

Daily The Spokesman

RAWALPINDI



MPA Jam Mehtab's vehicle attacked in Ghotki

GHOTKI: A vehicle carrying Sindh Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Jam Mehtab Hus-sain Dahar was attacked in Ghotki, As per details, the incident occurred when unknown assailants opened fire on the MPA's convoy in Khenjo area, resulting in the martyrdom of his guard and injuring three others. Police officials have confirmed that the MPA's guard was killed in the attack, while three others sustained injuries.



'Murree development project worth Rs4.5b launched on CM Maryam's instructions

Director General of the Walled City of Lahore Authority Kamran Lashari Sunday disclosed that the Punjab government has initiated a Rs4.5 billion project in Murree aimed at revamping the hill station's infrastructure to attract tourists, which will be completed within a year and a half under the direct supervision of the chief minister.

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Meeting for Appreciation

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met FIA and IB officials who nabbed notorious gang leader involved in human trafficking on Sunday.



Photo: PID

PM commends FIA, IB for busting main human trafficking gang

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday appreciated the authorities and officials of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) for nabbing the main ringleader of a gang involved in notorious human trafficking.

During a meeting with the authorities and officials of the FIA and IB in the presence of ministers and interior secretary, and broadcast live on national TV channels, the prime minister expressed the hope that with the relentless and worthy efforts undertaken by these agencies, the obnoxious practice of human trafficking would end forever.

He noted with appreciation the arrest of Usman Jajja involved in numerous human trafficking cases and said "the black business of human trafficking has earned bad name for Pakistan while a number of nationals lost their lives in boats capsized

incidents near Italy and Morocco which also created huge embarrassment for the country abroad."

The prime minister said that he called a meeting with all the authorities and officers to convey appreciation on his part and on behalf of the government and the people.

He also urged the authorities and officers to gird up their loins and raise the country's name by carrying out their official responsibilities with dedication.

The prime minister also awarded appreciation shields and cheques to different officials who took part in the operations to bust the gangs.

During the meeting, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and secretary Interior briefed the prime minister about the performance of the agencies.

The director generals FIA and IB also briefed the prime minister about the arrest of gang leaders, operators and facilitators involved in the human trafficking.

Sacrifice of five brave souls in the Nushki District Attack

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: On 16 March of 2025, a vehicle borne suicide bomber exploded himself on a security forces convoy in Nushki District.

Resultantly, five brave sons of soil embraced shahadat; three security forces personnel and two innocent civilians.

Shuhada include Havildar Manzoor Ali (Age: 38 years, resident of District Nawab Shah), Havildar Ali Bilawal (Age: 39 years, resident of District Naseer Abad), Naik Abdul Raheem (Age: 34 years, resident of District Badin), Civilian Driver Jalal ud Din (resident of District Quetta) and

Civilian Driver Muhammad Naem (resident of District Kharan).

In the ensuing sanitization operation, the terrorists were pursued and after intense fire exchange, three terrorists were effectively neutralized by the security forces.

Sanitization operations in the area would continue and perpetrators of this heinous and cowardly act will be brought to justice.

Security forces of Pakistan, in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers and valiant civilians further strengthen our resolve.

Three FC personnel, two civilians martyred in BLA attack on FC convoy in Nushki

Bureau Report

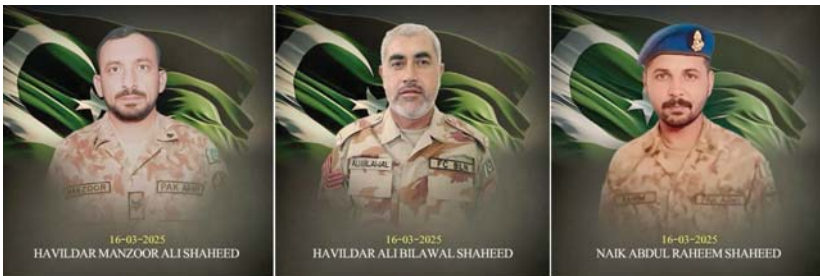
QUETTA: Terrorists belonging to the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) on Sunday attacked an FC convoy while it was on its way from Nushki to Taftan on the Nushki-Dalbandin highway, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

The intensity of the blast could be gauged from the fact that it was heard several miles away.

Sources told the media that the terrorists detonated explosives near the bus carrying the FC personnel.

However, security forces killed three terrorists besides a suicide bomber in retaliation.

Three FC personnel and two civilians also lost their



lives in the attack.

Sources informed that the forces had cordoned off the area and blocked all the routes through which the terrorists could escape.

The police said the injured were rushed to a local hospital, where two were reported to be in critical condition till last reports came in.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in his message,

while strongly condemning the terror attack, expressed profound grief and shock over the loss of innocent lives in the incident.

He prayed to the Almighty Allah to grant the deceased the highest place in Jannah besides patience to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss.

The prime minister said that such attacks could not shake the government's

determination to fight terror.

Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi also strongly condemned the blast in Nushki.

In his message, he offered his condolences to the bereaved families, besides praying for the fast recovery of those injured. "We share the grief of those who have lost their near and dear ones in the blast today. Targeting innocent people is a height

of barbarity," he commented.

He went on to say that the enemy country is trying to destabilise the country. "Such cowardly acts cannot dent the resolve of the nation to fight terror," he added.

Strongly condemning the attack, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti said the perpetrators of the crime would be brought to justice. "We will ensure that those responsible for the incident are given exemplary punishment. Such cowardly acts cannot dent our resolve. Terrorists will find no place to hide," and expressed the government's resolve to enforce the writ of the state come what may.

"This war will continue till the elimination of the last terrorist."

KP chief minister opposes expulsion of Afghan refugees

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has strongly opposed the policy of expelling Afghan refugees from the province, calling it an inhumane act worse than the violation of human dignity.

He asserted that he would act according to his policies and traditions, warning that criticism of KP's police for its counterterrorism efforts would not be tolerated.

Speaking at a press conference at the Chief Minister House, Gandapur revealed that when he assumed office, the provincial treasury had funds for only 15 days' worth of salaries.

However, his administration increased tax revenue by 55% without imposing new taxes and repaid Rs50 billion in debt without borrowing a single rupee, he added.

Gandapur stated that Rs30 billion had been added to the province's endowment fund and that ongoing hydropower projects would generate 500 megawatts of electricity by 2028. He emphasised that providing cheap electricity to industries would create employment opportunities.

RAW behind terrorism, no major operation needed in Balochistan: Rana Sana

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Sunday ruled out the necessity of a large-scale military operation in Balochistan, stating that intelligence-based operations are already underway to eliminate terrorist threats.

Speaking to the media in Faisalabad, Sanaullah reiterated that Pakistan's security forces were conducting daily operations against militants, ensuring that those involved in terrorist activities were being neutralized.

He stressed that the country's armed forces had successfully



thwarted numerous attacks, demonstrating their capability to handle security challenges without the need for a grand operation.

Five passengers dead as vehicle plunges into gorge in AJK



Bureau Report

AJK: At least five passengers lost their lives, whereas four others sustained injuries as a vehicle plunged into gorge in Haveli Azad Kashmir.

As per details, the incident occurred when the passenger vehicle slipped on the icy road and fell into the gorge, leaving five dead and four others injured.

According to rescue sources, the Rawalpindi-bound vehicle was traveling Kahuta when the horrific incident occurred, the dead bodies and injured have been transferred to nearby hospital.



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❖ Nationality ❖ Business Immigration

❖ Family Law ❖ Crime Law

❖ Road Traffic Offences



PM Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq's vision for a robust local government system in Azad Kashmir

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while expressing his firm resolve to make local government bodies strong, has said that a robust and fully empowered LG system was key to empowering people at the grass-roots level.

The PM said this while addressing an Iftar dinner hosted by Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore in honor of local government representatives of Azad Kashmir.

Referring to his constitutional duty to strengthen and promote local government institutions, the PM assured the LG representatives of his full support and cooperation saying that "There will be no compromise on the LG representatives' dignity and honor".

Citing constitutional provisions, the PM said, "As per the constitution of Azad Kashmir there are two governments, one formed through the Legislative Assembly soon after the general elections and the other through repre-



sentatives elected in elections held at City, District and Union Council level". "We are part and parcel of one another", he said, adding that we are

intrinsically connected to each other. In his clear-cut message to miscreants who are trying to weaken the state, the PM stated that the State

will not yield to the coercive strategies employed by those attempting to undermine it.

Referring to the fast changing

regional scenario, the PM said, "National security demands that we place the needs of the country and the nation above our personal interests".

The PM Haq made it clear that the government will not tolerate any narratives that are anti-military or anti-state. "Those involved in anti-State activities will be dealt with an iron hand", he remarked. He said that "we all need to realize the fact that when there is a state, there is politics".

The iftari dinner was attended by government ministers, mayors and hundreds of district councilors and union council chairmen from all over Azad Kashmir including Waqar Ahmed Noor, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Ahmed Raza Qadri, Sardar Aamir Altaf, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Sardar Muhammad Hussain, Chaudhry Arshad, Chaudhry Javed Iqbal Badhanvi, Mian Abdul Waheed, Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Chaudhry Aamir Yasin, Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Zafar Malik, Dewan Ali Chughtai, Chaudhry Aamir Yasin, Mrs. Taqdis Gilani Javed Butt, Chaudhry Rashid, Sardar Fahim Rabbani, Advisor to the Government Ahmed Saghir, Mayor Municipal Corporation Bagh Major (R) Abdul Qayyum Baig and others.

