

# QUETTA VOICE

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Chief Minister Balochistan, Ali Mardan Domki being briefed about Quetta Development Package

## Balochistan CM Expresses Concerns as NHA Progress Lags Behind Schedule

Manan Mandokhail:

QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Ali Mardan Domki has expressed concern as the National Highway Authority (NHA) progress lags behind the scheduled completion of development projects in the province.

During his fourth visit to ongoing development communication projects under the Quetta Development Package, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki conducted a comprehensive review.

The caretaker Chief Minister focused on projects such as Spini Road, Saryab Road, Link Badini Road, Radio Tower Road, Western Bypass, and Inscumb Road on Thursday.

Project Director QDP, alongside officials from the National Highway Authority (NHA) and National Logistics Cell (NLC), briefed the Chief Minister. Notably, the release of sanctioned funds for these projects has been expedited, with assurance from the Project Director that work is progressing at an accelerated pace.

### No Compromise On Quality

While the Chief Minister

### Sardar Akhtar Mengal's Triple Election Run

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: In Balochistan, Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal is gearing up for a unique political challenge. The chief of the Balochistan National Party has completed his nomination papers to run in not one, but three constituencies – Wadh, Qalat Mastung, and Quetta Qaryab.



With a commitment to represent diverse voices, Sardar Akhtar is ready to navigate the complex electoral landscape.

As the elections approach, Balochistan anticipates a significant political shift, and Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal stands at the forefront, aiming for victory on three fronts.



expressed satisfaction with the speed of work, he noted concerns about the slow pace of affairs at the NHA and instructed officials to expedite the process.

The caretaker Chief Minister emphasized that there would be no compromise on quality, urging completion of all projects to high standards.

Addressing concerns on Sabzal Road, the Chief Minister instructed the P&D Department, Project Director QDP, and

NLC officials to collaborate in finding solutions to con-

## Govt Acts Swiftly: 7 Stone-Crushing Plants Sealed After Quetta Voice Report

Syed Ali Shah:



the community. Quetta Voice's Report Prompted The Authorities

This proactive response underscores the importance of citizen journalism and the role it plays in holding industries accountable for their environmental footprint. Quetta Voice's report served as a catalyst for immediate governmental intervention, showcasing the power of community-driven advocacy in shaping policy decisions.

The closure of these plants aligns with the government's broader agenda to promote responsible industrial practices. Officials have also signaled a commitment to implementing

controversial issues hindering progress. He instructed the NHA to provide written information about the final completion dates within one week. The Scam Road project,

once completed, is expected to alleviate traffic problems in the city center significantly. The caretaker Chief Minister expressed optimism about the proposed special traffic policing under the project to regulate traffic effectively.

To ensure continuous monitoring, the Chief Minister instructed the CM Secretariat to stay informed about project progress.

He affirmed his commitment to reviewing all work until project completion, urging the identification and rectification of any mistakes.

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## Balochistan Govt's Bold Expedition, Guiding Thousands to Global Career Triumphs

Quetta Voice Special Report:

QUETTA: In a groundbreaking move aimed at enhancing opportunities for the youth, Balochistan's Caretaker Finance Minister, Amjad Rashid, revealed on Thursday the government's ambitious plan to send thousands of young individuals abroad to capitalize on employment prospects. In an exclusive interview with Daily Quetta Voice, Minister Rashid disclosed that over 12,000 youth have already enrolled in the Prime Minister's skill development program.

### PM Skills Development Program Launched In Balochistan

The minister emphasized that the primary objective is to elevate the living standards of the youth while fostering economic growth through remittances sent back to Pakistan. He underscored the joint commitment of the Balochistan and federal governments to create new avenues of employment for the province's unemployed population.

### Korea, Europe, and the Middle East The Best Destination

Minister Amjad Rashid ar-



ticulated the global demand for Pakistani manpower, citing regions such as Korea, Europe, and the Middle East. However, he stressed the importance of ensuring that the youth possess the necessary skills and training to meet the escalating demands of the international job market. "We aspire to equip every aspiring individual with the skills required to secure the best jobs abroad," Rashid asserted.

### Youth To Contribute Significantly To The National Economy

This strategic initiative aligns with the government's vision to not only address unemployment but also contribute significantly to the national economy through the export of skilled labor. As the program progresses, it is anticipated to empower a new generation of skilled professionals, fostering economic prosperity and elevating Pakistan's standing in the international arena.

