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FCCP declares disciplinary proceedings against NAB DG Shahzad Saleem illegal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) has declared illegal and set aside the charge sheet and departmental inquiry initiated against National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Director General Shahzad Saleem, ruling that matters already examined by the Supreme Court cannot be reopened after two decades without new evidence or legal justification.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha announced the detailed judgment on Shahzad Saleem's petition, also setting aside the Islamabad High Court's May 12, 2026, judgment.

The court observed that a violation of recruitment rules alone could not constitute misconduct unless an officer had secured appointment through fraud, misrepresentation, concealment of facts or corruption. According to the judgment, Shahzad Saleem was absorbed into NAB in 2003, while questions regarding his appointment, qualifications and promotions had already been examined by the Supreme Court. NAB had also informed the apex court that his master's degree was verified by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and that he possessed the required qualifications at the time of his appointment.

The court noted that NAB subsequently questioned the same degree and initiated disciplinary proceedings without presenting any new evidence or reasonable justification. It also observed that the allegation regarding a lack of five years' experience could not constitute misconduct in the absence of any charge of misrepresentation or concealment of facts.

Bushra Bibi files petition in IHC seeking eye treatment in hospital

ISLAMABAD (INP): A petition has been filed in the Islamabad High Court seeking the transfer of Bushra Bibi, wife of PTI founder Imran Khan, to a specialised hospital for medical treatment following concerns over her deteriorating eyesight.

Bushra Bibi approached the high court through lawyers Latif Khosa and Barrister Salman Safdar, requesting that authorities be directed to submit her complete medical record and ensure timely provision of all necessary medical and surgical facilities.

The petition also sought arrangements for her immediate transfer to a reputable specialised hospital for proper medical care and treatment.

According to the petition, Imran Khan informed Bushra Bibi during a meeting on November 10 about the seriousness of her health condition. She also reportedly told him on November 15 about a possible eye surgery, saying she was experiencing vision difficulties and pain in her eye.

The petition stated that a medical examination was conducted by a doctor at the jail seven to eight days after she complained of eye pain. Bushra Bibi was reportedly informed that she required critical surgery and that the procedure could result in the loss of vision in the affected eye.

A detailed report of the meeting held at Adiala Jail on November 11, 2026, was also submitted to the court along with the petition.

According to the application, cataracts have been diagnosed in both Bushra Bibi's eyes, while jail authorities had indicated that her operation was expected to take place on November 15, 2026.

PM Shehbaz stresses collective efforts' importance to address regional security threats amid ECO delegation call on

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Monday, stressed the importance of collective efforts to address threats to regional security amid underlining Pakistan's commitment to dialogue and diplomacy for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The prime minister made these remarks during a joint call on paid at him here by the Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegations of Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), visiting Islamabad to participate in the 30th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

Warmly welcoming the visiting dignitaries, the prime minister thanked them for their participation in the 30th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) meeting and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to the objectives of ECO and reiterated his government's resolve to promote regional cooperation, connectivity and economic integration within the ECO member states.

The prime minister appreciated the successful conclusion of the 30th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting and welcomed the adoption of the Islamabad Communiqué and the Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation 2026–2035, describing them as important steps towards strengthening the Organization and advancing shared regional priorities.

Highlighting Pakistan's Chairmanship of ECO for 2026–2027 under the theme "Reviving Regionalism for a Resilient ECO, " the prime minister emphasized the need to translate the Organization's collective vision into concrete, result-oriented initiatives that deliver tangible benefits to the people of the region.

The prime minister called for enhanced cooperation in trade and investment, transport and transit connectivity, energy, information and communication technology, and sustainable development. He stressed the importance of effective implementation of existing ECO agreements and strengthening institutional mechanisms to accelerate regional economic integration.

Highlighting Pakistan's strategic geographical location, the prime minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to enhancing regional connectivity through road, rail and multimodal transport corridors, including linkages with the ports of Karachi, Port Qasim and Gwadar.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegations of ECO member states, participating in the 30th meeting of ECO Council of Ministers.

Public service, merit and quality development top priorities: Bugti

DERA BUGTI (6 AM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said that public service, merit-based governance, transparency and the completion of quality development projects remain the foremost priorities of the provincial government, emphasizing that government initiatives must deliver tangible benefits and meaningful improvements in people's lives.

He expressed these views while inspecting the under-construction Model Secondary School Mir Ghulam Qadir Bugti in North Dera Bugti, where he reviewed the project and interacted with local residents and government officials.

The chief minister said his government had pursued an agenda of fulfilling public commitments, addressing citizens' grievances and improving institutional performance since assuming office. He stressed that effective coordination among government departments and responsible utilization of public resources were essential for achieving development targets.

Highlighting educational reforms, Bugti said the provincial government had recruited thousands of teachers and reopened hundreds of government schools that had remained closed for years, restoring academic activities and expanding educational opportunities for children across Balochistan.

He made it clear that government schools would no longer be allowed to serve as guesthouses or be used for other non-educational purposes, stressing that educational buildings must remain exclusively dedicated to teaching and learning.

The chief minister said the government had also provided a record number of scholarships to talented and deserving students, enabling financially disadvantaged young people to pursue higher education and develop their abilities.

He maintained that the positive results of the provincial government's education reforms had received recognition at federal and international forums.

Referring to healthcare improvements, Bugti said the provincial government had introduced several initiatives, including the Health Card programme, establishment of new hospitals and expansion of medical facilities, benefiting hundreds of thousands of residents.



NORTH DERA BUGTI: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti visiting under construction Mir Ghulam Qadir Bugti Secondary School.

DPM, Turkish minister review ties, vow to deepen brotherly bonds

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Türkiye Musa Kulaklikaya called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on the sidelines of the 30th Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Council of Ministers here on Monday. During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the longstanding bonds of friendship and brotherhood between Pakistan and Türkiye. The DPM/FM thanked Türkiye for its active participation in the Council of Ministers meeting.

Deputy Foreign Minister Kulaklikaya thanked Pakistan for the warm hospitality and arrangements for the meeting.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening the bilateral strategic partnership and maintaining close coordination at regional and multilateral fora.

PM condoles demise of Tablighi Jamaat chief Maulana Nazar-ur-Rehman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Monday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the passing of Maulana Nazar-ur-Rehman, the chief of the Tablighi Jamaat, paying tribute to his lifelong religious, preaching and humanitarian services.

In a condolence message issued by the Prime Minister's Office, the prime minister said Maulana Nazar-ur-Rehman had dedicated his entire life to the promotion of Islam, preaching its teachings and working for the moral improvement and welfare of humanity.

Paying tribute to the late religious scholar, PM Shehbaz Sharif described him as a distinguished Islamic scholar and a compassionate personality whose services would be remembered for generations.

The prime minister said Maulana Nazar-ur-Rehman's demise had created a significant void not only within the Tablighi Jamaat but also across the Muslim world, which would be difficult to fill for a long time.

DPM Dar says:

ECO to continue working for regional peace, prosperity under chairmanship of Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar Monday said the objectives of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) were to bring progress, prosperity, peace and stability to the region and Pakistan was committed to make its ECO chairmanship a period of tangible progress and meaningful outcomes.

Addressing a press conference here after the 30th Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Council of Ministers meeting, he said the ECO ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the organization and advancing regional cooperation.

He outlined five key priority areas for the period of two year chairmanship of Pakistan till December 2027, including expanding market access, strengthening regional value chains, promoting investment and encouraging private sector participation particularly by small and medium size enterprises.

He said ECO would work to deepen connectivity between Central Asia, South Asia and Pakistan's Arabian sea port through harmonised customs procedures and predictable transit arrangements.

It would also make effort to implement the negotiation strategy and roadmap for the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) approved by ECO Trade Ministers in November last year to modernise the trade mechanisms.

ECO leaders call for stronger regional connectivity, trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign ministers and high-level dignitaries from Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member and observer states on Monday underscored the need to strengthen regional connectivity, resilient supply chains, and diplomatic cooperation to navigate shifting global geopolitical and geo-economic realities.

Addressing the 30th meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM), chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar here, the delegates commended Pakistan's leadership and hospitality, while commending Kazakhstan's outgoing chairmanship and the ECO Secretariat for advancing the Organisation's shared agenda.

In his address, Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin thanked Pakistan for hosting the 30th ECO Council of Ministers meeting and for its efforts to advance the shared regional agenda.

Reaffirming that Tajikistan attached great importance to the ECO as a key platform for strengthening economic cooperation, he also acknowledged Kazakhstan's successful organization of its chairmanship.

New Italian embassy inaugurated in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The new building of the Embassy of Italy in Islamabad was formally inaugurated on Monday by the Secretary-General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), Ambassador Riccardo Guariglia. The inauguration marks a historic milestone in Pakistan-Italy relations, as the new chancery is Italy's largest diplomatic mission overseas, underscoring the growing importance Rome attaches to its partnership with Islamabad. Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan, Ugo Ciarlatani, senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of the diplomatic corps, and distinguished guests attended the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary-General Guariglia said the new Embassy was a symbol of the enduring friendship between Italy and Pakistan and of Italy's long-term commitment to further deepen cooperation in trade, investment, culture.

Gohar says disappointed with court's order

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said the Federal Constitutional Court had amended its November 5 order, but he was still disappointed with the court's order today.

He said a petition challenging the imposition of emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been filed in the Constitutional Court and that it was the Peshawar High Court's duty to decide the matter.

Barrister Gohar said they had again asked the court today to allow the Peshawar High Court to issue a decision. He added that the High Court had yet to decide whether the petition was maintainable.

The Federal Constitutional Court amended its November 5 stay order concerning arrests in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) and accepted PTI's petition.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister of Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove expressing his views during Balochistan Assembly session.

FCCP allows PHC to hear constitutional petitions under Article 199

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Constitutional Court (FCCP) has modified its interim order of November 5 in a case concerning the imposition of governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and arrests under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (3-MPO), allowing the Peshawar High Court to hear constitutional petitions under Article 199, except those relating to governor's rule and 3-MPO.

The court clarified that its November 5 order was confined only to matters concerning governor's rule and 3-MPO.

A two-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan, heard the case on Monday.

During the proceedings, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan argued that the November 5 order had adversely affected judicial proceedings at the Peshawar High Court and brought lawyers' professional practice to a halt.

Justice Aamer Farooq observed that a plain interpretation of Article 245 would mean that cases under Article 199 could not be heard. However, he said, such an interpretation would paralyze the entire judicial system.

The court clarified that the Peshawar High Court could continue hearing other cases under Article 199.

Balochistan appoints four special judges for anti-terrorism courts

QUETTA (6 AM Report): The Balochistan government has appointed four advocates as special judges of Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) for a period of two and a half years on a contractual basis, with immediate effect.

