

Senate passes bill amending Pakistan Army Act, 1952

ISLAMABAD The Senate on Thursday passed the Pakistan Army Amendment Bill, 2023, which proposes to amend the Act to incorporate amendments of classified data pertaining to the country's security or the Pakistan Army or a significant threat to safeguard sensitive information or national security.

The bill, moved by Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, is aimed at strengthening the existing legislative framework to ensure information related to the safety and interests of Pakistan and its armed forces.

According to the key highlights of The Pakistan Army Amendment Bill, 2023, the bill proposes the addition of Section 26-A to the Pakistan Army Act, which criminalises the unauthorised disclosure of information acquired in an official capacity that could be prejudicial to Pakistan's security or the armed forces. Any person found guilty under this section faces rigorous imprisonment for up to five years.

The bill makes it clear that information disclosure or sensitive information after obtaining prior approval from the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) or an officer duly empowered by him, such disclosure shall not be considered unauthorised.

The proposed amendments specify that cases of unauthorised disclosure shall be dealt with under Section 29(a) of the Pakistan Army Act read with the Official Secrets Act, 1923, reinforcing the legal framework to protect sensitive information. The bill introduces Section 26-B, which empowers any person subject to the Army Act from engaging in political activities for a period of two years after their retirement, release, resignation, or dismissal from service. Furthermore, individuals who have been convicted on sensitive data are barred from participating in any form of political activity for five years after their release from imprisonment.

"Violation of the aforementioned political activities restrictions, upon conviction by the court court situated under the Army Act, could lead to rigorous imprisonment for up to five years."

The bill proposes the introduction of Section 26-C, granting the COAS the authority to issue instructions for the implementation of the Act and its rules and regulations. The COAS also has the right to grant powers of functions to subordinate officers or authorities under the Act and to make any amendments to the provisions of the Act.

Additional amendments include Section 176-A, granting the COAS the authority to issue instructions for the implementation of the Act and its rules and regulations. The COAS also has the right to grant powers of functions to subordinate officers or authorities under the Act and to make any amendments to the provisions of the Act.

To ensure the effectiveness, Section 176-B establishes that the provisions of the Act shall have precedence over any other enactment, laws, rules, or regulations in force.

The passing of this bill by the Senate marks a significant step towards enhancing national security measures and ensuring the protection of classified information. The amended Pakistan Army Act, 1952 provides a robust legal framework to protect sensitive information and security of Pakistan and its armed forces while upholding the principles of transparency and accountability. The bill will now move forward to the President for approval before becoming law.

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Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed about infrastructure and development projects in Gwadar.

True implementation of SIFC vision to usher in revolution: Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the concerted efforts and true implementation of the vision of the SIFC would lead to the revitalisation and guarantee the prosperity of 420 million people of Pakistan.

The Prime Minister said addressing the inauguration ceremony of multiple development projects here, he expressed the hope that the current government would also start forward fast activities which will also appreciate by the business community of Karachi during his visit to South as Wednesday, Sunday. The Gulf countries are also expected to invest in Pakistan following the economic revival being witnessed by the government, in coordination with all stakeholders, he said monitoring an article written by a former South ambassador in Pakistan in an Arab publication.

Referring to his first visit on June 3, 2022 to Baluchistan, after assuming office, the prime minister said his dream was the condition of Baluchistan's development owing to the negligence part of it.

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Khawaja Asif says, his remarks taken out of context

ISLAMABAD Khawaja Asif clarified his remarks about Pakistan Federal Chief Justice (FCJ) members during his press session of the Parliament were misconstrued and are meant to single out any particular person.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly on Thursday, he emphasised that his remarks were not intended to single out any particular person. He said that his remarks were taken out of context and were meant to single out any particular person.

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2 killed, 6 injured in Pishin firing

ISLAMABAD At least two persons were killed and six others sustained injuries in a firing incident that took place near Kati Kahla area of the Pishin district of Baluchistan, Pakistan Interior Minister announced on Thursday.

According to details, two groups opened fire on each other near Kati Kahla area of the Pishin district, resulting in the killing of two persons and six others.

The victims' relatives including a woman and child were also injured in the same firing. A rescue team is en route to the site to provide medical aid.

Fourteen investigations are underway.

Additional District and Session Judge Husein Zaidi on Thursday granted an arrest warrant against the deceased person against the deposit procedure followed by the court.

By the hearing bench, Mrs. Asif's counsel Haroon Ghouse Akbar filed a request to the judge leading a one-time exemption from attendance by his client and said that the PFI (Pakistan Federal Investigation) would conduct an inquiry into the case.

The judge remarked that it is not the responsibility of a court to conduct an inquiry into security arrangements. The court had conducted a trial of the case.

Torrential rains continue, posing threats to dams in Baluchistan

QUETTA Torrential rains in the province have caused serious damage to the dam in the district of Hub and has raised concerns about the safety of other dams in the region.

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Senate passes The Cantonments (Amend) Bill, 2023

ISLAMABAD The Senate on Thursday passed the Cantonments Amendment Bill, 2023, a significant move towards modernisation and development of Cantonment areas.

The bill, presented by Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, aims to amend the Cantonments Act, 1924 (II of 1924) to modernise the administration of Cantonment areas and to provide for the betterment of the areas.

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Bizenjo for speeding up relief activities in flood affected areas

ISLAMABAD Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the Communications and Works (C&W) Department to take steps to ensure the restoration of the affected provincial roads.

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Bilawal, UN SG discuss revival of Black Sea Grain Initiative

ISLAMABAD Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held a telephone conversation with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday to discuss the revival of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) and its implications for food inflation worldwide.

During the conversation, the Secretary-General expressed his support for the BSGI agreement last year, the Foreign Minister reiterated his commitment to continue his valuable engagement with the UN Secretary-General to address the concerns of all parties.

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PFI chief again skips hearing in toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD A lower court on Thursday granted an arrest warrant against the deceased person against the deposit procedure followed by the court.

By the hearing bench, Mrs. Asif's counsel Haroon Ghouse Akbar filed a request to the judge leading a one-time exemption from attendance by his client and said that the PFI (Pakistan Federal Investigation) would conduct an inquiry into the case.

The judge remarked that it is not the responsibility of a court to conduct an inquiry into security arrangements. The court had conducted a trial of the case.

PM for Pakistan's uplift at par with other provinces

ISLAMABAD Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the development of Baluchistan at par with other provinces, was inevitable, which would lead to a balanced growth across the country.

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Aspirants gather outside BA, seek extension of PSC exam date

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Pakistan to continue diplomatic, moral support to Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Addressing the weekly press briefing here on Thursday, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said, "Pakistan strongly condemns the provocative statement made by Indian Defence Minister on July 26, 2023 in Ladakh, boasting India's readiness to cross the Line of Control. These unwarranted and totally unacceptable remarks reflect India's hostility against its neighbours, Pakistan in particular."

"Pakistan is fully capable of defending itself against any aggression as demonstrated in its forceful response to India's misadventure in February 2019," she stressed.

"This is not the first time that India's political leaders and senior military officers have made such highly irresponsible and delusional remarks about Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. They routinely engage in jingoistic rhetoric for political ends by stoking hyper-nationalism and anti-Pakistan sentiment. This practice of dragging Pakistan into Indian political discourse must end."

"These highly irresponsible statements also constitute a threat to regional peace and security and aim to destabilize the strategic environment in South Asia. While fully prepared to respond to India's provocations and irresponsible behaviour, Pakistan will continue to act responsibly and contribute to all efforts for promoting peace, security and stability in the region," she added.

The Spokesperson said, Jammu and Kashmir was an internationally-recognized disputed territory.

"India's claims on Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are founded in fantasy. Neither history and international law, nor morality and the situation on ground can validate

India's illusions. It should, therefore, direct its attention to full implementation of the relevant UNSC resolutions which stipulate that the final disposition of the territory will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations," she added.

She said Pakistan strongly condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran and dishonoring of the Pakistani flag in front of the Embassy of Pakistan in Copenhagen, Denmark. "A strong protest has been lodged with the Government of Denmark. We expect the Danish authorities to take all measures necessary to stop such acts of hatred and incitement." "The intent of such evil acts is to insult two billion Muslims around the world and create friction amongst communities, cultures, and countries. These acts, by any definition, do not constitute freedom of

expression. Nor can the permission to carry out provocative acts of religious hatred be justified under the pretext of freedom of expression, opinion and protest. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has said, speech and inflammatory acts against Muslims are offensive, irresponsible and wrong," she continued.

She said, "Pakistan has always maintained that freedom of expression comes with responsibilities. It is the responsibility of national governments, regional organizations and the international community at large to call out, condemn and proactively prevent the vile acts of Islamophobia and religious hatred. As urged by the UN Human Rights Council, the relevant countries must address, prevent and prosecute such acts of religious hatred. The international community must raise its collective voice against Islamophobia and work together to promote inter-faith harmony and peaceful co-existence."-APP

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PM Shehbaz Sharif distributes laptops among high-achievers of Gawadar University under the P M's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023 .

Road to Makkah initiative facilitated Hajj pilgrimage

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki said the launch of 'Road to Makkah' initiative was a groundbreaking programme aimed at providing seamless services and enhanced facilities for the esteemed pilgrims traveling to the Kingdom for the sacred Hajj pilgrimage.

Addressing a conference, organized by Tehreek-e-Difa Harmain Sharifain the other day, he said the initiative was set to streamline their journey and ensure a hassle-free experience by efficiently managing essential requirements such as passports, customs procedures, health necessities, and luggage transportation all the way to their accommodations in the holy city of Makkah. Ambassador Nawaf Al-Malki emphasized the deep-rooted and longstanding fraternal ties between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

He highlighted that the 'Road to Makkah' initiative was just one of the many efforts undertaken by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, in line with the visionary "Vision 2030"

President Tehreek-e-Difa Harmain Sharifain Maulana Ali Muhammad Abu Turab, expressing his admiration for the historical and brotherly relations between the two nations, extended heartfelt gratitude to the Saudi Embassy and Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malki for their dedicated and fraternal efforts in assisting Pakistan

and its people through thick and thin.

Religious scholars and dignitaries representing various denominations also attended the conference and conveyed their sincere appreciation for the unwavering support from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

They recognized the pivotal role played by both nations in maintaining fraternal relations and fostering unity within the Muslim Ummah.

They emphasized that the 'Road to Makkah' initiative stood as a testament to the enduring bond between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, further solidifying their brotherly relations.

As the conference concluded, the religious representatives reiterated their commitment to nurturing strong and harmonious ties between the two nations.-APP

Summary sent to PM seeking removal of DG FDE

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training has sent a summary to the Prime Minister, calling for the termination of services of the current Director General, Dr Ikram Ali Malik.

The sources told APP on Thursday that the decision comes as a result of multiple alleged instances of misconduct and disregard for official orders, as well as actions that have been detrimental to the welfare of affected employees and the education system at large.

Employees had issued several show-cause notices to Dr Ikram Ali Malik, which were allegedly ignored. Meanwhile, the teachers working in different schools and colleges are considering this step as a positive direction towards addressing their longstanding grievances.

One of the main concerns raised by teachers is the alleged violation of seniority in the appointment of principals during Dr. Malik's director generalship, during PTI government.

Several senior educators were reportedly bypassed, and junior officials were appointed as principals, leading to demoralization among the senior teaching staff.

Another area of concern is Dr Malik's alleged indifferent attitude towards securing rental ceiling funds for teachers from the Ministry of Finance.

Despite holding the highest position in the department, he reportedly failed to advocate for the teachers' rights and never visited the Ministry of Finance to resolve the matter.

However, according to APP, some teachers have raised their voices against the Director General for denying them No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for pursuing higher studies, including PhD programs.

Dar chairs Board-in-Council meeting to bid farewell to outgoing Chairman FBR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday chaired the Board-in-Council special meeting at Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to bid farewell to and recognize the services of the outgoing Chairman FBR Asim Ahmad.

During the meeting, Ishaq Dar acknowledged the contributions of the outgoing Chairman for meeting revenue targets and increasing revenue generation during the challenging economic times. Tariq Bajwa also appreciated the fact that Asim Ahmad's tenure was marked by integrity, dynamism, pro-activity and extraordinary achievements.

The Minister presented a memento and a bouquet to Asim Ahmad and the Members of the board wished the outgoing Chairman all the best in his future endeavours.-APP

PML-N always prioritized national development on personal interest

QUETTA: Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz (PML-N) Chaudhry Naeem Karim on Thursday said that his party has always prioritized national development over personal interests.

Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif was striving day and night to put the country once again on the path of development and prosperity, he said talking to a delegation of PML-N workers here.

including Balochistan saying that the Muslim League (N) has always served the people or carried out consistent development work.

He said that the country was going towards default when Muslim League (N) took the reins of the country in difficult conditions, and there was a severe economic crisis in the country but the great vision of the Prime Minister and dedication of public spirit has made the country stand on its feet again. He said that after the announcement of the general elections by the Prime Minister, the party workers should start preparations to participate fully in the elections.

The party will participate in the general elections and will be able to form government in the four provinces after winning polls, he stated.-APP

The termination request follows a series of events where Dr Ikram Ali Malik reportedly failed to cooperate with the National Assembly Special Committee for Affected Employees, despite being called before the committee on several occasions, they added.

