Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

www.voiceofmillionsqta.com Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah Quetta

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 17, 1448 AH Vol: XX No. 77 Thursday October 29, 2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

Balochistan's future lies in education

CM Bugti vows to eliminate terrorism, protect education in Balochistan

Says govt will transform Balochistan into a peaceful and prosperous province

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister (CM) Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Wednesday vowed to eliminate terrorism from the province and bring those responsible for attacks on innocent civilians to justice, declaring that acts of violence would not weaken the government's resolve to promote education, peace and development.

Speaking on the security situation in the province, the CM strongly condemned the recent attack at a girls' college in Nushki, saying that terrorists were attempting to deprive Baloch children, particularly girls, of education and opportunities for progress.

He reiterated that the provincial government would neither bow to intimidation nor allow educational institutions to be closed under any circumstances. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that terrorists affiliated with the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) entered the girls' college in Nushki and injured three students. Two of the injured girls, who sustained serious wounds, were shifted to Quetta for specialized treatment, while a third student, who suffered minor injuries, was treated in Nushki.

He assured the victims and their families that the government was ensuring the best possible medical care for the injured students.

The CM questioned the motives behind such attacks, asking what purpose was served by targeting innocent female students seeking education.

He said attacking and attempting to deprive Baloch girls of learning opportunities could not be justified under any interpretation of Baloch traditions or values.

"Baloch society has always upheld dignity, honor and respect for education, but it has now become evident to the people of the province that these elements want to keep our daughters away from education and push them towards a path of extremism and violence," he said.

Sarfraz Bugti warned that denying children access to education would make them vulnerable to propaganda designed to turn them against the state.

He said terrorist groups sought to exploit uneducated youth for their own agendas and therefore viewed educational institutions as obstacles to their objectives.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review progress on application of AI and digitization of economy in governance and ongoing collaboration with AliBaba group.



QUETTA: Talented child Munir Ahmed along with his brother and relative meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. Chief Minister has taken responsibility for the complete support and welfare of five orphaned siblings and their mother.

Youth our greatest strength:

Balochistan currently passing through critical phase: Governor

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor of Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, on Wednesday said that the youth are our greatest strength; consequently, we are taking comprehensive measures to hone their talents and empower them.

He said this while addressing participants at an event organized by the Muslim Students Federation (MSF) here. Present on the occasion were Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Senator Saeed-ul-Hassan Mandokhail, Parliamentary Secretary Nawabzada Zarrin Khan Magsi and MSF District President Humayun Kakar.

The Governor said that it is the responsibility of the youth to play an effective role in bringing their peers into the national mainstream, adding that the need of the hour is for all of us to embrace a spirit of 'Pakistanism' (national unity) and utilize our capabilities for the greater good of the country and the nation. He said that Balochistan is currently passing through a critical phase; therefore, the youth should exercise patience and restraint while focusing intently on their studies. Jaffar Khan Mandokhail stated that Parliamentary Secretary Nawabzada Zarrin Magsi and MPA Zarak Mandokhail are highly active and dynamic parliamentary members of our party, while Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran is also playing an active role in addressing the challenges faced by the youth.

He further noted that the presence of several parliamentary members at this MSF event aimed at encouraging the youth serves as proof that the education, development, and future of the youth are among our top priorities.



H.E. Dr. Rajeh Tami Albugamy, Ambassador of the Kigndom of Saudi Arabia called on Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Islamabad.

Religious scholars reaffirm fatwa against suicide attacks, terrorism

ISLAMABAD, (APP): A joint meeting of religious scholars, spiritual leaders and representatives of different faiths, organised by the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee, and the Provincial Paigham-e-Aman Committee, Balochistan, was held at Jamia Salafia Dawat-ul-Haq under the chairmanship of Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Coordinator of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee.

Maulana Ali Muhammad Abu Turab, Dr. Asif Mir, Mufti Yousaf Kashmiri, Maulana Syed Samiullah Agha, Maulana Qasim Haqqani, Allama Nasrullah Hussaini, Mufti Muhammad Jan Qasmi, Maulana Hizbullah Usmani, Maulana Samiullah Awan, Maulana Abdul Rahman, Maulana Abdullah Haqqani, Mufti Umar Farooq, Maulana Abdur Rahman Salafi, Pastor Simon Bashir, Sardar Jasbir Singh and other religious scholars, spiritual leaders and representatives of different faiths attended the meeting. In a unanimous declaration, they reaffirmed the consensus fatwa against suicide attacks, terrorism, extremism and the killing of innocent people, while fully endorsing the national narrative of Paigham-e-Pakistan. The declaration stated that suicide attacks are forbidden in Islam, the killing of innocent people is impermissible, and terrorism is contrary to the fundamental teachings of Islam and all religions. No individual, group or organisation has the right to engage in bloodshed, carry out armed actions against the state or take the law into its own hands in the name of religion, sect or any ideology. Strongly condemning the use of innocent women, children, young people and students for terrorism and suicide attacks, the declaration stated that such acts are religiously forbidden, morally reprehensible and serious crimes against humanity. It added that those who mislead the younger generation and turn them into fuel for terrorism are enemies of human life and Pakistan's future. The declaration expressed full support for the efforts of the Pakistan Army and national security institutions against Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan. It stated that the entire nation stood alongside the Pakistan Army in eliminating terrorism and safeguarding national security and stability.

President commends security forces for eliminating Indian-backed terrorists in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday paid rich tribute to the security forces for eliminating Indian-sponsored terrorists in Kachhi and Wadh areas of Balochistan.

The president, in a statement, praised the professional capabilities of the security forces for successfully destroying the hideouts of the terrorists and eliminating them.

He said that the conspiracies of foreign patrons of terrorists and their local facilitators would be foiled.

The president reiterated that the nation stood shoulder to shoulder firmly with its security forces and law enforcement agencies.

Pakistan crushes ISKP expansion; 67 major operations leave 50 terrorists dead; over 100 arrested

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Over the last three to four years, Pakistani security forces have effectively contained the expansionist ambitions of Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), preventing the terror group from establishing a permanent operational footprint inside the country. Operating out of sanctuaries in Afghanistan—principally within Kunar, Nangarhar, and Helmand provinces—ISKP has continuously utilised these eastern and southern hubs to coordinate logistics, plan cross-border infiltrations, and project force into Pakistan. Following the collapse of Daesh strongholds in Syria, ISKP shifted experienced fighters to Afghanistan, strengthening its ranks and expanding its reach.

On 13 April 2017, the US dropped a MOAB on ISKP's cave and tunnel complex in Mamand Valley, Achin District, Nangarhar, targeting one of the group's strongholds.

Additionally, Taliban Regime militants who could not secure positions on its payroll after the fall of Kabul in 2021 are moving to ISKP. In response to ISKP's expansion attempts into Pakistan, aggressive intelligence-based operations by Pakistan have thwarted the group's ambitions. A total of 67 major operations resulted in more than 50 terrorists killed and over 100 arrested.