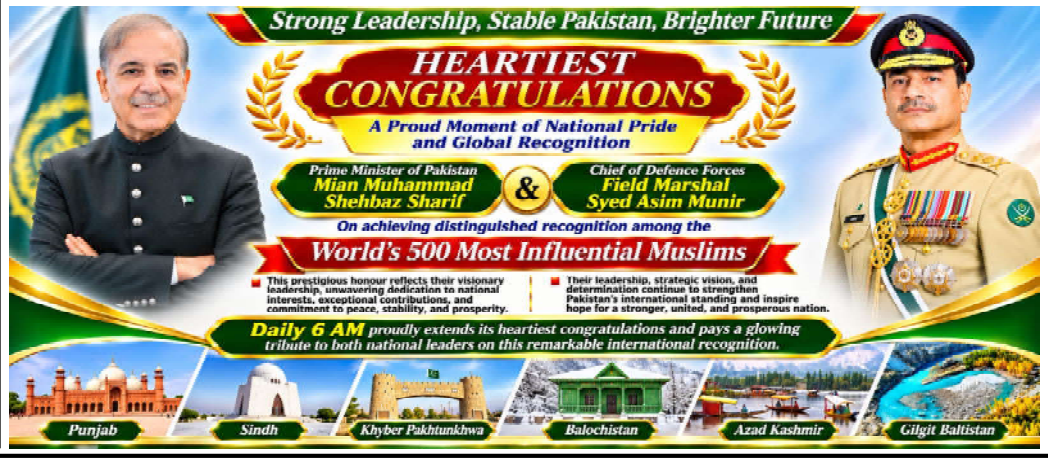
According to a notification issued by the Balochistan Home Department, the appointments were made on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.

The newly appointed special judges include Advocate Abdul Malik, Advocate Meraj Ali, Advocate Azmatullah Khan Tareen and Advocate Naeem-ul-Haq Kalachi.

The notification stated that Azmatullah Khan Tareen has been serving as Additional Prosecutor General for the Anti-Terrorism Court.

Under the terms of their appointments, the special judges will perform their judicial responsibilities in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, and the conditions prescribed by the provincial government from time to time.

The Home Department clarified that the appointed judges would receive salaries and other approved benefits equivalent to those of a BPS-21 Sessions Judge.



Maryam directs AI-based investigation, effective evidence recording in abuse cases

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister (CM), Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday ordered the introduction of a new anti-rape law and decided to establish speedy courts for cases involving violence against women and children, seeking time-bound trials and stronger prosecution.

Chairing a special meeting on the protection of women and children, here on Monday, she expressed concern over the low conviction rate in such cases and directed the police to strengthen investigation, improve officers' capacity and take preventive measures against sexual violence.

The meeting also agreed to use artificial intelligence (AI) to improve the quality of investigation and prosecution, while ensuring effective recording of audio and video evidence in cases involving women and children.

The CM Maryam stressed that specialized investigations were essential to secure convictions and said reporting such crimes was crucial to bringing perpetrators to justice.

She said the government would introduce effective legislation to ensure exemplary punishment for those involved in sexual abuse.

According to a briefing by the Inspector General (IG) Punjab, 1.24 million complaints relating to women had been registered at police stations across the province. Around 125, 000 complaints had been lodged through the Virtual Women Police Station with action completed in 92 per cent of cases. The meeting was further informed that 70, 000 missing or abducted children had been recovered through complaints registered with the Virtual Center for Child Safety while 4, 000 children with special needs had been reunited with their families.

A total of 7, 588 child sexual abuse cases had also been resolved.

The briefing revealed that people known to the victims were involved in 71 per cent of sexual abuse cases involving women and children.

The CM appreciated the police, Regional Police Officer (RPO), District Police Officer (RPO) and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) team for eliminating a criminal gang in Sargodha.

She said that women and children were among the most vulnerable segments of society and their protection remained a priority. She also called for greater social awareness to prevent sexual violence and emphasized the need for effective reporting mechanisms and specialized investigation to ensure convictions.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the special meeting.



LAHORE: Central President of the PPP Women's Wing Faryal Talpur alongwith Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan addressing, PPP workers' convention at the Governor House.

Qasim Noon highlights Pakistan's diplomatic, strategic achievements

JALALPUR PIRWALA (APP): Federal Minister and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon on Monday said that Pakistan had achieved significant diplomatic and strategic successes at the international level, adding that the events of May 10 (Marka-e-Haq) had demonstrated the professional capabilities of the armed forces and strategic vision of the national leadership.

Addressing a lawyers' convention at the Jalalpur Pirwala Kachehri Bar Association, he said the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and capabilities demonstrated by the Pakistan Air Force had played an important role in strengthening the country's position internationally.

He also appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's diplomatic efforts in effectively projecting Pakistan's stance at international forums.

The minister said raising the Kashmir issue at international forums was a matter of honour for him, adding that Pakistan's diplomatic achievements and constructive role in global affairs were commendable.

Emphasizing the importance of the rule of law, supremacy of the Constitution and effective coordination between the bar and bench, he said these were essential for establishing a just society.

He also stressed unity among members of the lawyers' community for their welfare and the development of bar associations.

Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon reaffirmed his commitment to completing development projects at the bar and pursuing the proposed lawyers' housing colony.

He also inaugurated a project for the provision of furniture to the Bar Association.

Highlighting the development needs of South Punjab, he called for strengthening local government institutions and transferring administrative and financial powers to people at the grassroots level. He also stressed the need for adequate representation of South Punjab residents in government services and senior positions, particularly in the judiciary.

On the occasion, MPA and Chairman of the Punjab Assembly Standing Committee on Tourism Malik Lal Muhammad Joiya assured the lawyers' community of his cooperation in resolving the bar's issues and addressing its demands.

Commendable aspect of PPP is encouragement for workers to speak openly: Faryal Talpur

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, accompanied by Faryal Talpur, Central President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Women's Wing, attended a PPP workers' convention at the Governor House in Lahore. The convention was attended by Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Nayyar Bukhari, Nadeem Afzal Chan, Qamar Zaman Kaira, and BISP Chairperson Rubina Khalid, alongside a large number of party workers .

Addressing a workers' convention, Faryal Talpur, Central President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), expressed her delight at being among the party workers in Lahore, noting that she herself is a party worker.

She stated that she was very pleased to meet with them under the leadership of Faisal Mir, the party's Lahore President. Faryal Talpur urged all workers to ensure that the party flag is displayed on the rooftops of their homes. She remarked that it is a hallmark of the PPP to engage with the public and seek their opinions, regardless of whether the party is in power or not.

She highlighted that a commendable aspect of the PPP is its encouragement for workers to speak openly and share their innermost thoughts. Faryal Talpur explained that the primary objective of her visit to Lahore was to assess the party's standing in the city. She emphasized that the PPP is a party of martyrs and is comitted to the welfare of the people. Dismissing minor, insignificant political groups, she asserted that the PPP lives in the hearts of the people. She instructed the workers and loyalists to remain fully prepared for the upcoming local government elections. Finally, she noted that Lahore belongs to everyone, and the PPP considers Lahore its own city.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan also addressed the workers' convention. He stated that the Governor House is always open to party workers and general public. He emphasized that he would not tolerate any mistreatment of these workers and loyalists He noted that the arrival of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leadership in Lahore has revitalized the party workers . The Governor further stated that the PPP will participate fully in the local government elections. He asserted that the PPP is the representative party of the people which understands the people's problems and is committed to resolving them.

Talented athletes deserve support, opportunities to excel: Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday said talented young athletes deserved proper patronage and equal opportunities to excel, stressing that merit-based support was essential to promote sports and produce international-level champions from the province.

The Governor expressed these views during a meeting with Peshawar-based international athlete Masood at the Governor House. Adviser on Sports Dr Sarfaraz Ali, Secretary Sports Muhammad Asif, the athlete's coach and other relevant officials were also present.

Appreciating Masood's hard work, determination and dedication, the Governor presented him with a cheque of Rs500, 000 and directed the Health Department to take necessary measures for his medical treatment.

Governor Kundi said he came to know about the young athlete after watching his video on social media and subsequently contacted him. He regretted that, compared with other provinces, young athletes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had not received the level of patronage and facilities they deserved.

He said the "Adopt a Player" initiative was launched last year under which more than 100 young athletes who had brought honour to the province were recognised with awards. He directed the Sports Department to devise an effective strategy for engaging various government departments and institutions to support emerging athletes under the programme and ensure that deserving players were promoted purely on merit.

The Governor said he had also discussed with the Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board measures to promote cricketing activities and improve sports grounds across the province. Masood has demonstrated his endurance and talent by successfully completing long-distance runs from Peshawar to Skardu and from Peshawar to Karachi.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information Azma Bukhari addressing Press Conference at DGPR.

Azma Bokhari rules out possibility of change in Punjab

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari on Monday ruled out the possibility of a change in the province's chief minister, asserting that CM Maryam Nawaz would complete her term.

"We will go to the polls after completing our term. Those hoping to see someone else replace chief minister [Maryam] will receive a shock," she said during a press conference in Lahore.

Bokhari asserted that CM Maryam would head into the next election based on her performance during her term. The Punjab minister criticised Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain response to a notice, saying it failed to adequately address the corruption allegations.

Her remarks refer to the public dispute that erupted after Hussain criticised the Punjab government's governance and alleged widespread corruption in the province during an interview with a private television channel.

The federal minister had alleged that political considerations were influencing development priorities and the allocation of public funds, claiming that a disproportionate share of Punjab's development budget was being channelled towards Lahore while other districts were being overlooked. However, Hussain acknowledged that he did not possess documentary evidence to substantiate the claims but maintained that corruption was taking place. CM Maryam subsequently announced legal action against the federal minister, challenging him to produce evidence or face proceedings. During today's presser, Bokhari said that the federal minister's reply demonstrated that he had no substantive answer to the allegations.

Six killed, several injured in road accident

PAKPATTAN (APP): At least six persons were killed and several others sustained injuries in a road accident on Burewala Road, Pakpattan, according to rescue sources quoted by tv channels.

Initial reports said that a bus carrying passengers collided with oil-tanker on Burewala Road. As a result of collision, six persons died on the spot. Several other persons were also injured in the same accident.

Rescue team rushed to the site after receiving information about the incident and shifted the bodies and injured persons to hospital. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the exact cause of the accident.

Five people die in various incidents

LAHORE (APP): Five people died in various incidents, including a case of suicide, here on Monday.

According to an Edhi spokesperson, a 22-year-old man named Akram Bhatti consumed poisonous pills in the Hair area over unknown reasons. He was shifted to a hospital but could not survive.

In Shadman, the body of a 70-year-old man was found along the footpath, while a 33-year-old unidentified man was discovered dead in a park near Akbari Gate on Circular Road.

Separately, the body of an unidentified man was found near the passenger lounge at Lari Adda (bus terminal), he appears to have died from a drug overdose. The body of another unidentified man, aged 40, was recovered from Nishtar Colony; he also appears to have been a drug user.

According to the Edhi spokesperson, the bodies had been shifted to the morgue.

Child killed, four injured in Shorkot road accident

SHORKOT (APP): A child was killed and four other persons were injured in a road accident on Jhang Road area of Shorkot, Jhang district, according to rescue sources quoted by tv channels.

Initial reports said that the incident occurred when a rashly driven mini-truck collided with a motorcycle passing through Jhang road area of Shorkot.

Rescue team rushed to the site after receiving information about the incident and shifted the child's body and injured persons to hospital. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the exact cause of the accident.

LUMS, Punjab partner to bring AI into healthcare

LAHORE (APP): The National AI Hub for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Office of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Punjab to promote the responsible use of artificial intelligence in public-sector healthcare and improve health service delivery across the province.

The partnership aims to link Punjab's provincial AI initiatives with LUMS's research and implementation expertise, focusing on practical AI applications to strengthen health-system decision-making, support healthcare providers and improve public services through evidence-based approaches.

The signing ceremony was attended by Provincial Health and Population Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir, Advisor to the Chief Minister on AI and Special Initiatives Ali Dar, Secretary Office of AI Punjab Ahmad Rajwana, LUMS Provost and Acting Vice Chancellor(VC), Dr.Tariq Jadoon, and Director and Principal Investigator of the National AI Hub for MNCH Dr.Maryam Mustafa.