Talking to this news agency, the daily wage teachers voiced their grievances claiming that Dr Malik continuously hindered the regularization process of 1791 affected employees, who were recommended for regularization back in 2012 under Khurshid Shah's Cabinet Sub-Committee.

Additionally, the Director General was accused of defying the committee's prohibition by attempting to hire new employees under the Federal Directorate of Education.

The Chairman of the National Assembly Special Committee for Affected

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However, according to APP, some teachers have raised their voices against the Director General for denying them No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for pursuing higher studies, including PhD programs.

This restriction has hindered the professional growth and aspirations of many educators, leaving them feeling disheartened and demotivated.

Furthermore, allegations have surfaced suggesting that Dr Malik used certain associations for personal gains and allowed them to organize protests against local government ordinances, using school buses for transportation of protesting teachers. This has raised questions about his impartiality and professionalism.-APP

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Action against HEC official for discouraging Holi, Senate told

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar on Thursday confirmed that strong action was taken against an official from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) who had directed educational institutions not to celebrate the Hindu festival of Holi, deeming it incompatible with the country's societal values and identity.

Danesh pointed out that on June 20, the HEC issued a directive to educational institutions, instructing them to refrain from celebrating Holi. Senator Danesh Kumar vehemently criticized the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for issuing a discriminatory letter against the Hindu community, emphasizing that non-Muslims were equal citizens of the country.-APP

He said that after the announcement of the general elections by the Prime Minister, the party workers should start preparations to participate fully in the elections.

The party will participate in the general elections and will be able to form government in the four provinces after winning polls, he stated.-APP

Hub dam attains maximum level of 339 feet: WAPDA

ISLAMABAD: Hub dam filled to its maximum level of 339 feet above mean sea level and the excess water is being released safely downstream through spillway. Once filled, Hub Dam with a live storage capacity of 645,470 acre feet can provide water to Karachi and district Lasbela for consecutive three years," said a statement issued here on Thursday.-APP



Khidmat-e-Khalq Foundation Internation Chairman Nematullah Zaeher addressing a Press conference.

Sindh cabinet approves writing off Rs. 7.2 bn loans

KARACHI: The provincial cabinet on Thursday decided to write off Rs7.2 billion old loans advanced to different government departments and organizations and launch e-registration, e-mutation, and e-crop assessment project under the Board of Revenue.

The meeting chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Sayed Murad Ali Shah also decided to allot land for the establishment of state-of-art Industrial Enclaves in Hyderabad and Sukkur.

Minister for Information Sharjeel Inam Memon, after the cabinet meeting, addressed a press conference and shared the decisions taken by the cabinet.

The finance dept briefing the cabinet on old loans for which the record was untraceable, said that Rs7.2 billion loans advanced from 1998-83 to 2012-13 to the government department and organization may be written off as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and sub-committee on Finance.

The cabinet was told that Rs. 174.863 billion loans advanced to private parties for the period from financial year 1982-83 to 1992-93 were also long outstanding for which the record is neither traceable nor recoverable.

The cabinet discussed the matter and approved the writing off the

loan of Rs. 7,204,280,508 outstanding against the government organizations and directed the finance department to inquire into the loan of Rs 174,863,627 advanced to the private organizations/parties.

Sindh Cooperatives Bank Rs. 27.5 million, Forest dept Rs4.5 million, Rs 62 million of Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA), HAD Rs1.4 billion, Sindh Sugar Corporation Rs 40.12 million, Sindh Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) Rs 666.35, SRTC Rs 200 million, KTC Rs 249.2 million, Local govt Naushehro Feroze for salaries Rs 30 million, Sui Southern Gas Company Ltd Rs.263.48 million, Kotri Surface Drain Rs 26.18 million, Hyderabad Electric Supply Company Rs 450,000, DCO Tharparkar Rs 44,895, KDA Rs 839.86 million, KDA Rs 221.13 million, Wapda Rs162.01 million, Shah Latif University Khairpur Rs 900,000, Food dept Rs 9.52 million, Kotri Surface Drain Rs 4.39 million, Karachi Water & Sewerage Board (KWSB) Rs 2.55 billion and DCO Hyderabad Rs 682.1 million.

Minister Revenue Makhdoom Mahboob told the cabinet that at present, a computerized record of rights was being maintained through a central Data Center in Karachi connected with 27 service centers across Sindh.

The record is also made available to the public through the official website of LARMIS. The District Manager & Assistant Manager have been authorized to issue true copies to the public on request and payment of the prescribed fee.

However, the services regarding registration of property documents and mutation are not being provided by the Service Centers.

For this purpose, Makhdoom Mahboob said that a new project - LARMIS-II was conceived, which contained different components such as e-registration, e-mutation, e-crop assessment, and up-gradation of Data Center, etc, and is now pending approval in the Planning & Development Department.

The cabinet was told that technical assistance from Punjab IT Board would be taken on board to develop software and implementation of e-registration and e-mutation through Service Centers of LARMIS. The cabinet approved the project. The Board of Revenue told the cabinet that the Sindh Economic Zones Management Company (SEZMC) has requested the allotment of Government land for the establishment of State-of-Art Industrial Enclaves in District Sukkur. The CM was informed that the state land measuring 400 acres of the A-1 category was available

in Deh Nando Kohistan, Taluka Rohri located between National Highway and Motorway Road. The market price of land has been fixed at Rs 5 million per acre.

Minister Local Government Syed Nasir Shah suggested that the land should be given to the Investment Department free of cost as the proposed industrial estate would generate employment opportunities and boost the economy. After a detailed discussion, it was decided to fix the price of the land at 25 per cent of the market rate and the request of the SEZMC was approved.

The SEZMC also requested the cabinet for the allotment of 451.37 acres of state land at Deh Goondar situated on the Hyderabad-Tando Mohammad Khan dual carriage-way and another 500 acres at Deh Ganjo Takkar, Taluka Latifabad, Hyderabad for the establishment of Industrial enclaves.

The revenue dept told the cabinet that the price of the lands has been fixed at Rs1.25 crores and Rs 1 core respectively. The cabinet approved the allotment of the land, in principle, and constituted a committee with Minister Transport Sharjeel Memon, Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, and Special Assistant to CM Qasim Naveed to discuss the price of the land and submit the report.-APP

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

"30TH JULY IS THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING. COOPERATE FULLY IN THE MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST THIS CRIME"

The Balochistan Development Authority invites sealed percentage rates tenders based on Composite Schedule of Rates, 2018 Government of Balochistan (Amended up-to-date) from interested contractors/firms for the following described project:-

S#	Description of Work	E/Cost In Rs.
1.	Installation of Home solar system at villages of Gharbi Thal Wayala & Nasar Abad District Duki. TSE-232407344663	36826000.00
2.	Installation of Home solar system at villages of Sharqi Luni Thal Chatali District Duki. TSE-232407344673	45732000.00
3.	Installation of Home solar system at villages of Sharqi Thal and Gharbi Thal District Duki. TSE-232407344693	43956000.00
4.	Solar Based Community water supply system District Duki. TSE-232407344693	46731000.00
5.	Solar Based Community water supply system District Duki. TSE-232407344703	46727000.00
6.	Construction of Building Boys primary Schools at Brahmani Thal, Killi Hajjan Nana Sahib Ziarat and primary School Building at New Abadi Ismail Shehr District Duki. TSE-232407344713	15622000.00
7.	Repair of RHC Building for RHC Ismail Shehr District Duki. TSE-232407344743	6759000.00
8.	Construction of pre stressed girder and pile foundation bridge at Ismail Shehr & pedestrian bridge for Killi Kawadi Miragan District Duki. TSE-232407344773	26825000.00
9.	Construction of pre stressed girder and pile foundation bridge at Killi Brahmani District Duki. TSE-232407344793	24985000.00
10.	Rehabilitation / Construction of Drainage system Nana Sahib Ziarat, black top link road in Raisani Mohala & repair / renovation of rest house Nana Sahib ziarat District Duki. TSE-232407344803	12687000.00
11.	Construction of water tank District Duki. TSE-232407344813	4630000.00
12.	Provision of two (02) nos ambulance for RHC Ismail Shehr District Duki. TSE-232407344851	15300000.00

The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with the Balochistan Public Procurement Authority Rules, 2014. Eligibility:- The Contractor must have registration with Tax authorities i.e. (active Tax Payers List (ATL) of FBR, NTN & Sales Tax department) valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council in relevant Category with PEC Code: EE11(i) (Solar) for the year of 2023. The firm will submit Affidavit (on Rs.100 Stamp Paper) regarding undertakings for non-blacklisting by any Government department. Method of Procurement:- Single-stage, One envelope. Bidding / tender Documents:- Issuance:- Bidding/ Tender documents will be issued on submission of a request by the contractor on his original letterhead from the date of advertisement published on BPPRA website till the last date of submission on presentation of requisite documents i.e. Tender fee (Challan Form) Rs.5000/- (Non-refundable) in Account No. 0010006476780067 through Bank Challan in Allied Bank Limited near Chamber of Commerce Zarghoon road Quetta Cantt; as well as a can be downloaded from BDA/B-PPRA Authority website. Call Deposit / earnest money:- (4%) earnest money of estimated cost of each work in the shape of call deposit in favor of Chairman BDA should be attached with the Tender Bid which will be refunded after one month from submission of Bid Documents. No cheque on this account shall be accepted. Submission/opening:- The last date for submission of tenders/documents will be 11th August, 2023 till 11:00AM and will be opened in the presence of contractors or their authorized representatives who may choose to be present at the time. Place of Issuance, Submission, Inquiries and opening:- G.M (Tendering Cell) Balochistan Development Authority Head office, Zarghoon Road Quetta Cantt. Telephone:- 9201775-9201875 Fax No. 9202844.

Term & Conditions:- Terms and conditions are mentioned (incorporated) in detail in bidding documents. A procuring agency may cancel the bidding process any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal, as per provision in B-PPRA rule, 2014.

CHAIRMAN
BALUCHISTAN DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY

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ANF foils bid to smuggle drugs through drone; recovers heroin

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has succeeded to foil a bid to smuggle drugs through a drone and recovered five kg heroin, said an ANF Headquarters Spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that acting on a tip-off, ANF Lahore conducted a raid at a house in suburbs of Lahore and recovered five kg heroin, two vehicles, a drone and a 30-bore pistol.

He informed the drug traffickers were using a new method to smuggle narcotics through drones.

The traffickers of the gang have been identified and raids are being conducted to arrest them. All available resources are being used to net the accused, he added. -APP

Protecting Your Eyes and Ears During the Summertime

ISLAMABAD: Summer is a time of fun and enjoyment, vacations, camp, and family trips. But many popular activities of summer, such as swimming, can have safety risks, especially to the eyes and ears.

Uswoma Abugo, MD, an ophthalmologist in Norfolk, VA, and a spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology, shares the story of "Linda," 16-year-old who recently consulted her because her right eye was red, irritated, and severely painful in sunlight. (Abugo changed the patient's name and identifying information to protect her privacy.) Linda had no history of trauma, and nothing like this had ever happened to her before. She also had no illnesses that could account for these symptoms.

"When we stained the eye with a special dye that picks up defects on the surface of the eye, we found that she had a corneal ulcer," Abugo said.

Linda usually wore contact lenses but couldn't put them in, due to the pain in her right eye. She told Abugo that she occasionally swam with her contacts in because she's "blind without them."

How to Protect Your Eyes From the Sun

The sun's so bright, you gotta wear shades. Here are some simple ways to avoid those harmful rays.

Swimming with contact lenses is dangerous, Abugo said. Bacteria can grow on the lenses and cause serious infections. Linda needed more tests to see what organism was causing the problem.

"Because she had a vision-threatening central corneal ulcer, she had to put in eye-drops every hour until improvement was noted, and she had to be seen daily in clinic to make sure she was improving - or, more importantly, not declining," Abugo said.

Linda ended up with a scar through part of her visual axis. "Further consideration is being done to decide whether she will need a corneal transplant in order to restore her vision," Abugo said.

This injury could have been prevented by not swimming with contact lenses. Instead, Abugo said, people should wear prescription goggles - if you can afford them.

Caring for the Eyes During Summertime

A new study published in the August issue of Ophthalmic Epidemiology looked at patterns of internet searches for eye symptoms, such as redness, dryness, pink eye, and pain. The researchers analyzed publicly available Google Trends data from the United States from Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2019. Close to half of the searchers (45%) had seasonal patterns. For example, searches for eye redness peaked in the springtime, which the authors suggest might be connected with the peak time for allergies. Searches for eye pain were highest during the summertime, which they suggested might be linked to eye trauma. Fireworks are a common cause of eye trauma, Abugo said. "Fireworks are beautiful but can also be blinding due to eye rupture, surface scratches, and burns, so ensure that you leave the handling of them to professionals," she said. "If you're in the presence of fireworks, even as a bystander, you should wear eye protection," she continued.



FAISALABAD: Passengers are travelling on the roof top of the bus at Nishatabad road without any proper safety, which may cause any incident any time.

