Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

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

Jamadi-us-Sani 14, 1448 AH Vol: XX No. 104 Wednesday November 25, 2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

No leniency for anti-state elements:

No one can break Balochistan; Pakistan will remain strong forever: CM Bugti

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said that no one can break Balochistan, Pakistan will remain strong forever, and Balochistan is an inseparable part of Pakistan. Terrorism, whether carried out in the name of religion or nationalism, is unacceptable under any circumstances. No leniency will be shown to those who take up arms against the state or advocate terrorism, whether they are men or women. The Constitution of Pakistan grants citizens the right to peaceful protest; however, it also teaches unconditional loyalty to the state and adherence to constitutional responsibilities. Under no ideology or narrative can the killing of innocent civilians, violence, or taking up arms against the state be justified. The solution to Balochistan's issues lies not in violence but in education, development, better governance, economic opportunities, and public service.

He expressed these views while addressing the participants of the 28th National Security Workshop on Tuesday. On the occasion, Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan gave a detailed briefing on the ongoing development projects, governance reforms, administrative measures, and the overall situation in the province.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that improving the standard of living of ordinary people of Balochistan, who endure extreme heat and harsh winters, making the governance system more effective, and resolving public issues through practical measures are among the government's top priorities. He said Balochistan needs to be viewed in the context of its history, social conditions, and ground realities. The issues of uneven development and deprivation in the province cannot, under any circumstances, be used to justify terrorism, violence, or separatism.

He said that facts about Balochistan are often distorted to create a narrative of deprivation through which attempts are made to justify separatism and violence. He said the government does not deny that development challenges exist, but their solution lies in constitutional and democratic struggle and public welfare measures, not in targeting innocent civilians and state institutions. The Chief Minister said the Constitution of Pakistan grants citizens the right to peaceful protest.



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



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

No harm in seeking public opinion on establishment of new provinces: Tarar

Says political stability requires a focus on public service and practical measures rather than political point-scoring

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

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

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

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

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

He added that the situation could improve significantly if these platforms aligned their rules and regulations with the country's laws.

Social media platforms must cooperate against terrorism, online crimes: Naqvi

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

He was speaking at an international seminar, titled: 'Social Media Platforms and the Post-truth Era', organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here. He said Pakistan has paid for terrorism with lives and that platforms act on 47 per cent of the requests made by the counter-terrorism department. He said free speech should not be curtailed and that dissent, including against the government, must remain possible, but that it cannot shield those who cross these lines. Naqvi said the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has limited manpower, citing 61 personnel, including drivers and clerks, covering Punjab's population of about 140 million. He said the Social Media Protection Regulatory Authority was set up to address this. Under the proposals he outlined, platforms, over-the-top services and major content creators would register with the authority, each platform would name an empowered representative for Pakistan.

Pakistan steps into human space exploration era with first astronaut mission

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan's first astronaut mission has entered its final stages, with Muhammad Zeeshan Ali set to make history by travelling to China's Space Station (CSS), Tiangong, under an initiative facilitated by the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA), marking a major milestone in the country's entry into human space exploration. The mission, led by CMSA in partnership with Pakistan's SUPARCO, will see the Pakistani astronaut serve as a Payload Expert, with primary responsibility for conducting the country's scientific programme aboard the space station.

During the mission, he will undertake scientific experiments in the microgravity environment, developed by Pakistani researchers in key areas including materials science, fluid physics, life and biological sciences, and biotechnology.

PM vows to eradicate terrorism; establish lasting peace, ensure public welfare

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

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

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

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

Reiterating the Centre's commitment to the progress and prosperity of the province, the prime minister directed authorities to utilize all available resources to provide healthcare, education and other basic facilities to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He placed special emphasis on improving social development indicators, particularly within the health and education sectors. The prime minister also stressed the need to promote sports facilities across the province to provide youth with opportunities for positive engagement. During the meeting, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi briefed the prime minister on the ongoing initiatives undertaken by his office and the KP Advisory Council to improve the overall law and order situation in the province.



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



Sikh Yatrees performing their religious rituals on the occasion of 557th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in Nankana Sahib

Violence against women grave violation of human rights; major obstacle to sustainable development: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday said that eliminating violence against women and protecting their fundamental rights are the shared responsibility of the state and society.

The Speaker said that violence against women constitutes a grave violation of human rights and a major obstacle to sustainable development.

He expressed these views in his message on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, observed on November 25.

Ayaz Sadiq said that addressing crimes such as domestic violence, harassment, forced marriages, honour killings and the exploitation of women requires a comprehensive approach encompassing effective legislation, strict enforcement of laws and sustained collective efforts. He stressed that Parliament, government institutions and all segments of society must work together to prevent violence against women, ensure timely justice and provide effective support to survivors. Ayaz Sadiq said that Parliament has enacted legislation to safeguard women's rights and prevent violence against them and will continue to play its effective role in protecting women's rights and eliminating all forms of violence against women.

He further said that effective legislation alone is not sufficient to eliminate violence against women; equally important is to ensure that women are fully aware of their fundamental rights, the laws enacted for their protection and the legal remedies available to them.

