

# Independent

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Gwadar

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## PM announces Rs 50b relief package to benefit 25m domestic power consumers

**Referring to PTI-led govt in past, Sharif recalled tall claims of eliminating corruption within 90 days and repatriating \$300bln from abroad; Instead, the sugar and wheat scams surfaced**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday announced Rs 50 billion package to provide a relief of up to seven rupees per unit to around 25 million domestic power consumers, falling in the projected category for three months till September.

"Today, an amount of Rs 50 billion has been allocated to provide a relief of Rs 4-7 per unit as a

concession to our protected category consumers using up to 200 units a month for three months period from July to September. This will benefit around 25 million domestic power consumers which constitute around 94% of the total consumer base," the prime minister said addressing a ceremony held to discuss the prevailing issues related to electricity bills and reforms in

the power sector. He said that the federal government had scrapped the said amount from its development budget to realise its commitment to public relief, contrary to the hollow claims of the previous governments.

He also assured the people of further relief as the government got a fiscal space consequent to its ongoing measures of

taxing the elite class, expanding the tax net, closing the non-performing entities and plugging the holes, causing financial leakages.

He told the gathering of federal ministers and senior government officers that during its previous 16-month stint, the coalition government saved the country from default by putting its politics at stake.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif briefing parliamentarians regarding power sector reforms.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presides over a meeting to review the departmental affairs of Culture, Tourism and Archeology.

## Cultural festival to be organized in Ziarat this month: GoB decides to take practical steps for promotion of localized culture & civilization of Balochistan

**Chief Minister Bugti directs to prepare revised mechanism for effective use of funds allocated for departmental grant-in-aid**

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has decided to take practical steps for promotion of the localized culture and civilization of the province.

In this regard, the provincial government decided to hold cultural festival in Ziarat by end of the current month besides arranging Azadi (independence) mushaira (poetry session) in next month.

Besides, Balochistan Literature Festival would also be organized in first month of next year.

These decisions were made during a review meeting on the departmental affairs of Culture, Tourism and Archeology department held with Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in the chair here on Tuesday.

The Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan and administrative secretaries of the provincial government departments were in attendance.

While chairing the meeting, Chief Minister directed to promote departmental initiatives regarding

cultural events on social media in a big way.

The meeting decided to hold different cultural events for promotion of the province's culture, tourism and historic heritage.

Earlier, the concerned high ups briefed the meeting about different departmental matters and wings. They also briefed about the new and ongoing development projects of the departments. In addition to this, the funds allocated for grant-in-aid for the cultural and tourism activities in the province.

## Captain Osama martyred during exchange of fire with terrorists

RAWALPINDI (Online): A fire exchange took place between security forces and terrorists in North Waziristan district. During the fierce engagement, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location, as result of which two terrorists were sent to hell. However, during the intense exchange of fire, leading his troops from the front, Captain Muhammad Osama bin Arshad (age: 24 years, resident of Rawalpindi District), having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat. Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers

further strengthen our resolve.

### Funeral prayer of martyred Capt offered

Funeral prayers of Captain Muhammad Osama Bin Arshad Shaheed were offered at Chaklala Garrison Rawalpindi.

He embraced martyrdom while defending the motherland in North Waziristan District.

Prime Minister of Pakistan, Defense Minister, Information Minister, Chief of Army Staff and a large number of serving and retired military officers, soldiers and relatives of Shaheed attended the funeral.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, COAS General Syed Asim Munir carrying the coffin of captain Muhammad Osama Bin Arshad Shaheed after funeral at Chaklala Garrison Rawalpindi.

## Govt authorizes phone tapping for national security, crime prevention

**Granting blanket powers of phone tapping to ISI deplorable: PTI**

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan government has authorized Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to phone tapping in the context of national security and crime prevention. This authorization has been given to the ISI under Section 54 of the Pakistan Telecommunication Act. The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication has issued a gazette notification to this effect. According to the notification, at least an officer of grade 18 will be appointed for this task.

Last month, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) ruled that any action of phone tapping without a legal mechanism as 'illegal' and turned down the additional attorney general's request for an in-chamber hearing in the audio leaks case. IHC's Justice Babar Sattar presided over the hearing of the petitions filed by former first lady Bushra Bibi and ex-CJP's son Najam Saqib regarding the audio leaks.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) allowing ISI and IB to directly retrieve data from service providers.

Justice Babar expressed concern that an SOP issued by a section officer, rather than the appropriate authority, raises questions about its legality.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vehemently condemned the federal cabinet's notification to give blanket powers to ISI to intercept calls and message under the guise of national security in sheer violation of constitution and law, demanding the Supreme Court of Pakistan to annul this notification forthwith.

The notification also grants the authority to trace calls, messages, and any form of communication.

## Azerbaijan president due in Islamabad on July 11 for two-day visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is scheduled to undertake an official visit to Pakistan from July 11-12, 2024, at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. During the visit, President Aliyev will hold meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a Foreign Office press release said. The two sides will engage in wide-ranging discussions on areas of mutual interest in order to further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

## Governor Balochistan says: Present Govt determined to resolve Balochistan issues

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the present government is determined to resolve the issues of province and it's masses.

The political and social leader Pasand Khan led the delegation.

The members of delegation apprised the Government about the lack of basic facilities in Mastung besides the issues being faced by the people there.

The Governor mentioned that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated the project of solarization of agricultural tube wells for the zamindars of province.

The Governor said that the project of solarization of tube wells is gaining great appreciation at the public level.

He said that the zamindars of province would not only be saved from the utility bills of electricity, but it would also be helpful in putting the agriculture and livestock sectors on modern lines.

The people of Balochistan have full trust on wisdom, vision and friendship of the elected government.

He said that it is the public leadership that understands their issues and can take result-oriented steps.

This sets new avenues for securing and increasing rights and powers of the people besides strengthening democracy.

The Governor was speaking to a delegation of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Mastung, who called on him here at the Governor's House on Tuesday.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Parliamentary Secretary for Excise and Taxation Haji Muhammad Khan Lehri meeting with Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

## Govt announces two-day Muharram holiday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal government on Tuesday announced public holidays across the country on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram (July 16 and 17) on account of Ashura.

"The Prime Minister is pleased to declare 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2024 (Tuesday and Wednesday) as public holidays on the occasion of Ashura (9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Moharram 1446 AH)," a notification issued by the Cabinet Division said.