China willing to strengthen strategic coordination with Pakistan: Zhao Leji

BEIJING: China is ready to work with Pakistan to implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, deepen exchanges and cooperation in various fields and push forward the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership for new and greater development. These views were expressed by China's top legislator Zhao Leji during his talks with the Speaker of National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf via video link, China's state-run media reported on Wednesday. Zhao, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, hailed Pakistan for giving firm support to China on issues concerning China's core interests over a long period of time. He

said China is willing to strengthen strategic coordination with Pakistan and promote the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community of shared future in the new era. It is hoped that the two sides will deepen all-round practical cooperation, push the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to a new level, strengthen friendly people-to-people exchanges, continue to closely coordinate and cooperate on international and regional issues and make global governance more just and equitable, he added. China hails Pakistan for taking the lead in supporting the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative, and joining the Group of Friends of the Global Development

Initiative, Zhao said. "We welcome Pakistan's support for and participation in China's proposals and initiatives, and jointly promote the effective implementation of relevant initiatives," he added. Zhao said the NPC is willing to work with Pakistan's National Assembly to strengthen exchanges, carry out exchanges on governance experience, timely issue and approve legal documents conducive to bilateral cooperation, and provide legal guarantee for the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said Pakistan firmly supports China's core interests and stands ready to work with China.

PIA to celebrate 60 years of flying high between Pakistan and China

BEIJING: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) will celebrate 60 years of flying to the People's Republic of China, next year.

With the inaugural flight between Karachi and Shanghai via Guangzhou (Canton) on April 29, 1964, with a Boeing 720B, the national flag carrier earned the distinction of becoming the first airline from a non-communist country to fly into China, official sources told APP here on Wednesday.

Later, in addition to flights operated between Islamabad and Beijing, passengers also enjoyed direct and convenient access to Tokyo, Japan via Beijing and Hong Kong via Bangkok.

At present, passengers travelling by PIA can fly between Pakistan and 16 captivating

cities of China via Beijing in partnership with Air China.

These cities include Guangzhou, Shanghai, Wuhan, Chengdu, Chongqing, Changchun, Hangzhou and Harbin etc. During the Covid-19 pandemic, PIA was among the few airlines which continued its flight operation to different cities of China. PIA operated its special flights from Islamabad to Beijing, Xian, Shanghai, Chengdu, Wuhan and Tianjin to facilitate passengers travelling between Pakistan and China. It also airlifted Covid-19 vaccine from China to Pakistan through special flights during the pandemic. Currently, PIA operates a weekly passenger flight on Islamabad-Beijing-Islamabad route every Sunday. -APP

ECC approves Rs985.43 for USC Ramzan Atta Scheme-2023

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet here on Monday approved Rs985.43 million for Ministry of Industries and Production that were spent by Utility Stores Corporation (USC) under the Prime Minister's Free Atta Scheme during Ramzan in last financial year (2022-23).

The scheme was launched on March 18, 2023 and continued till April 16, 2023, according to a press statement issued by the finance ministry adding the summary was moved by Ministry of Industries and Production.

The meeting was chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar while among others it was attended by

Federal Minister for Industries and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mehmmud, Coordinator to the PM on Economy, Bilal Azhar Kayani, Federal Secretaries and some senior officers. -APP

Daily Low-Dose Aspirin Can Increase Risk of Brain Bleeding

ISLAMABAD: Daily low-dose aspirin may increase the risk of bleeding inside the skull in older adults, while doing little to lower their risk of ischemic stroke, new research shows. Ischemic strokes are the most common Trusted Source type of stroke and happen when blood flow to the brain is blocked, such as by a blood clot.

The study, published July 26 in JAMA Network Open Trusted Source, adds to growing evidence that routine aspirin use for older adults who haven't had a previous stroke carries more risk than benefit.

Taking a daily low-dose aspirin is a common and effective strategy Trusted Source for preventing a heart attack or stroke in people who have had a previous heart attack, stroke or other cardiovascular disease event.

But some people without cardiovascular disease take a daily aspirin, thinking it will prevent a first heart attack or stroke - in 2017, approximately 29 million Americans Trusted Source fell into this category. Nearly 7 million did so without their health-care provider's recommendation.

The new study suggests that "we're not really getting the benefit of reducing potential stroke and cardiovascular disease with low-dose aspirin," said Dr. Ched Nwagwu, neurosurgeon and medical director of MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center's Stroke Program in Laguna Hills, Calif., who not involved with the new research.

"And, certainly in older patients, there's emerging data that [people taking daily low-dose aspirin] are more prone to bleeding," he told Healthline.

However, Nwagwu cautioned that no studies are needed to confirm these results.

"We can't base our entire [clinical] practice just on this one trial," he said.

Risks and benefits of low-dose aspirin

Aspirin thins the blood and helps prevent blood clots in the arteries that can cause a heart attack or stroke. But the blood-thinning quality of aspirin can also cause bleeding in the gastrointestinal tract or a stomach ulcer.

Earlier clinical trials have found that while routine use of low-dose aspirin reduced the risk of heart attack and stroke, it also increased the risk of bleeding, both in the stomach and intestines and inside the skull.

Older adults, in particular, are at higher risk of bleeding in the brain Trusted Source due to a ruptured blood vessel. They are also at high risk of falls Trusted Source, which can lead to head trauma and bleeding in the skull.

Because of this, the authors of the new study wanted to investigate the risks and benefits of low-dose aspirin use in older adults without a history of heart attack, stroke or other cardiovascular disease event.

The trial included more than 19,000 people in Australia and the United States aged 70 years or older, or 65 years or older for U.S. participants who reported their race or ethnicity as Black or Hispanic. -Online

Decision Making on Scientific Data for Improved Water Resource Management is Critical, IWMI

Water resources management in Pakistan is becoming complex day-by-day. National water security means national food security, and national food security means national security itself. To address the issue of water, there is a need to adopt a multidimensional approach.

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Pakistan organized a three-day training working on the sustainable use and management of groundwater in Balochistan. This training was conducted through the World Bank funded Balochistan Integrated Water Resources Management and Development Project (BIWRMDP). Around twenty agriculture and water professionals from On-Farm Water Management, Agriculture Department, Government of Balochistan attended the training. Speaking on this occasion, Dr. Mohsin Hafeez, Director of Water-Food & Ecosystems, IWMI/Country Representative, IWMI Pakistan said, "groundwater is extensively used for

agriculture and is under tremendous stress, with no systematic monitoring system in Balochistan province. We



need to use technology for groundwater monitoring and its optimized use by deployment of sensors and other monitoring equipment." He highlighted that

the training would help relevant departments and institutions in better planning and institutionalization of efficient

Resources, Islamabad in his presentation highlighted the significance of groundwater and its management in Balochistan. He said that the groundwater is depleting at an alarming level due to unmonitored extraction of this precious resource. PCRWR is piloting some of its successful interventions which have been tested in other areas similar to the conditions that we have in Balochistan. We need political will to implement those initiatives. Dr. Sarfraz Munir, Regional Researcher (Water Management) and Dr. Abdul Hakeem, National Researcher (Irrigation Agronomist), IWMI Pakistan introduced field instrumentation for efficient irrigation and groundwater monitoring, and geotagging of tube wells. Part of the training was an exposure visit to district Pishin where the participants witnessed practical demonstration of installation, operation and maintenance, and management of drip irrigation system for orchards and vegetable farms. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Chairman, Pakistan Council of Research in Water



ISLAMABAD: A view of the fallen tree in street after the heavy rain and wind storm last night in Federal Capital.

Balochistan Express

Dilemma of Hunger

Position of Pakistan on the Global Hunger Index is reminders that much work lies ahead to tackle this humanitarian crisis. The combat against hunger stresses firm commitment, innovative and inventive strategies, and collective action. It is the responsibility of the government, authorities, civil society, and affluent people alike to step up efforts and ensure that every citizen has access to sufficient, nutritious food. Together, we can transform this grave challenge into an opportunity to build a more resilient, nourished, and prosperous nation. Over an inordinate length of time, Pakistan has made some progress in reducing its GHI score, dropping from 38.1 in 2006 to 26.1 in 2022. However, this reduction is not enough to be complacent, as the score still places Pakistan in the category of "serious" hunger. A score of zero indicates no hunger, and while Pakistan's trajectory is promising, there is still a long way to go to ensure no one in the country goes to bed hungry. In the face of globalization and advancements in technology, it is disheartening to witness a fundamental issue like hunger still persisting in many parts of the world. The Global Hunger Index is an alarming reminder of the challenges faced by developing nations, and the recently released GHI-2022 ranking paints a bleak picture for Pakistan. The country's ranking of 99 out of 121 nations is a stark reminder of the urgency required to address this critical issue. It is no surprise that approximately 82.8 million people in Pakistan are forced to live in hunger, struggling to meet their daily nutritional needs. The report suggests that 46 countries, including Pakistan, are unlikely to eradicate hunger entirely by 2030. This projection is a wake-up call for Pakistan's policymakers to redouble their efforts in addressing the issue and ensuring that the country does not slip further down the list of hunger-stricken nations.

Within this region, Pakistan has one of the highest levels of hunger, exacerbating the problem of child malnutrition. Alarming, the rates of stunting and child wasting are also among the highest in the world. To confront this challenge effectively, Pakistan must prioritize hunger eradication and focus on implementing sustainable and targeted solutions. Government agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector must come together in a collaborative effort to address the root causes of hunger in the country. First and foremost, ensuring access to adequate and nutritious food for all citizens should be the primary objective. This involves investing in agriculture and rural development to boost food production, as well as providing financial support to small farmers to help them grow more and better crops. Moreover, strengthening social safety nets and welfare programs is essential to support the most vulnerable segments of the population. This includes the implementation of school feeding programs to combat child malnutrition and improve educational outcomes.

Beyond national efforts, international cooperation and assistance are indispensable in the fight against hunger. Pakistan should actively engage with global organizations, donor countries, and international agencies to access funds, expertise, and knowledge necessary for effective hunger eradication programs.

By Engr Qaiser Nawab

Pakistan's membership in the SCO: A path to shared prosperity and security

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has become an effective multilateral mechanism for regional states, as several states have applied for its membership. Full membership in the organization has enabled Pakistan to embark on a trajectory of shared prosperity, and common security, and become part of one of Asia's largest representative organizations. The membership of SCO has provided Pakistan with the opportunity to enhance its bilateral and multilateral engagement with various regional actors. Through multilateral diplomacy, Pakistan has been engaging with regional actors. The enhanced bilateral relationship with Russia and Iran is an instance of these developments. SCO is constructing a web of regional connectivity, and Pakistan's location greatly benefits it by being the epicenter of the trade and communication route.

The SCO offers a much-needed opportunity for Pakistan to become part of a legal normative multilateral forum through which Islamabad can engage with different regional actors. To begin with, the geopolitical significance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has increased Islamabad's geopolitical influence among its members due to its geostrategic location. Pakistan offers a natural link and route to SCO members to gain access to the Indian Ocean. Pakistan also provides a link between SCO countries, especially landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs), Afghanistan, Xinjiang Province of China towards the South, i.e., Arabian Sea and the Middle East. Consequently, by virtue of its geopolitical location, Pakistan acts as a major artery for regional connectivity. The unique geographical location of Pakistan for interconnectivity has significantly increased its geopolitical significance among the SCO members. The imminent geopolitical location of Pakistan has afforded it the status of an essential actor. Islamabad views the organization of SCO as a giant that can offer geostrategic benefits. This can assist Pakistan in collaborating with the member states toward achieving peace, security and long-term economic affluence in the region. SCO has infused a new spirit and energy into the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Russia. Pakistan's recent high-level official visit to Russia further improved relations. Under the

renewed relations, Pakistan has received crude Russian oil at discounted prices. This clearly indicates that Pakistan has benefited from its membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Similarly, the progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the completion and functioning of its major projects have also benefited Pakistan. CPEC is building a network of transportation, infrastructure and economic zones. This trade and investment structure of CPEC has made Pakistan a viable state for SCO member states to boost their economies through cooperation and collaboration. Pakistan's tilt towards the SCO nations seems to increasingly strengthen trade and economic cooperation, as evident in the case of Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan. The active participation in trade, security and other areas is becoming beneficial for Pakistan, especially at a time when its relations with the US are again sour. This clearly indicates that Pakistan's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has brought several benefits to the country both in economic and political terms.

Pakistan has been significantly affected by terrorism and a fragile security environment in Afghanistan. The SCO States are also vulnerable to terrorism and extremism. Pakistan, Russia, Iran and China have all expressed their concerns about the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the emergence of the terrorist organization known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In terms of regional security, by collaborating with the SCO, Pakistan has a historical opportunity to combat the menace of terrorism. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has recognized Pakistan's sacrifices and contribution against terrorism and extremism. This fits the framework of the SCO which endorses the fight against the three evils of terrorism, extremism and separatism. In 2022, the Samarkand Declaration emphasized initiatives for cooperation in countering terrorism and recognized Pakistan's efforts. Additionally, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is also contributing meaningfully to enhancing Pakistan's competency against terrorism, mainly through the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).