## BHC Directs Swift Action on Urban Development, Transportation Projects

News Desk:

QUETTA: In a recent hearing at the Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Kamran Khan Malik and Mr. Justice Shaakat Ali Rakhshani addressed a constitutional petition filed by Jalla Haider, a well-known lawyer. During the proceedings, it was revealed that the Chief Secretary's office had appointed the Secretary of the Urban Planning and Development Department as the focal person, as indicated in a letter. No outdated buses should be on the roads of Quetta, Mr. Justice Kamran Khan Malik directed the concerned authorities.

The bench thoroughly heard transport, construction of roads, and other issues relating to the provincial capital. The court directed the Secretary to ensure the court orders' implementation and warned of personal appearance in case of non-compliance. The Additional Attorney General assured through compliance efforts.

### Provision Of 12 Additional Greens Buses Under Consideration

The Managing Director of the Balochistan Mass Transit Au-



thority (BMTA) submitted a report stating the government's decision to acquire 12 additional green buses, with a proposal for 100 buses under consideration. The court suggested a re-evaluation of the 'Metro Bus Service Project.' The Commissioner of Quetta Division reported actions taken to survey and remove traffic-obstructing stands. The Regional Transport Authority planned to outsource a parking plaza and revise prices.

Concerning the long-route bus terminal relocation, the Quetta Development Authority (QDA) was advised to reduce the reserve price, pending approval by the QDA governing body. The court noted the absence of a governing meeting due to the Chairman's unavailability. The proceedings conclude with ongoing efforts to address traffic and public transportation challenges in the region.

## Single day's delay in holding polls beyond 90-day limit 'most grave' constitutional violation: Justice Minallah

ISLAMABAD: Justice Athar Minallah on Thursday said that even a single day's delay in holding general elections beyond the 90-day timeframe was "the most grave violation of the Constitution".

He made the remarks in an additional note penned in connection with the election date case. Earlier this month, a three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Minallah had heard a set of petitions calling for holding elections within 90 days after the dissolution of the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures.

The court had then directed the Election Commission of Pakistan to confer with President Dr Arif Alvi on the poll date. Subsequently, after months of dilly-dallying on the issue, the ECP agreed to hold general elections in the country on Feb 8. Since the National Assembly was dissolved

three days before the end of its constitutional term, Article 224 of the Constitution mandates that elections be held within 90 days of the dissolution, which was violated on November 7.

But at the same time, Section 17(2) of the Elections Act states that "the commission shall delimit constituencies after every census is officially published". The ECP had ruled out polls this year citing the need for fresh delimitation of constituencies after the approval of the 2023 digital census.

In a 41-page additional note, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, Justice Minallah said, "Delay of a single day in holding the general elections beyond the expressly provided time frame i.e. 90 days is the most grave violation of the Constitution and denial of constitutional rights of the people. "It amounts to a suspension of the Constitution because it breaches its foundation principle. NEWS DESK

## THE PAKWAVE

Editor: Asim Khan

### Funds lapse in financially-starved Balochistan

#### Editorial:

Lapsing of funds is a common phenomenon in the financially-starved Balochistan. The former provincial health minister, Syed Ehsan Shah revealed a bitter reality that his department lapsed Rs.7 billions allocated for the purchase of medicines and equipment for government hospitals.

This exposed the poor political commitment coupled with bad governance and incompetent officers in Balochistan, which is already lagging behind other provinces in terms of key social indicators.

**Hospitals without medicines for last three months in Balochistan**  
Government-run hospitals in Quetta, the provincial capital have been without medicines for the last three months. This compounds the problems of deserving and needy patients knocking the doors of government hospitals.

Since the elites can afford to go to Karachi for medical treatment. So the deserving and needy patients are the worst sufferers of the incompetence of the government in general and the health department in particular.

**Angioplasty and Angiography machines out of order for the last two and half years in BMC**

Look at the irony, the angiography and angioplasty machines are out of order at the Baluchistan's largest government-run hospital i.e. Bolan Medical Complex (BMC) hospital for the last two and half years. This daily has repeatedly reported the out of order machines. Unfortunately, the reports are falling on deaf ears.

The BMC administration cited lack of funds as the underlying reason behind the non repair of machines.

**Rs.7 billions lapsed in health department Balochistan**

This is strange, on one hand Rs.7 billions are lapsed by the department, on the other hand, the same department complains about lack of funds for the repair of two machines in BMC.

Simply, this is unacceptable and an investigation conducted by this daily suggests the machines are deliberately made out of order to force the patients towards private clinics and hospitals.