Jaranwala to get university soon: Talal

FAISALABAD (APP): State Minister for Interior Senator Talal Chaudhry has announced the establishment of a university in Jaranwala in future, declaring that the government is pursuing development projects to transform the urban and rural infrastructure and fulfill all commitments made to people.

He made these remarks while reviewing ongoing development projects in the inner city of Jaranwala along with Member National Assembly (MNA) Bilal Badr Chaudhry.

He said that record funds had been allocated for improving the sewerage system at tehsil level while a comprehensive network of projects covering electricity, gas, roads, schools and streets was being implemented to ensure that residents of both urban and rural areas benefited from development. He stressed that quality standards and timely completion would remain the foremost considerations in executing all development schemes so that people could receive durable infrastructure and reliable basic facilities.

He said that carpeted roads were being constructed in Jaranwala while quality tuff tiles would also be installed in streets to improve urban infrastructure and living conditions.



ISLAMABAD: Acting Managing Director of the Associated Press of Pakistan, Sabeen Usman Khattak in a a group photograph with a delegation of students from Quaid-i-Azam University during their visit to Associated Press of Pakistan Headquarters.

PHC hears case of Russian citizen missing in KP

PESHAWAR (INP): Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Monday heard a petition with regard to a Russian national allegedly missing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Hearing the petition, Chief Justice PHC, S.M. Ateeq Shah, summoned report from police with regard to missing Russian citizen, Ali Glegov within 14 days. The petitioner's lawyer informed the bench that the Russian national, Ali Glegov, arrived in Islamabad and later travelled to Peshawar, where he allegedly went missing.

"What is proof that the Russian citizen has been missing after coming here" the bench questioned. "Russian embassy and the police have said that he arrived in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and has been untraced since February 28," lawyer informed.

PA Speaker calls for collective efforts to improve literacy, enrollment

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan on Monday called for collective national efforts to improve literacy rates and ensure that every child was enrolled in school.

Addressing an annual sports and prize distribution ceremony at a Government High School in Toba Tek Singh district, he said promoting education and securing a better future for the next generation was one of the most meaningful services to the nation.

The speaker said he was impressed by the remarkable educational progress achieved in a remote village, where all children were enrolled in schools and students were securing examination results of around 95 per cent.

He described the achievement as an encouraging example of how communities could bring about positive change through collective commitment and local initiatives.

Referring to available statistics, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said approximately 25 million children in Pakistan were out of school. He said the impressive school enrollment and academic performance in the village demonstrated that meaningful progress was possible even with limited resources.

if people with the means and capacity took responsibility for improving education in their communities.

He said governments were making efforts to improve the education system, adding that the Punjab government, under the leadership of Chief Minister(CM) Maryam Nawaz Sharif was also taking steps in this regard.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi presides over the meeting of Worker Welfare Board.

Governor Hashmi emphasizes revival, promotion of scouting in educational institutions

KARACHI (APP): Governor of Sindh and Chief Scout Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi has said that the youth are Pakistan's most valuable asset and must be equipped not only with education but also with discipline, character building, patriotism and the spirit of service to humanity.

Scouting plays a vital role in shaping the personality of young people and making them responsible citizens. Therefore, scouting activities will be revived and promoted on a wider scale in public and private educational institutions.

He expressed these views while presiding over the 22nd Provincial Council Meeting of the Sindh Boy Scouts Association at Governor House, Karachi.

The Governor of Sindh said that the father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, also attached great importance to scouting. Scouting is a strong bond that brings people together and promotes mutual cooperation, respect and service to humanity.

He said that scouts are among the first to reach out and provide assistance during national days, emergencies and accidents, which reflects their spirit of service. Scouting is a voluntary service, and scouts must support one another, encourage positive and constructive criticism, and respect each other despite differences. The interests and dignity of the institution must always come first.

Appreciating the suggestions presented by Javed Manzar, Shahid Arain and other participants, the Governor assured that every possible effort would be made to implement them. He directed that those who could not be invited to the meeting should also be included in future meetings. He further proposed holding open-house discussions to promote scouting, address issues and encourage mutual consultation. The meeting approved a comprehensive roadmap, in line with the vision of the Chief Scout Sindh, to promote scouting activities in educational institutions and foster patriotism, discipline, character building and the spirit of public service among young people.

Under the approved roadmap, Shaheen Scout Units will be established in public and private primary schools. Scouting and Rovering activities will also be promoted in public and private educational institutions, special education institutions, technical and vocational institutions, and religious seminaries.

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Pakistan's rising global stature:

A new era of leadership

Pakistan's national strength rests on effective leadership, strong institutions, defence capabilities and international credibility. Throughout its history, the country's armed forces have played a vital role in safeguarding national sovereignty, protecting territorial integrity and combating terrorism. Their professionalism, dedication and sacrifices remain an important foundation of national security.

Recent diplomatic and defence engagements involving Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir have brought renewed international attention to Pakistan. High-level interactions with world leaders, regional security discussions and efforts to strengthen bilateral relations have highlighted the country's strategic importance and diplomatic potential.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's leadership has been particularly significant in advancing defence cooperation and military diplomacy. His international engagements have underscored Pakistan's role in regional security and its commitment to peace, stability and constructive international partnerships.

The inclusion of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in international listings of influential Muslim personalities has also attracted attention. Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar has welcomed this recognition, describing it as an acknowledgment of their leadership, diplomatic vision and contributions to regional stability.

Such recognition offers an opportunity to further strengthen Pakistan's international standing. However, the lasting value of diplomatic achievements depends on their practical benefits, including increased foreign investment, stronger trade relations, economic cooperation and improved opportunities for citizens.

Pakistan's armed forces continue to serve as a fundamental pillar of national security. Their sacrifices in defending the country and confronting security threats deserve national recognition. Effective coordination between civilian and military leadership, within their constitutional responsibilities, can further strengthen national stability and advance shared development objectives.

Economic progress must remain a central priority. Pakistan needs sustained investment in education, healthcare, infrastructure and employment generation. Balochistan, with its vast mineral resources, strategic coastal location and economic potential, can make a significant contribution to national prosperity through improved security, investment and development.

The diplomatic momentum associated with Pakistan's current leadership should now be translated into measurable economic and social progress. International recognition becomes more meaningful when it strengthens national institutions, attracts investment and improves the lives of ordinary citizens.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's recent international engagements have created opportunities to enhance Pakistan's global standing. The next priority must be to turn these opportunities into lasting peace, economic prosperity and national progress.

Taxpayers' burden

Mohammad Younus Dagha

In challenging times, ordinary citizens and businesses may be called upon to shoulder higher tax burdens to meet the unavoidable costs of maintaining a sovereign state. But citizens should not be expected to bear the burden of costs that are largely avoidable.

When debt servicing consumes 125 per cent of the FBR taxes retained by the federal government, 68.5pc of its total revenues, and nearly three times the defence budget, such an extraordinary burden demands closer scrutiny. Is our public debt being managed prudently and efficiently?

In Pakistan, where a large proportion of the population comprises practising Muslims, many people prefer to keep their savings in bank accounts that pay no interest. As a result, nearly 40pc of all bank deposits are held in current accounts, on which banks pay no interest. This gives Pakistani banks access to an exceptionally cheap source of funds, which they invest in government securities at exorbitantly high returns.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan, banks paid an average interest rate of just 5.53pc on their total deposits in September 2026, including current accounts that pay no interest. Yet, in October 2026, the government was borrowing through 12-month treasury bills at 12.79pc — a gross difference of 7.26 percentage points.

Is our public debt being managed prudently and efficiently?

A prudent borrower would certainly have sought to negotiate a much narrower margin, perhaps 1-2 percentage points. Yet our government continues to borrow at substantially higher rates, raising serious questions about the management of public debt. Ultimately, taxpayers are asked to bear the cost of such generosity. The burden falls on petrol and diesel consumers paying the Petroleum Development Levy, as well as investors paying effective income tax rates of 50-60pc.

High returns on relatively low-risk government securities have encouraged banks to attract more low-cost deposits, particularly current accounts. By June 2026, these accounts held Rs15.3 trillion, nearly 40pc of total deposits, up from 37pc a year earlier. SBP confirms that the Rs3.67tn increase in deposits during the first half of 2026 came mainly from current accounts.

While much of Pakistan's productive economy has struggled, bank deposits have tripled from Rs13.35tn in December 2018 to nearly Rs41tn in September 2026. But where has this enormous pool of savings gone? Into new industries, businesses and jobs, or increasingly into high-yield government securities, earning banks substantial returns at taxpayers' expense?

According to SBP, commercial banks held Rs40.36tn in government securities in September 2026. Applying the prevailing gross interest-rate differential of 7.26 percentage points to these holdings gives an estimated annualised differential of approximately Rs2.93tn.

If government borrowing rates were limited to 1-2 percentage points above banks' average deposit cost, the estimated annualised gross savings could reach Rs2,100-2,500 billion, subject to debt maturities and repricing. Even part of these savings could ease the lives of millions of households and thousands of struggling entrepreneurs by reducing the Petroleum Development Levy, multiple taxes on energy bills, and high income tax rates on salaries and businesses.

Such a policy would also reduce SBP's annual interest earnings by approximately Rs118bn, which would be just a fraction of the overall savings.

What needs to be done?

The government should introduce a law that limits the interest paid to commercial banks on government securities to a reasonable 1-2 percentage points above what banks pay their depositors on average. The implementation process should ensure that monetary policy, government borrowing operations and financial stability are not disrupted.

In order to bring transparency into debt management operations, the law should require the Ministry of Finance and SBP to publish quarterly reports showing how much the government borrows from banks and other investors, the interest it pays, and the cost of funds to banks. These reports should also disclose how much the government actually saves through lower borrowing costs.

The potential annual savings of Rs2,100-2,500bn, once realised, should be passed on to taxpayers and businesses that have long borne the burden of excessive taxation, rather than being absorbed by increased government expenditure. The priority should be to reduce the Petroleum Development Levy and General Sales Tax on electricity bills, thereby lowering fuel and transport costs, easing the cost of living and production, and reducing inflationary pressures. The government should also double the annual income-tax exemption threshold from Rs600,000 to Rs1.2 million, providing much-needed relief to salaried individuals and low-income taxpayers.

The government should also restore the Final Tax Regime for exporters, making tax deducted from export proceeds their final income tax liability, even if the rate remains 2pc. This would simplify taxation, eliminate uncertainty and improve the competitiveness of Pakistani exporters by bringing their tax treatment closer to that of competitors in peer economies.

Equally important is the complete abolition of the super tax, which reportedly generates around Rs400-500bn annually, but has become a major deterrent to new investment. The highest effective income tax rate on corporate, business and other incomes should be capped at 35pc, making Pakistan more attractive to investors while leaving greater disposable income available for savings, consumption and investment.

Many such measures could be financed through the proposed annual debt-servicing savings of Rs2,100-2,500bn, provided the government pursues the necessary reforms with determination and ensures that the resulting fiscal space is used to reduce the tax burden rather than expand public expenditure. These measures would provide a much-needed stimulus to economic growth, encourage investment and job creation, and help alleviate poverty, which has become one of the country's most pressing challenges.

Reviving economic growth requires reducing the excessive tax burden on ordinary citizens and businesses — a burden that stifles investment, discourages enterprise and holds back economic activity.

Dire straits

F.S. Aijazuddin

Recent events have given a new twist to history. A Chicago-born pontiff from Rome has publicly rebuked an American Christian crusader.