## CS expresses federal Govt.'s resolve to expedite work on solarization of agricultural tube wells in Balochistan

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has expressed the federal government's resolve to expedite work on the conversion of agricultural tube wells on solar energy in the province.

He said that welfare of farmers is top priority of the provincial government and as such all available resources are being utilized for ensuring timely completion of the development project.

and provincial governments under which the agricultural tube wells would be converted on the solar energy.

He noted that around 28,000 tube wells would be converted on the solar energy and one tube well would cost Rs. 2 million.

He said that the solarization of agricultural tube wells would cast positive impacts on the agriculture as they would get inexpensive and uninterrupted supply of electricity.

The Chief Secretary was chairing a meeting on solarization of the agricultural tube wells here on Tuesday.

The Secretary Agriculture, Dawood Bazzi, Secretary Energy, Bashir Ahmed Bazzi, Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat and Shaikat Jogezi were among those participated in the meeting.

The Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of other divisions and districts participated through video link.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Secretary said that an agreement has been reached between the federal

He hoped that the tube wells to be solarized would have great impact on the agricultural sector of the province. He directed to submit report of the progress on project on daily basis.



QUETTA: Former Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

## Washington says has 'shared interest' with Pakistan in combating regional threats

ISLAMABAD (INP): Washington has a "shared interest" with Islamabad in combating regional security threats, US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said in response to a question on whether America would support Pakistan if it conducted cross-border attacks against militant targets in Afghanistan.

Defense Minister Khawaja Asif hinted Pakistan could carry out cross-border attacks in Afghanistan against militants. Pakistan has suffered a surge in militant attacks since the Afghan Taliban seized Kabul in August 2021 which it blames on the Pakistani Taliban or the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) outfit. Pakistan says the TTP carries out attacks against it from sanctuaries in Afghanistan.

Tensions escalated between Islamabad and Kabul last month after Pakistan's

### Tarar stresses

## Comprehensive measures to address societal challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Human Rights, Law & Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday underscored the need for comprehensive measures to address societal challenges, particularly in policy-making and implementation.

lighting critical social issues and emphasizing collective action for effective solutions," he said called for the effective implementation of the policies, thus bridging the gap to effectively support families and children.

Addressing an event 'The Art of Parenting, high-

He said: "In the realm of parenting, it is imperative for the government, civil society, and all stakeholders to collaborate."



QUETTA: Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman, Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad along with others joint hand with each other to express their solidarity during the Ittehad Ummat Conference, held at Quetta Press Club

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### Supplementary grants

The ex post facto parliamentary approval of huge unbudgeted expenditures of Rs9.4tr — up by 389pc from Rs1.9tr sanctioned a year earlier — during the last two fiscal years underlines how the government is abusing the powers it derives from the Constitution to deal with possible budgetary shortfalls, and unexpected new expenditures or cost overruns. This practice of altering the original budget by obtaining retrospective approval of fund re-appropriation or new expenditures made during a given fiscal year, without parliament's nod to supplementary budget statements, is not new. But the rapid growth of these unauthorised expenditures affirms that the fiscal authorities have lately been interpreting Article 84 rather liberally to bypass parliamentary and public scrutiny. This is despite the fact that the constitutional provision is meant to give the government access to funds for unforeseen financial needs in times of emergencies or contingencies to ensure the unhampered functioning of public services.

A story on the excess expenditures by three successive governments between May 2023 and May 2024 through supplementary grants reveals that subsidies and the power sector, water division, defence and civil armed forces and related agencies stand out in exceeding budgetary allocations or securing finances for unbudgeted expenditure and initiatives.

Many expenditures for which the government sought retrospective parliamentary approval have little to do with emergencies or contingencies. Several expenditures, such as additional funds for CPEC security, military pensions and other retirement benefits, the Green Corporate Initiative of the armed forces, Pakistan-Iran border fencing, K-Electric and public power generation plants, etc, could have been anticipated when the original budget was passed.

The abuse of a constitutional provision meant for unforeseen financial needs betrays bureaucratic disdain for parliament and public opinion, in fact, even democracy. It is also a sort of violation of a 2013 Supreme Court observation that “the amounts as approved in the budget passed by the National Assembly have to be utilised for the purpose specified in the budget statement.

Any re-appropriation of funds or their utilisation for some other purpose, though within the permissible limits of the budget, are not justified...“ The recent re-appropriation of funds for need-less payment of ‘honoraria’ to PMO officers, as well as for parliamentarians’ development schemes and renovation and construction of judges’ residences at a time when the government has implemented additional taxes of Rs1.7tr underscores the urgency for restricting the government’s powers under Article 84 to alter the approved budget, except in extreme cases.

Even when an expense is made in emergency situations, it should be immediately brought before parliament for debate and approval to ensure the integrity of the budget, avoid unnecessary additional expenses and reduce digressions from the approved original spending framework. These changes are crucial to ensure tight fiscal discipline and contain budget deficits.

Arifa Noor

Drip, drip, drip ... the drops fall, big and small. There is a conversation here, an incident there. A snatched conversation with an acquaintance, a long chat with a friend. All of them quiet interactions, small, unnoticeable incidents unworthy of retelling. But the drops are unending; they are so many that they eventually become puddles left after the monsoon rains. Here, there and everywhere, some deep and some shallow, some deceptively deep while others can be skipped.

But there they are. And they are not going away.

A friend needs a visa, to somewhere in the glittery West. Well-travelled and well-educated and no stranger to the country in question — but there are no appointments to be had. She had travelled there more than once, as to other parts of the world. But visa appointments are not to be had. In hushed tones, it is whispered that visa appointments are being ‘sold’ for hundreds of thousands, as well as the

approval or checking of documents. The amount of money changing hands varies greatly but such is the rush of people trying to leave the country that few are willing to dismiss the numbers as wild exaggerations.

During another casual conversation, a colleague says his relative paid 10 lakh rupees to try to get out. But, he says, in all seriousness, if someone asks, “officially, the bribery rate is only two”. What is official about the rate of bribery is beyond comprehension.

A visit to a medical centre turns into a painful exchange when a young doctor asks seriously if what happened over 70 years ago was really worth it. He stumbles over the question because it is so difficult to put into words, even though he is careful to wait until none of his colleagues are nearby when he shares this burden.

