

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk

Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd XXVII No. 159, Shaban 08, 1447 AH Wednesday January 28, 2026 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

Govt. prioritizing efforts to utilize new technologies for national development: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said that the government was working on a priority basis to leverage new technologies for the national and economic development.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a high-level delegation of leading experts in artificial intelligence that called on him during his recent private visit to London, United Kingdom last week, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release on Tuesday.

The delegation included senior leaders from global institutions and organizations such as BlackRock, the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, Deloitte, and some of the world's

leading AI and technology companies. Chairman of the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA), Bilal bin Saqib, was also present in the meeting.

During the meeting, the prime minister underlined the importance of global expertise; particularly the involvement of overseas Pakistanis, to accelerate Pakistan's digital and economic transformation.

He stressed that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence should be aligned with national priorities, institutional capacities, and inclusive development goals.

The prime minister further said the government was actively working on partnerships with the private sector to improve the

delivery of public services.

Members of the delegation discussed the practical application of artificial intelligence to address Pakistan's key challenges.

During the meeting, Minister of State Bilal bin Saqib said that artificial intelligence was no longer a future concept for Pakistan but a golden opportunity of the present and the government was taking concrete steps in this regard.

The meeting between the prime minister and the delegation reflected Pakistan's broader strategy to promote digital transformation, foster innovation, and pursue a long-term vision for technology-driven public policy by engaging institutional partners with an international outlook, the press release added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif along with Information Minister Attaullah Tarar and Prime Minister's Coordinator for Information Ikhtiar Wali Khan addressing a news conference.

CM Bugti pushes women to the frontline of reform, redefines policing in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has declared that women's empowerment lies at the heart of the provincial government's reform strategy, stressing that equal opportunities for women are a core policy commitment rather than a symbolic promise.

Addressing the deployment of female police officers to key posts across the districts of the Naseerabad Range, the Chief Minister said that meaningful and sustainable development in Balochistan cannot be achieved without the full and active involvement of women in all spheres of life. He said the government is pursuing concrete and long-term initiatives to expand women's access to education, employment and social

progress.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti stated that, as part of broader efforts to empower women and transform the police into a more citizen-friendly institution, female police personnel have been assigned important and responsible roles in police stations throughout the Naseerabad Range. He said women officers are now serving as complaint officers, deputy record officers, computer operators and in other administrative and decision-making capacities.

He noted that following these postings, female officers have started playing a proactive role in addressing issues faced by women and the wider community, including cases of domestic violence, leading to faster response and a noticeable rise in public confidence in the police

system.

The Chief Minister praised the Inspector General of Police Balochistan and the Deputy Inspector General of the Naseerabad Range for initiating the move, saying that fully utilizing the capabilities of female officers would result in improved policing standards, more effective service delivery and enhanced public facilitation. He said the ongoing reforms are designed to create a secure, respectful and trust-based environment in police stations for women and all complainants, allowing citizens to report grievances without fear or hesitation.

Reaffirming the government's resolve, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that providing equal opportunities for women across every sector remains a central element of the govt's wider vision.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar talking to Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong.

Mustafa Kamal again demands federal takeover of Karachi

KARACHI (INP): MQM-Pakistan leader and Federal Minister for Health, Mustafa Kamal, has once again demanded that Karachi be immediately placed under federal control.

While speaking to the media, Mustafa Kamal said that an important city like Karachi should not remain under the control of what he termed an incompetent provincial government. He stressed that Karachi should be made part of the federation without delay, adding that the federal government can take control of the city through a notification and should do so under Article 148 of the Constitution.

Referring to the Gul Plaza incident, he said that people were martyred due to negligence. "We called the negligence and poor performance at Gul Plaza an act of oppression. If this

is the reaction to calling cruelty by its name, then I say it again: Karachi must be freed from their grip," he remarked, adding that the Sindh government's actions had validated MQM's stance. Responding to a question about the withdrawal of security from MQM-Pakistan leaders, Mustafa Kamal said that his own security had also been withdrawn. "It makes no difference to us whether we have security or not. They think they can scare us by withdrawing security. They have no right to rule Karachi, and the Sindh government cannot silence our voice through such actions," he said. The federal minister further stated that nationalist groups chanting slogans about breaking Pakistan while standing on highways are being provided security by the Sindh government.

DPM stresses sustained high level engagement with China

ISLAMABAD (INP): Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has underscored the importance of sustaining momentum of high-level exchanges and further strengthening Pak-China bilateral cooperation.

He was talking to Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong in Islamabad today.

Both sides discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest and exchanged views on evolving regional and international developments.

Seven dead, several hurt in Chaghi accident

CHAGAI (APP): At least seven people were killed while four others were injured in a fatal road accident that occurred in Chaghi, Balochistan, in the wee hours of Tuesday.

According to rescue authorities, the accident occurred near the Yak Mach area on the Pak-Iran RCD Road, private news channels reported. The incident claimed the lives of seven people, including women and children and left several others critically wounded.

Police and rescue teams promptly reached the scene and transferred the deceased and injured to a local hospital.



LONDON: A delegation of experts of Artificial Intelligence met with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, last week.

No military operation being carried out in Tirah Valley: Asif

KP govt spokesperson harps on baseless narrative regarding Khyber district migration: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday categorically stated that no military operation was being carried out in Tirah Valley, terming the migration of people a routine and seasonal process due to harsh weather and snowfall.

Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Prime Minister's Coordinator for Information Ikhtiar Wali Khan, the defence minister said, "There has been no operation in Tirah Valley for many years. These are all assumptions."

He said that it was strategically decided that intelligence-based operations (IBOs) were more effective than large-scale operations, adding that the armed forces had stopped such operations years ago in favour of IBOs.

Khawaja Asif said that

IBOs would continue to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country's soil. He said that every year around 60 to 65 percent of the population migrates to other areas due to severe weather conditions and heavy snowfall, a practice that has continued for decades and even over the past century.

The minister clarified that the armed forces deployed in the area had no role in the displacement. "This is an arrangement between the local jirga and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government," he said.

He said that the KP government had approved a relief package of Rs4 billion for the people of Tirah Valley who migrate seasonally.

Coming down hard on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said the provincial government was trying to pass its failure to others, including

the army.

He said there was a complete absence of civilian law enforcement agencies and public service institutions in Tirah, adding that the area lacked police stations, schools and hospitals.

The minister said it had been agreed between the provincial government and the local jirga that hospitals, police stations and girls' schools would be established in Tirah Valley.

Asif said the jirga in Tirah held meetings on December 11, 21 and 31 last year on the matter. "This jirga was constituted many years ago and all 24 of its members are on board. Now, in the presence of the jirga and the notification issued by the KP government, where does the military come into this?" he questioned.

He said hemp was being cultivated over more

Continued on page 2



GWADAR: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal inaugurates new block of GDA Pak-China Friendship Hospital. Provincial Minister for Health Bakht Muhammad Kakar and DG GDA Moinur Rehman are also present.

Pak-China friendship hospital emerges as healthcare hub for Mekran: Ahsan

Inaugurates new diagnostic block at GDA Pak-China Friendship Hospital

GWADAR (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal visited the GDA Pak-China Friendship Hospital in Gwadar, which is being operated by the Indus Hospital and Health Network, and inaugurated the hospital's newly constructed Diagnostic Block.

During the visit, Head of Campus Dr Affan Faizgada briefed the federal

minister on the hospital's operations and services.

He informed that the hospital is currently providing free, modern healthcare facilities to approximately 1,100 to 1,200 patients daily, including free medicines, laboratory tests, radiology services, and complimentary meals for admitted patients.

He further shared that plans are under consider-

ation for future expansion of the hospital, including the establishment of a medical college, nursing college, and multiple specialty departments to further strengthen healthcare services in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Iqbal emphasized that the vision of the China-Pakistan Economic

Continued on page 2

FCCP upholds super tax, strikes down parts of high court rulings

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan has announced its verdict in multiple cases related to the Super Tax and the Income Tax Ordinance, rejecting all objections regarding the maintainability of the petitions and affirming that Parliament holds full constitutional authority to impose taxes on income.

The court ruled that Section 4(b) of the Income Tax Ordinance will remain in force from Tax Year 2015 onward, while High Court

decisions concerning Section 4(c) have been partially set aside. The ruling is expected to generate a financial benefit of more than Rs300 billion for the federal government.

A bench headed by the Chief Justice dismissed all petitions filed in connection with the Super Tax imposed in 2015 and 2022. The court reiterated that taxation, including the determination of tax rates, slabs, and income thresholds, falls exclusively

Continued on page 2

Civil servants not bound to obey illegal orders: SC

ISLAMABAD (INP): Supreme Court Justice Hashim Kakar remarked on Tuesday in the OGDCL recruitment case that if the prime minister issues illegal orders, civil servants are not bound to comply with them.

A three-member bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Hashim Kakar, heard the case regarding illegal recruitments in OGDCL (Oil and Gas Development Corporation

Continued on page 2

President reaffirms commitment to tolerance, coexistence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Tuesday, called on President Asif Ali Zardari in Abu Dhabi.

The meeting underscored the importance of promoting dialogue, inclusivity, and peaceful coexistence.

President Zardari paid tribute to the visionary leadership of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and lauded the UAE's national vision of tolerance and human fraternity, noting that it has positioned the country as a leading global example of harmony among diverse communities.

First Lady Bibi Aseefa

Bhutto Zardari, MNA; Chairman People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Syed Mohsin Naqvi and Pakistan's Ambassador to the UAE were also present, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

The president appreciated the UAE's success in fostering unity and mutual respect among over 200 nationalities as a compelling model of social cohesion.

He also noted that these values strongly resonated with Pakistan's own commitment to interfaith harmony, social inclusion and respect for cultural and religious diversity, as enshrined in its constitution and societal traditions.



ABU DHABI: President Asif Ali Zardari shaking hands with H.E. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence.

Judicial reforms focus on citizen-centric and sustainable justice delivery, CJP Afridi

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief Justice of Pakistan on Tuesday engaged delegations from multiple bar associations as part of a broader stakeholder outreach initiative aimed at advancing judicial reforms and improving access to justice.

Delegations from the Rawalpindi High Court Bar Association, Tehsil Bar Association Kabal (Swat), and Mohmand Bar Association, Mohmand District, met the Chief Justice at the Supreme Court to discuss reform priorities and professional capacity-building.

Representatives of the Rawalpindi High Court Bar Association briefed the Chief Justice on their welfare initiatives, including the establishment of a welfare fund to support medical treatment and educational assistance for families of deceased lawyers. The

Chief Justice appreciated the initiative and commended the Bar's commitment to transparency and social responsibility.

Meanwhile, delegations from Kabal and Mohmand highlighted the need for enhanced facilities, including e-libraries, solar-powered infrastructure, and women facilitation centers, to strengthen legal services in their respective regions. In response, the Chief Justice informed the delegations about ongoing Continuing Legal Education programs being conducted through the Federal Judicial Academy. He also announced a special one-week training program for lawyers from newly merged districts to strengthen their legal capacity. The Chief Justice further shared updates on ongoing judicial reforms.

Six militants eliminated in Pishin operation, heavy weapons recovered

Independent Report
QUETTA: A targeted security operation in Pishin has successfully neutralized six

and a large cache of ammunition and explosives from the terrorists' hideout. DG CTD confirmed



terrorists, including the notorious Sanaullah, officials announced at a joint press briefing. The deceased were reportedly involved in serious offenses such as murder, attempted murder, and kidnapping for ransom.

Director General CTD Balochistan, Aitezaz Ahmed Goraya, stated that the operation was based on verified intelligence about the presence of armed militants in the area. Ten CTD personnel sustained minor injuries during the engagement but are now in stable condition. Authorities recovered a rocket launcher, multiple Kalashnikov rifles,

that the slain militants had connections with banned organizations, with efforts ongoing to apprehend other members of the group. "Wherever necessary, the CTD will take decisive action," he affirmed. Shahid Rind, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Balochistan, emphasized at the press conference: "Those who resort to violence will be confronted with the same force."