Ayaz Sadiq stressed that greater public awareness and a positive change in societal attitudes are essential to creating an environment in which women's rights are respected and protected.

The Speaker acknowledged the contributions of the Gender Mainstreaming Committee and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in advancing the parliamentary agenda on women's rights and gender equality.

He said that these parliamentary bodies play an important role in highlighting issues concerning women, promoting gender-responsive legislation and advancing initiatives for their social, economic and political empowerment.

Digitalization key to good governance: CM Bugti

Balochistan Chief Minister inaugurates NTC data centre in Quetta

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said that the world is rapidly moving towards artificial intelligence, advanced technology and digital systems, and the Government of Balochistan is also taking practical steps to promote digitalization and technology in order to align the province with modern requirements.

He said that for the first time in Balochistan, an artificial intelligence-based testing system has been introduced to ensure merit-based recruitment and transparency.

He expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the NTC Data Center here on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister termed the establishment of the first data center in Balochistan a welcome initiative and appreciated the efforts of the Federal Government and the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC). He said that the establishment of a modern data center in Quetta is an important development for digital progress and the promotion of advanced technology in the province.

The Chief Minister said that his generation had witnessed the journey from wooden writing slates to tablets, and the world had made extraordinary progress in technology within a very short period.

PM directs federal, provincial representatives to encourage positive dialogue

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday took notice of recent public statements by ministers and directed the members of federal cabinet to refrain from making political remarks against one another.

The prime minister, in a statement, emphasized that the federal government's entire focus remained on public welfare initiatives and development projects.

He said the government was continuing its journey from economic stability towards sustainable economic growth. "By the grace of Almighty Allah, Pakistan has achieved several significant successes at the international and diplomatic levels," the prime minister said adding that the federal government had always promoted a politics of development and progress.

Rewards up to Rs250 million announced for information on wanted terrorists in Balochistan

Balochistan govt reaffirms resolve to eliminate terrorism and restore lasting peace

QUETTA, (VoM Report): The Government of Balochistan has issued a list of the province's most wanted terrorists and announced rewards worth millions of rupees for those who provide credible information about them as part of its efforts to establish peace and eliminate terrorism.

According to the official advertisement, rewards ranging from Rs500,000 to Rs250 million have been announced for various terrorists. The list includes several wanted terrorists, including Bashir Zeb and Rehman Gul, and the Government of Balochistan will pay the announced rewards for credible information leading to them. According to the advertisement, a reward of Rs250 million has been announced for information about Rehman Gul, while Rs250 million has also been fixed for providing credible information about Bashir Zeb. Similarly, substantial rewards have been announced for other wanted individuals according to their status. Balochistan Adviser for Home Babar Yousafzai said that the Government of Balochistan is fully committed to eliminating terrorism and protecting the lives and property of the people. The publication of the list of the most wanted terrorists and the announcement of rewards on their heads are part of the government's ongoing measures against terrorism. Babar Yousafzai said public cooperation is of vital importance in the fight against terrorism. He appealed to the public to contact the relevant departments of the Government of Balochistan if they have any credible information regarding the wanted terrorists. He said the identity of informants will be kept completely confidential, and immediate action will be taken on credible information. Rewards will be paid in accordance with the government's prescribed rules and regulations. He added that action against enemies of peace and the establishment of lasting peace in Balochistan remain among the top priorities of the Government of Balochistan.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti visits NTC Data Center.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Wednesday November 25, 2026

Muslim states must take joint steps against Israel's persistent use of violence

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has recently declared that he is determined to establish the greater Israel, which covers not only the whole Palestinian territories, but also a large part of the Arab world, including Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. With this theo-political statement, Netanyahu has threatened Arab national security, the Middle Eastern regional stability and international peace and security. Netanyahu, who considers himself "on a historic and spiritual mission," has declared that Israel aims to expand at the expense of the regional Arab states.

According to the reports, 31 Arab and Muslim states have "strongly condemned" Netanyahu's "greater Israel" vision and his expansionist policies. These states denounced illegal occupation activities as a breach of international law. This bloc of Arab and Muslim states has warned Israel to end its genocide in Gaza and rejected the Israeli plan for the displacement of the 2 million Palestinians. However, Israel and all its supporters know well that this condemnation, like all the previous statements made by the same group of states, will be thrown into the dustbin of history. Although there are some exceptions, such as King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in the Arab world, who took real measures to prevent Israeli expansionism, Arab leaders and Arab regimes largely remain indifferent to the Israeli atrocities and crimes against humanity in Palestine and the wider region.

When we look at the regional developments and the regional balance of power, it is relatively understandable that the Arab regimes that are largely dependent on Western countries are unable to intervene in the ongoing genocide. However, the position of Arab states seems quite complex. For example, it is not understandable that some Arab actors directly or indirectly support the genocide. Similarly, many Arab states allow Israel to use their airspace or naval routes. Many Arab states provide economic, political and military support for Tel Aviv. Within the context of the "greater Israel" vision, Israeli officials often blatantly claim that they will take over a large part of the Arab states. It is obvious that Israeli expansionism is not and will not be limited to the Gaza Strip. Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is just used as an excuse for the Israeli aggression. As soon as Israel fully controls Gaza, it will return to the West Bank, which is already under heavy and consistent Israeli attacks. Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that there are at least four phases in the Israeli regional expansionist plan.

