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Balochistan's deprivation cannot justify violence, separatism: CM Bugti

CM alleges overseas anti-Pakistan elements are inciting youth through social media; defends peaceful protest, rules out leniency for those taking up arms against the state at 28th National Security Workshop

Independent Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said that the province's deprivation and uneven development cannot justify terrorism, violence or separatism, emphasizing that peaceful protest and dissent are constitutional rights but armed activities against the state are unacceptable. He alleged that overseas anti-Pakistan elements were using social media to incite Balochistan's youth, stressing that their future lay in education, peace and development.

Addressing participants of the 28th National Security Workshop on Tuesday, the chief minister said Balochistan was an inseparable part of Pakistan and that terrorism, whether committed in the name of religion or nationalism, was unacceptable. He maintained that no leniency would be shown toward those taking up arms against the state or supporting terrorism, regardless of gender.

Acknowledging development disparities and deprivation, CM Bugti stressed the need to understand Balochistan in its historical and socioeconomic context. He maintained that facts were being distorted to construct a narrative justifying violence and separatism.

He said the province's problems could be addressed through constitutional and democratic struggle, good governance, economic opportunities and public welfare initiatives rather than targeting innocent citizens and state institutions.

The chief minister drew a clear distinction between peaceful political struggle and armed activities against the state, emphasizing that constitutional rights must be accom-

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QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing participants of the 28th National Security Workshop.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi called Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM reaffirms Federal Govt's support to eliminate terrorism, boost development in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, assured the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government of every possible federal government's support to completely eradicate terrorism, establish lasting peace and ensure public welfare in the province.

Paying tribute to the law enforcement agencies, the prime minister said that the sacrifices rendered by the brave security forces and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police in the war against terrorism would not go in vain.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi who called on him. Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi was also present on the occasion, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He emphasized that the federal government would continue to extend full cooperation to implement the decisions taken during the Apex Committee's meeting aimed at eliminating terrorism.

Reiterating the Centre's commitment to the progress and prosperity of the province, the prime minister directed authorities to utilize all available resources to provide healthcare, education and other basic facilities to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He placed special emphasis on improving social development indicators, particularly within the health and education sectors.

The prime minister also stressed the need to promote sports facilities across the province to provide youth with opportunities for positive engagement.

During the meeting, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi briefed the prime minister on the ongoing initiatives undertaken by his office and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Advisory Council to improve the overall law and order situation in the province.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to extending all possible support for the development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), the welfare of its people, and the provision of basic facilities.

He made these remarks during a meeting with Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Syed Iftikhar Gilani, at the Prime Minister's Office.

During the meeting, PM Shehbaz said Pakistan will continue its moral, political, and diplomatic support for the people of Kashmir until they achieve their right to self-determination.

CJP, former Swiss President discuss criminal justice reforms, access to justice

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi and former Swiss President Ruth Dreifuss on Tuesday discussed criminal justice reforms, prison overcrowding and measures to improve access to justice, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Ms. Dreifuss, former President of the Swiss Confederation and a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Commission on Drug Policy, called on the Chief Justice at the Supreme Court along with Chairperson of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Rabiya Javeri Agha and other members of the delegation.

The discussions focused on protecting the rights of women, children and persons with drug dependence, besides addressing barriers to accessing justice and challenges arising from overcrowding in prisons.

Ms. Dreifuss expressed particular interest in the National Prison Reform Action Plan, jointly developed by the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee and the NCHR, especially its measures aimed at reducing pre-trial incarceration and promoting alternatives to imprisonment.

The delegation also proposed specialised capacity-building programmes for district judiciary officers through the Federal Judicial Academy to strengthen their ability to address challenges within the criminal justice system. The proposal was welcomed by the Chief Justice.

Highlighting the difficulties faced by women prisoners, particularly those unable to afford legal representation, the delegation discussed ways to ensure their access to legal assistance.



ISLAMABAD: Syed Amjad Ali Shah, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), presenting a souvenir to the Hon'ble Mr. Ömer Kerkez, President of the Court of Cassation of Türkiye, at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Mohsin Naqvi says: 'Terrorism, hate speech, incitement to violence & child abuse' govt red lines

Says govt has no intention of curtailing freedom of expression

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday said the government had four red lines for online content. i.e. terrorism, hate speech, incitement to violence and the sexual exploitation of children.

He was speaking at an international seminar, titled: 'Social Media Platforms and the Post-truth Era', organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here.

He said Pakistan has paid for terrorism with lives and that platforms act on 47 per cent of the requests made by the counter-terrorism department. He said free speech should not be curtailed and that dissent, including against the government, must remain possible, but that it cannot shield those who cross these lines.

Naqvi said the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has limited manpower, citing 61 personnel, including drivers and clerks, covering Punjab's population of about 140 million.

He said the Social Media Protection Regula-

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CHINA: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, visits Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre (JSLC), China, accompanied by the President of China Great Wall Industry Corporation (CGWIC), ahead of Pakistan's historic human spaceflight mission.

PM greets Field Marshal on induction in Malaysia NDSC's Hall of Fame

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday congratulated Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on his induction as a member in the Hall of Fame of Malaysia's National Defence Studies Centre.

The prime minister, in a social media post on his X timeline, said that the Field Marshal's resolute leadership during Marka-e-Haq, unwavering commitment to national defence, invaluable contributions to promoting peace, and enhancing Pakistan's international standing made this honour truly befitting.

He said that the distinction also reflected the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Malaysia.

"This recognition belongs equally to the brave men and women of our armed forces, whose courage, dedication and sacrifices safeguard our beloved homeland, and to the people of Pakistan.

Five militants killed in CTD operation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Peshawar Region on Tuesday killed five suspected militants of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in an intelligence-based operation in the Janna Khor Mera area of Bacha Khel in the jurisdiction of Badaber Police Station. However, TTP commander Taj Muhammad alias Sheenay, a resident of Tirah Valley in Khyber district, managed to escape along with two to three accomplices during the exchange of fire.

According to a CTD press release, the department had received credible intelligence tip off that the TTP commander, along with his armed associates, was present in the area and planning attacks on law enforcement agencies.

Acting on the information, heavily armed CTD teams immediately rushed to the location and strategically took positions to arrest the militants.



ISLAMABAD: Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan meeting with H.E Ms. Ruth Dreifuss, former President of the Swiss Confederation (1999), former Chair and current Steering Committee Member of the Global Commission on Drug Policy.

Pakistan, Turkiye reinforce judicial, cultural ties through wide ranging engagements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Building on the momentum generated by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Bilateral Judicial Cooperation, the high-level judicial delegation from the Court of Cassation of the Republic of Türkiye, led by its President, Ömer Kerkez, undertook a series of institutional, professional and cultural engagements in Islamabad Tuesday, reflecting the depth and diversity of the longstanding relations between the two brotherly nations.

During its visit to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the delegation participated in a sapling plantation ceremony, symbolising the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Türkiye and their shared commitment to nurturing these relations for future generations.

The delegation visited the Public Facilitation Centre of the Supreme Court, where it was briefed on various reform initiatives aimed at enhancing access to justice, improving judicial service delivery and facilitat-

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Zeeshan Ali set for historic spaceflight today

BEIJING (INP): Pakistani astronaut Muhammad Zeeshan Ali is set to lift off on Wednesday aboard China's Shenzhou-24 spacecraft, becoming the first Pakistani in space and the first foreign astronaut to visit China's Tiangong space station.

The spacecraft is scheduled to launch from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre at 5:18 am Pakistan Standard Time (8:18 am Beijing Time), the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) announced on Tuesday, Gwadar Pro reported.

Ali will fly as payload specialist alongside Chinese astronauts Tang Hongbo, the mission commander, and Wu Yi, in the first joint flight of Chinese and foreign astronauts in China's crewed space programme.

The Pakistan Embassy in China hailed the mission as "a historic milestone in Pakistan–China friendship" in a post on X on Tuesday, extending its best wishes to the crew. The mission's logo features jasmine, Pakistan's national flower.

AI-based testing system introduced to promote merit in Balochistan: CM Bugti

Independent Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said the provincial government has introduced an artificial intelligence-based testing mechanism to promote merit and transparency in recruitment, describing digital transformation and institutional reforms as key to creating equal opportunities for the province's youth.

He was speaking at the inauguration of the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) Data Center in Quetta, Balochistan's first such facility, where he highlighted the need to accelerate the province's adoption of modern technology and strengthen digital governance.

The chief minister appreciated the federal government and NTC for establishing the data center, saying Balochistan needed to keep pace with rapid developments in artificial intelligence and other digital technologies.

Reflecting on the transformation brought about by technology, Bugti said his generation had witnessed the shift from traditional writing tablets to digital tablets, illustrating the

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QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti offering Dua after inaugurating of the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) Data Center in Quetta.

JUI-F moves LHC after Fazl stopped from leaving Lahore residence

LAHORE (INP): The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) on Tuesday moved the Lahore High Court (LHC) against the alleged confinement of its chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, at his Lahore residence, seeking his immediate release and restoration of his freedom of movement after police deployed a heavy contingent outside the premises.

The development emerged after JUI-F chief was reportedly prevented from leaving his residence in Lahore after Punjab police deployed a heavy contingent outside the premises, ahead of his scheduled address to lawyers at the invitation of the High Court Bar Association.

"Fazl arrived in Lahore on Tuesday night and was due to address lawyers at the invitation of the LHC Bar Association. However, Punjab Police personnel has been deployed outside his residence to prevent him from leaving," the party said in a post on X.

According to JUI-F, police also deployed a heavy contingent in the housing society and at its main entrance, where a container was placed to block access. Residents of the society were also stopped from entering or leaving.

Achakzai calls for constitutional supremacy, political reconciliation, public control over national resources

Independent Report

LAHORE: Mahmood Khan Achakzai, Chairman of the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), head of the Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Aain Pakistan (TTAP), and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, has said that resolving the country's grave political, economic and law-and-order crises requires that national decisions be made through consultation among elected representatives of the people and all relevant political and democratic forces, rather than being left to a handful of individuals. He stressed that immediate constitutional and political reforms are essential to ensure constitutional supremacy, parliamentary sovereignty and the restoration of democracy.



Auditorium of the Lahore High Court Bar Association, Achakzai said that Lahore and its bar association had historically played an important role in the struggle for the Constitution and democracy. When such institutions fail to fulfil their constitutional and democratic responsibilities, the consequences are borne by society and the state as a whole.

He expressed serious concern over the law-and-order situation in various parts of the country. He said that unrest and bloodshed continued in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and

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Balochistan lawmakers reject proposals for new provinces

QUETTA (ANN): Members of the Balochistan Assembly have opposed proposals to divide the province or create new administrative units, calling on the federal government to focus instead on addressing Balochistan's longstanding socioeconomic challenges and ensuring its due share of financial and development resources. Speaking separately, MPAs Mir Rehmat Saleh Baloch, Mir Zabid Ali Reki, Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch and other lawmakers said they would not support any move aimed at dividing Balochistan or establishing new provinces. The lawmakers said people across the province continued to face serious challenges, including unemployment and inadequate access to education, healthcare and clean drinking water. They argued that debate over the creation of new provinces could divert attention from issues directly affecting the public. They also cautioned that establishing additional provinces at a time when the country was facing economic pressures and a growing debt burden could lead to higher administrative costs and place an additional financial burden on the national exchequer.

The MPAs alleged that years of what they described as discriminatory treatment by the federal government had contributed to Balochistan's underdevelopment and deepened a sense of deprivation among its people. They called on the federal government to ensure the province received its rightful share of financial resources and development funds, saying adequate funding was essential for improving public services.

Government committed to safeguarding dignity, honour, equal rights of women: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said the Government of Pakistan reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the dignity, honour and equal rights of every daughter of the nation.

"The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence also commence today and will continue until Human Rights Day on 10 December.

This global campaign is a clear manifestation of globally collective resolve to protect women from all forms of violence and abuse, " the prime minister said in a message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, being observed on November 25.

He said the Constitution of Pakistan obligates the State to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of national life, adding as a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 1996, Pakistan had undertaken to prevent violence, protect survivors and take effective action against perpetrators.

He reaffirmed that the government remained firmly committed to fulfilling these obligations.

The prime minister observed that violence against women occurs in homes, workplaces, public spaces and digital platforms. The under reporting of incidents, fear of social stigma and limited access to support services remain serious challenges in this regard.

Ensuring effective responses to such incidents is a shared responsibility that calls for the collective cooperation of all segments of society, he stressed.

In recent years, the prime minister said Pakistan has made significant strides in strengthening its legal framework for the protection of women.

"Legislation now addresses workplace harassment, acid attacks, honour related crimes and physical violence.

The Islamabad Capital Territory Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2026 has further reinforced protective measures for women and children. Effective implementation of these laws remains a key priority of the Government, " PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted him as saying.

The prime minister said the federal government is committed to further enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of relevant institutions and strengthening support services for women affected by violence.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addresses the international seminar on "Social Media Platforms and the Post-Truth Era," organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Syed Iftikhar Gillani calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan urges halt to energy grids & ship strikes, pushes for talks on Ukraine conflict

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Warning that "there can be no lasting food security without peace, " Pakistan has called on all warring parties to halt strikes on civilian energy grids and commercial vessels and pursue a negotiated settlement to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, now in its fifth year.

"There can be no substitute for the actual resolution of conflicts, through peaceful means, in accordance with the UN Charter and international law, " Ambassador Syed Haider Shah, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told a high-level UN Security Council briefing on Monday amid heightened attacks and tensions between the two countries.The briefing on Ukraine, "Protecting Critical Energy Infrastructure and Black Sea Lifelines of Global Food Supply, " initiated by Latvia with support from Liberia and Panama. Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics presided over the meeting.

The conflict began when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, arguing it was a "special military operation" for Ukraine's "demilitarization", protecting Russian-speaking people from "genocide, " and preventing NATO expansion.

In his remarks, Ambassador Haider Shah highlighted the widespread economic and humanitarian toll of the conflict resulting in an unstable geo-political situation, while urging adherence to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and a return to peace.

"We remain concerned by these conflict-driven disruptions and underscore the urgent need to safeguard critical infrastructure, ensure the uninterrupted flow of essential supplies.