**Provincial government should put its own house in order prior to criticism of Islamabad**

From the province's chief minister to a section officer everyone speaks about the financial crisis, currently. Blaming Islamabad for the all ills of the province has been the hallmark of all political leaders from government to opposition. However, they are yet to put their own house in order and ensure financial discipline in this resources-starved province of the country.

## Gaza and IHL

By Syed Sheheryar Raza Zaidi:

At the end of World War II, the Allied Powers decided to set up an International Military Tribunal under the London Charter at Nuremberg and later Tokyo to try the war criminals of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. At these trials, there were three primary categories of crimes under which the high-ranking perpetrators were to be tried: 'war crimes' and 'crimes against humanity'.

While conventional 'war crimes' were determined to be violations of the international laws of war existing at the time, 'crimes against humanity' and 'crimes against humanity' were given greater meaning.

'Crimes against peace' in the London Charter categorised acts of 'planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances'.

Similarly, 'crimes against humanity' categorised acts of 'murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war, or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds...'

It was at this time that the developed world realised that the existing laws governing conflict

were inadequate for ensuring protection of civilians, specifically children.

Thus, numerous laws, treaties and agreements emerged international conflict were introduced.

They were commonly referred to as 'International Humanitarian Law'.

The stated purpose of IHL is to determine, even in times of armed conflict, what can and cannot be done, with the primary emphasis on protecting civilians, paramedics, children and non-combatants.

These laws, meant to regulate international armed conflict, at least on paper, are applicable to hundreds of selfless doctors, nurses and paramedic staff.

It has also bombed one of the oldest churches in Gaza, killing tens of people seeking refuge in it.

Contrast that with the images of death, destruction and despair coming out of Gaza. Reports from Gaza confirm that Israel has systematically bombed all of Gaza's hospitals and paramedics.

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By Miftah Ismail:

THERE is a debate in Pakistan on the foreign trade strategy we should pursue: export promotion, import substitution?

In much of the world, especially South-east Asia, the debate has been won by export promotion to spectacular effect. We, however, are still confused, trying to carry out the best of both strategies and ending up with the worst of both.

Import substitution is a strategy that seeks to substitute imported goods with domestic production. Take for example, cars. In the 1980s, our government, while keeping higher duties on imported cars, reduced duties on components such as engines, transmissions, windshields, etc to encourage the assembly of cars here. This protected domestic industry from foreign competition through its duty differential.

This tariff protection, paid by consumers through higher prices, was justified by the argument that this was an 'infant industry' and the small local market didn't allow companies to quickly reach the production scale needed for global competitiveness.

Three decades later, infant-industry protection continues, we have excellent local cars from several international brands but they remain expensive and the market remains small. Both customs duty on parts — which is quite high —

and domestic protection through prohibitively high duties on foreign cars, have kept prices high in the local market and firms remain small and therefore inefficient and uncompetitive.

There are, of course, certain advantages to the import substitution model.

We have now developed a vibrant engineering and vendor industry, the auto industry provides many jobs, we save foreign exchange compared to importing built-up cars and collect considerable taxes.

The downside is that we still have to import a lot of auto components, reduced duties on most no exports from this sector, so it is still a drain on our foreign exchange reserves. If other countries were like that, substituting imports but exporting nothing, we'd have no dollars to buy the raw materials for our industry.

Have given the example of cars but the fact of protecting markets from competition is the same, whether it's air conditioners, candies, or any other good. By imposing tariffs to protect manufacturers cutting into domestic consumers, we let companies remain small and inefficient and not able to export their wares. This is an important reason why Pakistan has such low exports. Export promotion, on the other hand, is a strategy that makes manufacturers better off

selling to foreign customers than local ones. This is done through policies that favour export to achieve impressive growth, but even though Pakistan has also offered many of the same incentives, we have not been able to increase exports.

The reason is that by pursuing both these strategies simultaneously, we just end up increasing the cost of doing business for manufacturers, which renders our industry neither competitive in exports nor in substituting imports.

Of course, this isn't the only factor holding back exports, there are others as well. For instance, non-reliable and expensive provision of energy, periodically overvalued rupee, and law and order issues that prevent foreign buyers from visiting Pakistan.

But here I want to discuss how, by pursuing both import substitution and export promotion strategies, we mess things up.

