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SC dismisses plea seeking 50% vote requirement for electoral victory

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has rejected a constitutional petition seeking to declare elections null and void if a candidate scores less than 50% of the total votes for any house of parliament. The petition was heard by the Constitutional Bench headed by Justice Amin Ud Din Khan, and was ultimately dismissed with a fine of Rs.20,000 on the petitioner. Other members of the bench included Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan. The court questioned the petitioner, Mr. Muhammad Akram, on the constitutional basis for such a declaration, pointing out that the current system declares a candidate victorious based on the maximum number of votes received, regardless of whether they reach 50% or not. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar asked under which article of the Constitution the Supreme Court could declare a candidate unsuccessful for receiving less than 50% of the total vote. Justice Ayesha Malik also inquired about which articles of the Constitution would be violated if a candidate with the maximum votes, but less than 50%, was declared successful. The Court emphasized that the current system is lawful, and if the petitioner desires a change in the law, he should approach the parliament for new legislation. Justice Musarrat Hilali noted that every citizen has the right to vote, but the Supreme Court cannot compel eligible voters to participate in polling. In a surprising turn, the petitioner admitted not casting his vote in the previous general elections when questioned by Justice Jamal Mandokhail.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail speaks during a ceremony at High Court Bar.

Our lawyers are guardians of law and democracy, maintains Governor Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jafar Khan Mandokhail has stated that our lawyers are the guardians and servants of law and democracy. He said that he holds the invaluable services and sacrifices of all lawyers including the martyrs of 8th August in high esteem. Nevertheless, the democratic behaviours would be promoted through lawyers in the society. The Governor was addressing the ceremony arranged at the Balochistan High Court here on Monday. Also present on the occasion were the President Supreme Court Bar Association, Rauf Ata, newly elected President of Balochistan High Court Bar Association, Mir Attullah Langove, Additional Attorney General of Pakistan, Najam Mengal, President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Lawyers Wing, Anwar Nasim Kasi, besides other senior lawyers. Addressing the gathering, Governor said that the role of lawyers based on their cooperation is very important for strengthening the rule of law. The Governor emphasized upon the importance of role based on the cooperation of lawyers community.

Heirs of kidnapped child, traders community continue protest; lawyers express solidarity too

Independent Report QUETTA: The heirs of the child kidnapped from Quetta four days ago continued protest against his non-recovery in the provincial metropolis on Monday. While the family members of the kidnapped child staged protest dharna (sit-in) on second consecutive day in the middle of city, Unity Chowk near the Balochistan assembly and High court, the traders' community and lawyers also joined the protest and expressed solidarity with the family members. A protest rally was also taken up by the lawyers led by the senior leaders Ali Ahmed Kurd, Rahib Buledi, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman and other protesters denounced the provincial government and police for their failure in recovery of the child kidnapped from Patel Bagh area of Quetta on Friday last. They said that the government has miserably failed to protest the life and property of the common men, as a result of which, they are feeling their insecurity. They demanded of the government and other concerned law enforcement agencies to ensure safe recovery of the kidnapped child without any further loss of time. Meanwhile, children of different schools also took out protest rally for recovery of the kidnapped child. They came in the protest sit-in in form of the rally and expressed solidarity with the family members of Musawwar Khan. Similarly, the Provincial Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami and Member Provincial Assembly, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch also visited the protest dharna and expressed solidarity with the protesters. The lawyers including Ali Ahmed Kurd, Rahib Buledi, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman and other protesters denounced the provincial government and police for their failure in recovery of the child kidnapped from Patel Bagh area of Quetta on Friday last. They said that the government has miserably failed to protest the life and property of the common men, as a result of which, they are feeling their insecurity. They demanded of the government and other concerned law enforcement agencies to ensure safe recovery of the kidnapped child without any further loss of time.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receiving a briefing from the Ministry of Finance regarding the country's economy and meeting with the IMF delegation.

Governor contacts IGP, directs to ensure safe recovery of kidnapped child

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Jafar Khan Mandokhail contacted the Inspector General of Police, Moazzam Jah Ansari over the matter of innocent child, Musawwar Khan, kidnapped from Quetta, on Monday. In his conversation, the Governor stressed on taking concrete steps for early recovery of the 10-year old kidnapped child. He also directed the IGP to take speedy and strict measures for ensuring safe recovery of the child and taking stern action against those involved in the kidnapping so as to prevent such untoward incidents in future. The IGP assured the Governor that all available resources would be mobilized for recovery of the child at the earliest.

Seven policemen abducted by armed assailants in Bannu

BANU (Agencies): Seven policemen have been abducted by unidentified armed men from the Ahmedzai sub-division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Bannu district, District Police Officer (DPO) Ziauddin confirmed. The armed assailants seized control of the Rocha checkpoint and took the police personnel hostage. DPO Ziauddin said that a search operation has been launched in the area, with authorities cordoning off the location to apprehend the kidnappers. The abduction occurred shortly after the Maghrib prayer when a group of armed men stormed the checkpoint and took the officers, including their weapons, to an undisclosed location. The abducted policemen have been identified as Saleem, Aqal Rehman, Mewah Jan, Roshan, Abdul Malik, Neematullah, and Shad Muhammad. Authorities are working to secure their release and bring those responsible to justice.

PM grieved over dengue outbreak in Bangladesh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed sorrow over the loss of lives due to dengue outbreak in Bangladesh. "Deeply saddened by the loss of precious lives due to the dengue outbreak in Bangladesh," the prime minister wrote on X. He said, 'Pakistan stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Bangladesh at this difficult time and we stand ready to assist in whatever way we can'.

CM Bugti congratulates Domki on success in by-election of PB-8 Sibi

Terms success outcome of PPP leadership's policies Independent Report He said that the success of the PPP's nominated candidate in the by-election of PB-8 is the expression of trust of the masses. He said that all the commitments made by the PPP with the people would be fulfilled. He also said that the PPP would play its role for resolving the issues being faced by the people of Balochistan. The Chief Minister said that successfully of Sardar Kohyar Domki is an outcome of the Balochistan friendly policies of the President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Ahsan seeks stronger US-Pak ties across key sectors

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has congratulated the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) nominated candidate, Sardar Kohyar Khan Domki on his victory in the by-election of PB-8, Sibi. In a felicitation statement issued here on Monday, the Chief Minister said that successfully of Sardar Kohyar Domki is an outcome of the Balochistan friendly policies of the President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He said that the success of the PPP's nominated candidate in the by-election of PB-8 is the expression of trust of the masses. He said that all the commitments made by the PPP with the people would be fulfilled. He also said that the PPP would play its role for resolving the issues being faced by the people of Balochistan. The Chief Minister said that successfully of Sardar Kohyar Domki is an outcome of the Balochistan friendly policies of the President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.



ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday highlighted the importance of addressing global challenges such as climate change, energy sustainability and food security while discussing future cooperation between Pakistan and the United States. Addressing an event organized by USAID to mark the longstanding US infrastructure development support to Pakistan, he called for collaborative research in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and modern infrastructure to build a more resilient future. He also stressed the need for engaging the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in the United States to strengthen cultural, academic and economic ties between the two countries, a news release said.