, and prevent further escalation of humanitarian and economic crises, " the Pakistani envoy said.

The conflict, he added, is straining global food and energy markets, fracturing supply chains, and driving up commodity prices that severely impact developing nations outside the immediate conflict zone.

In this regard, Ambassador Haider Shah outlined three key priorities: protecting civilians and critical infrastructure under IHL, ensuring unimpeded humanitarian aid, and strengthening international cooperation to safeguard global supply chains.

3rd-party contract workers not entitled to permanent employment, rules FCC

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Constitutional Court has ruled that employees working through third-party contractors are not entitled to permanent employment, setting aside orders issued by the National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC) and the high court.

Justice Aamer Farooq authored the 18-page verdict. Justice Rozi Khan endorsed his judgments, while Justice Arshad Hussain Shah disagreed with the decision.

In its written judgment, the constitutional court observed that prolonged employment or service exceeding nine months does not automatically establish an employee's right to regularisation. It stated that recognising an employee hired under a third-party agreement as a permanent worker would amount to disregarding the terms of the contract.

The verdict further stated that the employee's salary payments and termination were the responsibility of the contractor. In the case under consideration, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) was not directly paying the employee's salary.

The court observed that directing the State Bank to regularise the employee was not justified, adding that no right to regularisation existed in the absence of a relevant law or policy. It also stated that courts did not have the authority to order the regularisation of an employee.



LARKANA: Deputy Commissioner Larkana Tariq Manzoor Chandio along with Chairman Larkana Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Khalid Hussain Mahar inaugurating the Pakistan Inter Board Girls Badminton Championship 2026 organized by BISE at Officers Club.

AI-based testing..

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speed at which technological advancement had reshaped society.

He said merit, transparency and effective action against corruption were essential for bringing Balochistan's young population into the national mainstream and ensuring that they received fair opportunities to progress.

Bugti said his government was pursuing institutional reforms and technological modernization to enable young people to advance on the basis of their capabilities and performance.

He directed the Secretary of Information Technology to enhance coordination with NTC and the federal government for the digitization and secure preservation of data maintained by provincial government departments.

The chief minister stressed that official information and government communications had important implications for national security and called for the adoption of the highest security standards to safeguard government data. He said the Quetta data center would be used to consolidate provincial government data through a modern and secure system, while cooperation with NTC and other data centers across the country would also be expanded.

Bugti expressed the hope that stronger institutional and technological cooperation would improve digital governance, enhance administrative capacity and contribute to better public service delivery in the province.

Pakistan, Turkiye..

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ing court users through technology-enabled services.

The distinguished guests also visited the Supreme Court Museum, which showcases Pakistan's judicial history, legal heritage and the institutional evolution of the Supreme Court, offering an insight into the country's judicial traditions.

The delegation subsequently visited the Fundamental Rights Monument, an initiative designed to promote public awareness of constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights and enhance community engagement.

Developed in the open space between the Supreme Court building and Constitution Avenue, the monument features large marble slabs etched and embossed with key words drawn from the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, highlighting the significance of constitutional values in public life.

As part of its engagement with key stakeholders of the justice sector, the delegation visited the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan, where it was warmly received by its President, Syed Amjad Ali Shah, and members of the Executive Committee.

The interaction provided an opportunity to strengthen professional ties and foster mutual understanding between the legal fraternities of the two countries. The distinguished guests were presented with traditional caps and commemorative souvenirs as gestures of hospitality and goodwill.

Extending its institutional outreach, the delegation visited the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan and held a meeting with the Federal Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs.

Complementing these engagements, the delegation attended a prize distribution ceremony at the Islamabad Club Polo Ground. The distinguished guests also visited a local market, providing them with an opportunity to experience Pakistan's cultural traditions, local craftsmanship and hospitality.

The day's engagements reflected the multi-faceted nature of Pakistan–Türkiye relations, extending beyond judicial cooperation to professional exchanges, cultural understanding and people-to-people connections, further reinforcing the historic bonds of friendship.

CORRIGENDUM

The NIT Published in Daily Newspapers Vide DAB/AB No.532/06-11-2026 (TSE-2627111220043) by this office. The items,Bill of Quantity,BOQ has been changed And the Deadline of submission of Bids has also been extended. Now Deadline of submission of Bids is 01/12/2026. 09:00 AM

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JUI-F says: Preventing Fazl from addressing LHC Bar evidence of govt's panic

LAHORE (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) spokesperson Aslam Ghori said preventing Maulana Fazlur Rehman from addressing the Lahore High Court Bar was evidence of the government's panic. He said the party would not let its leaders and workers be provoked into serving anyone's ulterior motives.

Reacting to the move to stop JUI chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman from addressing the Lahore High Court Bar, Ghori said confining him to his residence violated the Constitution, the law and basic civil liberties. Preventing a political leader from moving freely, he said, ran counter to democratic values and constitutional guarantees, while blocking peaceful political activity was pushing the situation towards tension.

He said there was no justification for preventing the party chief from leaving his home without a legal order, and urged workers to wait for party instructions rather than become provoked.

SC declares Auqaf takeover of private shrine land illegal, orders restoration to owner

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court has declared illegal and without lawful authority the Punjab Auqaf Department's takeover of privately owned land measuring 5 kanals and 3 marlas in Hafizabad, ruling that the construction of a shrine over a grave and visits by devotees do not automatically convert private property into waqf property. The court directed the Chief Administrator of Auqaf Punjab to restore the administration, control and possession of the land and structures to its owner, Muhammad Hussain, within 30 days of receiving the judgment. It also ordered the revenue authorities to correct the relevant land record, if any changes had been made pursuant to the takeover notification. A two-member bench comprising Justice Shahid Waheed and Justice Naeem Akhter Afghan dismissed an appeal filed by the Chief Administrator of Auqaf Punjab against a Lahore High Court judgment dated November 21, 2008.

Sardar Yousaf says: Int'l qirat competition to strengthen spiritual, cultural ties among Muslim countries

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Tuesday said that the International Qirat Competition is not merely a contest, but a reflection of the collective commitment of Muslims to the Holy Quran.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Second International Qirat Competition 2026, the minister said hosting the international event was an honour for Pakistan and would strengthen spiritual and cultural ties among brotherly Islamic countries.

He said that along with recitation of the Holy Quran, its understanding and practical implementation must also be promoted, as the Holy Quran provides complete guidance for individual and collective life.

The minister said Pakistan considered the promotion of Quranic and Sunnah teachings its national responsibility.

Highlighting legislative measures to prevent printing and publication errors in the Holy Quran, he said important legislation had been enacted in this regard.

Parliament had approved the Amendment Act 2024 to the Holy Quran Printing and Recording Act, 1973, while a standardised version had been prescribed to ensure uniformity in the printing and publication of the Holy Quran across the country.

He said efforts to safeguard the sanctity and textual accuracy of the Holy Quran would continue.

Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said Pakistan would play an effective role at the international level in promoting Quranic education, memorisation and the art of Qirat. He added that talented Huffaz and Qaris were being encouraged through national-level memorisation and Qirat competitions.



LARKANA: Players from the Larkana and Sukkur boards compete during the Pakistan Inter-Board Girls Badminton Championship 2026, organized by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Larkana at the Officers Club.

'Terrorism, hate..

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tory Authority was set up to address this. Under the proposals he outlined, platforms, over-the-top services and major content creators would register with the authority, each platform would name an empowered representative for Pakistan, and NCCIA complaints would move to the PakID app, with a single tracked complaint system to follow.

He said enforcement would proceed in steps, from engagement to notice to action, with blocking an entire platform kept as a last resort and any such request made clear, lawful and public. The minister said the government was also strengthening the NCCIA through recruitment, modern digital forensic facilities and artificial intelligence-based investigation capabilities. "Journalists must report. Citizens must question. Dissent must be heard, including against the government," he said, adding that freedom of speech could not be used as a shield by those crossing the stated red lines.

The Interior minister said the establishment of the Social Media Protection Regulatory Authority (SMPRA) would help the government address online crimes and ensure social media platforms respond promptly to complaints from victims.

Naqvi added that social media platforms, over-the-top (OTT) services and major content creators would initially be required to register with the authority. He clarified that registration was "not a licence to silence anyone" but was intended to establish accountability and identify those responsible if something went wrong.

Naqvi said major social media platforms would also be expected to nominate empowered country representatives authorised to make decisions on complaints, rather than merely act as intermediaries.

ECP approves Jamaat-e-Safa's intra-party polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has approved the intra-party elections of Jamaat-e-Safa, held on October 6, 2026, and issued a formal notification after scrutinising the party's submitted details of its elected office-bearers and their respective positions.

According to a notification issued by the ECP on Tuesday, Jamaat-e-Safa conducted its intra party elections on October 6 and subsequently submitted the names and designations of its elected office-bearers to the Commission.

The ECP examined the submitted information and granted approval to the intra-party elections, formally notifying the decision.

Gulalai Wazir is the central chairperson of Jamaat-e-Safa.

3 Pak players advance to Round 2 of CAS Int'l Squash C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani players Hamza Khan, Nasir Iqbal and Nauman Khan won their 1st Round matches of the CAS International Squash Championship 2026 on Tuesday.

In Round 1, Seif Tamer (Egypt) beat Abdullah Nawaz (Pak) 3-1 53 min, 11-4, 15-13, 4-11, 11-8; Adham Roshdy (Egypt) beat Saeed Abdul (Pak) 3-0 32 min, 11-6, 11-8, 11-5; Hazem Hossam (Egypt) beat Sadam Ul Haq (Pak) 3-0 23 min,11-6, 11-3, 11-7; Hamza Khan (Pak) beat Salman Saleem (Pak) 3-1 38 min, 11-2, 9-11, 14-12, 11-4; Nauman Khan (Pak) beat Tayyab Aslam (Pak) 3-1 49 min, 4-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-4; Eiad Daoud (Egypt) beat Azan Ali Khan (Pak) 3-0 28 min,11-9, 11-2, 11-5; Nasir Iqbal (Pak) beat Manuel Paquemar (France) 3-0 31 min, 11-9, 11-5, 11-6; Joeri Hapers (Belgium) beat Chi Him Wong (Hong Kong, China) 3-1 39 min, 11-5, 7-11, 11-1, 11-5.

On November 25 - Round 2, Mohammad Syafiq Kamal (Malaysia) vs Seif Tamer (Egypt); Adham Roshdy (Egypt) vs Muhammad Asim Khan (Pak); Noor Zaman (Pak) vs Hazem Hossam (Egypt); Hamza Khan (Pak) [9/16] vs Yee Xian Siow (Malaysia); Mohamed Gohar (Egypt) vs Nauman Khan (Pak); Eiad Daoud (Egypt) vs Joachim Chuah (Malaysia); Marwan Assal (Egypt) vs Nasir Iqbal (Pak); Joeri Hapers (Belgium) vs David Baillargeon (Canada). Noor Zaman and M Asim Khan will be in action.

Achakzai calls for..

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Balochistan, and had now spread to Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Approximately 20 citizens were being killed by gunfire every day, he said. In these circumstances, the foremost responsibility of state institutions and political leadership was to protect the lives and property of citizens and establish peace in the country.

Warning about emerging international developments, Achakzai said that the intensifying rivalry among major powers and their competing interests could once again push the region towards war and instability. Pakistan must learn from the lessons of history and avoid becoming a party to wars fought in the interests of other powers, as the consequences this time could be far more dangerous than in the past. Achakzai said that powerful armies existed across the world, but their fundamental responsibility was to defend their countries—not to violate their constitutions or seize political power. All state institutions, he emphasised, must perform their duties within the limits prescribed by the Constitution. Referring to Imran Khan, Achakzai said that the people had given him a majority mandate, but that mandate had been taken away. He stressed the need to remain vigilant about Imran Khan's political circumstances and health. Efforts were being made to break his resolve and isolate him, involving both external and internal elements, he said. "We will not allow this to happen," he declared, pledging that he and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas would not permit any attempt to isolate Imran Khan to succeed.

Emphasising the people's ownership of national resources, Achakzai said that the country's resources belonged to its people, not to a handful of individuals. The people must have the right to determine how these resources are used and distributed fairly. He pointed out the stark economic inequality in the country, where millions of rupees were spent on breakfast by the wealthy while the majority of citizens struggled to secure even a loaf of bread. He questioned how long a system based on oppression, economic inequality and exploitation could continue.

Achakzai observed that the League of Nations had approximately 66 member states after the First World War, whereas the United Nations now had 193 member states. These states had not emerged out of nowhere; throughout history, new states had come into being amid injustice, oppression and political upheaval. Injustice and oppression, he said, hollow out societies and states from within.



MULTAN: Visitors view paintings on display during the 3rd Annual Young Artist Exhibition (South Punjab), organized by the Department of Art & Design at The Women University Multan.

Balochistan's..

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panied by constitutional responsibilities.

Highlighting educational opportunities, CM Bugti said children of underprivileged workers from Balochistan were now studying at Aitchison College, Lawrence College and other prestigious educational institutions. He said the government was working to ensure equal access to quality education and development opportunities for every child in the province.

Referring to his allegations of overseas social media campaigns, he urged young people to distinguish propaganda from ground realities and contribute positively to the country's development.

Paying tribute to the sacrifices of Balochistan's people and security forces, the chief minister reaffirmed his government's commitment to maintaining peace, addressing public grievances and providing basic facilities.

CM Bugti said improving the living standards of ordinary citizens remained the government's foremost priority. Administrative reforms, improved departmental performance, timely completion of development projects and effective public service delivery were being pursued to ensure that the benefits of development reached the province's remotest areas.

Earlier, Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan briefed workshop participants on the province's overall situation, ongoing development projects, administrative reforms, governance and measures to improve public service delivery.

Shahid Rind says:

Govt ready to address legitimate demands of working journalists

Independent Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister's Adviser on Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind has assured working journalists of the provincial government's willingness to address their legitimate concerns, saying legislation could be introduced in consultation with representative journalist bodies to safeguard their professional and employment rights.

Rind gave the assurance while visiting the protest camp of the Balochistan Union of Journalists (BUJ) in Quetta, where he also pledged government support for efforts to restore the operations of television channel bureaus that have been closed in the provincial capital.