Consider a zipper manufacturer that has to import various metals, say at five per cent duty, to produce zippers. He will typically go to the government and request that it impose a 15pc duty on the imports of zippers so he can compete with larger foreign manufacturers. Even assuming that the Paki-

stani zipper has no quality issues and is available in all varieties, our garment exporters will quickly run to the government and say they can't afford to buy the more expensive Pakistani zippers or pay 15pc duty on imported zippers as they have to compete in the international market.

So the government allows them to import duty-free imported zippers that are then re-exported as part of a garment. As a result, Pakistani exporters still have to buy imported zippers and pay for freight and hence be at a disadvantage to their international competitors while the local zipper manufacturer will remain small and inefficient. Rather than win-win, we end up with lose-lose.

Our Ministry of Commerce over the years has tried to have an export promotion strategy, but the problem is that more than half of our tax revenues come from the port and in the shape of customs duty, sales tax and withholding tax. And much of the remaining sales tax is also collected because the government knows who has imported raw materials and therefore those manufacturers have to pay sales tax on goods. So our entire tax system depends on us collecting taxes from imports and therefore the import substitution strategy is not pursued because we want to but because we have to.

Similarly, we need concerted moral suasion on our large business houses to get into non-textile export businesses and only allow factories that generate at least 25pc of their sales from exports.

Finally, there should be a policy, for a few years, of 'eat what you hunt' with foreign exporters, whereby industries that are large exporters and have a protected domestic market should be asked to, over time, generate at least an equal amount of exports. In short, we need to re-lessly focus on exports, whether in agriculture or industry.

When the pie shrinks

By Khurram Husain:

THE state, the economy and the people pull the resource envelope of the country in different directions. It is especially the case when periods of macro-economic adjustments get going, meaning when an IMF programme is being implemented.

The state needs revenue. The economy requires liquidity. The people want incomes.

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These laws make it mandatory for Israel to ensure protection of civilians, specifically children.

They require countries engaged in armed conflict to ensure that paramedics are protected, hospitals are safeguarded against aggression and cultural property preserved in the midst of war.

Contrast that with the images of death, destruction and despair coming out of Gaza. Reports from Gaza confirm that Israel has systematically bombed all of Gaza's hospitals and paramedics.

Each of these can come from different sources, and they are finite. When the economy is growing, these resources grow tandem and, for a moment, it seems as if everybody is getting what they want.

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## Addressing climate change, food security issues govt's top priority: Sami Saeed

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed has said that addressing the challenges relating to climate change were top priority of the government and under the umbrella of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), key measures were being taken in this regard.

This was stated by him on Thursday while addressing the 26th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here, a news release said.

Sami Saeed addressed the thematic session titled, "Impact of Climate Change on Crisis, Food & Nutrition Security in Pakistan", the session

was held in collaboration with World Food Program (WFP) and SDPI. The panels of the session included Country Director World Food Program (WFP) Ms Rawalpindi, Muhammad Gooz, Shima, Nutrition Division WFP Ms Lynnda Kiess, Dr Friederike Greb, Dr Irfan Ullah from Nutrition International Pakistan, Dr Anceela Afzal from P M A S - A A U, Rawalpindi, Muhammad Daniyal Masood from NUST. The event was attended by a large number of people from different walks of life including students and civil society activists.

The minister while emphasizing the adoption of strategies highlighted by the experts to "The government is well aware of the climate crisis and several interventions are being undertaken to address the issue under the umbrella of SIFC as agriculture is one of the key areas of this council".

Stressing the need to enhance agricultural practices and resilience to ensure food supply in Pakistan, he said Pakistan aimed for increased productivity through investment in the corporate agriculture sector. The SIFC was established earlier this year to attract foreign and local investments while targeting five key areas which include Agriculture, Defense Production, Mining/Minerals, Information Technology and Energy. It may be noted that Pakistan has vast potential for foreign investment in the fields of agriculture as Pakistan is a semi-industrialized economy with a well-integrated agricultural sector that contributes 22.9 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and creates 37.4 percent of jobs, ensures food security and provides raw materials for industry.

Last year, Sami Saeed said Pakistan faced unprecedented devastation due to torrential rains and flooding in most parts of the country, which affected 33 million people and caused economic losses worth \$30 billion. As a result, the government prepared the 4RF framework, he added. The 4RF document suggested effective coordination and participation arrangements among the federal,



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed addresses at the 26th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

## PSDE Conference concludes, papers on diverse topics presented on final day

MULTAN (INP): The 37th annual general meeting (AGM) and Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE) on "Breaking the Aid-Dependence Chains" hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in collaboration with Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan concluded on Thursday.

