

Quetta
Karachi

DAILY MIRROR

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Military courts' verdicts made under law enacted by parliament: FO

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: In response to statements on recent verdicts by military courts, the Foreign Office (FO) on Tuesday said that the judgments were made under a law enacted by the parliament and in line with the ruling of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

In a statement, FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said: "Pakistan is fully committed to fulfilling all its international human rights obligations."

She said that Pakistan's legal system is consistent with international human rights law, including provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

"It has remedies of judicial review by the superior courts and guarantees promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms."

The spokesperson added that Islamabad believes in constructive and productive dialogue to promote principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

"We remain fully committed to implementing our commitments under the GSP Plus Scheme and core international human rights conventions."

The FO spokesperson said that they would continue to engage with their international partners including the European Union to uphold the international human rights law, without any discrimination and double standards.

The military court last week sentenced 25 individuals involved in the attacks on state installations during the violent protests of May 9, 2023. The violent protests broke out after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan was taken into custody in a graft case. In turn, scores of party workers were arrested and more than 100 civilians are facing military trials. However, the Khan-founded party maintained that it had no role in the incidents involving military installations, including the attack on the General Headquarters (GHQ), and has called for a judicial probe into last year's events.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

PM Shehbaz inaugurates F-8 underpass, completed in record 42 days

APP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday inaugurated the F-8 underpass — completed in record 42 days — to ease the traffic flow on two main arteries of the Federal Capital, Jinnah Avenue and 9th Avenue.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the F-8 underpass flanked by Ministers Senator Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Attaullah Tarar, Members of National Assembly and the Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), the prime minister said it was a propitious moment that this underpass was successfully completed within 42 days after laying its foundation stone.

PM Shehbaz Sharif lauded the efforts of the interior minister and his team for setting a new record. "This is the fashion in which nations progress through day and night struggle," he added.

The PM also felicitated Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, his team, and the contractor for achieving an unusual milestone.

The prime minister expressed the hope that the newly constructed underpass would help facilitate the traffic of the metropolis and the civic agency would also complete the Serena Chowk underpass in similar way. He also appreciated the Islamabad Traffic Police for maintaining smooth flow of traffic on project site.

Earlier, Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi appreciated the entire CDA team and congratulated Chairman CDA for completion of the F-8 underpass within 42 days.

He said that on the prime minister's instructions the CDA would establish a nursery by March next year for providing low cost and quality plants to the residents of Capital.

He acknowledged that the ICT Traffic Police did play a crucial role in maintaining vehicular traffic on the project site.

Following Quaid-e-Azam's principles vital for dealing challenges of country: CM

APP

Quetta: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday said that following Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's principles, faith, unity and discipline are essential to deal with the challenges of the country which is facing today.

In his message on the 148th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he said that it is important that we maintain complete unity in our ranks and consider the principles of the fathers of the nation as their motto and follow them. He said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's principles of faith unity and discipline provide the basis for making Pakistan a stable state which need to implement these principles has never been greater than it is today.

While paying tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he said that according to the vision of the father of the nation, we could only pay our respects by promoting tolerance, enlightenment and democracy in Pakistan.

The CM said that the traditional enemy of Pakistan has started conspiracies to destabilize our country saying that while the entire nation is determined to defeat these conspiracies through unity and consensus.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that our forefathers got this country after a lot of sacrifices and the people of the whole country including Balochistan would not let these sacrifices go in vain.

He said that the father of the nation had a special love for Balochistan and its people, after the establishment of Pakistan, it was his long-standing desire to join the states of Balochistan in Pakistan.

For which he himself came to Balochistan and had successful meetings with the nobles here, as a result of which these states became a strong part of Pakistan according to his will and desire, he said.

Bugti maintained that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah spent the last days of his

life in the province which is a manifestation of his closeness to Balochistan and its people.

Pakistan coming out of tough times: Mohsin Naqvi

Interior minister holds talks with MQM Chairman Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Chairman and Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui called on Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad on Tuesday and held in-depth talks with him on a variety of issues.

In the meeting, issues of mutual interest and overall political situation prevailing in the country were discussed.

The two federal ministers also pondered over measures to provide relief to the people and for long-term solution to public's problems.

Talking on the occasion, Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan is coming out of difficult situation as economic indicators are moving towards improvement.

Every coming day is promising Pakistan's bright future, Mohsin Naqvi said and added disappointment

is a sin and the agenda of the rejected elements is something else.

Mohsin Naqvi said those, who are obstructing the development of Pakistan, have nothing to do with the progress of the countrymen.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said those who create obstacles in the path of Pakistan's development do not care about the people.

PPP Balochistan to Commemorate Martyrdom Anniversary of BB Shaheed

APP

QUETTA: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Balochistan chapter is determined to organize the commemorations of the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed-e-Jamhuriat, Benazir Bhutto at divisional level across the province.

This was decided in a meeting of the Division Presidents and General Secretaries of PPP which was chaired by Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti here Tuesday to review the preparations of martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed-e-Jamhuriat, Benazir Bhutto.

During the meeting, responsibilities were assigned for organizing the events. It was decided that events would be held across Balochistan to pay tribute to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto on the occasion of her martyrdom anniversary.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was a great leader in the history, and her eternal struggle and sacrifices for democracy would always be remembered.

He emphasized that every ideological worker of the Pakistan People's Party was

an heir of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto's vision and mission. "Party workers are our pride," he said, adding that as a grassroots worker, he would personally oversee and guide the arrangements for the martyrdom anniversary processions and ensure that the preparations were up to the mark.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti further said that each Party worker was an ambassador of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto's ideals and would work to resolve the issues faced by the Party workers.

He emphasized that the Party workers should identify the issues faced by the public at the grassroots level. "To meet the expectations of the people, all party officials and workers must work among the people to alleviate their suffering and problems," he remarked. The chief minister said that the provincial government was working to improve the service delivery system to address the issues faced by the public. "We are ensuring the correct use of available resources for the welfare of the common man, under the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, continuing the mission of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto," he added.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti decided in a meeting of the Division Presidents and General Secretaries of PPP to review the preparations of martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed-e-Jamhuriat, Benazir Bhutto.

Pakistan's nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes: PM

PM hopes govt-PTI talks will bring about positive outcomes to promote peace, economic stability in country

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has categorically stated that Pakistan's nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes and no compromise will be made on it.

Addressing the Federal Cabinet meeting in Islamabad Tuesday, he said the 240 million people of Pakistan are united over the country's nuclear programme, which is for self-defence and does not have any aggressive designs against anyone. The Prime Minister said the imposition of restrictions by the United States on National Defence Complex and other entities are not justified.