He said the provincial government did not have the legal authority to compel private television channels to reopen their bureaus, but noted that Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti had repeatedly supported journalists affected by the closures.

The adviser offered to join the chief minister and representatives of journalists in a meeting with Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar to discuss the issue and explore possible solutions.

Rind also proposed legislation aimed at discouraging part-time journalism, inviting the BUJ and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) to jointly develop proposals defining clear professional criteria for working journalists.

He suggested that four key newspaper positions — editor, subeditor, reporter and photographer — should be reserved for full-time professionals through an appropriate legislative framework.

Expressing concern over government employees simultaneously occupying editorial positions, Rind called for clearer standards to distinguish professional journalists from those working in the field on a part-time basis.

On the demand concerning the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), he clarified that his reservations were personal and should not necessarily be interpreted as representing the position of the provincial government.

He said the government had no objection to responsible journalism based on facts and evidence, while identifying fake news and unsubstantiated character attacks on social media as serious concerns.

Referring to investigative journalism and criticism by senior journalists, Rind stressed that allegations of corruption should be supported by documentary evidence and reported in accordance with factual accuracy and professional ethics. He also questioned the record of political parties that had held power during the past 10 to 15 years, saying that expressions of solidarity with journalists should be accompanied by concrete measures aimed at improving their welfare.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti unveiling the plaque to inaugurate Nawa Killi Sports Complex.

No negligence in public healthcare services will be tolerated: Kakar

QUETTA (ANN): Balochistan Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar has directed authorities to strengthen healthcare services across the province, saying negligence in the delivery of basic medical facilities would not be tolerated.

Speaking to various delegations, the minister said practical measures were being taken to upgrade public hospitals, introduce modern medical facilities, improve the availability of medicines and ensure regular attendance of doctors and other healthcare staff across all districts.

He said residents, particularly those living in remote areas, should have access to quality treatment closer to their homes instead of being forced to travel to major cities for basic medical care.

Kakar said a healthy population was essential for the province's socioeconomic development and that the government was therefore focusing on the modernization of public hospitals and the provision of free or affordable treatment to patients.

The minister stressed that public grievances could not be resolved through announcements alone and called for concrete action to address complaints concerning healthcare facilities.

He directed the relevant authorities to respond promptly to public complaints and improve treatment arrangements for patients at government-run hospitals. Kakar reiterated the government's commitment to expanding accessible and affordable healthcare services throughout Balochistan, with particular attention to remote and underserved communities.

Khosa says:

No compromise on quality, transparency in development projects

QUETTA (ANN): Balochistan Minister for Communications and Works Mir Saleem Khosa has said the provincial government is focusing on improving road infrastructure to connect remote and underdeveloped areas with wider development activity, assuring that quality and transparency will remain central to the execution of development schemes.

Speaking to various delegations, the minister said construction of new roads, rehabilitation of existing routes and timely completion of ongoing projects were among the government's key priorities. He said an effective road network was essential for socioeconomic progress and that work was being undertaken in different districts to improve connectivity and ease transportation difficulties faced by local communities.

According to Khosa, better road links would not only facilitate movement but also create opportunities for trade, agriculture and business while improving access to education and healthcare services.

He said the needs and recommendations of local communities would be given due consideration when planning and implementing development projects.

The minister directed the relevant authorities to maintain effective oversight of project execution and ensure adherence to prescribed quality standards and transparency requirements.

He reiterated the provincial government's commitment to promoting balanced development across Balochistan and improving basic infrastructure and public facilities, particularly in areas that have remained underserved.



QUETTA: District Health Officer Chaman Dr. Owais meeting with acting Governor Balochistan Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Commodity Management Department and Chairman Balochistan Food Authority Haji Noor Muhammad Dummar listening the problems of the people in his office.

Dummar says:

Serving public, ensuring timely resolution of people's problems top priorities of govt

QUETTA (APP): Provincial Minister for the Commodity Management Department on Tuesday emphasized that serving the public and ensuring the timely resolution of people's problems are among his top priorities, adding that every possible effort would be made to address the difficulties faced by the people of Ziarat, Harnai, and Sanjawi.

He said this while talking to various public delegations from Ziarat, Harnai, and Sanjawi called on him at the Civil Secretariat.

During the meeting, the delegations apprised the Provincial Minister of the various issues and challenges faced by the residents of their respective areas. Chairman of Balochistan Food Authority (BFA), Haji Noor Muhammad Dumar listened to the grievances and concerns of the delegations with great attention and care.

He also assured them that he would coordinate with the relevant authorities to take practical steps toward resolving these public issues.

Haji Noor Muhammad Dummar expressed his firm commitment to utilizing all available resources to resolve the issues being faced by the public. He pledged to dedicate his full energy and take effective measures through the relevant departments to ensure that these problems are addressed.

Also present on this occasion were the Focal Person for Harnai, Haji Baz Muhammad Dummar, Personal Secretary, Musa Kakar; and Staff Officer, Kamal Akhtar.

Modern skills, technology vital to expanding agriculture, livestock sectors

Independent Report

LORALAI: Modern knowledge, technical expertise and hands-on training can play a key role in improving agriculture and livestock production while creating new opportunities for economic growth in the region, University of Loralai Vice Chancellor Engr. Prof. Dr. Ehsanullah Kakar said on Sunday.

Addressing the third certificate distribution ceremony of the Livestock Farmer Field School Program at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) field office in Loralai, Kakar also called on farmers and local entrepreneurs to take advantage of the large grants program to expand their businesses and contribute to local economic activity.

Sheikh Zarak says:

Equal development opportunities must reach all areas, communities

QUETTA (ANN): Balochistan Assembly member Sheikh Zarak Khan Mandokhail has called for equitable distribution of development benefits across the province, saying no particular area or group should be favored at the expense of others.

Speaking to various delegations, the MPA said public service, resolution of citizens' problems and balanced regional development should remain the fundamental objectives of politics. He said improving educational and employment opportunities for young people was particularly important, adding that elected representatives had a responsibility to take public concerns to the relevant legislative forums and pursue practical solutions.

Sheikh Zarak Khan Mandokhail said he was aware of the challenges confronting his constituency and was coordinating with concerned departments to address issues involving clean drinking water, electricity, gas, education, healthcare, roads and employment. He said development schemes were being identified on the basis of local requirements so that available resources could be directed towards areas facing the greatest public needs.

Chaman admin steps up market checks

Independent Report

CHAMAN: Additional Deputy Commissioner Chaman Fida Baloch has ordered strict enforcement of official prices for essential commodities and directed authorities to take legal action against traders involved in profiteering or overcharging. During an inspection of local markets, the ADC checked the prices of flour, LPG and other essential items and instructed traders to sell commodities according to officially notified rates. He also directed shopkeepers to display approved price lists prominently at their outlets. Fida Baloch said the district administration would maintain regular market surveillance to curb profiteering.



TURBAT: Additional Chief Secretary Development Zahid Saleem, Secretary Health Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Panezai, Special Secretary Health Shehak Baloch, Secretary Agriculture Dawood Khan Khilji and other during Teaching Hospital Turbat.

Police reinforcement planned for Kharan to combat street crime

Independent Report

QUETTA: Balochistan authorities have decided to reinforce police strength in Kharan and improve operational resources as part of measures aimed at controlling street crime and strengthening public security in Rakhshan Division.

The decision was taken at a high-level law and order meeting chaired by Inspector General of Police Muhammad Tahir Khan and attended by Provincial Minister for Finance and Minerals Mir Shoaib Nosherwani, Additional IGP Operations and other senior police officials.

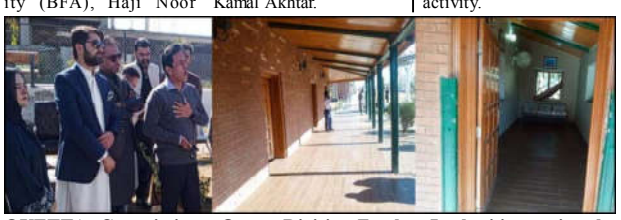
DIG Rakhshan Division Abdul Hai Baloch, who joined the meeting through video link, briefed participants on the prevailing security situation, with particular focus on street crime and other law and order challenges in Kharan.

The meeting examined the shortage of police personnel, inadequate resources and infrastructure-related issues affecting the district police. It was agreed to enhance manpower, upgrade infrastructure, strengthen professional capabilities and provide the force with essential operational facilities.

IGP Muhammad Tahir Khan instructed the concerned officers to step up patrolling and surveillance and adopt effective measures to prevent criminal activities and protect citizens. The meeting also reviewed security arrangements concerning political gatherings, sit-ins and protest activities in Kharan. Mir Shoaib Nosherwani said safeguarding the lives and property of citizens and maintaining lasting peace in Kharan and other parts of Rakhshan Division remained among the government's key priorities. He said police deficiencies, particularly shortages of personnel and operational resources, needed to be addressed to improve the force's ability to respond effectively to security challenges. The provincial minister assured that the government would extend all possible support to strengthen police capacity and improve coordination among security institutions.



NASIRABAD: Deputy Commissioner Vrinder Lal presides over meting regarding anti-polio campaign.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Zeeshan Lashari inspecting the Sheikh Manda station of Jinnah Peoples train at airport road.

Lashari reviews progress of ongoing development projects in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): Commissioner Quetta Division, Zeeshan Lashari on Tuesday visited various ongoing development projects across the city, part of the Chief Minister of Balochistan's 'Quetta Development Package' to conduct a detailed review of the progress and implementation status of these initiatives. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Quetta, Meherullah Badini, Deputy Commissioner Quetta West, Sana Mahjabeen, Divisional Director (Development) Quetta Division, Zahoor Ahmed, Deputy Project Director for the Quetta Development Package (QDP), Abid Ali and other officials. During the visit, the Deputy Project Director for the Chief Minister's Development Package provided a comprehensive briefing to the Commissioner regarding ongoing and proposed development projects, their scope, completion progress, and overall development objectives. While assessing the pace of work on the various projects, Commissioner Zeeshan Lashari directed that all development initiatives would be completed within the stipulated timeframe, emphasizing that the quality of construction work must be ensured.

Residents demand immediate relief from gas shortages as winter intensifies

QUETTA (ANN): Unscheduled gas outages and weak supply pressure have intensified the winter hardship for residents of Quetta and other colder parts of Balochistan, disrupting routine household activities as temperatures continue to fall.

Residents reported that inadequate pressure and repeated interruptions were making it increasingly difficult to cook meals and heat water, particularly during peak morning, evening and nighttime periods when demand is highest.

The situation has created additional difficulties for households with children, elderly people.

Senior Balochistan officials review healthcare facilities during visit to Turbat Teaching Hospital

TURBAT (APP): A high-level delegation led by Additional Chief Secretary for Development and Planning Balochistan, Zahid Saleem, visited Turbat, the headquarters of Kech district, to assess healthcare services and review ongoing challenges at Teaching Hospital Turbat. The delegation included Provincial Health Secretary Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Panezai, Special Health Secretary Shehak Baloch, and Agriculture Secretary Daud Khan Khilji. During the visit, officials conducted a detailed inspection of the hospital's various departments, wards, and medical units to evaluate healthcare services, administrative arrangements, and overall performance.

Senior district and health officials accompanying the delegation included Makran Division Commissioner Dr Tufail Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner Kech Yasir Iqbal Dashti, Divisional Director Health Services Dr Mohebullah, District Health Officer Kech Dr Abdul Raouf Baloch, and DHO Tump Dr Nauroz Yaqoob, along with other healthcare professionals.

During the inspection, the delegation reviewed available medical facilities, equipment, treatment arrangements, and patient care services being provided at the hospital.

The officials also examined the condition of healthcare infrastructure and discussed measures needed to improve service delivery. Medical Superintendent of Teaching Hospital Turbat, Dr Abdul Waheed Baloch, briefed the delegation on the hospital's overall performance, administrative and medical operations, available resources, key challenges, and future requirements.

The briefing highlighted issues including the growing patient burden on the hospital, the needs of the emergency department, shortages of medical equipment, and the provision of essential healthcare facilities.

The visiting officials expressed keen interest in resolving the challenges faced by the hospital and reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to improving healthcare services for the public. They assured hospital management that necessary measures would be taken to address critical issues affecting service delivery.

A major announcement made during the visit concerned the expansion of the hospital's emergency department. Officials stated that a PC-I proposal would be prepared and submitted for inclusion in the Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI) to facilitate the project. In addition, modern machinery and essential medical equipment will be provided for the operation theatre to enhance the hospital's treatment capacity.

Dera Bugti to get Rs257m for two road projects

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan government will spend Rs256.76 million during the current fiscal year on two federally funded road projects in Dera Bugti to improve regional connectivity and transportation infrastructure under the Dera Bugti Development Package. According to an official document available with Wealth Pakistan, the funds have been allocated under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) as part of the Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan Package (AHBP). Of the total allocation, Rs156 million has been earmarked for the construction of a black-topped road from Lehri to Sangsila under Phase-I, while Rs100.757 million will be spent on a 57-kilometre black-topped road connecting Sui with Uch Field.

The Lehri-Sangsila road project carries a total estimated cost of Rs841 million, against which Rs535 million has so far been released or spent. The latest allocation will provide further financial support for its implementation.

Similarly, the Sui-Uch Field road project has an estimated cost of Rs797.710 million, with cumulative releases or expenditure of Rs546.953 million. The fresh allocation will support the continuation of construction work on the 57-kilometre route.

The Dera Bugti Development Package comprises five development schemes with a combined estimated cost of Rs3.519 billion, covering road construction, improvement of existing infrastructure and village electrification.

Two of the five schemes have recorded releases or expenditure equal to their respective approved costs. These include a Rs335.690 million black-topped road connecting Dera Bugti with Pitokh, Habib Rahi and Vedara Killi Mured, and a Rs952.353 million scheme for electrification of villages in the district. Another scheme, involving improvement of the Sui-Dera Bugti Road and construction of a black-topped link road, has a total estimated cost of Rs592.042 million.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Social Welfare Haji Wali Muhammad Noorzai presides over the 25th Board meeting regarding Balochistan Awami Endowment Fund.