Another friend bemoans his lack of social life. There are hardly any people left to socialise with. What happened? Most of them have moved away in the past couple

## Conversations

of years; they all left the country.

An old college friend from somewhere in Africa messages to ask about the American school because she has an application from a teacher who was employed at one in Pakistan. Is the school any good, she asks?

Asking a colleague to explain the intricacies of the economy leads to a conversation about how everyone appears to be in a bad mood. They are always ready for a fight and the tiniest of irritations leads to an argument or a loud exchange, at work or in public. I didn’t need to ask why and he didn’t need to explain further.

A WhatsApp message from a friend settled abroad reveals that he ran into a Pakistani waiting tables at a restaurant, who turned out to be PhD in engineering from south Punjab and had left a teaching job to migrate. The friend then added that in recent times, he has run into many educated Pakistani migrants in basic jobs.

These conversations are not recent. They happened over months and

even years ago. And most of them, like a random drop of water, did not even register. They got brushed away, as one does when on a dry, clear day, suddenly, there is a tiny sensation of wetness on a hand or a bare arm.

All these happened before the latest budget, which has imposed new taxes on what a friend calls the moral backbone of society ie the salaried class, and indirect taxes on the poor, while everyone who had the power and access to get relief managed to do so, beginning with the civil and military bureaucracy, which will get plots from the state and sell them without paying the tax that ordinary civilians will have to do. The military also managed to delay pension reform for a year.

The parliamentarians increased their perks, while also ensuring fat chunks of development funds. The PML-N saved their voters in the trader class. As the phrase goes, everyone who was anyone got to wash their hands in the Ganges. But for the rest, there is the mantra of the difficult days. In In-

dia, the politicians promise ‘achay dinn’ while we have to settle for mushkil ones.

So many far better equipped at finance and the economy have explained this in detail in article after article and podcast after podcast.

And now the drops are forming deep puddles of dirty water.

Conversations among white-collar, ordinary people are about how not to pay taxes. Others have complicated conversations about establishing companies on foreign shores.

And the hopelessness afflicting the ordinary souls is creeping up.

A wealthy businessman speaks of family members who had left these lands long ago. They did the right thing, he said, I too should have moved and now I will. It was no longer possible to run a business in Pakistan, he added. He explains that over time whatever he has running in Pakistan might just slowly and steadily downsize and shut down.

Another one says friends have moved away not because they can’t af-

ford to live comfortably in Pakistan but because life is less stressful elsewhere.

The conversations are endless. Neither are they new. But with each passing year and each political development, they become more desperate and more pessimistic. The budget is merely one such incident. It is so critical but there is so much more. The lack of tolerance and the lynchings; the unending blocking of X; the draconian laws; the enforced disappearances.

This sense of despair is not even recognised by those ruling us, who continue to talk down to the people, or rather at each other. For what else can one call the interminable conversations about the need for IMF programmes, the divisions between the judiciary or the parties (Fawad Chaudhry and Javed Latif got more attention in talk shows than the budget) and the vague promises of billions headed our way as investment? It is more than a disconnect; it’s a lack of respect for those who live in this country. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Fable of the bicycle and a plane

Jawed Naqvi

The inability to accept defeat with grace comes from an authoritarian streak found in enfeebled democracies. Donald Trump and Narendra Modi, for example, are peas in a pod in this regard. Modi has an added problem — his compulsive obsessive rivalry with *bête noir* Jawaharlal Nehru’s back-to-back three-term tenure as India’s first prime minister. It reminds one of the soirée where a wet-behind-the-ears Urdu poet earned the wrath of a master versifier.

Legendary Firaq Gorakhpuri was waiting for his turn at the late-night *mushaira* when he felt compelled to chide a young poet for suspiciously plagiarising his lines to compose a bad verse. The young man pleaded innocence, adding a tad grossly that he was delighted to be involved in an intellectual accident with the master poet. Firaq’s response was withering: “One has heard of bicycles crashing into bullock carts. But a bicycle crashing into a plane?”

President Murmu, however, had to indulge Modi’s persistence. “The world can see Indians have for the third time formed a government with a stable and full mandate,” she said. “This has happened after six decades. People have shown trust in my government for the third time.” Murmu was clearly reading an address drafted by Modi’s office to the new parliament, earning endless applause from the treasury benches.

Full mandate? Stable government? In which case why did the markets, revered by BJP acolytes as a thermometer of the nation’s health, crash so nervously when the results came in on June 4? Worse, they crashed after Modi and his home minister exhorted investors in TV interviews to bet on their victory. The markets picked up only when help came from two regional parties who had little in common with the BJP’s communal agenda.

That’s precisely what everybody other than the BJP accepts. After the loss of 63 MPs, Modi’s party was reduced to a minority of 240. Rajiv Gandhi resigned as prime

minister after he was reduced from a mammoth 400-plus seats to become the leader of the single largest party in 1989, but short of a majority. Rajiv was a democrat, so he preferred to sit in the opposition, despite commanding the highest tally.

Third stable term? Is that why Modi rushed to the two leaders from Bihar and Andhra Pradesh post haste, who included a man who was only recently vying to become convener of the opposition alliance and the other who rose in politics as a Youth Congress leader? Modi sought their support, and the duo dictated their fanciful financial terms for their states, whose burden if fulfilled could be prohibitive for current and future taxpayers. Thus, it remains a point to ponder as to how long the alliance remains stable.

In the rush to keep the job, Modi broke a sacred democratic convention. While getting the two anchors to endorse their support, he tellingly didn’t hold a mandatory meeting of his own party’s MPs, a standard democratic requirement. Unlike the presidential system,

the prime minister must be elected by his or her party’s MPs before getting the president’s nod. It’s widely believed that by holding a meeting of the National Democratic Alliance, while studiously dodging the meeting of BJP parliamentarians, he was delaying the blame game for the electoral debacle, which reportedly is waiting to burst into the open.

Everyone, except the BJP, sees the election results as a clear rejection of Modi’s communal politics, and of his hateful speeches against Muslims during the election. To rub in the point, the prime minister’s handpicked candidate was trounced in Banswara, the constituency in Rajasthan from where Modi had exhorted Hindus to mistrust Muslims, claiming they would steal their women’s mangalsutras and even their buffaloes. Muslims were infiltrators, he said venomously. The hand-picked election commission unsurprisingly wouldn’t book him. Remember a court had ordered Indira Gandhi to be removed as prime minister for using an election

podium built by the Public Works Department.

