

While underlining the significance of third part validation of all the mega national development projects, he observed that with increase in revenues, enough funds could be made available for the uplift projects.

The prime minister chaired an important meeting on the matters related

to the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and Public Private Partnership Authority, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and other relevant senior officials.

The prime minister also directed for constitution of a cabinet committee headed by the minister for planning over the development budget and PSDP.

The committee would furnish a mechanism over PSDP programmes through short, medium and long terms proposals.

The prime minister emphasized upon harmonizing the federal PSDP and provincial annual development programme and the need of improving links.

He also asked for submission of proposals by all the federal ministries over public-private partnership projects.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the meeting of Economic Coordination Committee.

Political stability, persistent policies imperative for growth: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal Wednesday underscored the need for political stability and continuity of economic policies to put Pakistan on a sustained growth trajectory and attain social prosperity.

Addressing the Pakistan Development Summit, the minister said, "Pakistan is blessed with all natural resources and by mobilizing these resources, we can take the country on the path of rapid economic growth and social development within a ten-year time period."

Pakistan's economic growth.

About nine key thematic sessions under the topic of 5EsFramework would gather expert feedback and prepare a comprehensive plan of action to attain sustainable economic development and social prosperity.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister stressed the need to form an economic charter, besides maintaining the continuity of these economic policies to turn around the national economy. He said that peace and political stability in the country were the other prerequisite elements to put the country on a fast track to economic uplift.

Highlighting the significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project (CPEC), the minister said, "It was a game-changer project, which will help to transform local industrial and agriculture sectors."

He also called for mobilizing domestic resources to meet the financial requirements and reducing the reliance on borrowing.

The minister said that the income of the government was Rs7,000 billion and debt repayment was Rs8,000 billion, adding that it was borrowing 1,000 billion per annum to bridge the gap between income and expenditure.

Meanwhile, the minister said, "More than half of the country's population does not pay the electricity bill, besides large businesses and traders are not paying their due taxes."



FAISALABAD: Chairman Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Mahmood Khan Achakzai addressing lawyers at District Bar Association Faisalabad.

NA Speaker says Strengthening standing committees essential for ensuring quality legislation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday said that enhancing parliamentary outreach is key to abridging space between public representatives and the public.

"Digitalisation is key to transforming Parliament into a goal-orientated organization that produces quality and public responsive legislation" he expressed these views while chairing the 1st meeting of the National Assembly Strategic Plan Committee Special in Parliament House.

He, further, emphasized the need to strengthen parliamentary staff through

robust training.

While emphasizing the need to evolve a strong monitoring system for enhancing the efficiency of parliamentary supporting staff, he said that proper training and effective performance evaluation can render them more productive.

He said, "Strengthening standing committees is essential for ensuring quality legislation." He said that the Women Parliamentary Caucus, Secretariat of Sustainable Development Goals, Young Parliamentarians Forum, Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS), and other parliamentary forums play

proactive roles in enhancing parliamentary efficiency. Furthermore, he said that the rationalisation of the budget as per the strategic plan would make it more implementable and rational. While deliberating upon the contours for the formation of the strategic plan, Committee members unanimously decided to make a strategic plan led by parliamentarians. Speaking on the forum, Member National Assembly (MNA) Syed Naveed Qamar said that social media has gained undeniable importance in their age of social media and developing an independent proactive social media.

The theme of the event was "5Es Framework Road map to a Trillion Dollar Economy by 2035," which aimed to bring together stakeholders from industry, academia and sectoral professionals to shape the future of



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Communication & Works Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa and Secretary C&W Qambar Dashti being briefed about expansion of Gai Khan Chowk to Western bypass road.

Provincial Minister C&W says Improvement of road infrastructure in Quetta city included in priorities

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Communication and Works, Mir Saleem Khosa has stated that it is included in our priorities to improve the road infrastructure in Quetta city.

The Provincial Minister for C&W was speaking on the occasion of inspection of different roads projects in Quetta city on Wednesday.

The road projects were included Custom Flyover, Gahi Khan Flyover, expansion of Gahi Khan chowk to western bypass road and Nawab

Killi to Sheikh Zayed Heart Hospital.