Turning to terrorism, Shehbaz Sharif reiterated government's resolve to utilize all resources in collaboration with the provinces to root out scourge of terrorism from the country.

Acknowledging sacrifices of martyrs in the war against terrorism, he said their sacrifices will not go in vain. He said government's efforts to provide relief and pass on dividends of economic stability to the nation will not succeed till complete elimination of terrorism, which is surging again in the country. Regarding the sectarian violence in Kurram District, the Prime Minister criticized the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. He said the situation in Parachinar would have been different had the provincial government utilized their resources to address the issue instead of storming the federal capital Islamabad.

In his remarks about the political situation in the country, he said the government initiated the dialogue process with the PTI and its first meeting was held yesterday. He said the next round of talks will be held on the second of the next month.

Balochistan reports another polio case, Pakistan tally reaches 65

INP

QUETTA: Pakistan on Tuesday reported another polio case, occurring in the Kila district of Balochistan, which raised the total number of cases to 65 in the country in 2024.

The National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) for Polio Eradication reported that a one-and-a-half-year-old infant in the Chaman district's Qila Abdullah neighborhood has been affected with polio. The information indicated that this is the seventh case reported from the Kila Abdullah area. In total, Balochistan province has recorded 27 polio cases thus far in the current year.

Earlier on December 18, Pakistan reported the 64th polio case of the current year. According to the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) for Polio Eradication, the reported from from Jacobabad, Sindh.

Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. It invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours. The virus is transmitted by person-to-person spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (for example, contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine.

Envoys of five countries present credentials to President

APP

ISLAMABAD: Envoys of Romania, Somalia, Nepal, Japan and Bangladesh presented credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad today.

The President received credentials from Ambassador-designate of Romania Dan Stoiculescu, Ambassador-designate of Somalia Sheikh Nur

Mohamed Hassan, Ambassador-designate of Nepal Ms Rita Dhital, Ambassador-designate of Japan Akamatsu Shuichi

and High Commissioner-designate of Bangladesh Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan.

Welcoming the envoys, the President congratulated them on their appointments and expressed hope that they would play their role in further strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan in the areas of trade, economy, and culture.

Earlier, the envoys were accorded a guard of honor by a contingent of the Pakistan Armed Forces upon their arrival at the President House, Islamabad.

Governor congratulates Christian community on Christmas celebration

APP

Quetta: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandukhail on Tuesday congratulated the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas celebration.

He also directed to make strict security arrangements in all the districts of the province, especially in the provincial capital Quetta city to ensure the safe celebrations of the religious festival of Christmas of the Christian community.

The Governor ordered district administrators to strengthen security arrangements focusing on increased manning around all churches and areas with significant

Christian population.

He said that for the safety of people's life and property Police and security personnel should be enhanced in large numbers around all the above mentioned places.

The Governor said that the district administration and police officers should be alert at all times to resolve any potential problems immediately and closely monitor security preparations to ensure a safe environment for Christmas celebrations. For which he himself came to Balochistan and had successful meetings with the nobles here, as a result of which these states became a strong part of Pakistan according to his will and desire, he said.

Digital rights are at risk, youth must resist against govt: Bilawal

PPP chairman says youth must stand firm in the face of government's attempts to curb their rights

ONLINE

SUKKAR: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has stated that the digital space is under threat, and young people will have to resist the government's efforts to control high-speed internet and digital rights.

Speaking at an event at IBA Sukkur on Tuesday, Bilawal stressed that the youth must stand firm in the face of government attempts to curb their rights.

He expressed pride in the foundation of the university, noting that it was established by his late mother, Benazir Bhutto. "This seed has now grown into a tree with global recognition, an esteemed institution that attracts students from across Pakistan," he said.

Bilawal highlighted the government's tendency to centralise control, warning that authorities would attempt to regulate everything, including educational institutions and individual freedoms. "The youth must resist these efforts and ensure they have access to their rights," he urged.

"Every generation has fought for its rights. Democracy was not a gift; it was won through struggle," Bilawal added. He pointed out that young people have consistently been at the

forefront of movements, from the colonial era to modern times, triumphing over oppression.

He also referred to the eras of General Zia-ul-Haq and General Pervez Musharraf, noting that although these were difficult periods, the current digital space is especially under threat.

Bilawal stressed that technology plays a crucial role in strengthening Pakistan's economy. "To turn Pakistan into a \$1 trillion economy, we must free up our tax sector and ensure that every citizen has access to high-speed internet," he stated.

"The younger generation must lead the fight for digital rights, through peaceful and democratic means. We must legally secure the right to high-speed internet for all," he added. He further stressed that data privacy is a fundamental right.

He urged the students to send their suggestions and demands for a Digital Bill of Rights, vowing to join forces in pushing for change. "We will make these demands clear to the outdated politicians in Islamabad, who are clueless about social media, WhatsApp, streaming websites, and gaming," he concluded.

The construction of motorways and highways was less important compared to the promotion of information Technology and internet.

He said digital education is need of the hour. Bilawal told the students to focus on education which is a power in itself which no one can seal from the students.

He urged the students to give him suggestions related to the digital rights bill.

The PPP chairman lamented that there was no planning in the federal budget to deal with the climate change.

The PPP chairman said that the old man sitting in Islamabad didn't know the rights of youth.

"The motorways and roads are no more infrastructure. The real infrastructure is high-speed internet," said PPP chairman. He said that the youth would have to struggle to get their due rights.

The PPP chairman also congratulated the students on their big day and said that the IBA Sukkur was founded by his late mother Benazir Bhutto.

"No one can snatch the education from you. IBA has become the institution of international recognition," said Bilawal.

NYC established through merit, transparency: Mashhood

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, on Tuesday said that the National Youth Council (NYC) has been established through merit and transparency, comprising young experts from various sectors.

The youth would play a pivotal role in shaping policies and decisions related to youth matters and in highlighting the country's positive image, he said while addressing at a press conference.

He given credit to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and his team's relentless efforts and dedication for the recent positive developments in the economy.

Rana Mashhood noted, "The current government has successfully reached an agreement with the IMF, attracting interest from international investors, which reflects their trust in the government's policies."

"The industrial sector is flourishing, and the nation's genuine and positive image is

emerging strongly," he remarked.

"The Prime Minister's Youth Program has taken significant steps in the last eight months in areas such as education, entertainment, entrepreneurship, employment, and providing loans on easy terms," he informed.