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In hindsight

Just as an important partner in the ruling coalition is starting to question the wisdom of the 26th and 27th Amendments, a report issued by the International Commission of Jurists has detailed the damage the two enactments have wrought on Pakistan's judiciary. Titled Judicial Capture: Independence of the Judiciary in Pakistan after the 26th and 27th Constitutional Amendments, the report concludes that systemic constitutional and legislative changes have placed the country's highest courts under the control of the political and executive branches. The ICJ comprises judges and lawyers from around the world working to "develop and strengthen national and international justice systems". The report clarifies: "The ICJ does not take a position on the merits of political disputes between the parties. Its analysis is focused on the institutional framework in which the judiciary operates, and whether it is consistent with Pakistan's obligations under international law." The most worrying flag the report raises is that the ruling parties — in what can only be read as their zeal to have these two amendments enacted — have pushed the judiciary to a state where the country's highest courts no longer "enjoy the institutional guarantees of independence required by Article 14" of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, among other standards.

It also notes that the loss of judicial independence has stripped victims of human rights abuses of their right to an effective legal remedy under domestic law and Article 2(3) of the ICCPR. Though the ICJ agrees that prior issues in the Pakistani judiciary, especially its tendency to overreach into parliament's domain, needed targeted reforms, its secretary-general, Santiago Canton, says the government used those frustrations as a pretext to seize full control of the judiciary rather than enact serious reforms. The detailed report offers a cold examination of the path taken by the Pakistani judiciary since 2024 and brings into fresh relief what may be the roots of some of the new crises that have gripped the country since then. Its timing couldn't have been better: there is speculation that another amendment is in the works, and those who partnered with the government on getting earlier legislation enacted are now apprehensive of what a new rewrite will entail. As local observers have been warning, and as the ICJ's findings now bear out, the 26th and 27th Amendments have done serious damage to judicial independence. Part of the reason why is the haste with which they were enacted. Before any further changes are made to the Constitution, it would be wise to debate all proposed amendments at length and enact them only after a careful, deliberate consensus has been built.

Islamabad province?

Aasim Sajjad

Opposition to it has been largely suppressed, but all is not well within the ruling regime. One way or the other, the proposal to break up existing federating units will ultimately shape the regime's endgame.

Stage one has been completed without major resistance, the PTI disarmed through the imposition of emergency in KP, and a neo-administrative experiment comprising 12 districts in the southern and ex-Fata regions operationalised.

The ultimate prize for the establishment is the long-desired separation of Karachi from the rest of Sindh. And this is where the Bhutto-Zardari clan, facing an existential threat, will be forced to play its hand.

But before this, there are likely to be other moves expected to trigger less resistance, both within the ruling coalition and outside it. One of these is the plan to make Islamabad into a province.

The bureaucracy rules Islamabad without impediment.

The only proposal on record, finalised by a committee headed by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, has advised a 27-member assembly, headed by an elected chief minister/mayor. The elephant in the room is the viceregal institution which dictates the fates of Islamabad's three million people — the Capital Development Authority (CDA).

Pakistani democracy is, at best, an aspiration rather than a functioning reality connected to the will of the people. Elected institutions operate under pressure, while most who claim to be representatives of the people wage class war daily. Nevertheless, the pretence of democracy remains.

The federal capital is a glaring exception. The bureaucracy rules here without impediment, the popular will be damned. There has been one citywide experiment with local government since the capital was created in 1960. The 2016 elections brought the Municipal Corporation of Islamabad (MCI) into existence, under the nominal authority of an elected mayor. The mayor and elected representatives down to the level of union councillor had virtually zero legislative and financial power. Elections never took place again, and the MCI was transformed into yet another bureaucratic feeder to the CDA.

So if Islamabad is given a legislative assembly, will the CDA be cut down to size? I choose my words carefully — because those who are poised to 'give' Islamabad an assembly have, over the past year or so, made their plans for the city and its environs sufficiently clear.

A short list of 'achievements' reads as follows: thousands of homes in katchi abadis and historical villages bulldozed; suburban sprawl in the form of land-grabbing real-estate schemes extended; thousands of trees razed and the city's air poisoned by relentless construction.

With the CDA's Master Plan flagrantly violated by its own commercial projects and big proprietors, another post-facto amendment in zoning regulations was recently approved by the government. As for what is to come, entire chunks of Rawal Lake and many villages around Bhara Kahu will be sacrificed for a 350-acre safari park, while the area adjacent to the Bari Imam shrine — where forced evictions took place earlier this year — is being given over to hotel developers.

Will Islamabad's much-celebrated green spaces, already limited public services, and working-class settlements be left by the time the purported legislative assembly comes into place? Will the dominant imaginary of 'development' fronted by the state apparatus — of which the CDA is a poster-child — suddenly give way to a political-economic-environmental arrangement that serves the mass of Islamabad's people?

Only the awfully naïve believe that the plans for an Isla-mabad province — which may ex--tend into adjacent districts like Mu--rree and Haripur currently part of Punjab and KP respectively — are driven by democ-r-atic impulses. Seen thus, the Islam-abad case provides the most obvious indication of what the new provinces hullabaloo is all about; an attempt to subjugate the political and economic interests of the mass of the population, and future generations to boot, all in the name of efficient administration.

Over the course of the past year, mainstream parties like the PPP and PML-N have made no effort to stand with katchi abadi dwellers and villagers whose homes have been bulldozed in Islamabad. They have not resisted the barrage of 'development' projects that have forever destroyed local ecologies.

Islamabad was always the preserve of the elite, but working people fought for their rights with some success, mainstream politicians paying heed in exchange for votes. Like in the rest of the country, Islamabad's working masses now have to exclusively wage their own political fight. They are up against both powerful elements and political entrepreneurs who hunt with the hare and run with the hound.

Exchange rate & other protections

Khurram Husain

There is always something a little off when economists and other experts say that a given course of action is beneficial for industrial growth in the country, but those industries directly connected with that course of action or policy direction are silent on the matter. Normally, industry is very vocal about preserving its interests and either takes the lead in advocating its preferences, or at least responds to suggestions coming from other quarters.

These days we are seeing this happen in two areas. One is the conversation around the exchange rate. All manner of articles have been written about whether the exchange rate needs to be devalued to keep exports competitive. Those advocating this are pointing to the so-called Real Effective Exchange Rate, or REER, which, they say, is overvalued, making Pakistani products expensive in export markets by comparison to our main export competitors.

The REER is a tool used mainly by central bankers and academics to measure how a given country's exchange rate is aligned with the inflation-adjusted exchange rates of its main trading partners.

The way it works is simple. When the REER is 100 there is, in theory anyway, alignment between Pakistan and its trading partners in terms of how well the exchange rate reflects the costs of doing business in Pakistan versus its competitor countries. But if the REER rises above 100 it is considered overvalued, meaning the exchange rate no longer adequately reflects the rising price level within the country by comparison to its competitors, and keeping it at present-day levels will render exports non-competitive.

The more the REER is above 100, the more overvalued the rupee is considered to be. And if it is below 100, then the exchange rate can be considered undervalued, meaning exporters are enjoying a premium in international markets by comparison to the cost of doing business that faces their competitors in other countries.

Conditions that have historically called for an exchange rate devaluation are simply not there today.

Now here is the strange thing. The REER has been above 100 for a number of months now, and is now far enough above its equilibrium level to potentially merit a devaluation.

But none among the exporter community is demanding this. Not publicly anyway. All exporter associations, and other chambers around the country, are very vocal about the direction of interest rates, about the taxation burden, about electricity and gas pricing. But not a word about the exchange rate.

So what to make of a situation where economists are saying the currency needs to depreciate to make exports competitive, but exporters themselves are making no such demand?

Another example is with the auto policy that the government has been working on for many months now.

A couple of years ago they brought customs duties down on imported vehicles, and are now moving to cut import tariffs further on other manufactured goods. Despite a few years of applying this trade policy, and now moving to codify the gradual elimination of protections in a new auto policy, the auto companies themselves are silent. Sharp objections are being raised by manufacturers of auto parts, organised under an umbrella grouping called Pakistan Auto and Auto Parts Manufacturers Association (PAAPAM), who rightly argue that large investments made in the manufacture of auto parts like vehicle glass, headlights, doors, bonnets, other body parts and lots more are at risk with this new policy. So far their objections have not prevailed over the cabinet, though they have found sympathetic ears within government.

What is striking is the silence of the key stakeholders — the auto companies themselves. Why are those whose business is directly in line to be impacted by this measure not saying anything about it, at least publicly?

The answer is a little obvious: the proposed measure does not adversely impact their interests. The exporters are not asking for a devaluation and auto makers are not asking for the return of the protections behind which they grew up, because their business is not going to be as adversely or favourably impacted by the proposed measures as theory might tell us.

The auto part manufacturers are a different story.

They cannot sell their parts to anybody else other than the big auto makers for whom they have been vendors for many years now. Changing that would require a deep process of retooling their plant, and figuring out where auto volumes are sufficiently mature to merit retooling the plant and producing parts at industrial scale.

Given that the auto industry is in the middle of shifting to electric vehicles anyway, such a process of obsolescence and adaptation to a changing market reality is perhaps coming anyway, regardless of how much protection the government extends to legacy manufacturers.

Regarding the exchange rate, policymakers in Pakistan have never paid much mind to the Reer in deciding the level they want for the rate. The level is usually decided more with rupee cost of external debt servicing requirements in mind, first and foremost. Adjustments to the exchange rate always come when their hand is forced by market reality, which means devaluations come when the State Bank's liquid reserves fall below the level required to keep rampant dollarisation in check. Never have they based exchange rate decisions on export competitiveness and there is no reason to suppose they are about to change now.

Conditions that have historically called for an exchange rate devaluation are simply not there today. First, there is an abundant supply of dollars by comparison to the supply of rupees in the market, and the position is only improving. Second, there is no flight into the dollar. Third, the interbank market is virtually shut, with banks told (through silent channels) to finance their clients' import requirements from their own inflows, while the State Bank aggressively buys these inflows at a steadily appreciating rate, to fuel its own thirst for dollars.

Under these conditions, the REER is about as relevant as the daily weather forecast. There will be no devaluation in the near future, not until their hand is forced by market reality.

La nuora Italiana

F.S. Aijazuddin

Three female imports symbolise India: London-born Annie Besant, who became the president of the Indian National Congress in 1917; Gonxha Agnes (later Mother Teresa) who received India's third Nobel Prize in 1979 for the succour she gave to the dying in Kolkata; and Sonia Gandhi (an Italian) who became the longest-serving president of the INC (1998-2017, 2019-2022).

Sonia came to India in January 1968 to marry Rajiv (Mrs Indira Gandhi's eldest son). They wanted nothing more than an unobtrusive life together — he as a commercial airline pilot, she a casalinga or homemaker. However, neither could escape their destiny, nor death which stalked them.

Their first son died soon after birth. Rajiv's younger brother Sanjay plummeted to his death performing aerial stunts over Delhi. Their mother was assassinated in 1984. And Rajiv fell victim to an LTTE suicide bomber in 1991. Sonia has survived, to tell her own story, and theirs.

Sonia Gandhi's memoirs — Belonging: a Journey of Love (2026) — are a rosary of reminiscences. One section marks her minority as a middle-class Italian Catholic; the second, her assimilation into the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty; and the third, her powerful widowhood.

Sonia Gandhi's memoirs are a rosary of reminiscences.

Her marriage to Rajiv alienated her conservative father. He half-expected it to fail, absenting himself from the wedding with "a brief, cold" note: ''Remember that the door of this house will always be open for you.''

Amongst Sonia's in-laws, Mrs Gandhi remained her closest ally, and for a while Rajiv's younger brother Sanjay. Sonia noticed, though, a simmering tension between the siblings. Sanjay "was intensely competitive — he just had to know more and do better". Rajiv stayed out of politics while Sanjay used his position as his mother's favourite to influence her with insidious, often dangerous advice.

The situation in Mrs Gandhi's joint family household deteriorated after Sanjay's marriage to Maneka Anand, a Punjabi Sikh. Mrs Gandhi thought the immature Maneka too ambitious by half, the half being her pushy mother Amardeep Kaur.

Tensions overflowed after Mrs Gandhi's defeat in the 1977 elections, when the family were compressed into a four-bedroom house at 12 Willingdon Crescent (lent to them by Yunus Khan). They had to share transport, cut back on staff. They became 'hypersensitive'.

Rajiv held Sanjay responsible for their mother's humiliating ouster. During one fracas, Rajiv said vehemently, "I cannot forgive you, Sanjay — you have brought Ma to this pass." Mrs Gandhi, 'upset and agitated', assented: "What Rajiv said is true, Sanjay! How many times you gave orders without my knowledge.'' Ludicrously, according to Sonia, the only real "flare-up between the brothers" occurred after Sanjay's wolfhound savaged Rajiv's meeker dog Zabul. On Oct 31, 1984, Sonia cradled a dying Indira Gandhi in her lap during the unconscionably long journey to the hospital in an Ambassador car. Surprisingly, there was no ambulance on duty at PM's house.

Sonia tried desperately to prevent Rajiv from inheriting the premiership: "You must say no — for the children's sake, for yourself. You can't do this to us. They will kill you". He replied, "They will kill me anyway." And they did, in May 1991.

Cruelly widowed, Sonia Gandhi could have deflected destiny and returned to Italy. Why did she choose to stay on? Had Mrs Gandhi trained her for the prime ministership? No more than Pandit Nehru had tutored Indira. Mrs Gandhi explained her own self-tutoring: "You come to a river in the middle of a forest and there is a river across the way [.] Unless of your own accord, you learn how to swim, you will have to turn back, or die."

Sonia confes-ses to being tormented at seeing the "all-inclusive ethos" of the Congress Party being as--sailed by "the relentless advance of the communal [BJP] forces". In a move one expected to read in Narendra Modi's memoirs, she turned to the Bhagavad Gita for guidance.

In January 1997, aided by a 'Shastri-ji', she began reading the Gita in translation. After a year of studious meditation, she felt inspired by Krishna's message in the Gita: "Perform your dharma [duty] without regard for the fruit of your action". Despite the objections of her children, she conceded to the demands of the headless Congress. Like Annie Besant and Mother Teresa before her, she felt compelled to answer India's call to duty.

Canvassing tirelessly, Sonia Gandhi led the Congress to victory in 2004 and 2009. During those 10 years, she ill-used Dr Man-mohan Singh as her stringless PM puppet.