Researchers from different parts of country presented several papers on diverse topics during the parallel technical session of the final day of the Conference. The topics of the papers included the lifetime cost of public sector employees, PSDP, public financial management, remittances, debt threat, and gender, among others.

The special lecture on "Fiscal Management for the Revival of the Economy" was delivered by Faisal Rashid of the Oxford Policy Management. Faisal Rashid began his lecture by saying that the current period is the most challenging period for Pakistan's economy. He said that Pakistan has developed a major debt reliance to finance its high fiscal deficit as revenues continue to remain inadequate compared to the ever-increasing expenditures. The tax-GDP ratio remains low, while leakages in the energy sector have increased circular debt to unsustainable levels. Further, the pension schemes continue becoming unaffordable for the federal government, while the federal government continues to overburden itself by undertaking development projects of even the developed subjects.

In this scenario, it is important to think of the possible options that can solve these problems. In the short to medium term, there is no doubt that Pakistan needs to turn towards the IMF for support. A typical IMF program requires countries to focus on reducing fiscal deficits, and employ tight monetary policy, while in recent years the IMF has pressed Pakistan to reform its state-owned enterprises' performance and energy sectors on a priority basis.

Faisal Rashid said that in the medium to long term, Pakistan needs to develop an economic reform plan. There must be a focus on increasing revenue through additional untapped sectors, while the energy sector needs immediate reformation too. DISCOs must be privatized, while efforts must be made to minimize transmission and distribution losses. The SOEs are the white elephants that need immediate reform efforts as well to have a meaningful impact in the long term.

He also said that pensions are also a major issue faced by Pakistan. The present value of future pensions stands at PKR 10 trillion today and is going to balloon unless immediate redressal is not performed. It is essential to reduce the pension beneficiaries stemming from a single employee. Government must look to rationalise grants and subsidies which are majorly untargeted as of now. The development expenditure decision-making requires overhaul as well. The PFM Act 2019 must be implemented in full spirit, while post-completion monitoring & evaluation of the projects must be mandatory.

A panel, arranged by UNICEF, was on "Improving the Quality of Public Spending". The session was moderated by Shaaf Najib, PIDE, while the panelists include Dr Manzoor Ahmed, trade specialist, Asim Bashir Khan, development economist, Iftikhar Anwar, BZL, and Ahmed Waqar Qasim, PIDE.

Shaf Najib introduced the topic by asking whether it is the revenues to be blamed for debt or the expenditures. He said that the data shows that debt servicing accounts for the largest chunk of government expenditures. There are three major federal government liabilities. The government is giving subsidies without having the fiscal space for it. The government

footprint on the economy is very large and there is a great deal of sludge in the system. The private sector gets crowded out.

Ahmed Waqar Qasim said that 87% of loanable funds in the system end up getting diverted to the government, that leaves only 13% available to lend to the private sector. The impact can be looked at from the perspective of banks, private businesses, and the government. For banks, loans end up being given to big, established businesses rather than smaller firms due to high competition for limited resources.

There ends up being less financing in the economy also. Private businesses have to take recourse to private, informal borrowing and must sacrifice growth and expansion plans.

The government prefers to focus on international trade rather than developing and promoting domestic commerce.

Manzoor Ahmad said that the government ends up skewing the playing field and promoting inefficiencies in the economy. PEPRAs rules are outdated and promote inefficiencies and waste. Audit objections are made on frivolous activities, but not on the feasibility and efficacy of projects, and performance evaluations.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with Imam Khan at Masjid Al-Haram and Advisor at Saudi Royal Courts of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Saleh bin Abdullah Humaid at Awam-e-Sadr.

## SDPI confers 'Living Legend Series Award' on Dr Pervez Hassan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) conferred 'Living Legend Series Award' on Dr Pervez Hassan for his unparalleled contributions in the fields of environmental protection and education.

The award was presented to him at the plenary session titled: "SDPI's Living Legend Series Award 2023", at the 26th Sustainable Development Conference organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute on Thursday.

Dr Pervez has numerous achievements to his credit not only in Pakistan but also globally. He is internationally acclaimed and respected for his extraordinary contributions and commitment to the cause of environmental protection and conservation. It is to his credit and efforts that Pakistan got its first environmental protection legislation and is the pioneer of PEPA.

The history of Environmental law would be incomplete without the work of Dr Pervez. He is the force behind the first environmental protection legislation in Pakistan, and he has set up Punjab Hassan Environmental Law Centre at the University of Punjab", said Justice Mansoor. There is a Chinese proverb when the wind blows, some people build walls, while others build windmills. Dr Pervez has been building windmills all his life, Justice Mansoor remarked.