Protest

LAHORE: Christian's community hold a protest in favor of their demands outside press club, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Sardar Attique reflects on the historic role of the Mirwaiz Family in Kashmir's struggle for identity

Abdul Majeed Tahir



MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the candle lit by national celebrities and leaders like Mirwaiz Kashmir Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf Shah is being held by Kashmiri youth today and they are keeping this candle lit and shining at the cost of their lives. In a message on the death anniversary of former President of Azad Kashmir and former President of Muslim Conference Mirwaiz Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf Shah, he said that the Mirwaiz family has played a historic role in promoting Islamic values in Kashmir and restoring the survival and restoration of the Islamic identity of the state. The social services of this family cannot be ignored in any way. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf Shah challenged the usurping forces from the platform of the Muslim Conference during the Dogra era and accomplished the historic feat of uniting the Muslims of Kashmir with his ideology of Pakistan. He also had to migrate in this struggle. He said that even today, the Mirwaiz family is leading the freedom movement in Srinagar. India has failed to suppress the voice of truth and honesty despite using all its might. The voices rising from the Jama Masjid are challenging India. He said that Mirwaiz Kashmir Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf was a religious scholar, politician, and interpreter of the Quran who provided political and religious guidance to the Kashmiri nation. The late Mirwaiz also played a vital role in the initial construction and formation of the independent region as the President of Azad Kashmir.

Prof. Dr. Nadeem Haider Bukhari Assigned Charge of VC, UAJK

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Chancellor of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) has assigned the charge of Vice Chancellor, UAJK, to Prof. Dr. Nadeem Haider Bukhari, the senior-most Meritorious Professor and Dean of the university. He will hold this position until the appointment of a regular Vice Chancellor. Prof. Dr. Nadeem Haider Bukhari is a distinguished Meritorious Professor at UAJK, renowned for his outstanding contributions to English and Linguistics. He earned his PhD from the UK in record time and has played a pivotal role in launching the PhD program in Linguistics at the university. Under his leadership, over 20 PhD scholars and 52 MPhil graduates have successfully completed their research.

This appointment comes as Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, Vice Chancellor, UAJK, proceeds on full-paid leave from March 17, 2025, to June 2, 2025. To ensure continuity in the university's academic and administrative affairs, Dr. Nadeem Haider Bukhari has been assigned the charge under Section 10 (2) of the University of AJK Act, 1985.



Important meeting of Hyderabad Police Officers under SSP Adeel Hussain Chandio's Chairmanship

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: An important meeting of Hyderabad police officers was held under the chairmanship of SSP Hyderabad Adeel Hussain Chandio at Police Headquarters Conference Hall. The meeting was attended by SDPOs, SHOs, DSPs, and other senior officials from across the district, including DSP Latifabad Gul Hassan Thebo, DSP Cantt Dr. Safiullah, In-charge DIB Junaid Abbasi, SSP's Reader Inspector Ashfaq Bhatti, Head Clerk Naved Samejo, and In-charge RRF.

Addressing the meeting, SSP Adeel Hussain Chandio said that he has once again been entrusted with the leadership of Hyderabad police and is familiar with most of the officers. He emphasized the need for a joint strategy to resolve public issues and curb crime effectively. He highlighted that the meeting's agenda included introduction, crime, organized crime, wanted and absconding criminals, and investigation matters.

The SSP identified motorcycle theft and snatching as the district's biggest issue and directed that a comprehensive strategy be formulated for its prevention and the arrest of those involved. He stressed that immediate registration of FIRs in such cases must be ensured without any delay.

He also directed DSPs to personally monitor investigations, reduce pending cases, and oversee patrolling and checking activities in their respective areas with full dedication.

In conclusion, SSP Adeel Hussain Chandio made it clear that the performance of officers will be regularly evaluated, and only those with good performance will be considered for long-term postings.

'Hope School'—a ray of hope for poor, children

Rafiullah Mandokhel

ZHOB: The United Nations recognizes education as a fundamental human right for every child. Moreover, Article 25-A of the Constitution also guarantees the right to free and compulsory education for children between the ages of five and sixteen.

Unfortunately, Balochistan—Pakistan's poverty-hit province, has a high percentage of out-of-school children due to insufficient educational budget, lack of facilities, poverty, and gender inequity.

In fact, education has always been a cornerstone of human development. Its significance has grown exponentially in this modern era of science and technology, but due to high infla-



tion rates and a lack of facilities; children, particularly in rural areas, are

still deprived of their basic right to education.

Luckily, an educational institution called 'Hope Schooling System' has recently been established in the Walma area on the outskirts of the Zhob district in the northern part of Balochistan.

More than half of the children getting education here are orphans or those whose hand-to-mouth parents are unable to afford the educational expenses.

Abdullah Sherani, the principal of 'Hope Schooling System', says when orphans, destitute, and poor children are not provided free education, it results in the deprivation of their fundamental right, and an increase in the already alarming drop-out rate.

PRGMEA urges FBR to act against EFS misuse instead of penalizing SMEs

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ready-made Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) has strongly opposed the recent amendments to the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS), warning they will harm the apparel sector, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

PRGMEA former chairman Ijaz Khokhar urged the Federal Board of Revenue to take strict action against companies that misused the EFS facility instead of penalizing the entire export sector. He emphasized that SME exporters are already struggling and that delaying these amendments would help prevent further damage.

"A major concern is the reduced utilization period for imported raw materials, now capped at nine months, with



extensions requiring board committee approval." The former chairman argued that apparel production involves multiple steps, including designing, sourcing, manufacturing, and ship-

ping. Such a restrictive time frame will make it difficult for exporters to meet commitments.

"Another issue is the requirement of a bank guarantee for enhanced

face value, which disproportionately affects SMEs. Many lack the financial resources to secure such guarantees, potentially barring them from essential export facilitation benefits, he said, adding this policy limits their ability to expand into international markets.

The amendments introduced through SRO 301(I)/2025 will weaken Pakistan's competitiveness in apparel exports, he said.

Ijaz Khokhar highlighted that the industry is already struggling with rising production costs, energy shortages, and logistical challenges. Additional regulatory burdens will only worsen these issues, threatening jobs and reducing export potential. He noted that global buyers are highly sensitive to delivery timelines, and bureaucratic delays could result in lost orders.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:54 am
Zohr	12:17 pm
Asr	4:33 pm
Maghrib	6:16 pm
Isha	7:39 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

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Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

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CDA	9221334-43
Met Office	9208301-04
RDA	9250360-6
TMA	5555864
Cantonment Board	5770886
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

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Water Tanker Service	9204654
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G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9266316
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9271579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	9272249
Wasa Water Tank	0331-5022125

Chairperson (PSBA) MNA Malik Afzal Khokhar Visits Sahulat Bazar

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Chairperson Punjab Sahulat Bazar's authority, MNA Malik Muhammad Afzal Khokhar visited on Sunday Sahulat stalls in Model Bazar at Toba Tek Singh. He inspected sale of sugar and flour on subsidized price and questioned the purchasers about the availability of both commodities and about the attitude of the staff deputed for sale of both items. He also examined cleanliness, complaint cell functioning and the camp established for senior citizens. He reviewed the home delivery system in the Sahulat Bazar and took feed back from the customers about the provision of good quality commodities. He told reporters that chief minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was giving top priority to the provision of relief to the people in Holy month of Ramadan.

Eid preparations shift into high gear in twin cities

ISLAMABAD: As the holy month of Ramadan draws near to a close, Eid preparations have shifted into high gear in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The streets were abuzz with activity, and the festive atmosphere was palpable. Residents were thronging markets and shopping centers to purchase new clothes, shoes, and accessories for the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations. The city administrations have also swung into action, with sanitation teams working to ensure that the streets and markets are clean and tidy for the Eid celebrations. Kosar Tareen a local resident said "I'm excited to buy new clothes and shoes for my family and Eid is a time for celebration and joy, and I love the festive atmosphere in the markets."

Nawaz Sharif named patron-in-chief of Lahore Authority for Heritage Revival

Bureau Report

LAHORE: PML-N President Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz chaired a high-level meeting focused on restoring and preserving Lahore's historical heritage. A new authority, the Lahore Authority for Heritage Revival (LAHR), has been established to oversee the city's restoration efforts. Nawaz Sharif will serve as the Patron-in-Chief of LAHR's steering committee, while a sub-functional committee comprising relevant officials has also been formed. It was decided in the meeting that encroachments around Lahore's historical sites will be identified and removed. PMLN supremo Nawaz Sharif directed authorities to provide alternative locations and compensation for businesses affected by encroach-

ment removal. A comprehensive plan for the restoration of Lahore's heritage areas has been requested. The city will be divided into six zones for simultaneous restoration work. Underground shifting of electric wires on Mall Road is progressing rapidly to enhance its aesthetic appeal. Five locations in the city have been identified for underground parking projects. Proposals for restoring the original structure of Neela Gumbad are under review. Circular Road, Baghichian, and old drainage systems will be restored to their original condition. Maryam Nawaz expressed displeasure over encroachments around Circular Road and historic city gates, ordering their removal. A plan is under consideration to develop a pedestrian pathway from Shah Alam Market to Bhatti Gate.