By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi

Nuclear safety & security: Pakistan outranks India

LAST week, a US-based international organization, Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) in its latest report (2023) - while evaluating the status of global nuclear security - has ranked Pakistan above India in terms of its handling of hazardous nuclear material. Whereas, the IAEA has acknowledged Pakistan's efforts on nuclear security and the NTI in its 2020 report, also endorsed Pakistan's progress, declaring Pakistan as the most improved country in the theft ranking for countries with nuclear materials. Thus, it is justifiably argued, "Pakistan's nuclear capabilities are the safest and most secure in the world, with zero incidents of any theft or missing nuclear materials, like its eastern neighbour, India, where such incidents are often reported." Because of its prompt and comprehensive nuclear security mechanism, Pakistan dominates the South Asian region in terms of nuclear safety and security. Every year, NTI releases its annual report on nuclear safety and security index which measures countries' nuclear security capabilities and efforts based on a set of indicators and criteria - highlighting the security of nuclear materials and facilities; the adherence to international norms and treaties; the regulatory framework for nuclear security; and implementation of the best practices to prevent unauthorized access to nuclear weapons or materials. Currently, the NTI index revealed in the tabulated form Pakistan's total score of 49 which was higher than India's 40, Iran's 29 and North Korea's 18. Pakistan is ranked 32 along with Russia and Israel in terms of the security of its nuclear facilities and is above India, Iran, Mexico, South Africa and several others on a list of 47 countries. Stabilized nuclear safety, security mechanism in Pakistan: As a nuclear capable state, Pakistan takes its nuclear security responsibility very seriously. The security of nuclear weapons remains the core responsibility of Pakistan's National Command Authority (NCA). For years, the NCA's Secretariat, Strategic Plans Division (SPD) has been fully committed to ensuring nuclear safety and security. Pakistan has adopted the best available measures to enhance its security on both domestic and international levels. Domestically, Pakistan's Strategic Export Control Act 2004 enables the government to control the export, re-export, trans-shipment and transit of goods, technologies,

materials and equipment that may contribute to the designing, development, production, stockpiling maintenance or use of nuclear and biological weapons and their delivery systems. Pakistan has also established a specially trained, highly skilled and well-equipped force specifically for the physical security of its nuclear installations. As part of its national detection architecture, Pakistan has deployed radiation detection equipment at various entry and exit points to deter, detect and prevent illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials. Nuclear safety and security in Pakistan are based on multiple layers and defence-in-depth concepts. Pakistan has successfully implemented International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)-Pakistan nuclear security cooperation program. Several projects have been successfully implemented for capacity enhancement in nuclear security. For capacity building, Pakistan's Centre of Excellence on Nuclear Security (PCENS) was established with US support through the IAEA. The National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS) and the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) are also important contributors to capacity building and professional development. Moreover, Pakistan has also been working with the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) in different areas, including the development of GICNT guidelines. Pakistan is also a party to several legal instruments related to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) non-proliferation, disarmament and nuclear safety and security, including the amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). In this era of emerging technologies, Pakistan strongly believes that an internationally binding framework should be evolved to regulate different aspects of the Lethal Autonomous Weapons System (LAWS).

India, a hub of nuclear material thefts: The theft of over 200 kilograms of nuclear material over the last two decades in India poses a serious threat of nuclear terrorism, necessitating action by the global powers to address poor safety standards in the country. According to a timeline issued by The South Asia Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI), 18 nuclear materials' thefts and lost incidents were reported in India from 1994 to 2021 involving over 200 kg of

nuclear material. A number of uranium/radioactive substance theft incidents in the recent past occurred in India which indicated the presence of a black market for nuclear materials inside India. The latest incidents reported are: in 2021, 6.4kg of uranium in Jharkhand and likewise 7kg of uranium in Maharashtra were confiscated by the Indian authorities. In August 2021, 250kg of uranium variant - a highly radioactive and toxic substance - worth \$573 million was confiscated in Kolkata and two persons from Indian strategic organizations were arrested.

India's case of poor safety and security of radioactive material has been exclusively highlighted by Adrian Levy, a British Journalist, in his reports. He revealed that people living near the Subarnarekha River-flowing through the Indian states of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha - are routinely exposed to exceptionally high levels of radiation causing infertility and birth defects in the population. The source of this radiation are the mines, mills and fabrication plants of East Singhbhum - district of Jharkhand state - where the state-owned Uranium Corporation of India Ltd is sitting on a mountain of 174,000 tons of raw material. And most dangerously, on 9 March 2022, India accidentally fired a BrahMos missile originating from Sirsa, Haryana that crashed into Mian Channu, Khanewal district, Punjab, Pakistan.

NSG bid and Pakistan: Arguably, after NTI's current nuclear safety and security ranking for Pakistan, Islamabad's case for joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group has become convincingly poised. 'All of Pakistan's export control laws are at par with international standards and the standards set by the NSG and other export control regime'. India's irresponsible role of nuclear safety and security notwithstanding, the western powers have unjustifiably favoured India, thereby giving an unwarranted NSG waiver to it.

As for India, Pakistan races towards securing an NSG bid, by any sane arguments, today, Pakistan highly deserves to acquire the Nuclear Suppliers Group bid. The geopolitical western interest by no means should undermine the principle of fair and just treatment based on criteria of the NSG bid. Instead of demonstrating a biased approach vis-à-vis Pakistan's NSG bid, the western nuclear community must adopt a liberal approach in this regard.

By Yossi Mekelberg

Book burning must be banished from political discourse

There is something frighteningly true in the observation of the 19th-century German poet Heinrich Heine, which was prompted by a burning of the Qur'an in 1493 in Granada, as he warned humanity: "That was but a prelude; where they burn books, they will ultimately burn people as well." These chilling words are now engraved in the ground of Berlin's Opernplatz, commemorating the horrific burning in 1933 of 25,000 books decreed by the propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels to be "un-German." Not long afterward came the Holocaust and its mass murder of millions by the Nazis.

Recent incidents in Sweden and Denmark have highlighted that there are those who still refuse to heed Heine's cautionary words. In their distorted view, they still believe that this abject act is an acceptable and legitimate expression of freedom of speech. Well, it is not. It is simply an extreme form of incitement against what is held sacrosanct by others, and it should be universally regarded as a hate crime.

In the first incident, an Iraqi Christian immigrant burned Islam's holy book outside a Stockholm mosque on - of all days - the major Muslim festival of Eid Al-Adha. In the second case, a Swedish national backed off after threatening to burn the Torah, the Jewish holy book, in front of the Israeli Embassy in Stockholm, claiming that he was not interested in setting fire to the holy book, but was merely testing the Swedish authorities to see whether or not they would enforce the law selectively regarding the burning of religious texts. That the authorities should not enforce the law selectively enjoys a broad consensus, but this does not extend to consenting to the burning of any book considered holy by any religion or belief system, or more generally any book at all.

Not only is freedom of expression not absolute, but the burning of someone else's holy or deeply meaningful book is not an expression of opinion or part of any acceptable debate in a civilized society between disagreeing individuals or groups. It is simply an act of aggression against what a book represents to others, an attack on their beliefs and on a crucial aspect of their identity. It is an attempt to demean, to establish a sense of hierarchy, to instill fear and even provoke a reaction that would serve as an excuse to accelerate the marginalization of whatever group considers that text to be sacred.

While these two Swedish cases were apparently the work of individuals, in recent years book burning has become something of a despicable political act perpetrated mainly by right-wing, anti-migrant politicians and activists. More worryingly, in some cases it has been officially sanctioned. In 2010, Terry Jones, known for his extreme Islamophobic views and slurs, burned a copy of the Qur'an in his tiny Florida church, shamefully hiding behind the First Amendment. And earlier this year, Rasmus Paludan, the far-right Danish-Swedish politician and lawyer, set fire to a copy of the Muslim holy book in front of the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm to gain maximum publicity for his anti-migrant policies. There are those who dismiss these vile acts as those of negligible characters who are desperate for attention. Be that as it may, it is the lack of a firm response by their respective communities, or even the lack of any legal framework for clamping down on these actions, that makes those communities and countries complicit through their inaction.

In some European countries, burning a holy book is considered a hate crime and is punishable by law. Criminalizing such behavior as a tool to impose tolerance might be seen as counterintuitive in any civilized society where there is an expectation of respect for other people's beliefs, values and symbols, instilled from an early age at school and through other instruments of socialization, and where such respect becomes part of the society's DNA and need not be enforced. However, with the emergence of multicultural societies where the required tolerance cannot always be taken for granted, moves to curtail hate crime that are supported by law have become increasingly necessary.

Using the freedom of expression argument to defend the burning of books or, more generally, offending other people's beliefs is a lousy and disingenuous response. Yes, freedom of expression is a fundamental human right that is generally enshrined in international law. Disagreeing with others' ideas and beliefs and promoting your own is part and parcel of freedom of expression, but this has nothing in common with the sheer provocative vandalism of burning books.

Living in diverse societies brings with it proven benefits, among them prosperity, appreciating the

value of tolerance and the broadening of one's horizons; but it also poses challenges that need to be addressed with conviction, openness, attentiveness, flexibility and sensitivity in order to overcome them, but not with acts of violence.

By burning books, one does not make them disappear, as they will long outlive those who burn them. To torch the written word is an extension of attempts to silence people and ideas, to censor them and pretend that a book's content will disappear along with its physical destruction. There is, sadly, a long tradition of burning books, going at least as far back as 213 B.C., when Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered the burning of all philosophy and history books from states other than Qin. In the late 15th century, the Spanish Inquisition burned about 5,000 Arabic manuscripts; in the 16th century, copies of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible were incinerated by the Catholic Church; in 1683, several books by Thomas Hobbes and other authors were put to the flames at Oxford University; and the list goes on. In some cases, the burning of people did quickly follow.

In the toxic political environment and social turmoil we currently inhabit, which polarizes communities, burning books has become the weapon of opportunists who feed and thrive on division and discord by pushing their xenophobic agenda and putting the blame for all their society's ills on those originating from other countries and subscribing to other faiths. It is a debased tool to build their power and influence and maintain their inflated egos.

This cynical exploitation of freedom of expression demands a legal, political and social response that will make burning books illegal, banishing the practice from political discourse before it can exacerbate the already fragile intercommunal relations we are witnessing in many liberal democracies, from where such inflammatory actions are threatening to spread.

-Yossi Mekelberg is professor of international relations and an associate fellow of the MENA Program at Chatham House. He is a regular contributor to the international written and electronic media.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this op-ed are that of the author and do not reflect the editorial policy of Daily Balochistan Express.

By Abdul Samad

Unlocking Baluchistan's Agricultural Potential

Baluchistan, Pakistan's largest province in terms of area, is a land blessed with abundant natural resources, including nearly one-third of the country's coastline, offering vast opportunities for trade and fisheries, bolstering livelihoods.

At the heart of Baluchistan's economic potential lies agriculture, which finds many suitable areas for cultivating major crops such as pistachios, almonds, apples, apricots, and more.

This sector sustains the majority of the rural population, employing around 68% of Pakistan's inhabitants and 40% of its labor force. Over the past three decades in the 20th century, agriculture has consistently contributed significantly to the national GDP. Furthermore, it plays a vital role in supplying raw materials to the industrial sector and remains a significant source of foreign exchange earnings. Notably, wheat, rice, bajra, and maize are among the main crops cultivated in Baluchistan.

Despite its vast potential, the agriculture sector faces several challenges. Rapidly growing population rates have led to a decline in the crop sector's contribution, dropping from 65% of agricultural activity in 1990-91 to 48% in 2006-07.

Baluchistan's rural population, comprising the majority, depends heavily on the agriculture sector for income generation, but limited production inhibits significant improvements in their standard of living.

Covering 44% of the country's land area, Baluchistan's total geographical expanse spans 347,190 km². According to the 2017 census, the province is home to 12,344,739 people, with a population density of 35.70 km². A significant majority, 72.5% of the population, resides in rural areas.

Various factors impede the realization of the agriculture sector's true potential in

Baluchistan. Chief among them is water scarcity, with approximately 81% of farmers reporting its damaging effects. Prolonged droughts and unsustainable use of tube wells in Northern Baluchistan contribute to rapidly declining water tables in the soil.

Another challenge is the non-availability of good quality seeds. Lack of awareness prompts many rural farmers to use low-quality and uncertified seeds, resulting in nearly 40% germination failure.

Furthermore, access to agriculture lending poses a significant hurdle for Baluchistan's farmers. As highlighted in the Soil Fertility Atlas report, only 61% of farmers have access to loans. Insufficient availability of critical agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, tractors, and modern technology further hampers productivity. Additionally, the farmers' poor financial status and uneconomical landholdings, combined with plant diseases and natural climate variations, exacerbate the situation.

Baluchistan's agricultural potential is being hindered by several critical challenges that demand urgent attention from the government. While the region boasts fertile soil, farmers struggle with inadequate access to fertilizers due to the agriculture department's inability to provide proper support. Additionally, research and development efforts remain lacking, further hampering farmers' abilities to boost productivity and utilize modern agricultural practices.

One of the primary issues is the prevalent use of traditional farming equipment, exacerbated by the high illiteracy rates in rural areas. Limited access to modern technology restricts the sector's progress and stifles its contribution to the Balochistan economy.