Normally, popes issue insipid encyclicals or harmless homilies. In 1968, for example, Pope Paul VI issued Of Human Life — a justification of the Catholic church's opposition to methods of birth control. (One sceptic wondered how a celibate bachelor felt qualified to guide married couples on such an intimate matter.)

Previous popes chose not to interfere even when human rights were being violated. In the 1940s, Pope Pius XII refrained from any condemnation of the Nazis or Stalin's pogroms. Hitler let Mussolini handle the Vatican. Stalin silenced the pope with the cutting question: "How many divisions has the Pope?"

This Easter, Pope Leo XIV felt impelled to speak out against a fellow countryman — the US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth — who had appealed to "Almighty God who trains our hands for war and our fingers for battle" (Psalm 144). On Palm Sunday, Pope Leo XIV, in the name of the same God and quoting from the same Holy Bible, reproached Hegseth: "When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood!" (Isaiah 1:15).

Did Trump deliberately send Vance to Islamabad to fail?

It is perhaps telling that the recent negotiations between the US and Iran held in Islamabad on April 11 did not begin with a prayer from any faith. It might have given the talks a chance. Instead, the divine and Israel were both noticeably absent.

The composition of the US team revealed non-seriousness. Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner are Jewish real estate developers from New York. They had disappointed the Iranians twice earlier. They have a record of being midwives who specialise in lucrative abortions. Neverthe-less, Iran accepted them, hoping that Vice-President J.D. Vance might bring some gravitas and maturity to the table.

They were wrong. President Trump sabotaged the Islamabad talks even before they had begun by announcing: "If it doesn't happen, I'm blaming J.D. Vance. If it does happen, I'm taking full credit." With that, Trump ensured the failure of his VP, just as president Joe Biden, by delaying his withdrawal from the presidential race in 2024, scotched his VP Kamala Harris' chances.

It has been reported that, during a White House meeting on Feb 12, Vance sided with CIA director Ratcliffe who described Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to attack Iran as "farcical". Vance told Trump: "This is a bad idea, but if you want to do it, I'll support you." He warned that such a war would cause "regional chaos".

Did Trump deliberately send Vance to Islamabad to fail? Or, subtler still, did Vance (a recent convert to Catholicism) sacrifice himself this Easter so that he could resurrect himself to succeed a damaged, declining Trump? Vance knows he is only a heartbeat away from the presidency, as were H. Truman to F.D. Roose-velt (1945), L.B. Johnson to J.F. Kennedy (1963), and G. Ford to R. Nixon (1974).

Vance disclosed in his final statement in Islamabad that the US had wanted Iran to abjure nuclear ambitions, forever. Was it lost on him that he made this demand in the capital of a country that is said to possess an estimated 170 nuclear weapons and which hasn't signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? (Iran signed the NPT in 1968.)

Is the ongoing war really about Iran's nuclear capability? Or the hydrocarbons choking the veins of the Gulf Ara-b-s? Or the dangerous gauntlet run by traffic in the Strait of Hormuz?

The IWT dilemma

Aisha Khan

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960 has long been heralded as one of the most durable water-sharing agreements in history. Despite multiple wars and decades of profound political animosity between India and Pakistan, the IWT managed to survive, providing a fragile framework for regulating the shared waters of the Indus River system.

However, the delicate equilibrium of this treaty has been shattered. The move by India to place the IWT in abeyance is not merely a diplomatic protest; it represents a fundamental strategic pivot.

In an era increasingly defined by climate change and existential resource competition, the suspension of the IWT signals a shift toward a new, perilous world order where water security dictates state survival, and historical norms are rapidly eclipsed by the "law of the jungle."

To understand the severity of the hydro-political reality of scarcity, one must look beyond the immediate geopolitical friction and consider the changing hydrology and demography of the region. Climate change is rapidly altering the cryosphere of the Himalayas, which feeds the Indus basin. Glacial retreat, erratic monsoon patterns, and severe, prolonged droughts are making water availability increasingly unpredictable.

The World Resources Institute (WRI) provides a stark warning in its Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas, mapping a future where water becomes the most prized — and contentious — resource on the planet. According to WRI projections, vast swathes of the globe, including South Asia, face escalating levels of baseline water stress. By mid-century, trillions of dollars in GDP will be exposed to high water risk as demand drastically outstrips renewable supply. In such a landscape, water is no longer just an environmental issue; it is a fundamental driver of national security.

As resources diminish, states are becoming increasingly inward-looking. The international order, which once placed a premium on cooperation, is giving way to a more ruthless framework where states prioritise their own existential needs above collective agreements.

In this light, placing the IWT in abeyance is not a temporary diplomatic manoeuvre; it is a strategic preparation of the ground for an eventual unilateral withdrawal.

As water scarcity increases, the temptation for an upper-riparian state to leverage control over water flows to secure its own agricultural and energy requirements becomes overwhelming, effectively treating the resource as sovereign property rather than a shared heritage.

For Pakistan, the stakes are high because the Indus basin underpins agricultural production, rural livelihoods and food security.

The intensification of India's construction of storage dams along the Chenab River, despite the legal challenges and protests from Pakistan, is part of the strategic calculus and entirely consistent with this new paradigm. These projects allow for greater control, storage, and diversion of water.

For Pakistan, an agrarian economy whose very existence relies on the Indus system, this is not a developmental disagreement — it is an existential threat. The Chenab-Beas link tunnel and the Salal sediment bypass illustrate the dilemma.

Such projects may be presented as engineering responses to energy needs and sedimentation, yet transferring water between basins or modifying sediment-control infrastructure on a shared river raises both questions and concerns. The legal status and technical details of each project must be assessed individually for cumulative impact and downstream confidence.

In August 2026 the Court of Arbitration rejected India's unilateral abeyance of the treaty and reaffirmed that it remains in force. The court also ordered interim measures restricting specified construction at the Ratle hydroelectric project till 90 days after the Neutral Expert's final decision expected in July 2027. India's rejection of the court's authority leaves a gap between legal pronouncement and practical compliance.

The coming decision on pondage, spillways, low-level outlets and sediment flushing will matter, but the deeper question is whether both will accept a credible process for resolving disagreements. If the Neutral Expert and Court of Arbitration reach conflicting conclusions, and one or both governments dismiss the outcome, the treaty risks becoming an instrument that exists formally but no longer commands confidence.

An institutional collapse would have consequences extending far beyond the immediate available water. It could erode hydrological data sharing, weaken flood warning cooperation, discourage investment in regional water management and intensify competition over reservoirs and infrastructure.

A breakdown could also encourage unilateralism in transboundary river governance endangering peace at a time of growing geopolitical tensions and environmental fragility. The central danger remains the growing uncertainty in a system already under intense human pressure.

For Pakistan, the stakes are high because the Indus basin underpins agricultural production, rural livelihoods and food security. For India, the consequences would include a more volatile neighbourhood, heightened diplomatic costs and a precedent that could complicate its own relations with other upstream countries. Neither country can insulate itself from the climatic and economic consequences of a destabilised basin.

The gravity of the situation is exacerbated by the nuclear capabilities of both nations. The failure of the current global negotiations in limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius is also ensuring that hydrological instability will only worsen and add to the fear of scarcity.

The international community must act before the legal impasse becomes a humanitarian and security crisis.

Butterfly effect

Naveed Gilani

Does the flutter of a butterfly's wing on a flower in one part of the world cause a hurricane in another thousands of miles away? Literally, no, but metaphorically, yes. What is known as 'the butterfly effect' shows that a little event can lead to significant results over time. The little event I am talking about is providing nutrition to an underprivileged schoolchild and the significant result is the huge gain it spawns over his/her lifetime. In economic terms, what we put in is multiplied multifold, returning as a continuous stream for the child beyond the school years.

Nutrition has always been a cornerstone of human development. Anthropologists have compared the development of human populations and have found that nutrition has a profound influence on fundamental aspects of the physical and cognitive development of humans. We have learnt that investing in nutrition is not just a matter of public health but also a strategy for economic advancement.

Abundant empirical evidence shows the impact of proper nutrition on a child's physical robustness while laying the groundwork for optimal brain development. The earliest years, particularly from pregnancy to age five, are critical for physical growth and cognitive formation. Yet the challenge does not end once children start school. For millions aged five to 15, adequate nutrition during the school day is essential for sustaining attention, improving learning and ensuring that the education system can translate schooling into a healthier, smarter and more productive workforce that drives economic growth.

Pakistan's child nutrition statistics for ages five to 15 present a grim picture. Of the roughly 63 million school-age children, about 38.3 per cent are stunted (low height for age), 28.5pc are wasted (low weight for height), and 17.5pc are underweight. Whatever the exact numbers, it is known that hunger and poor nutrition remain serious challenges for a large number of children. These figures show that much needs to be done to address the nutritional deficit and help unlock the potential of these young minds.

Adequate nutrition during the school day is essential.

One could argue that society has a responsibility to address poverty, reduce inequality, and ensure that no child goes hungry. While that ethical argument is important, there is also a more pragmatic and equally compelling perspective: the economic case.

Recognising the link between nutrition and learning, countries around the world have adopted school meal programmes to support both child nutrition and education. School meal programmes are a highly effective investment in human capital, generating measurable returns through improved education, health, and future productivity. In this sense, school meals are not merely a welfare intervention of filling the stomach; they also represent a structural change in the child's future.

A primary school cycle is typically five years (Grades 1-5) in Pakistan. This is the period where school meals would be most beneficial. In fact, it aligns well with how economists think about human capital investments. The investment period may be only five years, but the benefits extend across the child's entire working life (35 to 40 years). In other words, a short investment with a very long economic return — the proverbial butterfly effect. The World Food Programme estimates that every dollar invested in school feeding can generate between $7 and $35 in long-term economic benefits, depending on local conditions. Even setting aside these estimates, the economic logic remains compelling. If sustained nutrition during the primary school years were to raise lifetime productivity by even 5pc, the resulting increase in earnings and economic output would far exceed the modest cost of providing meals during those same five years.

With firsthand data from our work with school meal programme, I can say that providing one cooked meal for each school day to one child for five years costs around Rs70,000. Based on conservative productivity gain estimate, this investment spread over five years would generate nearly Rs900,000 over a working lifetime.

My back-of-the-envelope estimate tells me that even if we were to invest in nutrition for only 10pc of the children the GDP gain would generate around $400 billion in lifetime economic output. What begins as a simple daily meal in a village classroom thus becomes a powerful investment in the country's future productivity.

Economic logic is a no-brainer, and the moral case is undeniable. Investing in the nutrition of schoolchildren is one of the simplest, most practical steps we can take to strengthen the country's future workforce. As the old proverb reminds us, "The best time to act was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now."

PM approves estab. of SME facilitation centers at district level to boost exports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday approved the establishment of SME facilitation centres at the district level to boost the country's exports and directed to launch pilot projects in Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi and Quetta.

He said following the successful implementation of these centers, they will gradually be established in all districts to provide maximum awareness and guidance to citizens interested in setting up businesses.

In a meeting with delegation of exporters associated with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to present, at the earliest, a comprehensive plan for establishing a sustainable cold storage system to facilitate the export of perishable goods.

The meeting discussed progress on government initiatives aimed at promoting small and medium-sized businesses, as well as the challenges they face.

The prime minister said an amount of Rs. 300 billion had been allocated under the Export Finance Scheme for the SME sector and new exporters.

The allocated amount, he said will be exclusively reserved for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In this regard, EXIM Bank has already issued a circular.