Dr Ishrat Hussain called Dr Pervez a man of vision. "During the time when economists, including me, were skeptical about climate change, Dr Pervez believed that it was a serious issue and felt the urgency to raise awareness". Another admirable quality of Dr Pervez is his commitment to education; his firm belief that the future of Pakistan lies in investing in human capital, he said.

Abdul Razzak Dawood, the former federal minister, said Dr Pervez Hassan is a man of exceptional character and true patriot. Recalling an incident of the past when a foreigner made some abusive remarks about Pakistan, Mr Dawood said: "Dr Pervez Hassan responded to the foreigner in a way that the latter had to apologize". He said Dr Pervez is one of the main brains behind setting up the charter of LUMS and the Beaconhouse National University. He also es-

fair mind as the only quality for an individual. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Pervez Hassan said in 2001, he had received the GC University Lifetime Achievement Award and today's SDPI award was a humbling moment for him. "The Living Legends Award demands stories and mine is the life fully blessed," he added. Shedding light on his life-time achievements from his childhood participation in the world sports league to his professional career as lawyer, he said: "The lawyering in 1970 was dominated by individuals damaging general practice. I professionalized legal practice through my law firm where I started regular counseling of young lawyers at my office. My new approach was received well and got me national fame." He provided free of cost extended legal services to people and communities unable to afford legal services for public interest issues like environmental conservation or human rights.

Dr Pervez Hassan mentioned that his pro bono work was extremely rewarding for him as he spent almost 50% of his professional life on Pro Bono work.

President of WWF-International, Dr Adil Najam, while extending his respects for his mentor said Dr Pervez Hassan's role in National Conservation Strategy was crucial and the first Pakistan-India Environmental Summit.

Vice Chancellor, Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Dr Moeed Yusuf termed the most meticulous person he ever met who possessed an esteemed personality. His hard work still at this age is commendable and he has been absolutely fair and open in his professional dealings, Dr Yusuf added. Dean, BNU School of Architecture, Omar Hassan, who is the son of Dr Pervez Hassan, said his father considered integrity and



ISLAMABAD: Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan WADA Mitsuhiro speak during reception hosted in honor of Journalist at his residence.

## Punjab CM reviews arrangements, renovation of Langar Khana at Data Darbar

LAHORE (INP): 24/7. Langar Khana of Data Darbar has started 24-hour service to provide food to devotees on the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday.

A meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Naqvi was held in order to review the arrangements and renovation of the Langar Khana at Data Darbar.

Langar Khana will be open 24/7 from now on for the convenience of devotees with the support of the Punjab Department of Medina Foundation.

Chief Minister Naqvi appreciated the Department of Auqaf and Medina Foundation for making immediate arrangements to keep Langar Khana open

Mian Rashid of Medina Foundation informed the CM about the arrangements of the Langar Khana.

Data Darbar, clear and beautiful.

The chief minister said that all necessary steps will be taken to provide maximum facilities to the devotees.

In the meeting, a briefing was also given to the CM about the progress on the upgradation of 9 religious shrines in Punjab.

A report was submitted on the upgradation of the shrines of Baba Bulhe Shah in Kasur, Hazrat Musa Pak in Multan, Shah Shams Tabriz in Multan and Hazrat Jalaluddin Bukhari in Uch Sharif.

In the briefing, Secretary Auqaf and

Authority of Lahore, Mian Rashid of Medina Foundation, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Secretary Finance.

Information Secretary, Secretary Auqaf, Secretary Planning and Development, Commissioner Lahore Division, DIG Operations, DG Punjab Information Technology Board, Deputy Commissioner and concerned officials attended the meeting.

DG Walled City

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ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Religious Harmony & Islamic Countries and Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashraf presenting a commemorative shield to Saudi Ambassador at Ta'azeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Conference.

## Four PESCO feeders to made load shedding-free in DI Khan: Commissioner

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): Commissioner Dera Zafarul Islam Khattak has said that four feeders of PESCO Dera Circle would be made load shedding-free within few days as a result of 100 percent recovery.

While talking to journalists at his office here on Thursday, the Commissioner said that in the first phase, four feeders including Topanwala, City-I, Town Hall and Sadder would be made load shedding-free after 100 percent recovery from those areas effective operations against Kanda mafia.