Also present on the occasion were the Secretary C&W, Kambar Dashti, Chief Engineer, Dr Sajjad Baloch and the concerned engineers and officers.

Engineer Aslam Zehri briefed the Minister about the ongoing development projects.

Mir Saleem Khosa on the occasion expressed displeasure over slow pace of development work on the ongoing projects.

He directed to expedite the progress on projects and complete them well in time.

Shaheed Major Babar Niazi laid to rest with full military honours

RAWALPINDI (APP): Major Babar Niazi (resident of Mianwali district), who was martyred during an intelligence-based operation against terrorists in Sambaza area of Zhob district of Balochistan, was laid to rest with full military honours in his native area.

A large number of serving and retired senior officers of Pakistan Army and Pakistan Air Force, relatives of the martyr and local people participated in the funeral prayer, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.



QUETTA: Provincial Ombudsman Balochistan Nazam Muhammad Baloch presenting a shield to Federal Ombudsman for Anti Harassment Fouzia Waqar.

Ji chief calls for resignations from ruling elites over Dubai property leaks

LAHORE (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Hafiz Naemur-Rehman has demanded immediate resignations from all individuals implicated in the Dubai Property Leaks scandal, citing widespread concerns over the transparency and legitimacy of their overseas investments.

Addressing the latest revelation of Pakistani elite's vast property holdings in Dubai, Hafiz Naemur-Rehman condemned the pattern of wealth accumulation among the country's political and influential figures, characterizing it as a betrayal of public trust.

With over 22 thousand Pakistanis reportedly owning properties worth a staggering \$12.5 billion in Dubai, the scandal has once again laid bare the extent of financial impropriety within the ruling class. Raising pointed questions regarding the origins and legality of funds used to purchase properties abroad, He called for full disclosure from those implicated in the leaks. He challenged the ruling elite to clarify whether these investments were duly declared.

Salik visits Saudi Arabia to review Hajj arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain has arrived in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to review the Hajj arrangements for Pakistani pilgrims. During his week-long visit, the minister will hold meetings with officials of the Pakistan Hajj Mission, including a briefing from the Director General Hajj on the arrangements for pilgrims.

Journalist shot dead in Muzaffargarh

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): Unidentified motorcyclists gunned a local journalist in a targeted attack here on Wednesday, police said.

According to details, unknown culprits riding a motorcycle stopped a journalist Ishaq Ahmed Sial at Thermal Bypass in Muzaffargarh and opened straight fire on him leaving him seriously injured.

The attackers sped the scene after committing the crime.

Maulana Fazal says: I am not going to meet Imran in jail

FAISALABAD (Online): JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said no one is meeting Imran Khan.

"No one is meeting Imran Khan. Our politics is like open book. Our institutions will have to stay in their respective parameters. Establishment has gone into blind alley."

There is ceasefire from PTI side which is good omen. All political parties will have to sit together and block their way, he said this while talking to media men after condoling with JUI-F Punjab Naib Amir Syed Muhammad Zikria Shah on the death of Syed Javed Hussain Shah here Tuesday.

He stated ceasefire has taken place between PTI and JUI-F. I am not going to meet Imran Khan in jail.

I don't know as to why such questions are being asked now a days, he inquired. All politicians will have to sit together for the sake of constitution.

He held every election remained controversial. This will have to be rectified at every cost.

He underlined that PPP is getting constitutional slots and is saying too that it is not part of the government. PPP is not in government, it means minority government is running.



ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal delivering keynote address during Pakistan Development Summit on the theme "5Es Framework: Roadmap to a Trillion Dollar Economy by 2035," at Pakistan China Friendship Center.

Governor exhorts LEAs to take solid steps for elimination of terrorism and extremism

INDEPENDENT REPORT

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of Major Babar Khan during the operation of security forces against terrorists in Sambaza area of Zhob district.

In a condemnation issued here on Wednesday, the Governor said that it is our responsibility to protect life and property of the masses. He said that the

strong foundations can be provided to the economy and politics by establishing sustainable peace.

The Governor exhorted the law enforcement agencies to take solid steps for elimination of terrorism and extremism in the province. Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail prayed for the departed soul of martyr Major Babar Khan. He also expressed empathy and condolence with the bereaved family of martyr military officer.