Non-recovery of abducted child All parties, Anjuman Tajran announce shutter down strike today

Independent Report QUETTA: All political parties and Markazi Anjuman Tajran have announced to observe shutter down strike today (Tuesday) against non-recovery of the kidnapped child, Musawwar Khan. The announcement was made at a joint press conference by the leaders of the political parties and office bearers of the Markazi Anjuman Tajran here at the Unity Chowk near the Provincial Assembly on Monday. He told the media persons that shutter down strike would be observed against non recovery of the kidnapped child, Musawwar Khan. He said that the All parties and others along with the family members of the child would also hold protest demonstration in front of the provincial assembly against non recovery of the child today. Meanwhile, all the leaders of political parties criticized the provincial government for its failure in recovering the child. Present at the joint press conference were the leaders of the parties including PNP, PKMAP, ANP, National Party, Balochistan National Party, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Nazrauti and JUL.

Relief for people govt's top priority PM satisfies with economic stability, investment boom

National progress is only possible when everyone fulfils their due responsibility; Tax evaders, abettors won't be left unpunished; Directs relevant authorities to expedite action against tax evaders.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that country's economy was on path to stability and due to steps taken in this regard, stock market was showing brisk business. He said that foreign investment was a reflection of confidence in the government's policies. The prime minister received a briefing from the Ministry of Finance regarding the country's economy and the meeting with the IMF delegation, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister was briefed on the economic indicators and the current situation of inflation. The meeting was also briefed on the steps taken against tax evasion and those facilitating such theft. The prime minister stressed that public relief should be accorded priority on all other steps and they were taking all possible measures to fulfill public promises. He also expressed satisfaction over the sliding down of the inflation rate to 7 percent from 38 percent and said the interest rate was lowered from 22 percent to 15 percent which would spur business activities and create jobs opportunities in the country. The meeting was attended by ministers including Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Dr Mussadik Malik, Ali Pervaiz Malik, PM's coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and relevant senior officials. Prime Minister Sharif further observed that due to surge in exports and record remittances, the country's foreign reserves had increased. He also praised Punjab chief minister and the provincial government for reforms in the agriculture sector. The prime minister directed for accelerating actions against tax defaulters, and reiterated to bring the tax evaders and their facilitators to book.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers and MPs meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

BA session to be commenced from today

Independent Report QUETTA: The session of Balochistan Assembly is scheduled to be commenced from today (Tuesday) in Quetta. It may be mentioned here that the Governor Sheikh Jafar Khan Mandokhail had summoned the session of Provincial Assembly. According to the notification of the Provincial Assembly's Secretariat, the session would start at 03:00 PM today. As per the agenda, call attention notice would be tabled by the Member Provincial Assembly, Rehmat Saleh Baloch about handing over of the Technical Training School in Kharan to the private sector. Similarly, the draft law of Balochistan Social Security Employees Institution would also be tabled in the today's sitting of the Assembly.

Apex Committee meeting postponed

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Apex Committee meeting on the National Action Plan (NAP) against terrorism, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has been postponed. The meeting, originally scheduled for 2:30 on Monday was called off. A new date and time are yet to be announced.

KP CM writes letter to PM for summoning meeting of CCI

PESHAWAR (Online): Chief Minister (CM) KP Ali Amin Gandapur has written letter to Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif to summon meeting of Council of Common Interest (CCI). According to copy of letter received by media KP CM said in the letter it is incumbent to hold meeting of CCI after every 90 days as per article 154 of the constitution. But this constitutional obligation is not being met after January 2024. It was said in the letter that meeting of CCI is must for bolstering cooperation between federal units, resolution of key issues, peace in the country, harmony and socio-economic development of the country.

PTI candidate wasting Election Tribunal's time by seeking adjournments: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Monday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Zaheer Abbas Khokhar was wasting time of Election Tribunal by seeking several adjournments. He was giving his reaction as Zaheer Abbas Khokhar took another adjournment in the application challenging election of Attaullah Tarar in NA 127, in February 8 general elections. The minister said his lawyers appeared in the Election Tribunal and they were fully prepared having all the documents. The opposite party had no evidence or proof, he maintained. "Zaheer Abbas Khokhar wants to escape from the court, that's why he requested the court to adjourn the hearing," he remarked. "If he had evidence, why did Zaheer Abbas Khokhar ask for an adjournment," he asked. Criticising Zaheer Abbas, he said he had challenged his (Tarar's) victory but now he was repeatedly seeking adjournments and wasting the time of the Election Tribunal. He said if the PTI candidate had no evidence, he should admit it.

Finance Minister lauds ADB's financial assistance to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) led by Senior Director, Tariq H. Niazi called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue



Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at the Finance Division on Monday.

The meeting was also attended by ADB's Country Director, Ms. Emma Fan and her team in Pakistan, according to press release issued by finance ministry.

Tariq H. Niazi briefed the Minister on ADB's public sector management and governance initiatives aimed at ensuring stronger macro-fiscal management and effective governance with improved policy framework and institutional capacities in the Bank's developing member countries.

Court extends interim bail of PTI founder in six cases, Bushra Bibi in one case

ISLAMABAD (Online): District Court Islamabad had extended interim bail of former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan in 6 cases and Bushra Bibi in one case. Bushra Bibi has been granted exemption from attendance as well. Investigation officer sought time for verification of Toshakhana receipts. Judge Afzal Majoka said there is hearing of bail plea of PTI founder. His attendance remains there. Defence Counsel Khalid Yousof said jail authorities are making pretences in online attendance. You please announce decision on bail plea of Bushra Bibi.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over meeting regarding PSDP 2024-25.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

When medicine fails

Who would have thought that the medicine that was developed to cure disease would one day be overpowered by the very microorganisms it was supposed to target?

Medical science may have progressed with lightning speed over the decades, but has now hit a significant roadblock in the form of antimicrobial resistance. From Nov 18 to Nov 24 — World Antimicrobial Awareness Week — countries will be reminded of this grim reality, as thousands of people worldwide continue to die because their sickness is not responding to antibiotic treatment. This should be especially alarming for a country like Pakistan, where the consumption of antibiotics is the third highest in the world. There are no checks on the intake of these drugs, thanks to a general lack of awareness and a lax attitude on the part of doctors, pharmacies and patients. Doctors often recommend antibiotics to patients without even diagnosing their illness; pharmacies readily sell them over the counter, and those consuming them resort to their improper use.

Under these and other circumstances, pathogens develop resistance. Indeed, when in a country like the US, with its high-quality healthcare, almost one-third of antibiotic prescriptions are not needed, one can expect worse in Pakistan, where regulations and international best practices are routinely overlooked.

The situation is nothing less than a medical emergency: between now and 2050, medical experts expect antibiotic resistance to kill 40m people worldwide. A disproportionate number is likely to be from the developing countries where healthcare is poor and disease-rife — a situation that is compounded by high levels of illiteracy and lack of education. Against this backdrop, it would indeed be a miracle if this year's theme for WAAW — 'Educate. Advocate. Act now' — is taken seriously by our authorities — not simply for health reasons but also to reduce the huge economic burden caused by longer hospital stays, more expensive, often inaccessible, therapy, and loss of work hours.