Women Police Station to be established in Khuzdar: Opposition Leader

KHUZDAR, (VoM Report): Modern lock-up rooms equipped with contemporary facilities were formally inaugurated at the Khuzdar City Police Station by Opposition Leader in the Balochistan Assembly Mir Younis Aziz Zehri.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by DIG Khuzdar Range Imran Qureshi, Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar Abdul Razzaq Sasoli, senior officers of the district administration and police, as well as a large number of police officers and personnel.

During the ceremony, Opposition Leader Mir Younis Aziz Zehri and Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq Sasoli unveiled the plaque of the lock-up rooms. They also inspected the newly constructed facilities in detail and appreciated the arrangements.

Executive Engineer of the Communication and Works Department Khuzdar Engineer Saleem Razzaq Umrani, Engineer Maqbool, Engineer Hidayatullah Zehri and Abdul Salam Mengal were also present.

Women job fair opens new employment avenues for skilled women in Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): New employment opportunities have been created for skilled women in Balochistan, with 61 women receiving job offers and 110 selected for paid internships at a job fair.

Secretary Labour and Manpower Balochistan, Saleh Muhammad Nasir, said the provincial government is taking practical measures to economically empower youth and women by providing sustainable employment opportunities.

He said providing employment to women according to their skills is among the government's priorities. He said skilled women can play a significant role in the province's economic development, and by providing them with appropriate opportunities, their active participation in economic activities can be ensured. He expressed these views while addressing the Women Job Fair organized by the Balochistan Technical and Vocational Training Authority (B-TEVTA) in collaboration with GIZ, the European Union, and the British Council. The job fair proved to be an important initiative in connecting skilled women with industrial organizations and companies through direct interaction, interviews, and employment opportunities.

During the job fair, 365 skilled women were interviewed by representatives of 12 industrial organizations

Secret to national development lies in AI and digitisation: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed relevant ministries to complete, by November, all necessary measures for projects being undertaken with Alibaba Group to advance artificial intelligence, digitalisation, exports and public service delivery.

He issued the directives while chairing a review meeting on progress in AI, digitalisation and cooperation with Alibaba Group in Pakistan's economy and governance sectors.

The prime minister said the effective use of digitalisation, AI and modern technology could improve trade, exports, agricultural productivity, ease of doing business and the quality of public services.

He welcomed Alibaba Group's cooperation in facilitating the export of Pakistani agricultural commodities to Chinese markets and called for the modernisation of the agricultural sector. He also endorsed collaboration on agricultural automation.

PM Shehbaz directed to implement an early cancer detection system with Alibaba Group's cooperation and ordered the launch of an AI training programme for IT graduates under the Ministry of Information Technology's Ignite programme in collaboration with the company.

He also directed the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) to introduce an analytics system, in partnership with Alibaba Group, to monitor the petroleum products supply chain. The Export Promotion Board was instructed to work with Alibaba Group to increase Pakistan's exports.

The prime minister said a memorandum of understanding had been signed with Alibaba Group at its headquarters in Hangzhou during his visit to China, adding that AI and digitalisation were central to national development.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Senator Saeedul Hassan, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Nawabzada Zareen Khan Magsi, Zarak Khan Mandokhail, Khalil George and Mir Noorullah Lehri participating the in program organized by MSF.

Security Forces kill 9 Indian sponsored terrorists in Balochistan: ISPR

RAWALPINDI, (APP): Security Forces neutralized nine Indian sponsored terrorists during two intelligence-based operations in Kachhi and Wadh Districts of Balochistan, on reported presence of terrorists belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna Al Hindustan.

"An intelligence-based operation was conducted in Kachhi district, during the conduct of operation terrorists hideout was busted by security forces and after an intense fire exchange seven Indian sponsored terrorists were sent to hell. Weapons and ammunition was also recovered," said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). In another intelligence based operation in district Wadh, security forces tracked and intercepted terrorist movement and after an intense fire exchange, two Indian sponsored terrorist were sent to hell. Weapons and ammunition was also recovered. "Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist found in the area. Relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country," the news release said.



QUETTA: A joint delegation of United Nations Organizations UNODC and UNDP meeting with Provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango.

JUI-F questions imposition of governor's rule, emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, addressing the National Assembly session, questioned the imposition of governor's rule and an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and warned the government against pushing the country toward bloodshed.

"We are ready to die at your hands, but we are not ready to die in history," he said.

Speaking in the House, he said that if the elected government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been removed and governor's rule and an emergency imposed there on the basis of terrorism and deteriorating conditions, then the situation in Balochistan was far worse.

Therefore, if this was the principle, governor's rule should also be imposed there.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Thursday October 29, 2026

Recognition of state of Palestine vital to isolate Israel's policies

The anticipated decisions of France and the United Kingdom to recognize the state of Palestine mark a significant diplomatic shift, reinforcing the international consensus that a two-state solution is the only viable path to lasting peace in the Middle East, with global implications. While recognition alone will not alter the realities of occupation, it carries profound legal and political weight – affirming Palestine's right of self-determination and sending a clear message to Israel: the denial of Palestinian statehood is unsustainable and in violation of international law and the prevailing global consensus.

This move aligns with a broader trend in Europe, where frustration over Israel's continued settlement expansion and rejection of meaningful negotiations led several nations to reconsider their positions. The symbolic and legal implications of recognition cannot be overstated: it reinforces Palestine's standing in international law and challenges Israel's occupation, which has been declared by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to be "illegal" in two advisory opinions, in 2004 and in 2024.

Under international law, recognition of a state is a political act that acknowledges an entity's statehood based on Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States criteria: a permanent population, defined territory, government, and capacity to enter relations with other states. While Palestine's territorial fragmentation under occupation complicates full state functionality, 148 UN member states have already recognized it, affirming its legitimacy as a sovereign state.

Admittedly, recognition does not end the Israeli occupation or settle matters related to border demarcation between Israel and Palestine, but it strengthens the latter's standing in international forums and legal disputes. It also signals to Israel that its current policies – settlement expansion, annexation threats, and the refusal to engage in good-faith negotiations – are incompatible with global norms and may lead to sanctions.

The ICJ and the UN General Assembly have repeatedly affirmed the principle of Palestinian self-determination and called for compliance with international law regarding the occupation. The ICJ is currently deliberating two significant cases: South Africa v. Israel, which examines the scope of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including accusations under the 1951 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and an advisory opinion on Israel's legal obligations toward UN agencies, including the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), operating in the region. Recognition of Palestine by additional Western and European states would reinforce these legal precedents, further isolating Israel's policies under international law.

The case of Kosovo offers a compelling parallel. Despite Serbia's vehement opposition, recognition by a majority of UN members allowed Kosovo to consolidate its de facto statehood, participate in international institutions, and establish legal precedents that Serbia can no longer overturn. While Kosovo's independence remains contested – given that Russia and China, two permanent UN Security Council members, continue to object – its recognition has normalized its sovereignty in practice.