In the first phase, the Zionist entity is determined to de-Palestinianize the Palestinian territories. It appears that the large Western countries have already given Israel the green light to proceed. In other words, it is a matter of time to initiate a second front of genocide in the West Bank. In the near future, we may hear news of mass killings, starvation and forced migration in the West Bank as well. The ultimate objective of Israel is not the control of the Gaza Strip or Palestine. In other words, the root cause of the problem is not Hamas, but the apartheid and expansionist regime established in Israel.

In the second phase, Israel will try to occupy the territories of other Arab states. Israeli officials claim that they will expand the territories of their state beyond Palestine. Recently, we have witnessed the new Israeli occupation attempts in Lebanon and Syria. Besides the long-time occupied Golan Heights, Israel now directly controls a large portion of the Syrian state. Furthermore, it tries to create an Israel-controlled political entity in the Druze-majority of the Suwayda region in Syria. Israel has severely curbed the power of the new Syrian government to pave the way for its further occupation and consolidate its occupation of the state. Similarly, Israel has been trying to control the Lebanese national politics after punishing the Hezbollah movement last year. Israel recently killed most of the movement's leadership cadres. Now, together with its Western supporters, it put pressure on the central government to force Hezbollah to disarm itself. Disarming Hezbollah will naturally decrease the Iranian influence in Lebanon, but at the same time, it will lead to an increase in the influence of Israel. In the third phase, Israel will turn to other Arab states after completing its plans in these two Arab states. It seems that Jordan, the majority of whose population is Palestinian, will be the next target of the expansionist Israel. Israel may question the existence of the Palestinians living in the country and use this factor as an excuse for its intervention into the Jordanian domestic political system. In the final phase, other countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq will become the next targets of the Israeli expansionism. Israel will try to prevent the establishment of regional peace and stability by any other political actor. Its ultimate goal is to establish the greater Israel and bring the whole region under its control. Tel Aviv's ultimate goal is to establish a regional hegemony by achieving the "greater Israel." In spite of the Israeli illegitimate plans, violations of international law, crimes against humanity in Palestine and attacks against Arab states, the Arab states cannot overcome the Israeli problem and threat simply by condemning Israel for all these atrocities. Arab states must take joint actions and measures against Israel's persistent use of violence and violations of international norms. Arab and non-Arab states of the region must unite their power, persuade the global powers and eventually deter Israel and its supporters. Regional states must meet on a common ground against the main threat of the region, the Israeli problem. They must take measures before it is too late. Otherwise, they have to wait for their tragic end – to be occupied by Israel.

Muslim collectivism

Ghulam Shabbir

Islam was a movement of moral initiative. The Holy Prophet's (PBUH) first address to his people reflected the entirety of the Quranic message as it had descended on his heart in an undifferentiated form, though the various verses 'unfolded' over the next 23 years. The following years of his life depict only differentiation of the nucleus of his message, the dilemmas confronted and the strategies devised to counter his opponents.

The movement was to rehabilitate the socio-economic equilibrium of society as mono-theism and socioeconomic justice were deemed the panacea to the twin malaise of polytheism and socioeconomic disequilibrium in Makkah.

The scale of social reforms required assumption of political power, so a protracted war with the Makkan oligarchy was a foregone conclusion.

The Quran equipped Muslims with positivism and collectivism to see their mission through. Positivism means scientific diagnosis and treatment of social malaises by the moral vectors of the Quran, and collectivism refers to the collective struggle of the community for the execution of the task since there is arguably no 'personal salvation' in Islam. The Quran offers only the idea of success (falah) or failure (khusran) in building a moral social order for which 'the people of the Book' are welcomed to share the burden. So, 'personal piety' oblivious to this obligation and Sufism neutral to social reality have no roots in the Quran.

At Madinah, the Quran established Muslims as a 'median community' against the rigid formalism of Judaism and the liquidity of Christianity. Thus, characterised as the 'best community', it was tasked to build an ethical sociopolitical order. The internal structure of the community was egalitarian and open, smacking of no elitism. Internal life of the community was based on goodwill and cooperation. Decision-making was premised on universal enfranchisement — every voice matters. The Quran tolerates neither elitism nor secret cliques of the influential.

With these arrangements in place, the Quran promulgated their task to establish a moral order in order to secure the socio-economic equilibrium of society, with the assurance that God is going to have mercy on them and help them build such an order (9:71). So bright was the light lit by the Quran that against all odds, the Prophet never lost hope.

To Shah Waliullah, 'The completion of favours', ie, political control of Arabia, was the fulfilment of the same promise.