He announced that the restructuring of the National Youth Council, which was chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as its patron-in-chief. The council now included 100 talented youth from across the country and 13 overseas Pakistani youth. Merit and transparency were strictly adhered to in the selection process.

He explained that applications were invited for categories such as IT, education, and climate change, resulting in thousands of applications from both within Pakistan and abroad.

"Through a comprehensive process, council members were selected," he told.

"Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has always focused on youth development, introducing initiatives like the laptop scheme, scholarships, and endowment funds," he proudly shared.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel in a meeting with Senator Dostain Khan Domki.

Former minister calls for restoration of peace in Kurram

INP

ISLAMABAD: Former Federal Minister, on Wednesday, called to restore peace in Kurram by acting against Fitna-al-Khawarij and ISIS, who were involved in the destruction of peace in the region. "Those who are involved in the massacre of people, attack on security personnel and creating hurdles in the way of peace action should be taken against them; we will also support the state institutes in this regard," the press release said.

While talking about the situation of current amenities in Kurram, he said, "The weather in Kurram is freezing, and the conditions of the people are getting worse due to a shortage of basic necessities, which will lead to a serious human tragedy if roads were not opened."

"The Chief Minister of Punjab, the Governor of Sindh and Edhi Foundation are being grateful for the relief activities," Turi acknowledged, saying this was a temporary solution; restoration of airspace was also not the permanent solution to the problem. We have held several meetings with Chief Minister KPK regarding the prevailing issues in Kurram, but nothing worked regarding the restoration of peace in the region, Turi said.

Adhering to Quaid's principles key to prosperity: NA Speaker

APP

ISLAMABAD: Paying tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his 148th birth anniversary, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said on Tuesday that following Jinnah's guiding principles—Faith, Unity, and Discipline—can lead the country toward progress and prosperity.

In his message on the birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he stated that Jinnah is amongst one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century. He further remarked that leaders like

Quaid-e-Azam are born in centuries.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's charismatic personality played a pivotal role in inspiring the Muslims of the subcontinent to strive for freedom and unity. His exceptional leadership qualities helped ignite a sense of nationhood among Muslims, who were previously fragmented and disenfranchised.

He described Quaid-e-Azam as a principled, dignified, talented, patient, pragmatic, and resilient leader who neither compromised on his principles, nor did he attempt to impose his decisions upon others.

He expressed these thoughts in his message on the occasion of Quaid-e-Azam's 148th birth anniversary, which is celebrated with national zeal and utmost respect on December 25 each year.

The Speaker further emphasized that there is an even greater need for establishing unity within our ranks to confront the challenges currently being faced by the country. All political forces to set aside their differences and strive for unity in the collective effort of nation-building. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also added that the best way to pay homage to Quaid-e-Azam.

Sheikh Rasheed does not see PTI-govt talks bearing fruits

INP

RAWALPINDI: Hailing the reports that talks between the government and the PTI were on the cards, former interior minister and Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed, however, said on Monday that nothing would come out of the exercise.

Speaking to the media outside an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Rawalpindi, he said negotiations between rival groups is not a bad idea at all. "Parties always come to the negotiating table after wars. However, he cautioned, if the government's dialogue with the PTI remained fruitless, the conflict between the two sides would intensify. Condemning the incident that took place on November 26, Rasheed said that whatever happened on November 26 could not be described in words. He said he had a detailed meeting with the former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan at Adiala Jail.

PPP Chief Pays Tribute to Quaid on His Birth Anniversary

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid rich tribute to the founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on his 148th birth anniversary.

In a statement issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP highlighted the unparalleled vision, leadership, and dedication of Quaid-e-Azam in achieving an independent homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

"Quaid-e-Azam's principles of Unity, Faith, and Discipline remain a beacon of guidance for every Pakistani. His dream of a democratic, inclusive, and prosperous Pakistan is a mission that we, as a nation, must strive to fulfill," he said.

Women in Balochistan face limited economic opportunities due to lack of jobs: Huma

Press release

QUETTA: We, the members/councilors of Women Informal District Assembly (WIDA) presenting a Press conference which has been developed after various consultative processes during the sessions of WIDA and with the consultation of various other social, political and community stakeholders under the project "Strengthening Women Participation in Democratic Process in Balochistan Pakistan" being implemented by Health and Rural Development (HARD) Balochistan with the support of the National Endowment For Democracy

(NED). Dear Journalists, we really appreciate your maximum cooperative support to the civil society organizations and the contribution in highlighting women and public issues all the time and thank you all for being here to cover the today's press conference. We, the members of Women Informal District Assembly demands the Government of Balochistan and other authorities. Limited Access to Education Barriers to Education: Many girls in Balochistan do not have access to education, particularly in rural and tribal areas. Factors like poverty, a lack of schools, and traditional gender norms discourage female education.



QUETTA: Vendors sitting around fire to warm themselves during chilled weather in Provincial capital.



QUETTA: A man viewing Christmas tree install at local hotel.



Brilliant Fakhar leads Markhors to Champions T20 Cup decider

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Dashing opener Fakhar Zaman hit a swashbuckling half-century while pacer Akif Javed grabbed three wickets to help UMT Markhors beat Nurpur Lions by 29 runs in the qualifier of the Champions T20 Cup here at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

The victory gives Markhors a place in the final against ABL Stallions on Wednesday.

Markhors were lifted to 180-6 in their 20 overs by a whirlwind 89 off 64 balls by Pakistan opener Fakhar who single-handedly fought after his team was sent into bat.

They restricted Lions to 151-9 in the allotted 20 overs.

Lions were never in the hunt after losing openers Imam-ul-Haq to a run-out for one and Omair Bin Yousuf (two). Hasan Nawaz, who scored a 22-ball 27 with two sixes and a boundary, added 62 for the third wicket with Mohammad Taha who scored a quick 28-ball 44 with the help of four sixes and a boundary. But the innings fell apart once they departed.



MARKHORS' opener Fakhar Zaman plays a lofted stroke during the Champions Twenty20 Cup qualifier against Lions at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Rizwan hails blend of youth and experience as Pakistan return to ODI excellence

SPORTS DESK

JOHANNESBURG: There were doubts over Pakistan's One-day International form when the team departed for Australia in the final days of October, given that they failed badly in their last assignment in the format at that point; missing out on the semi-finals in the 2023 World Cup.

Fast-forward to Sunday, the side has won three ODI series in a row, beating Australia, Zimbabwe and South Africa away from home.

Led by Mohammad Rizwan, who took the team's charge days before the Australia tour started, Pakistan now look like a well-oiled machine; their composition featuring a blend of experienced players and fresh faces.