Similarly, widespread recognition of Palestine would solidify its claim to statehood, making its exclusion from meaningful negotiations increasingly untenable for Israel. Like Kosovo, Palestine may not achieve full UN membership under the UN Charter owing to US exercise of its veto power in the UN Security Council, but diplomatic recognition by influential states would grant Palestine greater leverage in future talks.

France and the UK are joined by other states such as Portugal, Malta, San Marino, and Finland, joining Spain, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia, and Belgium, all of which have already taken steps toward recognition. Even traditionally cautious nations, such as Canada and Australia, have hinted at reconsidering their positions. This momentum reflects frustration with Israel's opposition to a two-state solution and aligns with broader efforts to revive diplomatic efforts. The EU's gradual shift toward recognition underscores that the status quo – perpetual occupation, settlement expansion, and the absence of a political horizon for Palestinians – is unsustainable.

Recognition should not be seen as hostility toward Israel but rather as a reaffirmation of international law. The Oslo Accords were meant to be transitional, yet three decades later, Israel continues to undermine Palestinian self-determination through military control, settlement entrenchment, and the fragmentation of Palestinian territory. By recognizing Palestine, European states underscore that Israel cannot indefinitely dictate terms without consequence.

A two-state solution remains the only framework endorsed by the UN, the EU, and major global powers. Recognition does not replace negotiations but reinforces their urgency. If Israel continues to reject Palestinian statehood, it risks further diplomatic isolation and the erosion of its own legitimacy as a democratic state. Therefore, recognition sends a powerful message: Palestinian statehood is not a concession but a right. As with Kosovo, international consensus can shape realities on the ground. For peace to prevail, Israel must accept that denial is no longer an option.

The expected recognition of Palestine by France, the UK, and other Western states marks a turning point in the conflict's diplomatic landscape. While it will not immediately end the occupation or resolve all disputes, it reasserts the principle that Palestinian self-determination is non-negotiable. Israel now faces a choice: adapt to the changing international consensus or face growing isolation and the real possibility of sanctions. The two-state solution, though challenged, remains the only viable path to peace. Recognition is not the end of the process – but it is an essential step toward a just and lasting peace under the UN Charter.

Sandy Eldorado

F.S. Aijazuddin

Never throw away a diary. It is like burying your past prematurely. In 1980, I worked in Dubai for a while and then for the next nine years in the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. Both sheikhdoms were emerging from the chrysalis of their sandy past to become modern Eldorados.

C. Davidson's recent book From Sheikhs to Sultanism (2021) encouraged me to re-read my early diaries. Davidson focuses on the rise of two modern Arab rulers — Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman al-Saud (MBS) and the UAE's President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ). MBZ (born in 1961) is older than MBS by 24 years. MBS defers to MBZ as his 'wise uncle'. The enormous disparity in their wealth, however, makes MBS far more important.

Both rulers govern through layered control — using what Davidson defines as 'patrimonialism' (governance dominated by the ruler, his family and friends) and 'neo-patrimonialism' (in which modern-looking institutions and rules are the veneer for patrimonialism). The ADNOC I joined in May 1980 fell into the second category.

From ADNOC's inception in 1971, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan had been keen that it should be run on professional lines. He did not trust the Western oil giants. He was suspicious of Egyptians and other Arabs. He turned instead to Algeria, where, after the peremptory departure of the colonising French, young Algerian executives in its national oil company Sonatrach stepped into the vacuum.

The man sent by Sonatrach to head ADNOC was a 31-year-old Sorbonne-trained economist, Dr Mahmoud Hamra Krouha. An FT profile described him as "a slightly-built man, neatly dressed in western suits, with an easy smile and an Indira Gandhi-style streak of white in his hair". A formidable linguist, he was fluent in Arabic (including the local Bedu dialect), French and English. He took with him about a dozen Algerians (not all properly qualified) to help him run ADNOC.

I had the privilege of working with Dr Krouha for seven years, between 1980 and 1987. Over my long professional career, I have encountered many chief executives, each a giant in his own field. None — except for our Syed Babar Ali — could compare with Krouha for vision, dynamism, and competence.

Dr Krouha exercised an unshared grip over ADNOC's 10 directorates — exploration & production (E&P), hydrocarbon processing, marketing, etc — and its 18 subsidiaries and affiliates. He knew everything about them and expected his staff to be as well informed. Every paper requiring his approval went up to his Spartan 12th-floor office in ADNOC's headquarters. (Its replacement is a 65-floor skyscraper, costing $316 million.)

He chaired the board meetings of each of ADNOC's subsidiaries, usually in the afternoons (ADNOC closed at 2:30pm.) All too often, underprepared CEOs would find themselves outgunned by him. On one occasion, I witnessed him take on Dr Mana bin Said Al-Otaiba, then UAE's minister of petroleum and mineral resources. A new general manager had to be appointed in a company of which Dr Otaiba was the chairman. British Petroleum proposed a candidate. Dr Otaiba welcomed him. Dr Krouha objected: "It is ADNOC's right as the majority shareholder to nominate the GM." BP and other foreign shareholders had to agree. The minister left the room, but returned. Dr Krouha had made his point.

Inevitably, as young watanis or locals returned from their training abroad, they eyed the top posts in ADNOC. In January 1981, ADNOC's board instructed Dr Krouha to appoint Abu Dhabians as deputy directors. The first ha---ppened to be Su--h-ail Al-Mazrui. I know the exact date — Jan 25 — from my diary. I was in the room of the Algerian director (E&P) when Suhail was ushered in. I wrote in my diary: "He is a young mild-looking engineer who has recently returned from the US." His salary I noted was in Grade 12, mine Grade 15.

I suspected that he had been chosen by Sheikh Zayed to take over from Dr Krouha. That took another six years. In 1987, during a routine majlis, Dr Krouha attended on Sheikh Zayed. Zayed asked Sheikh Tahnoun (his son-in-law and chairman, ADNOC): "Is he still here?" Before Dr Krouha could return to his office in ADNOC, it had been sealed and he was escorted to his villa. A BP representative commented afterwards, "We were there before, and we are here now. How long did he think he would last?"

Suhail Al-Mazrui took ad hoc charge of ADNOC. With the sustained patronage of MBZ, in time he rose to become minister of energy & infrastructure.

Davidson's detailed book mentions ADNOC only three times, Dr Krouha not once. Broken by the death of a son, Krouha died in Paris in 1997, unsung, but not forgotten.

Two things to beware

Khurram Husain

Here are two things to beware: billionaires in politics and government officials who publicly praise the 'resilience' of the people. These two may seem unrelated but they share a devastating quality: they mask the failure of governance and distort the public's understanding of power, responsibility and survival.

Let's begin with the billionaires.

In recent months, Rahul Gandhi's sharpened attacks on Narendra Modi have reignited a debate that India's ruling class would prefer to bury. At the centre of his criticism is not ideology, not even electoral promises, but a relationship. The relationship between Prime Minister Modi and Gautam Adani.

