

Independent

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Pakistan, Austria vow to boost bilateral ties in diverse fields

PM, Austrian Chancellor meet in Hofburg Palace, agree to enhance multi-sectoral bilateral ties

VIENNA (APP): Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday met Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria, Christian Stocker here at the Federal Chancellery in the historic Hofburg Palace.

Upon his arrival at the Federal Chancellery, the prime minister was received by Chancellor Stocker and welcomed by an impressive guard of honour ceremony. He also inscribed his com-

ments in the Guest Book, a PM's Office news release said.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday called for a new phase of economic, cultural, and strategic cooperation between Pakistan and Austria while addressing the Austrian cabinet and senior government officials in Vienna.

Speaking to Federal Chancellor Christian

Stocker, members of the Austrian government, and legislative representatives, Prime Minister Sharif conveyed warm greetings from the people of Pakistan and expressed appreciation for Austria's continued engagement with Islamabad.

"It is a great pleasure to meet you again," the prime minister said, recalling their discussions last year in New York. He noted that he had been particu-

larly impressed by the Chancellor's interest in strengthening bilateral ties.

Reflecting on earlier visits to Austria as a young tourist, Prime Minister Sharif spoke warmly of traveling to Salzburg, widely known as the birthplace of Mozart, and spending time in Vienna, where he experienced the country's historic architec-

Continued on page 2



VIENNA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in delegation level talks with Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker.

Balochistan province shifts to outcomes driven partnerships to strengthen inclusive social services

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahoore Ahmed Buledi on Monday called for results-based and long-term partnerships to strengthen inclusive and resilient social services in Balochistan, while addressing a high-level policy consultation titled "Towards Inclusive and Resilient Social Services in Balochistan", organised by the Government of Balochistan with technical support from UNICEF here in Islamabad.

Minister Buledi outlined a shift from project-based interventions to systems-oriented, outcome-focused reforms aimed at improving health, education, nutrition and social protection across the province.

Addressing representatives of development partners, federal and pro-

vincial officials and other stakeholders, the minister said Balochistan stood at a critical juncture in redefining its social development pathway, stressing that the government's approach is firmly grounded in evidence, reform and strong partnerships. Improving human development outcomes, he added, was a shared responsibility.

Highlighting progress achieved over the past decade, he cited national surveys and development studies showing a significant decline in child mortality.

Infant mortality has fallen to around 66 per 1,000 live births, while under-five mortality has declined to 78 per 1,000 live births, reflecting the impact of targeted investments in health systems and child welfare.

On education, the min-

ister noted a gradual improvement in access, with literacy rates rising to about 42 per cent. However, he acknowledged persistent challenges in learning outcomes and transitions to secondary education, underscoring the need for sustained reforms to improve quality and retention.

He also pointed to a decline in multidimensional poverty as a result of continued social sector investment, while cautioning that Balochistan still faces the highest levels of deprivation nationally, highlighting the urgency of accelerating progress through stronger service delivery systems and integrated policy interventions.

While significant investments have been made in expanding infrastructure,

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, in a meeting with His Excellency Mr. Irfan Neziroglu, Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan who paid courtesy call on the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan at Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Turkish ambassador calls on CJP ahead of Constitutional Court president's visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to Pakistan, Dr Irfan Neziroglu, called on Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi at the Supreme Court on Monday to discuss preparations for an upcoming high-level judicial exchange between the two countries.

The meeting was held in the context of the scheduled visit of the President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Türkiye

to Pakistan in March 2026. During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is expected to be signed between the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Constitutional Court of Türkiye to formalise institutional co-operation between two apex judicial bodies.

To ensure coordination at the governmental level, the meeting was also

Continued on page 2

Zardari wishes Chinese leadership happy new year

ISLAMABAD (APP): President, Asif Ali Zardari has extended his heartfelt felicitations to the people, the government and the leadership of the People's Republic of China on the occasion of Chinese New Year 2026.

In his message from the Presidency, the president said, "On the joyous occasion of Chinese New Year, ushering in the auspicious Year of the Horse, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the people, the Government and the leadership of the People's Republic of China. The Year of the Horse is traditionally associated with energy, progress and resilience. These qualities reflect the spirit of renewal and forward movement that defines this festival and resonate strongly with the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China." President Zardari underlined that the year 2026 also marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries, established in 1951. Over seven decades, he said Pakistan and China have built an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

Field Marshal Asim praises UAE support, calls its security vital for Pakistan

COAS meets Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan



RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), IJ on Monday met with Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi and National Security Advisor of United Arab Emirates Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral cooperation across various sectors, particularly in the fields of economic collaboration, investment and security, said a press release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

They also exchanged views on regional developments and emphasized importance of continued co-ordination to promote peace and stability in the region.

Field Marshal Asim Munir expressed his sincere

appreciation and gratitude to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for its longstanding investments and continued support to Pakistan's economy and security over the decades.

He noted that such support reflects the deep-rooted historical relations between the two brotherly countries and commended the constructive role of the UAE leadership in advancing economic and social development in Pakistan.

The press release said Field Marshal Asim Munir further affirmed that the security and stability of the United Arab Emirates are an integral part of Pakistan's own security, given the enduring historical relations and strong strategic partnership between the two countries.

He reiterated Pakistan's firm commitment to continuing joint efforts to further strengthen this partnership in all fields.



COLOMBO: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Sri Lankan Minister for Home and Parliamentary Affairs Ananda Wijepala during his visit to Sri Lanka.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka to deepen cooperation in sports, security, counter-narcotics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister and Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi held key meetings with Sri Lankan Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Sunil Kumara Gamage and Interior Minister Ananda Wijepala during his official visit to Colombo, agreeing to enhance cooperation across sports, security and counter-narcotics sectors.

In his meeting with the Sri Lankan Sports Minis-

ter, Naqvi discussed expanding bilateral collaboration for the promotion of sports, especially cricket. Both sides agreed to strengthen institutional linkages with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Sports and to work jointly for the development of cricket and other games.

"Warmth is growing in Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations, and cricket will further strengthen our ties,"

Continued on page 2



VEHARI: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing a public gathering at the residence of former Minister of State Nawab Shehryar Ali Khan.

Balochistan Government rolls out special Ramadan package for 328,000 needy families

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has launched a major relief initiative for over 328,000 deserving families across the province, as part of a special Ramadan Package aimed at providing essential food supplies to underprivileged households during the holy month.

Speaking to media representatives in Quetta, Director General PDMA, Jahanzeb Khan, said that the package, announced by Chief Minister Balochistan, will be distributed in phases across all districts to ensure that maximum beneficiaries can access the aid. He emphasized that transparency and accountability are at the core of the new distribution system.

To oversee fair allocation, an 8-member District Coordination Committee

has been formed in each district, tasked with monitoring the process and preventing misuse. Jahanzeb Khan noted that the distribution has already reached over 20 districts, with the remaining districts expected to receive supplies shortly.

He highlighted that the package has been carefully designed to meet the essential needs of each family for 15 days, ensuring that beneficiaries receive meaningful support throughout Ramadan. "The quality of the packages will not be compromised, and only genuinely needy families will benefit," he said, adding that no ineligible person will be allowed to take advantage of the program.

The DG stressed that the provincial government

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Director General PDMA, Jahanzeb Khan, Director PDMA Attaullah Mengal and Director Faisal Panzezi announcing special Ramadan Package during a media talk.

Balochistan to shift border trade to passport system: Hamza Shafqaat

Emphasized that illegal trade, smuggling, and the use of "post kaash" for funding unlawful activities will no longer be tolerated

QUETTA (ANN): Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Balochistan, Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat, has announced that facilitating legal traders will be a top priority and that within the next two months, the Iran border will operate under a formal One-Do or Regulation (ODR) system, making cross-border travel possible only with valid passports.

He emphasized that illegal trade, smuggling, and the use of "post kaash" for funding unlawful activities will no longer be tolerated.

Speaking at a meeting with the office-bearers and members of the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Shafqaat clarified that the perception that law

and order issues in Balochistan are primarily due to unemployment is misleading.

He noted that divisions experiencing higher terrorist incidents report lower unemployment rates compared to other areas.

Highlighting recent security operations, Shafqaat said that on January 31, nearly 400 individuals were involved in coordinated attacks across the province, resulting in 221 fatalities and around 100 arrests. He added that financial support for these attacks in the Nushki incident was obtained through illegal "post kaash," which will now be strictly curtailed.

Continued on page 2

Tarar says: PTI founder 70pc vision in one eye with glasses, other eye fully normal

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar stated that the PTI founder has 70 percent vision in one eye with the help of glasses, while his other eye has normal 6/6 vision.

Addressing a ceremony at the Sheikhupura Bar Council, he said a medical team has expressed complete satisfaction over the ongoing treatment of the PTI founder.

Opposition leaders and the former prime minister's personal physicians were also given a detailed briefing regarding his health condition.

Tarar added that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the results of difficult decisions are now emerging, and the country's economy is moving in the right direction.

Pak rejects Israel's illegal measures to steal land of Palestine

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has strongly condemned the latest attempt by the Israeli occupying forces to convert areas of the Occupied West Bank into so-called state property, and to expand illegal settlement activities.

According to a statement issued by the Foreign Office in Islamabad on Monday, such steps are in clear violation of international law as well as relevant United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and must be rejected by the international community. The occupying power's continued disregard for the international law and its provocative actions undermine the prospects for a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the region, said the statement and added, Pakistan calls on the international community to take concrete measures to end Israeli impunity.

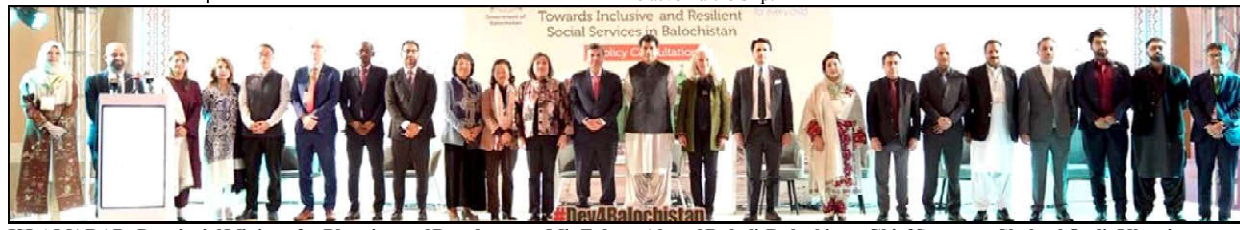
Opposition sets conditions for ending Parliament House sit-in

ISLAMABAD (INP): The opposition alliance's sit-in at the Parliament House premises has entered its fourth consecutive day, with protesting lawmakers demanding transparency regarding the PTI founder's medical condition.

Members participating in the demonstration say they are waiting for the new medical report to be submitted to the Supreme Court before deciding their next course of action.

Opposition members gathered at Parliament House say the sit-in will continue until clarity is provided about Imran Khan's health. Their key demand is that Imran Khan's personal doctors be granted immediate access for an independent medical examination.

Protesters insist that public confidence can only be restored once the personal medical team evaluates his condition.



ISLAMABAD: Provincial Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahoore Ahmed Buledi, Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan in a group photo with high level delegation of World Bank.

Sri Lanka crushes Australia by eight wickets to storm into T20 World Cup Super Eight

Sports Desk

BALAGOLLA: Sri Lanka booked their place in the Super Eight stage of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 with a commanding eight-wicket win over Australia after chasing down a target of 182 at Pallekele International Cricket Stadium on Monday.

A blistering century from Pathum Nissanka headlined the run chase as the hosts overhauled the total with authority and kept their unbeaten momentum intact.

Australia were restricted to 181 after a dramatic collapse, while Sri Lanka reached the target for

the loss of just two wickets, powered by aggressive top-order batting and disciplined spin bowling.

Sri Lanka won the toss and opted to field first, a decision that looked costly early on as Australian openers Mitchell Marsh and Travis Head launched a fierce assault. The pair added more than 100 runs for the first wicket and powered Australia to 70 without loss in the powerplay, their best start of the tournament.

Marsh smashed 54 off 27 balls with eight fours and two sixes before being trapped lbw by Dushan

Hemantha. Head continued the charge with 56 from 29 deliveries, striking seven fours and three sixes. At 105 for one after nine overs, Australia looked set for a total well beyond 200.

The momentum shifted sharply once the spinners were introduced. Hemantha broke through and triggered a slide, while Sri Lanka's slow bowlers squeezed the scoring rate through the middle overs. Australia lost their last five wickets for just seven runs and were bowled out for 181, adding only 31 runs across a five-over stretch after their flying start.

Kashmir emerges as Intl flashpoint following Marka-e-Haq: Muqam

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Amir Muqam on Monday said that following the Marka-e-Haq, Jammu and Kashmir dispute has emerged as a flashpoint at the international level.

This dispute has enhanced Pakistan's standing and highlighted the strength of its military. Pakistan achieved this significant success under the dynamic leadership of Chief of Defense Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir whose command demonstrated the country's resolve and military capability.

He expressed these views while addressing the Overseas Kashmiris Convention held here at a hotel hosted jointly by the AJK Government and Overseas

Pakistanis Foundation, where federal and regional leaders praised the contributions of overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris to the country's economy and the Kashmir cause.

Federal Minister while describing overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris a valuable national asset said that they were contributing billions of dollars in the form of remittances annually, strengthening Pakistan's economy. He thanked participants for traveling from abroad and acknowledged the diaspora's support during difficult times, including earthquake rehabilitation efforts.

Calling overseas Pakistanis "ambassadors of Pakistan," Muqam said their advocacy abroad had helped highlight the Kashmir issue globally.

Balochistan..

Continued from page 1

is fully committed to supporting vulnerable communities, deploying all available resources to provide maximum relief during the holy month. He urged the public to cooperate with the authorities to ensure smooth distribution and equitable access for all eligible families.

This initiative is part of the government's broader commitment to uplift marginalized communities, improve living standards, and ensure that the blessings of Ramadan reach those most in need.

Turkish..

Continued from page 1

attended by the Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice, and a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Justice Yahya Afridi welcomed the proposed visit and reaffirmed the Supreme Court's commitment to extending full judicial courtesy and hospitality to the visiting dignitary, reflecting the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkey.

The chief justice highlighted the historic and cordial ties between the two countries, rooted in shared legal traditions, mutual respect and enduring cultural bonds. He noted the expanding cooperation in areas such as technology integration within the judiciary, capacity building, and the exchange of best practices at various levels of the judicial system.



ISLAMABAD: NDMA conducted Humanitarian Conference on Sectoral Clusterization on Disaster Management at NDMA HQs.

Balochistan province..

Continued from page 1

including education support programmes, health system strengthening and water supply initiatives, he said key indicators such as female literacy, nutrition outcomes and service quality remained areas of concern.