Major historical landmarks, including Lahore Fort, the tombs of Jahangir and Noor Jahan, Shalimar Gardens, and Kamran's Baradari, will also be restored. Nawaz Sharif emphasized the importance of preserving Lahore's historical

identity, stating: "Old Lahore is incredibly beautiful and must be restored to its original form. Preserving our lost heritage is a national duty." He further compared the initiative to European cities, saying: "Even after centuries,

European nations have maintained their old castles and buildings. Destroying our national heritage is a sign of backwardness." Maryam Nawaz reaffirmed that "encroachments will no longer be allowed to ruin cities. We are working on the restoration of old Lahore, and in a few years, people will see a transformed city." Lahore's historical gates will be restored to their original state. The city has at least 115 buildings classified as historical heritage sites. Out of 75 colonial-era buildings, restoration work is ongoing on 48 structures. Mall Road will feature plaques marking the residences of literary figures like Saadat Hasan Manto and Shorish Kashmiri. The heritage revival initiative aims to restore Lahore's cultural and historical charm, ensuring its legacy for future generations.

Bahauddin Zakariya University Achieves Global Recognition in QS World University Rankings 2025

Zain Khan

MULTAN: Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) Multan has earned a prestigious spot among the top 251-300 universities worldwide in the field of Agriculture and Forestry in the QS World University Rankings 2025. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the university's academic excellence and a significant milestone for Pakistan's higher education and research sector.



This success is the result of the dedication and hard work of BZU's Faculty of Agriculture, researchers, teachers, and students, who have consistently maintained high standards in teaching and research. The leadership of Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Prof. Dr. Nazim Hussain, and Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zubair Iqbal, has played a crucial role in securing this global recognition. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zubair Iqbal, while expressing his thoughts on this achievement, stated, "This ranking

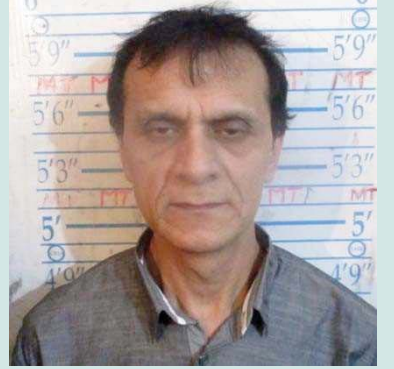
reflects BZU's commitment to academic and research excellence. The university has always strived for innovation and progress in education, and this international recognition is proof of our dedication and hard work." Under the leadership of

Prof. Dr. Nazim Hussain, the Faculty of Agriculture is making significant contributions to modern agricultural research, sustainable farming technologies, and environmental improvement initiatives. The university's inclusion in the global ranking highlights that its research and educational practices meet international standards. This milestone is a positive step for Pakistan's academic and research landscape and demonstrates that Bahauddin Zakariya University is establishing itself as a key player not only at the national level but also on the global academic stage. The university's faculty, researchers, and students have shown remarkable dedication, paving the way for even greater achievements in the future.

Pakistani Court declares UK resident as proclaimed offender in attempted rape case

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: A local court in Model Town Lahore has declared Iqbal Ahmed alias Bablu, a resident of Hurdsville, UK, as a proclaimed offender and issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against him for failing to appear before the court.



According to the case registered at Ghalib Market police station, the accused allegedly entered a house in Canal Park, Lahore, in February 2020 and attempted to rape a woman while he was visiting the city on vacation. Following the incident, an FIR was lodged, but the accused fled to the UK, evading law enforcement. The court order states that the accused has deliberately remained absent from legal proceedings. Consequently, the court has directed law enforcement authorities to arrest and present him before the court. Meanwhile, the complainant in the case has urged the police to take immediate action, ensuring that the accused is apprehended and punished for his alleged crimes. Ghalib Market police have assured that efforts are underway to arrest the proclaimed offender soon. Despite attempts to contact the accused in the UK for his statement, he remains unreachable.

Governor Kundi hosts Iftar dinner: Calls for unity against Islamophobia



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi hosted an Iftar dinner in honor of ambassadors from Muslim countries in Islamabad to come together and formulate a comprehensive strategy to counter Islamophobia. The event was graced by Acting President of Pakistan and Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, who attended as a special guest. The Iftar gathering saw participation from ambassadors of Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia,

Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Morocco, Bahrain, Tunisia, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, and Somalia. Additionally, representatives from Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt, Libya and Honorary Consul General of Tunisia were also present. Prominent political figures in attendance included Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Interior Pervez Khattak, Members of the National Assembly Asma Arbab Alamgir and Sardar Fatehullah Khan Miankhel, Chair-



person of Benazir Income Support Program Rubina Khalid, and Members of the Provincial Assembly Ahmad Karim Kundi

and Arbab Zarak. Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also participated in the event.

During the Iftar dinner, discussions revolved around the unity of the Muslim Ummah and the rising trend of Islamophobia globally. The ambassadors praised the role of Pakistan's government and people in fostering unity among Muslim nations. They also acknowledged Governor Faisal Karim Kundi's efforts for development and peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In his address, Governor Kundi expressed gratitude to the ambassadors for attending and emphasized that Ramadan is a sacred month symbolizing unity, brotherhood, and peace for the Muslim world. He urged Muslim nations to come together and formulate a comprehensive strategy to counter Islamophobia and safeguard the interests of the Muslim Ummah. He reiterated that Islam is a



religion of peace and harmony of humanity and respect for all that advocates for the well-being of religions.

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Bow Your Head: Before the State or the Almighty Allah?

Unlike many countries that are making progress by leaps and bounds, Pakistan, unfortunately, finds itself on a regressive path. This is not only disheartening for its citizens but also deeply disappointing for overseas Pakistanis, whose hearts and souls remain tied to their homeland despite living abroad. The recent news emerging from Pakistan is alarming, particularly the horrifying incident where an entire train was looted, its passengers abducted and killed while traveling through Bolan, Balochistan.

This event starkly contradicts the claims of our law enforcement agencies that they have "broken the back of terrorists and criminals." Instead, separatist and secessionist groups are gaining strength, their narratives taking deeper root both inside Pakistan and abroad, turning our security forces into mere objects of ridicule.

It has long been acknowledged that while the reins of government, parliament, and judiciary are theoretically in civilian hands, real power rests with the establishment. Yet, whenever failures emerge, the blame is swiftly unloaded onto civilian governments. Now, following this recent wave of terrorist attacks, the establishment has conveniently placed the burden of responsibility on the PPP-led government in Balochistan. This was expected, as such tactics have been used since the inception of Pakistan.

A new narrative has now been injected into the national discourse—one that demands all citizens to bow their heads before the mighty state. Those who refuse

to comply are branded as threats, facing the heavy arm of the state until they submit. Yet, the true role of the state is not to instill fear in its citizens but to serve and protect them, ensuring justice, security, and societal well-being.

A welfare state functions as a guardian of public interests, providing essential services such as health-care, education, and social security while upholding fundamental rights. Laws should be designed to protect citizens, not control them. However, when a state begins to demand absolute loyalty and unquestioned obedience, it ceases to be a servant of the people and transforms into an authoritarian force that suppresses dissent and compromises personal freedoms.

From a religious and philosophical perspective, particularly in Islam, submission belongs solely to Allah, the ultimate source of justice and morality. No earthly authority, including the state, has the right to demand obedience that contradicts divine principles.

Historically, oppressive rulers have sought to position themselves as supreme entities, enforcing allegiance through fear. This contradicts the Islamic principle that leaders are only legitimate if they govern with justice and protect the rights of their people. A recognizes that authority is a trust given by the people and should be exercised with humility, fairness, and a commitment to service rather than domination.

Had this foundational principle been upheld in Pakistan, the Baloch issue would never have escalated into a crisis. The land of Balochistan has historically belonged to the Baloch people for centuries, even during the rule of the Mughals and the British. The natural resources, wealth, and opportunities above and beneath this land rightfully belong to its people. Yet, instead of treating the Baloch with dignity, respect, and as equal citizens, successive governments and military interventions have only deepened their alienation.

The Baloch people do not demand extravagant wealth—they demand basic rights: water, infrastructure, education, economic opportunities, and most importantly, respect and honor. A state that attempts to subjugate its citizens through brute force and propaganda fails to learn from history. The same approach failed in Bangladesh, has failed in occupied Kashmir, and will never succeed in Balochistan.

To correct course, the state must begin by withdrawing excessive military presence in Balochistan and handing over governance to genuine Baloch leaders at the grassroots level. Using brute force to silence dissent will not bring peace; only justice and empowerment can. The security establishment must recognize that its duty is to serve, not to rule, and that its authority comes under the higher sovereignty of Allah, not unchecked worldly power. The transformation of the state must begin by shifting away from coer-

sion toward governance that listens to its people rather than suppressing them.

The people of Balochistan, tired of oppression, are looking for leadership that has the courage, determination, and integrity to stand tall against state brutality. They seek leaders who will not bow before oppressive power structures and who will champion the cause of transforming the state into a true servant of the people.

In an unprecedented turn, Imran Khan has emerged as the only leader in Pakistan's history who has demonstrated unwavering resolve to bow only before Almighty Allah—not before the forces that seek to impose their will on the nation. His struggle has set an example for all those seeking emancipation from state tyranny.