The prime minister also approved the modernization and restructuring of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to promote Pakistani exports and align local industries with international export standards.

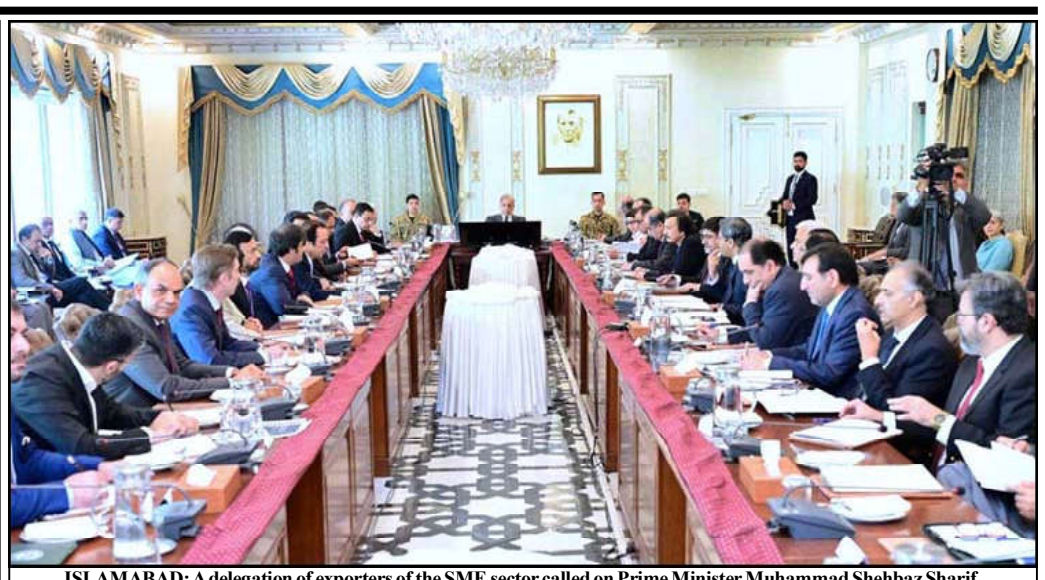
He said that small and medium-sized enterprises were the backbone of any country's economy, adding that providing facilities to increase exports by small and medium-sized enterprises was among the government's top priorities. The primary purpose of today's meeting is to facilitate exports for Pakistani small and medium-sized businesses, he added.

The prime minister directed that all possible measures should be taken to raise public awareness about establishing and running businesses.

The members of the delegation appreciated the government's initiatives to promote small and medium-sized businesses and presented proposals for further strengthening the SME sector.

The prime minister constituted a committee to review the practical and actionable proposals put forward by the delegation. The committee will submit a report to the prime minister regarding their implementation.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Ali Hassam Asghar, termed the prime minister's initiative a major step towards creating an enabling ecosystem for SMEs through improved access to finance.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of exporters of the SME sector called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting to review progress on SME financing and initiatives to enhance access to finance for SME exporters.

Petroleum minister meets Finnish delegation to boost trade, investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Monday held a meeting with a Finnish delegation led by Jarno Syrjälä, Deputy Minister for International Trade and Under-Secretary of State at Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to explore opportunities for enhancing bilateral cooperation and promoting Finnish investment in Pakistan.

The delegation included Wille Eerola, Honorary Consul General of Pakistan in Finland and Chairman of the Finland-Pakistan Business Council, along with representatives of leading Finnish and international companies, including Wärtsilä, Elematic and Casagrande Laboratories.

During the meeting, the federal minister briefed the delegation on the reforms being undertaken by the government in the petroleum sector, particularly initiatives aimed at deregulation, improving market efficiency and creating a more conducive environment for private-sector investment.

He highlighted the government's efforts to diversify Pakistan's energy mix and strengthen energy security through international partnerships and investment.

The minister also highlighted the potential of Pakistan's mineral sector and the government's commitment to accelerating its development by attracting foreign investment, introducing reforms and facilitating modern exploration and mining practices.

He emphasized that strengthening regulatory institutions and improving regulatory frameworks were important areas requiring continued efforts to ensure transparency, institutional capacity and investor confidence across the energy and minerals sectors.

Ali Malik welcomed Finnish companies' interest in Pakistan and encouraged them to explore investment opportunities and establish stronger business linkages with Pakistani counterparts.

He stressed that Pakistan was keen to benefit from Finnish expertise, technology and investment in energy, minerals and infrastructure development.

The Finnish side expressed its interest in expanding commercial engagement with Pakistan.

Jarno Syrjälä said that efforts were being made to bring more Finnish companies to Pakistan and encourage them to explore business and investment opportunities in the country.

Both sides discussed avenues for strengthening bilateral economic engagement and promoting business-to-business cooperation, with a shared resolve to translate mutual interest into concrete investment partnerships.

Finance minister reviews SME financing initiatives, SME Connect Portal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday chaired a meeting to review progress on initiatives aimed at expanding access to finance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly through the SME Connect Portal and export financing schemes to support SME exporters.

According to press release issued by finance ministry, the minister underscored the importance of expanding access to finance for SMEs, recognising their contribution to economic activity, investment and employment generation.

He emphasised the need to ensure that financing reaches a wider segment of businesses, particularly smaller and export-oriented enterprises, in line with the Prime Minister's vision of strengthening the SME sector and advancing export-led growth.

On the occasion, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) gave a presentation on the progress of the SME Connect Portal, launched on November 1, 2026, highlighting its role in facilitating access to financing and improving transparency in the application process.

The portal provides a central platform for SMEs to register their business profiles, submit their financing requirements and track the status of their requests. It also enables the monitoring of banks' responses and processing timelines.

Finance Minister emphasised that the portal would help establish greater visibility over the financing process and enable systematic monitoring of banks' performance against prescribed timelines. He highlighted the importance of comprehensive reporting on application status and banks' responses to support effective oversight.

The meeting discussed the portal as an important first step towards improving transparency and accountability in SME financing, while recognising that banks would continue to process applications through their respective systems and lending policies.

The minister also stressed the importance of facilitating access for SMEs with limited digital and financial literacy, including through bank branches, and called for further improvements towards a more integrated, end-to-end digital financing experience.

The Export-Import Bank of Pakistan (EXIM Bank) also briefed the participants on export financing initiatives. It was highlighted that an allocation of Rs. 300 billion under the short-term Export Finance Scheme had been earmarked exclusively for SMEs, providing dedicated financing support to meet their working capital requirements and facilitate export activity.

The discussion also covered measures to improve SME access to long-term financing and facilitate investment in export-oriented projects. Greater financing opportunities were considered important for supporting business expansion, investment and export activities, with implementation to be monitored to assess progress and uptake.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik held a meeting with a Finnish delegation led by H.E. Mr. Jarno Syrjälä, Deputy Minister for International Trade and Under-Secretary of State at Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Leghari invites Turkmenistan's minister of energy Annageldi Saparov to join CASA-1000

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Monday invited Turkmenistan's Minister of Energy, Annageldi Saparov to become part of the CASA-1000 project.

The Turkmenistan's minister called on the Federal Minister for Energy on Monday, where Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) power transmission project was a key focus of the meeting.

Both sides held detailed discussions on bilateral cooperation in the energy sector and regional grid connectivity.

Awais Leghari also shared that Pakistan has encouraged Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to explore extending the CASA-1000 transmission line to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The Federal Minister noted that future industrial and commercial activities in Gwadar will create an extraordinary surge in electricity demand. He therefore proposed that Iran and Turkmenistan explore enhancing electricity transmission capacity to Gwadar through the Iranian grid. A joint group of experts from both countries can deliberate on this proposal. He further stated that Pakistan is committed to integrating regional energy markets and providing affordable electricity. H e emphasized that economic and financial viability is essential for the success of projects like TAP and CASA-1000. This approach ensures that end consumers benefit directly.

The Federal Minister highlighted that Pakistan is currently surplus in electricity generation and is introducing a competitive energy market. He pointed out that the CASA-1000 project currently operates on a one-way electricity flow system. Converting it into a two-way flow will enable power exchange during mutual times of need. It will also make the project economically and financially more sustainable.

Regarding the TAP project, the Federal Minister stated that seven fundamental technical data sets are required for progress. Pakistan has already provided three of these data sets. However, the exchange of requisite technical information from Turkmenistan needs to be expedited.

Rs12b approved for Gadani Shipbreaking industry upgrade

GADANI (ANN): A Rs12 billion development project has been approved under the federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) to modernize the Gadani shipbreaking industry, improve workers' safety and provide essential facilities to local communities.

According to an official statement, the project, titled Modernization & Upgradation of Gadani Shipbreaking and Recycling Industry and Development of Allied Facilities (MUGSBRI), was approved following efforts by Balochistan Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi.

Project Director Saeed Umrani said the initiative includes a 30-bed hospital and trauma centre, estimated to cost Rs578.5 million, to provide healthcare and emergency treatment to industrial workers and residents.

A new school will also be constructed, while a 5-megawatt on-grid solar power system will be installed to improve energy availability and promote renewable energy.

The project further includes converting Balochistan Development Authority (BDA) shipbreaking plots into environmentally compliant green recycling yards, upgrading roads and industrial infrastructure, and establishing fire, rescue and workplace safety facilities.

An industrial waste management system will also be introduced to reduce pollution and ensure safer disposal of waste generated during ship dismantling.

Officials said the project aims to transform Gadani into a modern, safer and environmentally sustainable ship recycling hub while improving healthcare, education and employment-related conditions for workers and surrounding communities.

Shahid Rind, Bilal

Balochistan set to attract major investment

QUETTA (6 AM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister's Adviser on Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind and Balochistan Board of Investment and Trade (BBoIT) Vice Chairman Bilal Khan Kakar have said that Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti is committed to transforming Balochistan into a hub of domestic and international investment through improved business opportunities, trade promotion and economic development.

They expressed these views while addressing a networking luncheon hosted for journalists and social media influencers in connection with the Balochistan Investment and Trade Expo (BITE 2026), scheduled for November 18 and 19 in Quetta.

The event was attended by BBoIT Chief Executive Officer Abdul Manan, Balochistan Union of Journalists President Manzoor Ahmed, Chief Minister's Press Secretary Shaikh Abdul Razzaq, senior journalists and other participants.

Shahid Rind said the provincial government was working with relevant institutions and stakeholders to attract investors and promote Balochistan's economic potential. He emphasized the media's role in highlighting investment opportunities and presenting a positive image of the province.

He appreciated Bilal Khan Kakar's efforts to strengthen the Investment Board, saying investment opportunities in Balochistan had also been promoted among business communities in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

Rind said a major attraction of BITE 2026 would be its Made in Balochistan initiative, providing local manufacturers, small businesses, farmers and skilled workers an opportunity to showcase their products and explore national and international markets.

Bilal Khan Kakar said prominent industrialists and business representatives from different cities would attend the two-day expo, creating opportunities for local entrepreneurs to establish business partnerships and expand market access.

He stressed that encouraging entrepreneurship and self-employment among young people was essential for reducing dependence on government jobs and creating sustainable economic opportunities.

PSX gains over 300 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Monday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index gaining 309.07 points, a positive change of 0.17 percent, to close at 178, 182.95 points against 177, 873.88 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 1, 339.586 million shares, compared to 1, 042.810 million shares traded in the previous session. The traded value of the ready market stood at Rs32.584 billion, up from Rs31.001 billion a day earlier.

Meanwhile, total market capitalisation increased to Rs19.359 trillion from Rs19.336 trillion recorded in the previous session.