Still, the elections were a great leveller. The BJP’s candidate from Ayodhya was also crushed by a Dalit leader from the INDIA alliance, literally mocking Modi for embarking on his polarising campaign by hurriedly inaugurating a half-built temple to Lord Ram. In another religiously loaded rebuke, Modi’s candidate from Chitrakoot lost. The epic Ramayana tells us that Ram, Sita and Lakshman spent most of their exile years in the woods of Chitrakoot, in present-day Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Facts are sacred, opinions free. The fact is that way beyond the moral grasp of the current incumbent of the high office, Nehru had publicly pleaded with his party to relieve him of his post as prime minister in 1958. The high office he earned came from spending nine years in jail and marching as a foot soldier of India’s freedom movement. His experience as Gandhi’s lieutenant prepared him for the job. On April 29, 1958,

the Congress Parliamentary Party found itself facing an unprecedented crisis. Nehru requested the party’s permission to retire as prime minister after guiding the country for four decades. Serving the country had been exhilarating, Nehru’s biographer M.J. Akbar quotes him as telling fellow MPs. But he now wanted a respite from “this daily burden” to do “some quiet thinking” and return to “myself as an individual citizen of India and not as prime minister.”

As one Congress MP remarked, “Jawaharlal wanted time to think about how to save the world from the hydrogen bomb but had no complications about dropping a hydrogen bomb on the Congress.” When Nehru’s party rejected the offer to resign, Akbar recalled in a tribute in 2011, “letters of congratulation and relief came from both Dwight Eisenhower in Washington and Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow”. Modi might as well follow his bugbear to test the love the world leaders have for him. To begin with, he could offer to resign, and let his party take the call.

## Boom or doom?

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Narratives about Pakistan verge on two extremes. The narrative of all our regimes has been that it is on the verge of take-off that will land it in the august company of the Asian Tigers. But such imaginary flights to glory disappear mysteriously like Malaysia Airlines flight MH370. Then there are the prophets of doom who see a collapse soon. But despite close calls, the country has dodged many bullets since 1971.

Which outcome is more likely? On the boom side, the Asian Tigers are a leap too far. Can we even match South Asian horses like India and Bangladesh with whom we share a DNA? They are no Asian Tigers. Out of the four economic aims — stability, durable growth, equity and sustainability — they have only the first two via a neoliberal model, with sustainability eluding even the Tigers and others globally. For a nation fed by its state with a false sense of superiority over Hindus and Bengalis, it’s a rude shock how far it lags behind them.

Despite similarities with them, we have huge lags that make this outcome hard. There were the congenial ones. India had been a state for centuries and also inherited most of the administrative, economic and political legacy the British left behind. Bangladesh had ethnic homogeneity which further crystallised into a strong sense of nationhood due to 25 years of exploitative West Pakistan rule pre-1971. India and Bangladesh’s freedom drives were led by grassroots leaders pursuing democracy. Pakistan was a divided, brand new state led by elites looking to escape democracy and majoritarian Hindu rule.

So, if even modest

These varied birth conditions led to, and were compounded by, three catastrophic choices made by our elite rulers (especially non-elected ones) fearful of losing power: economic dependence on big states, political autocracy and social religiosity. So, we are now the breeding ground for many perverse economic, social and political traits that undercut national progress. This includes a severe gap in social capital and trust due to decades of autocracy and exploitative rule, which undermine cooperation and conflict resolution, and a lack of economic dynamism and creativity due to economic dependence and social extremism.

Our main economic problems — fiscal and external deficits and low growth — reflect these societal traits. The fiscal deficits, given low tax revenues, reflect the social mistrust in the state, while the external deficits and poor growth expose the lack of societal creativity and dynamism.

But these traits aren’t immutable. All were grafted onto society by elites and can be excised via a counter-effort. However, one doesn’t see a strong reformist social group on the horizon with clear ideas that can uproot the exploitative ruling set-up to usher in even economic stability and durable growth let alone equity and sustainability. The task is not just of following the right policies but of societal transformation that only popular movements, and not autocratic regimes, can undertake. The middle class is often billed for this role. But our middle classes and expats are still in the infancy stage of chasing populist messiahs bereft of solid ideas.

So, if even modest

progress seems elusive, is doom inevitable? Many say no badly run state can avoid doom for long. We face almost every political and economic path that has led states to doom: religious and ethnic insurgencies, nuclear stand-off, slow growth, high fiscal deficit and debt, depleted reserves and weak currency.

Climate change will hit us more badly to aggravate these issues. The three-er-its from insurgents are still not as strong as in Yemen, Somalia etc. But our econ-omic issues are grim. Recent state economy-ic collapses have come from high fiscal deficits and money supply growth causing hyperinflation (Zimbabwe) or high external deficits causing currency collapse and default (Sri Lanka).

Zimbabwe had 250 million per cent inflation caused by money supply growth above 50pc for years even before hyperinflation. Our highest money supply growth was less than 20pc during 2019-2023. Covid-19 and terrorism caused Lankan foreign revenues from remittances and tourism to fall hugely to just \$2.6 billion and the current account deficit reached 5pc. Our recent external profile is better but still similar to this. Though it’s improving, external shocks and state policies can quickly reverse it.

So, while the chances of even limited boom are near-zero, the chances of economic doom, though not near-certain, are surely high. The best that we can hope for from the current ruling coterie is that it avoids economic doom. For long-term boom, and that too an equitable one, we must keep scouting the horizons for the rise of better social groups. - Courtesy Dawn

## Revitalizing slums: Inclusive solutions for viable rehabilitation

By Umm-e-Maliha

Slums often evoke the picture of neglect and desolate congested population with temporary housing and unhygienic condition. They are in suburbs of a city, infamous for their infrastructure deficiencies and elevated crime level. Nonetheless, it’s crucial to understand these negative stereotypes and recognize the mankind and capability of locals.