He added that the next phase of reform would prioritise human capital development, service quality and resilient delivery systems. Outlining the province's strategic direction, the minister said the government is transitioning from a project-centric approach to a systems-oriented and outcome-focused model. Key priorities include integrating health, nutrition, education and social protection services, leveraging data and digital tools for improved planning and accountability, and aligning provincial investments with the Sustainable Development Goals and climate resilience principles.

silence principles.

He emphasised the importance of deeper engagement with development institutions such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, KfW, World Food Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, saying the province sought strategic, programmatic partnerships delivering measurable outcomes rather than isolated projects. Identifying priority areas for collaboration, he highlighted the need to improve learning outcomes, strengthen frontline health and nutrition services, expand climate-responsive social protection systems, invest in women and girls as drivers of human development, and enhance monitoring and data systems to ensure accountability. In conclusion, he reaffirmed the Government of Balochistan's commitment to building inclusive, resilient and accountable social systems.

Balochistan..

Continued from page 1

Shafqat assured that residents of border districts will receive financial assistance under the Benazir Income Support Program, and free passports will soon be issued to facilitate legitimate cross-border trade. He also announced that children of registered workers will be offered free education at top national institutions, while those seeking overseas employment may receive up to PKR 7 lakh in provincial support.

Addressing concerns raised by the Chamber of Commerce, Shafqat said steps would be taken to improve border operations, including extending Tiffin border hours, allowing all goods to pass through the Bazaarcha Business Terminal, and reviewing tax valuation challenges that hinder legal trade.

He urged the Chamber to form a committee to liaise with the government on resolving business issues and promised close collaboration to prevent disruption in commerce and employment.

Pakistan, Austria..

Continued from page 1

ture and renowned coffee culture.

He also highlighted the importance of cultural co-operation in fostering goodwill between the two nations, referencing collaborative cultural initiatives supported by Austrian partners. Such efforts, he said, play a vital role in deepening people-to-people connections.

The two leaders held a restricted meeting, followed by delegation-level talks, which included Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Syed Tariq Fatemi as well as Foreign Secretary Amna Baboch.

Both leaders recalled the friendly and historic ties between the two countries and committed to work together more closely to further strengthen the bilateral relationship in diverse fields including economic cooperation, trade and investment, tourism, hospitality, education, IT, healthcare and human resource development and mobility. They agreed to work for the early finalization of MoUs under consideration related to these areas.

Both sides also exchanged views on regional and global developments, and agreed on the central role of the United Nations in addressing the challenges of peace and security.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka..

Continued from page 1

Naqvi said, appreciating Sri Lanka's exceptional arrangements for the T20 World Cup. He also thanked the Sri Lankan government and people for their "remarkable hospitality" and formally invited the Sri Lankan Sports Minister to visit Pakistan.

Pakistan's High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Major General (Retd.) Faheem-ul-Aziz, Advisor to PCB Chairman Aamir Mir, PCB COO Sameer Ahmed and PSL CEO Salman Naseer were also present during the meeting.

Later, Naqvi met Sri Lankan Interior Minister Ananda Wijeyapala, who welcomed him warmly at the Ministry of Interior. The two ministers reviewed avenues for deepening cooperation in internal security, counterterrorism and counter-narcotics.

They also discussed forming joint strategies to combat cybercrimes and financial fraud networks, and agreed to boost coordination to curb illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

During the talks, Naqvi offered training opportunities for Sri Lankan police officers at Pakistan's National Police Academy, noting that training exchange programmes would significantly enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies in both countries. "Cooperation between the interior ministries will open new avenues in bilateral relations," Naqvi stated, adding that Pakistan and Sri Lanka must work closely to counter the growing challenges of cyber and financial crimes. Naqvi invited the Sri Lankan Interior Minister to visit Pakistan and conveyed gratitude for the warm hospitality extended during his visit.

CANCELLATION

The procuring agency, in exercise of powers conferred under Rule-38 of the Balochistan Public Procurement Rule, 2014, amended up to date hereby cancel the bidding process for the procurement of CONSTRUCTION OF WSS KILLI KATABAGH AJRAM 1, KILLI KATABAGH AJRAM 2, KILLI KATABAGH AJRAM 3, KILLI KATABAGH AJRAM 4, DISTRICT PISHIN (BSDI PHASE 2) TSE-252602965393 and CONSTRUCTION OF WSS KILLI MANZAKI 1, WSS KILLI MANZAKI 2, WSS KILLI MANZAKI 3, WSS KILLI MANZAKI 4, DISTRICT PISHIN (BSDI PHASE 2) TSE-252602965393 due to unavoidable circumstances, for which tender were published in daily newspapers vide PRQ No. 3601/03-02-2026.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION PISHIN

PRQ No.3795/16-2-2026

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TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer Roads CWPP&H Department District I oralai invites sealed Bids from eligible bidder who can prove their eligibility and qualification is mention in the bidding documents for the mentioned below percentage tender based on composite schedule of rates 2023 GOB amended up to date from interested contractor/firm for the work below:- **Tender Fee 2000/-, Time Limit Two Years**

| S. No. | Name of Work | Estimated Cost | Call Deposit amount | TSE No. |
|--------|---|----------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Construction Widening & Beautification of Main City (Bacha Khan) Chowk. | 49,000 Milion | 1960000/- In shape of Call Deposit | 252602971063 |

The procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Baluchistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rule-2014. BASIC ELIGIBILITY:- Presence in Active Tax Payer list. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any Procuring Agency of Pakistan. Baluchistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The Bidder must have completed 3 Assignments of similar nature of works. Turnover of at least 34,300,000PKR amount in 1 subsequent previous year showing financial capacity of firm. Attach PEC Certificate, CDR 4% of Estimated Cost. Green challan of Rs.2000/- A minimum of three completed works of similar scope and cost must be provided. **TERMS & CONDITION :-** The undersigned has right to cancel the tender before opening date or some date of the tender opening. Under the following conditions bid will be rejected. Conditional & Telegraphic bids/tender. Bid not accompanied by green challan and Bid Security of required amount and form as specified in the bidding documents. Bid received after specified date and time. **METHOD OF PROCUREMENT.** Single stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure. Bidding procedure envelope shall be marked as "Financial Proposal" and "Technical Proposal" in Bold letter to avoid any confusion. **BID SECURITY.** The Bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 4% specified above in the name of undersigned **BIDDING / TENDER DOCUMENTS.** Complete Bidding Documents can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk **LAST DATE OF BID SUBMISSION.** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by **02 March 2026 till 10.00 AM. TENDER OPENING.** All tenders will be opened on same date at 11.00 AM on **EPSS System.** **ADDRESS.** Office of the Executive Engineer, CWPP&H Department, Zhoob road District Loralai. Telephone No. 0824410031 E-mail. dawoodatexon@gmail.com

Executive Engineer (Roads), CWPP&H Department District Loralai

PRQ No.3799/16-02-2026

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TENDER NOTICE

The Chief officer Municipal Committee Nushki invites Sealed Tenders, based on composite schedule of Rates 2023, Gob Amended up to date from interested contractors/Firms for the work for the year (2025-26) BSDI PHASE-II is listed below. Tender fee 1000/- for each work **Bid Security 2% for each work**

| S. No | Name of work | Est. Cost | TSE Number |
|-------|---|-----------|------------------|
| 1 | CONSTRUCTION OF PCC DRAIN FROM MAIN BAZAR VIA GGHS TO DHQ ROAD MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE AREA NUSHKI. | 24000000 | TSE-252602975673 |
| 2 | REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF SOLAR LIGHTS FROM TARIQ CHOWK TO KALAM CHOWK AND INSTALLATION OF NEW SOLAR LIGHTS FROM N-40 TO JAMALABAD (3 KMS.) | 15000000 | TSE-252602975663 |
| 3 | CONSTRUCTION OF RETAINING WALL AT KHAISAR BRIDGE NUSHKI | 25000000 | TSE-252602975093 |

Procurements shall be made under BPPRA Rules 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List b) The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. c) Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required d) The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work e) Turnover of at least 17,500,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm d) Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-6 and above (Upto 25 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE03, CE04, CE04(i) (Dams/Water Retaining Structures), CE04(ii) (Irrigation & Flood Control Systems), CE04(iii) (dams only), CE04(iv) (Irrigation Only), and EE11(i) (Solar), EE11(ii) (Solar Energy), EE11(iii) (Solar Energy system), EE11(iv) (General Electrical Works Only). CE01: Roads and Pavements, Drainage & Retaining Structures, CE10: General Civil Engineering Works (e) quality cum least cost. f) The contractor must have a bank deposit equivalent to 70% of the tendered cost as performance guarantee and produce a bank certificate (f) The contractor must produce scheduled/ plan of work and method statement of work. **Method of procurement:** Single Stage One Envelope Procedure. **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the Of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee of amount specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender documents:** the bidding documents can be obtained from office of the under-signed upon payment (non-refundable) bidding document fee (amount mentioned above) Tender fee deposited in Municipal Committee Nushki account 4039392708 through Bank (The NIT Bidding can also be downloaded from www.bppra.org.pk **Issuance of tender Documents:** from the date of publication Of NIT to 10/03/2026 during office hours on weeks days. **Last date of bid submission:** Tenders should be submitted on 10/03/2026 till 11.00 AM at the office of the undersigned. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12.00 AM. Address: "at Office of the Municipal Committee Nushki Mobile no.03482296744 Email. munawarkhan6744@gmail.com

CHIEF OFFICER MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE NUSHKI

AB No.863/16-02-2026

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TENDER NOTICE

The NATURAL CALAMITIES & OTHER DISASTER (ESTABLISHMENT) invites bids from eligible Bidder for supply of following items. **TSE-252602975781 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. Tender Fee 1,000 PKR**

| S.No | Class of Object | Bid Security |
|------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Manufactured Vehicles & Accessories (Total Item(s) Count: 79) | 2% |

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 10,000,000 in Previous 3 Years Turn over of at least 10,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan JV is permissible Submission of the required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive Submission of the required Bidding document Fee All required Vehicle parts and accessories must be genuine. Affidavit on Rs.100/- stamp paper with TSE number and work title, duly notarized, confirming bid info is true. If any document is fake/forged, bidder shall be blacklisted and guarantee forfeited. Submission of the Financial Audit Report Chartered Accountant Firm of Last 03 Years i.e. 2023,2024,2025 Submission of Audit completion under section 25 of Sales Tax Act 1990 The Bidder must be able to submit bid security prior one day before opening of the technical bid Manufacturer must be Vehicle parts manufacturing company with valid NTN and Sales Tax registration, authorizing to supply of parts specified in tender/work. **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of **Deposit at Call of 2 %** specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk **Issuance of tender Documents:** Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk **Last Date of bid submission:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by **04 March, 2026 till 12:00 PM** through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at **01:00 PM on EPSS System Address:** Grain Silos Sheikh Manda Airport Road Quetta Phone no: 0819241118 Fax no: 0819241126 Email: pdma.balochistan2007@gmail.com

Assistant Director NATURAL CALAMITIES & OTHER DISASTER

AB No.860/16-02-2026

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TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer (Building) CW PP&H Department Musakhail invites sealed bids from eligible bidders who can prove their eligibility and qualification as mention in the bidding documents for the work mentioned below. The work estimated cost and other information of works as under tender based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2023. Government of Balochistan amended up to date as required from interested contractors / firms for the work listed below under BPPRA Rules.

| S. No. | Name of Work | Estimated Cost in Million | Tender Fee | Earnest Money |
|--------|--|---------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 1 | CONSTRUCTION OF ONE WASHROOM IN GGMS KILLI MALIK NIAZ KARKANA DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE WASHROOM IN GGMS KHANULLAH KARKANA DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE WASHROOM IN GGHS GARGOJI DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF TWO (2) ADDITIONAL ROOMS AT GBHS KARKANA TEHSIL DRUG DISTRICT. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE WASH ROOM IN GGMS KILLI MATHAN GHARBI DRUG DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE (01) CLASS ROOM GGHS FIRDA USMANI DRUG DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. (BSDI-Phase-I) TSE 252602974933 | Rs. 8.415 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 2 | CONSTRUCTION OF BOYS PRIMARY SCHOOL GARDIN SUMAN MARA BARKOHI TEHSIL DRUG DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. PROVISION OF WATER PIPES AND WATER MACHINEFOR GGMS KILLI MALIK GHULAM MID NATHI DRUG. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE (01) CLASS ROOM GGMS KILLI HAJI ALLAHAD NATH TEHSIL INHUS DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. (BSDI-Phase-II) TSE 252602974933 | Rs. 7.524 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 3 | REPAIRING WORK OF PUBLIC LIBRARY AT DISTRICT HEAD QUARTER DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. TSE 252602971873 (BSDI-Phase-II) | 2,475 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 4 | CONSTRUCTION OF THREE ROOMS OF NEW UPGRADED GOVERNMENT BOYS MIDDLE SCHOOL ZIARAT NIKA KOUCH JAMALZAI DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE (01) ADDITIONAL CLASS ROOM GBHS DAKYAN DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. (BSDI-Phase-I) TSE 252602975043 | Rs. 8.415 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 5 | CONSTRUCTION OF ONE WASHROOM IN GGMS KANWAR KIRAN GHUMI WINDPATA DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. ONE (01) CLASS ROOM IN GGHS JAIL ARAD MIRADZAI ONE (01) CLASS ROOM GGHS GHAI DODAZAI OLMAI. ONE WASHROOM IN GGHS MAJALLAH JAFFARABAD. ONE WASHROOM IN GGPS YARD NO 3 MALAK IQBAL. NEWASHROOM&REPAIR OF GGPS MUJALLAH HASSANKHAIL WARD NO 4. ONE (01) CLASS ROOM GGMS HAFIZ AHMED ESSOT NEW BAZAR MUSAKHAIL. ONE (01) CLASS ROOM GGPS NEW BAZAR MUSAKHAIL CITY DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. (BSDI-Phase-II) TSE 252602975033 | Rs. 8.118 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 6 | REPAIR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL MUHAMMADZAI DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. REPAIR OF BUILDING AT GBHS HAFIZ MUHAMMADUJIN ZAWAK MIKAN. REPAIR & INSTALLATION OF DOORS & WINDOWS OF GGMS RAHIM JAMALZAI UC SIRA KHAWA TEHSIL MUSAKHAIL DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. REPAIR OF GBHS TOISAR TEHSIL TOISAR DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. (BSDI-Phase-II) TSE 252602975033 | Rs. 7.120 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 7 | CONSTRUCTION OF GGPS MALAK HAKEEM SALMEZAI DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE (01) ADDITIONAL CLASS ROOM GGPS KILLI SALMEZAI DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE (01) CLASS ROOM IN GGPS MALAK HAKEEM SALMEZAI DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF GGPS LOGHAI PUNGA UC NALI MIRADZAI TEHSIL TOISAR DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. (BSDI-Phase-II) TSE 252602974993 | Rs. 6.237 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 8 | CONSTRUCTION OF TWO (2) ROOMS GGPS KILLI RAIZAN SHAH TEHSIL KINORI UC RARASHAN DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF TWO (2) ROOMS BUILDING AT GGMS ZAHIR ROD TEHSIL KINORI UC KOTI KHAN MUHAMMAD DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. REPAIR F GGMS KILLI PATRA ANDERPUR DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. (BSDI-Phase-II) TSE 252602974713 | Rs. 6.237 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 9 | CONSTRUCTION OF LABOUR ROOM ALONG WITH VERANDAH & ATTACH BATH IN BHU KARKANA DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF CO KHEWAN ESSOT TEHSIL TAIR ESSOTE DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF ONE DAMAGED ROOM AND REPAIR OF WHOLE BHU IN BURKAI TEHSIL DURUG DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. (BSDI-Phase-II) TSE 252602974793 | Rs. 9.005 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 10 | CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDING FOR HAJI SOBA KHAN BLOOD BANK IN DISTRICT HEAD QUARTER MUSAKHAIL. CONSTRUCTION OF OT ROOM IN DHQ HOSPITAL MUSAKHAIL. REPAIR OF CO CHIEENA KUNDAI DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. TSE 252602974713 (BSDI-Phase-II) | Rs. 5.45 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 11 | REPAIR OF THREE (3) OFF-ROAD AMBULANCES (BSDI-Phase-II) TSE-252602974383 | Rs. 1.860 | Rs 1500 | 2% |
| 12 | REPAIR OF BHU NARI RAGHA MOZA RAMAK ZIMRI PLASEEN DISTRICT MUSAKHAIL. MAJOR REPAIR AT BHU ZIMRI (BSDI-Phase-II) TSE 252602971913 | Rs. 2.673 | Rs 1500 | 2% |