The operation underscores the provincial government's sustained commitment to combating terrorism and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan being briefed about measures taken regarding Green Pakistan Initiative during a meeting.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BUILDINGS
CWPP&H DEPARTMENT DISTRICT
ZHOB

PRQ No.3494/27-01-2026

www.dprgob.pk @dpr_gob dprgob @dpr.balochistan

NP slams state action against protesters, accuses govt of crushing democratic dissent

Independent Report
QUETTA: The National Party has strongly denounced the alleged use of force, shelling and arrests against political workers, officials and employees during joint protest rallies organized by the All Parties and Grand Alliance, terming the actions a deliberate move to silence democratic expression.

In a statement issued on Monday, the party's central spokesperson said the so-called "Form-47 government" is attempting to hide its political shortcomings by unleashing co-

ercive measures against peaceful demonstrators. He described the shelling of protesters and what he called arbitrary detentions as a stark reflection of a fascist approach adopted by the current administration. The spokesperson said that the demands raised by the Grand Alliance are legitimate and firmly rooted in constitutional rights. However, instead of opting for serious negotiations and constructive engagement, the government has chosen repression and violence, a course he said cannot be justified under any circumstances.

Ziarat DC orders zero tolerance for absent doctors after midnight hospital check

Independent Report
ZIARAT: Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Abdul Quddus Achakzai has issued a stern warning of strict disciplinary action against doctors and staff found absent or negligent at Basic Health Units (BHUs) in rural areas, announcing that surprise inspections will be carried out on a regular basis to improve healthcare delivery. The warning came during a late-night, unannounced inspection of DHQ Hospital Ziarat, where the deputy

commissioner reviewed the attendance of doctors and paramedical staff, inspected hospital wards, and assessed the availability of medicines and essential medical facilities. Assistant Commissioner Ziarat Sajjadur-Rehman accompanied him during the visit. Speaking on the occasion, Abdul Quddus Achakzai said ensuring the continuous and effective functioning of health facilities is a top priority of the district administration.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzaib Khan Kakar presides over the meeting to review preparation Concept Papers.

Dr Rubaba hails appointment of female police officers

Female officers take command roles in Naseerabad range, marking breakthrough for women in policing

Independent Report
QUETTA: Adviser to Chief Minister of Balochistan for the Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi on Tuesday welcomed the induction of female police officers into key assignments across all districts of the Naseerabad Range, terming it a landmark development in the province's policing history. In a formal statement, she voiced strong appreciation for the decision to place women in crucial positions including Complaint Officers, Deputy Moharrirs and Computer Operators, saying the move demonstrated

the provincial government's full confidence in the competence, integrity and professionalism of women officers. Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said the presence of women in these roles would significantly improve the atmosphere at police stations, making them safer, more respectful and more supportive for women who approach law enforcement with complaints. She observed that female police personnel are particularly well placed to handle delicate matters such as domestic violence cases and local disputes, as

they can engage with complainants with heightened sensitivity, understanding and efficiency. Highlighting the broader significance of the initiative, she said it clearly showed that the daughters of Balochistan are fully capable of performing demanding public duties, working alongside male colleagues in uniform to uphold law and order and serve the community. The Adviser praised Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti for his forward-looking approach, describing the appointments as a concrete and

meaningful step toward women's empowerment in the province. She added that ensuring equal opportunities for women is central to the government's reform agenda, noting that such measures would not only strengthen the police force but also enhance public confidence in law enforcement institutions. Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi also acknowledged the role of the IG Police Balochistan and DIG Naseerabad, commending their efforts in translating this progressive vision into action.

DC Musakhel pledges full execution of govt development agenda

Independent Report
MUSAKHEL: Deputy Commissioner Musakhel Abdul Razaq Khajjak has reaffirmed the Balochistan government's commitment to fully implementing its development vision, emphasizing that public welfare and ongoing projects will remain uncompromised.

The assurance came during a meeting with District Chairman Alam Khan Musakhel, attended by Assistant Commissioner Najeerullah Kakar. The District Chairman highlighted the need for strategic planning to enhance the quality of development ini-

tiatives, strict oversight of all projects, and improvements in health, sanitation, and access to safe drinking water.

He urged all departmental district officers to maintain regular attendance to ensure citizens can access justice and government services directly, in line with the provincial development agenda.

Deputy Commissioner Khajjak assured full cooperation in executing these directives. The District Chairman expressed gratitude for the DC's efforts and extended best wishes for continued progress across the district.



CHAMAN: AC Chaman Imtiaz Ali Baloch reviews road clearance operation on both sides of Kozak Top.

Naseerabad divisional circuit house renovation completed

Independent Report
NASEERABAD: The renovation of the Divisional Headquarters Circuit House in Dera Murad Jamali has been successfully completed under the special supervision of Commissioner Naseerabad Division, Salahuddin Noorzai. The refurbishment included complete interior upgrades of rooms, as well as renovation and beautification of the lawn and other residential areas. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Deputy Commissioners Khalid Khan (Jaffarabad) and Muhammad Ramadan

Palal (Usta Mohammad), SSP Asad Nasir, Assistant Commissioner Bahadur Khan Khosa, Executive Engineer B&R Abdul Rehman Kakar, Assistant Director Local Government Ahmed Nawaz Jattak, and other senior officials.

Commissioner Noorzai described the renovation as a critical priority and pledged continued efforts to further improve the facility, ensuring high-quality services for visitors. He emphasized that the Circuit House is an important government property and that all available resources were utilized to upgrade it.



NASIRABAD: Commissioner Nasirabad Salah-ud-Din Noorzai and other officers inaugurate construction work of Circuit House.

Police SIs challenge direct promotions of levies officers in BHC

Independent Report
QUETTA: Sub-Inspectors of Balochistan Police have filed a constitutional petition in the Balochistan High Court contesting the provincial government's decision to directly promote Levies personnel to the rank of Police Inspector. While the petitioners expressed support for the integration of Levies officers into the police, they strongly objected to the bypassing of seniority, arguing that the move hampers their career progression and contravenes established promotion rules. Citing their educational qualifications—including Master's and Bachelor's degrees—and extensive field experience in investigations, operations, and administrative duties, the petitioners highlighted that despite their compe-

tence, promotions have been delayed. Many officers, even after nearly 18 years of service, have advanced only once—from Assistant Sub-Inspector to Sub-Inspector—whereas regulations stipulate promotion to DSP within 15 years. The petition also raised concerns that police officers' career advancement has been systematically neglected compared to other government departments. The direct elevation of Levies officers to Inspector and DSP ranks has generated frustration, leaving many officers with limited prospects of reaching Superintendent of Police before retirement. The officers have requested the court to annul the recent promotions, implement a permanent solution to the long-standing promotion issues.

Police reaffirm commitment to combating crime following attack on constable

Independent Report
LORALAI: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Loralai Range, Junaid Ahmed Sheikh, has reiterated that police operations against criminal elements will continue without interruption, asserting that law enforcement will not bow to pressure or threats. The DIG personally visited Constable Dilwar Khan at his home after the officer was injured in a shooting by unidentified armed men last night in Pathankot. During the visit, DIG Sheikh met with the constable and his family, commended their courage, and assured them of immediate and top-quality medical care. Accompanying the DIG were SSP Loralai Malik Muhammad Asghar Usman, SDPO Karim Mandokhail.

Quetta Commissioner demands data-driven planning as depts push to finalize development proposals

Independent Report
QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzeb Khan Kakar on Tuesday presided over a high-level meeting of concerned departments to review progress on the formulation of concept papers for development initiatives across the division. The session focused on ensuring that concept papers for both ongoing and proposed projects are comprehensive, practical and detailed, enabling them to effectively guide future planning and decision-making. Director Implementa-

tion Quetta Division Zahoor Ahmed, along with officers from various departments, participated in the meeting and briefed the forum on their respective proposals. Addressing the participants, Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzeb Khan Kakar instructed all departments to base their proposals on credible data, on-ground realities and genuine public requirements, stressing that well-prepared concept papers are essential tools for sound policymaking. He noted that strong and well-researched con-

cept papers facilitate swift approval of projects while also guaranteeing transparent and efficient use of public resources. Emphasizing inter-departmental coordination, the Commissioner urged all departments to work closely with one another and ensure that the required concept papers are completed and submitted within the given timeframe. During the meeting, several departments presented their proposals, while challenges faced during preparation and possible remedial measures were discussed in detail.



MUSAKHAIL: Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Khajjak presides over the meeting of District Health Committee.

Commissioner Kalat Division Launches tree plantation drive

Independent Report
KHUZDAR: Dr. Tufail Baloch, Commissioner of Kalat Division, has called for a large-scale and strategically planned tree plantation campaign in Khuzdar, emphasizing that saplings should be distributed according to area size and population density to maximize impact. During a visit to the Forest Department Nursery in Suni, Khuzdar, Dr. Baloch, accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Sasoli, inspected the nursery facilities and received a detailed briefing from District Forest Officer Owais Akbar

Zehri regarding the types, quantities, and maintenance of saplings. The Commissioner highlighted the critical role of trees in combating environmental pollution, mitigating global warming, regulating local temperatures, improving rainfall patterns, and reducing the severity of natural disasters. He stressed the need to increase sapling numbers to achieve maximum coverage. Dr. Baloch urged the Forest Department to engage the public, including schools, government offices, and local communities, ensuring the plantation drive is executed effectively.

Excise Dept announces key transfers of grade-19 officers

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Excise and Taxation Department of the Government of Balochistan has issued a notification detailing the transfer and posting of newly promoted Grade-19 officers awaiting assignment. As per the official orders, Niaz Ahmed (BPS-19) has been transferred and appointed as Divisional Director, Excise and Taxation, Rakhshan Division, while Abdul Habib (BPS-19) will continue his responsibilities as Divisional Director, Excise and Taxation, Naseerabad Division.



QUETTA: A view of rainy weather in provincial capital.

PTI decries arrest of Jahangir as open assault on democracy and constitutional rights

Independent Report
QUETTA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Balochistan Senior Provincial Vice President and noted tribal figure Syed Sadiq Agha has sharply criticized the arrest of the party's Provincial General Secretary Jahangir Rind along with other protesting employees, terming it a clear case of political victimization and a serious breach of fundamental human and political rights enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan. In a statement issued here, Syed Sadiq Agha said that peaceful protest is a constitutionally protected

right of every citizen, and its suppression through force casts grave doubts on the credibility of the democratic system. He maintained that Jahangir Rind was peacefully expressing solidarity with employees over their lawful and genuine demands, adding that speaking out on public issues is not a crime but a moral and political obligation of responsible leadership. He said the detention of an elected political office-bearer for highlighting public concerns exposes the government's frustration and vindictive politics. According to him, instead of accommodating dissent,

criticism and public demands, the present government is resorting to excessive force to silence political workers, public representatives and hardworking employees, a practice he described as wholly unacceptable. Syed Sadiq Agha warned that such actions are weakening democratic norms and steadily diminishing public confidence in state institutions. He reiterated that PTI would continue to stand for the rights of the oppressed, workers and marginalized segments of society and would not tolerate political victimization, injustice or oppression in any form.

Gwadar's Rs312.406m restoration project set to complete

ISLAMABAD (INP): A mega project to restore five historical sites in Gwadar city costing Rs312.406 million is all set to be completed with original renovation and landscaping under the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan 2026. These historical sites include Rest House (Padhgo), Indo-European Telegraph Office, the Portuguese Watchtower, Omani Watchtower and the Omani Fort. A GDA official told Gwadar Pro that the objective of this project is to preserve the city's ancient culture and historical

legacy, ensuring it is passed on to future generations. As part of the Gwadar Old Town Restoration Project, five significant historical sites are ready to be showcased to the public, he added. He said this initiative not only guarantees the preservation of the city's ancient culture but also serves as an important effort to keep the remnants of the past alive alongside the city's future development. This project will not only boost local and international tourism but also

highlight the historical background of the city. Under the project, the old historical structure, namely the Indo-European Telegraph Office is being conserved, which was established in the 18th century. The old building was initially built to house the Indo-European Telegraph Line offices. In the aftermath of the Great War of Independence in 1857, the Colonialists in order to overcome their fear of isolation, decided to connect England with India by telegraph lines. Restoration of Rest House (Char Padago) car-

ries a profound importance in Balochi culture. Once Gwadar was purchased by Pakistan, this building was adopted for various official uses. Gwadar Development Authority realizing the historical character of the building decided to salvage the building, and put it to befitting usage, for the promotion of cultural heritage. The Portuguese Watchtower was built in the 16th century. The height and location of the structure shows that it was the tallest structure at that time, and was located in the heart

of Gwadar. It was used to protect the area from both sides of the sea against the invaders. A huge basement area of the structure shows that it was used to store the weapons or used as a prison. The Omani Watchtower was built to protect the area from the eastern side of the Arabian Sea. It is located in Shahi Bazar, which was famous as a center of trade, according to Gwadar Pro on Tuesday.