Gandhi has been unflinching in what he calls a "symbiotic" arrangement between political power and corporate interest. In speech after speech, he has laid out how Adani's businesses ballooned after Modi came to power, often expanding into sectors — airports, defence, energy — where government clearances and public assets were key to growth. Gandhi's central point is blunt: Modi governs for Adani, not for India.

Adani's rise was greased by access — access to land, licences, loans and, above all, impunity. This is not business. It is cronyism par excellence, and a cautionary tale for the rest of us. It shows billionaires in politics are usually there for themselves only. They use their wealth to buy themselves a country, and use the country to increase their wealth.

In Pakistan, we've had our own versions of this playbook. One example would be Jehangir Tareen, who bankrolled Imran Khan's rise, shuttled independents into the PTI camp, and carried the party through its early years in power. And what did he get in return? Sugar — and a lot of it. Subsidies flowed, prices were manipulated, and regulatory oversight vanished. When the sugar inquiry report finally came out, it laid bare the scale of profiteering. Tareen's political investment paid off handsomely till he was caught with his hand in the jar and, mercifully for the rest of us, was turfed out of the game that he thought he had bought.

Then there's Elon Musk in America. Though not a politician in the formal sense, Musk now wields political power in all but name. From manipulating markets with tweets to controlling public infrastructure — satellite internet in war zones, electric vehicles on government subsidies — Musk has blurred the line between private ambition and public consequence. His public behaviour, particularly since acquiring Twitter (now X), reveals not a disrupter of elites but a billionaire deeply committed to reshaping the rules in his favour. He demands tax breaks, moves factories when displeased, and openly flirts with political candidates who will leave him alone. His influence is not democratic. It is imperial.

Whether it's Adani, Tareen, or Musk, the pattern holds: billionaires do not enter or shape politics out of civic duty. They do it to protect and expand their empires. They present their wealth as a marker of success. 'My wealth is evidence of my success. Give me control of the state, and I will operate it successfully too,' they say.

But it's a lie. In truth, they ask for control only to increase their wealth and nothing more.

Now to the second thing to beware: the myth of the 'resilient' Pakistani.

You've heard it before — usually from a government official at a conference, a donor event or a television interview. 'The people of Pakistan are incredibly resilient.' It sounds flattering. It sounds noble. But it's neither. It's a euphemism for abandonment.

We are not resilient because we choose to be. We are resilient because we have to be.

Because when inflation ravages the monthly wage, life must go on. Because resilience is what it takes when the roads are flooded after the slightest rain, crime is rampant, public service non-existent, property rights hard to come by and justice elusive, and education a luxury. Let's be clear. This is not resilience. It is endurance. It is a forced adaptation to failure.

And when officials celebrate this they are not saluting the people. They are excusing themselves. Every time they praise our 'strength' they are also admitting their own weakness. Their inability to provide the basics of governance becomes, in their narrative, proof of our heroism.

But there is no dignity in being told you are brave for surviving conditions that should not exist in the first place.

The woman who walks five kilometres for clean water does not want to be called strong. She wants water. The child studying by candlelight is not doing it for the applause.

And here's the real danger: once 'resilience' becomes the official line, it lets the state off the hook. It becomes a substitute for service delivery. 'Look how resilient they are,' they say — so why fix anything?

Let's retire this fiction. Let's stop romanticising suffering. The people of this country do not want to be resilient. They want to be safe, fed, housed and heard. And if there is any role for government in this country, it is to build a society where nobody needs to be resilient just to survive. So beware the billionaire who seeks to 'serve'. He's likely here to collect. And beware the official who praises your 'resilience'.

They are telling you not that you are strong — but that they are absent. Because in both cases, the real message is the same: 'you're on your own, kid.'

Peace and justice

Mohammad Ali Babakhel

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity by 2030. Achieving these ideals is difficult in a world that is increasingly divided, with some regions enjoying sustained levels of peace and security while others are confronted with endless cycles of violence. Violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on global peace, affecting economic growth. Addressing this requires a global approach and cooperation.

SDG 16 — 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions' — focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring access to justice, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. For developing societies with strong colonial pasts, the implementation of SDG 16 is complex. Its primary aim is to reduce all forms of violence by working with governments and communities to find solutions to conflict.

It includes 12 targets and 23 indicators. Its priority areas include strengthening police and judicial systems, community-based violence prevention programmes, reintegration of former combatants, ensuring access to justice through legal aid programmes and simplification of court procedures, human rights training for police and judiciary, fighting corruption through transparency in public finance, anti-corruption commissions, whistleblower protection laws, and building effective institutions with transparent governance structures, citizen participation in decision-making and digital governance. To protect human rights, national human rights commissions are to be formed, and human rights protection laws and monitoring mechanisms for rights violations are to be established. A few countries have introduced innovations to achieve the targets set in SDG 16. Rwanda introduced community courts (Gacaca) for post-genocide justice. They were designed to address the massive scale of crimes committed during the Rwandan genocide by involving local communities in the judicial process. Argentina opened 90 access-to-justice centres. Latvia planned the promotion of dialogue and civic education through accessible spaces like libraries and museums. Georgia initiated juvenile justice reforms that have lowered child incarceration and recidivism rates. South Korea and Sierra Leone established legal aid corporations and justice centres that have provided assistance in millions of cases, expanding equitable legal access. Australia introduced interdepartmental governance mechanisms for improved coordination, and Nigeria introduced a youth alliance to incorporate the participation of youth in civic engagement. In Pakistan, point 20 of the National Action Plan lists a commitment to revamp and reform the criminal justice system. Point 12 of the revised NAP 2021 includes it as one of its priorities. Pakistan has also drafted two internal security policies: NISP I 2014, NISP II 2018 and the National PVE Policy 2024. These federal initiatives need to be translated into action plans by all provinces, irrespective of political inclinations, as they are meant to improve institutional capacity and ensure order, security and peace. Pakistan's security rankings warrant more coordinated efforts among all federal and provincial agencies. In the Global Terrorism Index 2025, Pakistan has been ranked the second most impacted country by terrorism. In the Rule of Law index, it has been ranked 129th, and in the Human Development Index at 168. Translating global commitments into tangible action re--quires locally tail-o-red strategies. When evaluating the legal system, countries need to consider the cost, complexity, discri-mination and distance from rural communities. In rural areas, community-based justice solutions should be funded, and barriers to justice for vulnerable groups addressed. By improving transparency through digital tools, fostering partnerships between governments and civil society, strengthening legal aid and anti-corruption bodies, empowering women and youth in governance and peacebuilding, and encouraging robust data collection systems, the hurdles may be overcome. Implementation strategies include policy reform to align national laws with international human rights standards, capacity building of bureaucracy, data collection, encouraging civil society and youth engagement in governance, and fostering international cooperation. The SDGs and peace are interconnected. A developing state should interpret SDG 16's targets more flexibly. It must be understood that investing in the criminal justice system is not a non-developmental activity, but an investment in sustainable development and peace.