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan public Procurement Rules- 2014. **BASIC ELIGIBILITY:** Eligibility Criteria & Evaluation Criteria for bidders may be seen in the Bidding Documents. **METHOD OF PROCUREMENT:** Single stage - One Envelop Bidding Procedure. **BIDDING / TENDER DOCUMENTS:** The Bidding document can be downloaded for www.bppra.pk and the same can also be obtained from the office of the under signed upon payment of prescribed tender fee deposited in the head of account C-02706 NBP Bank green challan is verified by treasury. **DEAD LINE OF SUBMISSION:** Office of the Executive Engineer Building CWPP&H Department Musakhail before **02, March, 2026 at 11:00 Hrs. Opening.** "Technical Bids" will be opened on the same day i.e. **02, March, 2026, at 12:00 Hrs** before procurement committee in the presence of bides. Address: **Office of the Executive Engineer (Building) CWPP&H Department District Musakhail**

Executive Engineer (Building) CWPP&H Department District Musakhail

PRQ No.3784/16-02-2026

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Secretary C&W directs to expedite pace of ongoing uplift projects

QUETTA (APP): On special directive of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, Secretary Communications and Works (C&W) Babar Khan made a detailed visit to various important projects to accelerate the pace of ongoing development projects in the provincial capital Quetta.

During the visit, he reviewed the ongoing work on the Red Zone, Chaman Phatak to Koila Phatak, Alamo Chowk Airport Road and Chashma Pul projects and took a briefing from the concerned authorities about the progress.

Chief Engineer Federal Projects Dr. Sajad Baloch, Executive Engineer E&M Works Division Haji Muhammad Anwar, Executive Engineer Roads Sariab Division Habib Ahmed, Executive Engineer Roads Kuchlak Division Qazi Sanaulah and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.

Secretary Communications and Works inspected the sites of various projects and reviewed the ongoing construction activities in detail.

Executive Engineers and other officers gave a comprehensive briefing to

the Secretary regarding the current progress of the projects, challenges faced and expected completion times.

Secretary Communications and Works Babar Khan directed that the completion of all ongoing development projects should be expedited and the quality should be improved so that the public could get facilities as soon as possible. He said that all these projects are of utmost importance and their timely completion would reduce traffic problems in the city and provide significant relief to the citizens.



QUETTA: Finance Department Govt of Balochistan formally started preparation of Budget for the fiscal year 2026-27.

PML-N women wing meets DC Naseerabad to discuss public welfare, development priorities

Independent Report
NASEERABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Women Wing Provincial General Secretary and Provincial Assembly member, Akhtar Bibi, emphasized that providing maximum relief to citizens and improving their quality of life remain top priorities for the party. She highlighted that PML-N is also pursuing federal-level initiatives to accelerate development nationwide and ensure better facilities for the public.

Akhtar Bibi held a high-level meeting with Deputy Commissioner

Naseerabad Captain @ Zulfiqar Ali Karar at his office, attended by SSP Naseerabad Asadullah Nasir, Assistant Commissioner Dera Murad Jamali Bahadur Khan Khosa, Muhammad Aslam Bangulzai, Abdul Qayyum Johar Bangulzai, Khan Jan Bangulzai, and other dignitaries.

The discussions focused on the overall law and order situation in Naseerabad, progress on ongoing development projects, and strategies for public welfare. Deputy Commissioner Zulfiqar Ali

Karrar stated that the district administration is working closely with the police to maintain and strengthen law and order, ensuring the safety of citizens' lives and property.

He also highlighted that, in line with the directives of the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of Balochistan, the practice of holding khuli kachahri (public grievance hearings) continues, allowing residents to present their concerns directly to officials and facilitating prompt, practical solutions.



NASSERABAD: MNA Akhtar Bibi meeting with Deputy Commissioner Captain (ret'd) Zulfiqar Ali Karar.

DC Habib launches district-wide plantation drive in Chaman

Independent Report
CHAMAN: A comprehensive tree plantation campaign has been formally launched across Chaman district under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Chaman Habib Ahmed Bangulzai. The initiative commenced at Kojak Park, where the Deputy Commissioner planted a sapling to mark the start of the drive.

Speaking on the occasion, Habib Ahmed Bangulzai stated that transforming Chaman into a

green and vibrant district is a top priority of the district administration. He said efforts would be made to develop Kojak Park into an environmentally exemplary recreational site.

He highlighted that tree plantation not only enhances the natural beauty of an area but also plays a vital role in reducing environmental pollution by producing oxygen. A greener Chaman, he added, is essential for fostering positive thinking and promoting public health.



QUETTA: Stagnant rainwater in Quetta highlights negligence of authorities following downpour.

Sibi administration opens tenders for key development projects under strict oversight

Independent Report
SIBI: Under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Sibi Mansoor Ali Shah and Wing Commander Colonel Zubair, the district administration formally opened tenders for development projects under BSDI Phase Two, managed by the UPN&D Department.

The tender opening ceremony saw the participation of Executive Engineer UPN&D Raziq Mari, Executive Engineer Irriga-

tion Khadim Hussain Chandio, and other relevant officials. Following the opening, officials initiated a detailed scrutiny of contractors' technical and financial documents to ensure compliance with project requirements.

Authorities emphasized that every stage of the procurement process will strictly adhere to Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (BPPRA) rules and regulations.

ADC Chaman conducts surprise visit to Matric examination centre

Independent Report
CHAMAN: Additional Deputy Commissioner Chaman Fida Baloch paid an unannounced visit to the examination centre established at Jamal Nasir Stadium Hall during the ongoing matriculation examinations.

During the inspection, he thoroughly reviewed arrangements at the centre and observed the examination process inside the hall. Issuing clear directives to the examination superintendent and staff, he instructed that question papers must be commenced and conclude strictly according to the scheduled time.

He further emphasized that strict vigilance must be maintained to prevent cheating under any circumstances and that no unauthorized individual should be allowed inside the examination premises.



QUETTA: Secretary Food Arshad Bugti meeting with Provincial Minister for Food and Chairman Balochistan Food Authority Haji Noor Muhammad Durrani.

Strategic investments key to unlocking Balochistan's untapped potential: Zahid

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Additional Chief Secretary Balochistan, Zahid Saleem, delivered the opening address at the high-level policy consultation titled "Towards Inclusive and Resilient Social Services in Balochistan: A Policy Consultation," organized by the Government of Balochistan with technical support from UNICEF on February 16, 2026, in Islamabad.

Welcoming distinguished representatives of development partners, senior government officials, and stakeholders from across sectors, the Additional Chief Secretary underscored the importance of sustained partnerships and strategic investments to accelerate social and economic development in Balochistan.

He emphasized that the consultation reflects the Government's commitment to strengthening policy dialogue, aligning priorities, and mobilizing coordinated support for long-term, sustainable progress.

In his address, Zahid Saleem highlighted that Balochistan possesses significant untapped potential, and targeted investments in social sectors are essential to improving human development outcomes and reducing regional disparities.

He stressed that the province now requires focused investments aimed at strengthening the quality, efficiency, and resilience of social service delivery systems.

He further emphasized the need for investments in

strengthening governance systems, improving institutional capacity, and enhancing data-driven planning and monitoring mechanisms. He noted that modernizing service delivery through digital systems and strengthening accountability frameworks would be critical to ensuring transparency, efficiency, and measurable outcomes.

Zahid Saleem also highlighted the importance of climate resilience, noting that Balochistan is particularly vulnerable to climate-related risks, including drought and water scarcity. He called for enhanced support to strengthen adaptive social protection systems and climate-resilient infrastructure to safeguard vulnerable populations and ensure sustainable development.



QUETTA: Provincial Ameer Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam Senator Maulana Abdul Wasay addressing during a meeting.

Khuli Kachehri in Turbat brings citizens' grievances to forefront, admin pledges immediate action

Independent Report
TURBAT: In a proactive move to bridge the gap between citizens and government institutions, the Kech district administration, in coordination with FC Balochistan and District Council Kech, organized a high-profile khuli kachehri at the Circuit House in Turbat. The gathering saw the active participation of Chairman District Council Kech, Mir Othman Baloch; Assistant Commissioner Tarp, Shaikh Baloch; Additional Deputy Commissioner Kech (Revenue), Asadullah Baloch; SHO Turbat City, Abdul Ghafar Dashti; FC officials; heads of all district departments; and a large crowd of concerned residents.

The khuli kachehri

became a vibrant platform for citizens to voice pressing local issues directly to senior officials. Residents highlighted critical challenges including shortages of medicines in hospitals, teacher absenteeism in schools, deteriorating road infrastructure, irregular water supply, frequent electricity load-shedding, surging inflation, and delays in ongoing development projects. The public also stressed the need to revive cross-border trade to boost local livelihoods.

Responding to these concerns, district authorities assured that swift, practical, and effective measures would be taken. Departmental heads were instructed to conduct immediate field visits, evaluate ground realities, and

implement corrective actions without delay. Officials emphasized that any lapse in resolving public grievances would not be tolerated, with strict monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure accountability and performance.

Chairman District Council Kech, Mir Othman Baloch, highlighted that initiatives like the khuli kachehri strengthen trust between the administration and citizens while promoting transparency and responsiveness in governance. Participants welcomed the session as a step toward more accessible government, expressing optimism that it would lead to tangible improvements in service delivery and infrastructure across Turbat and neighboring areas.



QUETTA: Members of consumer society protest against Quetta cleanliness project at Quetta Press Club.

BRA launches major tax awareness drive for govt officials in Hub

Independent Report
HUB: Government officers and staff in Hub received a comprehensive briefing on provincial tax compliance as the Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA) organized a high-profile awareness and orientation session to ensure proper implementation of withholding tax laws.

The session highlighted the critical responsibilities of designated withholding agents, including

deducting sales tax at prescribed rates, submitting returns on time, and avoiding common compliance errors. BRA experts also explained legal obligations and potential penalties for non-compliance, ensuring participants fully understand the importance of timely adherence.

Representatives from multiple departments actively engaged in discussions, raising questions and receiving detailed guidance.



QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehruallah Badini presides over the meeting regarding plantation campaign.

Quetta administration launches major drive to green the city

Independent Report
QUETTA: Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Mehruallah Badini, the district administration has launched an ambitious tree plantation campaign aimed at beautifying the city and promoting a cleaner, greener environment.

The high-level meeting saw participation from Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Muhammad Anwar Kahr, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Quetta Hafiz Muhammad Tariq, officials from the Forest Department, representatives of Rotary Club, and Quetta Online. During the

session, it was decided that the plantation drive will be carried out extensively along major city roads, educational institutions, and other key public spaces.

Deputy Commissioner Badini emphasized that enhancing the aesthetic appeal of Quetta and maintaining a pollution-free, healthy environment remains a top priority for the district administration. He directed relevant authorities to ensure that the plantation drive is conducted in a well-organized and systematic manner, with proper care and maintenance of the newly planted trees.



QUETTA: CEO BRSP Dr. Tahir Rasheed meeting with Advisor to CM for Women Development Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi. Mir Asad Khan Buledi is also present on the occasion.

DC Ziarat holds Khuli Kachahri to resolve public grievances at doorstep

Independent Report
ZIARAT: Deputy Commissioner Ziarat, Abdul Quddus Achakzai, held a khuli kachahri (public grievance session) in Union Council Zandra to address citizens' concerns and ensure timely resolution of their issues, in line with the directives of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti and Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir.

The session witnessed participation from district officials and residents from remote areas, with a large number of citizens presenting petitions regarding various administrative, social, and civic issues. Deputy Commissioner Achakzai issued on-the-spot instructions for the immediate redressal of matters falling under the jurisdiction of the district administration.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC emphasized that the primary goal of the khuli kachahri is to resolve public problems at their

doorstep. He reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring access to education, healthcare, and all essential services for the people of Ziarat.

He highlighted ongoing initiatives to strengthen law and order in the district, noting that criminal elements have been effectively neutralized, paving the way for peace and security. Infrastructure development projects are also underway to enhance living standards across the district.

Deputy Commissioner Achakzai urged citizens to continue raising their issues through official forums, assuring them of the administration's full commitment to resolving complaints promptly. "Our foremost priority is the welfare of the people, providing them access to education, health, and other essential facilities, and addressing their grievances directly at their doorstep," he said.



QUETTA: MS Civil Hospital and other officials cutting a cake during a ceremony to mark Paramedics Day organized by Pakistan Paramedical Staff Association.

Naseerabad administration launches Ramadan drive to shield citizens from price hikes

Independent Report
NASEERABAD: With the holy month underway, Naseerabad district authorities have taken proactive steps to ensure maximum relief for residents against rising prices of essential commodities.

An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Assistant Commissioner Dera Murad Jamali, Bahadur Khan Khosa, bringing together representatives of trade associations, unions, and local business leaders. Notable participants included Chairman of the Citizens' Action Committee Mir Muhammad Rahim

The gathering focused on stabilizing prices of food items, strengthening market oversight, and establishing affordable markets for residents. Speaking at the session, AC Bahadur Khan Khosa stressed that providing tangible relief to the public during Ramadan is the administration's top priority.

He urged traders and union representatives to actively cooperate in curbing price hikes and hoarding, particularly for vegetables, meat, lentils, rice, and other essentials.