QUETTA: An aged man selling plastic pots to support family during winter season.



KOHLU: DIG Sibi Division Barkat Hussain Khoso alongwith SP Tayab Iqbal and DSP Sher Muhammad visiting Police Line.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Wednesday January 28, 2026

Overstayed welcome

It is about time the three gentlemen took their leave. The five-year terms of the chief election commissioner and the two members of the Election Commission of Pakistan representing Sindh and Balochistan expired on Jan 26 last year, yet the trio continue to serve well beyond their constitutionally mandated terms. This indefinite extension in their tenures, secured through a controversial constitutional amendment, has served no tangible national good. It has, instead, become a symptom of the deep, institutional rot in Pakistani democracy. However, with the recent appointment of a new opposition leader in the National Assembly, who is not only a stalwart of Pakistani politics but could also prove a much more reasonable counterparty for this government, there is an opportunity to start the process afresh. It could prove a test case for a fresh start between the government and the opposition.

It is most unfortunate that no substantive progress has been made in filling these important constitutional posts in the year since a reshuffle became due. While the Constitution envisaged fresh appointments within 45 days of a vacancy arising, this government, perhaps anticipating difficulties dealing with a PTI loyalist as opposition leader, had introduced a provision in the 26th Amendment allowing incumbents to continue in office till their successors were appointed. This 'convenience' gradually became a constraint, keeping stakeholders complacent rather than pushing them to take decisive action. The extended delay this has caused has only undermined the ECP's legitimacy at a time when public trust in democratic institutions is already rock bottom. Pakistan's electoral integrity depends on the credibility and effectiveness of the ECP. It plays a central role not only in organising elections but also in safeguarding the democratic process itself.

The constitutional mechanism for appointing the CEC and ECP members requires meaningful consultations between the prime minister and the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly. With a new leader of the opposition formally notified, a procedural obstacle that had been delaying progress has been removed. There is, therefore, no justification for further procrastination. The government and opposition must restart the appointment process with urgency, transparency, and good faith. Political bickering, in the form of demands for parliamentary committees or providing widely divergent nomination lists, should be eschewed in favour of consensus on candidates whose integrity, impartiality and administrative competence are beyond reproach. The ECP must be reshaped on the basis of a broad political agreement and respect for constitutional procedure. To delay this further will only allow narratives of institutional decay and political manipulation to take deeper root.

Arifa Noor

The young chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sohail Afridi, is attracting considerable attention, since he has been catapulted into this position. Much of it has been because of the criticism directed at him by those at the centre, in Islamabad and beyond. It turned him from an unknown face into an equal of sorts, thanks to the very people who targeted him. But, along with this, his own decisions to reach out to the people have also got him attention.

Since his ascension to the post of chief minister, he has travelled to Lahore and Karachi in a bid to mobilise people. And while he did not prove very successful in Lahore, in Karachi and Hyderabad he drew impressive crowds for someone whose name was barely known to people outside the party a few months ago. In Lahore, while the people were few, he still managed to create enough of a spectacle thanks to the antics of the government there.

Before that, in Islamabad, he made surprise visits to markets to mingle with those out and about.

In some ways, his outreach to the people is striking in this environment in which few are making the effort to do politics. The parties in power are far too busy roaming in byzantine corridors, enjoying their plush surroundings, and few of those outside in the cold are relevant enough to matter. And while PTI continues to tread around, eternally confused, Afridi has ignored the noise around him and walked his own path.

For instance, soon after he became chief minister, he spent some time in Islamabad, meeting groups of journalists, from anchors to bureau chiefs to reporters. And while little of his interactions were reported on mainstream media, what he said dominated YouTube channels and casual conversations in the capital. His point of view and that of the KP government soon became familiar to hacks in Islamabad. It was quite an

effective communication strategy.

This was then followed by the trips to other provincial capitals to kick-start what he and his colleagues call a 'street movement'.

In some ways, his approach also contrasts with the approach of his predecessor, a more traditional politician, who too addressed jalsas and rallies till the Nov 26 event in Islamabad. However, for Ali Amin Gandapur, the rallies never appeared to be more than a sideshow as, from all accounts, he thought Imran Khan's release would be a result of negotiations he was carrying out away from the limelight.

Afridi, on the other hand, is focusing on the people; it could be argued that he doesn't have the contacts to try and carry out negotiations. Be that as it may, it is still obvious that for a young politician and a relatively unknown one, he has a way with people. The ability to go out in the crowds and get them enthused is something that hasn't been practised by many

outside of the few leaders right at the top. Other than party heads, most politicians tend to stick to their constituency and rarely look beyond.

But it also has to be said that Afridi can do this because of circumstances peculiar to the PTI. The party's main leader, Imran Khan, is behind bars. Few of its senior politicians are still around and free; and beyond them, there is no clear hierarchy within the party. In addition, the family is also not in a position to lead the party publicly, because of Khan's own assertions that his relatives will not get involved in the PTI, even if they are now always followed. This means the chief minister of KP (the only province where the party is in power) becomes a first among equals. Gandapur also enjoyed this legitimacy and so does Afridi now.

And this gives him an edge. It allows him to lead interactions with the press and the public. Even though he is always surrounded by his young Turks while at a rally, or

during an interaction in a room, he is the chief minister, and few forget this.

But, to repeat, all of this is possible because Khan is behind bars and incommunicado.

Consider the other parties, where no one other than the main family leadership has the space to dominate political space. When Nawaz Sharif was behind bars, it was his political heir and daughter who took to the streets, not Hamza Shehbaz, let alone others. And Shehbaz Sharif opted for the role that Gandapur tried to play; unlike the previous KP chief minister, Sharif proved to be successful, far more than anyone could have imagined.

Even now, if there is one person whose coverage on television overshadows the prime minister's, it is Maryam Nawaz in Punjab. This is less so because of her official position and more because of her standing as Nawaz Sharif's daughter.

Contrast this with the chief minister of Sindh, Murad Ali Shah, who has been around for much longer. But he rarely

seeks the limelight or coverage, for he is aware that his position is safe as long as he stays in the shadows. He has to play second fiddle to the party leadership and he does. Recently, when the party held an event in Islamabad to highlight the governance record of the Sindh government, the entire presentation was given by Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. The chief minister of the province simply spoke for a few minutes before giving way to BBZ. Afridi, at the moment, doesn't have to play second fiddle. And he is also proving that he has the potential to reach out to the people and be effective in communicating with them. But will he have the space to continue taking such a prominent position and role when Khan is out of jail? For in the past, most leaders who led parties while the main leader was in trouble, didn't last for long, once the good times returned. Consider the fate of Javed Hashmi and Amin Fahim. Will Afridi end up like them? This will be the real test for Imran Khan and the PTI.

Be at the table, or on the menu

Jawed Naqvi

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney finished two significantly groundbreaking visits to Beijing and Davos last week and they hold a message for nations and leaders feeling the heat from President Donald Trump's insulting and arrogant behaviour with friend and foe alike.

And while Carney maintained his country's relations with the US were multifaceted and far-reaching, he was pleased that his rare talks with President Xi Jinping had set up guardrails for greater predictability in bilateral relations and to keep each other's interests in mind. He also clarified — perhaps to avoid needlessly poking Donald Trump in the eye — that there hadn't been a free trade agreement with Beijing even if thousands of electric cars from China would be plying Canadian roads in the coming days. And if this riles the US, so be it.

Why is it so difficult for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, representing a no less major power, to speak up like

Carney? Holding the BRICS presidency for 2026, Modi is required to host a summit of its increasingly powerful and influential leaders in New Delhi around August. However, when Modi does speak, he usually speaks about a municipal election his party would win or has won, if he is not otherwise threatening to replace this or that opposition government in the coming state polls.

The last time one heard him speak on a foreign policy issue from Indian soil was the threat he made (unusually) in English in Bihar about avenging the death of innocent tourists in a terror attack in Kashmir in April last year. It resulted in Operation Sindoor against Pakistan, which apparently served no purpose other than to reveal India's shocking diplomatic isolation under Modi's watch.

Going by the claims of Modi's own preferred media, he is a great speaker, a charismatic one, in fact. So why does the prime minister of India get tongue-tied facing Trump, whose presidency he canvassed for in

2020, which for likelier other reasons Trump lost.

In Davos, Carney spoke even more boldly about souring ties with the US. He told the ruling elites that the 80-year-old world order under US stewardship had ruptured and that there was a need to rearrange equations. The betterment of humanity and protecting its only known hospitable planet was paramount.

"We knew the story of the international rules-based order was partially false, that the strongest would exempt themselves when convenient, that trade rules were enforced asymmetrically, and we knew that international law applied with varied rigour, depending on the identity of the accused or the victim," Carney's message was blunt. "Let me be direct. We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition."

Carney's address was backed by the German chancellor and was followed by what seems like a Europe-Canadian pact to shun Donald Trump's self-promoted Board of Peace for Gaza. Its endorsement by lead-

ing Islamic states including Pakistan, Egypt and Türkiye makes it trickier to fathom the true intentions. Imagine the lot working with Benjamin Netanyahu who for his own reasons has enrolled himself aboard. It's not easy to see how Israel and Pakistan could be in a team that too in the name of alleviating the suffering of Palestinian people! India would have plunged headlong for the plan, but the unstated fear of being seen in the company of Pakistan has perhaps put it in a spot.

Trump's plan, in any case, is widely seen as a half-baked idea that postures to tend to the humanitarian pleas of the victims of Israeli genocide. It's also hampered by an even greater worry that Trump may be seeing the body as a substitute for the UN itself.

It's in this context that Carney's call for a new game plan for the "middle powers" finds traction, a group to which India presumably belongs as the world's fourth largest economy. The call was to collectively negotiate the jostling of Big Powers, which impacts

everyone, including the Global South. Thus, Carney not only came close to the BRICS ideal of multipolarity, he surpassed it in his zeal to locate a world without nerve-racking uncertainties or any more inbuilt inequalities with the US.

What did Carney say that melds with the agenda of a multipolar world, which should make India and other BRICS nations take notice? Like them, he spoke of the threat to multilateral institutions, namely the WTO, the UN, COP, the very architecture of collective problem-solving. "When the rules no longer protect you, you must protect yourself. But let's be clear-eyed about where this leads. A world of fortresses will be poorer, more fragile and less sustainable." In other words, individual deals with the bully are ill-advised.

"Hegemons cannot continually monetise their relationships. Allies will diversify to hedge against uncertainty. They'll buy insurance, increase options in order to rebuild sovereignty that was once grounded in rules but will

increasingly be anchored in the ability to withstand pressure. This room knows this is classic risk management... Collective investments in resilience are cheaper than everyone building their own fortresses. Shared standards reduce fragmentation."

Complementarities are positive sum." Carney could be reading from a Xi Jinping script for the coming BRICS summit.

Calling the middle powers in particular to act together, Carney cautioned: "If we're not at the table, we're on the menu." How could Donald Trump not pace himself in the frame? "China will eat you up," was his angry response. There are questions nevertheless that flow from a tartly pinpointed speech. Does Carney's new order propose to regard Palestine, Venezuela, Congo et al as equally violated by the old order? And what would be the fate of Nato, the Five Eyes and other assorted dubious relics of the US-led West? They can't logically remain intact, can they, in the event of a genuine rupture with the old order?

