

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 Shehzad 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 Shehzad 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 architecture.

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



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

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

SHEIKHPURA (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 Sheikhpura 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 Shehzad Sharif, the results of difficult decisions are now emerging, and the country's economy is moving in the right direction.

The DG stressed that the provincial government

Continued on page 2



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

Balochistan to shift border trade to passport system: Hamza Shafqat

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 Shafqat, has announced that facilitating legal traders will be top priority and that within the next two months, the Iran border will operate under a formal One-Door 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, Shafqat 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, Shafqat

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.

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ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Pakistan, Dr Irfan Neziroglu, called on Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afzad 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 Turkey

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 Turkey to formalise institutional cooperation between the two countries.

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

Continued on page 2

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.

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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 a powerplay, their best start of the tournament.

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

Hemanta. 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. Hemanta 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 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 Afzidi 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..

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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 prioritize human capital development, service quality and resilient delivery systems. Outlining the province's strategic direction, the minister said the government sought 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.

TENDER NOTICE
The Deputy Director Agriculture OFWM Killa Abdullah invites bids from eligible bidders for execution of following work(s) under the project BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (BSDI) PHASE-II for the years 2025-26 based on Composite Schedule Rates 2023 on Percentage Rates. **Tender Fee Rs. 1,000/- in shape of Green Challan form deposited in head of account (C03136) E/Money 2% of estimated cost in shape of Call Deposit and time limit 30-06-2026**

S#	Name of Work(s)	E/Cost
1	INSTALLATION OF SOLAR OPERATED SYSTEMS ON EXISTING BORES UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (BSDI) PHASE-II 2025-26	9,901,377 TSE-252602974733

Procurements shall be made under BPPRA Rules 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignments of similar nature of work. Turnover of at least 34,300,000 PKR amount in 1 subsequent previous year showing financial capacity of firm. Attach PEC Certificate. C04% of Estimated Cost. Green Challan of Rs.2000/- A minimum of three completed works of similar scope and cost must be provided. **TERMS & CONDITIONS:** The undersigned has right to cancel the tender before opening date or same 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 envelop 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, Zhob road District Loralai. Telephone No. 0824410031 E-mail: govt@epss.com.pk

PRQ No.3795/16-2-2026 www.dprgob.pk [@dpr_gob](http://dpr_gob) [@dprgob](http://dprgob) [@dprgobalochistan](http://dprgobalochistan)

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 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 Million	196000/- 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 34,300,000 PKR amount in 1 subsequent previous year showing financial capacity of firm. Attach PEC Certificate. C04% of Estimated Cost. Green Challan of Rs.2000/- A minimum of three completed works of similar scope and cost must be provided. **TERMS & CONDITIONS:** The undersigned has right to cancel the tender before opening date or same 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 envelop 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 04 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, Zhob road District Loralai. Telephone No. 0824410031 E-mail: govt@epss.com.pk**

PRQ No.3799/16-02-2026 www.dprgob.pk [@dpr_gob](http://dpr_gob) [@dprgob](http://dprgob) [@dprgobalochistan](http://dprgobalochistan)

TENDER NOTICE
The Executive Engineer Roads CWPP&H Department District Loralai invites sealed Bids from eligible bidder who can prove their eligibility and qualification as 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 of PCC DRAIN FROM MAIN BAZAR VIA GGHS TO DHO ROAD MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE AREA NUSHKI.	24000000	960000/-	TSE-252602975673

Procurements shall be made under BPPRA Rules 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The Bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turnover of at least 10,000,000 PKR amount in 3 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List. **TERMS & CONDITIONS:** 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 guaranteed 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 date 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**

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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 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 DHO 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 M.S.)	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. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. c) Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. 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 C03, C04, C04(i) (Dams/Water Retaining Structures), CE04(ii) (Irrigation & Flood Control Systems), CE04(iii) (dams only), CE04(v) (Irrigation Only), EE11(ii) (Solar) (Energy), EE11(iii) (Solar Energy), EE11(vi) (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 & 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.gov.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 under-signed. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 AM. **Address:** Office of the Municipal Committee Nushki Mobile no.03482296744 Email: munawarhan6744@gmail.com**

**CHIEF OFFICER
MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE NUSHKI**
AB No.863/16-02-2026 www.dprgob.pk [@dpr_gob](http://dpr_gob) [@dprgob](http://dprgob) [@dprgobalochistan](http://dprgobalochistan)

**Assistant Director
NATURAL CALAMITIES &
OTHER DISASTER**
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Pakistan, Austria..