A coordinated strategy is needed at a national scale to reduce the microbial danger. But, in the meantime, health authorities can step up disease-reducing measures such as carrying out frequent vaccination campaigns, ensuring cleanliness in neighbourhoods and public places, and keeping a vigilant eye on hospitals — the hotbeds of infection.

As recommended by the WHO, they would do well to promote antimicrobial stewardship to train doctors in judiciously prescribing and administering antibiotics. Besides, affordable lab tests can lead to more accurate diagnoses for patients who are otherwise deterred by high costs. Nothing, of course, can take the place of greater awareness among the public itself. But the state has to lead the way by recognising the health challenge and taking steps where it can.

Zarrar Khuhro

You've almost certainly heard of Multan's Nishtar hospital; as south Punjab's largest public sector hospital, it is visited by thousands of patients every year. Even if you're not familiar with the hospital, you will almost certainly have heard of an incident that took place in 2022, when a video went viral showing several corpses in various stages of decomposition left to rot on the roof of the hospital.

Some reports claimed that there were 200 to 500 bodies (in reality there were four), and there was furious speculation that these belonged to missing persons allegedly being disposed of with the collusion of hospital authorities. The truth, when it emerged, was less sensational and — in keeping with Pakistani realities — much more predictable.

The bodies were of the unclaimed and unidentified dead and were meant to be stored in special rooms. Instead, hospital staff had, in violation of SOPs, simply dumped them on the roof under the open sky. This was inhuman, shouted the government of the day, while pledging heads would roll. Investigative committees were constituted in classic Pakistani tradition. And in keeping with that tradition, nothing really happened. And now in 2024, the hospital is once again in the news, and once again for all the wrong reasons.

Following the death of a kidney patient, who undertook regular dialysis at the hospital, from HIV-related complications, it emerged that the three dialysis machines reserved for HIV patients had, in fact, been used for the dialysis of kidney patients who were free of the deadly blood-borne virus. The result? At least 30 kidney

Sick sector

patients now have HIV, as reported in Asif Chaudhry's comprehensive story in this paper last week.

By Oct 26, the hospital knew what had transpired, but reportedly tried — again in keeping with tradition — to hush it up. It only came out with the news once a person had died. Worse, when the news spread and patients went and got HIV tests at the hospital, reportedly the results turned out negative. When they went and had the same tests conducted at a private lab, they tested positive. From this, we can only conclude that either the hospital labs are ineffective or falsifying results. For those familiar with how Pakistan's health system operates, neither possibility is implausible.

For those unfamiliar with the way dialysis is conducted, allow me to explain in light of my own experience as a person with a family member who regularly underwent this treatment: the patient is tested constantly; prior to every session, a comprehensive blood screening is conducted to make sure that the patient does not suffer from a disease, such as hepatitis C, that could contaminate the machines. It appears that this screening was either not conducted, or else conducted in such an unprofessional way that the results would count for nothing.

In addition, patients with renal failure or impaired kidney function are sometimes tested several times a week to make sure that their creatinine and urea levels are in control.

Now, consider this: while the hospital apparently learned of this disaster in October, we have no way of knowing how long this contamination had been in play or how many people have

been infected beyond the 30 that have been reported. Those hapless patients would then have gone on to have regular blood tests and procedures which means that the circle of infection would have likely spread beyond themselves, not to mention that many of these would have gone on to expose others, such as spouses or sexual partners, etc to HIV, meaning that the spread may be exponential. Only now is the hospital attempting to track down those who may have been infected, but it's already too late.

In 2016, the exact same thing took place at Larkana's Chandka Medical College hospital, where over 50 dialysis patients were infected with HIV. This only came to light when many patients who had undergone dialysis there later sought treatment at SIUT (which follows protocols to the letter), where the virus was detected. As with Nishtar, proper dialysis procedures had not been followed.

And of course, we all (should) remember what happened in Ratodero in 2019, when a local doctor who catered to low-income segments was accused of having inadvertently infected 282 adults and children with HIV through negligence and the unsanitary reuse of syringes and blood transfusion equipment. (The doctor himself was reportedly an HIV patient, having contracted the virus through a blood transfusion after a car accident.) Reporters who covered this story say that while he was certainly at fault, he was also used as a scapegoat to cover for what is in fact a systemic breakdown, as many of the patients he saw may have already been infected elsewhere.

Our healthcare sector itself is sick, and no amount of committees is going to heal it. -- Courtesy Dawn

Asking questions

Neda Mulji

Recently, a student of Grade 8 asked a few questions in a rapid sequence during a science lesson. Her mind was reeling and one question led to another. The questions were met, as they inevitably are, with suspicion, and the teacher retaliated with 'don't act too smart'. That rebuttal is flawed at many levels. Firstly, aren't students being sent to school to become smart? Isn't the purpose of all learning geared towards asking questions relentlessly to engage with content on a deeper level?

Unfortunately, our schools have always laid more emphasis on discipline and compliance than relentless learning. Any behaviour that breaks the flow of the teacher's talk time is met with rebuke. It's almost as if the teachers are racing against the clock to re-gurgitate what they know in each chapter of the textbook being taught.

Students cannot be involved in learning in depth, nor can they learn to answer questions if they don't ask. Questions don't arise in a vacuum; they are the result of a thinking mind. Fostering a culture where questions are encouraged and appreciated helps instil a love for learning in students. It teaches them that curiosity is a strength and that questions demonstrate critical thinking.

This mindset is particularly crucial in primary and secondary classrooms, where students are still shaping their view of the world and belief systems and, at this stage, it is important for adults to value their self-expression as they learn to think, express and share ideas.

Besides, questions in class, and indeed

later on in professional life, provide valuable feedback reflecting understanding as well as gaps in knowledge. They also encourage collaboration, help students develop a voice and gain confidence in their abilities. Questions can create a vibrant learning environment, albeit noisy and chaotic. Chaos is often misunderstood in our culture as a lack of discipline, even though the sparks of intelligence and revelation often take root in chaos.

Educators who fear too many questions in class are often vying for control, hoping that they can orchestrate an environment where the teacher remains the main character in the movie. If students are to dev-e-lop the confidence to ask, explore and un-lock their potential, they need a safe, non-

judgemental environment where the quality and frequency of questions is not controlled. In an ideal world, students would not hesitate to ask or answer questions.

There is much literature and work being done on the foundational skills of learners in early years. Yet, the power of engaging them through questions is underrated. One of the fundamental ways that children develop communication skills is to practise relaying their thoughts, and the transformation to active learning comes from being involved, engaged and motivated.

When questions are unwelcome, it not only stifles curiosity, it discourages creative thinking and out-of-the-box solutions and negatively affects students' self-esteem as they lose their ability to express themselves and start relying on another authority to simply 'transfer'

content that they are expected to learn and reproduce.

Fast forward a few years — when these learners engage with technology, they will no longer have the skill to conduct research on their own using their digital literacy skills. Their engagement with AI, for example, rests on asking the right questions, using relevant prompts and leading their own learning. A large part of research prompts has to do with framing the right questions. When they no longer have the skills to engage with technology, the tools of learning become redundant in real-world experiences.