Justice, Pakistan-style

Naween A. Mangi

When we speak of justice in Pakistan, the discussion usually unfolds in courtrooms, legal reforms, constitutional clauses, and televised outrage. Rarely does it begin in villages — and yet it is there, far from cameras and commentary, that the justice system reveals its truest form.

What follows is not an exceptional story. That, precisely, is the problem.

In a rural area of Sindh, a group of politically influential men decided that community development work had crossed an unacceptable line. Their objection was not to corruption or inefficiency, but to ideas: girls attending school, women working outside their homes, women managing projects and exercising leadership. These, they declared, were signs of 'social vice'.

The first tactics were subtle. Men positioned themselves on roads used by school buses and women staff, standing in scant, obscene attire, leering and taunting. The intent was humiliation — a reminder that public space was not meant for women.

When this failed, the strategy escalated. Messengers arrived demanding that property be handed over. The implication was clear: surrender what you have built and leave, or stay at your own risk. These demands were accompanied by routine nightly gunfire. When questioned, the explanation was almost mocking — they were merely 'killing doves'.

Eventually, ambiguity disappeared. Shots were fired openly at security personnel and staff on more than one

occasion. The police were approached for protection. If an officer occasionally decided to show up after a report was filed, he joked openly that they had 'received nothing', and without such incentives how were they expected to act? Corruption did not even bother to cloak itself in euphemism.

As pressure mounted and rumours circulated that the police might intervene, the accused were quietly relocated. Influential landlords provided them safe houses — places of comfort and protection — while those who had been attacked continued to live in fear. In much of rural Pakistan, justice is not decided by evidence but by proximity to influence.

Then another attack took place. A guard was fired upon. Again, formal complaints were filed. For months, letters were written — repeatedly and respectfully — to every rung of the police hierarchy: SP, SSP, DIG, IG. Not a single response was received. Silence, it seems, is also an institutional tool.

When the matter finally reached court, the last illusion dissolved. Those seeking protection were made to stand shoulder to shoulder with the very men who had fired at them. There was no acknowledgment of risk or vulnerability. Instead, the judge directed his irritation at the victims, scolding them for 'causing trouble' by forcing the accused to appear in court so often — as though persistence itself were an offence. The message was unmistakable: endurance would be punished.

Believing that a higher court might restore balance, legal recourse was pursued upward. What emerged revealed

another layer of decay. The lawyers — officers of the court in theory — exploited desperation with ease. Court fees were fabricated. Costs inflated. Urgency monetised. Before the victims could even appear before a judge, they had been financially bled by those meant to represent them. There was no realistic forum in which to challenge this exploitation without inviting further retaliation. At every stage, the system closed ranks — not around the vulnerable, but around itself.

This is the anatomy of injustice in Pakistan: police compromised by corruption and power, courts dulled by hierarchy and delay, and legal practitioners operating in an ecosystem where ethics are optional and consequences rare. None of this requires conspiracy. It survives on apathy, fear and the understanding that some lives and some causes are expendable.

We often ask why citizens lose faith in institutions. Why crimes go unreported. Why silence becomes safer than law. The answer lies in lived experience. When intimidation is met with indifference, when procedure becomes punishment, and when even the pursuit of justice inflicts harm, withdrawal becomes rational. So where does one go next? When the police will not protect you, the courts will not hear you, and the custodians of the law profit from your vulnerability — what remains of justice then? Is it merely an idea invoked in speeches and textbooks, or a promise the state intends to honour?

For many Pakistanis working quietly at the margins, justice is no longer a destination. It is a question — asked carefully, repeatedly, and too often without an answer.

Broken federalism

Aisha Khan

Pakistan is confronting climate change under a governance model that was not designed for systemic, cross-border crises. Floods, heatwaves, droughts and glacial melt now interact with food security, public health, migration and fiscal stability. Yet the constitutional and fiscal architecture created after the 18th Amendment disperses authority, fragments accountability and leaves the federation with too little capacity to coordinate national responses. In a warming country already facing economic stress, this model is becoming a multiplier of vulnerability rather than a shield against it.

The 18th Amendment devolved extensive powers to the provinces, abolishing the Concurrent List and making provinces primarily responsible for key sectors such as health, education, agriculture, water and environment. Devolution addressed genuine grievances about over-centralisation and provincial autonomy. However, climate change is not a sectoral issue; it is a system shock. Rivers do not respect provincial boundaries, heatwaves spread across regions, and climate-induced migration strains cities far from the point of impact. Effective climate governance therefore requires strong federal coordination, data integration, financing capacity and enforcement authority. The current system constrains this.

The National Finance Commission (NFC) Award compounds this weakness. Under the prevailing formula, around 82 per cent of the divisible pool is distributed on the basis of population, leaving the federation fiscally hollowed out.

After debt servicing and defence, federal development and climate spending space is minimal. This means Pakistan negotiates international climate finance, adaptation funds and loss-and-damage commitments without the domestic fiscal leverage to co-finance, scale or sustain them. Provinces, meanwhile, often lack technical capacity, long-term planning frameworks and incentives to invest beyond electoral cycles.

Visible consequences include the 2022 floods with losses exceeding \$30 billion, cutting across Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and KP. Yet response and recovery were uneven and despite shared basins, water governance remains weak. Inconsistent standards for early warning and data platforms are not failures of intent but of structure.

Deforestation and its wider national implications are other emerging concerns. Does provincial autonomy give sub-national governments the right to put at risk the lives of communities in other parts of the country? The scale of deforestation in KP, GB and AJK and its impact in 2025 on downstream communities is another example of the devastating consequences of this disconnect. The 18th Amendment and the NFC Awards should therefore not only be seen as institutional arrangements but as a moral and ethical compact designed to facilitate cooperative governance and not mini power centres for serving political agendas.

Provincial scale is another overlooked constraint. Punjab alone governs a population larger than most countries, while Balochistan's vast territory poses administrative challenges. Overstates provinces dilute accountability,

centralise power in provincial capitals and struggle to deliver services in peripheral regions. Climate impacts disproportionately hit those peripheries — riverine belts, arid zones, coastal districts — where governance is weakest.

Pakistan does not need to abandon federalism; it needs to rebalance it. Revisiting the 18th Amendment does not mean recentralisation but re-territorialisation. Climate, water, disaster risk reduction and inter-provincial infrastructure should be treated as shared competencies with clear federal leadership. The NFC Award must be re-configured to include criteria such as climate vulnerability, geography, revenue generation and performance, while restoring sufficient fiscal space to the centre to govern effectively.

Equally important is administrative reform. Creating smaller, more manageable provinces or empowered regions would bring government closer to vulnerable communities, improve service delivery and allow tailored climate responses. Smaller units enhance oversight, reduce elite capture and align planning with local ecological realities.

Under a changing climate, governance structures are not neutral. They either absorb shocks or amplify them. Pakistan's current model, designed for political balance rather than planetary stress, is increasingly misaligned with reality. Without structural reform, climate change will continue to expose the fault lines of a fragmented federation, weakening the state and making disasters costlier. Survival now necessitates thinking beyond politics as usual.

Sindh Cabinet approves major relief for Gul Plaza victims, forms subcommittee under CM

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Provincial Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, approved an extensive relief and rehabilitation package for victims of the Gul Plaza tragedy, constituted a high-level subcommittee under the chief minister to review the inquiry committee's findings for further necessary action, and sanctioned multi-billion-rupee infrastructure, transport, water, and welfare projects aimed at accelerating Karachi's development and strengthening public service delivery.

At the outset of the meeting, the cabinet offered fete for the shuhda of the Gul Plaza tragedy. The chief minister said the government's foremost responsibility was to provide immediate relief to affected families while ensuring accountability.

"There can be no compromise on human life. Relief, justice, and prevention must go hand in hand," Murad Ali Shah said.

Gul Plaza tragedy: relief, rehabilitation, and over-

sight. The cabinet expressed profound grief over the loss of lives in the Gul Plaza incident and approved a comprehensive compensation and recovery package. Families of the deceased will

receive Rs 10 million each as financial compensation.

To support affected traders, the cabinet approved interest-free loans of Rs10 million each shopkeeper, with the Sindh government bearing the entire interest cost. In addition, Rs500,000 per shopkeeper will be provided as immediate subsistence support to cover household and utility expenses.

The chief minister directed that alternative commercial spaces be provided within two months to enable shopkeepers to resume their businesses, which the cabinet also approved.

A high-level subcommittee, comprising Ministers Sharjeel Inam Memon, Nasir Hussain Shah, Saeed Ghani, and Ziaul Hassan Lanjar, was constituted to review the inquiry

committee's report and ensure that responsibility is fixed and justice is delivered. It may be recalled that the chief minister had constituted an inquiry committee under Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi with Additional IGP Karachi Azad Khan and others as its members.

"No negligence will be overlooked. Those found responsible will be held accountable," the CM said.

The cabinet approved Rs19.116 billion for the immediate execution of six major road infrastructure projects in Karachi. These include the Star Gate flyover, Malir Halt underpass, Sohrab Goth flyover, and the reconstruction of important arteries linking M-9 to Malir and Main Korangi Road to Khayaban-e-Saadi.

"These projects are essential for easing congestion, improving road safety, and supporting Karachi's economic activity," Murad Shah said, directing the Local Government Department to commence work without delay.



Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over cabinet meeting at CM House in Karachi.

Strengthen accountability, merit Wajiha highlights transparency & digital reforms in education sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFEPT), Ms. Wajiha Qamar, outlined comprehensive transparency measures and digital reforms implemented across the education sector to strengthen accountability, merit, and public trust.

During the press conference on Tuesday, the Minister emphasized that transparency, digitization, and citizen-centric governance are at the core of the Ministry's reform agenda, in line with the Government's commitment to institutional integrity and efficient service delivery.

Ms. Wajiha Qamar stated that since 2024, all procurements within MOFEPT are being carried out strictly under PPRA Rules through the e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal

System (EPADS). Tenders are openly advertised, while bid opening, evaluation, and award processes are digitally recorded. Financial approvals follow defined digital workflows, significantly reducing manual intervention and the scope for favoritism.

The Minister highlighted that MOFEPT has been 100 percent E-Office compliant since February 2019, making it one of the first federal ministries to achieve this milestone. All official correspondence, approvals, and decisions are processed digitally, ensuring a complete audit trail, time-bound decision-making, and elimination of undocumented verbal instructions.

She informed that a monitoring and reporting portal is operational for Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) schools, while an AI-based Education

Management System is under development. Decision-making is increasingly evidence-based, supported by structured digital reporting of projects and programs.

The Minister noted that all complaints are handled through the Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit (PMDU), with strict monitoring and defined timelines. This transparent and trackable mechanism has strengthened responsiveness and reduced reliance on informal influence.

Ms. Wajiha Qamar explained that NAVTTC trainings follow strict merit through written tests, monitored delivery, and syllabus compliance.

Databases are maintained for successful trainees, with periodic follow-ups to track employment outcomes and analyze training effectiveness.



SARGODHA: Vice Chancellor University of Sargodha Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas and Parliamentary Secretary for Livestock awarding degrees to students on the second day of the 12th Convocation at the university's multipurpose hall.

CDA chief meets Nepali envoy, discuss sister-city plan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Tuesday met Nepal's Ambassador to Pakistan, Rita Dhital, at the CDA Headquarters, where matters of mutual interest, including ways to further strengthen bilateral relations, were discussed.

The meeting was also attended by CDA Member Administration Talat Mahmood and senior officials.

Randhawa said Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Nepal and described the two countries as friendly nations with longstanding ties. Ambassador Dhital praised the beauty and urban planning of Islamabad,

particularly appreciating the role of the CDA in preserving the capital's natural environment. She said the city's green spaces and numerous parks contributed to a peaceful and pleasant atmosphere.

The CDA chairman said the authority was strictly following the Islamabad Master Plan to ensure the protection and expansion of the city's green cover.

The two sides also discussed a proposal to declare Islamabad and Kathmandu as sister cities. The Nepali envoy said work on a draft agreement in this regard was under way.