After the Prophet, collectivism worked both in thought and practice of the early community. To them, Sunnah was an interpretive activity subject to revision and renewal, as was ijma, or consensus of the community. No ijma carried the status of finality; it could be substituted. Hence, Sunnah, ijma-ijtehad's ongoing democratic process worked well for three centuries. Then, the Hadith movement set in, and since then, the static view of Sunnah and the finality of ijma reign supreme.

So embedded in and accustomed to collectivism was the early community that, amidst early religio-political wars, they struggled under the banner of jama'a (community). Then, dictators crushed the practice of jama'a. This resulted in the expulsion of collectivism from the thought and practice of the community. With Ghazali's legitimation of 'personal salvation', religion took leave from public life. Ibn al-Arabi's explanation of the conflict of good and evil in terms of waves which arise from the sea, collide with each other and then fall back into the same sea appeared to render faith redundant.

Ibn Taimiyya's exhortation for Quranic positivism and collectivism fell on deaf ears. Later, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi stre-ngthened his thesis with mystic-intellectual fervour and deflated Ibn al-Arabi's monism. Shah Waliullah and Moha-mmad bin Abdul Wahab bro-ught fresh blood in the veins of the community. However, encounter with the imperial West stimulated Islamic reformers to judge their tradition by the normativity of the Quran to elevate the moral and intellectual standards of their community. It was a comprehensive venture to think of Islam in terms of the socioeconomic and political life of the community. The development rekindled hopes and led to freedom movements.

The positivistic and collectivistic approach of Indian Muslims established Pakistan to create an egalitarian order with equal participation of all without gender and class bias.

But many in the secular elite, in alliance with orthodoxy, seem to have defeated the purpose Pakistan was created for. To be a silent spectator is not a choice — the sins of omission are as bad as the sins of commission. Nations and civilisations, as per the Quran, are destroyed by natural political process rather than natural disasters. Are our moral and sociopolitical woes not inviting our collective political will for course correction?

Indo-Pak futures

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

As we approach 80 years since the sun set on the British Raj, leaving the two separate states of India and Pakistan in its wake, the imperative of charting a lasting peace in the world's most populous region is arguably more acute than ever. Yet under the influence of right-wing bigotry and militarism, the majority of people in both countries are instead baying for the proverbial other's blood.

On Aug 14-15 this year, the military exchange which took place in May is still fresh in the memory, as is the banter on both sides about 'winning the war'. There are, of course, many voices that resist the tide, but most young Indians and Pakistanis have little critical awareness about shared colonial legacies, let alone an imagination of a common future.

In the face of a renewed wave of state nationalism, let me suggest some potential futures for the almost 1.7 billion people who inhabit India and Pakistan, a figure which rises to almost 2bn if one includes Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

A race to the bottom: The most likely future is an extension of the present, whereby Hindutva, (militant) Islamism and other variants of xenophobic nationalism take hold of ever greater segments of youth. In India, this equates to the further entrenchment of the BJP, RSS, VHP in society at large and the unchallenged rule of hawkish elements in the permanent state apparatus.

In Pakistan, this means the reinforcement of khaki raj, complete surrender by the mainstream parties to the establishment, and a religious right ready and able to mobilise a critical mass outside the mainstream.

In both countries, anti-state militancy will intensify in brutalised peripheries. The state, in turn, will arrogate more and more power to itself in the name of fighting 'terrorism', and the politics of hate will become established as the only game in town. Respite for the liberal centre: The race to the bottom may be held up by a slightly resuscitated liberal centre. In India, this would see the Congress and small allied parliamentary forces taking governmental power, and pushing back against some aspects of majoritarianism. In Pakistan, this would take the form of a broad anti-establishment mobilisation against the now-normalised 'hybrid' rule. However, the liberal centre remains unwilling to offer an alternative economic programme to the dominant development regime that is based on dispossession, ecocide and mindless consumption. A centrist pushback, then, will ultimately fail to stem the forces of reaction and create the conditions for militarist and far right ideologies to make deeper dents in the body politic.

Pro-people forces unite within and without: The most unlikely scenario — lasting peace and shared prosperity — can become reality only if pro-people forces, representing the working masses, brutalised peripheries, women and future generations, come together both within and across states. This is not easy, especially given the sorry state of South Asia's left-progressives. But we must engage in an exercise of imagination rather than become resigned to the status quo.

A pro-people programme requires an economic vision that privileges the needs of working masses over the profiteering of speculative investors, multinational capital and entrenched landed/ business interests. As important is ecological regeneration across mountainous areas, plains and coastal deltas. The fact that environmental landscapes across the subcontinent are being ravaged to no end is arguably the most obvious trigger for an alternative politics to transcend the regressive logics of colonial statecraft. Such a politics demands that the traditional forces of the left — that speak the language of class and anti-imperialism — make common cause with the mass movements of the ethnic peripheries, else the critical mass necessary to displace both the far right and liberal centre cannot be generated. In India, this requires a dissolution of the hegemony of the Hindi-speaking belt, an acknowledgement of the historical oppression of Kashmiris, Nagas, tribal populations and many more, and more space for progressive leaders from the south. In Pakistan, this requires that the Baloch, Pakhtun, Gilgit-Baltistani, Kashmiri, Sindhi and Seraiki national questions are articulated alongside a class politics in Punjab and other metropolitan regions. Finally, a regional common sense must be crafted whereby the interests of ordinary people everywhere — including Ladakh and Baltistan, both Kashmirs, Sindh and Rajasthan, both Punjabs, Pakhtuns across both sides of the Durand Line, as well as the most oppressed people like the Baloch and Nagas — are seen as one and the same. Only in such unity can imperialism in all of its guises be confined to the dustbin of history.