Reading and comprehension skills are re-quired in all subjects, at all educational levels. Whilst teachers give questions to be answered by students, few take the time out to flip the formula and ask students to come up with questions based on what they read. The quality of the questions students come up with is a quick assessment method signalling which students have read and understood the content.

Asking questions, whether relevant or not, helps students learn decision-making, challenges their thinking and clarifies their thoughts. It also prepares them for a world where they will have to engage in conversations on topics they know little about and will need to ask questions to learn how to develop their understanding. The best scientists in history have engaged in problem-solving by asking hypothetical questions. How are we to produce problem solvers if students are only taught to learn content they receive and are not equipped to build on it through interrogation and original thought? -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Finance minister reviews progress on financing for priority sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday held a virtual meeting with the Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Chairman Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) and their teams to discuss progress on financing for the priority sectors.

The minister appreciated the work done by PBA and SBP for coming up with substantial initiatives and taking measures for implementing the more tangible initiatives, said a news release. He urged that initiatives with short term and immediate impact be given priority and their implementation time frame be compressed for finalizing them by end December and hopefully rolling them out from early next year.

The minister also assured full support for

arranging necessary consultations between PBA/SBP and the stakeholder ministries, adding the Finance Division would also host a meeting of all relevant stakeholders to hear their viewpoints, and help forge a consensus on the proposed initiatives.

Chairman PBA apprised the minister on various initiatives planned by PBA for building an inclusive and sustainable financial ecosystem.

He proposed that electronic warehouse receipt finance, SME index, corporate farming financing, venture capital fund for fintechs, revival of agri cooperatives and establishment of financial data exchange could be some of the potential initiatives to create a long-term impact towards a sustainable financial ecosystem.

He also proposed initiatives such as

financing, EV financing, solarization of tube-wells and markup subsidy and first loss coverage for SME financing for a short-term and more immediate impact on the system.

Meanwhile, SBP Governor highlighted the progress achieved on various fronts in respect of various initiatives proposed by PBA for financing to priority sectors.

He argued that some of the proposals suggested by PBA were concrete in scope and the central bank had already issued necessary notifications on regulatory side to facilitate their implementation. He also proposed a more proactive consultation between stakeholders, particularly with telecos and power companies, on initiatives requiring data collection and building scorecard for agriculture and SME sectors for sustainable financing.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a virtual meeting with the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Mr. Jameel Ahmed, and the Chairman of the Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA), Mr. Zafar Masud, along with their teams, to discuss progress on financing for the priority sectors.

Qaiser Sheikh says: Pakistan's ports significantly improved

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, has said that Pakistan's ports have been significantly improved, and many companies have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to invest in Pakistan's industry.

The Minister, who participated in the Global Maritime Trade Summit organized by the International Chamber of

Shipping, expressed his gratitude for the invitation.

He thanked the Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping, Emmanuel Grimaldi, and the Hong Kong Transport and Shipping Department.

In his speech, the Minister stated, "About 90% of global trade depends on the shipping industry. He emphasized that Pakistan's ports have been significantly

improved."

"Due to these improvements, Maersk Line, Mediterranean Shipping Company, Hutchison, and Abu Dhabi Ports Company have signed memoranda of understanding and agreements to invest in Pakistan's maritime sector and shipping industry," he said. Sheikh also invited other international shipping companies to invest in Pakistan.

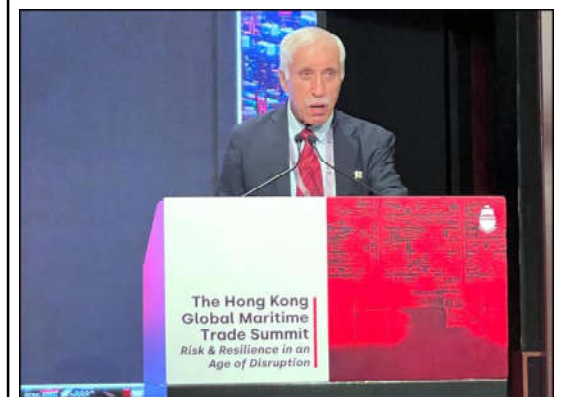
Rana, Shafay discuss industrial promotion

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain and Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain met here at PSIC House on Monday.

During the meeting, it was agreed to move forward together for the promotion of industry and technical education, and early settlement of the issue pertaining to 96 acres of federal land taken by TEVTA on a 99-year lease in Taxila. The Punjab government agreed to the proposal to revise lease of the land. The committee will determine suitable revised lease for the land

within a week.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that the federal and Punjab governments will work together for the promotion of technical education and industry. Coordination between the two governments is essential for the promotion of technical education and industry, he said and added that the federal government will cooperate with Punjab in all possible ways. He said, "It is our commitment to equip the youth with quality technical education. The future of Pakistan is linked to the promotion of quality technical education."



HONG KONG: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh while addressing Global Maritime Trade Summit.

FTT for reforms to save agricultural economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, Fair Trade in Tobacco (FTT) here on Monday highlighted the importance of policy reform to support Pakistan's agricultural economy and the livelihoods of millions dependent on the tobacco industry.

He urged the government to rationalize excise duties on tobacco products in Pakistan to combat the rising share of illicit trade and protect the legitimate sector from further economic damage, said a news release.

"The legitimate tobacco sector in Pakistan is already heavily taxed," said adding that "Tier-I brands are paying 84% in

excise, while Tier-II brands face a 60% excise duty. However, the illicit sector pays nothing and continues to grow unchecked, depriving the national exchequer of Rs. 300 to 330 billion annually — equivalent to \$1.2 billion. This is a staggering loss for our economy."

He emphasized that the share of illicit trade in Pakistan's tobacco market has skyrocketed from 37% in 2021 to nearly 63% in 2024.

These illicit operators sell their products below the legal minimum price of Rs. 162.25, bypassing tax obligations and undercutting legitimate businesses.

Current Account records a surplus of \$349 million in Oct 24: SBP

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan's external Current Account Balance witnessed positive improvement for the consecutive third month in October 2024 as Current Account recorded a surplus of \$349 million in the month while Current Account for the first four months of the financial year 2024-25 recorded as \$ 218 million, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported on Monday. Cumulatively the current account balance for July to October 2024, according to the latest SBP data, has shown significant improvement as a surplus of \$218 million was recorded during the first four months of FY 2024-25 as compared to the deficit of \$1.528 billion during the corresponding

period of last year.

"The external Current Account recorded a surplus of US\$349 million in October 2024, after showing a surplus of US\$86 million and US\$29 million in September 2024 and August 2024 respectively," said SBP adding that cumulative current account balance for July-October 2024-25 also turned into surplus after a deficit of \$131 million in the first three months of the current fiscal year.

According to SBP figures, the merchandise trade deficit has declined on month-on-month as well as yearly basis during October 2024. The balance on trade in goods in October 24 has recorded a deficit of \$1,586 million.