Issues related to the plot allocated for the Nepali Embassy in the Diplomatic Enclave were also reviewed.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a group photo with Provincial Ministers Overtake Valley Google for Education team after completion of training session "Empowering Punjab with AI".

CM Punjab launches first AI training for Punjab cabinet

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif led the province's first-ever artificial intelligence (AI) training session for provincial ministers, describing the initiative as the beginning of a new digital era in Punjab. The chief minister, along with members of the provincial cabinet, participated in an official workshop titled "Empowering Punjab with AI", here on Tuesday, where experts from Google for Education briefed participants on the practical application of AI tools in governance, policy making, and administrative reforms. During the session, Maryam Nawaz Sharif declared the use of AI in governance, policy frameworks, opera-

tional decision-making, sector-specific reforms, and policy analysis. Cabinet members were also introduced to the effective use of Google tools, including Gemini, for official and administrative work.

Participants were informed that under Google for Education's Tech Valley initiative, a master training programme for 3,000 teachers would be launched across Punjab. Additionally, more than 300,000 student IDs would be created in the School Education Department, while 200,000 students and 2,000 teachers associated with the Punjab Education Foundation would receive specialized AI and digital training.

The training featured detailed briefings on the application of AI in governance, policy frameworks, opera-

tional decision-making, sector-specific reforms, and policy analysis. Cabinet members were also introduced to the effective use of Google tools, including Gemini, for official and administrative work.

Participants were informed that under Google for Education's Tech Valley initiative, a master training programme for 3,000 teachers would be launched across Punjab. Additionally, more than 300,000 student IDs would be created in the School Education Department, while 200,000 students and 2,000 teachers associated with the Punjab Education Foundation would receive specialized AI and digital training.

Sharjeel Memon says: Security had not been withdrawn from any MQM-P minister, leader

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon on Tuesday rejected claims that security had been withdrawn from Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) ministers, terming the reports baseless and misleading. Speaking to the media, Sharjeel Memon said that security had not been withdrawn from any MQM-P minister or leader, adding that those entitled to protection had full security in accordance with the law and security protocol. He said a "rumour" was spread

that security had been withdrawn from MQM-P, and alleged that MQM-P was taking it as propaganda.

Commenting on the Gul Plaza tragedy, the Sindh minister said that visits to the homes of victims should be for condolence, not political propaganda. He announced that compensation cheques were now being personally delivered to the families of the deceased and affected individuals, adding that attempts to spread misinformation would be firmly rejected.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi in a group photo with a delegation of Utman Khel Qoumi Itihad who called on him at Governor House.

REF development HEC, British Council formally commence five-day deliberations

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, in close partnership with the British Council Pakistan, has formally commenced five-day deliberations on the development of Research Excellence Framework (REF) under Pak-UK Education Gateway programme. Once finalised, the framework is expected to strengthen the research evaluation, benchmarking, and performance assessment ecosystem in Pakistan.

During the course of the consultations, organised by Research & Innovation Division (R&ID) of HEC, a four-member expert delegation from the University of Sussex, UK – the lead consultant providing technical expertise for the initiative – will remain engaged in in-depth discussions with the HEC and British Council leadership, academic leaders and policymakers, and stakeholders to finalise the proposed policy framework.

KP PHE Minister holds online open court to redress public complaints

PESHAWAR (APP): The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, organized an online open court (Khuli Kachehri) as an important initiative on Tuesday to ensure prompt and effective redressal of public complaints.

The KP Minister for Public Health Engineering, Fazal Shakoor Khan, participated in the online session. He was accompanied by the Secretary Public Health Engineering, Additional Secretary, Chief Engineers, and other senior officers of the department.

During the online open court, the Provincial Min-

ister listened to public complaints and issues from across the province through live telephone calls and social media.

Participants highlighted issues related to the provision of clean drinking water, drainage, and ongoing development schemes, and also shared valuable suggestions to further improve the department's performance. The Provincial Minister on-the-spot issued directives to the concerned officers for immediate and effective resolution of public complaints and emphasized that any negligence or delay in addressing public issues would not be tolerated.

Governor KP, Opposition leader discuss Tirah operation, law and order

PESHAWAR (APP): Leader of the Opposition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Dr. Ibadullah, called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House here on Tuesday.

During the meeting, serious concerns were expressed over what was termed the provincial government's lack of interest in the Tirah operation.

They regretted that instead of focusing on resolving the problems faced by the people, political point-scoring was being prioritized, which they described as unfortunate.

The meeting also witnessed an exchange of views on the deteriorating law and order situation in the province and the severe lack of good governance.

KP govt launches major police, prison reforms

PESHAWAR (APP): Under the leadership of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi, the provincial government has initiated comprehensive reforms to strengthen the police and prison systems as part of its first 100-day reform agenda.

The reforms aim to establish a professional, people-friendly and credible police force capable of ensuring rule of law, effectively countering terrorism and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens.

To enhance counterterrorism capabilities, the government has approved Rs 7.77 billion for the movement, weapons, equipment and modern response systems of

the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD). An additional Rs 6.44 billion has been allocated for the establishment of CTD units at the district level in 24 districts, including a regional headquarters in Peshawar.

For the expansion and continuity of Safe City projects, a supplementary grant of Rs 3.825 billion has been approved, with a deadline set for full operationalization in priority districts by June 2026. Moreover, Rs 700 million has been sanctioned for the establishment of a Central Safe City Command and Control Centre to ensure province-wide surveillance.

Significant investments have also been made to strengthen the intelligence system.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Wajiha Qamar addressing a press conference at PID Media Center.

Lanjar assures PA of transparent, impartial inquiry into Gul Plaza incident

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Assembly session on Tuesday continued amid rumpus in the house.

The session started with recitation from Holy Quran and Naat Sharif with Deputy Speaker in the chair.

Questions and answers session regarding Auqaf, Religious Affairs, Zakat and Ushr was also held.

While speaking on the floor of the House about the protest by MQM-Pakistan on Gul Plaza Judicial Commission demand, the Sindh Minister for Law, Home and Parliamentary Affairs Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar assured the House that transparent, impartial, and comprehensive investigations into the recent incident Gul

plaza will be conducted, and all requirements of justice will be fulfilled.

He informed that the Chief Minister of Sindh presented a policy statement in the House, and the opposition was also given a full opportunity to express its views. The Opposition Leader spoke on a point of order, however, the Home Minister clarified that irresponsible statements on such a sensitive matter could worsen the situation. Therefore, it is essential to speak on the basis of facts.

The Sindh Home Minister apprised the House that the provincial cabinet has decided that the Karachi Commissioner's report will be received soon.

NAB KP arrests CEO Star Land Marketing, Director in Rs3.73 bln fraud case

PESHAWAR (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has arrested Chief Executive Officer of Star Land Marketing (Private) Limited, Bilal Hassan, and its Regional Director, Ifkhar Ahmad, in connection with a large-scale financial fraud involving public investments amounting to Rs3.73 billion. According to NAB, the arrests were made based on solid evidence linking the accused to a mega financial scam in which innocent citizens were allegedly deceived through fake real estate investment schemes.

The suspects reportedly lured investors by promising so-called "halal"

and guaranteed profits, but instead of investing the collected funds in advertised housing projects, the money was misappropriated.

Investigations have revealed that billions of rupees were collected from the public under pretences, causing massive financial losses to investors. NAB officials stated that further investigations are underway to trace the looted amount and identify all individuals involved in the scam. NAB KP has urged all affected individuals to submit their claims along with relevant documents at the NAB KP office at the earliest to facilitate recovery proceedings.



Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses Provincial Assembly Session at Sindh Assembly Building in Karachi.

President Zardari lauds AD Ports Group growing investment in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, Tuesday, appreciated AD Ports Group's long-term investment and growing role in Pakistan's maritime and logistics sector, describing it as a key pillar of Pakistan-UAE economic cooperation.

He highlighted the group's ongoing investments at Karachi Port as instrumental in enhancing port capacity, efficiency, and regional competitiveness.

Managing Director and Group CEO of AD Ports Group Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Tuesday, paid a courtesy call on the president in Abu Dhabi, President's Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, MNA, Chairman People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Pakistan's Ambassador to the UAE.

Both sides agreed that

the expansion and modernisation of port infrastructure would strengthen trade flows and support Pakistan's broader economic development and country's seaborne trade.

The president welcomed the establishment of AD Ports Group's Representative Office in Islamabad and appreciated the group's collaboration on digital and customs facilitation initiatives aimed at improving trade efficiency.

DPM Ishaq Dar directs Federal, provincial authorities to continue monitoring of key essential commodities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, on

Tuesday, directed federal and provincial authorities to continue close monitoring of main essential com-

modities, particularly in view of the approaching month of Ramadan, to prevent any artificial price



hike or exploitation of consumers by unscrupulous elements.

The DPM/FM chaired a meeting to review the availability and prices of essential commodities across the country and expressed

satisfaction over an ample stock of key essential commodities across provinces, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister said in a press release. The meeting was attended by Minister for National Food Security

Rana Tanveer Hussain, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, chief secretary Balochistan, chairman TDAP, and officials from the Federal Board of Revenue, ministries of national food security and commerce, and provincial

S&P Global Market Intelligence forecast offers updated view on economic growth: Khurram

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Finance Minister on Finance Khurram Schehzad on Tuesday said that S&P Global Market Intelligence (S&P) has released its latest macroeconomic forecast for Pakistan, offering an updated view on inflation, the current account, and economic growth which can be compared with the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP's) latest projections.

In a press statement here on Tuesday, he said that according to the S&P Global, inflation is projected at 5.1 percent in 2026, rising marginally to 5.6 percent in 2027. These point forecasts fall within SBP's projected inflation range of 5-7 percent for the next two years, imply stable-to-slightly higher inflation from 2026 to 2027.

Meanwhile, the S&P forecasts the current ac-

count deficit at 0.5 percent of GDP in 2026 and 1.3 percent in 2027. The 2026 projection is in line with SBP's guidance that the deficit in FY26 will remain within 0-1 per cent of GDP, he added.

He further informed that the S&P's other-year projection (1.3%) is slightly above SBP's FY26 band (noting SBP guidance provided is specifically for FY26).

The S&P expects real GDP growth of 3.5 percent in FY26, and 4.4 percent in FY27 (strengthening), while SBP forecast FY2026 FY26: 3.75%-4.75 percent, he said adding that the S&P for FY2026 is slightly below SBP's range (SBP lower bound 3.75 percent). The S&P expects growth to pick up in FY27 to 4.4 percent, which is within SBP's FY26 range (though for a different year).

Muzaffarabad Chamber, LCCI discuss economy, business cooperation

LAHORE (APP): A delegation from the Muzaffarabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by its President Khawaja Ishtisham Woogra met with Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) office-bearers here at LCCI on Tuesday.

Matters of mutual interest, the current economic situation and business cooperation were discussed in detail during the meeting that was attended by LCCI President Faheem ur Rehman Saigol, Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmad Sheikh and Vice President Khurram Lodhi, former LCCI president Tahir Javed Malik, former SVP Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and former Executive Committee members. Muzaffarabad Chamber's delegation

comprised its Executive Committee members Raja Abid Khan, Malik Ejaz Gilani, Shadab Mateen, Muhammad Irfan Kayani, Hasan Taj and Raja Abdul Rasheed.

During the meeting, LCCI President Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said that Lahore Chamber is a major and active chamber, and given Pakistan's current economic situation, it is necessary for the country's business community to be united. He emphasized that government should receive a single joint budget proposal to enable effective measures for economic stability.

He added that Lahore Chamber has decided to work collaboratively through the Federation platform to provide concrete proposals for economic stability.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister Syed Ashiq Kirmani presides over the meeting to review preparation for Horse & Cattle Show 2026.



ABU DHABI: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Managing Director and Group CEO of AD Ports Group, accompanied by First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and the Pakistan Ambassador to UAE.

Pakistan, Australia discuss coop. in mining, gemstones

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Australia on Tuesday discussed avenues for enhanced bilateral cooperation in the mining and gemstone sectors.