The unit announced itself as favourites to win next year's ICC Champions Trophy at home, and so in style; completing a whitewash over the South Africans with a 36-run win in the third ODI on Sunday.

The match saw opener Saim Ayub hit a century and spinner Sufiyan Muqem putting the game to bed later on. The contest also featured crucial half-centuries by Rizwan himself and his predecessor Babar Azam.

"... if you look at the last three series, Allah has granted us victories, I believe the youngsters played a key role in this," Rizwan said in the post-match press conference. "We cannot say that only senior players performed; if you look at the Australia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa [series], both young and senior players are there, and the combination of the two has been effective."

It was Saim's second ton of the series and a continuation of his form that seemed to start complimenting his much talked-about natural talent when he scored a match-winning 82 against Australia.

The stylish southpaw would go on to hit his maiden ODI century against Zimbabwe and a 98 not out in the second T20 against South Africa before winning the ODI series for Pakistan.

In the second ODI, another domestic cricket high-achiever in Kamran Ghulam hit a 32-ball 63 to take the visitors to a match-winning score. Meanwhile, white-ball vice-captain Salman Ali Agha stood out with impactful performances both with the bat and the ball.

"As far as new players are concerned, there is a lot of potential in Pakistan, and there are many performers," said Rizwan.



JOHANNESBURG: Pakistan cricketers pose with the trophies after winning the third ODI against South Africa at the Wanderers.

ICC confirms schedule for Champions Trophy 2025, tournament to commence in Karachi

SPORTS DESK

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday announced the official fixtures for the Champions Trophy 2025, more than a month after the schedule was expected to be shared.

The tournament, scheduled to take place in Pakistan from February 19 to March 9, has become embroiled in a dispute, with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) refusing to send its team to Pakistan, citing political and security concerns, despite assurances from all member boards regarding the security arrangements and the tentative match schedule.

On December 19, following weeks of wrangling, the deadlock over the hosting of next year's Champions Trophy ended when the ICC announced that India will play their matches of the 50-over event at a neutral venue

instead of Pakistan, who will get a similar arrangement for tournaments to be held in India till 2027.

Earlier in the month, the two-way hybrid model proposed by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to address the issue of India's refusal to send its team to Pakistan for the tournament was accepted by BCCI.

Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Karachi will be the three venues to host tournament play, according to an ICC statement.

Each Pakistan venue will feature three group games apiece, with Lahore hosting the second semi-final.

Lahore will also host the final on 9 March, unless India qualify, in which case it will be played in Dubai.

On Sunday, the PCB announced the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the neutral venue for India's matches for the championship.

"Both the semi-finals and the final will have reserve days," the statement said.

The three group matches involving India, as well as the first semi-final, will be played in Dubai.

Pakistan take on New Zealand in the Group A tournament opener in Karachi on Feb 19. The Dubai leg begins the following day with India taking on Bangladesh.

Group B begins on Feb 21, with Afghanistan squaring up against the Proteas in Karachi.

A big weekend then kicks off with rivals England and Australia set to clash in Lahore on Saturday, Feb 22, with the much-anticipated Pakistan-India clash set for the day later. The eight sides in the Champions Trophy competing for the famous white winners' jackets are the teams that finished in the top eight positions on the points table of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

Group A of the tournament features current Champions Trophy holders and hosts Pakistan, along with India, New Zealand and Bangladesh, while Group B features Cricket World Cup 2023 champions Australia.

TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Awaran invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-242512615341

Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. Tender Fee Not required

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Manufactured Vehicles & Accessories (Total Item(s) Count: 3)	2%

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 40,000,000 in Previous 1 Years Turn over of at least 35,000,000 PKR in 1 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan JV is not permissible Submission of the required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as ineligible and non-responsive The Bidder must be an Authorized Dealer having Sales, Service and Spare Parts Outlet in Quetta for timely repair and maintenance of vehicles The bidders are required to comply the delivery timeline on their letter head FBR Returns Statement along with Bank Maintenance Certificate Min 3 Completed assignments in last 1 year along with Min 2 In-Hand Jobs of same/similar nature of vehicles. Bidder must have European Standard ISO 9001:2015 Registration Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 08 January, 2025 till 12:00 PM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 01:00 PM on EPPS System Address: irrigation office main awaran road awaran Phone no: 0333771751 Email: zafar.pandrani@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
IRRIGATION DIVISION AWARAN

PRQ No.2510/24-12-2024
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"EXTENSION OF DATE"

It is informed that tender for the Construction of Boundary Wall & Watch Towers for BC during CFY, 2024-25 was published on 05.12.2024 in Daily "Jang" Newspaper Quetta vide TSE No.TSE-24251259773 and PRQ No.2224/04-12-2024. The opening was due on 24.12.2024 at 12:00 pm but due to some technical issues the date is hereby extended and now the tender will be opened on 02.01.2025 at 12:00 pm, while other terms & condition will be remains the same. Address: (Office of Addl: IGP/Commandant Balochistan Constabulary Headquarters Baddar Line Gulistan Road Quetta) Phone No. 081-9201472/081-9203784 Fax No. 9201401 Email: balochistanconstabulary@gmail.com

SSP/Headquarter for Addl: IGP/Commandant Balochistan Constabulary Quetta.

PRQ No.2523/24-12-2024
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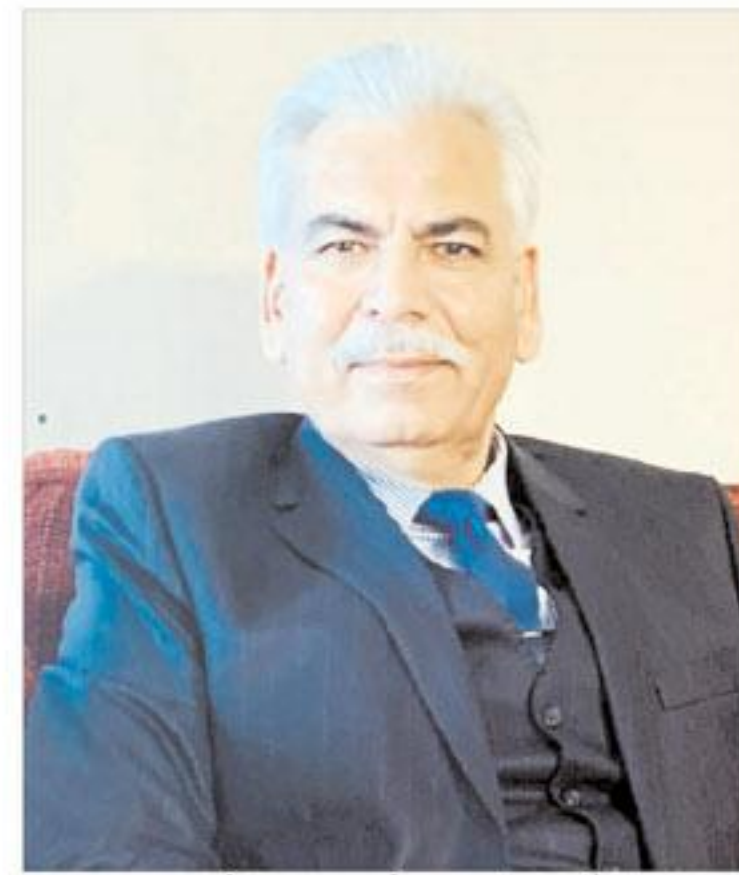
By Barrister Usman Ali, Ph.D.