Floods and politics

Khurram Husain

There is no room left now to turn rain-related catastrophes into a political whipping spectacle.

This summer, three provinces controlled by the three major political parties have borne the brunt of a major rain-related emergency, and none is in a position to accuse the other of not having done enough to prepare their province for the calamity.

The clear fact is that Pakistan is facing accelerating climate change impacts and needs to think outside of conventional frameworks in order to build resilience and preparedness. The monsoon is intensifying, glaciers are melting, near catastrophic heatwaves are becoming more and more frequent. This is not political theatre. It is a dire and urgent new reality opening up before us with rising ferocity. The first thing to shed is the reflex to politicise these catastrophes, because that literally does nothing to help.

The three governments — in KP, Punjab and Sindh — have just faced unusually strong rain events. But notice how turning these calamities into opportunities for political point-scoring has backfired spectacularly. When Punjab was inundated in July, for instance, the PTI lawmakers in the provincial assembly held what they called a 'people's assembly' outside the building in protest against the suspension of their colleagues. So far so good. Politics and theatre are cousins after all.

But some among them took the opportunity to skewer the provincial government for the rain-related devastation in the province. Three among them were named in a report carried by this newspaper, and their criticism of the government of Maryam Nawaz took aim at the floods caused by the rains. Crops and farmland were destroyed, they shouted, homes caved in, and "development projects" showcased by the Punjab government were "washed away". Yet the government "remains indifferent", according to the report.

The need and desire of the opposition to protest stridently in Punjab is understandable, given the suspensions that their colleagues have been served. Those that kept the focus on the politics of suppression their party is facing had a clear message. But those that veered and tried to use a natural calamity for political point-scoring were in for a nasty surprise only a few days later when the province run by their own party — KP — was hit by an even larger rain-related calamity.

All the criticism they had levelled at the Punjab government was now washed away as the devastation in KP was larger by order of magnitude to what Punjab had seen. If we keep only a political lens when viewing these disasters, who do we blame for the devastation in KP? Pretty soon, officials from both provinces were bickering over the meaning of the word 'cloudburst'. Both provinces had ascribed their devastation to a 'cloudburst'. In Punjab, they pointed to Chakwal, and in KP, they said Buner had seen a 'cloudburst'. Then the Met Office weighed in, reminding both that the word 'cloudburst' refers to a very specific event and no such event had been seen in Chakwal or Buner, and urged them both to refrain from using this word to describe the cause of their respective devastation.

Why this insistence on 'cloudburst'? Because cloudbursts are nearly impossible to forecast, and attributing rain disaster to them gets officialdom off the hook for having been unprepared. This is why it is now almost routine for provincial governments to use this word when explaining rain-related calamities in their province. At the time of writing, Karachi is bracing for a second round of intense rain; the first left the city flooded on Tuesday, following more than 200mm of rain in a 12-hour period. The flooding was bad, but the drainage was better. I'm old enough to remember when smaller rain events in 1991 or 2006 left the city flooded for days on end. This time, as in 2020 or 2022, they cleared it within hours. So far, so good. But the question remains: what prevents faster real-time drainage to keep flooding from become as dire as it does in the first place? The foremost expert on the disaster that is Karachi's urban planning, Arif Hasan, has a good interview with that intrepid podcaster Shehzad Ghias in which he explains how overdevelopment on three main drainage channels is a major contributor to the flooding. There is much that each provincial government needs to do to increase preparedness for these disasters that are hitting the country with growing intensity and frequency. And it all begins with superior weather forecasting capabilities. Without this, we are flying blind into a storm.

A former chief meteorologist of the country has an important contribution here. In a report in this paper, he is quoted as saying that Pakistan has 85 automatic weather stations around the country to cover more than 700,000 square kilometres of its land mass. According to the World Meteorological Organisation guidelines, there should be one for every 100 square kilometres of flat terrain, and 50 sq km of hilly terrain. This means we are short by factors of thousands in terms of our ability to monitor threats emanating from the weather.

With this critical weakness we will forever fumble in the dark as the weather turns increasingly hostile. And the resultant calamities will forever be sublimated only through political blaming and point-scoring, getting us nowhere.

A warning sign came around a decade ago when Pakistan experienced five massive floods in five years. Once more, nature is warning that politics alone will not save us.

Three floods in one summer in three provinces controlled by each major political party is a clear enough sign that scoring political points in the middle of natural calamities is the lowest form of politics in the country today. Those who engage in this behaviour are the same as those who in years past tried to score political points via fuel price hikes or ex--change rate adjustments. It is time to grow up.