During a meeting with Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Timothy Kane, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik welcomed the strong interest shown by Australian companies in Pakistan's mining sector and highlighted the country's vast untapped mineral potential, particularly in the Tethyan Belt.

The minister proposed the possibility of an inter-governmental agreement be-

tween Pakistan and Australia to promote structured and long-term cooperation in the mining sector.

The minister also underscored the government's efforts to develop and formalise the gemstones sector, stressing its potential for value addition, export growth and employment generation.

The Australian high commissioner said Australian companies were already actively involved in the Reko Diq project, while additional firms had shown keen interest in joining the venture.

He added that Australian companies would be

encouraged to participate in the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum, expressing hope for a strong Australian presence at the event.

Highlighting the growing global importance of copper and gold for the energy transition, the high commissioner said that Pakistan's mining sector had attracted significant international attention.

He expressed optimism about collaboration in the gemstones sector through knowledge-sharing, training and technical assistance.

WB urges Pakistan to improve tax system, expand tax base

ISLAMABAD (INP): The World Bank has released a report on development in South Asia, emphasizing the need to improve Pakistan's tax system and expand the tax base. The report also suggests discouraging pollution as a way to increase revenue.

According to the World Bank, groundwater levels in South Asia are rapidly declining, and Pakistan is among the world's most water-scarce countries. Poor irrigation systems and inefficient agricultural practices are leading to significant water wastage. The

report noted that modern irrigation projects in Punjab have saved 57 percent of water, while advanced agricultural initiatives have increased crop yields by 14 to 31 percent.

In Pakistan, electricity and gas subsidies are being linked to the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). Subsidy reforms are expected to reduce misallocation, financial losses, and circular debt.

The World Bank suggested that fuel subsidies could instead be redirected toward social protection programmes.

Gold prices fall by Rs1,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): Gold prices registered a decline in the local market on Tuesday as the price of 24-karat gold per tola decreased by Rs1,500 to settle at Rs530,562.

The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold fell by Rs1,286 to Rs454,871, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold went down by Rs1,179 to Rs416,980, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. However, Silver prices witnessed an upward trend, with the price of 24-karat silver per tola increasing by Rs212 to Rs11,640, whereas the price of 10 grams of silver went up by Rs182 to Rs9,979.



FAISALABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, visited the Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) to review the progress of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Faisalabad.

ADB keen to fund NFTP, Naulong Dam

LAHORE (APP): Asian Development Bank (ADB) Director for Central and West Asia, Jiangfeng Zhang, along with ADB team, called on WAPDA Chairman Li Gen (Retd) Muhammad Saeed here at WAPDA House on Tuesday.

Matters relating to providing funds for Naulong Dam Project and National Flood Telemetry

Project (NFTP) were discussed in detail during the meeting. WAPDA Member (Finance), Member (Water), Member (Power) and other senior officers also attended the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, the ADB Director said that Asian Development Bank would continue working with WAPDA by deepening its ties for implementation of the climate-resilient projects in Pakistan.

He also appreciated WAPDA for its technical expertise in harnessing water resources in the country.

Macroeconomic stability maintained in 1st half of FY26: Ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The country's economy has completed first half of FY2026 with continued macroeconomic stability, reflected in contained inflation, rebound Large Scale Manufacturing growth and strengthened foreign exchange reserves with stable exchange rate, said Finance Ministry in a report released here Tuesday.

According to Monthly Economic Update and Outlook for December 2025, the sustained growth momentum has been complemented with fiscal discipline resulted in fiscal and primary surpluses adding LSM has gained momentum, signaling improved growth prospects for the remaining period of the fiscal year.

Remittances remained robust, supporting the external account. In parallel, the Pakistan Stock Market has maintained a strong rally, ranking among the world's top performing

markets and reflecting improved investor sentiment.

Building on these gains, the government has launched Economic Governance Reforms aimed at embedding stability into institutions and enabling sustainable private sector led growth.

The report says, the agriculture sector remained resilient, driven by better input demand, and posted growth of 2.9 percent in first Quarter (Q1) of FY2026, showing a significant improvement from 1.0 percent during the same period last year.

The important crops (excluding Wheat being Rabi crop) recorded a contraction of 0.7 percent as compared to a contraction of 13.1 percent during Q1 last year, mainly due to reduced cotton production (-1.2%).

Likewise, LSM registered a growth of 6.0 percent with QIM index reaching its highest during July-November FY2026 since

FY2016 while during the period, 16 sectors recorded positive growth. In November 2025, LSM grew by 10.4 percent on year-on-year (YoY) basis and by 0.2 percent on month-on-month (MoM) basis.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation recorded at 5.6 percent on YoY basis in December 2025 as compared to 6.1 percent in the previous month and 4.1 percent in December 2024. On average, inflation during July-December FY2026 stood at 5.2 percent as against 7.2 percent during the same period last year. The government has achieved a fiscal surplus during July-November FY2026 also owing to a growth in revenue and a considerable reduction in mark-up payments.

Gross federal revenue receipts recorded a growth of 7.8 percent during the reference period, contributed by growth in both FBR's taxes and non-tax revenue

Minister directs PR to boost revenue, improve freight, passenger services

LAHORE (APP): Railways Minister Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Tuesday directed Pakistan Railways (PR) administration to enhance revenue by extending greater facilities to the business community, saying that the growing confidence of traders in the railways must be matched with punctual and efficient services.

Chairing a meeting at the PR Headquarters, the minister was given a detailed briefing on the performance of the Railway Traffic and Commercial Department. He noted that while progress had been made, there was still significant room for improvement in both freight and passenger sectors. He instructed the Chief Executive Officer to personally monitor railway revenue to ensure better financial discipline and results. The minister directed

officials to immediately address the shortage of luggage and brake vans and to abolish the practice of using the term "dummy coaches" for wagons. He emphasized that any deficiency of material in coaches should be met without delay to avoid operational issues.

Welcoming the business community's confidence in the two cargo trains currently in operation, Hanif Abbasi said preparations should be finalized for launching a third cargo train in the near future.

He also ordered the preparation of a model plan comprising 50 wagons for the transportation of automobiles to further tap freight potential.

The meeting was informed that operational officers would inspect the quality of refurbished coach rakes to ensure standards.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik in a meeting with Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Timothy Kane.

BOI minister visits FIEDMC to review progress of SEZs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, visited the Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) to review the progress of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and to assess issues related to their development and population.

During the visit, the Federal Minister stated that FIEDMC is a key hub of Pakistan's industrial development, and the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, is fully committed to resolving the issues faced by the industrial community with seriousness and determination, said a release issued here on Tuesday.

He emphasized that existing bottlenecks at FIEDMC would be addressed to make it more functional, stable, and attractive for both local and foreign investment.

Highlighting his association with district Chiniot, internationally recognized for its furniture industry, the Federal Minister said he fully understands the importance of industry and the practical challenges faced by industrialists.

Mr Sheikh noted that investment promotion remains a top priority of the

government, as industrial growth is fundamental to strengthening the national economy. Coming from an industrial family, he said that the concerns of the business community are viewed not merely as paperwork, but as real, on-ground issues.

The Federal Minister acknowledged that challenges exist on both sides; however, he stressed that Pakistan belongs to all of us and, despite existing challenges, collective efforts are required to move the country forward.

He highlighted improvements in the economy, including an increase in foreign exchange reserves, and informed that the Finance Minister has been directed to maintain continuous engagement with stakeholders to ensure practical resolution of industrial issues.

Earlier, Chairman FIEDMC, Mr Rana Azhar Waqar, briefed the Federal Minister on the progress of SEZs, stating that by 2025, 90 factories had been established at FIEDMC. He further informed that 26 additional factories have been set up, while development work on 31 factories is currently underway. Additional Secretary Board of Investment Ms. Arfa, CEO FIEDMC Ms. Quratull Ain, and other senior officials were also present.



Members of Hyderabad Water and Sewerage Corporation Employees Union protest against Non-Payment of Salaries at Hyderabad Press Club.

‘American Doctor’ tells of brutality in Israel-Hamas war

PARK CITY (AFP/APP): At the start of “American Doctor,” a new documentary about US medics working in hospitals in the Gaza Strip during the Israel-Hamas war, director Poh Si Teng initially declines to film pictures of dead Palestinian children that one of the doctors is trying to show her.

Teng worries that she will have to pixelate the gruesome scene to protect the dignity of the children. “You’re not dignifying them unless you let their memory, their bodies, tell the story of this trauma, of this genocide. You’re not doing them a service by not showing them,” Jewish-American doctor Mark Perlmutter tells her.

“This is what my tax dollars did. That’s what your tax dollars did. That’s what my neighbor’s tax dollars did. They have the right to know the truth.

“You have the responsibility, as I do, to tell the truth. You pixelate this, that’s journalistic

malpractice.”

Teng’s unflinching film follows Perlmutter and two other American doctors—one Palestinian-American and the other a non-practicing Zoroastrian—as they try to treat the results of the unspeakable brutality visited on a largely civilian population in Gaza since Israel launched its retaliation for Hamas’s October 2023 attack. Alongside the severed limbs and the open wounds the doctors labor on with their Palestinian colleagues, we also see the trio’s attempts at advocacy—in Washington’s corridors of power and in Israeli and American media.

The documentary also depicts the practical difficulties they face—the surgical scrubs and antibiotics they have to smuggle across the border to get around the Israeli blockade, and the last-minute refusals of Israeli authorities to let them in. And we see the bravery of men voluntarily going to work in hospitals that are

repeatedly hit by the Israeli army.

Israel rejects accusations its numerous strikes against Gaza hospitals amount to war crimes, saying it is targeting “terrorists” in these facilities and claims Hamas operatives are holed up in tunnels underneath the hospitals.

The attacks include the so-called “double tap” strike on the Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, South of the Strip, in August 2025 where the three men have worked.

Emergency responders and journalists who had rushed to the scene after a first projectile hit were killed when a second was fired at the same spot.

Feroze Sidwha, perhaps the most eloquent of the three doctors, repeatedly makes the case throughout the film that he has never seen any tunnels and that in any case, even the presence of wounded fighters in a hospital does not make it a legitimate target.



Jon Wolfthal, director of global risk at the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), and Steve Fetter, professor of public policy and former dean at the University of Maryland, reveal the location of the minute hand on its Doomsday Clock during a townhall in Washington, DC.

Obama, Clinton say killings by agents should be wake-up call for US

MINNEAPOLIS (AFP/APP): Former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton issued pointed calls Sunday for America to stand up and defend their values after the second killing of a citizen in Minneapolis by immigration agents that Donald Trump blamed on Democratic “chaos.”

The Trump administration has faced intensifying pressure over its mass immigration crackdown, particularly after federal agents shot and killed Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old ICU nurse, Saturday while scuffling with him on an icy roadway.

That incident came less than three weeks after an immigration officer fired on Renee Good, also 37, killing her in her car in the same Midwestern city.

Trump administration officials quickly claimed Pretti had intended to harm the federal agents—as they did after Good’s death—pointing to a pistol they said was discovered on him.

However, video shared widely on social media and verified by US media showed Pretti never drawing a weapon, with agents firing at him seconds after he was sprayed in the face with chemical irritant and thrown to the ground.

Trump provocatively attributed the deaths to Minnesota’s Democratic elected officials, including Governor Tim Walz and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, writing on his Truth Social platform: “Democrat run Sanctuary Cities and States are REFUSING to cooperate with ICE.”

Venezuela frees at least 104 political prisoners: NGO

CARACAS (AFP/APP): More than 100 political prisoners were freed Sunday in Venezuela, where detainees are slowly being released under pressure from the United States, the non-governmental organization Foro Penal said.

“At Foro Penal we have verified 104 releases of political prisoners in Venezuela today,” the NGO wrote on social media.

Foro Penal had earlier reported 80 political prisoners being released Sunday.

Director Alfredo Romero said on X that the group was verifying the identities of those released from jails nationwide.

Foro Penal attorney Gonzalo Himiob said the initial releases had taken place in the early hours of the day.