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sign Secretary Amna Babch.

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..

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They also discussed forming joint strategies to combat cyber

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 Daesh 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 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 Turkey. 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.

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

Frozen relationship

To Islamabad's demand 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, which 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'.

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 unedifying 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.

Land of the unclear

units at the average grid price 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 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.

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 paixas or rupees it will reduce the domestic tariff. We are simply expected to go along with the government's claim that this is a 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 slight 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 obliged 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

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 liveability; 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 developmental 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 liveability.

There is a need to develop a holistic policy to 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 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 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-

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

Post-cuts

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 getting 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 investigating the Watergate scandal. But it is only the latest moribund 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.

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 economics 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 o-ugh civil society movements, judicial challenges 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 Gujarat

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 Gujarat 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.



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. Shah appreciated the SPSC for introducing the computer based testing service. "This complex isn't just a building but a center of merit and progress," he underlined.

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.

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. Waseem briefed the CM that the SPSC after conducting the recruitment process recommended appointments of 21,504 candidates by 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.

Housing Ministry committed to addressing allottees' issues on priority: Riaz Pirzada

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, has assured that the ministry was fully committed to addressing the issues of allottees on a priority basis.

He expressed these views during the groundbreaking ceremony for infrastructure development work in Sectors F-14 and F-15, launched by the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA).

He added that the formal commencement of development work in Islamabad's Sectors F-14 and F-15 is a practical demonstration of this resolve.

He noted that the project was originally launched in 2015 but faced delays due to various reasons. However, he said it is now being revived and moved forward at full pace.

The minister stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, special emphasis was 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.

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242 search operations conducted across Punjab ahead of Ramadan

LAHORE (INP):

Punjab Police conducted 242 search operations across the province, including Lahore during the last 24 hours in view of the upcoming holy month of Ramadan.

According to the Punjab Police spokesperson, a total of 3,730 individuals were questioned during these operations, while 12 criminals were taken into custody.

He said that during the ongoing operations, police also recovered illegal weapons from criminal and suspicious elements, including 34 rifles, 375 pistols and 58 guns.

The spokesperson added that since the start of the current year, Punjab Police had carried out 16,440 search operations across the province, during which more than 688,000 individuals were interrogated and 1,951 criminals were arrested.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Abdul Karim directed that search operations should be continued to hold anti-state and criminal elements accountable and to ensure a peaceful environment during Ramadan.

FWO rehabilitates 58-km Dassu-Sazin section of Karakoram Highway

ISLAMABAD (INP):

The National Highway Authority announced the final evaluation report for the upgradation and rehabilitation of a section of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), a historic road linking Pakistan and China and widely regarded as a symbol of enduring friendship between the two countries, according to a Gwadar Pro's report.

As per the official document, the project titled

"Up-gradation/Rehabilitation

of KKH N-35 Between

KM 292+00 – 350+00

Dassu-Sazin,"

was procured through a single-stage two-envelope bidding procedure in accordance with public procurement rules.

According to the announcement, M/s FWO was declared the lowest evaluated bidder with a rebated cost of Rs5,608,170,338 (about Rs5.6 billion), and was found responsive under PPRA Rules, 2004.

The project will be financed through the Road Maintenance Account (RMA) of NHA, according to the bidding data. The contract involves the upgradation and rehabilitation of the Karakoram Highway section between Dassu and Sazin.

The Karakoram Highway, also known as National Highway-35 (N-35), is a key transport corridor connecting Pakistan and China and facilitating regional connectivity, trade, and economic cooperation.

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The Karakoram Highway, also known as National Highway-35 (N-35

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

VIENNA (APP): Prime Minister Shehzad 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 Shehzad 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.



VIENNA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehzad 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 in many sectors.

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

Independent Report

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

The meeting was also attended by FPCCI Vice Presidents Tariq Jadoon, Mr. Muhammad Razid, Capital 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 Ikrar Sheikh emphasized an expanding cooperation in Agricultural Technology, Food Processing, Pharmaceutical, and IT. He highlighted that Pakistan is offering a "One-Window" facility and a favorable environment for foreign investors.

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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 Rs52,762, 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.

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.

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 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.

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 Siegert and Deputy Head of Mission Hajo Provost of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Federal Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mumtaz Wattoo warmly welcomed the delegation and appreciated the longstanding cooperation 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 Mumtaz Wattoo during a 2-3 day official visit to Pakistan aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in water resources development and management.

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.

The delegation will also meet with Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehraullah Badini to discuss the collection of Agricultural Income Tax.

QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehraullah 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 SMEs.

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 Rating 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):

The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.61 compared to the previous day's closing at Rs 279.62.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 280.30 and Rs 282.25, respectively. The price of the Euro against Rupee increased by Rs 0.27 to close at Rs 331.84 from the previous day's close of Rs 331.57, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.82, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 1 and closed at Rs 381.77 compared to the previous day's Rs 380.77.

The exchange rate of the Emirati Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by Rs 0.01 each and were traded at Rs 76.12 and Rs 74.55, respectively.

FPCCI hails reduction in Sindh Infrastructure dev. Cess

KARACHI (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), on Monday, welcomed the Sindh government's decision to reduce the infrastructure development cess, terming it a historic breakthrough expected to reduce the cost of doing business by hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

President FPCCI Atif Ikrar Sheikh, SVP Saqib Fayyaz Magoor, Vice Presidents Abdul Mohamad Khan and Asif Sakhri, addressing a press conference here, lauded the provincial government for lowering the cess from the existing 1.85% to a bracket of 0.80% to 0.85%.

The FPCCI leadership noted that the business community had been struggling with this issue for the past 20 years and the resolution marks a significant relief for trade and industry. They expressed hope that the Sindh government would continue to support the industrial sector with similar business-friendly initiatives in the future.

Atif Ikrar Sheikh further highlighted that the infrastructure cess on the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) has been completely abolished, fulfilling a major demand of exporters.

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

new telecom sites and upgrading four existing ones, extending reliable voice and high-speed mobile broadband services to 144 underserved and underserved mazais 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.

The agreement, formalized at a ceremony in Karachi, reflects a shared

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

UNITED NATIONS (AP): 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.

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 Yis Barneh and Elm CEO Mohammad Alomair, in the presence of Saudi Ambassador to Damascus Faisal bin Saud Al-Majfali.

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

Minister Barneh 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 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.



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



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi 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 and 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.

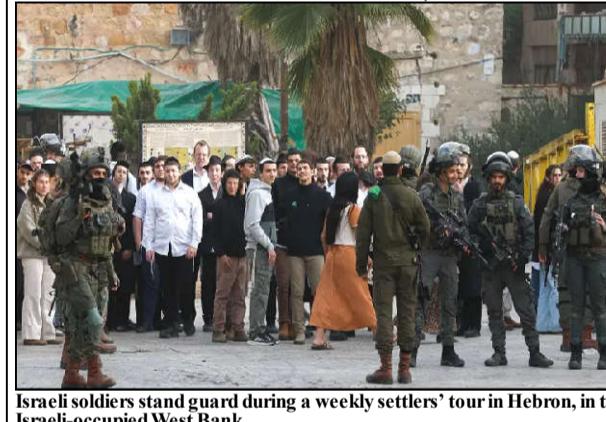
Fidesz party is trailing opposition leader Peter Magyar's FIDESZ. In a speech on Saturday, Orban insisted he would keep up his fight against "pseudo-civil organisations, bought journalists, judges, politicians"—a tirade not unlike those favoured by Trump. He also took aim at the "oppressive machinery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

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

But Orban, 62, has a fight on his hands with a record 10 legislative elections in Hungary. Polls suggest his

party 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-



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 so-called "Midas" case, on an alleged \$100-million scheme at the state atomic agency that ensnared senior officials and business elites, including a former associate

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.

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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. Shah 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 Chakra Goth area of Karachi. The arrested terrorists were later identified as Yasir Arafat, Khuda Bukhsh, and Zahid Hussain alias Barakza.

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 following intelligence reports about the presence of terrorists in the area.



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 Bulgar set case on medical grounds.

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

PESHAWAR (APP): A joint jirga (tribal meeting) was held in Lakk 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 Gobt 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 Sید 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-

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).

Dr. Khalid Maqbool also conveyed a message to the Karachites, 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.



RAHIM YAR KHAN: President Asif Ali Zardari formally wraps the turban of chieftainship on Sardar Noorulman 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.

Quetta set for major urban overhaul with new master plan

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.

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 Mehrullah 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 Sariab, Assistant Commissioner Kuchlak and magistrates of all four sub-divisions.

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.

Strict orders were issued in the meeting that indiscriminate action



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Food Haji Noor Muhammad Dummarr listening 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 Khalil 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.

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 upgrading 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.

SSGC announces gas supply schedule for Ramazan

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

According to the 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.

Strict orders were issued in the meeting that indiscriminate action



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