As per United Nations Human Settlements Program, 56% of Pakistan’s urban communities resided in slum residence as of 2020. These societies are not only overloaded with the country’s resources but people having some goals and human resilience. Residents end up renting out their new homes to return to slums due to proximity to jobs and low living costs. Earlier initiatives to rehabilitate slum residents by offering government-subsidized housing, frequently unsuccessful because of inadequate fulfillment of resident’s basic needs like socio-economic needs. For instance, Dharavi Redevelopment Project in India, the project aimed to provide the subsidized housing to slum’s residents but failed because of discrepancy of requirement and solutions.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider all the basic needs of slum residents while planning and implementing the rehabilitation programs. There are successful programs that use strategies considering the local requirements and conditions. These are Kenya slum upgrading program, Minha Casa Minha Vida program Brazil, Baan Mankong Program, Medellin’s urban transformation. These programs not just improve sanitary conditions but also offer real advantage to the community.

Efforts to rehabilitate slum areas in Pakistan have seen range of results but The Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in Karachi emerged as a one of the successful projects. Initiated in the 1980s, the OPP directed on upgrading housing and sanitation in Orangi Town, one of major informal settlements in Karachi. Regardless of such successes, Pakistan still encounters hurdles in slum rehabilitation, such as limited resource and rapid urbanization. Continued emphasis on community-driven initiatives and sustainable urban planning is critical for achieving lasting improvements.

Developing microfinance programs targeted at slum dwellers is an

other feasible strategy. These programs, by offering small loans for business ventures and housing upgrades can enable residents to recover their living conditions and economic opportunities. In addition, slums up gradation initiatives should emphasize the provision of vital services like fresh water, sanitary conditions, public health, and education.

Coordinating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector entities can potentially overcome resource constraints. Like, the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi collaborates with local communities to deal with urban challenges, urging for the rights and needs of slum inhabitants.

The key to rehabilitating slums requires recognizing and exploiting the potential of their inhabitants. By engaging residents in decision-making processes and delivering support based on their needs, we can rehabilitate these underprivileged areas into developing communities. It is time to provide slum inhabitants a seat at the stakeholders’ table for decision making, making sure that their voices are heard and their dreams are supported.

## Finance Minister meets with PMLTC CEO, discusses energy sector reforms and collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday met with the President and CEO of Pak Matiari-Lahore Transmission Company (PMLTC) Ms. Zhang Lei to discuss various aspects of energy sector development and cooperation.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy CEO Ma Desheng and CFO Wang Bo, said a news release.

The minister acknowledged the

contributions of PMLTC to infrastructure development and assured the delegation of required support through relevant government channels.

### Finance minister meets Chairman Nestle Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday met Chairman Nestle Pakistan Syed Yawar Ali and Ex-President Farmers Association of Pakistan Afaq Ahmed Tiwana to explore avenues for enhancing the growth of Pakistan's agriculture and livestock sectors.

Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervaiz Malik and Member-IR Policy Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) also attended the meeting, said a news release.

The minister thanked the delegation for their constructive proposals. He underscored the government's commitment to support these vital sectors through enhanced financing mechanisms.

The minister assured that relevant ministries would be consulted to consider the proposed framework, aiming to translate it into actionable policies that drive tangible results. Syed Yawar Ali shared insights on the current state of these sectors and emphasized their potential to significantly increase yield productivity and exports.

Syed Yawar Ali and Afaq Ahmed Tiwana appreciated the government for prioritizing agriculture and livestock in its policy framework.



QUETTA: A delegation of representative of Zamindar Action Committee meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti. Provincial Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries are also present.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain chairing 11th meeting of the National Coordination Committee on Small Medium Enterprises Development.

## 500kV Double Circuit Quad Bundle transmission line to enhance national grid's capacity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the China Chamber of Commerce in Pakistan (CCCPK) Wang Huihua has said that the 500kV Double Circuit Quad Bundle Transmission Line will play a pivotal role in enhancing national grid's capacity, ensuring stable and efficient transmission of electricity by connecting Nelum Jhelum and 844 MW Suki Kinari project.

Pakistan's quest for energy security and economic growth, said a press release issued here Tuesday.

reliable energy network", he said.

## Govt needs to engage businessmen for workable economic policy: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (INP): President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has urged the government to devise a viable solution to boost industry and businesses through providing affordable electricity and imposing nominal taxes.

when inflation has already dropped to 12%, he pointed out. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari stated that providing electricity to the industry at a rate of 9 cents/kWh would increase exports by \$6 billion, add over 300 megawatts to the grid, generate Rs. 500 billion in revenue, and reduce debt servicing by Rs. 240 billion.

Emphasizing that the business community can't secure international orders when the government imposes high charges under cross-subsidies, he questioned why international buyers prefer Pakistan over countries like Vietnam.

In a statement here on Tuesday, he highlighted that exorbitant taxes, high power costs, and a poor law and order situation severely impact the economy and could further accelerate unemployment. There was no justification for maintaining exorbitant interest rates at 20.5%



ISLAMABAD: A vendor is displaying Bananas attraction for customers on his loading van alongside a road, in the Federal Capital.

## Pro rata billing system to eliminate overbilling issue in Pesco region: Pesco chief

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) chief Akhtar Hameed Khan has said that a pro-rata billing system has been implemented to eliminate overbilling in the region.

in this regard and explaining that this software did not remove consumers from the protected category.

In a statement he said with the introduction of this new software, consumers would only be charged for the units which they had consumed. Giving details, he said the pro rata software automatically reduces and charges only the used units if additional units are added. He also said that some fake news is circulating on social media

that the implementation of the pro rata billing system had increased the number of protected consumers.

In March 2024, the number of protected consumers in PESCO was 1.85 million, which increased to 2.217 million in April. Similarly, this number reached 2.462 million in May. However, the number of protected consumers decreases due to increased electricity usage in the summer.

## Zong expands data network with addition of 400 new 4G sites in H1, 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The private mobile operator - Zong 4G - has announced the successful expansion of its network with over 400 new 4G sites added in the first half of the current year.

This significant expansion solidified Zong 4G's position as the second largest data network in the country.

This effort underscores the company's commitment to providing widespread and reliable connectivity. Currently serving 49 million customers, Zong aspires to democratize access to data across Pakistan, said a news release issued on Tuesday. In addition to expanding its network, Zong 4G has concluded an extensive network modernization project to

address capacity challenges.