Out of 498 companies that traded in the ready market, 260 posted gains, 211 suffered losses, while 27 remained unchanged, reflecting a positive trend in the market.

WorldCall Telecom led the volume chart with 376.274 million shares, followed by LSE Financial Services with 136.512 million shares and Pervez Ahmed Company with 92.785 million shares.

Among the top gainers in the ready market, Khyber Textile Mills Limited surged by Rs85.67 to close at Rs1, 793.64, while Pakistan Services Limited advanced by Rs52.94 to settle at Rs1, 423.36.

Pakistan, Turkmenistan agree to expand bilateral trade, investment, economic cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Atif Ikram Sheikh, and Chairman of the Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce, Gurdov Mergen Meretdurdyevich have agreed to strengthen bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan through enhanced business cooperation, investment partnerships and regular exchanges of business delegations.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between the two business leaders in FPCCI house here, which focused on exploring new avenues of trade, investment and institutional collaboration between the business communities of the two brotherly countries.

Both sides also agreed to enhance cooperation between the FPCCI and the Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce, with particular emphasis on establishing stronger institutional linkages, facilitating business-to-business contacts and promoting joint investment initiatives.

During the meeting, Atif Ikram Sheikh highlighted the significant potential for expanding bilateral economic cooperation, particularly in energy, renewable energy, textiles, agriculture and pharmaceuticals.

He emphasized that Pakistan and Turkmenistan needed to take concrete and coordinated measures to translate their existing economic potential into tangible trade and investment opportunities.

President FPCCI proposed organizing joint investment forums and signing memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between business organizations of the two countries to provide a structured framework for long-term cooperation.

The FPCCI president stressed that regular exchanges of business delegations could play an important role in strengthening institutional cooperation and enabling entrepreneurs to identify viable business opportunities.

He urged the business communities of both countries to move forward with joint ventures and investment projects, adding that the exchange of market information, trade statistics and business intelligence could help identify new areas of mutual interest. Atif Ikram Sheikh assured the visiting delegation that the FPCCI would take comprehensive measures to connect Turkmenistan's business community with Pakistani entrepreneurs and facilitate direct business contacts.

Consistent industrial policy, structural reforms vital for economic revival: Zikria

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Muhammad Zikria Akbar Zia, on Monday urged for fixing its domestic economic structure, promoting industrialization and ensuring consistent long-term policies to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Speaking during a roundtable discussion titled ' Indo-US Economic Relations: Prospects and Opportunities for Pakistan ' hosted by the Institute of Strategic Institute Islamabad (ISSI) he observed that Pakistan's economic challenges largely stem from structural weaknesses, policy inconsistency and over-reliance on short-term financial arrangements. He emphasised that industrial projects require long-term planning, as investors need several years to establish production facilities and recover their investments, said a press release.

He strongly advocated a strategic partnership with China through joint ventures, technology transfer and collaboration with local manufacturers. He said Pakistan should attract Chinese companies to establish partnerships with domestic businesses rather than setting up completely independent operations.

Criticizing blanket subsidies and sector-specific incentives, he said these policies often benefit influential business lobbies instead of delivering relief to consumers or strengthening the wider economy.

He advocated replacing institutional subsidies with targeted income support for deserving households and ensuring a level playing field across industrial sectors. He also called for strengthening small and medium enterprises (SMEs), describing them as essential drivers of sustainable economic growth.

Genuine ease of doing business, he maintained, would become possible when small businesses could operate without excessive regulatory hurdles, high borrowing costs and policy uncertainty.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi presides over the meeting about Public Private Partnership Projects.

No compromise on quality of irrigation projects: Umrani

Provincial minister directs timely completion of development schemes, efficient water management and equitable distribution for agricultural needs

QUETTA (6 AM Report): Balochistan Irrigation Minister Mir Sadiq Umrani has directed officials to ensure the timely completion of all ongoing irrigation development projects, warning that no compromise would be tolerated on quality, transparency or implementation standards.

He issued the directives while chairing a departmental review meeting attended by Irrigation Secretary Sohail-ur-Rehman Baloch, senior officials and other concerned officers.

The meeting reviewed the Irrigation Department's overall performance, progress on development schemes, implementation challenges and future priorities.

Umrani emphasized that effective management of water resources, equitable distribution and adequate water supply for agricultural needs were essential for strengthening Balochistan's agricultural economy.

He directed officials to accelerate work on ongoing projects, address implementation bottlenecks and ensure that development schemes deliver practical benefits to farmers and local communities.

The minister stressed the need to modernize irrigation infrastructure and improve water management practices to enhance agricultural productivity and ensure sustainable utilization of available resources.

Participants also discussed measures to improve the existing irrigation system, strengthen departmental efficiency and develop future strategies to meet the province's growing agricultural water requirements.

Umrani reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to completing irrigation projects on schedule, improving departmental performance and promoting agricultural development through efficient and transparent management of water resources.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Sadiq Umrani discussing Departmental matters with Secretary Irrigation Sohail ur Rehman Baloch and other officers.



QUETTA: Secretary CMD Arshad Hussain Bugti meeting with Provincial Minister for Commodity Management Department Haji Noor Muhammad Dummar.

Commissioner

36 doctors, medical staff appointed in Naseerabad division

NASEERABAD (6 AM Report): Commissioner Naseerabad Division Salahuddin Noorzai has said that the appointment of 36 doctors and healthcare professionals will help overcome staff shortages in government hospitals and improve medical services across the division.

Addressing a ceremony to distribute appointment orders, the commissioner said the initiative reflected the efforts of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan to strengthen healthcare services, create employment opportunities and provide essential facilities to the public.

The newly appointed personnel include 25 medical officers, seven lady medical officers and four staff nurses. Divisional Director Health Dr Abdul Qadir Khosa was also present at the ceremony.

Noorzai said the provincial government was introducing healthcare reforms to ensure that quality medical treatment was available to citizens closer to their homes.

He directed the newly appointed doctors and nursing staff to report to their assigned duty stations, maintain regular attendance and perform their responsibilities with dedication and professionalism.

The commissioner emphasized that the government's objective was not merely to fill vacant positions but to ensure that new appointments translated into improved patient care and effective healthcare delivery.

He warned that negligence or failure to perform official duties would not be tolerated, directing health officials to ensure accountability and improve hospital performance.

Noorzai reiterated that the provincial administration was committed to strengthening public healthcare institutions and ensuring that the benefits of government initiatives reached the people of Naseerabad Division.

Restrictions on press freedom, economic exploitation of journalists unacceptable: Rehmat

QUETTA (ANN): National Party central leader and Deputy Parliamentary Leader in the Balochistan Assembly Mir Rehmat Saleh Baloch has said that press freedom is essential for democracy, declaring that the forced dismissal of journalists, economic exploitation of media workers, unofficial censorship and restrictions on freedom of expression are unacceptable.

In a statement, he announced the National Party's full support for the nationwide protest campaign launched on the call of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and the Balochistan Union of Journalists' (BUJ) protest camp and sit-in scheduled for November 23 and 24 outside Quetta Press Club.

Rehmat Saleh Baloch said his party had consistently supported freedom of the press, freedom of expression and the protection of journalists' rights.

He expressed concern over the dismissal of journalists and media workers, closure of television channels' bureau offices in Quetta, non-payment and delayed payment of salaries, and cases and arrests involving journalists.

He demanded the immediate reinstatement of dismissed media workers, clearance of outstanding salaries and other dues, protection of small newspapers in Balochistan and effective implementation of laws concerning journalists' safety.

The National Party leader criticized restrictions on freedom of expression, including measures under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), saying that legal proceedings and arrests affecting journalists undermined press freedom.

He said the closure of television bureau offices in Balochistan not only threatened journalists' livelihoods but also reduced opportunities for the province's issues and public concerns to receive national media coverage.

Baloch urged media organizations to protect employees' jobs, salaries and legal rights, while calling on the government to take journalists' charter of demands seriously and resolve their grievances through immediate dialogue.

He also condemned violence, threats and legal actions against journalists, describing such practices as contrary to democratic principles.

Reaffirming his party's support, Rehmat Saleh Baloch announced that National Party leaders and workers would participate in the BUJ protest on November 23 and 24 to express solidarity with the journalist community.

No negligence in healthcare services will be tolerated: DC Kohlu

KOHLU (6 AM Report): Deputy Commissioner Kohlu Abdul Hameed Zehri has said that providing quality healthcare facilities to the public is a top priority of the district administration, warning that negligence in patient care and hospital management will not be tolerated.

He made these remarks during a visit to District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Kohlu, where he inspected various departments and reviewed medical services, cleanliness and overall administrative arrangements.

Medical Superintendent Dr Asghar Marri briefed the deputy commissioner on the hospital's performance, available medical resources, treatment facilities and administrative matters.

During the visit, Abdul Hameed Zehri met doctors and healthcare staff, listened to their concerns and directed the hospital administration to take effective measures to resolve staff-related issues and improve patient services.

He emphasized that all available resources would be utilized to ensure timely treatment, address patients' difficulties and strengthen healthcare delivery at the local level.

The deputy commissioner expressed satisfaction with the efforts of Medical Superintendent Dr Asghar Marri in improving hospital services and administration. He directed the hospital management to maintain cleanliness, strengthen overall performance and continue improving medical facilities to ensure better healthcare services for the people of Kohlu.

ADC orders complete record of govt properties, taxes and rents

QUETTA (6 AM Report), September 16: Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Quetta Hafiz Muhammad Tariq has directed the concerned departments to compile and submit complete, verified records of Metropolitan Corporation properties, property taxes, rental agreements and outstanding dues to ensure transparency and effective management of public assets and revenue.

He issued the directives while chairing a meeting to review Metropolitan Corporation property taxes, rented buildings and related financial matters. Representatives of the Metropolitan Corporation, Local Government Department and Communications and Works (C&W) Department attended the meeting.

The meeting reviewed properties owned by the Metropolitan Corporation across Quetta, including Fire Brigade Plaza, along with rental income from commercial buildings and shops, property tax collections and outstanding payments.

Public welfare, timely completion of projects top priorities: DC Khalid

BARSHORE (6 AM Report): Deputy Commissioner Barshore Flight Lieutenant (Retd.) Khalid Shams has said that resolving public grievances, ensuring basic facilities and completing development projects on schedule remain the district administration's foremost priorities.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), led by former Member of the National Assembly and JUI Pishin District Ameer Maulana Kamaluddin.

The meeting discussed ongoing development projects, provision of essential services, rehabilitation of educational institutions and healthcare centres, and measures to improve public welfare across the district.

Khalid Shams said the district administration would continue its efforts to improve education, healthcare and infrastructure, ensuring that development initiatives deliver tangible benefits to local communities.

Maulana Kamaluddin and other delegation members appreciated the district administration's development efforts and expressed satisfaction with the deputy commissioner's open-door policy and measures to address public grievances.

The delegation particularly acknowledged initiatives aimed at restoring and making government schools and basic health centres functional, emphasizing the importance of education, healthcare and infrastructure development for public welfare.

The deputy commissioner assured the delegation that the administration would maintain close monitoring of development schemes, address public concerns and ensure the timely completion of projects.

Gwadar sewage treatment plants recycle wastewater for parks, green belts

GWADAR (6 AM Report): The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has made sewage treatment plants operational at key locations across the city, recycling wastewater for irrigation of public parks, green belts and other landscaped areas under the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan.