No room for complacency

Ishrat Husain

Recent external developments have been quite favourable for Pakistan — some of them unexpected. Pakistan's emerging importance after the May skirmishes with India, President Donald Trump's soft pronouncements coupled with a warm welcome to the top leadership, the souring of US-India ties, a reasonably good deal on reciprocal tariffs, the upgrading of credit ratings, prospective investment in 'massive' oil reserves and minerals, etc, have led to euphoria.

However, this exuberance should be tempered by the experience of past relationships with major powers, which have been transactional and not permanent. High-wire acts carry risks. We should not allow the feel-good factor to intoxicate us. Our policymakers should not project life as being easy going forward, as if they were no longer obligated to carry out the onerous task of building a strong economy through stabilisation and deep reform. In short, there is no room for complacency as we are far from overcoming our domestic vulnerabilities, which are accentuated by adverse external conditions.

De-globalisation, inward-looking industrial policies, onshoring and nearshoring of supply chains, disruptive and exorbitant tariffs hindering international trade and openness, the likely slowing down of the US economy, climate change risks and AI penetration have made it difficult for emerging economies to repeat the exceptional progress made in 1990-2015. Domestically, the drivers of competitiveness — industrial and agricultural productivity through diffused innovation, a less skilled workforce, dysfunctional governance institutions, political instability, an inequitable and distortive taxation structure, over-regulation, the deep intrusion of state agencies in the market, an outdated model of energy pricing and the SOEs' continuing losses — are stumbling blocks to generating jobs, expanding exports, reducing poverty and attracting investment.

Digitisation, financial inclusion and the absorption of emerging technologies are still in their infancy and yet to permeate transaction structures. The debt burden has not yet reverted to the legal benchmark of 60 per cent of GDP, and the rollover risk of short-term deposits by friendly countries remains high. Foreign exchange reser-ves are inadequate for the growing needs of a buo-yant economy and as a buffer for unanticipated future shocks. Continuity and consistency of economic policies are yet to be tested when faced with politically unpopular decisions that end the privileges of rent-seeking classes, including those defying formalisation and documentation.

Many reforms resulting in stabilisation, deregulation of wheat prices and non-essential drugs, the Pakistan Single Window, automation and data integration of FBR taxes with third-party databases, the phasing out of regulatory and additional duties and reduction in rates and slabs, right-sizing of the federal government, privatisation of PIA and the Discos, civil service reform, and introducing a competitive market for the energy sector have been initiated. They should be brought to a successful culmination. Other planned reforms such as targeted subsidies and training of women through BISP, the repair of provincial finances by raising outcome-based investment in social sectors, developing employable skills for youth, the efficient use of irrigation water and drought- and heat-resistant seeds, boosting industries providing intermediate inputs such as steel, petrochemicals, active pharmaceutical ingredients, electronics and export facilitation have yet to see the light of day.

Delivery of basic public services has suffered since directly elected, fully empowered and well-resourced local governments were dissolved. Stiff resistance by MNAs and MPAs, who fear losing their clout, has prevented the completion of devolution. There's no realisation that dissatisfaction with the government of the day will dwindle once local communities take charge of their own affairs, and mobilise and allocate resources for what they see as priority needs in their areas. Surveys show that citizens with complaints have easier access to local councillors who can address their grievances than they do to their MPAs and MNAs. The Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad metropolitan corporations will no longer be dependent upon the provincial or federal governments, who can then allocate more resources to backward districts.

Iran threatens attacks on regional energy infrastructure after Trump's threat over Hormuz

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: An Iranian military source warned on Wednesday that Tehran would strike regional infrastructure, including energy facilities, if Washington targeted bridges and power plants in Iran, following US President Donald Trump's threat to attack infrastructure over commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump threatened earlier today that the US would bomb an Iranian bridge or power plant every time Tehran attacked a commercial vessel in the strategic waterway.

Speaking to the semi-official Tasnim News Agency, the source said Iran has a "steel determination" to exercise its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz and "would never allow the waterway to become a source of threats" against the country again.

The source added that shipping through the strait would remain safe provided vessels coordinated with Iran and complied with arrangements established by Tehran.

Otherwise, the source said, Iran would continue exercising what it described as its firm resolve to control the strategic waterway as part of ensuring its long-term security.

"If the US targeted any Iranian bridge or power plant, Tehran would respond by striking regional infrastructure, including energy facilities in which Washington has interests," he warned.

The source also said the US should have become fully aware over the past 10 days that Iran is capable of striking any target it chooses, adding that any "gamble" by Trump "would once again end in failure".

The warning comes as US and Iranian forces continued exchanging strikes despite a Pakistan-brokered framework agreement signed in June to end the war that began in February and pave the way for a lasting peace agreement.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday warned that the United States would retaliate with strikes on Iranian infrastructure if the Islamic Republic attacked any vessel transiting the Strait of Hormuz. In a post on his Truth Social platform, he said any attack by Iran on a ship in the strategic waterway — whether carried out with "a missile, rocket, drone, or any other device or weapon" — would trigger a US military response.



Visitors attend the 12th Traditional Pomegranate Festival at Halabja City Park in Halabja, Iraq

Nearly 1,000 people have died from Ebola in DR Congo

Monitoring Desk

CANGO: Nearly 1,000 people have died from Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the country's health ministry says.

DRC's National Institute of Public Health said on Wednesday that 999 deaths have been confirmed since the outbreak of the Bundibugyo strain of the virus began in May.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), two people have also died from the virus in neighbouring Uganda.

DRC's Health Ministry said that as of Monday, 2,473 cases had been recorded in the latest outbreak. At least 737 patients are currently in isolation and hospitals, it added.

The DRC outbreak was declared on May 15 after several deaths were recorded in the northeastern province of Ituri, where cases remain concentrated. Several cases linked to the DRC's outbreak were then reported in Uganda.

This outbreak has killed more people at a quicker rate than any Ebola outbreak on record, including the 2013-2016 outbreak that is considered the worst on record with over 11,000 deaths out of at least 28,000 cases. That outbreak took about eight months to reach 1,000 deaths.

Last week, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that the current outbreak had over the past month "expanded faster than any previous outbreak" of the virus.

Zelensky tasks new army chief with stepping up offensive operations

Monitoring Desk

UKRAINE: The new commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, Mykhailo Drapatyi, said President Volodymyr Zelensky has given him "clear tasks" for his new role, including continuing and intensifying offensive operations across all fronts.

Earlier on Wednesday, the outgoing commander-in-chief, Oleksandr Syrskyi, said that he was handing over an army that knows how to fight on the offensive, in a farewell message after his dismissal the previous day. Zelensky dismissed Syrskyi on Tuesday evening after days of protests, replacing him with Drapatyi.

The protests broke out after Zelensky removed the popular politician Mykhailo Fedorov - seen as responsible for recent Ukrainian successes in drone warfare - from his role as defence minister last week. In a post on Facebook on Wednesday, Drapatyi said that his priorities included potential operations deep inside Russian territory and the technological modernization of Ukraine's armed forces.

Drapatyj, who is 17 years younger than the outgoing chief, is expected to bring more modern approaches to warfare and military leadership.