Over 4.8m cotton bales arrive at ginning units by 15th

MULTAN (APP): Seed Cotton (Phutti) equivalent to over 4.8 million (48,93,948) bales have reached ginning factories across Pakistan till November 15, registering a decrease of 33.60 percent as compared to corresponding period of last year. According to a fortnightly report of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) issued to media on Monday, over 4.5 million (45,06,779) bales have undergone the ginning process i.e converted into bales Cotton arrivals in Punjab were recorded 22,44,880 bales registering a decrease of 34.53 percent as compared to the corresponding period of last year when arrivals were recorded 34,28,915 bales.

CCP approves 50% acquisition of Total Parco by Gunvor Group

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on Monday granted approval for the acquisition of 50 percent share-holding in M/s. Total Parco Pakistan Limited (TPPL) by M/s. Aquashore SA, a company operating under Switzerland's Gunvor Group. Under the terms of the sale and purchase agreement, these shares will be transferred from M/s TotalEnergies Marketing Services to Aquashore SA, said a news release. In the

petroleum sector, this acquisition marks the latest in a series of high-profile transactions recently approved by the CCP.

Earlier this year, Saudi Aramco acquired 40 percent equity stake in GO Petroleum, while another Saudi group, Waf Energy Holding Limited, acquired 77.42 percent share-holding and control of Shell Pakistan Limited.

These transactions highlight the growing interest of global energy giants in Pakistan's dynamic energy sector.

PSX gains 232 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 232 points, a positive change of 0.24 percent, closing at 94,995.67 points as compared to 94,763.64 points on the last trading day.

A total of 765,206,618 shares were traded during the day as compared to 893,170,249 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 23.924 billion against Rs 30.811 billion on the last trading day. As many as 457 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 192 of them recorded gains.

KP CM expresses dismay over delay in resolving public complaints; warns strict action

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur on Monday expressed dissatisfaction and dismay over delay in resolving public complaints registered on "Ikhtiyar Awam Ka" portal and warned strict action for negligence.

Presiding over a meeting here at CM secretariat to review the status of public complaints the CM instructed that complaints from previous administrations also be shifted to the "Ikhtiyar Awam Ka" portal to ensure resolution without discrimination.

A statement issued here after the meeting said that he emphasized the importance of transparency and efficiency, stating, "The timely and satisfactory resolution of public complaints was the responsibility of officials, and any failure would not be tolerated."

During the meeting, the CM was briefed on the progress made so far. Officials reported that the portal had received 6,242 complaints, out of which 2,559 had been resolved while 3,683 complaints were in progress.

The briefing revealed that relief provided to 1,200 citizens, while 757 others received partial relief through the platform.

It said that 13,384 citizens were registered on the portal including around 300 women, adding that 1458 complaints were registered from Peshawar, 405 Mardan, 363 Bannu, 335 Dera Ismail Khan, 344 Abbottabad, 277 Mansehra, 237 Charsadda, 235 Hari Pur, 223 Swabi, and 185 Lower Dir.

The portal received 1966 complaints against, 1040 Education, 876 Implementation of public agenda, 602 corruption and 539 law and order.

The CM Gandapur reaffirmed his commitment to personally oversee the resolution of public grievances, ensuring citizens receive satisfactory outcomes. He urged the public to make greater use of the portal, emphasizing that their genuine concerns would be addressed.



LAHORE: The Spanish Parliamentary delegation meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Heartily appreciate Spain's support for achieving GSP Plus status: Maryam

LAHORE (APP): A Senate delegation from Spain called on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz at the Chief Minister's Office here on Monday.

During the meeting, the CM discuss the promotion of bilateral relations, trade and tourism between Spain and Punjab. The chief minister said, "Spain is Pakistan's second largest export partner in the European Union, there are numerous opportunities to increase bilateral trade volume." An agreement to increase cooperation in the fields like economy, climate change, disaster risk management and environmental pollution was also discussed in the meeting.

Maryam said, "We heartily appreciate Spain's support for achieving GSP Plus status. Friendly ties with Spain are highly valued and we want to work together with Spain on early warning system, and rescue services to prevent flood damage.

We intend to further promote parliamentary diplomacy. We are making Punjab a tourist hub, will welcome Spanish investment in the sector. Special package is being prepared to facilitate foreign investors."

She said, "We are especially focused on women empowerment. The number of female parliamentarians has increased significantly."

Punjab Governor says: Pakistan wants to benefit from Spain's expertise in olive cultivation

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Spanish Parliamentary delegation met with the Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here today at the Governor House Lahore. Governor Punjab welcomed the delegation on their arrival at Governor House. During the meeting, both sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation in energy, infrastructure, Olive production and agriculture sectors.

Governor Punjab thanked the Government of the Spain for its cooperation with Pakistan in European Union.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the trade relations between the two countries are very old, however, there is need to increase the trade volume between the two countries. Governor Punjab said Pakistan wants to benefit from Spain's expertise in olive cultivation. Governor Punjab further said that Chakwal and Attock areas of Punjab province are very fertile in terms of olive production, adding that olive oil is also being extracted there. He sought Spain's cooperation in oil cultivation.



PESHAWAR: Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, Parliamentary Secretary of Information and Broadcasting, attending the Qul ceremony of the late Senator Ilyas Bilour.



LAHORE: Tehreek-e-Insaf Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly, Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Lahore press club.

Two including one girl injured in SW house blast

PESHAWAR (APP): At least two people, including a minor girl, were critically injured when a blast occurred inside a house in South Waziristan on Monday. According to a police spokesman, the incident occurred in Ladhah tehsil of South Waziristan, where a minor girl and a man were critically injured in an explosion inside their house. The injured were rushed to the district headquarters hospital for treatment.

Miscreants destroy school in S Waziristan

PESHAWAR (APP): Unknown miscreants detonated explosives inside a high school in the Azam Warsak area of South Waziristan during late-night hours, police informed on Monday. According to the police spokesman, miscreants planted explosive material inside Government High School, Azam Warsak, and escaped. The explosive was later detonated with a remote-controlled device.

Spanish parliamentary delegation meets speaker Punjab Assembly

LAHORE (APP): A 4-member Senate delegation from Spain called on Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan in the Punjab Assembly here on Monday. The delegation comprised Vicente Azpitarte, Natalia Ueero, Antonio Gutierrez and Luis de la Pena.

Pakistan Ambassador to Spain Zahoor Ahmed and Secretary General Chaudhry Amir Habib were also present.

PA Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan accorded a warm welcome to the delegation, and said the visit of the Spanish parliamentary delegation reflected the growing relationship between Pakistan and Spain. He said the exchange of parliamentary delegations would further strengthen bilateral relations between both the countries. Malik Muhammad Ahmad said that Parliamentary diplomacy could play a significant role in resolving global challenges, adding that steps had been taken to improve parliamentary tools in the Assembly.

Two brothers killed in Jamrud firing

PESHAWAR (APP): Unknown assailants on Monday fired multiple shots on a car, killing two real brothers in Jamrud tehsil of Khyber district.

Police said two local brothers, identified as Falak Jan and Abdul Malik were travelling in their Mehran car when unknown assailants fired at their vehicle near Wazir Dhand check post, killing both the brothers on the scene.