Challenges and Lessons from Pakistan's Political Turmoil

Recently, Pakistan's military courts sentenced 25 individuals to imprisonment ranging from 2 to 10 years for their involvement in attacks on military installations. These incidents occurred during the riots of May 9, 2023, which erupted nationwide following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The riots included attacks on military installations, vandalism, and other acts of violence. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) termed these sentences a significant step toward justice and warned the public against taking the law into their own hands under the influence of political propaganda. The spokesperson further emphasized that justice would only be complete when the masterminds behind these incidents are also held accountable.

This development followed a Supreme Court decision granting conditional approval for military courts to adjudicate cases involving approximately 85 civilians. However, the use of military courts to prosecute civilians remains a sensitive and contentious issue in any democratic setup, raising concerns about human rights and democratic principles. In the current circumstances—where civil court judges are either influenced by political biases or fearful of delivering verdicts in high-profile cases despite clear evidence—the necessity of military courts is viewed as a reluctant or compelled compromise.

Imran Khan's political trajectory has introduced a new direction to Pakistan's political culture, but it has largely been marked by negative repercussions. Under his leadership, supporters were



encouraged to use derogatory language and aggression against political opponents, eroding the culture of tolerance and civility in politics. Both before and during his tenure, Khan's rhetoric targeted political adversaries and dissenting voices, while the military, judiciary, and media were aligned with his agenda. However, after his removal from office through a no-confidence motion, Khan and his party leaders frequently targeted these same institutions in their speeches and propaganda, fostering deep-seated animosity among their supporters toward the military, judiciary, Election Commission, and other national institutions.

The PTI's social media teams amplified this narrative, spreading false allegations and hateful content against institutions, political rivals, and journalists. Overseas supporters played a significant role in this campaign, organizing anti-military protests in various countries and engaging in inappropriate behavior against political opponents in public spaces, including the sacred site of Masjid al-Nabawi. This approach

deepened political polarization and harmed social cohesion, culminating in the violent events of May 9, 2023.

Political workers are the backbone of any party, but PTI workers were exploited for personal political gains. The May 9 riots are a stark example, where workers were deliberately incited to attack military installations. Consequently, many were arrested and sentenced by military courts, while the leadership distanced itself from them. This betrayal led to widespread disillusionment and distrust among party workers.

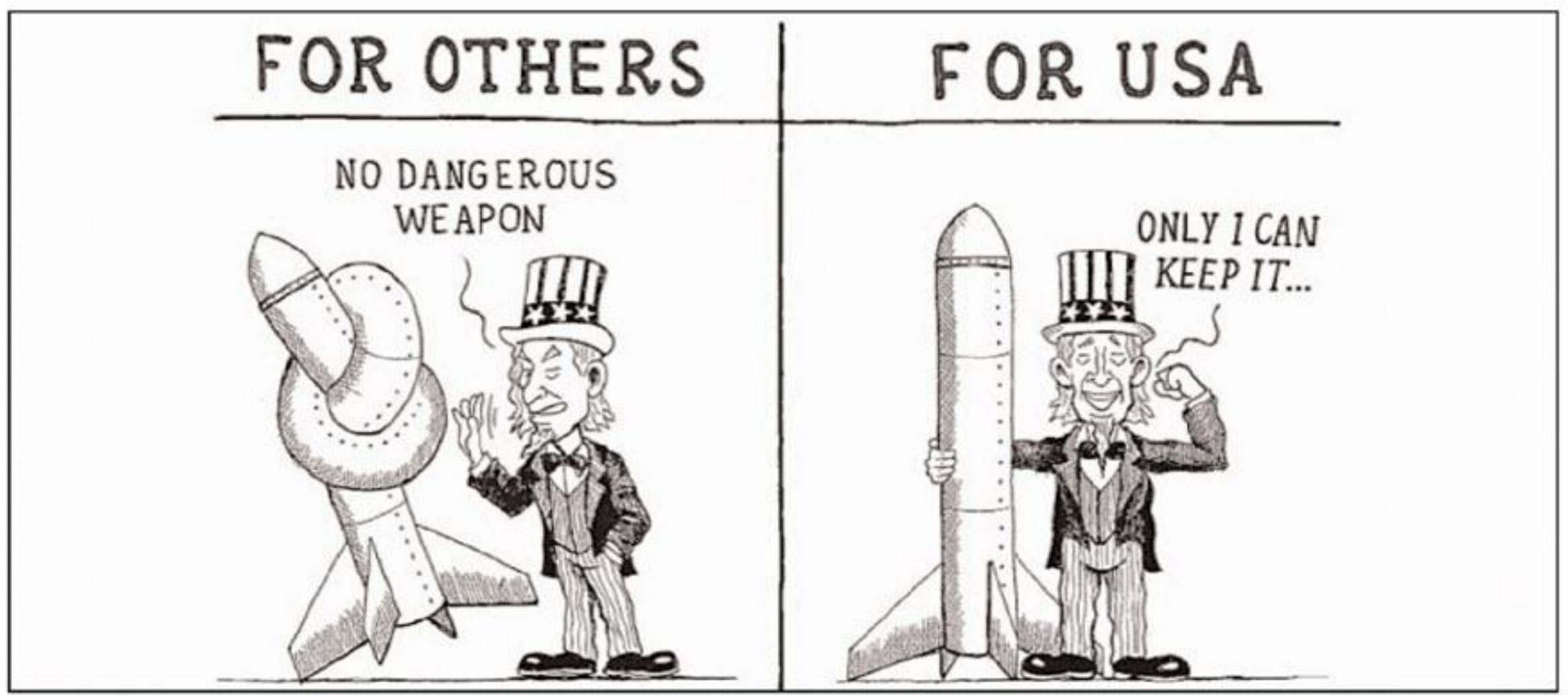
It is the responsibility of political leaders to educate and inspire their supporters toward constructive and positive political engagement. Instead of using workers for protests and unrest, leaders should involve them in social welfare activities. Promoting civility, patience, and tolerance in politics is essential for strengthening democracy and achieving political stability.