Following directives from Deputy Commissioner Naseerabad Captain @ Zulfiqar Ali Karar, the administration plans to organize affordable bazaars at multiple locations where high-quality goods will be available at reasonable rates, offering

genuine relief to citizens during the fasting month.

Traders assured full cooperation, pledging to respect the sanctity of Ramadan by discouraging profiteering and hoarding. It was clear that overpricing and artificial inflation would not be tolerated, warning that strict legal action would be taken against violators. Citizens were encouraged to report instances of exploitation via the district administration's helpline at 0333-3726000 for immediate intervention.

The meeting concluded with a firm commitment to delivering coordinated, practical measures that ensure accessible, affordable essentials for all residents throughout Ramadan, reinforcing a collaborative approach between administration and community leaders.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Tuesday February 17, 2026

Heavy cost of SOEs

Burdened by chronic losses and rising debt, Pakistan's SOEs have for years drained public funds that could have been spent on sectors such as healthcare and education. Frequent equity injections, subsidies, loans and sovereign guarantees reduced the pressure on these entities to fix their inefficiencies. Instead of reform, the outcome has been a growing pile of liabilities. Successive governments promised to restructure, privatise or improve the governance of these enterprises. Under various IMF programmes — including the current one — Islamabad pledged greater transparency, regular performance audits and the appointment of professional independent boards. But follow-through has been weak. Reforms are announced with fanfare, yet implementation rarely matches the rhetoric. Poor political will, coupled with resistance from vested interests, continues to stall meaningful change, adding to the burden of taxpayers.

This is what the Central Monitoring Unit's latest stocktake of SOEs for the past fiscal year has highlighted once again. Government support to these entities jumped 37pc to Rs2.079tr, driven mainly by Rs729bn in fresh equity injections and an expansion in official lending. Even though direct grants and subsidies have declined, the overall financial burden on the exchequer continues to grow. Total SOE liabilities have climbed to Rs9.571tr, roughly half the annual federal budget. Unfunded pension obligations alone stand at Rs2.03tr. Meanwhile, the circular debt remains stuck at around Rs1.9tr despite repeated capital injections. The form of support may have changed, but the underlying structural strain remains intact. The opportunity cost is enormous. Out of Rs12.97tr collected in taxes, about Rs2.1tr — nearly one in every six rupees — was redirected towards SOEs to keep them afloat. In effect, public revenue is being recycled to sustain entities that together posted a net adjusted loss of Rs122.9bn last year. The deep-rooted problems of the public sector are most visible in the crumbling power sector. It is the least liquid and most heavily indebted segment of the state system, reflecting a broader failure of governance. The CMU assessment is particularly striking because the power sector has received the largest share of government equity injections and fiscal support. With mounting losses and negative equity, the sector leadership appears unable to run it as a viable commercial enterprise. The CMU's recommendations — stronger boards, timely audits, better disclosure and performance-based accountability — are not new. What makes this report stand out is its blunt conclusion that the crisis is not just about financial losses but also the absence of strategic direction. Without fundamental restructuring, disciplined capital allocation and a shift from merely keeping entities afloat to making them efficient, SOEs cannot function as sustainable businesses.

Maleeha Lodhi

The terrorist attack on an imambargah earlier this month — the worst in the federal capital for over a decade — prompted Pakistani leaders to again accuse Afghanistan of providing sanctuary to violent groups that threaten Pakistan's security. The militant IS-K (Islamic State-Khorasan) group that claimed responsibility is based in Afghanistan and estimated to have 2,000 fighters. Initial investigation by Pakistan's security agencies found that the mastermind of the Feb 6 bombing belonged to Da'esh and trained in Afghanistan.

In a statement, President Asif Ali Zardari called out the Taliban regime for harbouring terrorist organisations. In similar vein, several ministers pointed the finger at Kabul and alleged that its 'collusion' with India was behind the attack. For its part, Kabul condemned the mosque bombing, saying it "contradicted Islamic and humanitarian values". This was unsurprising as IS-K is the Taliban's bitter foe. But the denunciation did nothing

to lower tensions between the two neighbours.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have continued to deteriorate in the past several months and remain in a frozen state. Diplomatic engagement has ground to a virtual halt, though embassies are open in both countries. Trade is suspended and the border has been closed since last October, when deadly clashes erupted and led to open hostilities.

That followed a major TTP attack in Kurram in which several Pakistani soldiers were killed. After this, Pakistan launched air strikes against militant targets in Afghanistan, including in Kabul. Afghan military forces then attacked multiple border posts in response. The situation escalated further with fierce cross-border retaliatory strikes by Pakistan.

A ceasefire was reached through mediation by Qatar and Türkiye. But subsequent talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan ended in deadlock over the issue of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan that has been stepping up attacks on Pakistan's security forces from Afghan soil.

To Islamabad's dismay that TTP should be disarmed and its violent activities stopped, the Taliban apparently gave unverifiable verbal assurances but declined to give a written commitment. Cross-border attacks by TTP fighters, that number around 6,000 in Afghanistan, have surged since the Taliban reclaimed power. Last year saw around 600 TTP attacks, making 2025 the deadliest year in a decade for Pakistani casualties. Over 3,500 have been killed in Pakistan in TTP attacks since 2021.

The February 2026 report of the UN Security Council's analytical support and sanctions monitoring team notes the increase in TTP attacks and says Afghan authorities continue to provide a permissive environment for the militant organisation and other terrorist groups. An earlier UN report of November 2025 said TTP attacks have led to military confrontation between the two countries, closure of border-crossings and economic consequences, which it casts as "the greatest short-term threat to the de facto [Taliban] authorities' stability".

Before the October 2025 breakdown in relations, Pakistan tried a carrot-and-stick policy to persuade Taliban leaders to address its security concerns about TTP. The stick was evident in the coercive policy pursued in the past two years. This had three elements: kinetic air strikes at TTP hideouts in Afghanistan, tightening of transit trade restrictions and expulsion of illegally resident Afghan refugees from Pakistan.

The carrot was reflected in revived diplomatic engagement with Taliban authorities, which reached a high point in April 2025 when deputy prime minister and foreign minister Ishaq Dar visited Kabul. Pakistan acceded to several Taliban requests on bilateral and transit trade issues and offered to upgrade relations. Dar visited Kabul three times last year as part of high-level dialogue.

The Taliban, for their part, pledged to 'contain' the TTP. But, as in the past, this turned out to be an empty promise. Publicly, Kabul always denied there were TTP hideouts in Afghanistan. But privately,

in talks with Pakistani officials, Taliban leaders, of course, acknowledged the TTP presence.

In successive rounds of talks, they offered to take action while urging Pakistani interlocutors to talk to TTP and show flexibility on two of the group's core demands — withdrawal of military forces from the tribal areas and reversal of Fata's merger into KP. These demands are, of course, non-negotiable for Pakistan.

The unending outcome of talks while TTP attacks surged and claimed rising casualties led Islamabad to conclude the Taliban were not prepared to break with TTP. Having exhausted diplomatic avenues, Pakistani officials felt the only option was to mount sustained pressure on Kabul to make it change course. This is where things stand at present.

Islamabad's strategy is, for now, aimed at raising the costs for Kabul for its non-action on TTP. Having made it clear to the Taliban that mass casualty attacks from Afghan soil will invite a kinetic response, Pakistan has been

conducting cross-border strikes against TTP bases and targeting individuals. Some strikes have been deeper in Afghan territory.

Meanwhile, the prolonged closure of the border and halt in trade are key levers Pakistan is using to pressure Kabul. This involves significant loss in revenues for the Taliban regime, estimated at \$400 million a year. Then there is the loss in export earnings for Afghanistan. Exports to Pakistan have ranged between \$880m and \$566m in recent years. Moreover, the suspension of transit trade obviously entails detrimental consequences for Afghanistan and its people. All this is apart from the smuggling that takes place across open borders from which the Taliban benefit.

Islamabad's calculation is that economic pressure will also start to affect the Afghan public, which could then direct its resentment at the regime. Moreover, there are indications that not all Taliban factions are wedded to TTP and some see it as a source of unnecessary friction with Pakistan.

Frozen relationship

Umair Javed

At the time of writing, the contractual status of net-metered solar connections remains unclear. New regulations from Nepra, backed by the Power Division, converted all new and existing customers to a net-billing scheme, drastically reducing the buyback rate. Shortly after, though, the prime minister entered the fray and asked the same Power Division to challenge the regulator's decision.

Passionate adherents of the sitting government who were lauding Nepra's boldness in taking on 470,000 'elites' then promptly lauded the PM's attentiveness to their tears. In some eyes, the government simply can't lose.

On the larger issue at hand, there are a few things that can be conceded from the outset. The first is that the official position on net-metering is, narrowly and technically, correct. The marginal price of electricity during the day has fallen, but net-metered connections, amounting to around 7,000 MW of installed capacity, are able to offset their exported

units at the average grid price.

In this way, they accrue a benefit that is not available to households who do not have grid-connected solar. And yes, the gap between the two (ie, the benefit) is indirectly paid for by non-net-metered consumers via the distribution companies.

The second point of concession is that the generous incentive offered by net-metering certainly encouraged solar adoption, but this adoption forms a comparatively small part of Pakistan's ongoing solar revolution. The vast bulk of solar adoption, totalling more than 14,000 MW of capacity, is off-grid, and has shifted demand away from the national grid because of the latter's lack of reliability, high price, and in many places, complete absence.

As census and HIES (Household Integrated Economic Survey) numbers both confirm, more than 10 per cent of Pakistan's households now rely on solar as their primary form of electricity. This figure masks considerable variation, with rates being much higher in rural Balochistan

and KP compared to urban and rural Punjab.

This variation maps on to population density, poverty, and most importantly, grid access and reliability, which explain why the percentage of rural households connected to the national grid has fallen by nearly 6pc in the last decade.

The environment that encouraged this adoption is marked by a perennial state of exhaustion with the state's expensive provision of electricity, as well as sales tax concessions, credit subsidy, and import relaxations that allowed a glut of panels and inverters to enter and take over the Pakistani market in the first place.

With the retail, distribution and human resource system of solar now firmly in place, this pattern is unlikely to reverse, even as the concessions are gradually rolled back. Proof of concept is well beyond the point of being established.

Given these two points taken in narrow isolation, one can concede that the government is right: that net-metering represents a cross-subsidy to mostly upper-income

households from the rest, and that reversing it does little to harm the country's rapidly progressing and very decentralised green energy transition, which is driven by other policy measures anyway.

But the problem has to be contextualised and broadened beyond this very narrow turf. The government claims that it is changing this policy for the benefit of the common consumer, who doesn't have the resources or the roof space to install an expensive net-metered connection. Embedded in this claim is the notion that shifting net-metering to net-billing, ie, getting rid of the subsidy, will reduce cost pressures on the tariff, thus benefiting the masses.

To date, there is no figure indicating what this reduction entails or by how many paisas or rupees it will reduce the domestic tariff. We are simply expected to go along with the government's claim that this is a pro-poor proposal that will reap (unclear) dividends in the medium term.

There is a second, associated issue at hand as

well. The government's fixation on net-metering is a red herring. The cross-subsidy to net-metered consumers is not responsible for the higher price of electricity being paid by the masses. At least not in any meaningful way.

The reasons for that higher price lie elsewhere — in the generation mix, in the underinvestment in infrastructure, in the line losses and poor governance of distribution companies, and most pertinently, in the take-or-pay contracts signed with independent power producers (IPPs).

Looking past this sleight of hand, we get an indication of the battles the government is willing to fight and the ones it chooses not to. Net-metered customers are told that the government is not obligated to buy electricity from them at the same rate (or on the same principle) forever. They are told that the purchase rate should reflect the market rate of electricity during the hours of sale. This is a fair enough assertion.

But what then of the utility-scale solar IPPs that were commissioned with fixed tariffs, which

far exceed the current marginal price of solar electricity? Are those also going to be opened up and challenged on the same grounds? Why should existing domestic consumer contracts be revised on welfare concerns, but others are left untouched, even when they're more squarely responsible for the perverse price of electricity that the masses have to pay?

Any change to net-meter regulations for existing prosumers was bound to be unpopular, because it impacted sections of society that have greater voice and access than most. There should be no qualms in admitting this.

But the terms of the debate that the government has set and the manner in which it has gone about doing it cast question marks on the entire process. By turning this solely into a reverse Robin Hood story of net-metered elites vs the rest, the real issue of expensive electricity, compounded by another capacity-based surcharge being quietly added to everyone's bills, gets lost in the weeds of public outcry and panic.

Reclaiming public space

Farhan Anwar

Public spaces are considered to be public assets that define the physical, social and cultural identity of an urban space and community. Regrettably, over the years, Karachi has experienced a decline in the vitality of public spaces, despite being historically known for its lively public spaces including streets, markets and squares. The iconic Saddar area and the coastal ecosystem, once vibrant hubs, have lost their appeal due to factors such as increased commercialisation, neglect, encroachment and changing societal preferences.

Recently, the World Bank launched the publication *The Hidden Wealth of Cities* — Creating, Financing and Managing Public Spaces, which looks at public spaces as catalysts of overall improved urban livability; the section on spatial patterns in Karachi indicates that green areas have decreased by four per cent, whereas the urban extent in this core city expanded by 8pc between 2005 and 2017. The share of public spaces of the total built-up area is 14pc; the share of street areas is 8.7pc. A closer examination of public-space typology shows a considerable number of unclassifiable public spaces and a relative lack of city and neighbourhood parks in the city.

Despite being a highly residential city, many residential neighbourhoods in Karachi have almost no green areas to provide environmental and social benefits to the people. If we take the case of urban streets, which are globally being revived as vibrant public spaces, then pedestrian access has been neglected, and most roads

and pavements in Karachi have been encroached on, lack basic safety features or are not maintained regularly. This hampers accessibility and mobility, particularly for women, the elderly and people with disabilities.

The shift towards prioritising land for profitable endeavours, for instance residential gated complexes, shopping malls and high-end eateries, has resulted in a scarcity of accessible public spaces. Land that needs to be considered a social asset has been treated as a financial commodity. This shift towards privatised spaces has led to a less inclusive and more segregated urban landscape. The glamour of private spaces and the gloom of public spaces sharply reflect development priorities that promote inequity. Many causal factors contribute to this decay. The creation and upkeep of public spaces in Karachi have been deprived of political support. At the core of the rot lies ineffective governance and a lack of clear vision in understanding public spaces as critical triggers of improved overall urban livability.

There is a need to develop a holistic policy construct mandated to cover all forms and typologies of public spaces with a guiding framework for designing, implementing, managing and monitoring urban public spaces in an inclusive manner. This policy agenda for change should emerge as a shared, consensus-based vision for the city's urban spaces, and involve relevant formal and informal stakeholders and be jointly owned by all public entities whose mandate includes various public spaces in Karachi. Also engaged should be authorities such as the can-

tonments, DHA and housing societies so that they also find the inspiration to develop their own policy guidelines in alignment with the larger shared vision.