Area police reached the area and shifted bodies of both the brothers to hospital for medico-legal procedure.

LG Minister to digitize accounts of local bodies

MARDAN (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Local Government, Arshad Ayub Khan Monday announced plan to digitize accounting process of local bodies for streamlining transfers, postings, and financial operations.

He expressed these views while presiding over a performance review meeting of tehsil municipal administrations (TMAs) of district Mardan.

The minister directed TMOs to increase property rents for local bodies, re-evaluate government land allotments according to the new lease policy, and preserve TMA resources with the approval of respective councils. He also directed to resolve the issue of distribution of assets between TMA Mardan and Garhi Kapura at the earliest. Arshad Ayub Khan emphasized zero-tolerance for negligence in public interest projects and urged municipal bodies to take immediate steps to boost revenue.

He directed authorities to intensify operations against illegal housing societies in the district.

PJA conducts training program on forensic science

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Judicial Academy (PJA) on Monday launched a six-day training program on forensic science, medico-legal procedures, post-mortem examination, and arms and ammunition analysis for judicial officers.

PJA Director-General Justice (Retd) Sardar Ahmad Naem addressed the inaugural session, emphasizing that dispensing justice was not merely a job but a sacred trust bestowed by Almighty Allah.

He stated that judges who fear Allah Almighty have no fear of any worldly power and can deliver justice without any external pressure.

DG Sardar Ahmad Naem highlighted the importance of post-mortem reports in criminal cases, noting that they are crucial in determining the fate of individuals.

International News

Biden lifts ban on Ukraine using US arms to strike inside Russia

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden's administration has lifted restrictions that had blocked Ukraine from using US-provided weapons to strike deep into Russian territory, said three sources familiar with the matter, in a significant change to US policy in the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

Ukraine plans to conduct its first long-range attacks in the coming days, the sources said, without revealing details due to operational security concerns. The White House declined to comment.

The move by the United States, which comes just over two months before president-elect Donald Trump takes office on Jan 20, comes after months of requests by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to allow Ukraine's military to use US weapons to hit Russian military targets far from its border.

The change follows Russia's deployment of North Korean ground troops to supplement its own forces, a development that has caused alarm in Washington and Kyiv.

The first deep strikes are likely to be carried out using ATACMS rockets, which have a range of up to 190 miles (306 km), according to the sources.

Moscow warns US over allowing Ukraine to hit Russian soil with long-range weapons

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied long-range missiles was met with ominous warnings from Moscow, a hint of menace from Kyiv and nods of approval from some Western allies.

Biden's shift in policy added an uncertain but potentially crucial new factor to the war on the eve of its 1,000-day milestone. News of Biden's change came on the day a Russian ballistic missile with cluster munitions struck a residential area of Sumy, a city in northern Ukraine, killing 11 people, including two children, and injuring 84 others.

On Monday, another Russian missile attack started fires in two apartment blocks in Odesa, in southern Ukraine. At least eight people were killed and 18 were injured, including a child, regional Gov. Oleh Kiper said.

Washington is easing limits on what Ukraine can strike with U.S.-made weaponry, U.S. officials told The Associated Press on Sunday, after months of ruling out such a move over fears of escalating the conflict and bringing about a direct confrontation between Russia and NATO.

The scope of the new firing guidelines isn't clear. But the change came after the U.S., South Korea and NATO said recently that North Korean troops are in Russia and apparently are being deployed to help the Russian army drive Ukrainian troops out of Russia's Kursk border region.



Palestinians, including rescuers, search for casualties at the site of an Israeli strike on a house, in Gaza City.

Israeli strikes kill 20 Palestinians in Gaza, some in attacks on tents, medics say

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip killed 20 Palestinians on Monday, including six people in attacks on tents housing displaced families, medics said.

Four people, two of them children, were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a tent encampment in the coastal area of Al-Mawasi, which is designated as a humanitarian zone, while two died in temporary shelters in the southern city of Rafah and another in drone fire, Gaza health officials said.

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, medics said an Israeli missile struck a house, killing at least two people and wounding several others. On Sunday, medics and residents said dozens of people were killed or wounded in an Israeli airstrike on a multi-floor residential building in the town. Another airstrike on a house in Gaza City killed seven people and wounded 10, medics said. Later on Monday, an Israeli airstrike killed four people in the Nuseirat camp in the central area of the coastal enclave, they added.

The Israeli military, which has been fighting Palestinian militant group Hamas in Gaza since October 2023 in a war that has left Gaza in ruins, did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on Monday's incidents.

On Sunday, the military said it had conducted strikes on "terrorist targets" in Beit Lahiya. Israel accuses Hamas and allied militants of operating within residential areas including hospitals for cover.

NATO's largest artillery exercise underway in Finland

Monitoring Desk
ROVANIEMI: Finland is hosting its first large-scale NATO artillery exercise since the Nordic nation joined the military alliance last year, with live fire drills starting on Sunday.

The exercise conducted in the northern Lapland region in November is part of Dynamic Front 25, the largest NATO artillery exercise ever held in Europe, with fire drills in Finland as well as Estonia, Germany, Romania and Poland.

Running from 4 to 28 November, it marks the first time NATO allies are practicing artillery fire at a large scale on Finnish soil.

The Nordic nation, which shares a border with Russia, joined NATO last year, dropping decades of military non-alignment after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

"We work on interoperability with our allies, to carry out artillery fire in coherence with our NATO allies," said Romain, a French army captain and unit commander of the Ecrins battery of the 93rd mountain artillery regiment, giving only his first name.

Hezbollah spokesman assassinated in Beirut

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: An Israeli airstrike without warning on the office of Syria's Baath party in Lebanon's capital Beirut killed the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah's Media Relations Officer, Mohammed Afif, a Lebanese security source said.

The strike on Ras al-Nabaa killed Hezbollah media relations official Mohammed Afif, the security source said.

Ali Hijazi, secretary-general of the Lebanese branch of the Baath party, confirmed the death of Hezbollah media official Afif.

UK PM Starmer seeks 'pragmatic' Chinese ties in meeting with Xi

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer called on Chinese President Xi Jinping to establish "consistent, durable" relations between their two nations on Monday, pressing on with efforts to thaw ties between London and Beijing at a G20 summit.

The meeting in Brazil was the first between the countries' two leaders since 2018, and Starmer struck an upbeat tone, saying he would like to engage with Beijing on areas such as trade, the economy and climate, and have broader engagement on science, technology, health and education.

The British leader also said he would start plans to have a "full bilateral" with Xi in either Beijing or London and hoped his finance minister Rachel Reeves could meet Vice Premier He Lifeng before the restart of the UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue early next year.

"We want our relations to be consistent, durable, respectful as we have agreed, avoid surprises where possible, and strengthened dialogue should provide stronger understanding," Starmer told Xi at the start of their meeting.

"The UK will be a predictable consistent sovereign actor committed to the rule of law and multilateral system," he said, adding he appreciated Xi's candour in a call in August and would match him in tone when raising differences between the two. Xi told Starmer the two countries enjoy a vast space for cooperation, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The meeting's cooperative tone was in stark contrast to ties under the former Conservative government, which took a robust approach to differences with China, particularly over human rights, Hong Kong and allegations of Chinese espionage. Relations between London and Beijing deteriorated as Britain grew concerned that an open door to Chinese investment could pose national security risks.