IMF expresses serious concerns over uncontrolled circular debt in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has expressed strong concerns over the uncontrolled growth of circular debt in Pakistan.

The circular debt in the energy sector has surged by a staggering amount of Rs150 billion, raising alarms about its potential impact on the country's

economy.

There are apprehensions that the circular debt could reach a daunting Rs2.5 trillion by the end of the current fiscal year.

The IMF had set a target to control the circular debt at Rs 2.31 trillion for the ongoing fiscal year, urging an increase in tariffs for power and gas.



QUETTA: MPA Asghar Tareen meeting with Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langoo.

BME successfully concludes 8-week internship program for Balochistan graduates

QUETTA (APP): Bolan Mining Enterprises (BME), a pioneering mining joint venture between Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) and Balochistan government has successfully concluded an intensive 8-week internship programme designed to nurture local talent and empower young graduates from the region.

The programme, a testament to BME's longstanding commitment to community development and fostering skilled professionals for the mineral sector, the participants of 25 graduates including seven women, for the first time, marking a progressive step towards gender inclusivity. The ceremony, held at BME's facility in Khuzdar, was graced by PPL's Chief Operating Officer, Sikandar Ali Memon.

In his address, he underscored BME's unwavering dedication to nurturing young talent and equipping them with the requisite skills and knowledge to excel in the dynamic field of resource extraction and management through hands-on training and on-job experience. He also distributed certificates amongst graduating interns, comprising individuals from diverse educational backgrounds such as engineering, geology and management sciences.

Throughout the internship programme that started off on March 8, the interns were provided with invaluable hands-on experience and exposure to BME's operational facilities in Khuzdar, gaining insights into the intricacies of extracting and processing barytes. BME's internship programme stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity for the youth of Balochistan, offering a platform for skills enhancement, professional growth.

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ABU DHABI: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the United Arab Emirates, CEO Abu Dhabi Airports Elena Sorlini and officials from both sides attended a ceremony that highlighted launch of PIA's flight from Al Ain to Turbat, Baluchistan at Al Ain airport.

Steps being taken for supply of water to people of Gadani City: Balach

QUETTA (APP): Executive Engineer (Xen) of Public Health Engineer (PHE) Hub Balach Amir on Wednesday said that measures were being taken on an emergency basis to continue the uninterrupted supply of water to people of Gadani city.

He expressed these views while talking officers during assuming charge of his office.

The Xen was briefed regarding the shortage of water and other issues of the Department.

The directive of the district administration district Hub, Xen PHE has taken notice of the problem of water shortage being faced by the public.

He said that a crackdown would be launched against several water tankers and tractors involved in stealing water from the Gadani hydrant channel of District Hub saying that the operation against water tankers to be started with help of police.

President lauds security forces for successful anti-terror operation in Zhob

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday lauded the security forces for conducting a successful anti-terror operation in Sambaza area of Balochistan's Zhob district.

The president paid tribute to Major Babar Khan Shaheed, who was martyred in line of his duty during the operation, and applauded his bravery, patriotism and services to the country.

Applauding the professional capabilities of the Pakistan Army, he reiterated the resolve to eliminate terrorism.

President Zardari prayed to Allah Almighty for the elevation of the martyr's ranks in paradise and for patience to the bereaved family.

Pak-Latvia BPC review positive trajectory in bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 6th Round of Pakistan-Latvia Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) held here on Wednesday reviewed the positive trajectory of bilateral relations and agreed to expand bilateral cooperation in trade and investment, energy, education and technology, and labour mobility.

Additional Foreign Secretary (Europe) Ambassador Shaifqat Ali Khan led the Pakistani side while Deputy State Secretary-Political Director Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Andzejs Vilumsons, headed the Latvian delegation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a post on X account.

They also discussed regional and global developments and underlined the need for collective efforts to address common challenges, it was added. Separately, Deputy State Secretary-Political Director Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Andzejs Vilumsons called on Foreign Secretary.



KILLSAIFULLAH: Commandant Cadet College Brig. Muhammad Athar Sultan addressing students during parade.