He said that following the directives of the Federal government, the drive against the power theft and defaulters was continued since September 07, 2023. The PESCO Dera Circle has recovered pending dues of about Rs 800 million during the

campaign. Moreover, he informed that the feeders with more than 80 percent losses would be closed during the ongoing campaign. While the feeders with over 80 percent recovery would be made load-shedding-free, he added.

He appealed to the citizens to pay their arrears on time so that their areas could also be made load shedding-free.

Replying to a question about the upcoming MDCAI test scheduled to be held on November 26 at Gomal Medical College, the Commissioner said the administration has completed foolproof security arrangements for test. During the test, he said, uninterrupted power supply will be ensured in that area. He said that carrying electronic devices would not be allowed in the ex-

amination center. The mobile network will also be closed in and around the examination center, he told and mentioned that the papers would be brought to the examination centers under the supervision of the Assistant Commissioner. About the pending salaries of Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSC) employees, he said the administration was in contact with the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the release of funds for the purpose.

He said the administration was aware of the public issues and worries related to the cleanliness. He assured the administrative officers of WSSC that their funds would be released soon for payment of salaries however they should continue the cleanliness operation in all areas.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugri in a meeting with the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq.

## Four terrorists from banned organization killed in Turbat

TURBAT (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) killed four terrorists from banned organization during a targeted operation in Turbat on Thursday.

According to the details, the CTD officials carried out a targeted operation on Pismi Road near Turbat and killed four terrorists affiliated with the banned organization.

The law enforcers recovered a large cache of arms, ammunition, and explosives from the possession of the dead terrorists.

The encountered terrorists were involved in attacks on forces and civilians.

Earlier in the day, a joint operation of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) along with other law enforcement officials was conducted on a tip-off in the SITE area of Karachi, resulting in the arrest of four terrorists affiliated with the banned organization Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

The CTD spokesperson revealed that the arrested individuals - identified as Amin alias Munna, Shahnawaz alias Saleem Mechanic, Maaz Khan, and Yaseen - had created a secret cell of the banned organization in the Orangi Town area of Karachi.

According to the CTD spokesperson, the arrested individuals are allegedly involved in several target-killing incidents in Manghopir, and Pakistan Bazaar areas and are also accused of killing Maulana Rahim and Shamm Khan in the Iqbal Market area of Karachi.

The spokesperson further revealed that Amin alias Munna has served jail for more than nine years in 27 murder cases, while Shahnawaz alias Saleem was sent to jail for nine months in multiple murder cases.

Meanwhile, the police during the raid recovered three pistols and a motorcycle from the possession of the arrested terrorists.

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## Schools closed due to smog in ten Punjab districts

LAHORE (INP): The government of Punjab on Thursday has mandated the closure of educational institutions in ten districts, including Lahore, on Friday and Saturday. This decision has been taken to safeguard the health and well-being of students and staff in the face of deteriorating air quality.

The smog situation in Punjab has reached alarming levels, prompting the government to take decisive action. The closure of schools and colleges aims to minimize exposure to hazardous air pollutants and protect the vulnerable population.

In a high-profile meeting convened to address the smog situation, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired discussions on various proposals aimed at mitigating the impact of smog on the region. As a result, the government has opted to close educational institutions in the designated districts.

Furthermore, market operations will undergo a significant shift, with markets set to open post 3 pm on Saturday and remain completely closed on Sunday. An innovative initiative is scheduled for Sunday as well, with cycling permitted on Mall Road from morning until 5 pm.

In an effort to implement a soft smog lockdown, proposals were considered, including restrictions on public and private vehicles within the city.

Another proposal on the table involves reducing government office staff by half on Friday and Saturday. Additionally, there is contemplation on the installation of canals to aid in smog control.

However, the Lahore High Court has intervened, expressing strong disapproval of the unsealing of factories contributing to pollution. Justice Shahid Karim, presiding over the case, halted the process of unsealing factories without prior court permission. The court heard petitions from concerned citizens, including Haroon Farooq, during which senior legal advisers of LDA Sahibzada Muzaffar Ali and Environmental Commission member Syed Kamal Haider presented reports.

The Commission's report highlighted a meeting with the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi, who assured the court of full compliance with its orders regarding smog control. The court's decisive stance on factory closures underscores the urgency and severity.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Pakistan, Danila Ganich called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Madad Ali, Kyrgyz Envoy discuss exchange of expertise in vocational, technical training

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindi has said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have cultural, linguistic and people-to-people love for each other.

He was talking to a high-powered delegation led by the Ambassador of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuaev which called on him at his office on Thursday.