PTI workers must question their leadership about why they are repeatedly incited to participate in violent protests and abandoned when consequences arise. It is imperative for all political activists to act with reason and awareness, understanding the long-term harm caused by a politics of protest and division. Pakistan's current political situation serves as a lesson that exploiting workers for personal gain not only harms them but also undermines the country's democratic framework. Replacing hatred, discord, and mistrust in politics with unity, tolerance, and respect for national institutions is essential. These principles must be embraced by all parties, their workers, and leaders to ensure Pakistan becomes a strong, stable, and democratic state.

Under pressure

Whether it is through draconian laws, arbitrary restrictions of social media platforms, lack of access to information, financial pressure, boycotts and even failure to protect journalists from violence, Pakistan keeps throwing up new ways to stop the country's media from doing its job. This is one area where the country seemingly does not lack for innovation and new methods to make journalism difficult are discovered pretty much every year. The cumulative impact has been to make the jobs of those in the industry today harder and riskier than ever. Journalists have been left with little choice but to try and do their best in their current circumstances and raise a voice of protest against the status quo and hope for some change. This hope often goes unrewarded but it is not for a lack of trying. The latest to try is the Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (Aemend), which expressed deep concern over the state of media freedom in Pakistan on Thursday, saying that "every possible tactic" was being used to suppress dissent. These comments came as the media body's executive committee held a meeting to review the challenges faced by the media in the country. Aemend highlighted that the pressure on television channels is aimed at exerting maximum control over the media and silencing dissent and criticised the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) for acting as a rubber stamp, issuing illegal notices daily to bring television channels under pressure.

The media body also focused on how certain media organisations were being harmed financially via the halting of advertisements due to disapproval of editorial policies and the impact of the ongoing internet interruptions and restrictions. Aside from access to certain social media platforms being disrupted, depriving journalists of their voice and access to information, there is also the case of journalists being targeted under the guise of legal and moral restrictions on social media. Amidst all this pressure from the state, one would expect political parties to lend a helping hand. After all, without a free and independent media, how can there be free and independent politics? It also does not help that popular political leaders often level false accusations of the media being corrupt or biased and tend to use it as a punching bag. The popular perception in the country now is that traditional or legacy media is not to be trusted, despite most independent analyses showing that legacy media is generally accurate. The maligning and silencing of those who actually produce accurate news has a lot to do with the drift towards fake news and the tightening chokehold of conspiracies and malicious narratives over the political and social ecosystem. While media in the developed world worries about how to stay relevant in the age of social media, Pakistani media houses worry about how to get on social media. While those in power should be worried about the media holding them accountable, in Pakistan journalists worry about the next legal steps that will be taken against them. And things may only be getting worse, with the government reportedly seeking to establish two new authorities with extensive powers to regulate digital content, investigate breaches, and prosecute offenders via amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) 2016. This is a law that experts already say has been abused to target journalists and muzzle free speech and it might be about to get a major boost. Aside from journalists, all those who benefit from an environment where information is trustworthy and authority can actually be held to account will suffer.



By Hassan Baig

Unpacking IT challenges

The Information Technology (IT) sector holds immense potential to transform businesses and create new job markets for entrepreneurs. IT encompasses a broad range of areas, including software development, hardware manufacturing, the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and cloud computing. The future undoubtedly lies with IT. However, it is alarming that Pakistan's IT sector faces multiple challenges, ranging from structural reforms, IT infrastructure, policy formulation, and regulations to bottlenecks in providing high-speed internet and facilitating freelancers. Addressing these challenges is an urgent priority for the government of Pakistan. IT infrastructure is the foundation for IT exports and e-commerce. A few years ago, Pakistan ranked as the fourth-largest freelancer market globally, with the potential to become number one. Thousands of IT professionals and young entrepreneurs work as freelancers for international clients, earning valuable foreign exchange for the country. These individuals need encouragement and facilitation at all levels. High-speed internet is crucial for efficient IT operations and unlocking the full potential of freelancers. With adequate support, Pakistan's freelancers could generate up to \$100 billion in revenue within five to ten years. Unfortunately, internet speed often suffers due to cybercrime control mechanisms, commonly referred to as a 'firewall' in the security paradigm. Pakistan is still in the process of developing a robust IT infrastructure to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector. Establishing software technology zones (STZs) and software technology parks (STPs) is essential to boost IT and IT-

enabled services. The government must energise and activate entities like the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) and the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) to facilitate the IT services sector. The National Incubation Centre (NIC) also needs to play a proactive role in enhancing exports and fostering innovation as a hub for economic growth. Policymakers' inertia in adopting successful models like the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina (USA), Zhongguancun in Beijing (China), and Kista Science City in Stockholm (Sweden) is baffling. These hubs have produced tech giants like Skype and Spotify. Pakistan must emulate such initiatives to establish itself as an IT hub. The IT sector's growth is hindered by slow-speed internet, negatively impacting IT services and IT-enabled services exports. Affordable and reliable high-speed internet, state-of-the-art data centres, and uninterrupted power supply are critical to the sector's promotion. Expanding 5G coverage is also essential for advancing IT. AI is reshaping industrial infrastructure, and its efficiency hinges on high-speed internet. The government should prioritise restoring broadband facilities to help the sector thrive, contributing significantly to export earnings. Innovations in data analytics and blockchain are necessary to enhance exports, but these are currently lacking, which adversely affects the sector's overall performance. Pakistan is losing its share in the freelancers' market due to several factors, particularly slow internet speeds. Young IT professionals involved in IT services exports frequently report disruptions caused by unreliable internet connections, which affect their ability to meet deadlines

and fulfill orders. Freelancers in Pakistan handle various tasks, including web development, content creation, graphic design, and digital marketing. However, their productivity is hampered by these connectivity issues. While virtual private networks (VPNs) offer some relief, they are not robust or accessible enough to support business needs effectively. Moreover, the cumbersome process of obtaining VPN access adds another layer of difficulty, further impeding IT exports. Immediate action is required to address these challenges. IT and fintech startups also face hurdles due to overly complex regulatory frameworks, which undermine the confidence of aspiring entrepreneurs. Freelancers also struggle to open bank accounts for their export proceeds. While the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has made efforts to facilitate this process, many freelancers still resort to opening accounts abroad. This is primarily due to the stringent monitoring of remittances by the SBP, which stems from commitments to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Lengthy payment processing times and scrutiny by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) further exacerbate these challenges. These obstacles compel many young entrepreneurs to relocate abroad, seeking environments where IT businesses can thrive without bureaucratic hurdles. While there are multiple reasons for the brain drain, the lack of facilitation for IT entrepreneurship is a significant factor. Ensuring ease of doing business within Pakistan is critical to retaining talent and capitalising on the lucrative IT services market, which has the potential to generate billions of dollars.