This is a critical moment for Pakistan. The state must retreat from interfering in civilian affairs, reset the National Assembly based on the true election results (Form-45), drop all politically motivated cases against opposition leaders, and release Imran Khan. He has, against all odds, earned the respect of the Baloch people as a fearless, upright, and loyal leader. If Pakistan is to heal and move forward, it must reintegrate Balochistan into the national fold through justice, inclusion, and genuine leadership rather than through guns and coercion. This is the only path forward—one that allows the country and its citizens to finally take a much-needed sigh of relief.

Writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) and Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Macomb, Detroit, Michigan

Analysis



Qamar Bashir

Pakistan urges 'wholehearted' global commitment to ensure gender parity

Pakistan has called for "unwavering and wholehearted" global commitment to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women as well as the implementation of anti-poverty Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"At this pivotal moment, we must renew our commitment to ensure that every woman and girl can live with dignity and equality," Pakistani delegate Allah Dino Khowaja told the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Khowaja, who is the Federal Secretary for Human Rights, was speaking in a general debate on the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which called for ensuring greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys.

He described the Beijing Platform for Action as one of the "most comprehensive and transformative" frameworks for promoting women's rights, but said its full implementation remains a challenge due to social and structural issues which continue to undermine the gains already achieved.

Allah Dino Khowaja said Pakistan remains committed to empower women in all walks of life.

"In our pursuit of gender equality and women empowerment, Pakistan is guided by our constitutional obligation, international commitments and above all the vision of our founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who aptly said, 'No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you'," the Pakistani delegate said.

Pakistan, he said, has enacted progressive laws and policies to safeguard the rights of women, provide equal opportunities, and ensure their full participation in national life.

In this regard, Khowaja said that Pakistan has prioritized political empowerment and participation, with seats reserved for women Parliament, provincial assemblies ensuring their representations at all levels of decision-making.

"(We) proudly share that Pakistan, being Islamic country, had Shaheed Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto as first democratically elected woman Prime Minister, with the Chief Minister of the largest Province (Punjab), Chief Justice of Punjab High Court, Foreign Secretary, and Judges of Supreme Court."

Khowaja also said that Women continue to occupy leadership positions in civil bureaucracy and large business boards. He also drew attention to the Prime Minister's recently launched women empowerment package ensuring 33% women representation in all administrative and statutory bodies, financial institutions, while ensuring legal framework for ensuring protection of property rights.

"Poverty reduction remains a key pillar of our gender strategy," the Pakistani delegate said, citing the Benazir Income support programme for vulnerable women. The National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights under UNGP (UN Guiding Principles) guidelines also emphasized human rights due



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awsat)

RBOD and LBOD project in Sindh and its objectives...

An important project, RBOD, was also launched in Sindh with the support of federal and international organizations. The aim of this project was to improve agricultural lands and make the lands affected by unutilized silt and chlorine suitable for agricultural cultivation. Through these drains, the drainage of silt and chlorine water from agricultural and non-agricultural affected lands was to be discharged into the sea. In this regard, the RDOD and LBOD projects were launched in Sindh with the financial support of the federal government and international funded organizations. The real spirit or purpose of this project was to make uncultivated lands suitable for agriculture. In this regard, after 1985, according to a careful estimate, billions of rupees have been spent, which is approximately 14 billion to more than 60 billion rupees.

Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD) and Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) projects in Sindh have been designed to safely transport turbid and saline water discharged from agricultural lands to the sea. The main objective of these projects is to prevent soil erosion and increase agricultural production.

About RBOD-1 and RBOD-3. RBOD-1 and RBOD-3 projects were constructed under the supervision of WAPDA. The purpose of RBOD-1 was to drain turbid water from Lake Manchar

and its surrounding areas, while RBOD-3 also drains water from agricultural areas of Balochistan. Detailed information about the cost and construction of these projects is not available, but the cost of RBOD-2 increased from Rs. 14 billion to Rs. 62 billion, from which the cost of RBOD-1 and RBOD-3 can be estimated.

RBOD-2. The PC-1 of the RBOD-2 project was prepared in November 2001, with an initial cost of Rs. 14 billion. Later, due to expansion of the project capacity and other changes, the cost increased to Rs. 62 billion.

LBOD: The LBOD project was started in 1986, with a cost of Rs. 33.44 million. The project is spread over an area of 1.270 million acres and includes 261.12 km long spinal drain, 99 km KPDO/DPOD, 43 km tidal link, 1666 km surface drains and 1673 water drainage wells.

Benefits: With the completion of these projects: Drainage of muddy and salty water from agricultural lands will prevent silt and chlorine. Agricultural production will increase. It will be possible to prevent flood damage.

Disadvantages of not completing the projects on time and reasons for the late completion of these projects: The ecological health of Lake Manchar has been completely destroyed, which has had a negative impact on fishing and other economic activities. The poverty rate in the region has increased. The ponds, ponds, ponds, and ponds that grow on

fresh water have disappeared, which has affected the employment of the people.

Main Objective: The main objective of these projects is to ensure the drainage of muddy and salty water from agricultural lands, protect the lands from silt and clay, increase agricultural production, and improve the economic condition of the region. The attention that should have been paid to this project and achieve results has not been given. Due to the changes in governments of the time and financial irregularities during their governments, these large, important and expensive projects have led to corruption and have not been able to give timely results. Due to this, the land affected by silt and clay, which was supposed to be suitable for agricultural cultivation, has not been improved.

The main reason for this is corruption and lack of attention to the projects. The current government should pay special attention to this project and all similar projects and make the projects fruitful. The completion of these projects will prove to be important for the development and institutional improvement of the country. It is especially necessary that the government of the time, the parliamentary committee of the parliament and especially the responsible chairmen of the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly and the Sindh Assembly, including the accountability institutions, should conduct a high-level investigation into the laxity and financial irregularities in this project and give appropriate punishment to those responsible. So that no national thief and institutional thief dares to commit such illegal acts in the future.

Analysis



Rehmatullah Buriro

30-Day Progress Report of Commissioner Multan, Amir Kareem Khan

A Commissioner holds the highest administrative authority in a division and is responsible for overseeing governance, law enforcement, public service delivery, and development projects. Their primary duties include ensuring effective implementation of government policies, maintaining law and order in coordination with law enforcement agencies, and supervising the work of Deputy Commissioners (DCs) across districts. They play a crucial role in infrastructure development, urban planning, and revenue administration, ensuring the timely execution of projects related to roads, education, healthcare, and municipal services. Additionally, they address public grievances through mechanisms like Khidmat (خدمت) Counters, streamline bureaucratic processes, and facilitate coordination between provincial and local governments. In times of crisis, such as natural disasters or emergencies, they lead disaster management efforts and resource allocation. Overall, a First Rank Commissioner acts as a bridge between the government and the public, ensuring efficient governance and socio-economic progress in the division.

Over the past 30 days, Commissioner Amir Kareem Khan has spearheaded significant initiatives across the Multan Division, focusing on education, public service improvement, infrastructure, and urban development. A major achievement was the engagement of distinguished alumni for the betterment of their alma maters. Out of 248 contacted alumni, 133 responded positively, leading to contributions such as a donation of 2 Kanals of land worth 6 million PKR for school expansion in Kahror Pakka. To improve public service delivery, the Khidmat Counter system was introduced, ensuring efficient handling of citizen complaints in the absence of officers. Visitors' details were recorded, issues were coordinated with relevant departments, and resolutions were provided within 3-5 days, with additional commissioners assigned duties seven days a week for continuous facilitation.

Urban development projects also gained momentum, particularly with the beautification of eight major chowks in Multan. Designs prepared by IDAP were finalized, with two sites to be developed by MDA and six by the private sector, with work scheduled to begin by the end of February 2025.

Another major initiative was the Northern Bypass Development Project, aimed at transforming a 9 KM dualized road from Sayyada Wala Chowk (Bosan Road) to Sahoo Chowk (Multan-Khaneval Road) into a thriving commercial hub. The area already sees traffic of over 1,500 vehicles per day and has emerging commercial and residential developments. Planned interventions include the installation of street lights, a biker lane, a service road, parking bays, and an 18 KM green belt with cycling tracks, an open gym, a basketball arena, family sitting areas, swings, and walking tracks. The estimated cost of the project is 2 billion PKR, with funding committed by the provincial government. Construction is divided into four phases, with work on the first section starting in March 2025.

In just one month, Commissioner Amir Kareem Khan's leadership has resulted in education reforms, improved governance, infrastructure enhancement, and urban renewal. His proactive approach is transforming Multan Division into a well-managed and progressive region, ensuring better facilities and services for its residents.

Commissioner Multan, Amir Kareem Khan, has become synonymous with positive transformation and justice in the region.

His leadership has instilled a renewed sense of security among the people, while those involved in corruption and unlawful activities find themselves increasingly unsettled.

Since his appointment, he has taken bold and decisive actions to uphold the rule of law, ensuring that justice prevails for all. His firm stance against land grabbers, hoarders, and those exploiting the common man has brought a wave of relief to the citizens. The people of Multan now feel safer, knowing that their rights are being protected under his administration.

On the other hand, elements that thrived on lawlessness and manipulation are now facing the consequences of their misdeeds. The crackdown on illegal activities, price gouging, and administrative negligence has sent a strong message that there is no room for corruption in Multan.