Germany offers 1 mn euro reward for Berlin blackout culprits

BERLIN (AFP/APP): Germany is offering a one-million-euro (\$1.2 million) reward for information leading to the arrest of suspected far-left militants whose arson attack caused a massive blackout in Berlin, the interior minister said Tuesday.

The electricity outage left roughly 45,000 homes and around 2,200 businesses without power for nearly a week in the middle of winter in the southwest of the German capital.

Police are hunting members of the far-left “Vulkangruppe” (Volcano Group) which claimed responsibility for the early January blackout in several online statements. Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt on Tuesday vowed to “strike back.” “I think it’s appropriate to underscore the seriousness of the situation with a reward of this magnitude,” Dobrindt said.



Panda fans gather to see off twin pandas Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei before a truck transporting them departs from Ueno Zoo for their planned return to China, in Tokyo, Japan.



Sailors aboard the Philippine Navy frigate BRP Jose Rizal salute during near Scarborough Shoal in disputed waters of the South China Sea.

UNRWA chief slams Israel over arson attack on agency’s HQ

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The head of embattled UN relief agency for Palestinians, UNRWA, has condemned reports that its headquarters in East Jerusalem have been set alight by Israeli authorities. It comes after Israeli y arsonists “stormed and demolished” buildings in the compound last week, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said.

“Allowing this unprecedented destruction is the latest attack on the UN in the ongoing attempt to dismantle the status of Pal-

estine Refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and erase their history,” Lazzarini said.

In a short statement, the senior UN official added that there were “no limits to the defiance of the United Nations” and international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Last Tuesday’s move by Israeli authorities to send bulldozers into the Sheikh Jarrah compound where they tore down UNRWA structures prompted swift condemnation from senior UN officials including Sec-

retary-General Antonio Guterres and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk.

Ahead of that dramatic development, on 14 January, Israeli forces entered an UNRWA health centre in East Jerusalem and ordered it to close. The agency reported that its workers were “terrified” and that the deteriorating situation was a direct result of legislation passed by the Israeli parliament in December, stepping up existing anti-UNRWA laws adopted in 2024.

US aircraft carrier has arrived in Middle East

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): The USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group has arrived in the Middle East, the US military said on Monday, dramatically boosting American firepower in the region.

The carrier and its accompanying ships were ordered to the region as Iran cracked down on mass protests.

While President Donald Trump has since backed away from military action against Tehran, he has insisted all options remain on the table.

The strike group is “currently deployed to the Middle East to promote regional security and stability,” US Central Command, which is responsible for

American forces in the region, said in a post on X.

Trump told Axios in an interview on Monday that the United States has “a big armada next to Iran,” but said Tehran is eager to talk: “They want to make a deal. I know so. They called on numerous occasions.”

A senior US official meanwhile said to reporters during a call that Washington is “open for business” if the Iranians “want to contact us.”

The protests in Iran started in late December, driven by economic grievances, but turned into a mass movement against the Islamic republic, with huge street demonstrations for several days from January 8.

Russia kills 6 in Ukraine, hits energy sites

ODESA (AFP/APP): Russian forces killed six people and wounded dozens of others, including two children and a pregnant woman, in attacks on Ukraine’s energy facilities, Kyiv announced Tuesday.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said the latest bombardment undermined peace efforts and urged allies to step up pressure on Moscow to end the war, which is grinding towards its fourth anniversary.

“Every such Russian strike erodes the diplomacy that is still ongoing and undermines the efforts of partners who are helping to end this war,” he wrote on social media.



A city worker shovels heavy snow from a sidewalk in a residential neighborhood in the aftermath of a winter storm in the St. Louis area, Missouri, US.

France’s president to meet Denmark, Greenland leaders

PARIS (AFP/APP): France’s president will meet the leaders of Denmark and Greenland in Paris on Wednesday for “a working lunch”, his office said Tuesday.

Emmanuel Macron will “reaffirm European solidarity and France’s support for Denmark, Greenland, their sovereignty and their territorial integrity”, the presidency said.

The meeting comes days after US President Donald Trump backed down from threats to seize Greenland, a mineral-rich Arctic island that is an au-

tonomous Danish territory.

The three leaders will discuss “security issues in the Arctic and the economic and social development of Greenland, which France and the European Union are ready to support”, Macron’s office said.

Faced with Russian threats and US ambitions for Greenland, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Greenland leader Jens-Frederik Nielsen have been making rounds with European allies this week including talks in Hamburg and Berlin ahead of visiting Paris Wednesday.

Minneapolis mayor says ‘some’ US immigration agents to leave city

MINNEAPOLIS (AFP/APP): Some federal immigration agents will leave Minneapolis Tuesday, the city’s mayor said, as US President Donald Trump struck a conciliatory note after nationwide outrage over the killings of two American citizens.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said in a post on social media platform X that “some federal agents” will begin leaving the city, but did not provide specifics of how many. “I will continue pushing for the rest involved in this operation to go,” Frey added.

Frey said he spoke with Trump on Monday, adding: “The president agreed the present situation can’t continue.” The White House was scrambling as video of the latest shooting went viral, prompting street protests, criticism from former presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama and, increasingly, from within Trump’s Republican Party. In a marked change of tone, Trump said he had sent his top border enforcer Tom Homan—whom the president described as “tough but fair”—to Minneapolis on Monday.

Gazans long for reopening of ‘lifeline’ Rafah crossing

GAZA CITY (AFP/APP): With Gaza’s vital Rafah border crossing expected to soon reopen, residents of the war-shattered territory are hoping to reunite with family members, or are looking to leave themselves. The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt is the Palestinian territory’s only gateway to the outside world that does not lead to Israel and is a key entry point for both people and goods.

It has been closed since Israeli forces took control of it in May 2024, except for a limited reopening in early 2025, and other bids to reopen failed to materialise.

Following a US-brokered ceasefire that took effect in October, Rafah is

expected to reopen for pedestrians, after visiting US envoys reportedly pressed Israeli officials to reopen the crossing.

“Opening the Rafah crossing means opening the door to life for me. I haven’t seen my wife and children for two years since they left at the beginning of the war and I was prevented from travelling,” said 48-year-old Mahmud al-Natour, who hails from Gaza City.

“My children are growing up far away from me, and the years are passing by as if we are cut off from the world and life itself,” he told AFP.

Randa Samih, 48, also called the crossing “the lifeline of Gaza,” but is worried about whether she would be able to leave.

US monster storm kills 30

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): More than half a million Americans woke up without power Tuesday, as freezing temperatures gripped swathes of the country in a monster storm that has killed at least 30 people.

A frigid, life-threatening Arctic air mass could delay recovery as municipalities from New Mexico to Maine tried to dig out following the storm, which dropped a vicious cocktail of heavy snow and wind, along with freezing rain and sleet.

Forecasters warned that much of the northern half of the country will see temperatures that are “continuously below freezing through February 1,” the National Weather Service said in an X post.

It added that “record low temperatures” hit southern states, which are unaccustomed to intense winter weather.

While skies began clearing in parts of the country, relentless snowfall in the northeast meant parts of Connecticut saw over 22 inches (56 cm) of snow, with more than 16 inches

(40.6 cm) recorded in Boston, Massachusetts.

The storm was linked to at least 30 deaths, according to a compilation of state government and local media reports, with causes including hypothermia as well as accidents related to traffic, sledding, ATVs and snowplows.

Seven people were killed when the small plane they were traveling in crashed while taking off in a snowstorm in Bangor, Maine, the Federal Aviation Administration said.

One man in New Jersey was found in the snow unresponsive with a shovel in his hand.

In New York City, eight more people were found dead amid plummeting temperatures, and an investigation to determine the causes was underway. It was not known if all of these fatalities were storm-related.

Electricity began blinking back on across the south but as of Tuesday morning more than 540,000 customers remained without it, according to the tracking site Poweroutage.com.

North Korea fires ballistic missiles towards Sea of Japan

SEOUL (AFP/APP): North Korea fired what appeared to be two ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan on Tuesday, Tokyo said.

South Korea’s Joint Chief of Staff also said it had detected a “projectile” being fired towards what Seoul calls the East Sea.

Japan’s coast guard, citing the defence ministry, said it had detected two ballistic missiles and that both were estimated to have already splashed down.

Japanese news agency Jiji Press reported the two missiles had landed outside of the country’s Exclusive Economic Zone, citing defence ministry sources.

The test is Pyongyang’s second of the month, following a salvo of missiles fired hours before South Korea’s leader headed to China for a summit.

It comes a day after a high-level visit to Seoul by the Pentagon’s number three official Elbridge Colby, who hailed South Korea as a “model ally”.

North Korea has stepped up missile testing significantly in recent years.

Analysts say this drive is aimed at improving precision strike capabilities, challenging the United States as well as South Korea, and testing weapons before potentially exporting them to Russia.

Pyeongyang is also set to hold a landmark congress of its ruling party in the coming weeks, its first in five years. Ahead of that conclave, leader Kim Jong Un ordered the “expansion” and modernisation of the country’s missile production.

55,000 local observers to watch elections in Bangladesh

DHAKA (BSS/APP): The Election Commission (EC) has allowed 55,454 local observers to monitor the 13th National Parliamentary Election and the Referendum scheduled for February 12.

Of them, 7,997 observers from 81 observation organizations centrally registered with the EC, and constituency-based 47,457 observers have been given permission to observe the elections.

A letter, signed by EC Secretariat Director (Public Relations) and Information Officer Md Ruhul Amin Mallick, revealed the information on Monday.

According to the letter, only voters of the respective polling centres and those carrying EC-approved identity cards will be allowed to enter the polling centers.

Observers must follow the ‘Election Observation Guidelines 2025’ while observing the election.

The EC launched a web portal (<https://precs.gov.bd/>) to issue identity cards and car stickers for the local observers.

To apply for identity cards and car stickers, the approved observers have to

log into the portal separately and apply online by February 3.

After verifying and approving the applications, the observers will have to download and print the cards and stickers online.

Centrally-registered observers can collect their identity cards and car stickers from the EC Public Relations Branch.

Returning officers or authorized officials will approve the online applications for constituency-based observers across the country. User IDs and passwords have already been provided to returning officers for this purpose.

Observers must follow these instructions:

Central and local observers should display their identification cards at all times during observation, ensuring they are clearly visible.

Observers must respect voters’ rights and avoid obstructing the work of EC officials.

They cannot interfere with the election process in any way. Observers may stay briefly in any area inside polling centres, provided their presence does not disrupt the election process.

Pakistan says: India's illegal occupation of Kashmir is root cause of South Asian instability

UNITED NATIONS (INP): Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar, has said that India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir in gross violation of Security Council resolutions is the root cause of instability in South Asia.

Speaking at a High-Level Open Debate of the United Nations Security Council, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar said that lasting peace in South Asia requires resolving the Kashmir dispute in line with UN resolutions and ensuring respect for treaty obligations, including water-sharing agreements. He also condemned India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty as "another blatant breach of international obligations, threatening lives, livelihoods of millions, endangering peace and security."

"Pakistan rejects the weaponisation of water and

critical natural resources," Ahmad stated, noting that treaty compliance is a cornerstone of international legal order.

Ambassador Asim said the erosion of the rule of law was contributing to conflict, humanitarian crises and weakening trust between countries. He said international law was meant to make relations between states predictable and stable. But when countries ignore agreed rules, he warned, law risks losing its meaning. The Pakistani envoy emphasised that "reaffirming international rule of law is not an abstract legal exercise but a prerequisite for peace, justice, and collective security."

"Selective application of legal norms, erosion of treaty obligation and unilateral actions have weakened trust among states and strained the multilateral system in the UN Charter," he stressed. "When law

yields to power or expediency, instability deepens, disputes entrench further, and peaceful coexistence jeopardised." He cautioned against attempts to normalise unilateral actions outside the UN framework.

Referring to tensions with India, Ambassador Ahmad said Pakistan had experienced violations of international law first-hand. He stated that last May, "India carried out an unprovoked military aggression in breach of international law and Pakistani sovereignty." He noted that Pakistan, "acting in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter," exercised "its inherent right of self-defence in responsible, restrained and proportional manner."