DAILY MIRROR

SRBC not strategic, essential organization, reiterates Cabinet committee

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCSOEs) here on Tuesday reiterated its decision to exclude the Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company Limited (SRBC) from the list of strategic or essential organizations, paving the way for its potential privatization or public-private partnership.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the CCSOEs, according to press release issued by finance ministry.

Among others, the meeting was attended by the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal; Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada; Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser

Ahmed Sheikh; Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP); Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP); Federal Secretaries; and senior officers from the Finance Division.

According to the statement, the Committee deliberated on a summary presented by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) regarding the privatization

and exploration of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for the Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company Limited (SRBC).

During the discussion, the Cabinet Committee reiterated its earlier decision that organizations like SRBC will not be classified as strategic or essential. The MoIB will be required to abide by the Cabinet's earlier decision regarding non-essential and non-strategic SOEs.

In addition, the Committee reviewed the implementation status of decisions previously taken regarding various SOEs under the agendas of the Cabinet Division,

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Petroleum, Ministry of Railways, and Revenue Division.

A presentation was given highlighting the six cases currently under implementation across these ministries, with two cases pertaining to the Cabinet Division and one each for the others. The review emphasized ensuring timely execution of all decisions.

On the occasion, Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the need for a robust monitoring mechanism for SEZs and urged the implementation of reforms that can transform these zones into engines of economic growth.



Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses during the 11th Convocation ceremony of Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Sukkur

Bugti greets Christian community on occasion of Christmas

APP

Quetta: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti on Tuesday greeted to the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas.

In one of his congratulatory messages, the Chief Minister has said that this day, which is celebrated in connection with the birth anniversary of Jesus, is also auspicious for Muslims and Muslims also share equally in the joys of the Christian community.

He said that the Christian community is utilizing all its capabilities for the development and development of the country and nation, their role in this regard is commendable. The CM said that the government is ensuring the protection of the rights of all the minorities living in the province, including the Christian community.

"Quota for minorities in jobs is being implemented and special financial support package has been announced for them", he said.

He said that all other minorities living in the country and Balochistan, including the Christian community have full freedom to perform their religious rituals, saying that the example of which is not found in the whole world.

Reduced inflation rate to increase business activities: Aleem

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Board of Investment and Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan says reduced inflation rate will increase business activities and improve annual growth rate in the country.

He was talking to CEO of a Turkish Company Karim Yahi in Islamabad.

They discussed important issues related to investment including business promotion in Pakistan.

Abdul Aleem Khan said that foreign investors are being provided with maximum facilities in Pakistan.

He welcomed Turkish business companies to invest in Pakistan and assured the CEO of his all possible cooperation.

The CEO appreciated the business-friendly initiatives and facilities and assured that his company will definitely avail such opportunities.

PTI top leaders strongly condemn trials, decisions of military courts

INP

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Qaiser and Arif Alvi on Tuesday expressed his strong disapproval and condemned the trials and decisions of military courts, stating that they have raised concerns internationally including from the European Union and the United Kingdom.

Speaking to the media in Peshawar, Qaiser stated, "We are deeply disappointed with the trials and decisions of military courts. Our concerns are shared globally, with various international bodies raising similar alarms. The right to a fair trial must be upheld, and civilians should not be subjected to military court rulings."

Mr Qaiser emphasized that the PTI's ongoing struggle is centered on the supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law. He criticized the government for allegedly misusing its authority, which he claimed was becoming a part of the nation's troubling political history.

"We are not backing down from our stance on the supremacy of law. We want an independent judiciary, and we stand for civilian supremacy in this country,"

he asserted. The former speaker further expressed his dismay over recent developments, including the controversial decision by the Supreme Court and laws that restrict peaceful protests.

"The constitution guarantees the right to peaceful protest, yet the government has passed laws prohibiting gatherings in Islamabad. Isn't Islamabad a part of Pakistan?" he questioned.

Asad Qaiser also pointed to the growing dissatisfaction within the public regarding the government's handling of PTI leaders and workers. "The people see the actions against us as acts of vengeance," Qaiser said.

He added that, according to public sentiment, 99 percent of people believe that the cases against

PTI's leadership, including that of Imran Khan, were baseless and politically motivated.

In a clear call for accountability, PTI senior leader urged that a judicial inquiry be launched into the incidents of May 9 and November 26, which have been pivotal points of tension between the opposition and the government.

Imran Khan demands quick development, time frame of talks: Barrister Gohar

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: PTI chairman Barrister Gohar Khan has said that PTI founder Imran Khan has demanded time frame of talks between the government and PTI negotiation team.

Talking to media outside Adiala Jail, Barrister Gohar said Imran Khan was briefed about the start of the negotiation between the government and PTI teams. Gohar said Imran Khan has demanded quick development in talks as PTI has genuine demands.

Gohar said PTI founder hoped that within a time frame positives development will come out of the talks. Barrister Gohar said he has not discussed any international issue with Imran Khan. He said Imran Khan has directed party leaders that PTI chairman, secretary and Information Secretary were authorized to speak about international affairs.

Barrister Gohar said no talks were made regarding the start of civil disobedience movement.

He said 4 PTI leaders could not be become part of yesterday's negotiation process with the government and PTI had informed Speaker Ayaz Sadiq about their non presence in advance. He said PTI charter of demand will be put before the government during the next round. He said efforts were being made to arrange PTI negotiation team's meeting with PTI founder Imran Khan. Barrister Gohar said PTI was optimistic about the negotiation process. He said PTI hopes all issues should resolve in the talks.

He claimed all cases against PTI founder are political, bail has been granted in all of them. Barrister Gohar said there was only one reference, which has to be decided next month. Gohar hoped that, "if there is a fair trial, PTI leaders will also be acquitted and get bail in all cases".

PTI chairman said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa CM Ali Amin Gandapur could not become part of the negotiation process due to his participation in KP Apex Committee.