The policy framework should incentivise the rejuvenation of inactive passive urban public spaces and the protection of existing functional spaces from encroachment. Also included should be considerations for restoration and the adaptive reuse of built heritage spaces for community use. An urban street design manual needs to be prepared and implemented to catalyse the activation of streets as vibrant public spaces.

Public entities with jurisdiction over public spaces should engage with communities to promote volunteerism for building greater social capital. Space design should be inspired by and sourced from local sociocultural and architectural sensitivities for incentivising a sense of greater belonging and ownership in communities where forms follow function. Globally, local governments faced with similar challenges are open to learning from successful approaches adopted by civil society and the private sector, which can be streamlined in a policy framework to expand the scale and benefits of resulting interventions. There is an urgent need to both document and critically analyse such projects and programmes that are actually working in this city. Public spaces are now regarded as critical triggers for overall improved urban livability with dividends that are social, economic and environmental.

By prioritising public space revitalisation, Karachi can build a stronger, vibrant, more inclusive urban identity.

Huma Yusuf

Democracy dies in darkness. The Washington Post's tagline for the Trump era, introduced after Amazon's Jeff Bezos bought the paper in 2013, has become prophetic, with Bezos himself casting a shadow over the publication. News that the Post laid off 300-plus journalists — a third of its newsroom — may seem a distant concern for most Pakistanis. But it signals the deepening of trends that will affect free speech and democracy worldwide.

Events have unfolded almost as a caricature of media capitulation under authoritarianism. The cull of Post journalists (whose collective salaries would barely dent the fortunes of the world's fourth richest man) coincided with the release of an obsequious film about US First Lady Melania Trump, on which Bezos spent \$75 million. Many believe Bezos is gutting the Post to appease the US president in the hope of winning government contracts for his other businesses.

The sackings have drawn attention as Donald Trump seems to have gotten the better of the paper most famous for investigative reporting on the Watergate scandal. But it is only the latest morbid milestone in the decline of global independent journalism. Over the past 20 years, the US has lost a third of its newspapers and two-thirds of its reporters. Trump's decision last year to cut funding for Voice of America and Radio Liberty, plus the halt of USAID support for free media, have amplified the global media crisis.

Cynical corporate interests and rampant state censorship subverting press freedom ... that sounds so familiar to Pakistani media watchers.

Post-cuts

When media censorship in less free societies, like ours, becomes egregious, civil society actors often rely on credible global publications to out the truth and help course correct. That recourse is now fast dwindling. This is concerning given the pressure on domestic news outlets, which the Freedom Network described last year as facing 'existential threat' due to journalist intimidation, judicial overreach and draconian legislation that clamps down on media freedom.

It is alarming that Bezos's axe fell on the Post's international correspondents, including those in conflict hotspots. The demise of independent reportage is terrifying, particularly as other voices ranging from CSOs such as Human Rights Watch to UN rapporteurs find themselves censored and attacked. In dark times, truth-telling is often left to journalists. Without them, silence will reign over the worst injustices.

The other horror stemming from journalism's wane is the prospect of a world in which all information is misinformation. In May 2025, there were more than 1,200 AI-generated news sites convincingly presenting as credible news sources but spewing out false claims with minimal human intervention. This should give pause to those who believe AI bots can replace newsrooms. Ironically, it is under-appreciated how critical journalism is to the success of generative AI. Briefly, large language models can process existing content; they cannot create original content. For that, you need journalists. In fact, news sources comprise half of the top 10 sites in Google datasets used to train LLMs. A drop in the quantity of human-made

content could lead AI applications to "malfunction, degrade, and potentially even collapse", according to analyses by Courtney Radsch, a non-resident fellow at the Brookings Institution.

The Post job cuts — though politically driven — were justified on the basis of the tough economic conditions of mainstream news (the Post has struggled after losing 250,000 subscribers after Bezos prevented the paper from endorsing Kamala Harris during the last US presidential poll). Democratic backsliding must be addressed through civil society movements, judicial challenge and progressive trends at the ballot box. Meanwhile, newsrooms must focus on surviving so as to continue the fight for free speech and accountability. In that context, Pakistani news outlets can take two lessons from the Post's travails.

The first is to join global media movements pushing for regulation to ensure that news outlets (and not just the big Western brands with access to persuasive lawyers) are fairly compensated for feeding data into the AI machine, whether to train LLMs, or provide the content that enables AI-generated search results.

The second is to invest in the kind of news that AI will never be able to generate (unless it hallucinates it) — and that is local news. Communities and their challenges can only be witnessed at the grassroots by real reporters, and highly localised coverage will increasingly differentiate credible news reporting from AI 'slop'. Such steps will help newsrooms build the economic resilience needed to sustain political resistance, and ensure that Watergate is not consigned to history as an anomaly.

Maryam urges youth to protect country, nation

Distributes Honhaar Scholarships, laptops among students in Gujrat

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has urged the youth to safeguard the country, refrain from violence and protect public property.

Addressing a ceremony in Gujrat for the distribution of Honhaar scholarships and laptops, she described students as the "real heroes and chief guests" of the event, said a handout issued here on Monday.

The CM said the nation's future rests firmly in their hands and that their responsible conduct, unity and commitment will determine Pakistan's progress and stability. She added that their enthusiasm and confidence reflected a bright future for Pakistan. She said the scholarship and laptop programme was not merely a routine ceremony but a celebration of students' hard work and achievement.

She assured that no child would be deprived of education due to lack of resources and that all awards were granted strictly on merit without any political consideration.

Declaring 2026 as the "Year of Youth," the chief minister said students would shape the country's future as doctors, engineers and scientists. She encouraged them to dream big, assuring that the government would stand behind them "like a rock."

Emphasising national unity, she urged citizens to protect every inch of the country, avoid riots and refrain from damaging public property or green belts. She stressed that political differences must not be turned into personal hostility and advised students never to mock anyone's illness or personal hardships.

Calling for an end to hatred, misinformation and divisive politics, she said prayers should be offered for the recovery of the sick regardless of political affiliation.

Highlighting youth-focused initiatives, she said students in Punjab are being provided scholarships, laptops, transport facilities and skills support to enhance educational and employment opportunities. She added that the passion shown by students at the ceremony strengthened her belief that the future of every son and daughter of Pakistan is bright.

At Khawaja Muhammad Safdar Medical College Sialkot, 98 students received laptops and 66 scholarships, while 1,025 students of government colleges received laptops and 216 scholarships.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurates Sindh Public Service Commission Secretariat Complex in Hyderabad.

Kundi criticizes PTI's protest, urges immediate reopening of roads

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday strongly criticized the ongoing sit-in protest in the province, alleging that public life had been paralyzed while government facilities were being utilized by demonstrators.

In a statement, the Governor said that KP House was itself a property of the provincial government and fully equipped with staff and kitchen facilities, questioning the rationale behind staging a protest while availing official resources.

He remarked that parliamentary business at the Parliament House was continuing uninterrupted, with

committee meetings proceeding as per routine, and expressed surprise over claims regarding lack of facilities for the opposition.

The Governor alleged that major roads in the province had been blocked due to the sit-in, resulting in severe disruption to daily life.

He said while other provinces such as Punjab and Sindh were functioning normally, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was facing a standstill.

Criticizing the provincial government, he said the administration appeared indifferent to the difficulties being faced by citizens, particularly patients and elderly people affected by road closures.



LAHORE: Members of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Insaf Lawyers Forum protest over health concerns of PTI founder Imran Khan outside High Court in Lahore.

Sharjeel Memon says:

Fake news major threat to individuals, families

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Senior Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that fake news is a major issue and that individuals and their families are being harmed by it.

He stated that anyone can file a complaint against fake news with the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency, and that the federal government has also enacted the PECA Act.

Speaking in the Sindh Assembly during questions and answers session on Information Department, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that a defamation law also exists, but he does not recall anyone being punished under it.

He gave the example that when a channel is penalized in the UK, it issues an apology.

He said that a resolution on the issue of fake news should be introduced in the Sindh Assembly and that a parliamentary committee should be formed to prepare recommendations for legislation and implementation.

He emphasized that they are not against freedom of expression, but against fake news.

Memon said that the province should also have an authority empowered to take direct action if any channel or individual spreads false news.

He added that the parliamentary committee should examine the issue and propose solutions to all related problems.

He said that decisions regarding which newspapers receive government advertisements should be made independently and entrusted to APNS.

"We want to empower the APNS so that our work becomes easier and this can serve as the best system for newspaper advertising," he said, adding that despite repeated written letters, no substantial response was received from APNS. Sharjeel Memon said that everyone has the right to protest, but no one has the right to harm the public. Earlier, the session started with recitation of the Holy Quran and Naat Sharif with Speaker Awaiz Qadir Shah in the chair.



GUJRAT: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif addressing the Honhaar Scholarships and laptops among students distribution ceremony.

CM Sindh inaugurates new Rs2.49 bln complex of SPSC

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated the renovated building complex of Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC), located on Thandi Sarak road, here on Monday.

Accompanied by the provincial ministers Syed Nasir Hussain Shah and Jam Khan Shoro, the CM cut the ribbon of the building complex whose renovation and expansion cost the provincial government Rs2.493 billion.

"The SPSC has established a system of merit based recruitments in Sindh," he observed. He said a transparent and digital examination system was their priority.

"The capable and intelligent youth will become the future of Sindh," he added.

He vowed to continue implementing programs which were aimed at the public welfare as per the objectives of the Pakistan Peoples Party's Sindh government. On the occasion Chairman SPSC Muhammad Waseem briefed the CM about the complex and its facilities.

He apprised that a digital lab had been established in the complex for 300 people while a CBT lab, auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium and a mosque were also part of the new complex.

"The new complex will make the commission stronger and more self-reliant," he expressed the hope.

Waseem briefed the CM that the SPSC after conducting the recruitment process recommended appointments of 21,504 candidates from July, 2022, to December, 2025.

He added that 8,666 qualified candidates were recommended for jobs in the Sindh Education Department; 7,357 in the Sindh Health Department and Population Department; 1,696 in Sindh Local Government Department; 1,965 in the Sindh Law Department and 1,137 in the Sindh Agriculture and Livestock departments.

The minister stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, special emphasis is being placed on housing projects, resulting in a significant acceleration of development activities.

He expressed satisfaction that all sectors of the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority have started returning to track. Pirzada assured that all concerns of landowners and allottees would be addressed, fair compensation would be ensured, and the project would be completed within the stipulated timeframe. He said that, under the agreement, development work will be carried out by the National Logistics Cell (NLC), whose cooperation he described as commendable.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Housing & Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada inaugurates development work in F-14 and F-15 sectors.

84 VCs attend first-ever conference on Countering Violent Extremism in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (CECVE) under the Home Department organised the first-ever Vice Chancellors' Conference in Punjab's history under the National Action Plan and the National Policy on Countering Violent Extremism 2024 to promote a co-ordinated academic role in preventing extremism and fostering social harmony.

Vice chancellors of 84 public and private universities attended the conference.

Provincial Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rafique presided over the conference, which highlighted the role of universities in fostering national cohesion, tolerance and intellectual development.

Secretary Home Punjab Dr Ahmad Javed Qazi, Chairman HEC Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad, Secretary Auqaf Dr Ehsan Bhutta, Additional IG Operations Muhammad Ali Nekokara, Special Secretary Home Fazal-ur-Rehman, Chief Coordination Officer Ghulam Sagheer Shahid, Deputy Coordination Officer Dr Ahmad Khawar Shehzad, Dr Tahir Raza Bukhari attended the conference.

Khawaja Salman Rafique appreciated the efforts of the Home Department and CECVE for organizing the conference on such a critical subject. He said that the fight against terrorism and extremism was a collective national responsibility and required

unity, practical measures and sustained efforts to ensure lasting peace in society.

He emphasised that educational institutions had a key role in character building of youth and in countering intolerance, misinformation, social tensions and identity-based conflicts. He said that universities, as centres of higher learning, significantly shaped national, social, intellectual and civic trends and must actively promote moderation and harmony.

Secretary Home Dr Ahmad Javed Qazi said that the framework of the Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism Act 2025 provided guidance for inclusive engagement of all schools of thought.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health and Chairman Cabinet Committee for law and order Khawaja Salman Rafique addressing the participants of Vice Chancellors Conference.

Punjab health reforms to ensure transparent, timely care: Abbasi

RAWALPINDI (APP): Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi on Monday said that ongoing reforms and modernization in Punjab's health sector would prove a milestone in ensuring quality medical treatment for the public.

Addressing the foundation stone-laying ceremony of a new facilitation centre at Benazir Bhutto Hospital, he said the provincial government's efforts under visionary leadership of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif would ensure equal, timely and transparent healthcare services for both urban and rural populations.

He said around 4,000 citizens would benefit from the facilitation centre, which would play a key role in streamlining patient guidance, registration and other administrative processes within the hospital system.

The minister highlighted that an automated

system was being introduced in hospitals across Punjab under which patient registration, medical reports and emergency services would be shifted to a digital platform to enable patients to receive treatment without unnecessary delays or influence.

He appreciated Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for providing modern facilities to hospitals in Rawalpindi, including Holy Family Hospital and District Headquarters Hospital, saying the measures would not only improve standards of care but also create new opportunities for medical research and training.

Abbasi said that projects related to upgradation of hospitals, establishment of new health centres, expansion of wards and provision of modern medical equipment across Punjab had either been completed or were under construction.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Minister for local government Syed Nasir Hussain Shah addressing during ceremony to distribute ownership certificates among slum dwellers at SRTC ground.

PTI protests become hassle for people of KPK: Babak

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sardar Hussain Babak, here Monday said that the ongoing protests in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have become a hassle for the public, and the continuous road blockades have paralyzed people's daily lives.

He said that protest politics has subjected the people of Pakhtunkhwa to mental stress and severe anxiety, says a press release.

Sardar Hussain Babak said that protesting in different cities of Pakhtunkhwa will not benefit any political leader.

increased public difficulties. The working hours of educational institutions are being affected, students are facing problems, and the movement of patients, the elderly, and those in need has been severely disrupted.

He added that people who are already suffering from issues such as terrorism, inflation, and unemployment are being pushed into even greater hardship.

Sardar Hussain Babak said that protesting in different cities of Pakhtunkhwa will not benefit any political leader.

CM Punjab announces 'Maryam Ko Batain' program for Ramadan

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced the launch of a special "Maryam Ko Batain" programme from the first of Ramadan to provide immediate financial assistance to deserving families, with eligible applicants to receive up to Rs10,000 within 24 hours.

In a message posted on social media platform X, the chief minister said the initiative aims to ensure prompt support for individuals facing financial hardship during the holy month.

She added that a dedicated helpline, 1000, will become operational from the start of Ramadan to facilitate applications. Under the programme, citizens will also be able to apply by entering their CNIC number on a web portal or mobile application. Applications will be processed through a transparent digital verification system featuring live tracking, digital record-keeping and continuous monitoring to ensure accountability.