The company replaced 2T2R technology with advanced 8T8R, focusing particularly on enhancing the customer experience for remote projects along the CPEC route.

As part of its commitment to network sustainability, Zong 4G completed over 1,400 power upgrades in H1-2024. The upgrades featured Li-Ion solutions, known for their fast-charging capability and longer life compared to traditional battery banks.

Senior management from Huawei and ZTE also joined Zong 4G in celebrating these achievements, pledging their continued support for future endeavors.

## CCP Green-lit merger of SCL in JKSM

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a Scheme of Arrangement for the merger of M/s. Shamim and Company (Pvt.) Ltd with M/s. JK Sugar Mills (Pvt.) Ltd.

products namely, molasses, bagasse, and mud. SCL, since 1967 is into the business of manufacturing and distribution of PepsiCo products across Pakistan.

The Phase-I competition assessment by the CCP identified two relevant markets namely, 'Sugar and by-products' and 'Non-alcoholic beverages'. As per the Scheme of Arrangement, the transaction involves merger of SCL with JKSM.

JKSM is a private limited company with the business of production and sale of sugar or related products in Pakistan, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.



MULTAN: A worker weighing and packing good quality mangoes into the boxes for delivery to the other City.

## Advisor to Ombudsman for steps to enhance revenue of Pakistan Post

KARACHI (APP): Advisor Federal Ombudsman Regional Office Karachi Seema Shakil, on Tuesday, paid a visit to Pakistan Post GPO Sadder Karachi to inspect facilities being offered to public.

area for customers need to be improved and water and other basic facilities should be made available there.

The senior advisor, while speaking to media at the occasion, said that federal Ombudsman is the only institute that resolves the grievances of citizens without any fees while they don't need assistance of lawyer as well.

Seema Shakil said that complaints filed to Ombudsman office by public against the Pakistan Post were mostly about lost parcels. In case of missing of booked parcel the customer was eligible to receive a compensation amount up to Rs.1000 irrespective of the value of the goods dispatched, she pointed out and stressed on the need of enhancing the compensation amount as well as ensuring insurance of parcels at the time of booking.

The officials of Ombudsman secretariat conduct visits and inspections of federal government departments and organizations engaged in public service delivery to review their performance and service delivery status and forward their findings and recommendations for not only resolving the public grievances but also to address the issues faced the relevant institution, she mentioned.

The advisor urged on measures for improving efficiency and revenue of Pakistan Post and remarked that revenue enhancement through tapping the unexploited resources will help strengthening financial position of the postal services as well as overall service delivery status.

## Ali Pervaiz says: Reforms in energy sector to be introduced shortly

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister of State for Finance, Revenue and Power Ali Pervaiz Malik massive will be introduced in energy sector shortly which will ensure a sustainable and efficient energy sector for the future. During an interview with PTV News on Tuesday, he stated that the government was adopting a multi-faceted approach to overhaul the energy sector.

grade utilization was needed to reduce per unit capacity costs. Emphasizing the importance of shifting towards local fuel sources to decrease dependence on imported fuels, he highlighted the ongoing efforts in local exploration. A significant portion of the reform strategy involves the privatization of distribution companies (DISCOs) and generation companies (GENCOs).

He said that inefficient and obsolete furnace oil plants currently incurring costs despite being non-operational would be scrapped, auctioned, or liquidated. "Efficient plants will be put on a privatization model," he added.

## Flour price reduced

FAISALABAD (APP): Price of flour bags have been reduced across the district Faisalabad to facilitate the masses.

He said that inefficient and obsolete furnace oil plants currently

The state minister said that the government was working on establishing a robust regulatory framework to safeguard consumer interest's post-privatization. The government is working to enhance corporate governance and auditing practices in the DISCOs.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with the Chairman Nestle Pakistan and Ex-President Farmers Association of Pakistan.

## Dr Mughal says: Budget has nothing for masses but distribution of resources among legislators

LAHORE (INP): President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), Dr Murtaza Mughal has said that the federal budget has nothing for masses but it is only distribution of resources among legislators.

development budget, electricity tariff would not have to be hiked to unbelievable levels. Still, the rulers were not concerned about people's problems and were busy shaping their future.

He said that differences among major political parties regarding budget was not aimed to facilitate countrymen but about their share in resources. In a statement issued on Tuesday, he said that Rs 16 billion have been earmarked for development projects in the budget, which will be used to please the members of national and provincial assemblies and supporters.

The government was making life difficult for the masses through taxes and blaming the IMF, which was not a reality, he added.

Dr Murtaza Mughal said that if there were some reduction in the

The President PEW said that the government had increased its current expenses by 24 per cent, for which the right to live has been taken away from the people and the salaried class.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where two ships, MSC Mundra VIII and Al-Thakhira carrying Container and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Common Venture and Sky Blue scheduled to load/offload Rice and Palm oil also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last 24 hours. A total of four ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containership 'MSC Mundra VIII' left the port on today morning while another ship 'Suvani Reis' is expected to sail on today.

## DG Agriculture says: Punjab gov't striving for welfare of farmers

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Agriculture Department will guide farmers on crop cultivation, better yields, and proper use of agricultural medicines at the Farmer Facilitation Centers by the Punjab government is a farmer-friendly initiative where fertilizers, quality agricultural medicines, and spray machinery are available at reasonable rates.

These views were expressed by Director General Agriculture (Extension) Chaudhry Abdul Hameed during a visit to the Farmer Facilitation Center in Bahawalpur. He urged farmers to take full advantage of the Punjab government.

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## PM says: Int'l community must recognize Pak for hosting huge refugee population

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday urged the international community to recognize the burden being shouldered by Pakistan while hosting such a large refugee population and demonstrate collective responsibility.

The prime minister, in a meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi at the PM House, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to address the protection and safety needs of people in vulnerable situations and underscored that the international community needed to be mindful of the socio-economic challenges and security threats



ISLAMABAD: UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Khair Jan to lead Committee on Education: Chairmen of standing Committees of BA elected

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chairmen of four standing committees were elected in meetings of the respective committees held here on Tuesday.

According to the official release, the standing committee for Information, Sports, Culture, Tourism and Libraries was held with all its members in attendance.

The committee unanimously elected MPA Rehmat Saleh Baloch as chairman of the standing committee Information, Sports, Culture, Tourism and Libraries.