12 killed in blast at Turkey explosives plant

MONITORING DESK

ISTANBUL: A powerful blast ripped through an explosives plant in northwestern Turkey on Tuesday killing 12 people and injuring five others, officials said.

Footage showed shards of glass and metal scattered outside the plant, where ambulances stood by.

"According to initial reports, 12 employees died and four were taken to hospital with injuries as a result of the explosion" in the Karesi district of Balikesir province, local governor Ismail Ustaoglu said.

"I wish God's mercy upon our deceased citizens and a speedy recovery to our wounded," he added.

Officials later revised the number of the injured as five and added they were not in a serious condition.

There were no staff members left inside the factory and the blaze was put out, they added.

The blast took place at 8:25 am (0525 GMT) at a section of the plant which local officials said collapsed under the force of the explosion.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said the cause of the blast at the factory, which is located away from residential areas, was not immediately known.

"We are trying to find out what caused it," he said.

Gillani extends Christmas greetings to Christian community

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani extended heartfelt Christmas greetings to the Christian community in Pakistan and across the globe on Tuesday.

In his message, Gillani described Christmas as a sacred occasion for Christians and highlighted the importance of fostering interfaith harmony. "Respecting each other's beliefs is a fundamental responsibility, and only through peaceful coexistence can we achieve new milestones of progress," he added.

The Chairman underscored Pakistan's commitment to interfaith and interreligious harmony, affirming that minorities in the country enjoy full religious freedom.

He highlighted his tenure as Prime Minister, during which he established a dedicated Ministry for Minority Affairs and ensured minority representation in the federal cabinet to amplify their voices in decision-making processes.

Gillani urged collective efforts for individual and societal well-being, aiming to create a world characterized by peace and harmony.

Air Chief vows to enhance ties b/w Pakistan, Azerbaijan

APP

ISLAMABAD: A high level defence delegation led by Deputy Minister of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan-Director General Mr. Agil Gurbanov, alongwith Lieutenant General Namig Islamzade, Deputy Minister of Defence-Commander of the Azerbaijan Air Force called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad.

During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared the recent achievements of Pakistan Air Force,

symbolizing his vision of operational excellence in the realm of contemporary warfare domains.

The Air Chief reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral ties between the armed forces and particularly cooperation with Pakistan Air Force in operational and training domains.

He also highlighted the importance of training cooperation; wherein, a large contingent of Azeri air and ground crew is currently undergoing training at an operational PAF base.

He noted that the training program is on schedule, with over 50% of the training objectives successfully achieved.

He further emphasized that the initiative is expected to culminate within one-month timeframe, reflecting the commitment of PAF to enhance the operational

capabilities of Azerbaijan Air Force. The visiting dignitaries lauded the historic & exemplary professionalism demonstrated by the personnel of Pakistan

Air Force and praised PAF's notable progress in developing a thriving domestic capability in the aviation industry in a short timeframe.

The dignitaries expressed satisfaction on the training imparted to 70 aircrew & technicians getting trained in PAF and expressed their desire for enhanced Air Force to Air Force collaboration between the two sides.

Emphasizing on the need to adapting to the evolving landscape of modern warfare, the Azerbaijan military leadership also proposed the establishment of a more comprehensive training regimen focusing on niche and disruptive technologies, as well as cyber and electronic warfare capabilities.

Later the delegation visited PAF Cyber Command, established at Air Headquarters, where it was briefed about the operational capabilities and ongoing projects of PAF's modernization drive.

The visit of this high level defence delegation from Azerbaijan to Air Headquarters Islamabad signifies a resolute commitment of both countries to reinforce their military partnership, fostering collaboration and promoting robust relations.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mobsin Naqvi met with MQM Chairman and Federal Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

Ahsan directs provision of basic infrastructure in all SEZs

APP

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has directed the authorities concerned to ensure the provision of basic infrastructure in all Special Economic Zones in the country.

He was chairing a high-level meeting in Islamabad today to review progress of Special Economic Zones under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

The Minister emphasized prioritizing the operationalization of existing Special Economic Zones over establishing new ones.

He called for devising a robust monitoring mechanism for these zones and stressed implementation of reforms to transform them into engines of economic growth.

He also directed for ensuring investor facilitation to attract more investment.

Ahsan Iqbal identified political stability, continuity of policies, and reforms as the four key elements for sustainable development.

He directed the relevant officials to facilitate Chinese solar companies in initiating solar energy projects in Gilgit-Balistan to address energy challenges of the region.

During the meeting, officials of Special Investment Facilitation Council provided a

comprehensive briefing on the latest updates regarding the infrastructure and operational status of SEZs across the country.

Govt to transform agriculture sector in its full spirit: Rana Tanveer

INP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain said Government is committed to transform agriculture sector in its true potential and we started collaboration with partners in this regard. He stated these remarks at FPCCI Capital office to address the seminar "Transforming Pakistan's Agriculture: Sustainable Growth Amid Challenges and the Role of Precision Agriculture Technologies".

Minister Rana Tanveer said the agriculture sector has shown its potential in the financial year 2023-24. As a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, the sector grew by 6.25 percent, contributing to 2.38 percent in overall economic growth rate. Despite sluggish growth in other economic sectors, improved crop production, particularly in wheat, rice, and cotton, along with other agricultural sub-sector, has boosted exports and increased foreign currency reserves for the country.

FPCCI Chairman Standing on Agriculture, Ahmad Jawad said agriculture sector required institutional support and without this the sustainability is questionable. The question arises: how sustainable is this trend amid challenges such as shrinking arable land, climate

change, water scarcity, soil degradation, desertification, and socio-economic shifts like rising rural-to-urban migration? Another critical question is how embracing innovative precision farming technologies can further enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability, addressing technological backwardness and institutional and structural inefficiencies to position the sector at the forefront of economic and social development in Pakistan.

This is critical to note that poverty in Pakistan has risen to 40.1 percent, pushing an additional seven million people below the poverty line, exacerbating issues vital to food security, unemployment, and rural poverty; Jawad added.

Vice President FPCCI, Tariq Jadoon said traditional farming methods prevalent in Pakistan are unsustainable and inefficient,

leading to increased costs and reduced profitability. How can the agricultural sector in Pakistan be transformed by bringing together farmers, agri-service providers, and the agri-industry to lead essential technological changes required for proper crop scheduling and access to new technologies? These changes can improve agricultural practices and reduce environmental footprints, such as those from fertilizers and pesticide applications.



QUETTA: Woman takes interest in stall during ongoing Grand Handi Craft exhibition at local hotel.