The Zarayi Taraqiyyati Bank Limited (ZTBL) was established to finance agricultural development, yet

many rural farmers remain unaware of how to obtain loans for this purpose. The lack of awareness and fear of risks associated with loans hinder agricultural growth and development.

To address these issues and unlock Baluchistan's agriculture potential, it is imperative for the provincial government and agriculture minister to take immediate action. Investing in irrigation infrastructure and water resource management, as supported by the Asian Development Bank's \$100 million loan, can alleviate the water shortage and increase farm earnings significantly.

Furthermore, the government must prioritize research and development in rural areas, providing farmers with the knowledge and tools to optimize their agricultural practices. Efficient policies should be implemented to support small farmers, enabling them to raise production and gain property rights.

Encouraging agro-business for rural youth will not only create employment opportunities but also foster economic growth. The government should explore opportunities to export surplus produce and import modern agricultural equipment to improve productivity while reducing costs.

Extending the reach and functionality of the agriculture department will facilitate soil testing and better pesticide usage, further contributing to increased agricultural production.

Baluchistan's agriculture sector has the potential to elevate the living standards of its people and play a significant role in the region's economy. By addressing these challenges and implementing robust agricultural policies, the government can pave the way for a prosperous and thriving nation.

The writer is hails from District Khuzdar, Baluchistan. He can be reached at samadmen-gal4870@gmail.com.

By Meraj Hayat

Turbat: A City Struggling for Development amid corruption

Turbat, the historical gem of Makran, is renowned for its beauty and the hospitality of its people. However, this city is facing numerous challenges that have hindered its progress. The government's lack of attention and failure to address these issues have taken a toll on Turbat's growth.

Fundamental rights seem scarce in Turbat, with little progress to boast about. A shortage of electricity, the absence of a proper library, rampant drug addiction, and widespread corruption have plagued the city. These critical problems not only hinder the nation's development but also force individuals to resort to desperate measures to cope. The middle-class population is often the hardest hit, while those in power exploit their authority for personal gain.

The government's efforts to benefit the people of Turbat have been few and far between, disproportionately impacting the lower class. As a result, the living conditions in Turbat have deteriorated, turning the city into a challenging place to reside.

The lack of a functional library is a pressing issue that students have raised with relevant authorities, but it has been consistently ignored.

This obstacle hampers educational progress in the region, depriving the country of a well-prepared workforce. Turbat urgently needs a spacious and well-equipped library, yet it only has a tiny, overcrowded facility that can barely accommodate four students. During summers, the scorching heat makes it almost unbearable to study, exacerbated by frequent power shortages.

Electricity shortages have become a distressingly common occurrence, particularly during the sweltering summer months. The appeals of the people to the government for a resolution have fallen on deaf ears, with no

discernible action taken. Neglect and indifference have become the norm in every government department, with employees prioritizing personal gain over public welfare.

The responsibility to address these issues does not solely lie with the government; every department must shoulder its part in overcoming these challenges. The lure of a government job, seen as an easy way out with fewer responsibilities, often leads to a lack of dedication and accountability. This shortsightedness burdens the present and upcoming generations, further exacerbating the city's problems.

The rise in drug dealers and addiction has reached an alarming level, with well-known culprits escaping any meaningful repercussions. Merely targeting small-scale dealers is akin to cutting branches off a tree, but leaving its roots intact. To combat this menace effectively, the government must focus on arresting the root causes and punishing those responsible. As the saying goes, "Mercy to the guilty is cruelty to the innocent."

The impact of drug addiction is most heartrending on the city's youth. Turbat's streets are filled with affected young individuals, while drug dealers continue to undermine the foundation of society. The devastating consequences of drugs extend beyond individual lives, devastating entire families.

In conclusion, the underlying cause of many of

Turbat's problems is corruption, which is often the root of all evils. Dishonesty, selfishness, and abuse of power hinder the city's progress and rob the nation of its potential. Pakistan's government must confront this issue head-on, taking decisive action to root out corruption from every corner of the country. Additionally, promoting education and its value is crucial for the development of Turbat and the nation as a whole.

Illegal construction

THE city of Karachi has been experiencing a surge in illegal construction and unauthorised possession of land for many years. This trend has gained momentum with time, causing significant harm to the environment and affecting the quality of life of residents in the affected areas.

Illegal construction and unauthorised possession of land not only violate the law, but also pose significant risks to public safety. Buildings that are constructed without proper planning and permits are often structurally unsound and prone to collapse in case of natural disasters, such as earthquakes. These structures can also block vital infrastructure, such as waterways and drainage systems, causing flooding and other issues. Moreover, unauthorised possession of land is a significant problem in Karachi, as many people take over public land, parks and green spaces for their private use.

Ahsan Ali Farooqui
Karachi

LETTER TO EDITOR

Blocking out sun is a dangerous course

THE recent discussions surrounding the idea of blocking out the sun as a step to combat climate change have garnered attention from influential figures. For instance, the American government, in a 44-page report available on the White House website, has mentioned the concept of sun blocking to mitigate the effects of climate change. Even otherwise, the Biden administration has acknowledged that it is open to the idea as a possible solution to address the escalating issue of global warming.

Additionally, billionaires Bill Gates and George Soros are financially supporting Solar Radiation Modification (SRM) technology and other such developments of the targeted sun-dimming technol-

ogy that could reflect sunlight out of Earth's atmosphere, potentially leading to a global cooling effect. Although the notion of sun blocking is not new, it is essential to consider the potential consequences of such actions. Prof Gary Rendsburg, a biblical historian specialising in ancient history, has drawn attention to the plagues during the time of the Pharaohs in ancient Egypt. One such plague was darkness and the blotting out of the sun, resulting in death and destruction. Presently, there is a lack of a coherent global strategy based on collective consultation to effectively tackle climate change. As the world becomes increasingly fragmented, with old and new powers vying for economic and geopolitical dominance,

the challenges associated with climate change will intensify, particularly as we enter a new era of a multipolar world with the rise of China.

Climate change is an issue that will affect us all, especially in countries like Pakistan, in ways that are difficult to predict or model mathematically. The decisions made by the powers that be will have far-reaching and unpredictable impact on our lives.

To illustrate the point, we can look at the unintended consequences of actions taken during China's Great Leap Forward in 1958 when the decision to eradicate sparrow birds due to its consumption of grains caused an upset in the ecological balance.

Adil Hanif
London

By Maryam Javaid

The Pitfalls of Facial Beauty Creams

Facial beauty creams have become a popular choice for many individuals seeking to enhance their appearance, promising brighter, smoother, and more youthful skin. While these creams may deliver the desired effects for some, it is crucial to acknowledge that they come with their share of adverse effects. In this article, we will explore the drawbacks of using facial beauty creams.

Skin Irritation: Among the most common issues associated with facial beauty creams is skin irritation. These products often contain active ingredients like alpha hydroxy acids, salicylic acid, and retinoids, which can cause redness, itching, burning, and peeling of the skin. In severe cases, medical attention may be necessary.

Prolonged Use: Long-term usage of

facial beauty creams can be detrimental to the skin. Many of these products contain chemicals that lead to dryness and thinning of the skin, resulting in wrinkles, discoloration, and even scarring. Moreover, prolonged use may make the skin more vulnerable to environmental damage.

Skin Cancer: Shockingly, certain facial beauty creams contain chemicals that could heighten the risk of developing skin cancer.

Hydroquinone, an active ingredient found in some creams, has been associated with this dangerous outcome. Additionally, repeated use of hydroquinone can lead to a condition known as exogenous ochronosis, causing a blue-black skin discoloration.

Hormonal Imbalances: Watch out for facial beauty creams that may contain steroids, as they can disrupt hormonal bal-

ance within the body. This imbalance can result in acne, abnormal hair growth, and other unwanted changes. Steroids can also contribute to skin thinning, making it more susceptible to environmental harm.

In conclusion, while facial beauty creams offer a quick fix for appearance enhancement, they are not without their drawbacks. The potential skin irritation, scarring, skin cancer risks, and hormonal imbalances should not be overlooked. Prioritize safety and efficacy by consulting a dermatologist before using any facial beauty cream, and follow their expert advice.

The writer is a graduate student specializing in Medicinal Chemistry hailing from Bahawalpur. As a talented blogger, she focuses on writing scientific articles to educate and inform her readers about various topics.

By Ruksar Rashid ALi

Book Review: A Small Setback is Not the End of Dreams

Once upon a time, in a small village, lived a girl named Alica with her loving family. Supported by her parents, Alica nurtured ambitious dreams, and their encouragement bolstered her confidence and enthusiasm.

Alica was not only exceptionally talented but also intelligent, earning the admiration of the entire village. However, amidst the adoration, some family members harbored jealousy towards her abilities. Tragically, one summer evening, an accident claimed the life of Alica's father, leaving her and her mother devastated.

Regrettably, Alica's family unfairly blamed her for the accident, burdening her with guilt and sadness. Crushed by the

weight of their accusations and malevolent gazes, she lost all hope and sank into a world of depression.

Despite her mother's continuous support and motivation, Alica found herself unable to pursue her dreams. She felt lost and directionless, a far cry from the confident girl she once was.

However, life had more in store for Alica.

After persistent efforts and wise counsel from her mother, a positive transformation began to take shape. Alica mustered the courage to face her doubts and fears head-on, focusing on her aspirations with unwavering determination.

Gradually, she embraced a new perspective, employing affirmations and believing

in her own abilities and potential for success.

Alica knew she could overcome setbacks and hardships, understanding that they were an integral part of life's journey.

Dear readers, life indeed presents us with challenges and setbacks, but Alica's story teaches us to confront them with resilience. Her unwavering determination to follow her dreams, despite a small setback, speaks volumes about the power of hope.

In conclusion, let Alica's journey inspire us all to navigate through life's hurdles with unwavering courage, never losing sight of our dreams. A small setback is merely a stepping stone towards greater accomplishments.

By Shahzaib Arz Baluch

"Preserving Balochi: Reviving a Cultural Treasure Amid Modern Challenges"

Language breathes life into a nation, and to keep a nation alive, we must nurture and promote its language. Balochistan, with its rich heritage, finds its identity in the melodious tones of Balochi, a language now facing the risk of compression and loss in the wake of modernization and the prioritization of other languages like Urdu and English.

Balochi, the language of the Baloch people, has been cherished and nurtured by its speakers for generations. However, it pains us to witness the gradual fading of this beautiful language over time. Experts and reports warn us that without action, many languages, including Balochi, could vanish from the world in the future, leaving only a single language behind after thousands of years.

Numerous languages have already succumbed to neglect, fading away because their nations failed to give them the importance they deserved. To keep a language alive, we must create literature, speak it on national and international platforms, and produce quality audio and videos for future generations to learn from.

Furthermore, making a language easy to learn is essential, but unfortunately, Balochi is not widely taught in many parts of Balochistan. Instead, the love for other languages like English and Urdu has taken precedence, leading to the neglect of Balochi.

Language is not merely a reflection like a mirror but a powerful tool that dissects the culture and values of a society. Neglecting a regional language erases that nation's presence from the pages of history. As the African Professor, Dr. Mwangi wa Githinji, aptly put it, "Language is the carrier of cultures, the library of ideas." Language defines a nation, and to understand a nation, one must first understand its language.

Balochi, the language of the humble people living in this prosperous land, holds within it centuries of emotions and historical events. However, due to an unstable situation in the province, it has not received the attention it deserves in the educational sphere. Consequently, it remains confined to homes and has not taken its rightful place in society, leaving the younger generation with limited opportunities to learn and express their rights.

Balochi literature is a treasure trove of beauty and spirituality, with poets like Ibrahim Jawansal Bugti weaving words that touch the soul. However, many Baloch people are unable to understand their own literature, as it is not taught at the college or school level. In contrast, other provinces like Sindh have embraced their regional languages, especially Sindhi, which has become the language of politics, society, and education. Such progress in preserving regional languages

is commendable and serves as an example for others to follow.

Balochi-speaking candidates often find themselves at a loss when contemplating choosing Balochi as a subject in competitive exams. The lack of proper resources and limited knowledge of the language among Baloch candidates is a dilemma that needs urgent attention.

Today, Balochi language stands voiceless, unable to cry out for its own justice. It is time to reflect on the obstacles hindering the development of Balochi – be it the political situation, the rich land, or the lack of support from Baloch linguists. We must act swiftly to revive our language, or else our nation will pay a steep price for its loss.

Education sectors and syllabus designers must take heed of the importance of teaching children in their own language to instill a sense of security and pride in their cultural heritage. Balochi, along with all regional languages, must be promoted and facilitated to ensure a brighter future for the coming generations.

Language is innocent, and it is the responsibility of society to protect and promote it. The preamble of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan strongly advocates for the promotion of regional languages at the primary level. Let us embrace this call for justice for our language and breathe life back into the soulful cry of Balochi.

The Ashes 2023: Pick your team of the series

Australia have retained the urn after the Manchester rain denied England the chance to set up a thrilling finale but Ben Stokes' side can still claim a 2-2 draw with victory at The Oval.