Similarly, MPA Prince Ahmed Omar Ahmedzai was elected as chairman of the standing committee for Irrigation, Energy, Environment, Forests and Wildlife in the meeting of respective standing committee held the same day.

Besides, Dr. Muhammad Nawaz was elected chairman of the standing committee for Public Health & Population Welfare.

Moreover, MPA Khair Jan Baloch was elected as chairman of the standing committee for Education.

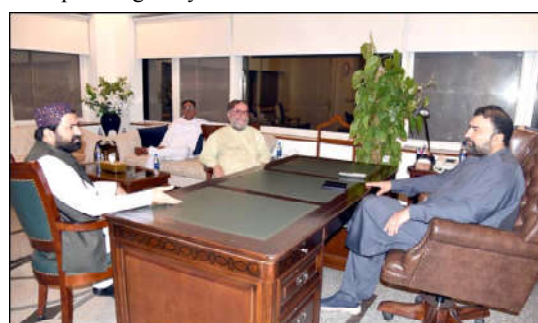
## Pakistani coast guards seize over 15,000 liters of smuggled Iranian diesel

QUETTA (INP): Pakistan Coast Guards seized over 15,000 liters of Iranian diesel being smuggled into the country through the south-western Balochistan province in two separate operations, state media reported on Tuesday.

Iranian petroleum products are regularly smuggled into Pakistan through Balochistan as Iran offers the world's cheapest petrol and diesel due to low production costs, international sanctions and weak currency.

The illegal activity takes place regularly as Iran and Pakistan share a 900-kilometer (560-mile) porous and largely lawless border, where militants and smugglers operate with impunity.

"Pakistan Coast Guards seized 10,370 liters of illegal Iranian diesel from two vehicles at Uthal check post during routine checking," state broadcaster Radio Pakistan said in a report. It added that 5,270 liters of diesel were also recovered from three vehicles in another operation between Balochistan's Lasbela and Hub districts.



QUETTA: MNA Mian Khan Bugti and Wadera Kalpar Bugti meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

## Bilawal launches first travelogue on China by columnist from KP

PESHAWAR (APP): First travelogue by any columnist from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa focused on China, now featured by China Window, a cultural center in Peshawar promoting Sino-Pak friendship is launched here on Tuesday.

The unveiling ceremony at the Governor's House, graced by Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi, and President of Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik, highlighted the significance of columnist, Naz Parveen's work.

Titled "Xinjiang kay Khushaal Uyghur," which translates to "The Happy Uyghur of Xinjiang," the travelogue offers a heartfelt narrative of Parveen's journey through China's Xinjiang province.

Through vivid descriptions and personal encounters, she portrays the real stories of Muslims living in Xinjiang who are thriving and content amidst their cultural heritage.



LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the Professor Waris Mir Memorial Seminar.

## President for holistic approach, prudent financial policies for country's development

LAHORE (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has called for adopting a holistic approach and prudent financial policies to put the country on the path of development. He said that different sectors of the economy, especially the agricultural sector, needed to be developed along modern lines. He added that the government was planning to tax agricultural income as per the International Monetary Fund's conditions, however, the provincial governments would be leading the initiative to tax large landholding farmers in accordance with their profitability and expenditures.

The President gave these remarks while addressing the Professor Waris Mir Memorial Seminar, in Lahore, on Tuesday. A large number of journalists, academicians, political workers, and members of the civil society attended the event. Speaking on the occasion, the President highlighted that the media had given power to the people by amplifying their voices, however, recent years had also witnessed a grouping in the media.

He cautioned that a strong religious lobby in the world was manipulating and managing perceptions aiming to sow divisions in Muslim societies. He said that he was a supporter of the freedom of press and had always tolerated harsh criticism from the media. He said that societies needed to be careful against agenda-driven information

The President highlighted that one had to face trials and tribulations in life, however, one needed to stay steadfast in the face of challenges. He paid rich tribute to the political struggle and sacrifices of Mohatma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed for democracy, saying that Pakistan People's Party had a history of facing pressures and assassinations, however, continued its struggle for the cause of democracy in Pakistan. He said that assassination attempts and political pressures could not deter us from our mission as we firmly believed that life and death were in Allah's hands. The President also paid rich tribute to the services and contributions of Late Professor Waris Mir towards democracy and journalism.

He also appreciated Faisal Mir and Hamid Mir for taking forward the legacy of their father. Senior Journalist Hamid Mir, while speaking on the occasion, called for putting an end to the culture of political victimization and upholding the 1973 Constitution in its true spirit. Senior Journalist Sohail Warraich paid tribute to the services of the late Professor Waris Mir for journalism and democracy. Appreciating the political wisdom and the reconciliatory role of the President, he said that the country was in dire need of political reconciliation and the President could play an instrumental role in addressing the political and economic issues.

## Solarization of over 27,000 agri. tube wells in Balochistan: Joint strategy to be prepared with zamindars for implementation on project, assures Chief Minister

**Bugti says legislation to be made for ending illegal connections; Zamindar Action Committee highly appreciates CM and members of provincial cabinet on success of solarization of agricultural tube wells in province, describes progress on project historic**

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has announced that joint strategy would be prepared in collaboration with the zamindars for implementation on the project of solarization of agricultural tube wells in the province.

He said that it is our utmost endeavour to complete the project within one month.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the representative delegation of Balochistan Zamindar Action Committee, who called on him here at the CM's secretariat on Tuesday.

Besides the office bearers of Zamindar Action Committee, the provincial ministers, parliamentary secretaries of different departments, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan and other concerned high ups were also present in the meeting.

The members of delegation highly appreciated the Chief Minister and members of provincial cabinet on success of the project of solarization of agricultural tube wells in the province.

He also appreciated the wholehearted and active role played by the Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan regarding implementation of the vital project.

Speaking to the members of zamindars' delegation, Chief Minister said that provincial government has taken practical steps for resolving long-standing issues of the zamindars.

He said that it is his endeavour to complete the project within one month. However, until then, supply of electricity would be ensured to the zamindars for six hours, the Chief Minister maintained.

He said that the registered tube wells would be converted on solar energy with cooperation of zamindars in due course of time.



QUETTA: A delegation from different walks of life meeting with Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

## Economic diplomacy vital in Pak foreign policy: Dar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister has said economic diplomacy is a major constituent of Pakistan's foreign policy.