Now in opposition, she concedes that PM Modi and she have little in common: he is a product of an antediluvian RSS, leapfrogging into the future; she the legatee of Nehru's sentimental secularism. She expects young India to allow Rahul and Priyanka to fulfil their dynastic destiny.

Educational opportunities to be expanded for talented, deserving youth: Punjab CM

RAWALPINDI (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday said that laptops and merit-based scholarships were rewards for students' hard work and academic achievements, not government favours, reaffirming her commitment to expanding educational opportunities for talented and deserving youth.

Addressing the 12th laptop and merit scholarship distribution ceremony at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) as the chief guest, she congratulated the students and acknowledged the sacrifices of their parents and the efforts of the young achievers.

She said every child had the right to education and no student should be deprived of it merely because their parents could not afford the fees.

The Honhaar Scholarship Programme, she added, was designed to support such deserving families.

The chief minister said every student had a story of struggle, with many overcoming financial difficulties and other challenges to continue their education. She expressed confidence in the country's future, saying the talented youth of Rawalpindi had strengthened her belief that Pakistan was in capable hands.

She said 30,000 students received scholarships in the first phase of the Honhaar Scholarship Programme, after which the number was increased to 50,000. Another 20,000 students benefited in the second phase, while scholarships were awarded to 53,488 deserving and talented students in the third phase.

The programme also covered matriculation and intermediate board position holders, while scholarships had been allocated for students from other provinces and regions.

Maryam Nawaz announced that the initial target of the laptop scheme would be increased from 40,000 to 112,000 to broaden access to modern technology and digital education.

At the Rawalpindi ceremony, 3,562 students enrolled in federally chartered universities in Islamabad were given 13th-generation Intel Core i7 laptops, while 451 students received scholarships worth a total of Rs.41.48 million under the Honhaar Scholarship Programme.



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



NANKANA SAHIB: PML-N senior leader and MNA Hamza Shahbaz Sharif addresses a large gathering of Sikh Yatrees during celebrations marking the 557th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Nankana Sahib.

CM Sindh directs for expedited implementation of Karachi Safe City project

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the Sindh Safe Cities Authority (SSCA) to strengthen the operational capacity of the Karachi Safe City Project, ensuring that modern surveillance technology translates into safer streets, effective policing and better protection for citizens.

Presiding over a meeting of the Sindh Safe Cities Authority at the CM House on Tuesday, the Chief Minister reviewed the project's progress, operational arrangements, financial requirements, institutional strengthening, and performance during January-October 2026.

The meeting was attended by Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Home Secretary Iqbal Memon, IG Police Javed Odho, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Local Govt Waseem Shamshad, Secretary Excise Ali Ahamd Baloch, Secretary Finance Asghar Memon, DG SSCA Sarfraz Shaikh, DG PDMA Salman Shah, MPAs Syed Sarfaraz Shah, Ali Hassan Hingorjo, Ms Sumeta Afzal and others.

The Chief Minister said the Safe City Project was an important investment in modern, technology-driven policing and stressed that its infrastructure must deliver tangible results for the people.

He directed the Authority to ensure uninterrupted functioning and professional maintenance of cameras, communication networks, control rooms and other surveillance facilities.

DG Sindh Safe City Sarfraz Shaikh, briefing the meeting, informed that Phase-I, installed by the National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC), comprises 300 pole sites and 1, 300 cameras, supported by 18 Points of Presence (PoPs), a Data Centre and a Network Operations Centre.

The CM considered and approved the revised six-month operation and maintenance proposal of Rs189.75 million, with an overall annual financial ceiling of Rs213.03 million, including spares and optical fibre charges. The project will commence on January 1, 2027.

The Chief Minister stressed that the agreement must ensure transparency, financial discipline and measurable performance, with no escalation in fixed costs, monthly verification of services and deductions for failure to meet agreed standards.

Reviewing operational performance, the meeting was informed that the system had helped trace and hand over 1, 631 vehicles, hand over 84 wanted persons to law enforcement agencies and provide 642 instances of digital evidence to investigating formations during the first ten months of 2026.

Of the 751 evidence-search requests received from 23 formations, 642 were facilitated. The system also processed 408 vehicle-arming and 32 person-arming requests, while 52 vehicles were traced through arming alerts.



Sindh Indus lawyers forum protests against new provinces and 27th constitutional amendment draft outside CM House in Karachi.

Punjab govt committed to safeguarding minority rights, religious freedom: Arora

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Minorities Affairs, Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora on Tuesday said that the provincial government was committed to safeguarding minority rights, ensuring religious freedom and preserving the historical religious heritage of minority communities across the province.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of the 557th birth anniversary celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Gurdwara Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib, he said Pakistan held exceptional spiritual significance for the Sikh community, as several of its most sacred religious sites were located in the country.

He added Pakistan was a sacred land for Sikhs and the Sikh community worldwide had a longstanding desire to visit its holy places, particularly Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur.

The minister also urged India to immediately reopen the Kartarpur Corridor, saying Sikh devotees around the world wanted access to their sacred religious site to perform their religious obligations and pay homage to their spiritual heritage. He said facilitating religious pilgrimages was essential for promoting interfaith harmony, mutual understanding and people-to-people contacts between communities. Appreciating the role of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), the provincial minister said the board was making efforts to protect minority religious places, restore historic Gurdwaras and provide facilities to visiting pilgrims.

He appreciated ETPB Chairman Qamar Zaman for ensuring arrangements for the accommodation, transportation, food, medical assistance and security of thousands of Sikh pilgrims attending the birth anniversary celebrations. He said the preservation of religious heritage and provision of facilities to pilgrims reflected the importance of religious freedom and peaceful coexistence.

Secretary Housing Danish Afzal visits WASA head office

LAHORE (APP): Secretary Housing Danish Afzal on Tuesday visited WASA Lahore Headquarters and reviewed the agency's ongoing development projects, operational performance and facilities being provided to citizens.

Managing Director(MD) WASA Lahore, Ghufran Ahmed welcomed the Housing Secretary and briefed him in detail on the agency's overall performance and ongoing projects.

During the briefing, the Secretary Housing was informed about WASA Lahore's 50 years of services, provision of water supply and sewerage facilities to citizens, and initiatives aimed at improving the agency's operational capacity.

He was also briefed on the progress of major projects, including the Tunnel Boring Project, Wastewater Treatment Plants, Surface Water Treatment Plants and other mega projects.

Secretary Housing Danish Afzal also visited WASA Lahore's Command and Control Room, where Director WASA Mudassir Javed briefed him on the modern monitoring system.

He reviewed the Rain Monitoring Dashboard, live cameras installed at underpasses and the online monitoring system for disposal stations.

He was also briefed on the mechanism for registering citizens' complaints, forwarding them to the con

Governor reviews departmental performance, directs action against hoarders, fake news

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has chaired a meeting of the Advisory Council to review the performance of provincial departments, service delivery, administrative affairs, ongoing development projects and progress towards achieving the 100-day and 180-day targets.

Members of the Advisory Council briefed the Governor on the performance of their respective departments, ongoing projects and future plans. The meeting reviewed measures aimed at improving governance and public service delivery across the province.

The Governor directed the authorities to take strict action against hoarders and those selling flour at inflated prices, and stressed transparent implementation of the transfer policy in government departments strictly on merit. He also called for legal action against individuals involved in spreading fake news and organised propaganda.

The meeting also discussed a proposal to construct a hospital near the motorway in Peshawar in collaboration with Peshawar Zalmi. Governor Kundi emphasised the need for effective measures for the restoration, preservation and beautification of the shrine of Rehman Baba.

Finance Adviser Tariq Mahmood Pasha briefed the meeting on the province's financial position and related matters, while Interior Adviser Kifayatullah informed participants about service delivery, progress on the Safe Cities Authority Bill, the Police Amendment Act and other proposed legislative reforms.

The Interior and Food Adviser also presented details regarding the province's wheat requirements, consumption, procurement from Punjab and PASSCO, and the existing wheat stocks.

The Health Adviser briefed the meeting on progress towards the health sector's 100-day and 180-day targets, saying an agreement with UNICEF was being finalised to provide nutritional support for children up to one year of age in selected districts. He also informed the meeting about the shortage of 1, 326 vaccinators in the province.

Education Adviser Aamir Abdullah highlighted ongoing education sector initiatives, teacher shortages and administrative issues. He said an agreement for providing meals to students in government schools in Peshawar would soon be signed, adding that transfers of teachers would remain suspended until completion of the academic session. The meeting also discussed salary-related issues of employees working in Panah Gahs and Zamung Kor.

Information Adviser Samar Haroon Bilour said an awareness campaign on smog had been launched through digital media and radio, while a dedicated cell had also been established to effectively counter fake news and negative propaganda.

The Industry Adviser briefed the meeting on industrial development, measures to attract investment and progress on matters related to the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The Auqaf Adviser informed the meeting about welfare initiatives for minority communities, scholarships for students and other social welfare programmes. The Governor directed the adviser to present a detailed briefing on the Auqaf Department and Auqaf land.

Energy and Planning Adviser Usman Saifullah.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Zia Hussain Shah, visits exhibition stalls during the annual meeting of the IAEA International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSC Network).

Hamza Shehbaz urges stronger Muslim-Sikh ties at Guru Nanak celebrations

NANKANA SAHIB (INP): Punjab former chief minister Hamza Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for strengthening bonds of love and brotherhood between the Muslim and Sikh communities, saying all citizens, irrespective of their religion, enjoyed equal rights in Pakistan.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of the 557th birth anniversary celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Gurdwara Janam Asthan, he said the teachings of Baba Guru Nanak promoted love, peace, equality, selfless service and respect for humanity.

He said the message of love had become more important in a world facing conflicts, adding that dialogue and mutual understanding were essential to resolving disputes.

Hamza Shehbaz said Pakistan shared a deep-rooted relationship of love and reverence with the Sikh community, while its religious sites, including Nankana Sahib and Kartarpur, formed part of the country's shared heritage.

"There is no word like minority in my dictionary," he said, adding that all citizens were entitled to equal rights. Referring to the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor, he said Pakistan had extended its arms to welcome Sikh pilgrims and stressed the need to further strengthen ties between the two communities for future generations.

Recalling his family's association with the Sikh community, he said his late grandfather, Mian Muhammad Sharif, used to share stories of love and friendship between Sikhs and Muslims in Amritsar and Jati Umra. He urged people to follow Baba Guru Nanak's teachings by sharing their resources, helping the needy and serving humanity.



HYDERABAD: Customs officials destroyed confiscated contraband goods, including significant quantities of Chinese salt, packets of gutka seeds, mobile phones and banned medicines, along with sheesha flavors, tobacco by setting them on fire at Gunju Takar Mountain.

BNP withdraws petition against PAC order for FIA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday disposed of the case following the withdrawal of the petition of developer company of One Constitution Avenue, BNP challenging a 2023 Public Accounts Committee (PAC) order directing the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to investigate the matter.

Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas heard the petition filed by BNP against the PAC decision. CDA counsel Kashif Ali Malik and NAB Prosecutor Rafi Maqsood appeared before the court.

The PAC had directed the FIA and NAB to initiate action against BNP after the cancellation of the lease over non-payment of outstanding dues.

Eight killed, seven injured as vehicle overturns in Torghar: Police

PESHAWAR (APP): At least eight people, including a woman, were killed and seven others injured when a passenger vehicle overturned on Shah Tal Road in Torghar district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to Rescue 1122 Torghar spokesperson and police, the accident occurred at Gegani Kandao when a Datsun vehicle travelling from Shah Tal to Judba overturned on Tuesday.

Soon after receiving information about the incident, Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the site, provided first aid to the injured and shifted them to a nearby hospital. Three of the injured were stated to be in critical condition.

Rescue sources said the accident occurred due to brake failure.

The deceased were identified as Maulana Samiullah, Sakhimullah, driver Hakim Khan and Karim, among others.

The injured included three women and a child.

Young police officers valuable asset of country, nation: Interior Minister

PESHAWAR (INP): Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday visited the Federal Constabulary (FC) Headquarters and police lines in Peshawar, where he addressed a farewell ceremony for 34 police officers of the 49th Common who completed their posting tenure with the FC.

Addressing the officers, the interior minister said young police officers were a valuable asset of the country and nation.

He appreciated their dedication, enthusiasm and professional skills demonstrated during their service with the Federal Constabulary.

The interior minister said the nation had high expectations from young police officers and urged them to live up to public aspirations while discharging their professional responsibilities.

He asked them to take on their new assignments with renewed commitment and determination.

"Go to every possible extent to provide justice to the oppressed and never spare the oppressors under any circumstances," he emphasized.

Earlier, the interior minister inaugurated the Safwat Block at the FC Headquarters and visited its meeting halls, offices and gymnasium.



MULTAN: Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, offers condolences to Makhdoom Syed Muhammad Mustafa Gilani on the demise of Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani's cousin during his visit to Gilani Colony on Ghous-ul-Azam Road.

KP information commission holds awareness session at Peshawar varsity

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission on Tuesday organized an awareness session on Right to Information (RTI) Law at Department of Journalism and Mass Communication University of Peshawar to orient students about their legal rights and importance of access to public information.

Information Commissioner, Arshad Ahmed, Chairperson of the department Dr. Mehnaz Gul, faculty members and students attended the session.

On the occasion, Director Communications KP Information Commission, Syed Saadat Jahan gave a detailed briefing on various aspects of KP Right to Information Act.

He said the law entitled every citizen to access public information held by government institutions. Citizens could use this legislation to obtain information from public bodies and play an effective role in ensuring transparency and accountability.

He further highlighted the importance of RTI law in promoting investigative journalism. He said journalists could obtain authentic and verified information from government departments under the law and use it to produce fact-based reports.



HYDERABAD: MNA Syed Waseem Hussain hands over a cheque to a family affected by the Paretabad cylinder blast during a financial assistance distribution ceremony held at Dialdas Club.

DC inspects government institutions, development projects in Daska

SIALKOT (APP): Deputy Commissioner Owais Mushtaq on Tuesday visited Daska tehsil and inspected various government institutions and ongoing development projects to review public service delivery and facilities being provided to citizens.