LAHORE: Members of All Government Employees Grand Alliance hold protest demonstration outside civil secretariat building in Lahore for acceptance of their demands.

UNICEF, South Punjab join hands for child development drive

MULTAN (APP): UNICEF Chief Field Office Ramiz Behbudov met Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Fuad Hashim Rabbani at the South Punjab Secretariat in Multan to discuss collaborative efforts aimed at improving child health, education and skills development across the region.

The meeting was attended by Special Secretary Health South Punjab Syed Shahbaz Hussain, additional secretaries, and officials from WASA and the Public Health Engineering Department.

Discussions focused on advancing child welfare initiatives, with particular emphasis on education, health services, skills training and community development.

Officials briefed the participants on the ongoing Model Villages Project in South Punjab, which is being implemented at an accelerated pace.

Under the first year of the two-year initiative, 100 villages have been selected for development.

The project also includes the installation of 500 hand pumps to improve access to clean drinking water.

PM Shehbaz invites Austrian investors, business companies to invest in Pakistan

VIENNA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday underscored Pakistan's commitment to boosting bilateral economic cooperation with Austria while highlighting the country's vast potential in key sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture, mining, and human resource development.

The prime minister said that Pakistan was an agrarian country and more than 60% people lived in the rural areas, calling upon Austrian expertise to enhance value-addition in citrus and other produce for export markets.

He also invited Austrian investors to explore opportunities in mining, tourism and engineering sectors.

"Austria has world-class expertise in engineering, renewable energy, environmental technology and advanced manufacturing," he said while addressing the Pakistan-Austria Business Forum in Vienna.

He invited Austrian companies to participate in Pakistan's renewable energy projects, grid modernization and energy logging initiatives.

PM Shehbaz Sharif extended a personal invitation to Austrian business leaders to visit Pakistan, promising to showcase investment opportunities and the country's scenic treasures, from snow-capped mountains to vibrant cultural hubs.

The prime minister said both countries shared a longstanding friendship grounded in historical ties and decades of Austrian business engagement in Pakistan, particularly in areas such as cable car installations, minerals and renewable energy technology.

"Although the level of economic activity in recent years has declined for a variety of reasons, Austrian firms have made impactful contributions in Pakistan," he said.

The prime minister

noted that discussions with the Austrian Federal Chancellor had been very warm, fruitful and productive, where both leaders agreed to follow up the meetings to take discussions to their logical conclusion.

He said approximately 60% of the country's 240 million population was young and ready to contribute to global technological and industrial value chains.

"We are working to equip our youth with modern training — laptops, AI skills, IT-led education, vocational and technical training are being rolled out at the federal and provincial levels," he said, stressing Pakistan's readiness to supply internationally certified skilled labor to European markets in response to demand.

He also expressed the resolve to combat illegal immigration in collaboration with partners like Austria, Germany and France.



ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Water Resources and IHE Delft delegation sign MoU to strengthen Pakistan-Netherlands water cooperation, witnessed by Federal Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mueen Wattoo and Ambassador H.E. Mr. Robert-Jan Siebert.

AJK PM Rathore offers investment opportunities to Overseas Kashmiris

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the Overseas Kashmiris Conference is not simply a ceremonial event but a significant milestone signaling the start of the region's path towards a prosperous and economically secure future.

Addressing the Overseas Kashmiris Convention, held here on Monday in collaboration with the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, the AJK premier said it was time to move beyond conventional thinking, adopt out-of-the-box solutions, and evolve a comprehensive strategy to effectively address the region's fundamental challenges.

The conference, he said, serves as a comprehensive roadmap for the state's economic progress.



LARKANA: A shopkeeper displaying ladies clothes to attract the customers at Reshamgali.

NHA operates with Rs43bn surplus, rejects 'loss-making' labels

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway Authority (NHA) on Monday dispelled recent reports labeling it as a loss-making State-Owned Enterprise (SOE), saying such claims stem from a misreading of accounting entries rather than its actual operational performance.

A financial fact-check of the Authority's audited accounts shows that for FY 2024-25, NHA recorded a robust Net Operating Income of 43.612 billion PKR, calculated from 122.021 billion PKR in revenue against 78.409 billion PKR in operating expenditures. The reported "accounting deficit" of 288.541 billion PKR arises almost entirely from non-cash entries—specifically 133.771 billion PKR in depreciation and 193.488 billion PKR in finance costs—which do not involve any direct cash outflows.

The NHA has evolved

into a financially independent entity that no longer imposes a burden on national fiscal resources. Unlike many other organizations, the NHA does not receive any budgetary allocation for its administrative expenses and manages these entirely from its own resources. This financial autonomy extends to its workforce; the NHA does not rely on the Federal Government for employee post-retirement benefits. Instead, it has established its own independent pension and retirement funds, governed by a Board of Trustees and audited according to prevailing standards.

Furthermore, while 50% of the NHA network serves as a non-revenue-generating Public Service Obligation, the Authority successfully finances the maintenance of the entire network through its own generated income.

PSX sheds 5,149 points to close at 174,453 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday witnessed bearish trend, losing 5,149.79 points, a negative change of 2.87 percent, to close at 174,453.94 points compared to 179,603.73 points on the previous trading day, according to PSX data.

During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 773.291 million shares with a traded value of Rs 46,242 billion, against 708.968 million shares valuing Rs 38,887 billion in the previous session. Market capitalization declined to Rs 19,781 trillion from Rs 20,359 trillion a day earlier.

Out of 487 active companies in the ready market, 65 advanced, 378 declined, and 44 remained unchanged.

K-Electric Limited topped the volume chart with 63,826 million shares, followed by WorldCall Telecom with 62,243 million shares and The Bank of Punjab with 56,166 million shares.

Gold prices drop sharply by Rs.3,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): Gold prices witnessed a significant decline in both domestic and international markets on Monday as 24 karat gold per tola rates decreased by Rs3,200 to settle at Rs523,762. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold fell by Rs2,743 to Rs449,041, while that of 10 grams of 22 karat gold dropped by Rs2,515 to Rs411,635.

In the international market, gold prices declined by \$32 to \$5,010 per ounce.

Meanwhile, silver prices also recorded a downward trend. The price of silver per tola decreased by Rs55 to Rs8,164, while 10 grams of silver declined by Rs47 to Rs6,999. In the international market, silver prices fell by \$0.55 to \$76.80 per ounce.



VIENNA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses Pakistan Austria Business forum held at Federal Economic Chamber.

SOEs losses declining gradually; go down by Rs.74bln: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said here on Monday that financial losses of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) have steadily declined over the past three years, falling by Rs74 billion during the period as part of the government's ongoing reform and restructuring efforts.

In a televised media message, the minister while commenting on the Federal State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) Annual Aggregate Report for FY2025, said the losses of SOEs stood at Rs. 905 billion in 2023, Rs. 851 billion in 2024 and Rs. 832 billion last year. "So over the last three years, the

losses have declined by approximately by Rs.74 billion... approximately Rs.142 million per day (we) saved over the period," he remarked.

The minister emphasized that the fiscal picture surrounding SOEs was not one-sided adding that it was important to understand that while the government has had to support these entities financially, there has been a substantial return in the form of taxes and dividends.

Illustrating the balance between outflows and inflows, the minister said, in 2023, the government provided an outflow of 2.078 trillion rupees in support of SOEs, however, in the same year, it received inflows of

2.119 trillion rupees, primarily from taxes, dividends and markups paid. He said, it was around Rs.40 billion positive inflow.

He clarified that these losses were accumulating since decades and outlined key steps taken by the government to improve transparency and governance.

The Minister further acknowledged that while some profitable companies, such as those in the oil and gas sector, continued to remain profitable, their profits had decreased due to global factors such as falling oil prices. Despite these challenges, operational improvements have been observed in many sectors.

FPCCI, Hungary to boost economic cooperation in Agri, IT & energy sectors

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Hungarian Ambassador to Pakistan, Zoltán Varga-Hazsonits, visited the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) to meet with President Atif Ikram Sheikh.

The meeting was also attended by FPCCI Vice Presidents Tariq Jadoon, Mr. Muhammad Raziq, Karim Office Chairman Karim Aziz Malik, Mr. Zahid Maqbool, Mr. Rashid Humayon, Mr.

tween Pakistan and Hungary. Both parties discussed increasing the current trade volume and the exchange of business delegations. Exploratory talks were held regarding potential joint venture projects.

President Atif Ikram Sheikh emphasized an expanding cooperation in Agricultural Technology, Food Processing, Pharmaceuticals, and IT. He highlighted that Pakistan is offering a "One-Window" facility and a favorable environment for foreign in-



Badar Haroon, Mr. Dost Ali Jan, Mr. Asif Javed, Ms. Aliya Agha, Ms. Rabia Raheel, Ms. Ayesha Khan and.

Ministry of Water Resources, IHE Delft delegation sign MoU

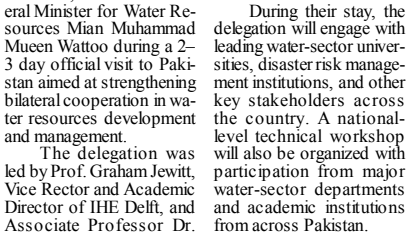
ISLAMABAD (APP): A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of Water Resources and the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education on Monday to strengthen cooperation in the water sector between Pakistan and the Netherlands. The agreement aims to enhance the capacity of professionals from the Ministry and its affiliated organizations in the areas of water resources planning, development, and integrated management.

A high-level delegation from IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, one of the top-ranked international institutions in water sector education, called on the Federal Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mueen Wattoo during a 2-3 day official visit to Pakistan aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in water resources development and management.

The delegation was led by Prof. Graham Jewitt, Vice Rector and Academic Director of IHE Delft, and Associate Professor Dr.

Ilyas Masih, and was accompanied by Ambassador Robert-Jan Siebert and Deputy Head of Mission Hajo Provó Kluit of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Federal Minister Wattoo warmly welcomed the delegation and appreciated the longstanding cooperation between Pakistan and the Netherlands in the water sector. He acknowledged the Netherlands' global leadership and technical expertise in water management and emphasized the importance of further strengthening collaboration to address emerging challenges, including climate change impacts, flood management, and sustainable water utilization.

During their stay, the delegation will engage with leading water-sector universities, disaster risk management institutions, and other key stakeholders across the country. A national-level technical workshop will also be organized with participation from major water-sector departments and academic institutions from across Pakistan.



QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehraulah Badini presides over the meeting regarding collection of Agricultural Income Tax.

Jamil reiterates commitment to investor facilitation, swift service delivery

KARACHI (APP): Secretary Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) Jamil Ahmad Qureshi, reiterating the commitment to ensuring investor facilitation service delivery on Monday, urged all stakeholders to work together for stability, prosperity and dignity of Pakistan.

He was addressing the launch event of the World Bank's Business Ready Index 2025, themed as "Improving Pakistan's Competitive Rating under B-Ready Index". The event was attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Investment, Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar, Deputy Head of Mission, British Deputy High Commission in Karachi, Tom Burge, Secretary Sindh Investment Department, Zubair Channa, Senior officials of REMIT program, Board of Investment, and other relevant departments.

The SIFC secretary, speaking at the occasion,

expressed commitment to managing investor services as measurable performance products, prioritizing the removal of bottlenecks, and keeping reforms rule-based and investor-neutral to lower discretion, promote transparency and a level playing field, especially for SMEs, which matter most for jobs.

He said that Pakistan is a young country with a growing workforce and it was an opportunity as well as a responsibility. The country needed to create 25 to 30 million jobs in the next decade to turn the youth bulge into an economic dividend, he said, adding this is our national imperative for stability, prosperity and dignity. Referring to the improvement of Pakistan's ranking in World Bank's B-Ready Index, the secretary said that clear progress has been made in regulatory quality, public service delivery and operational efficiency.



KARACHI: Federal Secretary of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Mr. Jameel Qureshi, addresses the launching ceremony of the event titled "Improving Pakistan's Competitive Ranking under the Business Ready (B-READY) Index" at a local hotel in provincial capital.

Jazz, USF sign Badin project to expand digital connectivity in Sindh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz — Pakistan's leading connectivity provider from JazzWorld — and the Universal Service Fund (USF) have taken another step to expand digital connectivity in Sindh with the signing of the Badin Project, aimed at bringing reliable mobile voice and broadband services to underserved communities in District Badin.

The agreement, formalized at a ceremony in Karachi, reflects a shared effort to extend meaningful digital access to areas where connectivity has remained limited. The ceremony was attended by Governor of Sindh, Kamran Tessori, and Federal Minister for IT & Telecom, Shaza Fatima, as Chief Guests. The project marks continued progress in strengthening telecom infrastructure to support inclusive digital access across the province.

The Rs. 668 million Badin Project will strengthen telecom access in the district by deploying 45

new telecom sites and upgrading four existing ones, extending reliable voice and high-speed mobile broadband services to 144 underserved and underserved mauzas and reaching an estimated 0.43 million people.

The expanded network will support access to digital financial services, online learning, tele-health, and government e-services, while enabling small businesses and farmers with improved digital tools and generating direct and indirect employment during deployment and operations. Commenting on the development, Aamir Ibrahim, CEO JazzWorld, said: "Connectivity is the foundation of inclusive growth. We appreciate the continued support of the Universal Service Fund and the Ministry of IT & Telecom in enabling partnerships that bring high-quality digital services to communities that have long remained on the margins of the digital economy."



FAISALABAD: Students are visiting different stalls during the Gur Mela organized by Directorate of Farms at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad.

SBP launches "Cyber Shield" to safeguard the banking system, customers

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Monday, announced the launch of "Cyber Shield" strategy aimed at strengthening the safety and robustness of the banking and financial system and protecting the regulated entities as well as customers from cyber threats. "Cyber Shield" — the Cyber Resilience Strategy for Regulated Entities 2025-2030, is part of SBP's vision 2028 agenda and is designed to better protect banks and financial institutions from cyber threats, thus ensuring that people and businesses can continue to access financial services safely, said a statement issued here by the central bank.

The strategy set out a clear roadmap to help financial institutions strengthen their systems and controls, prevent cyber incidents, respond quickly

when cyber threats materialize, and recover effectively from such incidents, it added.

As the banking ecosystem faces increasingly sophisticated cyber threats, the strategy aims to enhance cyber defenses of the regulated entities through a holistic, forward-looking and collaborative approach. The Cyber Shield is focused on five key priorities: strengthening the ability of banks to withstand cyber incidents, improving governance and accountability for cybersecurity, encouraging cooperation and information-sharing across the financial sector, building skilled cyber talent, and continuously updating security practices to keep pace with new risks.

The milestones laid down in the strategy will be implemented in a phased manner by 2030.

Trump announces 'Board of Peace' members have pledged more than \$5 billion toward Gaza reconstruction

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Ahead of this week's meeting of the Board of Peace, President Donald Trump has announced that members of his newly established U.S.-led body have pledged \$5 billion for the reconstruction of Gaza and will commit thousands of personnel to international stabilization and police forces for the war-shattered territory.