The FM remarked that Pakistan's economy has shown some positive signs over the past few months and it may come out of the woods soon.

He said all the efforts to isolate Pakistan at the international stage have been failed and the country has been regaining its status internationally.

The deputy premier added that inflation has come down to 11 percent from 38 percent and the country has been playing its active role to counter Islamophobia.

Your next read: Pakistan to implement five-year roadmap for economic turnaround

On the Gaza war, he said Pakistan has played a crucial role to highlight the atrocities committed by Israel.

## ECNEC clears construction of Dadhocha Dam, other water, transit projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on Tuesday met under chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

The meeting considered and approved four water sector projects including Government of Punjab's project namely "Construction of Dadhocha Dam (revised)" on. "The project will help bridging water deficiency in Rawalpindi through supply of 35 MGDs of water." Office of the Deputy Prime Minister said in a press release.

The Upgradation of Pakistan Railways existing Main Line-1 (ML-1) was approved at re-modified scope, with directions that the Phase I of the Project i.e. 929 km from Karachi to Multan will be taken up as priority.

The ECNEC also considered and approved project titled "Flood Response Emergency Housing Project (Phase-I), to be funded through a loan from the Asian Development Bank.

The project aims to support the flood effected people in Sindh through the community-led reconstruction of more than 250,000 flood resilient houses.

Other water sector approved projects included Gomal Zam Multipurpose project, Raising of Mangla Dam Project and Golen Gol Hydropower project. All three projects are now moving towards closure.

"Development of Integrated Transit Trade Management System" was also approved by the forum.

The project envisages construction and development of state-of-the-art border crossing points at Torkham, Chaman and Wahga, establishment of Land Port Authority, digital end-to-end tracking of containerized cargo etc.

ECNEC further approved "Karachi Neighborhood Improvement Project (KNIP)" and extended its implementation period by six months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

## SC reserves verdict in SIC's appeal regarding reserved seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved the judgment after hearing the arguments from respondents in an appeal of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) regarding reserved seats. A 13-member bench of the apex court, led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Ayesha Malik, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, heard the case. Barrister Salman Akram Raja and SIC's Faisal Siddiqui presented their arguments before the court during the hearing which was live streamed on the website.

During hearing, Faisal Siddiqui argued that Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) participated in general elections of 2018 but didn't win a single seat.

## Ahsan highlights importance of social media in enhancing citizens' engagement in different processes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday highlighted the significance of social media, calling it an "essential tool" in promoting citizen engagement, transparency and participation in government and political processes.

"Citizens' engagement, transparency and participation in government and political processes have been revolutionized by social media platforms, enabling instant communication, mobilization, and dissemination of information," he said. The minister expressed these views while addressing an event titled "Digital Democracy in Action: Enhancing Engagement through Social Media," organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

He said social media platforms provided spaces for dialogue, enabling people from all walks of life to voice their opinions, share concerns,



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretaries and MPAs meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

## IHC allows Fawad to go abroad for two weeks

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has allowed former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry to go abroad for two weeks.

Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamir Farooq took up for hearing Fawad Chaudhry petition seeking removal of his name from Passport Control List (PCL).

During the hearing of the case the court ordered to remove name of Fawad Chaudhry from PCL for two weeks.

The court has maintained Fawad Chaudhry can go abroad from August 10 to 24.

## AJK govt plans to settle post-1990 Kashmiri refugees on permanent basis: Anwar

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Prime Minister, Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Tuesday said that permanent settlement of post 1990 Kashmiri refugees, pouring in from Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) into AJK, was his government's priority.

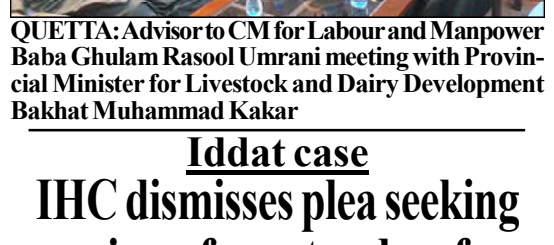
"The AJK government in collaboration with the government of Pakistan, will use all resources for the resettlement of the Kashmiri refugees," he said this while speaking the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony regarding the construction of 750 houses for the post 90s refugees in the state metropolis.

Reiterating his commitment of rehabilitating the Kashmiri refugees, the prime minister said the government would never leave in lurch the members of the migrant community who were forced to leave their homes and hearth by the Indian occupation forces.

"Refugees are our brothers. Providing all the basic facilities to them is our first priority", he said.

He said, "We salute the people of Occupied Kashmir for their courage and resilience in the face of Indian oppression".

Anwar ul Haq said that the government and people of Azad Kashmir would continue to support their brethren till they achieve their cherished goal of freedom.



QUETTA: Advisor to CM for Labour and Manpower Baba Ghulam Rasool Umrani meeting with Provincial Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development Bakhat Muhammad Kakar

## Iddat case IHC dismisses plea seeking review of court orders for deciding central appeal pleas

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has dismissed the plea seeking review of court orders to decide the central appeal pleas in iddat case within one month.

The court upheld the order that Sessions court should decide the appeal pleas within month.

High Court has already directed sessions court to decide appeal pleas within a month.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb of IHC took up Khawar Manki petition for hearing Tuesday. The assistant lawyer to Khawar Manika said senior lawyer Rizwan Abbasi is pre-occupied in Supreme Court (SC). Please announce some interval in the case. Suleman Akram Raja counsel for Imran Khan argued counsel for Khawar Manika has written he wants to go to Iran, Iraq for pilgrimage.

## Secretary finance visits Quaid-e-Azam public library in Ziarat

QUETTA (APP): Provincial Secretary Finance Babar Khan on Tuesday visited Quaid-e-Azam Public Library in Ziarat.

The focal person of the library, Abdul Manan Sarangzai briefed the Secretary about the library.

Provincial Secretary Finance said on this occasion that former Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Hamood-ur-Rahman built a library under his help and in a very short time that he gave a great gift to the people of Balochistan as a whole.

He said that now it was the responsibility of the people of Ziarat to expand the library and open books and read them to get important knowledge while book-friendship was very important, book-friendly nations were ruling the world.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presides over the meeting regarding shifting of Agricultural Tubewells on solar.