According to the GDA, the initiative aims to conserve water resources, reduce marine pollution and promote environmentally sustainable urban development through modern wastewater treatment technology. The authority said the project was being implemented in line with Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti's development vision to improve urban infrastructure and provide residents with a cleaner, greener and healthier environment.

DC Harnai calls meeting on security, smuggling and encroachments

HARNAI (6 AM Report): Deputy Commissioner Harnai Arshad Hussain Jamali has convened a meeting of the District Coordination Committee (DCC) on November 17 at 2 pm at the Deputy Commissioner's Office to review law and order, crime prevention, administrative affairs and public welfare measures.

According to the district administration, the meeting will discuss security arrangements for DIFTAC projects and institutions, interdepartmental coordination and timely uploading of departmental information to the Sigma Dashboard.

The agenda also includes enforcement of traffic regulations, action against illegal petrol pumps, non-custom-paid vehicles, smuggling networks and warehouses storing smuggled goods, electricity theft, encroachments on public roads and markets, and measures to discourage begging.

Representatives of FC 81 Wing Loralai Scouts, Police, intelligence agencies, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), QESCO, assistant commissioners and heads of district departments are expected to attend.

Deputy Commissioner Arshad Hussain Jamali has directed all concerned officials to attend the meeting with complete reports and preparations to facilitate effective decisions on security, law enforcement, good governance and public welfare.

Improving education standards, teachers' professional commitment essential: Zubina Mushtaq

CHAMAN (6 AM Report): Divisional Director Quetta Ms Zubina Mushtaq has emphasized that improving educational standards, encouraging students and ensuring teachers fulfill their professional responsibilities are essential for promoting quality education.

She expressed these views during visits to various government and private educational institutions in Chaman, where District Education Officer Ashok Kumar Rajput welcomed her and briefed her on educational activities and administrative matters.

During the visit, Zubina Mushtaq inspected the examination hall, training hall and vocational training centre at Government Boys Model High School Chaman, reviewing ongoing academic and training activities.

She also visited Government Girls High School, observed classroom teaching and assessed students' academic performance.

Dr Mushtaq Shah

Practical skills essential for sustainable dev.

KHUZDAR (6 AM Report): Balochistan University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) Khuzdar Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr Mushtaq Shah has said that sustainable development cannot be achieved without connecting theoretical knowledge with practical experience and modern technical skills.

Addressing the closing ceremony of a five-day training workshop for supervisors of the Irrigation Department's Technical Working Group, he emphasized the importance of collaboration among universities, government departments and development organizations to improve professional capacity and the quality of development projects in Balochistan.

The workshop was organized by the university's Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) under the Revival of Balochistan Water Resources Programme, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

Pashtun youth being overlooked in federal govt jobs: PkMAP

QUETTA (ANN): The Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) has expressed serious concern over the alleged exclusion of youth from Balochistan's Pashtun districts in federal government jobs, demanding transparent recruitment, merit-based selection and equal opportunities.

In a statement issued by its provincial secretariat, the party questioned recruitment procedures in the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), Pakistan Railways, Pakistan Television (PTV) and other federal institutions, alleging irregularities in shortlisting and quota allocation.

PkMAP said eligible candidates were reportedly being denied interview opportunities, while interview centres established in Gwadar and other distant cities imposed additional financial burdens on unemployed youth.

The party demanded publication of district-wise quotas, shortlisted candidates and selection criteria, along with interview centres in Quetta and other accessible locations.

It also called for an investigation into alleged appointments made through fake domicile certificates and urged authorities to address complaints from eligible applicants.

Highlighting unemployment, inflation and declining business activities in Pashtun districts, PkMAP warned that continued alleged discrimination could deepen frustration among young people.

The party urged elected representatives to protect employment rights and warned of peaceful, constitutional and democratic protests if its concerns remained unresolved. The allegations have not been independently verified.



QUETTA: Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani listening the problems of the people in his office.

QESCO announces power shutdowns in Quetta, Chaman

QUETTA (6 AM Report): Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) has announced scheduled power outages in different areas of Quetta and Chaman on November 17 and 18 for development work, shifting of electricity lines, installation of poles and essential maintenance.

According to a QESCO notification, the shutdown schedule is as follows:

November 17: PAF City, Samungli and Interconnector feeders of Quetta City Grid Station will remain shut from 11 am to 3 pm.

November 17 and 18: PTV, Stadium, Shahbaz Town, Mark Factory, Deba and GOR Colony feeders will experience outages from 7 am to 2 pm on both days.

November 18: Airport Road feeder of Sheikh Manda Grid Station will remain shut from 11 am to 3 pm. November 18: Electricity supply from Chaman Grid Station will be suspended from 10 am to 2 pm for maintenance and testing.

Anti-encroachment operations to continue in Sibi, violations will not be tolerated: AC

SIBI (6 AM Report): Assistant Commissioner Sibi and Bakhtiarabad Malik Bahadur Khan Bangulzai has said that anti-encroachment operations will continue without discrimination across the city to ensure smooth traffic flow, facilitate pedestrians and keep roads and footpaths free from illegal occupations.

He made these remarks while supervising an anti-encroachment operation conducted on the directives of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Deputy Commissioner Sibi Major (Retd.) Ilyas Kibzai.

The operation, led by the assistant commissioner, covered Liaquat Bazaar, Chakar Road, Nishtar Road and Jinnah Road, where goods illegally placed outside shops and on public footpaths were confiscated. Several shopkeepers were issued warnings, while fines were imposed on violators.

Transporters' legitimate issues to be resolved under law: DC Ayesha Zehri

KALAT (6 AM Report): Deputy Commissioner Kalat Engineer Ayesha Zehri has assured transporters that their legitimate concerns will be addressed in accordance with the law and relevant regulations, emphasizing that mutual consultation and cooperation are essential for improving transport services and facilitating passengers.

She expressed these views during a meeting with a transporters' delegation led by Haji Aziz Mughal, which discussed operational and administrative issues affecting the Kalat–Quetta transport service.

The delegation briefed the deputy commissioner on concerns regarding coaster operating schedules, issuance of new route permits and other difficulties faced by transport operators.

Ayesha Zehri said the district administration was committed to resolving public and transport-related issues and would consult the relevant departments and authorities to address the transporters' legitimate demands.

She emphasized that the transport sector played a vital role in providing travel facilities to citizens and that administrative matters should be resolved through mutual understanding and within the legal framework.

The deputy commissioner assured the delegation that necessary steps would be taken to address operational difficulties and improve transport arrangements for the convenience of passengers and operators. The delegation, comprising Mir Dhani Bakhsh Lehri, Abdul Samad, Abdul Qadir, Haji Dilmurad, Haji Sahibdad, Sunil Kumar and other transporters, thanked the deputy commissioner for hearing their concerns and expressed hope that practical measures would follow to improve transport services on the Kalat–Quetta route.



QUETTA: Director General Public Relation Balochistan Askar Khan presides over the meeting regarding KPIS.

Any Indian move to deprive Pakistan of water would be act of war: Gilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Monday said that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear state and demonstrated restraint during the recent Pakistan-India standoff, conveying to the world that it is a peace-loving country committed to regional stability.

However, he warned that any unilateral Indian action aimed at depriving Pakistan of its legitimate water rights would constitute an act of war.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Finnish Deputy Minister for International Trade Jarno Syrjälä and a high-level Finnish business delegation at Parliament House, Islamabad.

The Senate Chairman called for transforming 75 years of Pakistan-Finland diplomatic friendship into a dynamic and result-oriented economic partnership through enhanced trade, investment, technology transfer and joint ventures.

Describing the visit as a historic milestone and the first ministerial-level Finnish business delegation to Pakistan in 75 years, he highlighted Pakistan's economic potential and opportunities in telecommunications, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, mining, artificial intelligence and industrial development.

He proposed structured economic dialogue, a joint economic commission and exploration of a bilateral investment treaty to strengthen long-term cooperation.

Emphasising parliamentary diplomacy, Gilani called for regular parliamentary exchanges, stronger engagement between the Pakistan-Finland Parliamentary Friendship Groups and enhanced institutional cooperation.

He stressed that people-to-people contacts, educational and cultural exchanges, and closer business linkages were essential for building lasting relations.

He also acknowledged the Pakistani diaspora in Finland as an important bridge between the two countries and briefed the delegation on the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC).

Appreciating Finland's international leadership in education, innovation and technology, the Senate Chairman called for expanded cooperation in vocational training, nursing, artificial intelligence, robotics and digital skills.

He also invited Finnish expertise in renewable energy, climate resilience, water management, sustainable agriculture and mineral processing.



MULTAN: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan is briefed on the rehabilitation work of National Highway N-5 from Lodhran to Multan.



Secretary General of OIC H.E Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.

IG Muhammad Tahir

Traffic law compliance essential for road safety

QUETTA (6 AM Report): Inspector General of Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir has said that observing traffic laws is the responsibility of every citizen, as violations not only cause road accidents and endanger human lives but also result in the loss of valuable time and fuel.

Addressing a ceremony held to provide new vehicles and equipment to Quetta Traffic Police, he said the provincial police, with the financial support of the Balochistan government, were introducing modern technology to improve traffic management and ensure safer roads.

The IG formally handed over 15 new vehicles, 10 heavy motorcycles and four lifters to the City, Sariab and Saddar traffic zones of Quetta.

He said the new vehicles would be equipped with advanced cameras and monitoring equipment and connected to the Safe City Authority to strengthen traffic surveillance, improve traffic flow and address congestion.

Muhammad Tahir emphasized that an organized traffic system reflected citizens' discipline and respect for the law. He directed the Traffic Engineering Bureau and Traffic Police to adopt a coordinated strategy to resolve traffic problems and facilitate commuters.

Appreciating traffic personnel for performing their duties under challenging weather conditions, he urged citizens to cooperate with police and strictly follow traffic regulations.

Earlier, DIG Quetta Imran Shaukat briefed the participants on the performance, existing challenges and operational requirements of the Traffic Police.

The ceremony was attended by Additional IG and Commandant Balochistan Constabulary Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmed, Transport Secretary Muhammad Hayat Kakar.

Kamal stresses complete polio eradication

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal has stressed that progress made in the fight against polio would remain meaningless until the virus is completely eradicated from the country.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Sindh Chief Secretary Syed Asif Haider, where matters relating to polio eradication, routine immunization and child health were discussed in detail.

The meeting emphasized timely birth registration of children, vaccination coverage and strengthening environmental surveillance to ensure effective monitoring of the poliovirus.

The participants also discussed the provision of immunization services at 114 basic health units across Sindh and stressed the need for effective measures to address malnutrition and child development challenges.

The health minister said Pakistan had made considerable progress in its fight against polio, but sustained efforts and coordinated action were essential to achieve complete eradication of the disease.

Justice must not be delayed, citizens' rights must be protected: Governor

QUETTA (6 AM Report): Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has said that access to justice is a fundamental constitutional right of every citizen, emphasizing that unnecessary delays in resolving public grievances amount to a denial of justice.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Provincial Ombudsman Saadatullah Khan Bazai at Governor House Quetta. Principal Secretary Abdul Nasir Dotani was also present.

The meeting reviewed pending complaints, the performance of the Ombudsman's institution and measures to strengthen transparency, accountability and public service delivery in government departments.

Governor Mandokhail directed the Provincial Ombudsman to prioritize the disposal of pending complaints and cases and initiate regular inspections of government departments to assess administrative performance, service delivery and public grievances.

He said an effective Ombudsman's institution played a vital role in protecting citizens' rights, promoting good governance and ensuring accountability in public offices.