Amir Kareem Khan's commitment to fairness and accountability has won the trust of the masses. His policies and initiatives are not only improving governance but also restoring faith in the system. The residents of Multan now look up to him as a symbol of hope, believing that real change is possible under strong and principled leadership.

Analysis



Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

Three Decades of Turkmenistan's Positive Neutrality Highlighted in Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: For three decades, Turkmenistan's policy of permanent neutrality has served as a model for diplomatic balance, fostering regional stability, economic cooperation, and global peace initiatives. Neutrality is not a passive stance but an active diplomatic approach that fosters peace, stability, and economic cooperation in an increasingly polarized world. Turkmenistan's model of permanent neutrality, recognized by the United Nations, serves as an effective tool for conflict resolution, regional integration, and global mediation.

Positive neutrality allows states to engage with diverse international actors, promoting trust, non-interference, and balanced foreign relations. Amid global tensions rise and alliances shift, adopting a neutral foreign policy has enhanced Turkmenistan's diplomatic leverage, trade opportunities, and security partnerships while preventing entanglement in major power rivalries. These were the remarks by the speakers during the International Conference on "The Role of Neutrality in Strengthening International Peace," organized by the Embassy of Turkmenistan to Pakistan in collaboration with the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS) on the occasion of three decades of Turkmenistan's global initiative to declare 2025 as the "International Year of Peace and Trust", which was unanimously adopted at the UN General Assembly with the co-sponsorship of 86 nations, including Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Tariq Fazal Choudhary, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs while praising the Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties with Turkmenistan.

He noted that both nations share



common goals in energy security, trade expansion, and regional connectivity through initiatives like the TAPI gas pipeline. He commended Turkmenistan's leadership in promoting multilateral cooperation and peace diplomacy. Atadjan Movlamos, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in his welcome remarks highlighted the contours of Turkmenistan's dedication towards fostering peace, stability, and economic development.

He further highlighted Turkmenistan's initiatives in energy, trade, and

cultural diplomacy, strengthening bilateral cooperation with Pakistan. Dr. Farhat Asif, President of IPDS, opened the conference by highlighting the importance of Turkmenistan's neutrality in shaping international peace efforts. She emphasized that neutrality is not passive but an active diplomatic strategy that enhances global cooperation. She noted that Turkmenistan's commitment to neutrality has allowed the country to play a constructive role in regional economic projects and peace initiatives.

Mohamed Yahya, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator

in Pakistan, stressed the significance of neutrality in global diplomacy. He noted that Turkmenistan's diplomatic approach aligns with the UN's peace-keeping efforts, contributing to regional stability and conflict prevention. He highlighted the importance of diplomatic neutrality in fostering economic partnerships and sustainable development.

Dr. Khurram Iqbal, Head of the International Relations Department at the National Defense University, provided an academic perspective

on neutrality, emphasizing its role in conflict resolution and regional stability. He pointed out that Turkmenistan's neutrality enables it to act as a mediator in international conflicts and economic negotiations. He highlighted the importance of Pakistan-Turkmenistan collaboration in security, trade, and regional peace efforts. Dr. Taraq Waheed, Head of the Department of Social Sciences at SZABIST, emphasized the impact of neutrality on cultural diplomacy and economic development.

He highlighted Turkmenistan's proactive role in fostering regional

economic projects and its commitment to peaceful coexistence. He called for greater academic and research collaborations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan to enhance bilateral understanding and engagement.

Participants reaffirmed the need and commitment for continued engagement in trade, energy, and cultural partnerships, strengthening the historical ties between Pakistan and Turkmenistan. The event was followed by exchange of souvenirs and iftar dinner and was attended by large number of diplomats and members of the civil society.



Tinted Democracy: A tactic to fool the Pakistani nation



Most of the renowned theories about human society have lost their true essence in Pakistan. Typically, human society is considered a complex structure, interwoven with various segments such as social, economic, cultural, ethnic, political, and ideological dimensions. Each of these segments is backed by theories developed by scholars after extensive research, aiming to establish globally accepted principles for building a stable and progressive society best suited to human lives. Before delving into Pakistani politics, it is important to understand how theorists have conceptualized and defined "politics."

Politics is generally considered a process of decision making in groups, while the different forms of government are structured systems by which societies are governed, known as democracy, monarchy, dictatorship, and various other mixed or hybrid systems. Renowned political scientist Harold Lasswell defined politics as "who gets what, when, how" and narrated that politics exists wherever people interact with one another to make decisions that affect them collectively. D. Alan Heshop, further defines the political system by evaluating it as a set of formal legal institutions that constitute a "government" or a "state."

Democracy is generally considered the most effective system of governance because it not only empowers people but also refines

the decision-making process. Unlike authoritarian regimes where decisions rest in the hands of a few, democracy ensures collective wisdom, leading to more balanced, inclusive, and well-thought-out policies. Political theorist John Dewey emphasized that 'democracy is not just a form of government but a way of life, fostering public participation and continuous learning.' The supporters of democracy advocate by stating that it enhances the quality of decision-making by allowing competition among leaders and accountability to the electorate. It is also believed that in a diverse society where differences in opinion and conflicts are inevitable, democracy provides a structured and peaceful mechanism to address and resolve them through debate, discussion, and consensus rather than coercion or force.

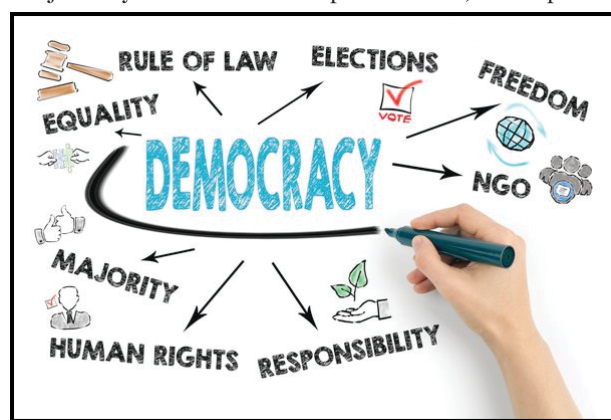
A prominent advocate of pluralism, Robert A. Dahl, asserted that democracy ensures political equality, allowing competing interests to coexist and preventing the concentration of power in a single entity. One of democracy's greatest strengths lies in its ability to uphold the dignity of citizens, recognizing them as active participants rather than passive subjects. It grants individuals the right to voice their concerns, generally known as freedom of expression, choose their representatives, and hold them accountable. Democracy's biggest advantage is its ability to remove ineffective leaders without violence, making it a self-correcting system through the power of the vote. Consequently, democratic societies thrive because they encourage innovation, reform, and adaptability. Justice, equality, and progress are the essence of democracy. The most widely cited definitions of democracy, symbolizing a system where power ultimately rests with the people, came from Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President

of the United States, who on November 19, 1863, during the American Civil War in his Gettysburg address stated, "Democracy is government of the people, by the people, for the people". Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, was the strongest supporter of democracy, and his speeches to the national assembly are part of history where he openly advocated democracy. One of his famous sayings was, "Islam and its idealism has taught us democracy. It has taught equality of man, justice, and fair play to everybody."

Considering the blessings of democracy, no one can easily hate this form of government, but as soon as we unite democracy and Pakistan in one frame, incertitudes run through the mind. Before cursing democracy in Pakistan, the question arises: Have we ever tasted real democracy? The obvious answer is "No".

Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan's democracy has been more theatrical than functional, a never-ending cycle of civilian rule, military takeovers, judicial interventions, and political betrayals. While the country was envisioned as an Islamic democratic republic, its history tells a different story, one where democracy has been used, abused, derailed, and revived repeatedly. Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, dreamed of a democratic state, but his early demise left a power vacuum. The country's first decade was marked by political instability, constitutional delays, and the dismissal of elected governments. In 1958, General Ayub Khan imposed martial law, setting the stage for military dominance over civilian politics. Pakistan's first real attempt at democracy came in 1970, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto won elections in West Pakistan while Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won in East Pakistan. The refusal to transfer power led to the crea-

tion of Bangladesh in 1971. Bhutto's government brought economic reforms but also political suppression, leading to his overthrow and execution by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1977. After General Zia's death (1988), Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif played a game of political musical chairs, each being dismissed twice due to corruption and political manipulation. Democracy became a façade, controlled by the establishment and judiciary.



General Musharraf's rule (1999-2008) introduced a "controlled democracy", while the post-2008 period saw elected governments completing terms but with deep institutional interference. The ousting of Nawaz Sharif (2017) and Imran Khan (2022) further exposed democracy's fragility, and in recent years, a new term was introduced—"hybrid regime". Pakistan's democracy has always been a puppet show, where real power lies elsewhere. Votes matter, but only within limits set by non-democratic forces. The system survives, but the question remains: Is it truly democracy or just a well-disguised illusion of it?

Democracy brings freedom, accountability, and public empowerment. Pakistan's history tells a different story of manipulation, controlled leadership, and institutional interference.