During the visit, the deputy commissioner inspected the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Daska, where he reviewed different wards, medical facilities, treatment arrangements and staff attendance. He also interacted with patients and their attendants to seek feedback about the quality of healthcare services.

He also inspected the ongoing construction work at Shahbaz Sharif Park on Canal Road and directed the concerned authorities to ensure timely completion of the project while maintaining construction standards.

Earlier, the deputy commissioner paid a surprise visit to Government High School Bheelo Mar, where he checked teachers' attendance and inspected classrooms, teaching activities, cleanliness and basic facilities available to students. He also visited the office of the Principal Officer, Agriculture Department, Daska, and reviewed departmental affairs.

PM orders expediting customs clearance, immigration, other operations at airports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to expedite customs clearance, immigration and other operations at Pakistan's airports.

Chairing the weekly review meeting on the affairs of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the prime minister directed that smart scanning systems should be made operational at all international airports across Pakistan at the earliest.

He expressed hope that the visits of the Chairman FBR to Karachi and Lahore, and his meetings with traders and industrialists there, would yield positive results for the country's trade, exports and investment.

Following the recent inquiry into bonded warehouses, which revealed tax irregularities by oil marketing companies, the prime minister directed that action be taken and recoveries made without any discrimination.

During the meeting, it was informed that with the assistance of relevant institutions, smart scanning systems were being installed at Pakistan's major international airports. Through these systems, passengers' luggage will be automatically directed to either the Green Channel or the Red Channel.

The meeting was further informed that work was also underway on a modern cargo tracking system, which will help control the sales tax gap and smuggling.

Through the cargo tracking system, the transportation of goods, from loading to delivery, will be connected to a single digital system. This system will comprise e-bilty, a risk management system, field enforcement and an analytics dashboard.

A steering committee is also being formed to ensure the effective implementation of this system, which will include provincial representation.

The meeting was informed that, on the Prime Minister's instructions, an audit of the bonded warehouses of oil marketing companies had revealed irregularities amounting to Rs. 24.4 billion. Legal procedures are being followed in this regard, and recoveries are underway.

The meeting was further informed that the Indus Collectorate had started operations at bridges over the River Indus across the country.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairing weekly update meeting of FBR.



Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing a follow-up meeting to review progress on the revamping and restructuring of Pakistan Railways, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad.

Jam invites global investors to explore Pakistan's Agri-Food potential at FoodAg 2026

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, emphasizing the country's potential as a major player in the global agri-food market, invited international investors and business communities to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's agriculture and food sectors, particularly in processing, packaging, branding and livestock.

The Federal Commerce Minister was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the fourth edition of International Food and Agro Exhibition (FoodAg) Pakistan 2026, organized by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) at Sindh Governor House late Monday night.

The ceremony was attended by Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nihal Hashmi, Coordinator to PM for Industry and Commerce Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan, members of parliament, foreign diplomats and business delegates as well as leadership of REAP, FPCCI, KCCI, LCCI and other trade and industrial associations and chambers.

The Federal Commerce Minister, at the occasion, welcomed international delegates and visitors and conveyed the special regards of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Highlighting Pakistan's rich agricultural heritage, the federal minister observed that the region had sustained agricultural production for nearly 4, 000 years, owing to the Indus River and the ancient Indus Civilization.

He noted that the global agricultural landscape was continuously evolving, with changing market dynamics, emerging ideas and new requirements shaping international trade. He emphasized the importance of incorporating global experiences, suggestions and innovations into Pakistan's trade exhibitions.

Jam Kamal highlighted that FoodAg provides an important platform for connecting international buyers with Pakistani producers, particularly small-scale businesses that otherwise face difficulties in accessing international markets. He stressed that smaller businesses, including those operating in smaller cities, should have the same opportunities to connect with international buyers as businesses in major commercial centres.

Emphasizing the growing importance of sustainability and regulatory compliance in international trade, he noted that global buyers increasingly require detailed information about every stage of production, while new laws and regulations were becoming essential considerations for exporters. He underscored the need for Pakistani producers to adapt to these changing requirements to remain competitive in international markets. The Federal Minister also identified emerging opportunities in olive oil, aquaculture, pink salt and meat processing, while highlighting Pakistan's competitive advantage in the global halal food market as a Muslim-majority country. He observed that halal food requirements were expanding across international markets, including countries such as Hong Kong. He further highlighted Pakistan's role in facilitating regulatory requirements for around ten countries through the presence of relevant regulatory bodies. Underscoring the importance of value addition, the Minister stressed that Pakistan must enhance the value of its agricultural products before exporting them.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, meets a high-level Brazilian delegation to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in agricultural trade, livestock, dairy development, fisheries and investment.

Kayani emphasizes

Devolution of power, resources to address public issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance and Railways, Bilal Azhar Kayani, on Monday emphasized the need for devolution of power and resources to bring public services closer to the people and ensure effective resolution of their problems.

Speaking to a private television channel, he said that the country's growing population had made it increasingly difficult to address public issues under the existing governance structure. He stressed that the creation of smaller provinces would promote development of that specific region, improve administrative efficiency and help address the challenges faced by local.

Kayani described the establishment of new provinces as an important issue directly linked to public welfare and service delivery. He said that this issue should produce tangible results. Responding to a question, he also highlighted that the creation of new provinces would follow the constitutional and legal framework, with consensus among relevant stakeholders being essential to moving the process forward.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan helding a one-on-one meeting with Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi at Governor House, Karachi, on the sidelines of the FoodAg Pakistan 2026 inaugural ceremony and gala dinner.

Shaza stresses need for stronger cybersecurity amid rising digital threats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Tuesday said that cybersecurity challenges were rising rapidly, making it essential to strengthen the country's digital security infrastructure and raise public awareness.

Addressing the Opening Ceremony of PAK-CRYPT – International Symposium on Cybersecurity 2026 ("Advancing Cybersecurity Innovation, Research and Skills Development") at Air University, Islamabad, she said that every aspect of modern life was now connected with cybersecurity.

She said that the government had invested billions of rupees in the National Cyber Security Academy and National Cyber Security Centre and introduced policies to strengthen the country's cybersecurity framework.

She expressed the hope that the Higher Education Commission (HEC) would establish similar cybersecurity operations centres in other universities.

The minister said that the government had passed the Digital Nation Pakistan Act and established the relevant authority, while work was underway on digital governance under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

She said that out of Rs3.7 billion in government payments made over the past few months, 92 per cent had been processed digitally. She added that the government was also working on establishing a national data registry.

Shaza Fatima said that the government was moving towards digital transformation under the prime minister's Digital Nation Pakistan vision. "The government is now operating through e-office, and government operations have become digital," she said.

She said that developments in cybersecurity across the world over the past month had raised serious concerns and highlighted the need for stronger protection.

Rupee gains 03 paisa against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 03 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 276.47, down from the previous day's close of Rs 276.50.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.30 and Rs 280.00, respectively.

The Euro decreased by Rs 1.87 to close at Rs 301.82, down from Rs 303.69 the previous day, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.73, while the British Pound came down by Rs 2.09 to Rs 360.83 from Rs 362.92 the previous day.

The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham remained stagnant at Rs 75.27 and the Saudi Riyal declined by 01 paisa to close Rs 73.67.

Romanian wheat boosts Pakistan's food security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has received another major shipment of Romanian wheat, bringing total imports from Romania to 273, 603 metric tonnes in five consignments, as the two countries strengthen agricultural trade ties and Pakistan diversifies its sources of essential food supplies.

The bulk carrier MV Alex arrived at Port Qasim on Monday, November 23, carrying 54, 983 metric tonnes of Romanian wheat for Punjab, according to a Romanian Embassy press release. The shipment is part of the Trading Corporation of Pakistan's (TCP) efforts to supply wheat to Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh.

Earlier, on Saturday, November 21, the MV Zhong Chang arrived at Karachi Port carrying approximately 50, 000 metric tonnes of Romanian wheat for Punjab. According to the Karachi Port Trust (KPT), the vessel berthed at berths 13 and 14.

Before the latest arrival, four TCP shipments carrying more than 200, 000 metric tonnes of Romanian wheat had reached Pakistan. Two consignments were allocated to Punjab, one to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and one to Sindh. The MV Alex carried the third consignment for Punjab.

Romanian Ambassador Dr Dan Stoenescu said the shipments demonstrated the practical benefits of bilateral trade, providing Pakistan with an additional source of wheat amid pressure on international markets.

Abhi Microfinance Bank makes debut on PSX under Ticker symbol ABHI

KARACHI (APP): Abhi Microfinance Bank officially commenced trading on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Tuesday under the ticker symbol 'ABHI', marking a significant milestone in the evolution of Pakistan's financial services sector.

The occasion was marked by a Gong Ceremony at PSX, attended by Commissioner, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Zeeshan R. Khattak; Chairman PSX, Ruhail Muhammad; Managing Director and CEO PSX, Farrukh H. Sabzwari; Chairman Abhi Microfinance Bank, Atif Riaz Bokhari; Co-Founder and CEO of Abhi (Pvt.) Limited Omair Ansari; along with representatives and senior management of CDC, NCCPL, Arif Habib Limited, Topline Securities, Growth Securities, PSBA, investors representing Vostok Emerging Finance (VEF) and Speedinvest, and members of the financial community.

The successful listing, according to a statement issued here, follows the Bank's Initial Public Offering (IPO), which comprised 132 million ordinary shares, with 75% allocated to institutional investors through book building and 25% to the general public.

The book-building portion was oversubscribed by 1.6 times, while the public subscription achieved 100% subscription, it stated, adding that the shares were offered at the Strike price of PKR 15.50 per share. The IPO raised Rs 2.05 billion and attracted participation from institutional, retail and foreign investors. Farrukh H. Sabzwari, welcoming the Abhi Microfinance Bank to the PSX, stated that the ceremony marked the 14th listing of the current calendar year and the 6th of the fiscal year.

NA body discusses Petroleum Levy & Climate Support Levy Amendment bill 2026

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly's standing committee for petroleum Tuesday discussed the Petroleum Levy and Climate Support Levy Amendment bill 2026.

Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik said that the proposed amendment has been aimed at ensuring timely recovery of petroleum levy and climate support levy during the standing committee meeting chaired by Mustafa Mehmood.

Minister said that currently Rs. 80 per litre levy imposed over petrol and diesel. "Local refineries also bearing burden of the petroleum levy," he said.

Proposed legislation will ensure that refineries will deposit the petroleum levy before the product move out of the gate.

"The recovery of levy before the product move out of the gate will be a burden over refineries," Naveed Qamar said.

CDNS realizes Rs 700b in first five months, sets Rs1.53trln target for FY27

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has realized Rs700 billion between July 1 and November 23, achieving its target for the period and positioning itself to pursue an ambitious resource mobilisation target of Rs1.53 trillion for the fiscal year 2026-27.

The strong performance reflects sustained investor interest in government-backed savings schemes and the institution's efforts to strengthen domestic savings, broaden its investor base and provide accessible investment opportunities to citizens, official sources said.

The annual mobilisation target forms part of the government's broader strategy to channel household savings into formal investment avenues while offering secure options for individuals seeking financial stability and long-term planning.

PSX stays bullish, gains over 1, 068 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Tuesday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index gaining 1, 068.42 points, a positive change of 0.60 percent, to close at 178, 542.28 points against 177, 473.86 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 644.770 million shares, compared to 551.451 million shares traded in the previous session. The traded value of the ready market stood at Rs23.066 billion, up from Rs22.500 billion a day earlier.



Warm clothes demand surges on Gondlanwala road in Gujranwala amid winter cold wave.

Italian experts visited Marble City to explore avenues for stone-processing technologies

KARACHI (INP): Italian experts have visited Marble City Karachi to explore avenues for introducing advanced Italian stone-processing technologies, technical expertise and specialised skills in Pakistan's marble and natural stone industry, with a particular focus on the development of a state-of-the-art Common Facility and Training Centre (CFTC). The visit marks a significant step towards strengthening international technical cooperation and translating ongoing engagements with Italy's leading marble industry representatives into practical initiatives aimed at modernising Pakistan's marble sector.

The 300-acre Marble City Karachi, a flagship industrial development project of the Government of Sindh being developed under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode, is being implemented through the Sindh Economic Zones Management Company (SEZMC). The project aims to establish Karachi as a major hub for modern marble processing, value addition and technological advancement. The initiative is being pursued under the leadership of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, with the support of Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Investment and Public-Private Partnerships.

Gold prices surge by Rs1, 300 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): Gold prices increased in the local market on Tuesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs 1, 300 to settle at Rs 385, 436, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs1, 115 to Rs330, 449, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold rose by Rs1, 022 to Rs 302, 922. In the international market, gold prices increased by US$ 13 to US$ 3, 629 per ounce, the association reported.

SECP lifts RCDP lending suspension, orders corrective action

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has lifted the temporary restriction on fresh lending by the Rural Community Development Programme (RCDP) and directed the company to address weaknesses in its loan recovery practices and complaint handling.

The company has been directed to submit a compliance report within 60 days, said a news release here on Tuesday.

The commission withdrew the restriction following an on-site inspection, which found no evidence linking RCDP or its employees to the reported suicide in Farooqabad, Sheikhupura district.

The SECP took notice of the incident after police registered an FIR on October 30. The FIR alleged that the man's death was linked to efforts by RCDP staff to recover a loan taken by his wife. The commission ordered an on-site inspection on November 1 and temporarily suspended fresh loan disbursements by RCDP on November 2, pending the outcome of the inspection. The family had withdrawn the allegations in written statements to police and in affidavits before a magistrate.



Visitors show enthusiasm at stalls during 5th international food and AGRO exhibition FOODAG 2027 at expo center in Karachi.

Iran won't reopen Hormuz until its conditions are met: Army Chief

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: The commander of Iran's Army warned that the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed until Iran's seven conditions are fulfilled, stressing that Tehran will tighten its control over the strategic waterway and make conditions increasingly difficult for its adversaries.

Addressing senior Army commanders on Tuesday, Major General Amir Hatami said the Islamic Republic's power across four dimensions — military, social, political and geopolitical— has overturned all of the enemy's calculations.

He said Iran has demonstrated that it is an insurmountable challenge for anyone seeking to overpower it.