But which players have most impressed you across the series? Was Marnus Labuschagne's hundred at Old Trafford enough to earn him a place at number three?

Mark Wood and Chris Woakes missed the first two Tests but starred in Leeds and Manchester - does that get them the nod over Mitchell Starc or Pat Cummins?

We'll announce the results on Sunday, 30 July.

Svitolina, Andreescu get Washington Open wild cards

WASHINGTON: Former Ukrainian world number three Elina Svitolina and 2019 U.S. Open champion Bianca Andreescu have been handed wildcards to compete in the Washington Open later this month, the organisers said on Wednesday.

The 28-year-old Svitolina, ranked 27th, reached the semi-finals of Wimbledon earlier this month just nine months after giving birth to daughter Skai.

Canadian Andreescu, 23, reached the third round at the grasscourt Grand Slam.

American Sofia Kenin, who won the Australian Open in 2020, is the other wildcard entry alongside compatriot Danielle Collins.

Former world number four Kei Nishikori, Frenchman Gael Monfils and South African Kevin Anderson were given wildcards into the men's draw.

The Washington Open will be held from July 31-Aug. 6.

Andrey Rublev saves 3 match points to win in Hamburg

HAMBERG: Second-seeded Andrey Rublev saved three match points in the deciding tiebreaker to escape with a 5-7, 6-1, 7-6 (7) victory over Spain's Bernabe Zapata Miralles in the first round of the Hamburg European Open on Wednesday.

The Russian trailed 6-4 in the tiebreak before saving the next two points. After Zapata Miralles went back ahead 7-6, Rublev saved another as part of recording three straight points to win the two-hour, 53-minute match. In another first-round match, top-seeded Casper Ruud of Norway notched a 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 victory over Argentina's Sebastian Baez. In second-round play, fourth-seeded Alexander Zverev beat Maximilian Marterer 6-3, 7-5 in an all-German affair. Other second-round winners include Frenchman Luca Van Assche and Serbian Laslo Djere.

Australia's Alexei Popyrin converted four of five break points while posting a 6-4, 6-1 victory over third-seeded Austrian Sebastian Ofner in a second-round match at Umag. In other second-round play, seventh-seeded Matteo Arnaldi was a 6-3, 7-6 (5) winner over fellow Italian Flavio Cobolli. Also, Croatia's Dino Prizmic beat Hungary's Zsombor Piros 6-2, 6-3. Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka, the No. 6 seed, registered a 6-3, 6-2 win over Filip Misolic of Austria. Also winning first-round matches were Jaume Munar of Spain, Hungary's Fabian Marozsan, Argentina's Federico Coria and Italy's Marco Cecchinato. Atlanta Open Fifth-seeded Christopher Eubanks, competing in his hometown, rallied for a 6-7 (4), 6-4, 7-5 victory over Brandon Nakashima in an all-U.S. second-round matchup at Atlanta. Eubanks got the first service break of the match to take a 5-4 lead in the second set, then leveled the match in the next game. The third set followed the same pattern, with Eubanks getting the only break in the penalty game before sealing the victory. In other second-round action, second-seeded Alex de Minaur thrashed Thanasi Kokkinakis 6-3, 6-4 in an all-Australian match. Australia's Aleksandar Vukic upset fourth-seeded Yoshihito Nishioka of Japan 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (3), and seventh-seeded Ugo Humbert of France eliminated



It was the first World Cup draw that the United States have seen since Sweden held them 0-0 in 2015

Spa star Verstappen targets eighth win in row ahead of Dutch homecoming

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS: Max Verstappen will seek to extend his and Red Bull's current sequence of record-breaking invincibility at this weekend's Belgian Grand Prix ahead of spectacular Dutch homecoming next month. After winning seven straight races and nine out of 11 this year, the Belgian-born defending double world champion, and runaway leader of this year's title race, could make it eight on Sunday and then a record-equaling nine at Zandvoort next month. Two more successive wins would take him level with former Red Bull driver and four-time champion Sebastian Vettel's 2013 run of nine and extend his team's record sequence to 13 and then 14. Only five drivers have won seven races consecutively - Alberto Ascari, Michael Schumacher, Vettel, Nico Rosberg and now Verstappen - and the 25-year-old Dutchman's current form makes it seem inevitable that

he will go on winning. Having won the last two Belgian races, he will be seeking a hat-trick as the majestic, fast and dangerous Spa-Francorchamps circuit, set in the Belgian Ardennes, hosts an F1 sprint race weekend for the first time. "Spa is my favourite track, of course," said Verstappen, echoing the thoughts of most drivers who love the sweeping fast corners of the longest circuit in use on the F1 calendar. "So, I'm looking forward to racing there and seeing the fans - it should be a fun weekend. It's our final push before the summer break." Early weather forecasts have warned of a wet weekend ahead, but that does not worry Verstappen.

"That'll make it a bit more interesting and chaotic," he said, oozing the kind of confidence created by driving a car that has turned him into a winning machine. Not even the best efforts of his team-mate Sergio Perez have slowed

Verstappen as he extended his lead in the drivers' championship to 110 following last Sunday's victory in Hungary, where Perez was third behind McLaren's Lando Norris. After a slump in form, notably in qualifying, Perez recovered at the Hungaroring and will hope to continue his good run at sprint race weekends with the revived McLaren team and Mercedes expected to be closest in pursuit. who like Verstappen has a Belgian mother, will be seeking a third consecutive podium, while seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, who ended Verstappen's run of five pole positions last weekend, will hope for a fifth victory in the Ardennes, where he has also suffered bad luck, but will be challenged by Mercedes team-mate George Russell. The weekend's practice and racing will be preceded on Thursday by a track run arranged by Alpine's Pierre Gasly in memory of fellow-Frenchman.

Spain grants nationality to Iran chess star who defied veil decree

MADRID: Sara Khadem, the Iranian chess player who fled to Spain after competing in an international tournament without wearing a mandatory hijab, was on Wednesday granted Spanish nationality, a government minister announced. "In response to the exceptional circumstances concerning Mrs Sarasadat Khademalsharieh, I have just granted her Spanish nationality," said Justice Minister Pilar Llop, quoted in the country's Official Journal of the State (BOE), and using Khadem's full name. A 26-year-old chess grandmaster, Khadem participated in a World Cup event in Kazakhstan in December 2022, without wearing the Islamic veil, which is compulsory for women in Iran. As she explained in an interview with AFP in February, she did so in support of the protest movement that erupted in Iran following the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini in September last year.

Amini, 22, had been arrested by Tehran morality police for an alleged breach of the country's strict dress code for women. A relative warned Khadem that she would be arrested if she returned to Iran. She decided to travel to Spain with her husband, film director Ardashir Ahmadi, and their 10-month-old son Sam. In January, she met Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, with whom she played a game of chess. Iranian female athletes are required to abide by the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women, mainly by covering their heads, when representing their country at international events. She had said she started thinking of moving abroad after the birth of her son. "I started to appreciate living in a place where Sam could go out in the streets and play without us being worried, and many things like that. Spain emerged as the best option, thinking of Sam," she said.



Sara Khadem participated in a World Cup event in December 2022, without wearing the Islamic veil

Haiti coach wants to see same passion against China at World Cup

ADELAIDE: Haiti coach Nicolas Delapine on Thursday said their eye-opening performance against England at the Women's World Cup will go to waste if they do not back it up when they meet China. The Haitians were hugely impressive on their World Cup debut against the European champions in Brisbane on Saturday, dangerous on the counter-attack while restricting Sarina Wiegman's side to only a 1-0 victory. Praise rained in afterwards for a team ranked 53rd in the world, who went close to an equaliser, with Wiegman calling them "unpredictable, very transitional". Delapine said it was heartening, but would mean little unless they can perform to the same level against

China in Adelaide on Friday. "We were very happy after the England game because we received a lot of compliments from other countries," said the experienced Frenchman. "But the message I want to say is that it will only count if we face China in the same way. "We have to be credible and show the world the work we have put in and perform at the best level possible." "Les Grenadieres" need a result to keep their hopes of unlikely progression to the knockout phase from Group D alive. If they lose, and Denmark win or draw against England, their tournament will be over. Similarly, the 14th-ranked China will be eliminated with a defeat,

coupled with England winning or drawing against Denmark. "For us, everything is possible," said Delapine. "We lost against England but we put up a good performance, it has given us good confidence against China who are a very good team. "China has strong players, quality throughout. They have a well established game that they execute well," he added. "We need to work on our technique and tactics." They head into the game without key defender Jennyfer Limage after a devastating knee injury against England, but buoyed by the performance of teenage attacking midfielder Melchie Dumornay, who mesmerised the crowd with her touch and ingenuity.

Norwegian woman, Nepali guide set record for summit of 14 'super peaks'

ISLAMABAD: A Norwegian woman and her Nepali guide set the record Thursday for the fastest summit of all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre (26,000-foot) mountains, their team said in a statement.

Kristin Harila and Tenjin Sherpa -- known as Lama -- completed the feat in three months and one day after summing Pakistan's K2, the last peak on their quest. The record reflects "their unwavering determination, teamwork, and sheer tenacity throughout this monumental endeavour", the team statement said.

"Harila and Lama's collaboration has showcased the essence of mountaineering unity, transcending borders and cultures to achieve greatness together." The pair surpassed Nepal-born British adventurer Nirmal Purja's record of six months and six days, set in 2019.

Purja is currently attempting to set the record for the fastest ascent of all 14 peaks without supplemental oxygen.

In her race to set the record, Harila had to summit 12 of the mountains twice, including K2, after delays in securing visas from China to climb Shishapangma -- wholly in

Tibet -- and Cho Oyu, normally climbed from the Chinese side. More than 40 people have summited the world's top 14 peaks, only a few of them women.

Last year, despite her proven climbing prowess, 37-year-old Harila struggled to secure sponsors, forcing her to sell her apartment to fund her quest.

"I think to do this project if I was a man would be much easier," she told AFP in an interview in May. "It is just different to be a woman in the world, not just with the sponsorships."

Harila is a native of Vadso, on the Barents Sea in Norway's northernmost reaches, where the highest point is just 633 metres (2,000 feet). She did not take to climbing from an early age, dedicating herself to football, handball and cross-country skiing.

It was only in 2015 when she won a trip to Kilimanjaro in Tanzania from her employers -- a chain of furniture shops -- that she discovered her passion. Lama, who has been a guide since the age of 16, was Kristin's companion throughout her record-breaking journey.

"Lama's invaluable expertise and profound connection with the mountains have been integral to their success in navigat-

ing treacherous terrains and facing harsh weather conditions," the team's statement said.

Pakistan is home to five of the world's 14 "super peaks", and climbing them all is considered the ultimate achievement of any mountaineer. Besides being far more technically difficult to climb than Everest, K2 has notoriously fickle weather and has only been scaled by 425 people since 1954 -- including around 20 women.

WTA roundup: No. 6 seed Mirra Andreeva upset in Lausanne

LAUSANNE: Anna Bondar of Hungary, ranked No. 155 in the world, rallied to upset No. 6 seed Mirra Andreeva of Russia 7-6 (3), 6-3 on Wednesday to reach the quarterfinals of the Ladies Open Lausanne in Switzerland.

Down a break in both sets, Bondar came back to deny the 16-year-old Andreeva her first quarterfinal appearance on the WTA Tour. In other action, No. 7 seed Alize Cornet of France advanced to the second round with a 3-6, 6-1, 6-3 victory over Switzerland's Viktorija Golubic.

Following her run to the round of 16 in the French Open, No. 8 seed Elina Avanesyan of Russia moved into her third WTA quarterfinal in the last two months by defeating France's Chloe Paquet 2-6, 7-5, 6-1.

Hamburg European Open Posting 48 winners to Russian Yulia Putintseva's eight, Jule Niemeier - ranked No. 106 -- rallied for a 5-7, 6-3, 6-1 win over the No. 6 seed to reach the quarterfinals in her native Germany. No. 7 seed Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands dropped the second set against Nadia Podoroska of Argentina, but pulled out a 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 win. Eva Lys of Germany had no problem dispatching Panna Udvardy of Hungary 6-4, 6-1. Australia's Daria Saville defeated Germany's Tamara Korpatsch 7-6 (6), 6-2 and Germany's Noma Noha Akugue bounced back to upend Australia's Storm Hunter 0-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4.

BNP Paribas Warsaw Open Tatjana Maria of Germany and Yanina Wickmayer of Belgium each picked up second-round victories in straight sets in Poland. Maria rolled past Clara Tauson of Denmark 6-4, 6-0, while Wickmayer cruised over Tereza Martincova of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-2.

T20 World Cup: Ireland qualify for tournament

Ireland have qualified for the T20 World Cup after their qualifier against Germany in Edinburgh had to be abandoned because of overnight rain.

The point is enough to ensure a top-two finish in the qualifying tournament. The Irish were already on course to qualify after victories over Italy, Denmark and Jersey. Qualification for next year's T20 tournament comes after failure to secure their place at this year's Cricket World Cup in India. Ireland face hosts Scotland in their final qualifier on Friday (15:30 BST) in a match which will decide the outright tournament winner. "While it's true that we'd rather have achieved qualification on the field today, we're delighted to have achieved our primary objective of qualifying for next year's T20 World Cup," said Ireland captain Paul Stirling.