Warmly welcoming the delegation, Madad Ali Sindi discussed with them the exchange of expertise and knowledge regarding Vocational and Technical Training. He said that the two countries can benefit from the experience of each other. He acknowledged and praised the longstanding cordial relationship between the two countries.

The Education Minister welcomed the exchange of teachers and students to further mutual cooperation. He said that there is significant potential for cooperation between the two countries.

He said that Teacher's Training and quality of education have been given the highest priority since he took office.

He highlighted the E-Taleem and Teleschool platforms developed by the Ministry of Education in its bid to develop digital solutions to prevalent problems in the public education sector.

Madad Ali said that Pakistan has always collaborated with Muslim countries and looks forward to enhancing bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Kyrgyzstan. He appreciated the developments in the education sector of Kyrgyzstan and said that through the exchange of expertise, Pakistan can learn from

their road to progress. The minister was told that 11,000 Pakistani students are studying in Kyrgyzstan. Madad said that such exchange will lead to the strengthening of ties and can lead towards a fruitful bilateral relation. The minister said that we should also look towards collaboration on multilateral platforms such as ECO.

The minister was also briefed about the issue of Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan. He reiterated his resolve to resolve all such outstanding issues. He said that the youth of Pakistan is the most important asset for the country and should be facilitated in every manner. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan H.E. Ulanbek Totuaev said that the People of Kyrgyzstan have a deep affiliation with Pakistan. He said that university-to-university cooperation and Technical Institution to Technical Institution collaboration are the way forward.

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## Govt to provide maximum facilities to ECP for holding free, fair elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said the caretaker government was committed to conduct free, fair and transparent elections and it would provide all possible facilities to the Election Commission of Pakistan for conducting elections.

He said this during a meeting with the delegation of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), which was led by its President Major General (ret'd) Raza Muhammad. The current political and economic situation of the country, elimination of fake news

and disinformation, upcoming general elections, social media issues, and elections in other countries of South Asia were discussed in the meeting, a press release said. The delegation informed the minister about the IPRI's latest research on the political scenario of the country, and appreciated the caretaker government's commitment for conducting free, fair and transparent elections.

"Equal opportunities are being provided to all political parties, there will be no discrimination against anyone," Murtaza Solangi said. He said for improvement of the political environment in the country, development of

consensus among all political parties was indispensable. The minister said the world was facing the problems of misinformation, disinformation and fake news, while the latter was the biggest challenge on social media.

All stakeholders would have to play their role in ending fake news, he maintained. The role of media in the upcoming general elections was also discussed in the meeting.

Solangi said the media would be provided a conducive environment during the elections. Equal coverage was being given to all political parties on state media, he added.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), led by its President Major General (ret'd) Raza Muhammad called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi.

## Wildfire engulfs homes in Western Australia

SYDNEY (INP): Australian firefighters Thursday battled a runaway bushfire that has incinerated 10 homes and forced scores of people to evacuate in the northern outskirts of Perth during a fierce heatwave.

Fire services issued emergency warnings for fire-swept areas north of the Western Australian capital, urging people to flee their homes if they can, or shelter in place if it is already too late to move.

More than 500 emergency workers backed by aircraft were trying to tame the out-of-control, fast-moving flames, which were being fanned by warm winds, officials said.

The blaze has destroyed 10 homes, four sheds and a number of vehicles including caravans, said Western Australia Deputy Premier Rita Saffioti.

"The forecast today is unforgiving," she told a news conference, predicting that thermometers would hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) during the day. "It is crucial now that everyone involved continues to be alert as this bushfire emergency continues to unfold. Today is a day that everyone has to stick together."

Firefighters in one truck struggled to navigate smoke-shrouded streets as red-hot embers flew through the air, television images showed.

At one point, they were confronted by trees engulfed in a fire raging near homes south of Perth, television images showed.

About 130 people including children who fled their homes had sheltered overnight at an evacuation centre, officials said.

Winds will create "significant fire weather" during the day before easing in the next 24-48 hours, said Darren Klemm, head of the state's Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

"It's going to take a number of days to bring this fire under control," he said. Another 65 fires were burning across Western Australia, Klemm said.

Fires have been erupting around Perth as the city swelters in an Australian spring heatwave. The previous day, helicopters dumped water on a fire raging near homes south of Perth, television images showed.

Some people in T-shirts, shorts, and sandals used garden hoses to try to extinguish flare-ups.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif talking to media after launching ceremony of IT Export Strategy.