Pakistan has gone through the electoral processes, the formation of parliaments, and allied democratic symbols, but it has never experienced true democracy. Pakistani political leaders either complained about the lack of power or misused it, and elite groups enjoyed the power instead of the people. Democracy, in its true form, is a system where the people hold power, where governments are accountable, and where policies are shaped for public welfare, not for personal

gains. Democracy in Pakistan has repeatedly failed, not due to the lack of elections but because of systemic flaws, institutional interference, and political immaturity. Corruption and dynastic politics has crippled democracy in Pakistan; as political parties operate like family enterprises rather than institutions promoting governance. Leaders prioritize personal gain over public service, making democracy a means to power rather than a system of accountability. Military intervention, which has toppled civilian governments through direct coups or behind-the-scenes manipulation, is considered a major hurdle, too. Since independence, the military has positioned itself as the ultimate power broker, ensuring that no civilian leadership can function independently. Another big reason is judicial complicity,

where courts have often validated military takeovers and disqualified elected leaders under vague legal pretexts. The absence of strong democratic institutions and the lack of political tolerance have fueled constant power struggles. Instead of strengthening parliament, politicians rely on backdoor deals and establishment support. Moreover, media manipulation and a weak civil society fail to hold power players accountable. Ultimately, democracy in Pakistan remains a ceremonial process, where the real power lies elsewhere. In reality, democracy in Pakistan neither originates from the people, belongs to the people, nor serves the people.

In a real democracy, elected representatives govern freely, making independent decisions in the interest of the people. But in Pakistan, civilian leaders often operate under invisible pressures, with key decisions influenced or dictated by non-democratic forces. Governments come and go, but power remains in the hands of a few, not the masses. A true democracy guarantees free and fair elections, where every vote genuinely counts. But in Pakistan, RTS (2018) or Form-47 (2024) decides the fate of elections. Democracy also thrives on judicial independence, where courts uphold the constitution and protect democratic norms. However, in Pakistan, the judiciary has often sided with non-democratic forces, and instead of protecting democracy, it has at times facilitated its downfall. Freedom of speech is considered a significant pillar of democracy, allowing people and media to criticize the government without fear. But in Pakistan, censorship is routine, journalists are silenced, and speaking the truth can come at a heavy price. Instead of an open exchange of ideas, there is controlled information and suppression of dissent. Perhaps the greatest betrayal of democracy in Paki-

stan is the lack of accountability. In a true democracy, leaders are held responsible for corruption, incompetence, and broken promises. But in Pakistan, the powerful remain untouchable, and corruption cases are used as tools for political engineering rather than justice. It can be easily concluded that in Pakistan, we have the labels and rituals of democracy but not its essence.

To bring real democracy to Pakistan, we must go beyond symbolic elections and political rhetoric. True democracy demands free and fair elections, independent institutions, an accountable judiciary, and a strong rule of law. Citizens must actively engage in the political process with courage and patience, rejecting corrupt and dynastic politics while demanding transparent governance. The military and establishment also need to review their strategies in the context of security challenges to Pakistan, allowing elected representatives to govern the country in an accountable framework. The military's role in Pakistan is pivotal and important, excluding politics. Freedom of speech and a strong, independent media are crucial to ensuring accountability. Most importantly, Pakistanis should vote for the country's future, not for personalities. Blind loyalty to individuals and political dynasties has kept Pakistan in a cycle of corruption, incompetence, and instability. People should vote for policies, progress, and prosperity, not for leaders who exploit emotions for personal gain. Pakistan needs informed, responsible voters who choose leaders based on merit, vision, and national interest. If we truly want to taste real democracy, then we must vote wisely, hold leaders accountable, and resist non-democratic forces that manipulate the system for their benefit. Only then can Pakistan move towards a strong, just, and true democratic future.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
115,536.16	115,094.23
Day's High	Day's Low
115,730.98	115,162.69
Index Value	Change
15,888,460,784	+441.93
Percentage	Time
+0.38%	14 Mar, 2025 1:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,633.72	+91.16
Percentage	Time
+1.07%	14 Mar, 4:29 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
41,318.48	+504.91
Percentage	Time
+1.24%	14 Mar, 11:35 am GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
37,053.10	+263.07
Percentage	Time
+0.72%	15 Mar, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	177.50	179.75
Bahrain Dinar	741.75	749.75
Canadian Dollar	195.10	197.50
China Yuan	37.55	37.95
Danish Krone	38.45	38.85
Euro	304.25	307
Hong Kong Dollar	35.65	36.00
Indian Rupee	3.12	3.21
Japanese Yen	1.90	1.96
Kuwaiti Dinar	904.25	913.75
Malaysian Ringgit	62.18	62.78
New Zealand \$	157.59	159.59
Norwegians Krone	25.21	25.51
Omani Riyal	726.00	734.5
Qatari Riyal	76.18	76.88
Saudi Riyal	74.70	75.25
Singapore Dollar	211	213
Swedish Korona	27.41	27.71
Swiss Franc	311.62	314.37
Thai Bhat	8.17	8.32
U.A.E Dirham	76.10	76.75
UK Pound Sterling	363.00	366.5
US Dollar	280.50	282.00

CCP approves strategic joint venture between NLC and DP World Logistics

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the pre-merger application for the establishment of a joint venture between National Logistics Corporation (NLC) and DP World Logistics FZE (DWLF). The investment, facilitated by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), aims to enhance Pakistan's logistics and freight industry while ensuring fair competition in the market.

The transaction involves NLC acquiring a 60 percent equity stake in the joint venture, with DWLF holding the remaining 40



Competition Commission of Pakistan

percent. The venture aims to enhance Pakistan's road freight logistics sector by lever-

aging NLC's domestic expertise and DP World's global supply chain solutions.

The relevant market for the transaction was identified as 'road freight logistics', a key segment in Pakistan's trade and transport sector. Following a detailed competition assessment, CCP determined that the transaction does not result in a substantial lessening of competition or the creation of a dominant market position.

The review also considered horizontal overlaps in road freight logistics and potential vertical integration effects. CCP's analysis concluded that the market remains competitive, with multiple players ensuring

continued competition.

The joint venture highlights Pakistan's growing appeal for foreign investment in logistics. It is expected to improve infrastructure, lower transport costs, and boost Pakistan's trade competitiveness in the region.

Last year, the CCP facilitated transactions attracting \$29.6 billion in investments from leading global companies across Pakistan's energy, finance, telecom, and agriculture sectors. This latest approval is another major transaction, paving the way for significant investment in road freight, advancing the modernization of Pakistan's logistics industry.

Appreciation

MULTAN: Labourers are busy unloading tomato bags from the delivery van at the Vegetable Market.



Photo: APP

High-Level Business Delegation from Uzbekistan visits RCCI



Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: A high-level business delegation from Uzbekistan's food industry visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). The 15-member delegation was led by Mr. Bakhrom Yusupov, Trade and Economic Counsellor at the Embassy of Uzbekistan.

RCCI President Usman Shaukat, in his welcome remarks, provided an overview of

RCCI's initiatives and its role in fostering trade relations and regional connectivity. He highlighted the immense potential for trade expansion in Central Asia and emphasized the importance of strengthening economic ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi and Vice President Fahad Barlas in their remarks extended a warm welcome to the delega-

tion. The visit was focused on exploring trade opportunities, fostering B2B matchmaking, and enhancing bilateral cooperation in the food industry.

The delegation engaged in discussions with local counterparts to identify avenues for collaboration and mutual growth. The visit reflects the growing economic ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, paving the way for increased trade and investment opportunities.

Role of AI Gigafactories in Pakistan's Industrial Revolution



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said AI gigafactories will change Pakistan's destiny with rapid pace of industrialization by modernising economy reducing dependency on traditional sectors, strengthen growth and create a dynamic digital ecosystem.

In a statement unfolding the vital importance of AI gigafactories in future, the octogenarian popular trade leader of South Asia said AI gigafactories hold the key to unlocking a new era of economic prosperity, making Pakistan a competitive player in the global AI-driven industrial landscape. He said the advent of AI-powered gigafactories presents a transforma-

tive opportunity for Pakistan to leapfrog into a new era of industrial and economic growth.

He said these large-scale, technology-driven manufacturing hubs, equipped with artificial intelligence, automation, and smart systems, could redefine productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness across sectors, positioning Pakistan as a key player in the global digital economy. He said AI gigafactories can boost small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by providing access to advanced manufacturing and AI-driven tools. This will enable local businesses to scale up efficiently, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

To harness this potential, Pakistan needs strategic investments in AI research, infrastructure, and digital policies. Public-private partnerships and international collaborations can accelerate the establishment of AI gigafactories, ensuring sustainable economic growth, he concluded.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia Collaborate on Food Industry Investments

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: A high-profile delegation from Pakistan's food sector currently visiting Saudi Arabia to explore investments avenues receiving an overwhelming response from their Saudi counterparts.

According to message received here Sunday from Riyadh the leader of delegation Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman Sunday said the visit aims to strengthen trade ties, explore investment opportunities, and foster collaboration in the food especially snacks. Pakistani food companies have showcased their international standards high-quality products and processed foods, which

have garnered significant interest from their counterparts. He said we are engaged in productive meetings with leading Saudi food importers, distributors, and retailers, who have expressed keen interest in forging long-term partnerships.

He said daily discussions are underway for potential joint ventures between Pakistani and Saudi corporate sectors to enhance food production, processing, and distribution. We are also exploring avenues to set up manufacturing units in Saudi Arabia to cater to the growing demand for halal and organic food products, he added. He said our month long visit will pave the way for increased bilateral trade and investment in the food industry.