Iranian official denies 2 French diplomats mistreated

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI/PARIS: An Iranian foreign ministry official denied on Wednesday that two French diplomats were mistreated by Iranian security personnel who detained them for several in Tehran.

Paris swiftly dismissed the Iranian official's comments, which were reported by state media, and has warned that there will be consequences over the incident.

The French foreign ministry summoned the Iranian charge d'affaires on Tuesday over the incident, in which it said two French embassy staff had been detained and physically intimidated by Iranian security services. Paris said the diplomats had their phones taken, were forbidden to contact the embassy and were verbally intimidated in a breach of diplomatic conventions.

Mysterious white foam draws crowds on Nigerian highway

Monitoring Desk

NIGERIA: An urgent investigation has been launched by Nigeria's environmental agency after a strange white foamy substance appeared on a major highway, sparking a public spectacle and raising safety concerns.

The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Nesrea) has warned people to keep their distance from the unidentified substance along the busy Kaduna-Abuja Expressway, linking the main city in the north to the federal capital.



An Israeli army attack on a school housing refugees in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip resulted in the death of one Palestinian and injured many others. Palestinians who lost loved ones were overcome with grief.



Emergency teams work at the scene of a collision involving two high-speed trains near Urda station in Toledo province, Spain

Desperate search for survivors after flash floods 'like an earthquake' kill 23 people

Monitoring Desk

KABUL: Rescue crews were digging through mud and rubble for the second day in search of survivors after flash floods tore through a remote province in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least 23 people and leaving over 100 missing.

The floods struck Nuristan province on Monday, collapsing an undetermined number of buildings and injuring 80 people, the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority said. Parun, the provincial capital, was among the worst-affected areas and officials said they expected the death toll to rise as rescue reached cut-off villages.

Nuristan is one of Afghanistan's most isolated provinces, a sparsely populated stretch of steep valleys and forests along the Pakistan border where roads are poor and settlements cling to mountainsides. Its harsh terrain is slowing the arrival of help from the national capital Kabul, leaving residents to join the search alongside emergency teams.

Scores of people gathered in Parun on Tuesday to look for the missing, some using wooden poles and their bare hands, an AFP journalist at the scene reported.

Farid Gul Zaheer, a 34-year-old pharmacist who was hurt while trying to escape up the mountainside, said he had never witnessed such a dangerous flood. "It felt like there was an earthquake, and I heard children and people screaming," he told AFP.

Severe weather was forecast to persist for a few days, with heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, winds carrying dust and sand.

Ukrainian drones hit Russian online giant retailer Wildberries for 2nd time

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukrainian drones have hit warehouses of Russia's biggest online retailer again, killing one person and injuring another 14, local officials say.

They say logistics hubs run by Wildberries in two south-west cities in the Krasnodar and Stavropol regions were struck overnight, triggering the evacuation of employees.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the hubs were "involved in providing the Russian army with drone components, navigation equipment and other gear".

Ukraine hit the retailer's warehouses in central Russia four days ago, killing eight people, according to Russian officials. Wildberries - often described as Russia's Amazon - employs some 48,000 people.

Workers were evacuated after the attacks on logistics centres in Krasnodar and Nevinnomyssk, Wildberries founder and Russia's wealthiest woman Tatyana Kim said earlier on Wednesday.

"There are no words to describe all the feelings and emotions caused by the attacks on ordinary people, on our employees, on us, who are simply doing our jobs," she wrote on Telegram. "But these situations demonstrate the most important thing: we must continue to do what we do for the benefit of people."

In Krasnodar, 10 people were injured in an attack on a warehouse complex, with three in a serious condition, the region's Governor Veniamin Kondratyev said.

FBI chief hold talks in Cambodia

Monitoring Desk

PHNOM PENH: FBI Director Kash Patel held talks with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Wednesday on joint efforts to combat international online scam operations that cheat victims out of billions of dollars each year.

A report issued Tuesday by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime estimated that scams caused estimated losses in the Asia-Pacific region alone of as much as $114 billion in 2025. It warned that even as authorities conduct raids on industrial-sized scam centers mostly located in border regions of Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, criminals have responded by shifting to other parts of the world or operating on a smaller scale. Patel arrived in Cambodia from neighboring Thailand.



The Turkish Stars, the aerobatics team of the Turkish Air Force, conducted a rehearsal flight over Ankara today as part of the 29 October Republic Day celebrations and the Turkic States Organization Summit.

German army sends combat engineers to help fortify Poland's border

Monitoring Desk

GERMANY: German army combat engineers are helping Poland fortify its border with Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, the Bundeswehr said on Wednesday, adding that the troops from a reinforced armoured engineer platoon had already arrived in early July.

The soldiers are working alongside the Polish army to dig anti-tank ditches, erect tank barriers and build field fortifications and fighting positions.

"The aim of this initiative is to delay an invasion by those forces in the event of a military conflict, thereby increasing the responsiveness of Polish troops and NATO," the Bundeswehr, as Germany's armed forces are formally known, said in a statement.

Lebanon's PM visits shattered border village as deal with Israel begins

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: Lebanon's prime minister visited Wednesday a battered southern village as the implementation of a Washington-brokered Lebanese-Israeli agreement began, following months of war between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah.

The latest conflict started March 2, when the Lebanese militant group fired rockets toward Israel after the U.S.-Israeli February attacks that set off the Iran war.

In response, Israel launched an aerial campaign and ground invasion in Lebanon, killing more than 4,000 people and displacing 1.2 million others.

The two sides, technically in a state of war nearly 80 years after Israel's establishment, started rare direct talks championed by Washington.

They reached an agreement by late June, setting a plan for the deployment of Lebanese military forces in areas in southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah had a military presence and influence, and the withdrawal of Israeli forces, while disarming the militant group.

Hezbollah has refused the talks and disarmament calls.

Nawaf Salam's visit to Zawtar Al Gharbieh came a day after President Joseph Aoun's landmark White House meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, who made a surprise announcement, allowing American carriers to resume direct flights to Lebanon for the first time in 40-plus years.

Salam, alongside Lebanon's defense minister and senior military officials, pitched a Lebanese flag near a destroyed building in the town, vowing the government will start rebuilding destroyed homes and infrastructure.

"We have insisted since the beginning that our goal is the complete Israeli withdrawal from all our territory," Salam said.