The Netherlands were out for revenge after the Americans denied them the trophy in 2019

US has yet to produce their best at World Cup, says coach

WELLINGTON: The United States have yet to produce their best performance at the Women's World Cup, coach Vlatko Andonovski said on Thursday. after the Netherlands held them to a frustrating 1-1 draw in their second match of the tournament in Wellington.

Co-captain Lindsey Horan powered a terrific header into the net to level the affair in the second half and save the four-times champions from outright embarrassment after not putting up much of a fight early on in the match.

It was the first World Cup draw that the United States have seen since Sweden held them 0-0 at the tournament in 2015.

"(In) the first half, we allowed them to take control of the tempo and slow down the tempo a lot more than we wanted," Andonovski told reporters, days after the United States beat Vietnam 3-0 in their opener.

The early performances were below the level the Americans can achieve due in part to the relative lack of experience the starters have with one another, he added.

"This team has not had time together. I mean, the first time we see this team together is in game one and now we saw them again in game two. So in game three, we expect it to grow from there," he told reporters. "As hopefully we move forward, we're going to see better and better."

While much has been made of the relative inexperience of the U.S. team, with 14 World Cup newcomers among the 23-player squad, Andonovski spent precious pre-tournament time retooling his starting lineup amid a glut of injuries.

Medvedev withdraw from Washington Open

WASHINGTON: World number three Daniil Medvedev and Australia's Nick Kyrgios have withdrawn from the U.S. Open tune-up tournament in Washington due to injury, organisers said on Wednesday.

Medvedev, who won the U.S. Open in 2021, has five titles this year with triumphs in Rotterdam, Doha, Dubai, Miami and Rome. The 27-year-old Russian reached the Wimbledon semi-finals earlier this month, losing to eventual champion Carlos Alcaraz.

Defending Washington champion Kyrgios has missed every Grand Slam this year due to injuries to his knee, foot and wrist.

He has only made it onto the court once, losing in straight sets at the Stuttgart Open in June.



Russian trailed 6-4 in the tiebreak before saving the next two points

Modi regime is hell-bent to impose its Hindutva agenda in IIOJK: Gulzar

ISLAMABAD: The Vice Chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar Thursday said that the Modi regime was hell-bent to impose its Hindutva agenda on the people of India illegally occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS), Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar in a statement issued in Srinagar said, "The ban on Eid and Juma congregations, locking of the grand mosque in Srinagar and other historical mosques, stopping people from offering prayers and forcing Muslims to chant Hindu slogans clearly indicate that Saffronisation of Kashmir is the ultimate goal of the present Indian regime."

He said, "Kashmiris have

been deprived of all basic rights guaranteed in the United Nations human rights charter, to which India is also a signatory."

"Tyrant Modi is the modern-day Yazeed (Devil) and Kashmiris, who are followers of Imam Hussain, will fight oppression till the last drop of their blood," he added.

Deploring the duplicity of the Indian government Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar said, "On one hand, India has deployed thousands of additional troops for the safety of Amarnath Yatrees and, on the other, Kashmiris are not allowed to offer prayers and perform other religious rites."

He said Kashmiris are not against Yatra and they have always facilitated 'yatrees' in performing their religious rites but the Modi

regime is using this pilgrimage for its political agenda in the occupied territory."

"The Modi regime is bringing more and more Hindus to Kashmir to create a sense of supremacy and intimidate Kashmiris," he said.

"The extension of yatra and large gatherings is not only creating environmental hazards but also fear and panic among the people due to the heavy presence of Indian forces."

Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar lamented that besides denying religious freedom to Kashmiri Muslims, dozens of Islamic scholars had been kept behind bars for raising voices against cultural aggression and invasion. He said, "India has turned Kashmir into Karbala and Kashmiris are

facing the worst repression."

He said, "The people of Kashmir are being killed, arrested, tortured and their houses are gutted for demanding fundamental right to self-determination."

"India is using colonial war measures to suppress their voice," he deplored.

Paying glowing tributes to the martyrs of Karbala, he said, "It is a lesson of Karbala that truth prevails and falsehood vanishes and no matter how mighty and powerful tyrants are they have to face defeat and humiliation."

Gulam Ahmed Gulzar vowed that the martyrs' mission would be accomplished at any cost and that the followers of Imam Hussain (RA) and his companions would prefer martyrdom over slavery.-APP



State Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik and Secretary petroleum briefing the media about MoU signing of Greenfield Refinery Project in Islamabad.

Murtaza hails Electoral Reforms Bill 2023

ABBOTTABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Javed Abbasi said that the acceptance of the Electoral Reforms Bill 2023 through consultations with the coalition parties in the federal government was a victory for democratic forces.

In a press statement issued here Thursday, the minister further mentioned that they had collectively decided on a political direction for the future. According to the Bill, the Presiding Officer will create Form 45's image and send it to the Election Commission, if the internet is not available, the Presiding Officer will be bound to personally deliver the original results, he said.

Murtaza Abbasi said that the Presiding Officer would be obligated to provide election results by 2 am on the polling day. In case of any delays, the Presiding Officer will be given a deadline of 10 a.m. the next day, with criminal proceedings initiated against them in case of non-compliance, he told.

The minister said that under this bill, a decision on violations of the Code of

Conduct would be made within 7 days instead of 15 days. The polling station will not be changed within 5 days before the polling day and for election expenses, previously used bank accounts can be utilized, but an affidavit must also be provided, he expressed.

Murtaza Abbasi said that security personnel would be deployed outside the polling stations adding, in case of any emergencies, they will be allowed inside with the permission of the

Presiding Officer. To ensure transparency in the postal ballot, the number of votes issued in each constituency and the polling day will be informed on the website, he added.

The minister said that for the National Assembly seat elections, the difference of 5 percent or 8,000 votes (whichever is less) would be subject to a recount, following the bill, only serving judges will be responsible for the Election Tribunal instead of retired judges.-APP

PTI chief again skips hearing in toshakhana case

Continued from page 1

37 hearings in the Toshakhana case and the accused had appeared in only three hearings, he said, adding that the defence lawyers were only used to file exemption requests.

The lawyer said that he was filing an exemption from attendance request last time and prayed the court to adjourn further hearing till Monday, adding that last day they couldn't get the detailed judgment in the identical case.

The judge asked that whether the lawyer was giving commitment that the accused would appear on Monday to this Barrister Gohar said that he couldn't give this assurance as he was only a counsel.

The judge remarked that Imran Khan had to appear at every hearing, adding that the court was adjourning the case till Monday.

ECP's lawyer Amjad Pervaiz opposed the request and said that as per the directives of the top court, the appearance of an accused was essential during trials in criminal cases. The exemption could be granted only if the court gets satisfied with it, he said.

He said that the defence was claiming security risks in F-8 Kachehri but now it had the same concerns in the new building.

The ECP lawyer said the application had not stated that the PTI chairman would appear on Monday.

During the hearing, Imran Khan's lawyer also filed an application to the court seeking suspension of the proceeding till the decisions on a petition against evidence recording in the said case.

ECP's lawyer Amjad Pervaiz contradicted the request and said that such an application could be moved only before the cross-examination against the witnesses, adding that

these were just delaying tactics by the defence.

After a recession, Imran Khan's lawyer told the court that his client would appear before the court on the next hearing as per the senior counsel Khawaja Harris.

The court accepted the two requests including exemption from appearance to Imran Khan and adjournment of the case till Monday.

However, the third application against recording the evidence by the prosecution was terminated.-APP

Tribute paid on 75th anniversary Capt Sarwar Shaheed Nishan-e-Haider

ISLAMABAD: The 75th martyrdom anniversary of Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, was observed on Thursday to highlight his courage and valour exhibited while defending motherland in the battlefield of Tiltatra (Azad Kashmir) in 1948.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the Director General Garrison Security Area (RGSA) laid floral wreath at Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed's mausoleum in his native town Sanghori, Gujjar Khan.

A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army presented guard of honour.

The wreath laying ceremony was attended by people from different walks of life, civil and military officials and relatives of the Shuhada (martyrs).

Earlier, the Armed Forces of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJSC) and the Services Chiefs paid glowing tribute to Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on his 75th Shahadat (martyrdom) Anniversary. His matchless chivalry, unwavering resolve and fortitude would always be remembered.

Captain Muhammad Sarwar, the first recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, who demonstrated indomitable courage and valour in defence of motherland and embraced Shahadat at Tiltatra (Azad Kashmir) in 1948.

Captain Muhammad Sarwar's martyrdom anniversary served as a powerful reminder of the extraordinary sacrifices made by the Armed Forces of Pakistan to defend the motherland.

"Let us remember these heroes who have laid down their lives in defence of our motherland.

The nation is proud of its gallant sons," the ISPR said.-APP

Bizenjo for speeding up relief activities in flood affected areas

Continued from page 1

Bridge which were damaged during the flood last year, he said.

The CM also expressed his concern over the fact that in the last one year, NHA has failed to restore the rain-affected highways.

Bizenjo directed the Irrigation Department to continue monitoring the dams and strengthen the weak embankments of the dams and canals and keep staff and missionaries available 24 hours a day.

He also directed the health department to establish medical camps in all the affected areas to provide health facilities to the affected and the secretaries of the departments of communication, health, livestock, irrigation and PHE to visit the affected areas.

Torrential rains continue, posing threats to dams in Balochistan

Continued from page 1

different areas of Panjur were filled up and flood water was flowing from the spillways." Deputy Commissioner Panjur said, adding that the spillway of the Nivan dam was destroyed due to the pressure of the heavy flood water entering in the dam. He said that other dams were also in danger as rains were continuing in the areas. All seasonal rivers and streams were carrying huge flood water in district Panjur.

"Standing crops, bridges, roads and protection dykes were wreaked havoc," deputy commissioner Panjur said.

However, no human loss was reported from any area so far. He said that the local administration was shifting the people who have lost their houses. Relief operations are continuing and food items are being provided to affected people.

The situation in Hub and Lasbela district was also becoming serious due to heavy rains.

People also rendered homeless in these districts as dozens of villages were badly affected.

The Porali and other rivers were also carrying huge flood water.

The traffic between Quetta and Sibi could not be restored as the alternate road constructed at the place of Pinjra Bridge at Bolan River was again washed away as more flood water hit the road and still large numbers of vehicles and trucks were struck up on both sides of the bridge.

Women and children have to sit in the passenger buses which cannot go back or move towards their destination.

Shortage of gas hampering 24 hours supply to domestic consumers

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Parliamentary Affairs, Saad Waseem on Thursday informed the National Assembly that due to a shortage of gas in the country, it could not be provided around the clock to even domestic consumers.

Responding to a calling attention notice raised by Dr Nafisa Shah regarding the non-supply of natural gas to Khairpur Economic Zones, he said no doubt that gas should be provided to all commercial units across the country but due to a shortage of the gas, a policy has to be devised to provide gas to the domestic consumers on priority.

Earlier, moving the calling attention notice, Dr Nafisa Shah said that Khairpur Economic Zone was set up with the vision to promote small and medium industries in the country. Such economic zones were set up with the government's guarantee to provide all services, she said. She said the Sindh government set up the first economic zone in Khairpur with a total cost of Rs 2 billion which attracted not only local but foreign investment. Some 80-100 units were set up in the zone, she said.-APP

Aspirants gather outside BA, seek extension of PCS exam date

Continued from page 1

#PCSAFTERCSSSPICIAL was written on the placards that aspirants were holding outside the Balochistan Assembly. It should be mentioned that a few days back a ruling was also given by the Balochistan Assembly to conduct the PCS exams in November.

On the other hand, there are some students who think that the PCS exams should be conducted on the announced date.

Salman Sanjrani Baloch, an aspirant and lawyer, said that BPSC should consider the interests of the majority of aspirants who have been waiting for their exams for a long time. "I think BPSC

should stick with its announced schedule because many aspirants have other engagements; some are working private jobs, which makes it difficult for them to apply for leaves time and again," he said and added that the ruling of BA was not appropriate because BPSC is an independent institution with its own rules and regulations.

Anwar Manjhuo, another aspirant in favor of the commencement of examinations on the announced schedule, said, "PCS and CSS are two sides of the same coin. If someone is not prepared now, then it is hard to say that they will be prepared even after CSS Special."

Aspirants gathered outside the Balochistan Assembly building in Quetta, some holding placards demanding an extension of the PCS exam date.

True implementation of SIFC vision to usher in revolution: Shehbaz

Continued from page 1

previous government, which he said merely focused on mud-slinging of the opposition leaders.

He said the previous government failed to execute crucial projects like clean drinking water despite the fund's allocation in 2015 by Nawaz Sharif's government.

Similarly, the unnecessary delay in the completion of the 26-kilometer power transmission line from Iran forced the people to live without electricity. A project to protect Gwadar Port from flood also met the same fate.

After 2015, no dredging of Gwadar Port was done impacting the movement of big ships, but the incumbent government took up the project and would complete it by March next year.

Likewise, the previous government could only bring 100,000 tons of cargo to Gwadar Port, comparing

PM for Balochistan's uplift at par with other provinces

Continued from page 1

impression was created that Balochi locals were being neglected in the process which was not true and accurate in any way.