Major General Hatami added that Iran has not allowed its enemies to make the Iranian people bear the pain of war alone, saying those who have launched the war have also felt its consequences at their own gas stations and in their living rooms.

The Army chief stressed that Iran would not bear the costs of war alone and that anyone who has supported or sided with the enemy would also have to feel its pain.

He also described the Strait of Hormuz as an expression of Iran's geopolitical power and an integral component of the country's overall power.

General Hatami stated that the strategic waterway would not reopen until Iran's seven conditions are met.

He added that, instead, the strait would become increasingly closed, pressure on the enemy would intensify day by day, and Iran would exercise stronger control over it.

Iranian officials have repeatedly emphasized that Tehran will take no action or enter negotiations before its seven conditions are fulfilled, describing them as the country's legitimate rights that cannot be relinquished under pressure or threats.



Nato chief Mark Rutte and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz respond to reports of Russian plans to launch nuclear weapons into space.

Russia may launch nuke-laden satellite by year's end, German report warns

Monitoring Desk

GLASGOW: Russia may place a satellite loaded with a nuclear weapon into orbit by the end of the year, German public media reported, citing intelligence sources.

The satellite, dubbed Sputnik-S, has reportedly been assembled and stored in the greater Moscow area for several years. An investigation by German public broadcasters WDR and NDR and German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung uncovered an intelligence assessment from early November that says the satellite could be launched "within 60 days."

Asked about the reporting during a visit to Berlin, NATO chief Mark Rutte said on Monday that the alliance was constantly assessing its deterrence and defence situation. "I can assure you, we will always make sure that we defend every inch of NATO territory. And that includes making sure that we are safe when it comes to the space element," Rutte told reporters at a joint press conference with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Placing a nuclear weapon in orbit is prohibited by the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, to which Russia and 117 other countries are parties.

Detonating an atomic bomb in space can have devastating effects: It is likely to destroy or incapacitate a large number of satellites, as well as cripple communications systems and power grids back on Earth with its electromagnetic pulse.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union detonated nuclear weapons in space during the Cold War, most significantly the American Starfish Prime test, 400 kilometers over the Pacific Ocean in 1962. The resulting artificial radiation belt damaged several satellites, including the Telstar-1 satellite launched a day after the blast.

Reporting by Western intelligence agencies of alleged Russian plans to place a nuke into orbit dates back several years. In early 2024, then-House Intelligence Committee chairman Mike Turner (R-Ohio) publicly warned of a "serious national security threat" without identifying it; U.S. media soon reported this was referring to a Russian space nuke.

A Russian strike on Ukraine kills 2

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: A Russian nighttime attack on the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia killed two civilians and wounded 44 others, including four children, officials said Tuesday, as officials in Ukraine and Libya debated the legitimacy of an unprecedented Ukrainian strike on a Russian warship docked in Benghazi.

The Zaporizhzhia attack destroyed a private house and partially destroyed a five-story apartment building, according to Mykhailo Semikin, the head of the Zaporizhzhia Regional Military Administration. The youngest wounded child was less than a year old, he said, adding that the others were ages 4, 6 and 16. The Ukrainian military is sending reinforcements to the Zaporizhzhia region, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday, which lies on the roughly 1,250-kilometer (almost 800-mile) front line snaking through eastern and southern Ukraine.

French police officer who shot teenager will face murder trial

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: A French police officer will stand trial for murder in the killing of teenager in 2023 that sparked violent protests across country, the Versailles appeals court said on Tuesday. Officer Florian M. shot Nahel Merzouk, 17, in the Paris suburb of Nanterre on June 27, 2023, after the teenager did not comply with an order to stop his car.

He later died from his wounds• The officer's charge was to voluntary assault ' leading to death earlier this year, but after a successful appeal to France's highest court, the Versailles ' court re-examined the case On Tuesday, the court ruled there was sufficient evidence for him to stand trial for murder

China walks 'thin line' in push to prevent another Horn of Africa war

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China has stepped up diplomatic efforts in the Horn of Africa, sending senior envoys to four countries to ease mounting tensions that threaten to plunge the region into another devastating conflict.

Beijing's special representative for African affairs, Liu Xianfa, travelled to Ethiopia, Djibouti and Egypt in early November, while its special envoy for Horn of Africa affairs, Hu Changchun, visited Eritrea. They met senior officials, including Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and the foreign ministers of Ethiopia and Egypt.

Announcing the visits on November 2, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said they were aimed at "promoting talks for peace, easing tensions, and playing a constructive role for upholding regional peace and stability".

The visits followed a sharp deterioration in relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, raising fears of another war between the neighbours.

Meanwhile, longstanding disputes involving Egypt threaten to draw other countries into a wider confrontation.



Garment workers leave a factory amid ongoing protests ahead of garment factory owners' expected submission of their proposed wage increase to the Wage Board in Gazipur, Bangladesh.



A funeral was held earlier in southern Gaza for three Palestinians killed in an Israeli strike.

Six dead, 10 hospitalized after explosion destroys restaurant in popular tourist destination

Monitoring Desk

HANOI: At least six people died, with 10 others injured, in an explosion at a restaurant in Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, on Tuesday, Nov. 24

A gas cylinder exploded at about 8:30 a.m. local time, causing the one-story building to collapse and windows in surrounding buildings to shatter

Officials have launched an investigation into the cause of the explosion to determine who was responsible and whether any laws were broken At least six people have died, with 10 injured, in an explosion at a restaurant in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi.

At about 8:30 a.m. local time on Tuesday, Nov. 24, a gas cylinder exploded on Nguyen Van Tuyet Street in Hanoi's Dong Da Ward, causing a building to collapse, according to a city press release. Per the Associated Press, the building was a hot pot eatery.First responders, including Hanoi City Police Department officers and EMS workers, attended the scene to rescue people trapped in the wreckage, according to a police statement on Facebook. Per a city press release, more than eight fire trucks and rescue vehicles, as well as sniffer dogs, attended the one-story building.As of 1 p.m. Tuesday, six people had died in the explosion and subsequent collapse, up from earlier reports that suggested two or three fatalities, while 10 individuals were in intensive care across three of the city's hospitals, per the city's release.

According to local newspaper Nhan Dan, the explosion caused windows in surrounding buildings to shatter and trees to fall."I was lying at home when I heard a very loud explosion, like thunder, but it wasn't raining," one neighbor told the outlet, translated from Vietnamese. "I ran out to the balcony and saw a scene of devastation."

Another resident said, "At first, when I heard the loud explosion, I didn't know where it was coming from.

South Korea says

Russian jets entered air defence zone

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: South Korean authorities said Tuesday several Russian military aircraft had breached its air defence zone, correcting an earlier alert that reported a North Korean plane had made an incursion.

A breach of South Korean airspace by a North Korean military plane would mark a significant escalation in tensions between the two Koreas, which remain technically at war.

The inaccurate alert came following heightened tensions along the heavily fortified border, after a recent mine blast that injured three South Korean soldiers in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).An emergency alert was issued on Ulleungdo in North Gyeongsang Province at 8 am Tuesday (2300 GMT Monday), saying a "suspected North Korean aircraft has left the danger zone".

"The air raid alert for Ulleung County was lifted at 7:58 am. Please resume normal activities," it added.

Around 40 minutes later, provincial authorities issued a correction.

"It was Russian aircraft that violated the airspace. We inform that it was Russian aircraft," they said, without explaining the cause of the error.

Several major South Korean news outlets issued breaking news alerts based on the initial warning before later correcting their reports.

South Korea's military later clarified that the Russian aircraft had not violated the country's airspace and that no North Korean aircraft were involved. "Some media reports that 'a flying object believed to be a North Korean aircraft violated South Korean airspace' are not true," it said in a brief statement.

Tehran says: Several tankers hit by explosions in Strait of Hormuz

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iran on Tuesday once again reported several explosions on oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz. According to a statement by Iran's Revolutionary Guard, a ship struck a sea mine in the strait in the early hours of the morning. The military organization had previously reported three other incidents. The claims could not initially be independently verified.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said that three vessels were struck by "unknown projectiles" in the Strait of Hormuz on Monday evening, but were able to continue their transits.Israel and the US launched their war against Iran on at the end of February. In response, Iran's armed forces effectively blocked shipping traffic.



First responders outside a restaurant building in Hanoi, Vietnam, after an explosion.

Iraq's Zaidi emerges as risk-taker in showdowns against militias and Kurds

Monitoring Desk

BAGHDAD/DUBAI: Just six months since taking power as a political novice, Iraq's Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi has emerged as an unexpectedly bold risk-taker, launching simultaneous showdowns against armed Iran-backed Shi'ite militias and the semi-autonomous Kurds.

The two moves put the 41-year-old multimillionaire businessman on course for direct confrontation with two of the most powerful entrenched groups that have defied Baghdad's central control for decades.Last week he ordered the military stand by to enter a city controlled by Iran's most powerful armed Shi'ite proxy group in Iraq, Kataib Hezbollah, after an investigation concluded the group was running an oil smuggling ring there.

Kataib, initially defiant, agreed to let troops enter in a compromise brokered by Shi'ite politicians.

Then on Tuesday Zaidi's office announced that he had ordered the federal oil ministry to manage oilfields now under Kurdish security control, a source of longstanding dispute between Baghdad and the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

Zaidi also ordered the border crossings authority to take over all crossings in Kurdistan, and directed the Kurdistan Regional Government to allow exports of crude oil and petroleum products only through the federal ministry.

The prime minister of Kurdistan called the moves unacceptable.

"Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi's decisions are bold," said Baghdad-based political analyst Hamza Mustafa.

China probes Shanghai party boss, Politburo's Chen Jining

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Shanghai's party chief Chen Jining, a member of China's elite Politburo, is under investigation, the state-run Xinhua agency said on Tuesday, marking the fourth member of the top leadership body to be probed since 2025. China's anti-graft watchdog is investigating Chen for "suspected severe violations of discipline and laws", Xinhua said. The phrase is a common euphemism for corruption. Before the unexpected announcement of the Chen probe, three Politburo members from the 24-member body formed in 2022 — He Weidong, Zhang Youxia Ma Xingrui — had already ' been purged.The investigation of Chen marks a further escalation in President Xi Jinping's widening anti-graft campaign, which has thinned ' the party's senior leadership.

UK sanctions Yemen's Houthi group, four senior officials

Monitoring Desk

UNITED KINGDOM: The United Kingdom has imposed sanctions on Yemen's Houthis, an armed group also known as Ansar Allah (Arabic for Supporters of God), as well as four of the group's senior officials.

Announcing the measures on Wednesday, the UK government accused the Iran-aligned group of "deliberately attempting to undermine stability in the Middle East".

It accused the four sanctioned individuals – Houthi interior minister Abdulkarim Amir al-Din Hussein al-Houthi, security and intelligence chief Abdul Hakim Hashem Ali al-Khaiwani, judge Mohammed Moufleh and prosecutor Sarim al-Din Muffadal – of involvement in human rights abuses.

Muffadal, according to the UK government, "is reasonably suspected of having directly perpetrated, or knowingly permitted or acquiesced in, sexual violence including rape, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of women detainees." Al-Houthi, meanwhile, allegedly oversaw the custody of detainees who were "subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment". Such abuses included "electric shocks, beatings and sexual violence", the UK government said.

The sanctioned individuals are subject to an asset freeze and travel ban, it added.

The UK government said the measures reaffirmed Britain's view that "Houthi aggression is unacceptable and that the group must be held to account".

It cited the group's attacks on vessels in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, strikes targeting civil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia and "aggression" in Yemen. Since seizing Yemen's Sanaa in September 2014, the Houthis have controlled much of northern and western Yemen, and Yemen's internationally recognised government has controlled much of the south. While a United Nations-brokered ceasefire largely halted the fighting in 2022, the conflict flared again this summer when the Houthis announced a blockade on Saudi ports.



Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics speaks during an interview with Reuters in New York City.

Israeli air strikes in Gaza kill 7 as doctors warn of meningitis outbreak

Monitoring Desk

GAZA: At least seven Palestinians, including a child and police officers, have been killed and dozens injured in Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip.

Health officials confirmed the deaths on Tuesday morning while a public health warning was issued about an outbreak of meningitis. Three Palestinians, including a child, were killed in an Israeli air strike on the Wadi Gaza area in the centre of the Strip, medical sources said.Earlier on Tuesday morning, a further three Palestinians were killed and five wounded when an Israeli drone struck the al-Mawasi area west of Khan Younis in southern Gaza while a fourth Palestinian died from injuries after being targeted in the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, according to the Palestinian news agency Wafa.

Al Jazeera's Hind Khoudary reported from Gaza that the three people killed in the al-Mawasi attack were Palestinian police officers. "Dozens of others have been injured in different areas across the Gaza Strip," she said on Tuesday. "According to the Ministry of Health, it was very hard to recognise who these people were who were attacked by Israeli forces, and the same thing happened yesterday when Israeli forces targeted a vehicle in Gaza City."

"There have been attacks on a daily basis by Israeli forces despite the fact that there has been a 'ceasefire' that has been agreed on between both parties," Khoudary said. "Israel continues to violate this 'ceasefire' every single day." On Monday night, two civilians were also killed and others injured in an air strike by Israeli forces on Gaza City.

Russian governor detained in rare criminal case against regional leader

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: The governor of Russia's northern Murmansk region has been arrested on corruption charges in the first detention of a regional leader for five years.

Andrei Chibis, 47, is suspected of embezzlement and misappropriation of more than a billion roubles ($12.2.m; £9.3m) set aside to build an Arctic highway, as well as a further 39m roubles from the Murmansk construction budget.

Chibis is reported to have been detained as he arrived on a visit to Moscow on Monday and was taken in for questioning.He denies wrongdoing but has made no public comment. His wife Yevgenia Chibis said "anyone who knows our family understands how ridiculous this is".

In a post on social media, she said her husband sincerely believed in the Murmansk region and thanked people for their words of support: "We really need them right now."

Chibis worked for several years as deputy minister for construction and housing, before becoming governor of Murmansk in 2019.

Murmansk is a key military point for Russia in the Arctic and is home to the Russian navy's Northern fleet.Chibis was re-elected two years ago after surviving a knife attack and is considered an active supporter of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Governors are seen as representing the Kremlin.