Philippines, United States sign military intelligence-sharing deal

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The Philippines and the United States signed a military intelligence-sharing deal on Monday, deepening defence ties between the two nations facing common security challenges in the region.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin signed the agreement with his Philippine counterpart, Gilberto Teodoro, at Manila's military headquarters where they also broke ground for a coordination center that will facilitate collaboration between their armed forces.

Called the General Security of Military Information Agreement or GSOMIA, the pact allows both countries to share classified military information securely. "Not only will this allow the Philippines access to higher capabilities and big-ticket items from the United States, it will also open opportunities to pursue similar agreements with like-minded nations," said Philippines' defence ministry spokesperson Arsenio Andolong. Security engagements between the United States and the Philippines have deepened under President Joe Biden and his Philippine counterpart Ferdinand Marcos Jr, with both leaders keen to counter what they see as China's aggressive policies in the South China Sea and near Taiwan. China's foreign ministry said on Monday any kind of military agreement or security cooperation.

Pope seeks international study into Gaza genocide

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Pope Francis has suggested the global community should study whether Israel's military campaign in Gaza constitutes a genocide of the Palestinian people, in some of his most explicit criticism yet of Israel's conduct in its year-long war.

In excerpts published on Sunday from a forthcoming book, the pontiff said some international experts say that "what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide."

"We should investigate carefully to assess whether this fits into the technical definition (of genocide) formulated by international jurists and organisations."

North Korea's Kim urges improved military capabilities for war

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged the country's military to improve capabilities for fighting a war in a speech last week, state media KCNA said on Monday, after Pyongyang dispatched thousands of troops to Russia. Kim delivered the speech to a conference of battalion commanders and political instructors held in Pyongyang on Friday, during which he called for building political and military strength and fighting efficiency to ensure that the armed forces can cope with a war.

Threats from the United States and its allies including South Korea and their military confrontation with North Korea have brought tension to "the worst phase in history," he said, calling the Korean peninsula "the world's biggest hotspot."

UK to put Sudan resolution to vote by UN Security Council

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain will seek backing from other United Nations Security Council members on Monday for its demand that Sudan's warring parties stop hostilities and allow deliveries of aid, the British foreign ministry said. With London holding the rotating presidency of the council, British foreign minister David Lammy is due to chair a vote on a UK/Sierra Leone-proposed draft resolution.

DPM Dar chairs 5th session of Exploration & Production Committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday chaired the fifth Session of the Exploration & Production Committee constituted by the Prime Minister to develop a comprehensive action plan for addressing the challenges faced by the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector in Pakistan.

Building on the discussions from previous sessions, several key decisions were made to improve the sector's outlook.

The committee reached an in-principle agreement to submit a long-awaited framework to the Executive Committee of the National Economic

Council (ECNEC) for the sale of 35% of the unallocated gas volumes to third-party buyers. The framework includes a 100 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscfd) cap for the first year, with annual reviews thereafter.

In another significant move, the committee decided to initiate a bidding round for available onshore exploration blocks by December 2024. The deadline for bid submissions is set for March 15, 2025. In parallel, a separate bidding process will be launched for offshore exploration blocks, with a six-month period allowed for potential bidders to evaluate the offered blocks and make their bids by 30th of June 2024.



ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday chaired the fifth Session of the Exploration & Production Committee constituted by the Prime Minister to develop a comprehensive action plan for addressing the challenges faced by the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector in Pakistan.

Dr. Rubaba nominated for Cadet Colleges Board of Governors

Independent Report
QUETTA: Advisor for the Women Development Department, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, along with MPA Ghulam Dastagir Badini, has been nominated to represent the parliamentary side in the Board of Governors for Balochistan's cadet colleges. According to the correspondence from the Balochistan Provincial Assembly, the Speaker has forwarded the nominations to the Secretary of the Higher Education Commission.

Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi is currently serving as the Advisor to the Chief Minister of Balochistan for Women Development. She has previously excelled as the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, where her ex-

ceptional management of COVID-19 earned her a performance excellence award. As Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, she consolidated 210 years of legislative drafts into a single publication, earning a Certificate of Merit from the former Chief Minister of Balochistan.

Additionally, as the Parliamentary Secretary for Science and Information Technology, she played a significant role in establishing the IT Secretariat, a Forensic Lab, and activating IT offices at the district level. Recognizing her contributions, the current Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has nominated her for a prestigious civil award, which she will receive next year.

Female abducted on way to Quetta from Chaman recovered by Levies, QRF

Independent Report
QUETTA: A female, who was abducted while she was on her way to Quetta from Chaman was recovered by the Levies and its Quick Response Force (QRF) in a quick action.

The Levies QRF recovered the abducted female within two hours of her abduction and arrested the kidnappers, on special orders issued by the Deputy Commissioner Chaman, Habib Ahmed Bangulzai.

It may be mentioned here that Deputy Commis-

sioner Chaman had mobilized to recover the female, who was on her way on a vehicle to Quetta from Chaman, soon after he got the information in this regard.

He had ordered to conduct comprehensive search for recovery of the abducted female at all the check posts and other places.

As a result of which, the QRF recovered the abducted female and arrested two accused in the case, taking speedy action on directives of the Deputy Commissioner, Chaman.



QUETTA: Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar inaugurating provision of electricity project in Christian Colony, Nawab Killi.

Govt. to introduce strict Umrah policy to curb begging in Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani government is tightening its grip on begging in Saudi Arabia by introducing a stringent Umrah policy. As per details, the move aims to curb the begging mafia that has been tarnishing Pakistan's image in the holy land.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has decided to take drastic measures against beggars, including obtaining an affidavit from pilgrims before departing for Umrah, promising not to beg. Those who violate this affidavit will face strict legal action.

To further prevent begging, Umrah pilgrims will only be allowed to travel in groups, not individually. This measure ensures that pilgrims are accountable for their actions

and are less likely to engage in begging.

Tour operators will also be required to obtain affidavits from pilgrims, making them complicit in preventing begging.

Sources revealed that the government is serious about addressing this issue, as begging has harmed Pakistan's relationship with Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) conducted operations during various areas of Multan and arrested four travel agents involved in sending citizens to Saudi Arabia for begging.

According to an FIA spokesperson, the arrested agents, identified as Sadiq Hussain, Mohammad Ejaz, Ghulam, and Ghulam Yaseen.



BAKU: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam photographed along with panel speakers at a high-level event 'Acting on Commitments - Ministerial Discussion on Green Education and Planning for the Future', organised by Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in collaboration with Cambridge University.

Ayaz Sadiq says Pakistan to continue unwavering cooperation to Syria in education, trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz has said that Pakistan would continue its unwavering cooperation and support to Syria in education, trade, tourism, especially religious tourism.

During a meeting with the Ambassador of Syrian Republic in Pakistan Dr. Ramez Alraee, he said that Pakistan and Syria enjoy historic and brotherly relations, both countries are tied in the bond of shared religion, fraternity, history and culture.