Trump plans to host the board's inaugural meeting on Feb. 19 at the "Donald J. Trump Institute of Peace" in Washington, D.C., where, he said in his Sunday Truth Social post, the pledge will be formally announced.

"Very importantly, Hamas must uphold its commitment to Full and Immediate Demilitarization," Trump wrote. "The Board of Peace will prove to be the most consequential International Body in

History, and it is my honor to serve as its Chairman."

Trump's post on Sunday did not specify which member nations were making the pledges or would contribute personnel. However, The Associated Press reported that Indonesia's military expects up to 8,000 of its troops to be ready by the end of June for a potential deployment to Gaza as part of a humanitarian and peace mission. It's the first firm commitment that Trump has received, according to the AP.

Rebuilding the Palestinian Gaza Strip is projected to be an immense undertaking. Estimates from the United Nations, World Bank and European Union place reconstruction costs at roughly \$70 billion, following more than two years of devastating Israeli bombardment that left much of the territory in ruins.

Pakistan, whose Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will also attend the Board meeting, is a founding member of the Board. But Islamabad has not yet announced its commitment in this connection.

The UN-endorsed Board initiative is tied to the Oct. 10 U.S.-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas aimed at ending the prolonged conflict.

The agreement mandated the creation of an armed international stabilization force which is to be tasked with maintaining security and ensuring the disarmament of Palestinian organization Hamas — a key demand of Israel.

So far, few countries have publicly expressed interest in joining such a force, and Thursday's meeting might make things clear in terms of individual commitments.



German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier speaks during a press conference with his Lebanese counterpart Joseph Aoun, at the presidential palace in Baabda, east of Beirut, Lebanon.

Germany will keep supporting Lebanon after UN peacekeepers leave, German president says

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: Germany moved to assure Lebanon on Monday that it will support the Lebanese government even after pulling out German troops deployed as part of UN peacekeepers along the Lebanon-Israel border when their mission ends later this year.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier made the announcement during a news conference at the presidential palace near Beirut. Germany's navy, he said, is already training Lebanese troops as they boost their presence in the country's south following the 14-month war between Israel and the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group.

The mission of the multinational UN peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, concludes at the

end of 2026, nearly five decades after it was deployed. The force has played a significant role in monitoring the security situation in the region, including during the Israel-Hezbollah war last year.

Over the past months, Beirut has said that Lebanon will need a follow-up force to fill the vacuum in southern Lebanon once the UN peacekeepers leave.

"After the end of UNIFIL's mission, Germany will stay by the side of your country to boost state authority," Steinmeier said, without elaborating. It remains unlikely German troops — tasked with preventing arms smuggling by sea and helping the Lebanese army monitor the country's sea border — would remain in Lebanon.

Syria, Saudi Arabia sign framework agreement to digitize financial operations

DAMASCUS (SANA/APP): The Syrian Ministry of Finance has signed a framework agreement with Saudi digital solutions company Elm, to support the digitization of financial operations and modernize Syria's financial sector the other day.

The agreement was signed by Syrian Finance Minister Mohammed Yisr Barnieh and Elm CEO Mohammad Alomair, in the presence of Saudi Ambassador to Damascus Faisal bin Saud Al-Majfal.

The framework agreement aims to enhance digital transformation across financial processes, improve administrative and technical performance, and develop national capacities in digital finance.

Minister Barnieh said the move forms a key pillar of the ministry's strategy

to improve efficiency, transparency, and service delivery through modern digital systems, noting that it will help streamline procedures and strengthen accountability across the financial sector.

For his part, Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abdul Salam Haykal described the agreement as an important model for digital transformation across government institutions, reaffirming continued support in providing infrastructure and an enabling regulatory environment. Elm's CEO said the partnership seeks to transfer expertise and advanced digital solutions to improve efficiency and transparency in financial operations, adding that the agreement opens the door to future projects in areas such as customs, insurance, and taxation.

Thirty four Australians released from Syrian camp holding Daesh affiliated families

Monitoring Desk

ROJ CAMP: Syrian Kurdish forces on Monday released 34 Australians from a camp holding families of suspected Daesh militants in northern Syria, saying they would be flown to Australia from Damascus.

Hukmiya Mohamed, a co-director of Roj camp, told Reuters that the Australians been released members of their families who had come to Syria for the release. They were put on small buses for Damascus. Roj camp holds more than 2,000 people from 40 different nationalities, the majority of women children.

Killing of far-right activist stokes tensions in France

LYON (AFP/APP): France's government accused the hard left Monday of being partly responsible for the killing of a far-right activist last week.

Quentin Deranque, 23, died of his wounds after being attacked Thursday on the sidelines of a far-right protest against a left-wing politician speaking at a university in the city of Lyon.

The incident has fuelled tension between France's far right and hard left ahead of municipal elections in March and the 2027 presidential race.

The investigation is still ongoing, but the government has already blamed rhetoric from the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) party for fuelling the violence that led to his death.

The far right has blamed the killing on la Jeune Garde (Young Guard), an anti-fascist youth group co-founded by an LFI lawmaker before he was elected to parliament.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi meets with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi in Geneva, Switzerland.

Iran foreign minister met IAEA chief ahead of nuclear talks

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign minister met with the UN nuclear watchdog chief on Monday, ahead of talks between Washington and Tehran aimed at resolving a decades-long nuclear dispute, with few clear signs of compromise from either side amid a US military buildup.

Washington, which joined Israel in a wave of air strikes on Iran in June, has ordered a second aircraft carrier strike group to the Middle East in the latest standoff with Tehran, in addition to other US war-

ships and aircraft that have already been deployed.

Adding to the tension, Iran began a military drill on Monday in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital international waterway and oil export route from Gulf Arab states, which have been appealing for diplomacy to end the dispute.

The US and Iran renewed negotiations earlier this month, hoping to tackle their dispute over Tehran's nuclear program, which Washington, other Western states and Israel all believe is aimed at building nuclear

arms. Tehran denies this.

However, Washington has sought to expand the scope of talks to non-nuclear issues such as Iran's missile stockpile.

Tehran says it is only willing to discuss curbs on its nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief and won't accept zero uranium enrichment. It says its missile capabilities are off the table.

Speaking during a visit to Hungary on Monday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said reaching a deal with Tehran would be hard.

Rubio visits Trump's 'friend' Orban ahead of Hungary polls

BUDAPEST (AFP/APP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has arrived in Hungary for talks with Prime Minister Viktor Orban Monday, ahead of elections where the nationalist leader faces a significant challenge from the opposition. Rubio's visit is the final stage of a whirlwind trip to Europe that also saw him address the Munich Security Conference and visit another right-wing ally, Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico.

US President Donald Trump has made no secret of his high regard for Orban, saying in a social media post on Friday that the prime minister had pro-

duced "phenomenal" results in Hungary.

But Orban, 62, has a fight on his hands for the April 12 legislative elections in Hungary. Polls suggest his Fidesz party is trailing opposition leader Peter Magyar's TISZA. In a speech on Saturday, Orban insisted he would keep up his fight against "pseudo-civil organisations, bought journalists, judges, politicians" — a tirade not unlike those favoured by Trump. He also took aim at the "oppressive machinery of Brussels", another jibe at the European Union's leadership, with whom he has long been at loggerheads on a host of issues.

Italy says it stands ready to train police in Gaza

Monitoring Desk

ROME: Italy stands ready to help train police forces in Gaza and elsewhere in the Palestinian territories, its foreign minister said on Monday, as aims to a stabilizing the Middle East.

"We are ready to train a new Gaza police force, and we are also ready to Palestinian police," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani told a news conference in Rome. He confirmed that Rome ready to participate as an observer in US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace initiative, and Italy had been invited to attend a meeting of the group this week in Washington.



Israeli soldiers stand guard during a weekly settlers' tour in Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Ukraine prosecutors say former energy minister is suspect in kickback case

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: A Ukrainian former energy minister has been detained as a suspect in a high-profile kickback case for crimes such as money laundering and participation in criminal activity, anti-graft prosecutors said on Monday, but did not name him.

Ukraine's previous two energy ministers resigned amid fallout from the alleged "Midas" case, on an alleged \$100-million scheme at the state atomic agency that ensnared senior officials and business elites, including a former associ-

ate of President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The scandal also claimed the job of Zelensky's chief of staff, and all three have denied wrongdoing. "We talking the former energy minister of Ukraine (2021-2025)," special anti-graft prosecutors on the Telegram messaging app. "He is charged with money laundering and participation in a criminal organization."

The former minister was detained the weekend while attempting to leave Ukraine, the prosecutors said.

Ousted as PM, Nepal's veteran Marxist leader Oli seeks return

KATHMANDU (AFP/APP): Tough-talking Nepali leader Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli spent decades in communist politics and served as prime minister four times before he was ousted in 2025 by deadly youth protests.

Less than six months since the September anti-corruption unrest, in which at least 77 people were killed, the 73-year-old is seeking his political comeback.

Oli, leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-UML), hopes to regain control of parliament in the March 5 elections.

But he faces a direct challenge in his home constituency from 35-year-old rapper-turned-mayor Balendra Shah, who has cast himself as a symbol of youth-driven political change. Campaigning begins Monday. Oli spent last week meeting communities and appealing for votes, painting the polls as a "competition between those who burn the country and those who build it".

The protests were triggered by the Oli government's ban on social media, but driven by widespread frustration over economic stagnation and entrenched corruption.

Israeli approval of West Bank land registration draws outrage

Monitoring Desk

JERUSALEM: Israel's government has approved a process to register land in the West Bank, drawing condemnation from Arab nations and critics who labelled it a "mega land grab" that would accelerate annexation of the Palestinian territory. Israel's foreign ministry said the measure would enable "transparent and thorough clarification of rights to resolve legal disputes" and was needed after unlawful land registration in areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

But Egypt, Qatar and Jordan criticized the move as illegal under international law. In a statement, the Egyptian government called it a "dangerous escalation aimed at consolidating Israeli control over the occupied Palestinian territories."

Qatar's foreign ministry condemned the "decis-

sion to convert West Bank lands into so-called 'state property'," saying it would "deprive the Palestinian people of their rights."

The Palestinian Authority called for international intervention to prevent the "de facto beginning of the annexation process and the undermining of the foundations of the Palestinian state." Israeli anti-settlement watchdog Peace Now called Sunday's measure a "mega land grab." According to public broadcaster Kan, land registration will be reopened in the West Bank for the first time since 1967 — when Israel captured the territory in the Middle East war.

The Israeli media reported that the process will take place only in Area C, which constitutes some 60 percent of West Bank territory and is under Israeli security and administrative control.

Trump tells Hamas to proceed with 'full and immediate' disarmament

Monitoring Desk

WEST PALM BEACH: US President Donald Trump on Sunday urged Hamas to move forward with disarmament under his plan for postwar Gaza, and said members of his so-called "Board of Peace" had pledged \$5 billion to the Palestinian territory's reconstruction.

"Very importantly, Hamas must uphold its commitment to Full and Immediate Demilitarization," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform, ahead of a February 19 meeting of the board in Washington.

Disarmament is a key part in the second phase of the US-brokered ceasefire plan sealed in October between Israel and the Palestinian militant group to end the war triggered by Hamas's attack on Israel in October 2023.

The United Nations endorsed the plan in November.

The second phase stipulates that Israeli forces gradually withdraw from Gaza and Hamas should disarm, with an interna-

tional stabilization force deployed to ensure security.

Hamas has repeatedly said that disarmament is a red line, although it has indicated it could consider handing over its weapons to a future Palestinian governing authority.

Both sides accuse each other daily of ceasefire violations.

Although originally intended to oversee Gaza's rebuilding, the charter for the "Board of Peace" does not seem to limit its role to the Palestinian territory.

"The Board of Peace has unlimited potential," Trump said Sunday in his post.

After an initial meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos last month, the board is due to meet Thursday in the US capital.

Countries have been asked to pay \$1 billion for permanent membership of the board, and the invitation for Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country invaded Ukraine in 2022, has drawn criticism.

German foreign minister slams France over defence spending

BERLIN (AFP/APP): German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl criticised French defence spending on Monday, calling for Paris to do more to turn calls for European security sovereignty into concrete capabilities.

The comments marked the latest crack in relations between the two European giants.

French President Emmanuel Macron "repeatedly and correctly refers to our pursuit of European sovereignty," Wadepuhl told public broadcaster Deutschlandfunk.

"Anyone who talks about it needs to act accordingly in their own country," he said.

European NATO members are under pressure from the United States to build up their defence spending.

Though they pledged last June to raise their defence and secu-

rity-related outlays to five percent of GDP by 2035, Wadepuhl said progress in Europe so far had been lacking.

"Unfortunately, efforts in the French Republic have also been insufficient to achieve this so far," Wadepuhl said. "France, too, needs to do what we are doing here with difficult discussions."

Germany last year exempted most defence spending from constitutionally enshrined debt limits and current budgets foresee Berlin spending more than 500 billion euros (\$593 billion) on defence between 2025 and 2029.

Under financial pressure, France has less room for manoeuvre.

The country has the European Union's third-highest debt burden as a proportion of GDP after Greece and Italy, almost twice the 60-percent ceiling set in EU treaties.

Russian Scientists Find a Way to Reduce Child Mortality From Burns

MOSCOW (SPUTNIK/APP): Researchers at the Tyumen Medical University have found, using drugs that regulate the immune system in the first hours after injury can improve survival rates and speed up treatment for children with burns.

The university reported that the study revealed the mechanism behind immune system deterioration in young children following burn injuries.

Burns are one of the leading causes of hospitalization among children under four to five, according to scientists at Tyumen Medical University. In about 75% of cases, children suffer thermal injuries from scalding liquids such as boiling water, tea, soup, or steam.

"Burns rank eleventh among the causes of death in children aged one to nine, and they are also the fifth

most common cause of non-fatal injuries in children. Each year, more than half a million children worldwide are hospitalized with burn injuries. According to UNICEF statistics, 260 children die every day from thermal injuries and their consequences," said Sergey Sakharov, head of the Department of Healthcare Mobilization Training and Disaster Medicine at the university and a practicing surgeon.

According to him, the main cause of illness and mortality following burn injuries is infectious complications, since thermal trauma significantly weakens the body's immune defenses. At present, the mechanisms of immune protection in burn patients are still insufficiently studied, and specialists are searching for ways to improve treatment effectiveness, the researcher noted.



Members of Syria's Kurdish Internal Security Police Force and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces stand guard during a joint security operation at Camp Roj, in the countryside near al-Malkiyah in Syria's northeastern Hasakah province, Syria.

LJCP to frame mechanism for free legal aid to marginalized citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): "No deserving litigant should go unrepresented, and every citizen — regardless of financial means — must have access to legal advice and assistance," the Chief Justice of Pakistan said while chairing the 47th meeting of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan at the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday.