The prime minister told the newsmen that his government had completed a project of 100 MW power transmission line from Iran to ease the lives of locals. Similarly, a Panjur-Khuzdar transmission line has also been completed.

He said all of the said projects were conceived during Nawaz Sharif's tenure and funds were also allocated but "criminal negligence" was shown by the previous government.

Similarly, he said the laptops were distributed among the top-performing students of public universities, which the previous

PM for Balochistan's uplift at par with other provinces

government failed to do so, despite it being a tool for progress in the modern era.

He said the incumbent government allocated billions of rupees for the laptop scheme.

He said instead of a 6% allocated share of the laptop scheme for Balochistan, the federal government gave away the machines with a ratio of 14%, and the quota had further been increased to 18% for fiscal 2023-24.

He said the federal cabinet had green-signalled a 300 MW coal power project for Gwadar and NEPRA had also approved the tariff.

The prime minister thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for a rollover of a \$2.4 billion loan for two years by EXIM Bank and overall support in the form of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.-APP

EXIM bank rolls over \$2.4bln loan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said here on Thursday that Chinese Export Import Bank (EXIM) has rolled over US\$ 2.4 billion which were due in next two fiscal years.

In a tweet, the finance minister said that US\$1.2 billion were due in fiscal year 2023-24; and US\$ 1.2 billion in fiscal year 2024-25. He said Pakistan will make interest payments only in both years.

"Chinese EXIM Bank has rolled over for 2 years principal amounts of following loans totalling US\$ 2.4 billion which are due in next 2 fiscal years: FY2023-24: US\$1.2 billion FY2024-25: US\$ 1.2 billion, Pakistan will make interest payments only in both years," he tweeted.-APP

Bahrain welcomes start of UN operation to unload safer tanker

MANAMA: The Kingdom of Bahrain has welcomed the beginning of the United Nations' operation to unload 1.14 million barrels of oil from the "Safer" tanker off the coast of the Republic of Yemen, which is an important step that would prevent a marine environmental disaster in the waters of the Red Sea.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement, expressed the appreciation of the Kingdom of Bahrain for the unremitting efforts made by the United Nations and international endeavors that have contributed to the initiation of this crucial step, which is of great importance in confronting the environmental and humanitarian threat posed by this tanker, Bahrain News Agency reported.-APP



Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the executive committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

"30TH JULY IS THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING. COOPERATE FULLY IN THE MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST THIS CRIME"

The Balochistan Public Service Commission is conducting competitive examination for the posts of Assistant Commissioners / Section Officers (B-17) and DSP (Police) from 26th August, 2023. In the premises of Government Girls Degree College and office of Balochistan Public Service Commission Quetta, therefore the undersigned invites sealed bids for supply of the following Work/Items.

TSE-232407344832

S.#	Items / Descriptions of Procurements	Est Cost (Rs. in Million)	Bid Security (Rs. in Million)	Time Limit
1.	Supply & installation of Shamiana, Kaneta, chairs (6000) and (36) tables with cover sheets, fans 150, water coolers for water 150 approximately etc (per day rent) And : Lunch (Chicken Baryani) with service only for 2 day for 650 (more or less) staff and tea refreshment for whole examination approximately	2.8	2%	30

Eligibility: Reputed firms having relevant experience, financial capability and registration with tax authorities (i.e. Income and Sales Tax departments. Registration with the Balochistan Revenue Authority is also required (where applicable). The evidence of "Active Taxpayer" in Active Taxpayer List (ATL) of Federal Board of Revenue according to the Government's Policy Directives. **Method of Procurement:** **Single Stage-One envelope Bidding/Tender Documents: - Bid Submission.** The sealed bids will be received on 15/08/2023 at 11:00 AM. **Opening of Bids:** The sealed bids will be opened on 15/08/2023 at 12:00 AM in the presence of bidders or their nominated agents who prefer to be present in the meeting. **Issuance:** Bid Documents can be obtained in person on written request against deposited tender fee (Green Bank Challan) of Rs. 1000/- under the Head of Account (C-03870) during working hours till a day before tender opening from office of Secretary Balochistan Public Service Commission. Contact # 081-9202201/081-9201507, for further detail of this tender & condition, the bid documents can also be seen at www.bppra.org.pk under procuring agency "Agricultural Research". Bidding document will not be accepted without the signature of issuing authority. **Bid Submission.** The sealed bids will be received on exact date and time mentioned in Bid Documents. **Opening of Bids:** The sealed bids will be opened on exact date and time mentioned in Bid Documents in the presence of bidders or their nominated agents who prefer to be present in the meeting. **Address/Opening Venue.** Bids will be opened in the office of the Secretary Balochistan Public Service Commission Samungli Road Quetta. **Bid Security.** An amount of 2% Original Call Deposit Receipt of quoted bid. Are required in shape of Call Deposit Receipts from any scheduled bank in the name of Secretary Balochistan Public Service Commission.

Note: - The Procurement will be made under the provision of BPPRA Rules, 2014.

SECRETARY
Balochistan Public Service Commission

PRQ No.231/27-07-2023
www.dpr.gob.pk @dpr_gob dprgob dgpebalochistan

HEADQUARTERS
PAKISTAN RANGERS (SINDH)
SUB-DIVISIONAL OFFICE, KANAIWAL, BALUCHISTAN
KANAIWAL

Date: 26/07/2023

TENDER NOTICE

1. Sealed tenders are invited from the manufacturers, distributors and sole agents for supply of following stores by Pakistan Rangers (Sindh). Tenders will be opened on 11 August 2023 at 1430 hours in presence of concerned/ authorized firms representatives:-

Ser	Nomenclature	Tender Fee (Rs)
a.	Camouflage Combat Dress	500/-
b.	Camouflage Combat Trousers	500/-
c.	Shirt & Trousers (Green)	500/-
d.	Long Boot Desert	500/-
e.	Long Boot Black	500/-
f.	Joggers Shoes	500/-
g.	Sleeping Bag	500/-

2. Manufacturers, Distributors & Sole agents desirous to participate in tender should be registered with Sales Tax, Income Tax, Departments, Active Tax Filer at FBR and having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (as applicable).

3. Tender forms can be obtained from Ordnance Branch Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) with effect from 27 July 2023 to 11 August 2023 from 11:00 AM to 13:30 PM daily (except Saturday and Sunday & public holidays) after payment of tender fee (non refundable) as mentioned against each in shape of pay order/ bank draft from any scheduled bank in favour of DG Pakistan Rangers (Sindh). Tenders can be dropped in tender box till 11 August 2023 upto 1400 hours.

4. Director General Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders as per Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Rules 2004.

5. For further details please contact on telephone # 99205205-7 (Extension # 3055).

PDR/S/No.27/23

Lieutenant Colonel
for Director General
(Muhammad Saleh Ud Din)

Senate Ch. urged to facilitate meeting with Dr. Afia

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Muhammad Talha Mehmood has urged the Senate Chairman on Thursday to write a letter to the foreign office, requesting their help in organizing a meeting with Dr. Afia Siddique, who is presently incarcerated in an American jail.

In response to a Calling Attention Notice raised by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, urging efforts for the release of Dr. Afia Siddique, Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, stated that a briefing on the issue would be given to the House by Foreign Minister Bilawal Zardari and State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar, in the near future.

NA passes Pak Air Safety Invest. Bill, 2023

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Safety Investigation Bill, 2023 was smoothly sailed through National Assembly here Thursday.

A bill to provide the establishment of Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Funds to contribute in sustainable economic development through the management of funds assets to achieve optimal use according to best international standards policies and practices to maximize their values for future generations (The Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Funds Bill, 2023) was also introduced in the National Assembly by Saad Waseem on behalf of Minister for Finance Mohammad Ishaq Dar.-APP

EC summons meetings on LG polls in Punjab, ICT

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has called for an important meeting on August 2nd to discuss the dates of local government elections in Punjab and Islamabad. A notification has been sent to the Secretary of Interior, the Inspector General of Islamabad, and the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad to attend the meeting.

already completed delimitation of constituencies in Islamabad and Punjab as per the law. Both meetings will assess all necessary measures to ensure the certainty of LG elections in both regions, and dates for conducting these elections will be determined through consultations. The Election Commission's persistent efforts over the past three years have resulted in the successful completion of all stages of LG elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Sindh.

SBP to announce Monetary Policy on July 31

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will announce Monetary Policy on Monday, (July 31).

SBP, Jameel Ahmad would announce the Monetary Policy decision at a press conference on the same day after the MPC meeting, the statement added. The MPC of the State Bank, in its emergency meeting convened on June 26, has decided to raise the policy rate by 100 bps to 22 percent for keeping real interest rate firmly in the positive territory in view of potential effects of budgetary measures and relaxation in imports.-APP

Gwadar sea port to be developed as one of the best in world: PM

GWADAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday reiterated the government's firm resolve to extensively develop the Gwadar Sea Port as one of the best in the world. He said the fate of the people of Balochistan, especially of Gwadar, would be changed through the ongoing development operation across the province.

The prime minister announced that the laptop quota for Balochistan had now been increased to 14% against the 6% population share of the province. He also directed the relevant authorities to further increase the laptop quota to 18% for next fiscal year. PM Shehbaz said default risk for Pakistan had been averted due to support from the brotherly countries like China, Saudi Arabia and UAE.



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif distributing cheques among the fishermen of Gawadar.

ECNEC approves mega projects relating to social sector uplift

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on Thursday approved several developmental projects of social sector uplift including communications, water and energy for economic uplift and social prosperity of the country.

The ECNEC approved the project at a revised updated cost of Rs.10,689,807 million including FEC of Rs.4,934,564 million. The ECNEC also considered and approved a project titled "Construction of Abdul Khel - Dhakhi-Kallurkot (45 kms) road" at a cost of Rs. 14,257,294 million without FEC. The project will be executed by NHA in Dera Ismail Khan district of KPK at 50:50 cost sharing between the Federal government and KPK government.

Online registration process for artists' health insurance launched

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday launched an online registration process for the artists' health insurance scheme by uploading its form on the dedicated website.

Minister tems political will, anti-graft action key for power sector

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power, Khuram Dastgir Khan said that the power sector couldn't be put on the right track without the political will, support of the Parliament and strict disciplinary action against the corrupt mafia within power distribution companies.

raising concerns about the overall governance. Additionally, he highlighted that the significant line losses were putting a substantial burden on the country's economy. In response to Kauda Babar's question, the minister confirmed the successful installation of transmission lines connecting Bolan to Jewani, facilitating the connection between Iran and Gawadar.

Qamar Kaira rules out delay in elections on basis of new census

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira Thursday said it would not be possible to delay elections on the basis of holding a new 'Census' by demanding establishing new parties.

also not in favor to delay the process at any cost. "The caretaker setup has a huge responsibility to run a country in an appropriate manner," he added. Kaira said, "If the new Census notification issue then it will not stop the process of elections."

KKF Int'l & GAB sign MoU on culture & public service

QUETTA: Chairman Khidmat Khalq Foundation International, Naimat Ullah Zabeer, and Chairman Gark Association Balochistan Ayub Khoso have said that the three years agreement between both organizations will promote Pakistani culture, education, health, wildlife, and wildlife on an international level. They expressed these views during a press conference here in Quetta on Thursday.

both institutions will support widows, artists, and those related to literature as well as the underprivileged ones through a joint action at the provincial level. They said that through TV channels, especially PTV Bolan, they will work on news ideas for public participation, dissemination of information, and promotion of languages, history, and culture with documentaries, dramas, and theater.

DC Quetta urges people to follow precautionary steps during monsoon

QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Shahk Baloch visited Hanna Urak, a suburb area of Quetta to review the flood situation due to heavy rains and urged the people to take precautionary measures during floods. On this occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Sana Majabeen and SHO Hanna Police Station Mitha Khan were also with him.

Mitha Khan told reporter that he has kept police personnel on high alert to deal with the flood situation in the area saying that wherever there was a flood situation, our police personnel were performing their duty diligently. The SHO further said that we were well aware of the damage caused by the floods in Hanna Urak and the administration would fully cooperate with the local people in this regard.

No report submitted on affected employees in NA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Water Resources, Syed Khurshheed Ahmed Shah expressed his dismay on Wednesday and said that the secretaries of various ministries had not submitted any report to the House regarding compliance with the recommendations of the Special Committee on Affected Employees.

matter of contempt for the House, as the House orders had not been obeyed. The Minister further highlighted that even employees from the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) had not been restored, despite the committee's recommendations.

Alvi for early diagnosis of hepatitis cases

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that as Pakistan has the world's largest population of hepatitis patients, it was a must to prioritize the screening and early diagnosis of the disease and any delayed action could lead to a devastating liver cancer epidemic.

made commendable progress in combating hepatitis C, regrettably, our country remains a major contributor to this burden in our region," he remarked. The president said Hepatitis C was a dangerous, silent disease, often carrying no signs or symptoms until it has done significant damage to the liver.



Provincial Interior Minister Mir Zia Lango presided a high level meeting to finalize security plan of Muharram-ul-Haram.

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