Chickens coming home

FAISAL BARI

There have been some recent posts on social media claiming that admission numbers in many colleges and universities across Punjab have gone down by as much as 25-30 per cent this year. This is a large number but not surprising: it is some of the chickens coming home to roost.

Here are some changes that Pakistan has seen in the higher education sector lately. The number of universities has risen significantly. We have 270-odd universities now, with 160 or so in the public sector. There are several foreign and online programmes that have also entered the sector. And the expansion drive continues. Existing universities have been expanding enrolments and programmes as well.

Higher education funding has either remained static or decreased, even in nominal terms. It has definitely gone down in real terms. Inflation has hit every person in recent years, but fee increases have also been going up in the higher education sector.

The regulator's focus has been on expansion, encouraging universities to introduce more Master's and doctoral programmes and faculty to produce more (not necessarily of higher quality) publications.

Some of the consequences, intended and unintended, should have been expected. Generally, the quality of education delivered by most undergraduate programmes across Pakistan has never been very good. Expansion, with little planning for faculty availability, has exacerbated the problem.

The regulators' focus on the Master's and doctoral levels has hurt the quality of undergraduate programmes even more. Undergraduate programmes are seen by many universities and colleges as just a way of earning revenue. The pressure to expand programmes has meant that every university, whether or not it is ready for it, has launched every faculty and programme it could think of. Fewer resources and rising costs have worsened matters.

The pressure to publish and increase the number of publications has also shifted the focus from teaching in general and undergraduate teaching in particular. It has also led to increased gaming, fraud and plagiarism. More significantly for us, it has led to the neglect of undergraduate teaching, with most faculty wanting to teach graduate programmes, supervise theses and publish with their students to make research numbers impressive.

It should not come as a surprise then that parents do not want their children to enrol in programmes where perceived and real rates of return to undergraduate studies are low. The students themselves don't want to enrol. If you were a student, would you do something different? If you were a parent, would you not suggest something different?

Do bear in mind that there is plenty of evidence that universities, private and public, that offer good quality undergraduate education, have not seen any decline in the number of admissions or applications. Similarly, majors that are perceived to be in high demand in the job market have not seen any decline either.

There are issues that should be kept in mind though. There is a massive increase in demand for computer science, IT, data analytics and similar programmes. People feel, and rightly so, that job prospects in these areas are very bright. The buzz around AI makes this perception even stronger. So, it is not surprising that parents are asking students to enter these fields and many students are also shifting their sights to them. Most universities with relevant departments are expanding enrolments. Others are scrambling to start relevant departments and programmes. But there is a limit to how much expansion can take place in these programmes. And there should be too.

Globally, there is a fair bit of conversation going around the four-year undergraduate programmes. Is four years too long? Some argue that if people can do a few six-month or so courses, especially in computer- and IT-related fields, and enter the job market and get decent returns, why should they spend a lot of money on four-year degrees. Others say that with online education becoming more accessible, undergraduate can move online. Others talk of micro-credentialing and argue that selected courses, rather than a four-year degree, which makes the student go through a broader curriculum and more diverse courses, is the need of the day. There is some merit to many of these arguments, though the four-year undergraduate programme has a lot going for it too. Different routes will be better for different people. Education has time and money costs, and quality education tends to be quite expensive.

University education is not recognised as a right anywhere, though states might have functional reasons — human resource development, social and economic mobility, growth — to subsidise undergraduate and graduate education for a part of the population. Students will have to make careful choices about what suits them, what is possible for them and their families, and what is the best way forward. The state has to carefully assess what it has been doing as well.

Agriculture holds potential to swiftly steer economy towards growth: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, terming agriculture as the backbone of the national economy, said it has the potential to steer Pakistan's economy on the path of development in a short span of time. The prime minister chaired the first meeting of the National Agriculture and Food Security Council (NAFSC).

The prime minister observed that the livestock sector also possessed vast potential to increase national exports and the government was taking steps to increase Pakistan's halal meat exports. He said that the federal government would provide all kinds of cooperation to the provinces for agricultural development, adding that providing farmers with low-cost fertilizer, quality seeds, modern machinery and equipment and technical capabilities for the better use of water was a top priority. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Ministers Rana Tanvir Hussain, Dr. Musadik Malik, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Ahsan Iqbal, Attaullah Tarar, Khalid Hussain Magsi, Mian Moeen Wattoo, Advisors Rana Sanaullah and Haroon Akhtar, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Sindh Agriculture Minister Makhdoom Mehboob-uz-Zaman and relevant senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister expressed his satisfaction at the availability of wheat to meet domestic requirements and warned that no leniency would be shown to those hoarding wheat.

He further stressed that ensuring a fair price for farmers' crops, especially small and medium-scale farmers, is a priority, adding that it was necessary to determine the correct price of wheat before sowing so that farmers received appropriate compensation for their hard work.