"Our response established that there can be no new normal based on coercion or impunity," he said, adding that "respect for international law remains the only legitimate norm governing interstate conduct."



ISLAMABAD: The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, meeting with a delegation comprising members of the Rawalpindi High Court Bar Association, Tehsil Bar Association Kabal, and Mohmand Bar Association, Mohmand District, at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

India's hesitation on US-led peace board stems from Kashmir fears, shifting Washington ties: Masood

MIRPUR (APP): Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and ex-Pakistan envoy to the United Nations and the United States, has said that India's reluctance to join the US-led Board of Peace is rooted not in procedural reservations but in deep strategic anxiety over Kashmir, potential scrutiny of human rights violations, and evolving relations with Washington. Speaking during a televised discussion in the federal capital on Tuesday, he observed that New Delhi has deliberately

avoided an outright rejection, reflecting unease rather than confidence.

Ambassador Khan explained that diplomatic circles believe India fears the Board's wide mandate, particularly the possibility that it could take up protracted disputes beyond Gaza, including Jammu and Kashmir.

He noted that India has consistently resisted third-party mediation and undermined UN Security Council resolutions affirming the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

Naeemur Rehman says: 'Not even a single project is completed timely in Karachi'

Independent Report
KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan supreme leader Engr Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has said that neither provincial status, nor federal control, but an empowered local government is the most viable solution to the woes of Karachi.

The JI Pakistan Ameer said this while addressing a press conference, held at Idara Noor-e-Haq—the JI Karachi headquarters, here on Tuesday.

Neither provincial control nor federal control—the solution to Karachi's problems lies only in an empowered city government. "A system of occupation cannot function by dis-

respecting the people's vote," he said, adding that Karachi's authority should belong only to the citizens of Karachi.

"Today, the people are dissatisfied with the Sindh government; tomorrow, they will raise their voice against the federation, he said while further commenting on the demands for federal control or provincial status.

"Empowered local government systems are successful in all major cities of the world," he said while highlighting that London and New York in the West, and Tehran and Istanbul in the Muslim world, are successful examples of this model.



HYDERABAD: Awami National Party central president Aimal Wali Khan addressing to Bacha Khan Peace Conference, organized by Awami National Party Jamshoro district, at local hotel.

Balochistan Govt prioritizes public welfare through healthcare reforms: Bakht

Independent Report
QUETTA: Balochistan Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar has reaffirmed that addressing public concerns remains the provincial government's foremost priority, with concrete measures underway to improve healthcare delivery. Speaking to visiting delegations, he highlighted that reforms grounded in transparency, merit, and good governance are central to restoring public confidence and ensuring citizens receive healthcare services at their doorstep.

The minister noted that significant steps have been taken to maintain medical facilities, ensure the

availability of medicines, and monitor staff attendance in government hospitals.

Special initiatives are underway to extend basic healthcare services to remote areas, alongside development plans focusing on upgrading existing hospitals, establishing new health units, and rehabilitating medical centers to provide enhanced treatment facilities.

Kakar emphasized that the government is working closely with public representatives and relevant departments to tackle issues related to clean drinking water, sanitation, and environmental health.

President hails CTD for successful operation against terrorists in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday paid tribute to the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) for successful operation against terrorists in Balochistan.

The president hailed the CTD and law enforcement agencies for eliminating 10 terrorists during the operation, a Presidency's news release said.

President Asif Zardari directed to provide best medical facilities to the CTD personnel injured in the anti-terrorist operation. The president emphasised that operations against terrorists were essential for establishing peace in the country and the region.

Court stops arrest of PTI founder in May 9 case, five other cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): The District and Sessions Court of Islamabad on Tuesday stopped the arrest of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in the May 9 case and five other cases, extending pre-arrest bail for him and his wife Bushra Bibi until February 6.

The court also directed that the PTI founder must be presented at the next hearing, either in person or through a video link.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka heard the case. The court passed the orders during proceedings related to the May 9 case and other pending cases registered against the PTI founder.

Due to the absence of the PTI founder, arguments on the pre-arrest bail applications could not be heard.

Renowned television actor Khalid Hafeez Khan passes away

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani entertainment industry is mourning the loss of renowned television actor Khalid Hafeez Khan, who passed away recently, leaving fans and colleagues deeply saddened.

Known for his impeccable comic timing and memorable performances, Khalid Hafeez Khan had become a household name, particularly for his role as 'Mr. Shameem' in the iconic PTV comedy drama 'Guest House', a show that continues to be celebrated by viewers decades after its original airing.

According to family sources, his funeral prayers will be offered after Asr prayers at the 'H-11 cemetery in Islamabad', and friends, colleagues, and fans are expected to pay their respects.



ISLAMABAD: The Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, H.E. U Than Swe called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

CM Bugti lauds timely & effective of action of CTD against suspects in Pishin

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday appreciated the timely and effective action of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in Pishin district against suspects.

He said that the law enforcement agencies are performing their duties with full professionalism and determination to establish law and order in Balochistan.

In a statement, the Chief Minister paid tribute to the courage, bravery and sense of duty of the CTD personnel who were injured in the exchange of fire during the operation and expressed his best wishes for their speedy recovery.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that CTD Balochistan and

police personnel are standing on the front line in the war against terrorism and are taking all possible steps to protect the lives and property of the people.

He said that the recovery of rocket launchers, SMGs and explosives from the terrorists during the operation is clear evidence that these elements were busy trying to sabotage the peace of the province and had links with banned organizations.

The CM mentioned that the government has always given top priority to peace and law enforcement, the agencies have been given clear instructions to continue their operations without discrimination under the zero tolerance policy against terrorism.

He also expressed satisfaction that the protection of the civilian population was given priority while upholding the state writ during the operation.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti made it clear that there is no room for terrorists, their facilitators and networks in Balochistan. "Until the establishment of lasting peace in the province, anti-terrorism operations will continue with full force and every conspiracy will be foiled with the cooperation of the people", he noted.

He said that the protection of the lives and property of the people of Balochistan is the first and unwavering responsibility of the government, on which no compromise to be made.

NAB, TI discuss transparency and future collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): A four-member Transparency International (TI) delegation led by Chair François Valerian met National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Lt Gen @ Nazir Ahmed at NAB Headquarters to discuss transparency accountability and prospects for enhanced cooperation between TI and NAB.

The TI delegation included Justice @ Zia Perwez, Advocate Daniyal Muzaffar and Kashif Ali. Deputy Chairman NAB Sohail Nasir and senior NAB officers were also

present.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on key anti-corruption initiatives, institutional reforms, and the importance of collaboration between national anti-graft institutions and international civil society organizations to promote accountability and good governance.

Chairman NAB emphasized the need for coordinated national and international efforts to counter corruption, noting that the challenge transcends borders and undermines the rule of law and public trust.



ISLAMABAD: A four member delegation of Transparency International headed by its Chair Mr. Francois Valerian held a meeting with Chairman NAB Lt Gen (R) Nazir Ahmed at NAB (HQ).

NA body directs Radio Pak to furnish detailed account of its nationwide properties

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday directed Radio Pakistan to furnish a detailed account of its nationwide properties, province-wise employee strength including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, pensioners, and the locations of upcoming FM stations.

Chaired by MNA Pullain Baloch, the committee further instructed that Radio Pakistan's land in Quetta be utilized for edu-

cational or health facilities instead of being converted into a park. DG Radio Saeed Ahmed Shaikh briefed members that the Balochistan Chief Minister had requested the land for a park, but assured compliance if the committee recommended otherwise.

Expressing concern over repeated bailout requests, the committee advised Radio Pakistan's management to prioritize income generation, stressing reliance on government grants is unsustainable.

Zero tolerance on lapses as Commissioner intensifies drive to wipe out polio

Independent Report
QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzeib Khan Kakar has underscored that the complete elimination of polio demands unwavering commitment, coordination and accountability from all concerned departments, making it clear that any form of negligence will be unacceptable.

Chairing a review meeting on the polio situation in the Quetta block, the commissioner examined progress and challenges related to on-

going eradication efforts. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini, the divisional focal person, members of the polio task force, relevant District Health Officers, while Deputy Commissioners of Chaman, Kila Abdullah and Pishin participated online.

During the briefing, Shahzeib Khan Kakar was presented with a comprehensive assessment of the previous polio campaign, highlighting achievements,

operational hurdles and sectors where performance fell short. He instructed officials to focus special attention on low-performing union councils and to introduce effective, targeted strategies to improve outcomes. Emphasizing transparency and efficiency, the commissioner called for further strengthening of the monitoring mechanism, recommending that specific monitors be assigned to individual union councils to enable continuous oversight.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzeib Khan Kakar presides over the meeting to review overall situation of anti-polio campaign.

Meets Myanmar's FM PM underscores expanding bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, U Than Swe, who is on an official visit to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday.

Welcoming the visiting dignitary and reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening its longstanding relations with Myanmar, the prime minister underscored the importance of expanding cooperation in trade and economic engagement, education, culture, capacity-building, and people-to-

people exchanges, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif particularly appreciated Myanmar's cooperation in combating trafficking and its support for Pakistan's engagement with ASEAN. The Myanmar Foreign Minister thanked the Prime Minister for the warm welcome accorded to him and his delegation. He conveyed the greetings and good wishes from Myanmar's leadership and expressed Myanmar's desire to expand its ties with Pakistan in areas of mutual interest.



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani meeting with Pir of Lauri Sharif, Pir Muhammad Sadiq Qureshi in the Federal Capital.

Pakistan, Ghana agree to strengthen multi sectoral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Ghana have agreed to enhance cooperation across a broad range of areas, including political, economic, defence, tourism, cultural, health, education, information technology, and other mutually beneficial sectors.

The bilateral ties were discussed during the first Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between the two countries held on Monday in Ghana, marking an important milestone in the development of bilateral relations.

The Pakistani delegation was led by Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan,

Additional Foreign Secretary, while the Ghanaian side was headed by Ambassador Khadija Iddrisu, Chief Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the consultations, two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed, including one on Bilateral Political Consultations and the other between the Foreign Service Academy, Islamabad, and the Ghana Foreign Service Institute. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations and agreed to hold the next round of the Bilateral Political Consultations in Islamabad next year.

Balochistan women's commission takes global stage

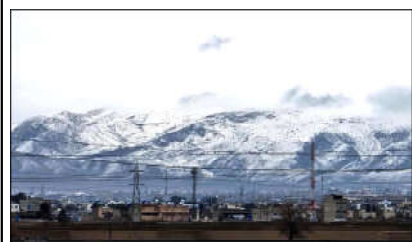
Kiran Baloch drives cross-border push for women and child rights

Independent Report

JAKARTA: Chairperson of the Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women (BCSW), Ms. Kiran Baloch, held a high-level meeting in Jakarta on January 19, 2026, with senior officials from Indonesia's Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (MOWECP), the Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Cultural Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN

Women, and the Wahid Foundation.

The meeting served as a significant forum for in-depth discussions on key challenges and emerging priorities related to women's empowerment and child protection. Participants shared perspectives on policy frameworks, practical experiences and effective approaches aimed at promoting gender equality, protecting children's rights and strengthening social inclusion.



QUETTA: Clouds and snow-covered mountains create stunning winter scene in Quetta.

Reko Diq project prioritizes local talent, boosts employment and skills

Independent Report

NOKKUNDI: Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC) has emphasized its commitment to local development, reporting that 76 percent of the project's 705 employees are from Balochistan, with the majority originating from District Chagai. The workforce also includes 11 percent expatriates and 13 percent employees from other parts of Pakistan, reflecting RDMC's focus on community empowerment.

Company data indicate that 67 percent of Balochistan-based staff are from Chagai, 10 percent from Quetta, 4 percent from

Noshki, and 19 percent from other districts. RDMC highlighted that employment and career advancement opportunities are being offered across operational, technical, and administrative roles, enabling local talent to assume leadership positions in the future.

To support this objective, specialized training programs have been launched in collaboration with technical institutions, equipping young people with modern skills. The company also underlined its commitment to gender inclusion, with women comprising 12 percent of the workforce.