Supporters of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who was re-elected in the second round of the Brazilian presidential elections, gathered in Rio de Janeiro to celebrate their president's 81st birthday.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-2627101215413 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BUILDING DERA BUGTI invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee 2000 PKR and bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	CONSTRUCTION OF AC OFFICE AND RESIDENCE SUB- DIVISION SANGSEELA, DISTRICT SOUTH DERA BUGTI PSDP NO 141 Z2026.0603	43,349,754

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over of at least 30,344,827 PKR Amount in3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Bid Security 2% of the Estimated Cost Tender Document Fee Rs.2000 in account of C-02716 The Bidder must not have any pending litigation or court cases related to contractual disputes, fraud, corruption, or other serious offenses. The Bidder must not have been involved in any contract breach or termination Completed at Least 02 Projects of Similar Nature and complexity projects Cost 60% or above under taken in last 05 Years **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Gurantee,Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gob.pk **Issuance of tender Documents:** Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gob.pk **Last Date of bid submission:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 12 November, 2026till 12:00 PM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 01:00 PM on EPPS System Address: Mian Road, Dera Bugti

Phone no: 0835410162Fax no: 0835410562

Email: Aijazhussainxenbuilding@gmail.com

Executive Engineer Building CWPP&H Department District Dera Bugti

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MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING

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INFORMATION SERVICE ACADEMY

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Courage, Honour and Loyalty — The Identity of Balochistan's Youth

ہمت، غیرت اور وفا—بلوچستان کے جوان کی پہچان

ہمت، غیرت ءُ وفا — بلوچستان ءِ جوانانی پچھار

Applications are invited from the candidates holding Local/Domicile Certificate of Balochistan to fill the following vacancies against Balochistan Quota on regular basis in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Islamabad:

Post	BPS	Number of Posts	Age Limit	Qualification/ Other Requirements
Lower Division Clerk (LDC)	11	01 (Balochistan)	35 years including general relaxation + 05 years (Specific additional relaxation for candidates from Balochistan - **Total: 35 years)**	• Matriculation with Typing Speed 30 WPM • Preferably Computer Literate

TERMS AND CONDITIONS/GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Only the candidates possessing Balochistan Local/Domicile Certificate are eligible to apply.
2. Recruitment will take place at the doorstep (at District level) with the help of newly established Employment Cells in the Districts of Balochistan as a special case to ensure recruitment of residents.
3. Applications can be submitted at the respective District Employment Cell as well as through the National Job Portal (njp.gov.pk) using the dedicated tab created for this recruitment exercise.
4. The Recruitment will be done through Walk-in-Interview process (No Entry & Written Test).
5. Candidates must bring original documents at the time of interview.
6. No TA/DA will be admissible for appearing in the interview.
7. Candidates must apply for the job within 15 days of the date of this advertisement.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR (ADMIN)

Information Service Academy, ISA Building,

Zero Point, Islamabad | Ph: 051-9252192

PID(I)3897/26

Air pollution claims over 200,000 lives annually in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Air pollution causes more than 200,000 deaths annually in Pakistan and costs the country up to 6.5 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP), speakers at the Pakistan National Clean Air Conference 2026 said on Wednesday, calling for coordinated action, stronger monitoring and sustained investment to address the public health and environmental crisis.

A presentation by UNICEF highlighted the disproportionate impact on children, attributing 56,725 deaths among children under five to air pollution in 2023 and estimating 5.1 million healthy years of life lost in this age group.

Drawing on the State of Global Air Report 2025 and the Global Burden of Disease 2023 study, the presentation said the entire population of Pakistan lived in areas where annual average concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) exceeded the national standard of 15 micrograms per cubic metre. Some 92 per cent of the population lived in areas where concentrations exceeded 35 micrograms per cubic metre.

It added that 76.6 million children in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa lived in areas where average PM2.5 concentrations exceeded the World Health Organisation's least stringent interim target of 35 micrograms per cubic metre.

Cindy Kushner, UNICEF Pakistan's chief of water, sanitation and hygiene and climate, environment and energy, highlighted the consequences for children's survival, health and education.

She cited the closure of schools in 18 Punjab districts during the November 2024 smog episode, affecting 16 million children, and identified winter smog, crop burning, heatwaves and monsoon floods as recurring threats to children's lives and learning.

The conference brought together government officials and development partners to discuss implementation of the National Clean Air Policy across the Islamabad Capital Territory, provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Speaking during a session on partnerships for air quality management, moderated by Islamabad Environmental Protection Agency Director General Syed Ibrar Hussain, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan Bolormaa Amgaabazar said South Asia accounted for two million of the seven million premature deaths attributed to air pollution globally and was home to nine of the world's 10 most polluted cities.

She said the World Bank's 10-year strategy aimed to reduce air pollution in Pakistan by 35 per cent by 2035 under its "35 by 35" objective.

She cited the $300 million Punjab Clean Air Programme as part of a broader $1.26 billion package covering five countries in the Indo-Gangetic Plain and Himalayan foothills airshed.



ISLAMABAD: Justice Munib Akhtar, the Senior Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, taking oath as Acting Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan at Supreme Court of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal addressing a high-level event titled "Pathways to a Poverty-Free Pakistan: Advancing Multidimensional Poverty measurement for evidence-based policy and action".

President Zardari extends condolences over loss of lives in Spain train collision

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, on Wednesday, expressed deep sorrow over the tragic train accident in Spain, extending heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and sympathies to the injured.

He expressed solidarity with the leadership and people of Spain in this difficult time and wished a speedy recovery to those injured, a post on X said.

According to foreign media, at least 30 people had died after two high-speed trains collided near Toledo, causing a significant number of injuries, while officials feared that casualty figures were expected to rise. The authorities informed more than 500 people were on board the two trains.

PM vows to ensure provision of safe learning environment to students

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the urgent implementation of reforms in infrastructure, curriculum, teachers' training and other areas in all government schools in Islamabad, ordering the resolution of issues facing the institutions within a week.

Chairing a high-level meeting on reforms in the federal capital's government schools, the prime minister directed Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal to ensure that the issues were resolved within the stipulated timeframe. The prime minister directed the authorities concerned to mobilise all available resources to address infrastructure-related problems on an emergency basis, stressing that providing students with a safe learning environment was the government's responsibility.

He also directed the activation of a free lunch programme in government schools to ensure proper nutrition for students.

Emphasising improvements in teaching and learning facilities, the prime minister ordered the installation of smart boards in all government schools at the earliest. He also directed the formulation of a strategy to transform the Federal Directorate of Education into an effective and efficient institution. The prime minister stressed that teachers in government schools should focus exclusively on teaching and educational activities and should not be assigned other tasks. He further directed that recruitment of teachers be carried out strictly on merit.

To improve students' access to education, the prime minister called for expanding the government school bus service. He also directed the outsourcing of bus services for student transportation, along with third-party validation.

The prime minister instructed the authorities to promote solarisation in government schools and ensure that ramps were installed in all institutions to facilitate students with physical disabilities.

Online safety of children in Pakistan matter of serious concern: Shaza

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday called for coordinated efforts by the government, technology companies, parents and civil society to ensure a safe digital environment for children and young people.

Addressing the Digital Tahaffuz Summit, she said the growing role of digital platforms in communication, education, healthcare, entertainment and access to information had made it imperative to protect children from online harms.

She said the online safety of children in Pakistan was a matter of serious concern and stressed the need to strike a balance between protecting young users and ensuring their access to emerging technologies.

The minister said an outright ban on social media for children could push them towards alternative means of accessing such platforms.

She emphasised the need for effective age-assurance mechanisms in collaboration with social media companies, saying these could strengthen the implementation of existing safeguards for children and teenagers.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja said responsibility for children's online safety could not rest solely with the government, technology platforms or parents, but required coordinated efforts involving policymakers, the private sector, international partners, civil society, educators and young people.