"We want farmers to get the right price for wheat and consumers to avail of affordable wheat. The decision regarding the price of wheat will be made in consultation with the provinces, " the press release quoted him as saying.

During the meeting, the prime minister lauded Chief Minister of Punjab for taking commendable steps such as farmers' development, aquaculture, shrimp farming, and providing direct subsidies to farmers through the Kisan Card.

He also appreciated the chief minister Sindh for his hard work for the development of farmers and providing them with facilities.

During the meeting, the chief minister Punjab and the Sindh Minister for Food highlighted the steps taken by their respective provincial governments for the development of farmers in their respective provinces.

During the meeting, briefings were also given on the steps taken for agricultural development in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.



Maysam Tunsi, sister of Mahdi Tunsi, a Palestinian student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who was detained by Israeli forces, participates in his hearing held at the Jerusalem Central Court, in Jerusalem

Aurangzeb highlights economic reforms, investment opportunities at Jefferies Roundtable

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday highlighted Pakistan's economic reforms, financing opportunities and efforts to strengthen investor confidence during a roundtable hosted by Jefferies International.

Secretary Finance, Imdadullah Bosal, and Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Jameel Ahmad also participated in a roundtable with institutional investors, held on the sidelines of the World Bank Group–IMF Annual Meetings 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand, according to press release issued by finance ministry. The minister highlighted Pakistan's improving fiscal and external balances, stronger foreign exchange reserves, rating upgrades and renewed access to international capital markets. He emphasized consolidating macroeconomic stability and moving towards sustainable, export-led growth, supported by continued reforms in taxation, energy, state-owned enterprises and public finance.

Discussions covered progress under the IMF programme, debt management and potential financing instruments, including Sukuk, further Panda bond issuance and tokenization. Aurangzeb outlined privatization opportunities and stressed expanding business-to-business trade and investment.

He also addressed tax-base broadening, agricultural income tax implementation, digital enforcement and federal–provincial coordination on fiscal targets.

Responding to investor questions, the delegation discussed regional geopolitical risks, energy security and LNG obligations, alongside economic engagement with the United States and Saudi Arabia. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to maintaining reform momentum and strengthening investor confidence.

Meanwhile, the minister, met with Mashreq Bank's senior management to discuss its expanding presence in Pakistan and highlighted macroeconomic gains and renewed market access, reaffirming support for Mashreq's expansion and sustainable growth. He reviewed digital banking growth and opportunities to advance financial inclusion through technology.

Pakistan-China Business Forum delegation signals readiness for Joint Ventures

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia has called for enhanced China-Pakistan industrial cooperation through joint ventures, technology transfer and investment in manufacturing,

He emphasizing that industrialization is vital to Pakistan's sustainable economic growth, export development and job creation.

He expressed these views while addressing a 13-member delegation of the Pakistan-China Business Forum (PCBF), led by Lt. General ® Abdul Qayyum, Chief Patron, and Sheikh Ejaz Asghar, Co-Chairman, said a press release.

He stressed that consistent follow-up, effective business matchmaking and a clear understanding of mutual commercial interests were essential to translating bilateral engagements into tangible economic outcomes.

He proposed compiling a comprehensive directory of Chinese companies and their products, establishing a product and technology display centre at ICCI, and setting up a dedicated facilitation desk for Chinese businesses in Islamabad.

He emphasized that Islamabad's strategic location and proximity to government institutions made it an attractive destination for investment. The ICCI President also proposed organizing a major Pakistan-China Expo in Islamabad in March 2027.

DPM reviews wheat import progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday reviewed wheat import progress and expressed satisfaction that sufficient supplies had been arranged as per the demand of the provinces.

Chairing the 7th Meeting of the Steering Committee on Wheat Imports for Food Year 2026–27, the deputy prime minister said first shipment was scheduled to reach Karachi before end of this month.

The DPM/FM emphasized that the imported stocks along with PASSCO supplies already allocated to provinces should be utilised for price stability to create ease for the consumers.

The meeting was attended by the Ministers for National Food Security and Research, Commerce.



Visitors explore the Turkic World tents during the fifth day of the Ethnosport Culture Festival in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of the state-of-the-art Mir Sarfraz Bugti Sports Complex in PB-39 Nawan Killi

Pakistan, EU explore cooperation in electric vehicle skills development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Tuesday met a delegation of the European Union (EU) and discussed avenues for cooperation in electric vehicle (EV) skills development, technical training and capacity building to support Pakistan's transition towards sustainable mobility.

During the meeting, Haroon emphasized that promoting electric vehicles and developing the skilled workforce required by the emerging sector were important components of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's vision for a modern, competitive and sustainable industrial economy, said a news release.

"Pakistan has set a target of increasing the share of electric vehicles to 30 percent by 2030. Achieving this transition requires more than introducing new vehicles; it demands a skilled workforce, technical expertise and the development of a supporting industrial ecosystem, " the advisor said.

He noted that several companies had entered Pakistan's electric vehicle market, creating a growing need for trained technicians, engineers and other professionals equipped with modern EV-related skills.