Strategies for sustainable economic growth in Pakistan: Insights from Shahid Imran



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry regional committee on food Shahid Imran Sunday said Pakistan can lay the foundation for sustainable economic growth, reduce unemployment, and increase exports by regulating unproductive sectors, incentivising real economic activity and ensuring capital flows into employment generating industries.

Talking here today to a delegation of traders from south Punjab led by Mian Zahid Iqbal Arain, he said Incentivizing real economic activity is equally critical. The government should offer tax breaks, subsidies, and low-interest loans to industries with high job creation and export potential, like textiles, agriculture, IT, and manufacturing. He said government must build a financial system that ensures capital flows into productive sectors. This requires reforming the banking sector to prioritize lending to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and export-oriented industries. Strengthening capital markets and encouraging venture capital can also support startups and innovative businesses, he added.

While concluding he said Pakistan's economy faces significant challenges, including a growing trade deficit, low export levels, and high unemployment. To address these issues, the country must prioritize regulating unproductive sectors, incentivizing real economic activity, and creating a system that channels capital into industries capable of generating jobs and boosting exports.

NCC is need of hour to harmonise with global economic tools

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said the establishment of a National Crypto Council is need of the hour for Pakistan to capitalize the opportunities offered by digital currencies.

Presiding council board of directors meeting here today he said by creating a robust regulatory framework, promoting awareness, and fostering innovating, Pakistan can position itself as a forward-thinking player in the global digital economy. It's right time to act now, as the world

moves swiftly toward a decentralized financial future. He stressed the need to align the country with global trends in digital currencies and blockchain technology. As the world rapidly embraces cryptocurrencies and decentralized financial systems, Pakistan risks falling behind in this transformative economic shift. A dedicated regulatory body should provide the framework needed to harness the potential of digital currencies while mitigating associated risks.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq said the primary role of council should be to create a comprehensive regulatory



environment for cryptocurrencies. This includes defining

legal statuses, taxation policies, and anti-money laundering (AML) measures to ensure transparency and security. By establishing clear guidelines, the council should foster trust among investors, businesses, and consumers, encouraging innovation and adoption in the digital finance sector.

He said moreover, the council must play a pivotal role in educating the public and stakeholders about the benefits and risks of cryptocurrencies. With proper awareness campaigns, Pakistan can combat misinformation and promote responsible usage of digital assets.

President Zardari awards trophy at 62nd National Open Polo Championship final

Sports Desk

LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari watched the final of the 62nd National Open Polo Championship as the chief guest and presented the trophy to the winning team, DS Polo, at Lahore Polo Club on Sunday.

Former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Punjab Governor Sardar Salim Haider Khan, Bank Alfalah Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Atif Bajwa, Lahore Polo Club President Malik Azam Hayat Noon, executive committee members, and a large crowd of polo enthusiasts witnessed an exhilarating final of the championship.

In a thrilling contest, DS Polo edged past FG Polo 7-6 in the closing moments of the match. FG Polo dominated for four and a half chukkers, but DS Polo turned the game around with two decisive goals in the final minutes to claim the Bank Alfalah National Open Championship trophy.

For DS Polo, Lao Abelenda led the charge with four goals, Max Will Charlton added two, and Daniyal Sheikh struck the winning goal. FG Polo's Raul Laplacette delivered an impressive performance with five goals, while Mian Abbas Mukhtar contributed one.



President Zardari gave away awards in various categories: the Best Pakistani Polo Player Award was given to Hamza Mawaz Khan, while the Most Important Player Award went to Mian Abbas Mukhtar.

In the 0-4 goal category, the Best Player Award was given to Raja Samiullah, and the Most Improved Player Award to Muhammad Ali Malik; in the -2 to 0 goal category, the award was clinched by Abdullah Khattak, and in the 0-2 goal category, Chaudhry Hayat Mahmood was honoured. In the 2-4 goal category, Raja Mikael Sami received the Best Player Award, Ibrahim Sultan was recognised with the Emerging Talent Award, and the Lady Player Award was given to Manam Faisal.

The Spirit of Polo Award went to Faisal Khan, the Most Valuable Pakistani Player Award to Ahmed Ali Tiwana, while the Best Foreign Player Award was presented to Max Charlton. The Syed Wajid Ali Trophy went to Daniyal Sheikh's mare Anatolia.

Secretary Lahore Polo Club Lt. Col (ret'd) Umar Amir was recognised for his team's excellent performance.



First T20 a nightmare for Pakistan as New Zealand cruises to a nine-wicket win

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan's players leave the ground after defeat during the first Twenty20 international cricket match between New Zealand and Pakistan at Hagley Oval in Christchurch on March 16.

The first T20 in Christchurch turned into a nightmare for Pakistan as New Zealand secured a dominant nine-wicket victory.

Pakistan's batting lineup collapsed completely, with the entire team bundled out for just 91 runs — its lowest-ever total in T20 cricket against New Zealand.

Pakistan's openers, Mohammad Haris and Hassan Nawaz, departed without scoring, while Irfan Khan managed just one run.

In his comeback match, Shadab Khan could only add three runs before being dismissed. Khushdil Shah was the top scorer with 32, followed by captain Agha Salman, who contributed 18.

Eight Pakistani batters failed to reach double figures.

New Zealand's Jacob Duffy claimed four wickets, while Kyle Jamieson took three, dismantling Pakistan's batting order with ease.



Three Pakistani players make their T20 debut

Three Pakistani players — Abdul Samad, Mohammad Ali, and Hassan

Nawaz—made their T20 debut in this match.

Inzamam blasts Pakistan team after T20 defeat against New Zealand

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq has strongly criticised the national team and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) following their defeat in the first T20I against New Zealand.

He warned that frequent changes in the squad would only further damage Pakistan cricket.

Speaking at a Peshawar Zalmi sponsorship event in Lahore, where he signed an agreement as the franchise's president, Inzamam emphasised that Peshawar Zalmi remains a favourite in PSL and aims to win the tournament this year.

He also highlighted the franchise's



commitment to social and welfare initiatives.

Inzamam took a harsh stance against PCB's selection policies, stating that constant team changes are harming Pakistan cricket.

He stressed that the board needs to trust its management and players instead of making impulsive decisions.

"If you remove the 1990s generation of cricketers, Pakistan's cricket will become very weak," he stated. Babar Azam is a big player and will make a strong comeback, he added.

He also questioned the decision to rest Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan, suggesting that they were actually dropped rather than rested.

He expressed full support for Babar Azam, saying that PSL presents a golden opportunity for him to regain form.

Salman Ali Agha opens up after Pakistan's crushing defeat against New Zealand in first T20I

CHRISTCHURCH: Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha highlighted the team's shortcomings after crushing nine-wicket defeat against New Zealand in the first T20I at Hagley Oval on Sunday.

In a post-match conference, Agha admitted that his team was not up to mark in the five-match series opener against a well-disciplined New Zealand team.

"It was difficult, we weren't up to the mark, but we need to regroup (ahead of Dunedin)," he remarked.

"They bowled really well, in great areas, there was a bit of seam movement as well. We will sit down, have a chat and think about the next game," he said.

Salman Ali Agha highlighted the performances of three debutants and

expressed confidence in their potential for upcoming matches.

"We had three debutants, the more games they play, they'll learn more."

"The new ball does a bit in New Zealand, we've good bowlers and we'll look to do well in the next match," he concluded.

After being asked to bat first in the series opener, Pakistan team struggled against a disciplined New Zealand bowling attack and were bundled out for 91, with Kyle Jamieson leading the charge by picking up crucial wickets.

The Men in Green encountered early trouble, losing three wickets for just one run. Kyle Jamieson caused havoc with the ball, claiming three wickets early on.

Pakistan's batting lineup collapsed,



getting dismissed for just 91 runs in 18.4 overs.

Khushdil Shah was the top scorer with 32 runs, followed by captain Agha Salman with 18 and Jahandad Khan with 17.

Abdul Samad scored 7, Shadab Khan managed 3, while Ahrar Ahmed added only 2 runs. Irfan Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, and Mohammad Ali contributed just 1 run each. Openers Mohammad Haris and Hassan Nawaz were dismissed without scoring.

New Zealand's Jacob Duffy led the bowling attack with 4 wickets, while Kyle Jamieson claimed 3 and Ish Sodhi grabbed 2 wickets. Zakary Foulkes dismissed one player.

Chasing 91, Tim Seifert and Finn Allen displayed exceptional batting from the start, putting on a 53-run stand inside the powerplay, showcasing their brilliance with the bat.

New Zealand chased down the target in the 11th over, giving them a 1-0 lead in the series.

Winter Camp Punjab Kyokushin Karate Championship Concludes



Sports Desk

LAHORE: The All Punjab Winter Camp and Championship, organized under the World Kumite Organization (WKO), was held in Lahore, featuring enthusiastic participation from fighters representing Faisalabad, Wah Cantt, Sialkot, Gujranwala, and Lahore.

According to Chief Organizer Shihan Akhtar Ali, Lahore showcased an outstanding performance across various weight categories, securing first position. In the 60 kg weight category, Afshan Akhtar delivered an exceptional demo, bringing pride to both herself and her club. She won the gold medal along with the prestigious "Winner of Dojo" trophy.

Other remarkable fighters were also honored with certificates of appreciation for their impressive performances. The event concluded with a grand Iftar arrangement.