The Commission deliberated on a range of proposals aimed at advancing law reform in line with constitutional requirements and contemporary societal needs.

In what was described as a landmark decision, the Commission tasked the

LJCP Secretariat with developing a comprehensive framework for a free legal aid and advisory mechanism to expand access to justice for marginalized segments of society.

The proposed framework will include systemic arrangements in collaboration with the High Courts and bar regulatory bodies. It will also explore modalities for institutionalising pro bono commitments and utilising funding from the relevant window of the Access to Justice Development Fund to support the initiative.

The meeting was attended on special invitation by Justice Amin-ud-Din

Khan, Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan. Participants also included the Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court, the Additional Attorney-General for Pakistan, the Secretary of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Acting Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women, and senior advocates of the Supreme Court.

The Chief Justices of the Lahore High Court, Peshawar High Court, High Court of Sindh, and High Court of Balochistan, along with Justice (Retd.) M. Shaiq Usmani and Barrister Sajid Zahid attended the meeting virtually.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf awarding degree during 28th Convocation Ceremony of Bahria University, Islamabad.

28th Convocation of Bahria University held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 28th Convocation of Bahria University Islamabad was held on Monday to confer degrees in various disciplines.

Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) and Pro-Chancellor of Bahria University, Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as the chief guest and conferred degrees upon the graduating students, said a news release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pak Navy).

During the convocation, over 3,300 graduates were awarded degrees in various disciplines. Additionally, 108 gold medals and 105 silver medals were

awarded to students in recognition of their exceptional academic achievements, it further said.

While addressing the ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff congratulated the graduating students and their parents on the successful achievement of this important academic milestone.

He emphasized the vital role of higher education institutions in national development.

The CNS also commended Bahria University's remarkable growth and its transformation into one of the country's most prestigious national institutions.

Three facilitators of Fitna al-Hindustan arrested from Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) have arrested three facilitators of Fitna al-Hindustan during a joint operation in Karachi.

The joint operation was conducted in the Chakri Goth area of Karachi. The arrested terrorists were later identified as Yasir Arafat, Khuda Bukhsh, and Zahid Hussain alias Barakzai.

Pakistan Rangers and CTD personnel also recovered five kilograms of explosive material, three detonators, one kilogram of ball bearings, 250 boxes of extremist literature, and laptops from their custody.

The arrested terrorists were planning to use this material, which was hidden at a secret location, for terrorist attacks on sensitive

locations in Karachi.

A spokesman of the Pakistan Rangers said that all these terrorists were handed over to the police for further legal proceedings.

Earlier in January 2026, law enforcement agencies in Karachi have thwarted a major terrorist plot through a timely operation, recovering a large quantity of explosives and arresting three suspected terrorists.

Addressing a press conference, Additional Inspector General of Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Zulfiqar Lark and Deputy Inspector General Ghulam Azfar Mahesar said a raid was conducted in Rais Goth on Karachi's outskirts for the presence of terrorists in the area.

Ahsan departs for Dhaka to attend new PM's oath taking today

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal will represent Pakistan at the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected Prime Minister of Bangladesh due to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's foreign visit.

Dhaka is preparing for a landmark political transition on February 17 as Bangladesh's newly elected leadership takes the oath of office in a ceremony that signals both continuity and change in the country's democratic journey.

The Government of Bangladesh formally invited the Prime Minister of Pakistan to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected Prime Minister.

Six perish as speedy trailer crushes car in Naushehro Feroze

NAUSHEHRO FEROZE (INP): Six people lost their lives and another critically wounded when a trailer crushed a car due to overspeeding in Naushehro Feroze on Monday morning. The accident took place near Manan Pump Nangu Shah Mori on the National Highway in Naushehro Feroze. The ill-fated car, with five people on board, was going to Karachi from Larkana. All car-riders were residents of the Lal Rayak area of Larkana. Soon after receiving the report, a police party rushed to the spot and shifted the dead and injured persons to a hospital in Naushehro Feroze.



QUETTA: Director QDA Zain Kasi meeting with Director General Public Relations Balochistan Askar Khan.

PTI fails to address IHC registrar's objections to plea in Toshakhana-II case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The registrar of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday pointed out that the objections he had raised to an appeal filed by the PTI lawyers for the release of former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan on bail after suspending the sentence awarded to him in the Toshakhana-II case had not been addressed despite the passage of seven days.

The registrar said that seven days had been given to the petitioner to address these objections. "But now the time is up," he said, and added that when the objections persisted, how the petition could be fixed for the hearing.

A petition had been filed in the IHC on Saturday, seeking suspension of

the sentence handed to Imran Khan in the Toshakhana Bulgari set case on medical grounds.

Filed by Barrister Salman Safdar and Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry Advocate, the petition stated that unless the appeal was decided in the case, the prison term awarded to him be suspended and he be released.

It was further written in the petition that only 15 per cent vision had been left in the right eye of Imran, and that Dr. Muhammad Arif at PIMS had said that the treatment of his eyes was not possible at Adiala Jail.

The petitioners also stated that the former prime minister was already 73 years old, and his prolonged imprisonment could pose serious risks to his health.

Police, Nasar Khel tribe unite against terrorism in Lakki

PESHAWAR (APP): A joint jirga (tribal meeting) was held in Lakki Marwat district on Monday, wherein the Nasar Khel tribe and local police agreed on a collective strategy to take strong action against elements disturbing peace in the area.

During the consultative session led by SP Investigation Murad Khan Wazir and SDPO Saeed Khan, both the police and tribal elders reached a mutual understanding to eliminate terrorism and criminal activities through coordinated efforts.

The Nasar Khel tribe, showing unity and determination, openly declared that they would stand firmly against anti-state and anti-peace elements.



VIENNA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Vice President of Austrian Federal Economic Chamber Carmen Goby witnessing the signing ceremony of MOU between Pakistani and Austrian companies.

Health Minister directs Establishment of at least one HIV screening & treatment in every district

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal, on Monday directed the concerned authorities to establish at least one HIV screening and treatment center in every district to ensure citizens have access to quality treatment facilities within their own localities.

He made these remarks while chairing a high-level meeting to review the HIV/AIDS situation in the country, where participants were given a detailed

briefing on the prevailing challenges and the way forward.

The meeting was attended by senior officials of the Central Management Unit and representatives of international partner organizations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Health Minister emphasized the urgent need to further strengthen HIV prevention, timely diagnosis, availability of treatment, and public awareness campaigns across the country.

The Minister also instructed that implementation of Border Health Ser-

vices Regulation recommendations be made more effective and that proper screening of every individual entering through borders must be ensured. He further called for the development of a regular reporting mechanism in this regard.

Highlighting existing gaps, the Minister noted that timely diagnosis of all people living with HIV in the country is still not being fully achieved, stressing that coordinated and effective practical measures are indispensable to address the challenge.

SC declares founder PTI's three criminal petitions infructuous, adjourns them indefinitely

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has declared three criminal petitions, filed by founder PTI, as infructuous and adjourned them indefinitely, holding that since the trial court's final judgment has already been challenged and is pending before the high court, the petitioner may raise all objections before the appropriate forum.

According to a detailed written judgment issued on Monday, a two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan passed the order after hearing the matter on February 12.

The three petitions arose out of the same criminal case instituted on a complaint filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan through the District Election Commissioner, Islamabad.

Although the peti-

tions challenged different interim and ancillary orders, they stemmed from a common set of proceedings.

In the first petition, the petitioner had raised legal objections before the trial court, including issues relating to jurisdiction and limitation, which were dismissed. The high court, in review, remanded the matter to the trial court.

However, the trial was subsequently completed and a final judgment was delivered on August 5, 2023. An appeal against that judgment is currently pending before the high court.

In the second petition, the petitioner challenged the rejection of his request to summon certain witnesses. Despite filing a review petition and a miscellaneous application before the high court, no stay order was granted, and the trial proceeded to conclusion.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Food Haji Noor Muhammad Dummer listening to the problems of the people in his office.

Achakzai urges results-based partnerships for Balochistan's development

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly, Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, delivered the opening address at the high-level policy consultation titled "Towards Inclusive and Resilient Social Services in Balochistan: A Policy Consultation," organized by the Government of Balochistan with technical support from UNICEF on February 16, 2026, in Islamabad.

In his address, the Speaker expressed appreciation to development partners, government representatives, and stakeholders for their participation and continued commitment to supporting Balochistan's development. He emphasized that the consultation marks an important step toward shaping a shared vision for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable social sector development in the province. Highlighting the Government's sustained efforts over the past fifteen years, Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai noted that

despite fiscal constraints, geographic challenges, and climate vulnerabilities, the Government of Balochistan has consistently prioritized social sectors through its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

He outlined major initiatives undertaken to improve education, healthcare, water access, and social protection systems across the province. In the education sector, he highlighted large-scale initiatives such as the Balochistan Education Support Project, girls' education support programmes, province-wide school upgradation and classroom expansion, and the establishment of cadet colleges and Danish Schools, all aimed at expanding access to quality education and strengthening human capital development. In the health sector, the Speaker noted significant investments in upgrading tertiary and teaching hospitals, strengthening district health facilities, expanding maternal and child health programmes.

IMF mission to reach Pakistan on Feb 25 for 3rd economic review

ISLAMABAD (INP): An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission is set to arrive in Pakistan on February 25 for the third economic review talks under the ongoing loan program, a key step that could unlock \$1.2 billion in fresh funding.

The 15-day visit will focus on assessing Pakistan's economic performance from July to December 2025 and reviewing progress on agreed reform targets.

The IMF delegation will hold negotiations with officials from the Ministry of Finance, the State Bank of Pakistan.

Two killed, 17 hurt in Bannu blast

PESHAWAR (APP): A time bomb planted on a motorcycle exploded near the main gate of Miryan Police Station in Bannu on Monday, killing two people and injuring 17 others. According to police, the cowardly terrorist attack resulted in the martyrdom of two innocent civilians, while around 17 people sustained injuries.

The injured were immediately shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Bannu, for medical treatment. Upon receiving information, a heavy contingent of Bannu Police led by SP Rural Haider Ali and SDPO Rural One Khanan Khan reached the site along with the Quick Response Force bomb disposal squad and armored personnel carriers.

SSGC announces gas supply schedule for Ramadan

QUETTA (APP): The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has announced the gas supply schedule for the month of Ramadan to facilitate consumers during Sehri and Ifthar hours.

According to schedule issued by SSGC, gas will be available in the morning from 3:00 AM to 9:00 AM and in the evening from 3:30 PM to 10:00 PM. Announcement said that gas supply will remain suspended during the day from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM and at night from 10:00 PM to 3:00 AM.

The company has advised citizens to strictly follow the announced timings to avoid inconvenience. On the other hand the consumers have also been warned against using gas compressors, stating that its use is illegal, unsafe, and unethical.

Minister Siddiqi advises NGOs to support non-formal schools serving in Karachi's urban slums

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqi on Monday observed that Karachi is the charity capital of the world, no country in the world has been blessed with a city like this,

and advised prominent NGOs that collect charity and donations from Karachi, should redirect their support to the non-formal schools serving in the city's urban slums under the Directorate General of Basic Education Community Schools (BECS).

The Minister expressed these views while addressing a chief guest distribution of teaching learning material and school bags among BECS Learners of Karachi in a ceremony at the Nazeer Hussain University, F.B. Area here.

He said that those

large non-governmental organizations in Karachi, which collect donations from this city, are nurturing hunger on the streets, they should instead be supporting the non formal schools of BECS.

Dr. Khalid also conveyed a message to the Karachiites, the teachings of our faith is about charity begins at home. It starts from own home, parents, relatives, and neighbors.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool said that after immense difficulty, with great wisdom, and navigating through extensive legal proceedings, we obtained permission under a Supreme Court decision. It allows for non-traditional, non-formal, micro-schooling—wherever education is needed, the Constitution permits the federation to intervene in areas where educational gaps are.



RAHIMYAR KHAN: President Asif Ali Zardari formally wraps the turban of chieftainship on Sardar Nooruzaman Khan Gopang, marking his succession as Chief of the Gopang tribe.

Jam Kamal says: National sovereignty to remain paramount

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Monday said that Pakistan will not compromise on security under any circumstances and that national sovereignty will remain paramount.

In a statement, Jam Kamal said that effective and decisive action against terrorist elements using Afghan soil has become inevitable.

He stated that Pakistan has been presenting evidence and proof regarding terrorism for several years, yet a lasting solution to the issue has not been achieved.

He emphasized that the issue of terrorism must be resolved before enhancing relations with Afghanistan at any level.

He noted that the recent increase in terrorist incidents is deeply concerning, underscoring the urgent need to address the security situation with seriousness.

The Commerce Minister further stated that Pakistan supports dialogue and the promotion of trade and seeks to advance economic cooperation in the region. However, he stressed that meaningful progress is not possible in the presence of terrorism.

Quetta set for major urban overhaul with new master plan

Independent Report

QUETTA: Quetta is on the verge of a transformative urban makeover as authorities unveil a comprehensive Master Plan to modernize the city, expand infrastructure, and tackle long-standing civic challenges.

In a key meeting chaired by Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzeb Khan Kakar, senior officials, including Deputy Commissioner Mehruallah Badini, Divisional Director Development Zahoor Ahmed, Deputy Project Director Abid Ali, QDA representatives, and the planning consultants, reviewed a detailed roadmap covering short-term, mid-term, and long-term projects. The plan includes

digital mapping, land surveys, urban expansion strategies, and improvements in roads, drainage, and sewerage systems.

Commissioner Kakar stressed that the planning process will prioritize sustainable solutions, public participation, and relocation of commercial and industrial hubs away from congested city areas. He highlighted pressing challenges such as water scarcity, urban congestion, and land utilization, insisting that immediate actions for short-term projects must be implemented without delay.

"This Master Plan is not just about today; it is about securing Quetta's future."

DC Quetta vows to implement price control for facilitating people in Ramadan

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehruallah Badini on Monday chaired a meeting regarding price control to ensure implementation of it for facilitating people in Quetta during the Holy month of Ramadan.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Muhammad Anwar Kakar, Assistant Commissioner City, Assistant Commissioner Sariah, Assistant Commissioner Kuchlak and magistrates of all four sub-divisions.

In the meeting, strict decisions were taken to control the prices of food items during Ramadan and provide relief to the people.

Strict orders were issued in the meeting that indiscriminate action

would be taken against profiteers and sellers of expensive goods and those violating the law to be sent to jail, no concession would be made to high-priced sellers.

Deputy Commissioner Quetta directed all administrative officers to make price control operations effective and continuous in their respective sub-divisions and ensure monitoring by being present in the field.

The district administration clarified that providing relief to the people during the holy month of Ramadan is the top priority and all possible steps would be taken in this regard and strict action to be taken against profiteers, no one could be allowed to profiteer during the month of Ramadan.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzeb Khan Kakar being briefed about Quetta Master Plan. Deputy Commissioner Mehruallah Badini is also present on the occasion