The matters pertaining to bilateral relations and important regional and international issues were discussed in the meeting.

The Speaker stressed the need for unity among the Muslim countries to cope with the challenges confronting to Muslim ummah. He said that the peace in the Middle East is linked with peace in Palestine. He noted that Pakistan fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and a desire durable peace in Syria.

Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the importance of Pak-Syria Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) and highlighted the role of PFG in the National Assembly as a significant platform for fostering mutual understanding and collaboration.

He lauded the commencement of commercial flight operations of Syrian Airlines between Damascus and Lahore.

The Speaker was confident that flight operations of Syrian Airlines would promote people-to-people contact, trade and tourism between both brotherly nations. He also appreciated the hospitality extended by Syria to Pakistani Zaireen visiting Syria for Zayaraat of Shrines. The envoy said that Syria values its historic relations with Pakistan and the Syrian Government wants to further strengthen the existing ties through enhanced cooperation in diverse fields.

He held "to my personal opinion this matter does not relate to CIA."

"I think Raghob Naeemi has given inappropriate opinion. He has supported government but his support otherwise has proved criticism against government. He should have made consultation before giving this opinion."

"I think VPN has nothing to do with shariah, he remarked."

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Romina urges nations to prioritize investment in greening education to boost climate action

BAKU (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam emphasised that transforming educational systems to empower students and inspire communities to take meaningful actions for a greener and more sustainable world is crucial for building climate-resilient societies.

"Education is the cornerstone of sustainable development and climate action for resilient and environmentally-sustainable society," said the PM's climate aide while addressing as a keynote speaker here on Monday at a high-level event 'Acting on Commitments - Ministerial Discussion on Green Education and Planning for the Future', organised by Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in collaboration with Cambridge University on the sidelines of COP29 global Climate Summit.

"By greening our educational systems, we are equipping the next generation with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to address climate change and build a resilient future," she said.

She said that as a nation highly vulnerable to climate change, Pakistan recognises the transformative power of education in addressing climate challenges. Our commitment to greening education stems from the belief that equipping our youth with climate knowledge is fundamental to achieving long-term resilience and sustainability.

Highlighting Pakistan's efforts regarding mainstreaming climate education into the national education system, the PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid Alam said, that significant progress has been made by the present government by integrating climate education into national curricula.

"From primary to university levels, we have developed educational modules tailored to build climate awareness. These modules emphasize the science of climate change, its impacts, and actionable solutions, ensuring that students grow up with a sense of responsibility toward the environment. These efforts also extend to training teachers as key change agents in this mission", she noted.

Tribal leader killed in Khuzdar

Independent Report
KHUZDAR: Unknown gunmen opened fire on Ferrozabad Road in Khuzdar at 10 am, killing Khair Muhammad Mardouei, a prominent tribal figure and leader of the Balochistan National Party. The perpetrators escaped the scene unhindered.

DSP Muhammad Jan Sasoli and his team promptly arrived at the scene, collected evidence, and shifted the body to Teaching Hospital for further proceedings. The authorities have yet to apprehend the culprits.

The incident has sent shockwaves through the community, and an investigation is underway to determine the motive behind the killing.

Rana Sana says: Use of VPN not un-Islamic

ISLAMABAD (Online): Rana Sana Ullah special assistant to Prime Minister (PM) for political affairs has said use of VPN is not un-Islamic and there will be no sin or punishment on it.

"Therefore, us it fearlessly, he said this while reacting to the decision of Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) for declaring use of VPN un-Islamic during his talks in a private TV channel.

He held "to my personal opinion this matter does not relate to CIA."

"I think Raghob Naeemi has given inappropriate opinion. He has supported government but his support otherwise has proved criticism against government. He should have made consultation before giving this opinion."

"I think VPN has nothing to do with shariah, he remarked."

Suspected human trafficker in Libya boat accident case arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested a key suspect in a human trafficking case linked to a tragic boat accident in Libya, on Monday.

According to FIA spokesperson, this action came on the orders of Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

Yasir Mehmood, a suspect listed in the Red Book's most wanted list was apprehended during a major operation by the FIA's Gujranwala zone.

He faces multiple charges with over five cases filed against him in 2023 by the Composite Circle Gujarat.

Yasir is accused of defrauding victims by collecting Rs 24 lakh each to facilitate their illegal journey to Europe.

Meeting held about DC Office security, local, issuance of arms license in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) General Quetta Muhammad Anwar Kakar on Monday chaired a meeting regarding DC office security, local/domicile and issuance of computerized arms license.

The meeting was attended by Officers of Assistant Commissioner (City), Assistant Commissioner (Sadar), Registrar, Sub-Registrar, Arms Li-

should immediately ban private people from working in the branch, and added the officers would visit branches on daily basis.

Similarly, discussing security in the DC office, he said that security should be tightened at all entry and exit points of the office saying that private people have also been banned from the Registrar and Sub-Registrar offices.



QUETTA: Former Chief Minister Balochistan, MPA Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Sanjrani urges regulation, not ban on border trade

Independent Report
QUETTA: Former Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani has emphasized the importance of border trade, warning that its closure would lead to widespread economic despair and depopulation in Balochistan. Moreover, he expressed concerns that restricting people's livelihoods would fuel anti-state elements, further destabilizing the economy already burdened by unemployment and poverty. Sanjrani's stance echoes the World Bank's findings that trade has been a powerful driver of economic development.

NP condemns Coast Guards' violence against unarmed citizens in Gwadar

Independent Report
GAWADAR: The National Party's district spokesperson in Gwadar has strongly denounced the Coast Guards' violence against unarmed citizens in Jiwani, Chatti, Ganj, and Pawan.

The spokesperson termed the actions of law enforcement agencies as "thoughtless" and emphasized that shutting down employment opportunities while also denying people their right to livelihood is unacceptable. The border trade supports the livelihoods of millions, and its closure will only exacerbate feelings of

deprivation. Criticizing the Coast Guards for using violence against civilians, including women, the spokesperson stressed that this behavior is condemnable.

The National Party expressed deep concern over the situation and demanded that action be taken against those responsible for the violence. They also called for the simplification of border trade to prevent further economic hardship.

The incident highlights the need for law enforcement agencies to protect citizens rather than infringe upon their rights.



QUETTA: Senator Manzoor Kakar meeting with Chief Executive Officer QESCO Engr. Shafiqat Ali.

Gwadar hosts awareness program on climate change and groundwater issues

Independent Report
GWADAR: An awareness program on climate change and groundwater issues was held in Gwadar, organized jointly by the district administration and civil society. Deputy Director of Irrigation, Pazer Ahmed Baloch, delivered a detailed briefing, highlighting the severe impact of 2024's heavy rainfall on Gwadar's old settlement, particularly Thana Ward. Many families were forced to relocate, and some still haven't returned to their homes.

Experts emphasized that climate change has disrupted the rainfall system, with Gwadar receiving 180 mm of rainfall in 2024, significantly above average. The excessive use of groundwater and boring has led to seawater entering underground reservoirs, causing land degradation and the loss of ancient trees.