A boy carries a dog out of a residential building damaged in a Russian airstrike in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine.

President reaffirms resolve to end violence against women

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, emphasizing that safeguarding women's rights is essential to upholding human rights as a whole. In a message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the 16 Days of Activism, being observed on November 25, he said the day also marked the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism, which conclude on Human Rights Day, December 10.

"Together, these observances remind us that the protection of women's rights is fundamental to the protection of human rights," he added.

The president said the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides a clear foundation for this responsibility. Article 14 guarantees the dignity of every person, Article 25 establishes equality before the law and Article 34 directs the State to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of national life.

As a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Pakistan has also undertaken international obligations to protect women from discrimination and violence and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable, he added.

"This commitment also has an important place in our political and constitutional history. The Constitution of 1973, adopted under the leadership of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, established equality before the law and called for the full participation of women in national life," President Secretariat Media Wing, in a press release, quoted President Zardari, as saying. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto carried this principle forward and gave practical expression to it through initiatives such as the establishment of the First Women Bank and women police stations, aimed at expanding women's economic opportunities and improving their access to public services, he added. The president observed that their contributions remind them that equal rights must be reflected in the opportunities available to women and in their ability to seek protection and justice.

He further mentioned that Pakistan had taken important steps to strengthen its legal and institutional framework in this regard. Legislation addresses workplace harassment, acid attacks, offences committed in the name of honour, rape and anti-women practices, adding Pakistan has taken steps to strengthen its legal and institutional response to violence against women.

However, he opined, legislation must be matched by effective implementation, timely action on complaints and adequate support for survivors. Emerging forms of abuse, including technology-facilitated violence, also require appropriate safeguards and institutional responses.

He further said preventing violence must remain a shared responsibility, supported by public awareness, education and the active participation of men. The National Action Plan for Human Rights 2026 includes specific commitments for the protection of women, while the national human rights helpline 1099 provides access to legal advice and referral services across the country.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar holds a meeting with Mr. Omer Kerkez, President of the Court of Cassation of the Republic of Türkiye, Ambassador of Türkiye Dr. Irfan Neziroglu and members of the Turkish delegation to discuss strengthening bilateral judicial and legal cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Panelists participate in a discussion during the annual meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSC Network).

Govt aims to ensure opportunities for youth to progress by sports, education, healthy pursuits: Bugti

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday said that incumbent provincial government aims to ensure that young people have opportunities to progress through sports, education and healthy pursuits. He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held to lay the foundation stone for the state-of-the-art 'Mir Sarfraz Bugti Sports Complex' in Nawan Killi (PB-29).

The Chief Minister said that the needs of Pakistan always take precedence, he affirmed that for the sake of the country's defense, national security, and stability, Balochistan would not hesitate to make any sacrifice including contributing from its own resources and requirements.

He said that Pakistan has recently fought a war against an adversary many times its own size, while simultaneously grappling with a complex security situation in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a struggle in which security forces are making unparalleled sacrifices.

The Government of Balochistan and the people of the province hold these sacrifices in high regard and would not shy away from any sacrifice required for the defense of the nation, he said.

The Chief Minister noted that while he generally prefers to attend the inauguration ceremonies of completed projects, he decided to personally attend the foundation-laying ceremony for the Nawan Killi Sports Complex due to the delays and complications surrounding it. His objective was to remove the obstacles hindering its construction and ensure that practical work begins immediately.

The Chief Minister explained that the project had been delayed for the past six to seven months due to land-related issues and various administrative.

Azam Tarar says:
Balancing freedom of expression with citizens' dignity vital in digital age

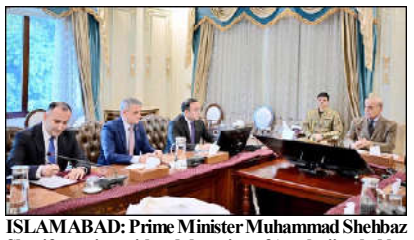
ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday emphasized the need to maintain a constitutional balance between freedom of expression and access to information and the protection of citizens' privacy, honour, reputation and dignity in the digital era.

Addressing an international seminar titled "Social Media Platforms and the Post-Truth Era", organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), the minister said rapid technological advancements allowed fake news to spread within seconds, with consequences that could not be undone once the information was disseminated.

Referring to the Constitution, he said Articles 4, 9 and 14 guaranteed the protection of life, liberty, honour, reputation and dignity, while Articles 19 and 19-A subjected the rights to freedom of expression and access to information to reasonable legal restrictions aimed at protecting personal privacy, national security and institutional integrity.

Citing international examples, Senator Tarar said the European Union, the United Kingdom and regional countries had introduced stringent regulations to protect citizens, particularly women and children, from online misinformation.

He said Pakistan had revamped its regulatory framework following 18 months of consultations with journalists, experts and representatives of global technology companies, including Meta and the Asia Internet Coalition.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meeting with a delegation of Azerbaijan led by Mr. Ulvi Mehdiyev, Chairman of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovation.

Talal Chaudhry alleges JAAC links to Afghan militant groups

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Tuesday presented evidence of links between the proscribed Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) in Azad Kashmir and Afghanistan-based terrorist group Fitna al-Khawarij, saying that individuals associated with the committee were involved in weapons transportation, recruitment, funding and coordination of violent activities.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Talal Chaudhry played audio recordings and presented other evidence.

According to the minister, Zarshad transported weapons from Afghanistan to border areas, while Akbar, a government employee, moved the weapons to other locations under the cover of his official position. Zia had been involved in these activities for the past eight years.

The minister said Zia was in contact with Majid, who served as a special aide or personal assistant to Sardar Aman. Majid maintained contact with Zia on Sardar Aman's behalf to facilitate the movement of weapons. Talal said further investigations revealed the involvement of additional individuals, including Nazim, who had links with Ammar Sohail. The minister said another individual, Imtiaz Aslam was a member of the JAAC's core committee and acted as a link between Sardar Aman, Khawaja Mehran and individuals operating.

Balochistan announces rewards up to Rs250m for Info on wanted terrorists

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has announced cash rewards ranging from Rs500,000 to Rs250 million for credible and actionable information leading to authorities' efforts against most-wanted terrorists in the province.

Balochistan Adviser on Home Affairs Babar Yousafzai said the government had placed a reward of Rs250 million each for reliable information concerning Rehman Gul and Bashir Zeb, while substantial financial incentives had also been announced for information about other individuals on the most-wanted list.

Yousafzai urged citizens to provide relevant information to the authorities, saying public cooperation was crucial to strengthening counterterrorism measures and maintaining peace across the province.

Atta Tarar says:
Political stability required focus on public service, practical measures rather than political point-scoring

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said that political stability required a focus on public service and practical measures rather than political point-scoring.

Talking to the media here, the minister said that there was no harm in seeking public opinion on the establishment of new provinces.

He said new provinces should be created if public opinion favoured the move; otherwise, the proposal should not be pursued. He said that a debate was underway across the country to seek public opinion on the establishment of new provinces.

Responding to a question, Tarar said that the matter would be presented before Parliament when the appropriate time came.

Regarding social media, the minister stressed the need for better coordination with social media platforms, saying that engagement with them was ongoing. He said that social media platforms were also establishing their offices in Pakistan.

PM takes notice of recent statements by ministers, directs cabinet members to avoid point-scoring

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday took notice of recent public statements by ministers and directed the members of federal cabinet to refrain from making political remarks against one another. The prime minister, in a statement, emphasized that the federal government's entire focus remained on public welfare initiatives and development projects. He said the government was continuing its journey from economic stability towards sustainable economic growth.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing ceremony held to lay the foundation stone for the state-of-the-art 'Mir Sarfraz Bugti Sports Complex' in Nawan Killi .

Ayaz welcomes first-ever visiting Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday warmly welcomed Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, Bir Bikram, Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, upon his arrival in Pakistan along with a high-level parliamentary delegation.

The visit is being undertaken at the special invitation of Ayaz Sadiq, said a news release.

The visit marks a historic milestone in parliamentary diplomacy between Pakistan and Bangladesh, as it is the first-ever visit to Pakistan by a Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament.

The visit is expected to open new avenues of parliamentary cooperation and further strengthen the longstanding bonds of friendship between the two brotherly countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Ayaz Sadiq said that the arrival of the Bangladesh parliamentary delegation marked a new beginning in parliamentary relations between the two countries.

He warmly welcomed the Speaker and members of the delegation, expressing his pleasure at hosting them in Pakistan.

Pakistan's space dreams take flight as first astronaut departs Wednesday: Ahsan

JIUQUAN (China) (APP): As Pakistan's first astronaut Muhammad Zeeshan Ali is set to depart for space as the first foreign guest aboard the Chinese space station on Wednesday, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has hailed it as a historic and proud moment for the entire nation.

The minister, who virtually attended a media briefing at China's Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center ahead of the mission's launch, said that it would turn Pakistan's dream into reality. The televised briefing showed the minister waving to the Pakistani astronaut and conveying best wishes for the historic mission. Ahsan Iqbal said the sky was no longer the limit for Pakistan, but a starting point for the younger generation to aspire to greater heights. He said that Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud had successfully completed their rigorous space training, bringing pride to the nation.

Lowari Tunnel key to regional connectivity, tourism: Aleem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to expedite renovation, maintenance and rehabilitation work at Lowari Tunnel, as well as ongoing development work on NHA's N-45 highway in Chitral. He said highways in he northern areas, particularly Lowari Tunnel, serves as a gateway to China, Afghanistan and other countries while an improved road network in Chitral would significantly promote tourism from across the country, said a press release.

The minister issued these directions during his one day visit to Chitral, where he chaired meetings with senior NHA officials and reviewed the progress of ongoing development projects. He also inspected the N-45 highway and various construction sites, directing the authorities to ensure their timely completion. Expressing concern over delays in the Mastuj, Shandur and Chitral–Kalash Road Projects, he directed the authorities to ensure the provision of the best possible travelling facilities to the people of Chitral. He emphasized that the public should be able to see and experience that NHA is working to facilitate them and improve infrastructure.

He said that making the difficult and challenging routes of the northern areas more accessible was essential for the country's economy and regional development.

Aleem Khan stated that N-45 was a vital highway for the development and prosperity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He stressed the need to improve the pace and quality of ongoing work on the 309-kilometre-long national highway connecting Nowshera with Chitral.



CHITRAL: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan being briefed on NHA Projects.

Three militants linked to Zargul alias Uncle group killed in operation

BANNU (INP): Security forces, Bannu Police and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) killed three militants linked to the Zargul alias Uncle group during a major joint operation in different areas of Bannu district. The operation, titled Operation Sarbulandi, targeted militant hideouts in Gharira Shah Jahan, Kangar and adjoining villages, according to a statement issued by the Director Public Relations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police. The joint forces also recovered weapons and ammunition and detained several suspected individuals.

Pakistan, China to develop maritime training institute in Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): Pakistan is seeking to develop specialised maritime and engineering education in Gwadar through a partnership with Chinese institutions, with a new technical institute planned to train local youth for work in port and maritime industries.

The proposed Pakistan Overseas Engineering and Technology Institute will focus on training professionals in marine engineering, navigation, shipping technology and port operations, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said that training should match maritime industry needs. He was speaking at a pre-board meeting of the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), which reviewed development projects and initiatives aimed at strengthening technical education and human resource capacity in the port city. GPA Chairman Noorul Haq Baloch informed the meeting that GPA, Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCTVI), University of Gwadar.

Govt steps up efforts to control Hepatitis C across Pakistan: Kamal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday said the government was making concerted efforts to control and eliminate Hepatitis C from the country through expanded screening, timely diagnosis, free treatment and public awareness initiatives.

The minister was speaking at the launch of a free Hepatitis C screening camp at the Naval Complex, Islamabad, organized by the Ministry of National Health Services in collaboration with the Pakistan Navy under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C.

He said the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C had initially been launched in Islamabad and Gilgit-Baltistan and would subsequently be extended to other cities across the country. Under the programme, free screening, diagnostic testing, treatment and public awareness services were being provided to facilitate early detection and ensure timely medical care, the minister said. He emphasized that early diagnosis and treatment, along with preventive measures and public awareness, were essential to achieving the goal of eliminating Hepatitis C from Pakistan.

PTI founder moves IHC seeking live streaming of 190mn pound case appeals

ISLAMABAD (INP): A significant development has emerged in the £190 million case as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC), seeking live streaming of hearings on his appeals against the sentence.

Imran Khan, through his lawyer, has filed an application in the Islamabad High Court, requesting the court to order the live broadcast of proceedings on the appeals.

DPM reviews preparations for upcoming multilateral engagements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister (DPM/ FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review preparations for upcoming multilateral engagements to be hosted by Pakistan. The Foreign Secretary briefed the deputy prime minister on the ongoing preparations, including administrative and logistical arrangements for the forthcoming multilateral engagements, a DPM's Office news release said. The DPM/FM directed the concerned officials to ensure close coordination with all relevant stakeholders.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister's Adviser on Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind addressing on journalists protest camp outside QPC.

PFUJ vows to intensify nationwide campaign for press freedom

QUETTA (ANN): The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has announced the continuation and expansion of its nationwide protest against restrictions on press freedom, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), journalist layoffs and the closure of television channel bureaus across Balochistan.

PFUJ President Afzal Butt made the announcement while addressing journalists at the conclusion of a 27-hour protest camp outside the Quetta Press Club, organized by the Balochistan Union of Journalists (BUJ) under the federation's call. Journalists and media workers remained at the camp despite freezing weather conditions.

Butt said the protest campaign would now move to Lahore and other cities after demonstrations in Karachi and Quetta, before culminating in a major sit-in in Islamabad. He said the movement would continue until the journalists' Charter of Demands was accepted and their fundamental rights were protected.

He said the issue of freedom of expression and access to information extended beyond the journalism community, describing it as a constitutional matter affecting the country's citizens. Butt said the PFUJ had maintained its resistance to restrictions on press freedom since 1950.

Rejecting PECA in its present context, the PFUJ president said journalists' bodies were opposed to fake news, irresponsible reporting and character assassination, but would not accept measures that undermine constitutionally protected freedoms. He called on parliamentary political parties to hold meaningful consultations with journalists' representatives to address their concerns.

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