The governor emphasized that citizens should not be forced to make repeated visits to government offices to obtain their legitimate rights, adding that timely and impartial resolution of complaints would strengthen public confidence in state institutions. He also directed that all regional Ombudsman offices strictly observe official working hours, improve their responsiveness and submit detailed monthly performance reports to the Provincial Ombudsman's Office for regular monitoring and evaluation.

Governor Mandokhail urged district administrations to extend full cooperation to regional Ombudsman offices to remove administrative obstacles and facilitate the prompt resolution of public complaints.

He reiterated that

Tribal traditions must be respected, exploitative practices reformed: Buledi

QUETTA (6 AM Report): Balochistan Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi has said that his criticism of exploitative practices within the tribal and Sardari systems was never intended to disrespect tribal traditions, elders or any individual, emphasizing that constitutional and legal reforms are essential to eliminate social injustice, discrimination and outdated practices.

Clarifying his recent remarks in the Balochistan Assembly regarding the tribal system, Buledi said his intention was to highlight practices that promote prejudice, hatred, violence and social divisions rather than criticize the positive traditions and cultural values of tribal society.

The provincial minister rejected interpretations by certain sections of the media suggesting that his references to public grievances and historical or political personalities amounted to a justification for rebellion.

He categorically clarified that he had neither supported nor justified rebellion, violence or any unconstitutional action on the grounds of public deprivation, maintaining that his position was firmly based on the supremacy of Pakistan's Constitution, national unity and peaceful democratic reforms.

Buledi said certain outdated and exploitative practices associated with the tribal and Sardari systems encouraged discrimination, tribal extremism and social inequality, undermining democratic values and fundamental citizenship rights.

He emphasized that while the positive aspects of tribal traditions deserved respect and preservation.

Global recognition of PM, Field Marshal a pride for Pakistan: Syedaal Nasar

ISLAMABAD (6AM Report): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar has said that the international recognition of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir is a matter of pride for Pakistan, reflecting their leadership, diplomatic efforts and contributions towards promoting regional peace and protecting national interests.

According to a statement issued by the Senate Secretariat's Media Directorate, Nasar congratulated both leaders on reportedly securing a joint top position in a list of the world's 500 most influential Muslims, describing the recognition as an acknowledgement of their leadership and services.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir had played significant roles in strengthening Pakistan's international standing, promoting regional stability, reducing tensions and advancing diplomatic engagement.

The deputy chairman maintained that their strategic vision and coordinated efforts had helped project a positive image of Pakistan at regional and international forums.

Emphasizing the importance of cooperation between political and military leadership, Nasar said national unity, institutional coordination and a shared vision were essential for economic development, political stability and safeguarding national interests.

He expressed confidence that continued cooperation and effective policymaking would help Pakistan overcome challenges and move towards sustainable progress and prosperity. Nasar extended his congratulations and best wishes to both leaders, expressing hope that they would continue contributing to Pakistan's development, stability and international standing.

Condolences continue for CM Bugti's aunt on third day

DERA BUGTI (6 AM Report): Condolences and Fateha continued for the third consecutive day at Pakistan House in North Dera Bugti following the death of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti's aunt, who was also the mother of former provincial assembly member Mir Tariq Bugti.

Prominent personalities, tribal elders, government officials and people from different walks of life visited Pakistan House to express their grief and extend heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

The visitors offered Fateha for the departed soul and prayed for her forgiveness, elevation of ranks in the hereafter and strength and patience for the grieving family.

ECP appoints two official affairs spokespersons

ISLAMABAD (APP): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has appointed Additional Director General Nadeem Qasim as its spokesperson for local government elections and Director MCO Duriya Amir as spokesperson for overall official affairs, aiming to streamline communication and provide information on the commission's activities, according to notifications issued by the ECP on Monday.

Under the notification, Mr Qasim will serve as the spokesperson on matters relating to local government elections, while MS Duriya Amir will handle media communication and provide information on the commission's overall official affairs.

The appointments are part of the ECP's arrangements for managing its official communications and keeping the media informed about its activities and decisions.

N-5 Lodhran-Multan road project to be completed in six weeks: Aleem Khan

MULTAN (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday announced that the N-5 Lodhran-Multan road project would be completed within the next six weeks, providing improved travel facilities to the people of South Punjab, particularly residents of Lodhran and Bahawalpur.

Talking to the media, the federal minister congratulated the people of South Punjab on the expected completion of the project, saying commuters had been facing considerable difficulties due to the poor condition of the highway.

He appreciated the efforts of the National Highway Authority (NHA) in completing the project and said its completion would provide significant relief to the public.

He added that streetlights would also be installed along the highway while green belts and other beautification measures would be introduced to improve its overall appearance.

Regarding the Layyah-Taunsa Bridge project, Abdul Aleem Khan said the bridge had already been constructed, while the approach roads on both sides were incomplete.

He said work on the connecting roads was now being completed.

Speaking about the creation of new provinces, the federal minister said his party had a clear stance in favour of establishing both South Punjab and Bahawalpur provinces.

He said the demands of the people should be addressed and the people of Bahawalpur should also be accommodated if they wanted a separate province. He stressed the need for the establishment of both provinces.



Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Jarno Syrjala, Deputy Minister for International trade, under-state secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland along with delegation at Parliament House, Islamabad.

Every penny of public funds must be accounted for: Babar Khan

QUETTA (6 AM Report): Balochistan Communications and Works (C&W) Secretary Babar Khan has said that every penny of public funds must be accounted for, emphasizing that transparency, financial discipline and accountability are essential for the responsible utilization of government resources.

He made these remarks while chairing a meeting of the Departmental Audit Committee (DAC), attended by Director Audit Works Balochistan Abid Kakar, chief engineers, superintending engineers, executive engineers of roads and buildings, and other concerned officials. The committee reviewed financial and administrative audit objections individually, examining departmental records, documentary evidence and explanations submitted by the relevant officers.

Several audit paras were settled following the submission of satisfactory records and explanations, while decisions on the remaining objections were deferred pending further verification of supporting documents.

Babar Khan stressed that public funds were a trust and must be utilized strictly in accordance with financial rules and regulations. He warned that no compromise would be tolerated on transparency, accountability or financial discipline.

He directed departmental officers to take audit observations seriously, provide complete records promptly and submit evidence-based responses to avoid unnecessary delays.

The secretary emphasized that effective audit procedures were essential for strengthening institutional accountability, preventing financial irregularities and improving departmental performance.

Gas pipeline damaged in Qta, supply to Mastung, Kalat suspended

QUETTA (6 AM Report): Gas supply to Mastung, Kalat and surrounding areas has been suspended after a 16-inch-diameter main supply pipeline of the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) was damaged during road construction work by the National Highway Authority (NHA) in Quetta.

According to a media alert issued by SSGC, NHA officials informed the company that the main gas pipeline had been damaged during construction activities.

Following the incident, SSGC dispatched a technical team to assess the situation, identify the affected section of the pipeline and determine the extent of the damage.

The company said gas supply to Mastung, Kalat and adjoining areas had been temporarily suspended as a result of the damage.

SSGC officials stated that repair work would begin once security clearance was obtained and the nature and extent of the damage had been assessed.

The company has not yet announced a definite timeframe for restoring gas supply to the affected areas.

BA erupts over flour prices, extortion & department mergers

QUETTA (ANN): The Balochistan Assembly on Monday witnessed a heated debate over rising flour prices, alleged extortion of transporters, the reported abduction of a minority girl from Sibi, restructuring of government departments and delays in responding to lawmakers' questions.

Presiding over the session, Speaker Captain (Retd.) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai issued directives for reports on administrative matters and referred several issues to relevant committees.

Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove informed the House that the Sindh government had provided information concerning the alleged abduction of Bandia Kumari from Sibi. According to the information received, the girl reportedly converted to Islam and married of her own choice in Larkana. The claims were not independently verified in the information provided.

Mir Rehmat Saleh Baloch moved a privilege motion against the Health Department for failing to answer assembly questions submitted in 2025 despite the Speaker's subsequent directions. The motion was referred to the relevant committee.

The House also offered prayers for Major Omar Minhas and Havildar Adnan. Question Hour was postponed due to the absence of the Livestock Minister, prompting MPA Zabid Ali Reki to protest ministers' repeated absence.

The Speaker said the matter would be taken up with the Chief Minister.

Responding to a notice by Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman regarding rising flour prices, Food Minister Haji Noor Muhammad Khan Dummar said deputy commissioners had been directed to ensure flour sales at official rates. He claimed prices in Balochistan remained lower than elsewhere in Pakistan but acknowledged that government wheat stocks were unavailable.

MPA Ghazala Gola raised the issue of naming a football ground in Sohbatpur after her father, who she said had donated the land. Minister Mir Saleem Khosa referred to the prescribed naming procedure, while the Speaker directed the Deputy Commissioner Sohbatpur to appear before the House.

Parliamentary Secretary Wali Noorzai introduced a bill concerning non-formal education, which was referred to the relevant standing committee.

The Balochistan Whistleblower Bill was returned to the Select Committee after MPA Asad Baloch opposed the proposed legislation, arguing that it could create social disputes and conflict with local traditions.

Former Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch expressed concern over the abolition and merger of provincial departments, saying employees faced uncertainty and the Assembly had not been consulted.

JUI-f vows to defend Madrasas, Balochistan's resource rights: Wasey

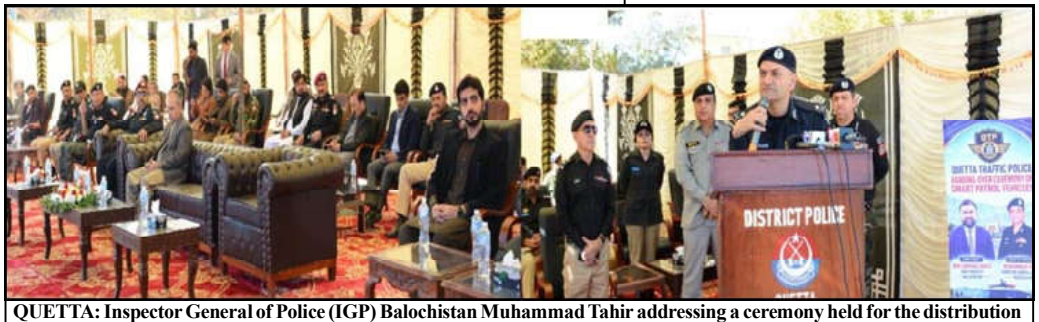
QUETTA (ANN): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Balochistan chief Senator Maulana Abdul Wasey has vowed to continue the party's peaceful and constitutional struggle to protect the independence of religious seminaries, safeguard the rights of Balochistan's people over natural resources and oppose alleged political victimization.

Addressing a joint meeting of the party's provincial executive committee and parliamentary members at its Quetta secretariat, he announced that provincial organizational tours would begin on November 17 to strengthen public engagement and mobilize party workers.

Provincial Secretary General Agha Mahmood Shah presented the meeting's agenda, while committees comprising party officials and lawmakers were formed to coordinate district visits, public gatherings and organizational activities.

The meeting discussed proposed legislation concerning madrasa registration, the Mines and Minerals Act, law and order, economic difficulties and alleged politically motivated cases against party leaders.

Maulana Abdul Wasey expressed concern over what he described as attempts to undermine the autonomy of religious seminaries and distance their administrators from JUI-F.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Balochistan Muhammad Tahir addressing a ceremony held for the distribution of new vehicles to all three zones of Quetta Traffic Police, namely City, Sariab, and Saddar, as part of efforts to improve traffic management.

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