Ayzaz wins Ramadan Tenpin Bowling C'ship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ayzaz ur Rehman emerged as the champion of the Ramadan Tenpin Bowling Championship 2025, held here at the Leisure City Bowling Club, Safa Gold Mall, F-7 Markaz.



Ayzaz secured the top position with an impressive score of 379, beating senior players in the competition. Faizan took the second position with a score of 341, while Saleem Baig secured the third position with a score of 301.

The President of the Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz Ur Rehman, and Secretary General, Muhammad Hussain Chatta, distributed cash prizes and trophies among the winners.

Speaking on the occasion, Ijaz said, "Bowling is gaining popularity in Pakistan, and we are committed to promoting this sport nationwide."

He also requested the higher authorities, to direct the Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ministry to allocate a place, approved by the Executive Committee of the Pakistan Sports Board, for an international bowling club.

This will enable Pakistan to host the World Cup Championship, attracting over 100 participating countries, he said.

He said this championship demonstrated the growing talent and enthusiasm for tenpin bowling in Pakistan, and the federation is dedicated to nurturing this talent and promoting the sport globally.

PCB issues legal notice to South African cricketer Corbin Bosch

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has issued a legal notice to South African all-rounder Corbin Bosch for breaching his Pakistan Super League (PSL) contract. According to a PCB statement, the notice was sent through Bosch's agent for violating his contractual obligations in PSL.



Peshawar Zalmi had selected him in the Diamond Category during the PSL player draft. However, despite having a PSL contract, Bosch opted to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

He was signed by the Mumbai Indians as a replacement for the injured Lizaad Williams. PCB has outlined the consequences of his withdrawal from PSL in its notice.

Solidarity

KARACHI: Members of Tehrik Jawanan Pakistan and Kashmir Karachi holding a demo in favour of Pakistan Army outside Karachi Press Club.



Photo: Spokesman

PM, President, and political leaders condemn Nushki blast

City Desk

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and other political leaders have strongly condemned the Nushki blast, expressing deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extended his condolences to the bereaved families and directed authorities to provide the injured with the best possible medical care.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to eradicating terrorism, stating, "Cowardly acts like these cannot shake our determination."

President Asif Ali Zardari also condemned the attack,



expressing profound grief over the loss of lives.

He prayed for the martyrs' souls and patience for their

families while also wishing a swift recovery for the injured.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi condemned the bombing near a bus on the Nushki-Dalbandin Highway,

calling it an act of sheer brutality.

He extended his condolences to the families of the victims and stated that enemies of the state are conspiring to destabilize the country.

"These cowardly acts will not weaken the nation's unwavering resolve," he declared.

Khurshid Shah, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Khurshid Shah also expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives in the Nushki bombing.

"May Allah grant the martyrs the highest ranks and give patience to their families," he prayed.

He further lauded the swift response of security forces, vowing that the enemy and its cowardly actions will be eliminated once and for all.

Mangla Dam hits dead level, power production halted

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's water reservoirs have reached critical levels, with the Mangla Dam water level dropping to the "dead level," leading to the suspension of hydroelectric power production.

According to a WAPDA spokesperson, the Mangla Dam is now at its minimum operating level.

Tarbela Dam stands just two feet above its dead level, while Chashma Barrage is only one foot above. Consequently, Mangla Dam has ceased power production due to the lack of water.

Current Reservoir Levels:
Tarbela Dam: Water level at 1404.93 feet (minimum operating level: 1402 feet, maximum



storage level: 1550 feet). Current water storage is 14,000 acre-feet.

Mangla Dam: Water level at 1050 feet (minimum operating level: 1050 feet, maximum storage level: 1242 feet). Current water storage is 72,000 acre-feet.

Chashma Barrage: Water level at 639.30 feet (minimum operating level: 638.15 feet,

maximum storage level: 649 feet). Current water storage is 17,000 acre-feet.

River Flows:
At Tarbela, the Indus River inflow is 19,600 cusecs, while outflow is 20,000 cusecs.

At Nowshera, Kabul River inflow and outflow are both 14,600 cusecs.

At Mangla, the Jhelum River inflow is 19,800 cusecs and

outflow is 19,900 cusecs.

At Marala, the Chenab River inflow is 16,600 cusecs, while outflow is 11,900 cusecs.

Other barrages such as Jinnah, Chashma, Taunsa, Guddu, Sukkur, and Kotri are also witnessing varying inflow and outflow levels, further reflecting the declining water availability.

The severe water shortage highlights Pakistan's ongoing struggles with water management and climate change impacts.

The reduction in water levels not only affects power production but also has significant implications for agriculture and drinking water supply.

Experts have been urging authorities to implement sustainable water conservation

and storage strategies to address this crisis.

Additionally, Pakistan's dependency on hydroelectric power means that such shortages can worsen energy shortfalls, especially during peak demand seasons.

The situation underscores the urgent need for sustainable water resource management and diversification of the energy mix to reduce reliance on hydroelectricity.

Developing renewable energy sources like solar and wind, along with improving energy conservation practices, could mitigate the risk of energy crises caused by water shortages.

This dual approach could help Pakistan ensure a more stable and resilient energy future.

Partial curfew imposed in South Waziristan

Adam Khan

WANA: Authorities in South Waziristan have announced a partial curfew in various areas, set to be enforced from 6am to 6pm on March 17, 2025.

According to an official statement, the curfew will extend from Beni Zai Raghzai to Jandola, along with key routes in Upper and Lower South Waziristan.

The curfew will also be imposed on Tanai-Sarwekai and Jandola roads, while the Wana Zalai Camp to Cadet College route will remain closed for the day.

Movement will be strictly restricted on roads leading to Kot Qila, Manzai, Khargai, Ahmad Wam, and Jandola.

Officials said that the curfew has



been imposed due to security force movements in the region.

The decision was jointly issued by the Deputy Commissioners of Upper and Lower South Waziristan, along with Tank District.

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Russian Federation Navy Ships visit Karachi



Bureau Report

KARACHI: A Russian Navy Flotilla, comprising frigates RFS REZKIY and RFS ALDAR TSYDEN-ZHAPOV, along with medium sea tanker RFS PECHENGA, arrived in Karachi for a goodwill visit from 15 to 18 March 2025.

Upon arrival, the Russian warships were accorded a warm welcome by officials of the Pakistan Navy, along with the Russian Consul General and Defence Attaché.

During the port call, the crew of the visiting ships will engage in professional discussions with Paki-

stan Navy personnel and participate in bilateral ship visits. Furthermore, Russian and Pakistani naval ships will conduct joint exercises aimed at enhancing interoperability and maritime cooperation.

Regular port visits and joint exercises between Pakistan Navy and Russian Navy continue to strengthen bilateral ties, deepen naval collaboration, and foster mutual trust.

The visit of Russian Flotilla marks a significant milestone in maritime diplomacy, reinforcing security and defence cooperation between the two nations.

Opposition to approach PM Shehbaz for appointment of ECP chief, two other members

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: An important constitutional requirement of appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and two members has turned into a letter-writing exercise.

According to government sources, the Speaker National Assembly has sent the Opposition leader's letter to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs for further action. Further, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs wrote a letter to the Prime Minister for guidance on this issue.

However, government has decided that nomination of candidates first and then formation of a parliamentary committee, sources said.

The opposition leader will have to approach the Prime Minister on the nomination issue because the current chief and members have constitutional protection until the appointment process is completed. Sources said that the government is in no hurry to bring in a replacement for the current members. If candidates do not come forward, the formation of the committee is pointless, government sources said.

Investigation into Mufti Munir Shakir attack progresses; only 600 grams of explosives used



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Significant progress has been made in the investigation of the attack on Mufti Munir Shakir in Peshawar.

According to police, the explosion was caused by an improvised explosive device (IED) containing 600 grams of explosives, planted near the small gate of the mosque.

Authorities revealed that as soon as Mufti Munir Shakir entered the mosque, the device detonated, instantly killing him and injuring three others.

Law enforcement officials have gathered CCTV footage and other crucial evidence from the scene as the investigation continues to track down those responsible.

Son refuses burial, demands accountability

Following Mufti Munir Shakir's martyrdom in the blast, his son has refused to proceed with the burial until police officials are held accountable. He accused authorities of ignoring repeated security requests despite persistent threats against his father.

"You tied my hands and feet so someone could martyr Mufti Sahib," he alleged, further stating, "I was denied the right to bear arms, yet my father was left unprotected."

The refusal to bury Mufti Munir Shakir has escalated tensions in the area, with local residents joining in protest, demanding justice.

Govt raises petroleum levy by Rs10 per liter, learn how much you pay now

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Despite a significant drop in global petroleum prices, the federal government has increased the petroleum levy on petrol by Rs. 10 per liter, denying local consumers the benefit.

According to sources, a notification has been issued after federal approval, raising the petroleum levy from Rs60 to Rs70 per liter, effective March 16 (today).

Officials revealed that while international prices allowed a reduction of up to Rs15 per liter, the increased levy has prevented direct relief for the public. Sources added that the savings from lower global oil prices are being redirected to reduce electricity tariffs.

Last night, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that



petroleum product prices would remain unchanged, while electricity rates would see a significant reduction. He also mentioned that the government is working on a comprehensive relief package, to be unveiled in the coming weeks.