She appreciated Meta's engagement and responsiveness, saying continued dialogue with technology companies that took their policy guidelines and local compliance obligations seriously was essential to maintaining constructive relationships.

The minister said online safety must be built into technology platforms from the outset rather than treated as an afterthought or addressed only after concerns arose.

She also called for greater public awareness of online risks, particularly in areas beyond major urban centres, and urged technology companies with extensive reach, including Meta, to take proactive measures to educate children and parents about online safety.

Acknowledging awareness campaigns conducted by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), she said social media campaigns alone had limitations in reaching all sections of society.

She stressed that awareness initiatives should reach communities across the country and help parents and children understand the safeguards available to them and how to use them effectively.

The minister also underscored the importance of open and candid discussions among young people, parents and educators, saying children should feel safe expressing themselves when discussing online challenges.

She said practical cooperation and tangible outcomes were essential to advancing the online safety agenda, adding that continued dialogue among stakeholders could help develop solutions that protect children while enabling them to benefit from digital opportunities.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, H.E. Irfan Davudov, calls on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing the sixth meeting of the Access to Finance Steering Committee at the Finance Division.

Afghan intelligence hatches disinfo plot to shift blame of terrorism to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Afghan Taliban regime's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) has orchestrated a coordinated disinformation campaign aimed at maligning Pakistan by coercing Afghan nationals into making false video confessions, according to sources. The Afghan GDI is actively recording staged statements of detained Afghan nationals. Under duress, these individuals are being forced to claim affiliations with the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) or various anti-Taliban resistance movements, alleging that they received combat training at covert bases inside Pakistan to launch operations against the Taliban regime.

The engineered narratives are part of a deliberate effort by the interim Afghan administration to deflect mounting international pressure regarding its failure to neutralize terrorist sanctuaries within Afghanistan. Sources further disclosed that the Taliban regime plans to formally present these fabricated confessions to regional neighbors.

CM Bugti vows to provide education, best opportunities in life for vulnerable, deserving children

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has taken full responsibility for the care and support of five orphaned siblings, including Munir Ahmed, a child working at a roadside dhaba who gained attention through a viral social media video, along with their mother.

Munir Ahmed met the Chief Minister, who inquired about the children's hardships and living conditions and directed the authorities to take necessary measures for their better education, upbringing and a secure future. The Chief Minister ordered the admission of Munir Ahmed, his younger brother and their three sisters to educational institutions, directing that the children also be provided with suitable accommodation and other essential facilities so they could continue their education free from domestic and financial difficulties.Mir Sarfraz Bugti personally assumed responsibility for the support of the five children and their mother and instructed the relevant staff to look after the family's needs and ensure effective measures for the children's education, accommodation and welfare. On the occasion, the Chief Minister also arranged, through his staff and from his personal expenses, the purchase of warm clothing and other essential items for the children for the winter season.

Pakistan seeks stronger education ties with Central Asia: Wajiha

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training Wajiha Qamar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening educational and scientific cooperation with Uzbekistan and Central Asian states for regional integration and sustainable development.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the International Education Forum 2026 in Tashkent, themed "Developing a Common Educational Space in Central Asia and International Cooperation," the Minister of State called for transforming historic regional ties into meaningful academic partnerships that create opportunities for future generations. She said Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy deep-rooted relations founded on centuries of shared history, faith, culture and intellectual traditions, adding that the historic centres of learning in Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent symbolize the region's remarkable contribution to global knowledge and civilization.

"Our ancestors connected our civilizations through knowledge. It is now our responsibility to connect future generations through opportunity," she remarked.

The Minister of State appreciated Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's vision for advancing education, science and innovation, and expressed gratitude to the Government of Uzbekistan for bringing together international leaders, academicians and policymakers to promote educational cooperation.

Highlighting Pakistan's national priorities, Wajiha Qamar said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the government was pursuing comprehensive initiatives to strengthen education, develop human capital and equip young people with skills required in the modern global economy. She said the Prime Minister's Education Emergency reflected Pakistan's determination to bring out-of-school children into classrooms, improve learning outcomes and expand access to quality education, particularly for girls and underserved communities.

Sustainable peace requires addressing underlying causes of tensions: Masood

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Kashmir dispute must be resolved in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions to ensure the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people, said Sardar Masood Khan, former ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the UN, and former president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. According to a press release issued here Wednesday, Khan was addressing a seminar organised by the Institute of Kashmir Studies at the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Kashmir Black Day, observed on October 27. He highlighted the historical background of the conflict, the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and the continuing need for a peaceful and just settlement. Khan recalled that October 27, 1947, marked the arrival of Indian forces in Jammu and Kashmir, fundamentally altering the course of the region's history. Referring to the political developments surrounding Partition, he said that the Muslim-majority population of Jammu and Kashmir had strong aspirations regarding its future



Israeli forces reportedly killed four Palestinians and wounded 19 others in attacks on the Mawasi area of Rafah in southern Gaza Strip, despite the ceasefire. The bodies of the deceased were taken to the morgue at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. Relatives of the victims expressed their grief.

Abbasi lauds security forces for killing 9 terrorists in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi has paid rich tribute to the security forces for eliminating nine terrorists during operations in Kachhi and Wadh districts of Balochistan.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, the minister said the security forces had timely conducted operations and destroyed terrorist hideouts, foiling the nefarious designs of the enemy.

He reaffirmed that the nefarious designs of terrorists and their foreign facilitators would be thwarted at all costs.

Abbasi said the bravery, professionalism and operational capabilities demonstrated by the security forces in the fight against terrorism were a matter of national pride.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presides over the meeting to review performance of BMRL and BMEC

Access to information key to transparent governance: Provincial Secretary Info

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Provincial Information Secretary, Government of Balochistan, Imran Khan, has said that the right to access information is of fundamental importance for promoting transparent governance, accountability and public trust, while the timely and effective provision of information by government institutions helps keep the public informed about government affairs and improves institutional performance. He expressed these views while addressing in detail a training workshop for Public Information Officers (PIOs), organized by Transparency International Pakistan in collaboration with the Balochistan Information Commission, on Section 5 of the Balochistan Right to Information Act 2021, titled Proactive Disclosure.

He termed the role of Public Information Officers important in promoting transparency in government departments, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and providing citizens with accurate, authentic and timely information. On the occasion, Chairman of Transparency International Pakistan, Justice (Retd.) Zia Pervez, delivered the welcome address and termed the right to access information essential for good governance and institutional transparency. Information Commissioner of the Balochistan Information Commission, Abdul Shakoor Khan, gave a detailed presentation on the key aspects of the Balochistan Right to Information Act 2021, particularly the importance and usefulness of proactive disclosure under Section 5.

Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah printed at Shah Printing Press, Quetta and Published from Al-Syed Building M.A. Jinnah Road Quetta Ph. 2843190 E.mail: dailyvomqta@gmail.com.