He stressed that timely investment in skills development would help prepare Pakistani youth for emerging employment opportunities while strengthening the country's capacity to adopt and manufacture new technologies.

"Pakistan missed important opportunities during earlier phases of the global automobile revolution, but we will not afford to miss the electric vehicle revolution. Our objective is to build local capabilities, develop technical expertise and ensure that this transition creates jobs and industrial opportunities for Pakistan, " Haroon remarked.

The advisor said that the government's forthcoming Auto Policy, expected to be rolled out in the coming weeks, would place particular emphasis on electric vehicles and the development of the automotive sector.

He said that work was also underway on a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Policy, which would support the broader transition towards cleaner energy technologies and strengthen the enabling environment for emerging industries. Highlighting the economic and environmental significance of electric mobility, he said that the transition could contribute to reducing the country's oil import bill, improving energy sustainability and creating opportunities for local value addition.

He underlined the importance of ensuring that Pakistan's EV transition was accompanied by the development of technical skills, local supply chains and industrial capacity.

Haroon directed the Engineering Development Board (EDB) to engage with the EU delegation and explore practical areas of cooperation in EV skills development, technical training and capacity building.

He said Pakistan was keen to benefit from European expertise and experience in developing the workforce and technical capabilities required by the evolving automotive industry. Secretary of Industries and Production Ihsan Ali Mangi emphasized the importance of aligning skills development initiatives with the emerging requirements of the automotive industry.

He observed that effective coordination between government institutions, industry and international partners could help identify skills gaps, strengthen technical training and ensure that the workforce was prepared for new technologies.

He said that collaboration with the European Union could provide opportunities to exchange technical knowledge.



The mural of Argentinian footballer Diego Maradona in the Spanish Quarter of Naples, Italy, has reopened after 13 months of renovation work. Many people attended the reopening, visiting the artwork that commemorates Maradona.

Regional telecom leaders unveil roadmap for digital inclusion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Regional telecom leaders on Tuesday unveiled a roadmap to promote digital inclusion across the Asia-Pacific region, focusing on high-speed internet, satellite networks, affordable smartphones and emerging technologies.

The three-day Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Symposium on Digital Transformation and Universal Service Fund (USF) opened in Islamabad.

The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) and USF Pakistan co-hosted it, in collaboration with the APT Secretariat.

The symposium brings together ministers, telecom regulators, industry executives and delegates from across the Asia-Pacific region to discuss ways to improve digital connectivity and modernise universal service policies.

Discussions focus on expanding high-speed fibre networks, using satellite technology, making smartphones more affordable, and developing local artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure in rural areas.

SECP guidebook strengthens safeguards against misuse of financial services

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued a guidebook on Targeted Financial Sanctions (TFS) for its regulated entities to strengthen safeguards against terrorist financing and other illicit activities and protect the integrity of Pakistan's financial system.

The guidebook explains, in practical terms, the steps regulated entities should take to meet their obligations under applicable TFS requirements, said a news release here on Tuesday.

These include screening customers, prospective customers and beneficial owners against relevant sanctions lists and notifications; assessing potential matches; freezing the funds and assets of designated persons and entities without delay; and reporting to the relevant authorities within the required time.

It also highlights the need for clear internal procedures, regular screening, proper record-keeping, staff awareness and effective compliance controls.

PSX loses over 347 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 347.97 points, a negative change of 0.21 percent, to close at 164, 776.44 points against 165, 124.41 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 383.746 million shares, compared to 362.954 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value decreased to Rs13.104 billion from Rs14.507 billion.

Market capitalisation declined to Rs18.325 trillion from Rs18.359 trillion recorded a day earlier.

Out of 500 companies that traded in the ready market, 223 posted gains, 226 suffered losses, while 51 remained unchanged, reflecting a bearish trend in the market.

LSE Financial ® led the volume chart with 32.283 million shares, followed by Waves Home App with 21.848 million shares and WorldCall Telecom with 19.528 million shares.

Among the top gainers, Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited advanced by Rs66.97 to close at Rs886.99, while Fateh Industries Limited surged by Rs34.89 to settle at Rs383.83. On the losing side, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited.

Pak, Ethiopia discuss expediting pharmaceutical market access, strengthening bilateral trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Tuesday called for expediting regulatory approvals for Pakistani pharmaceutical companies seeking access to the Ethiopian market, as Pakistan and Ethiopia discussed measure to expand bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation.

The discussions took place during a meeting between the minister and Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Oumer Hussein Oba, who called on him at his office here, said a news release.

Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industries Rana Ihsaan Afzal, Federal Secretary for Commerce Jawad Paul and senior Ministry officials also attended the meeting.

The minister highlighted Pakistan's growing pharmaceutical industry and its potential to expand exports to African markets.

He stressed that timely regulatory approvals and transparent procedures were essential to building confidence among Pakistani exporters and strengthening commercial ties with Ethiopia.

He emphasised the need for close close coordination among regulatory authorities, diplomatic missions and trade officials to address pending issues and facilitate market access. Jam Kamal also called for stronger business-to-business engagement, remove trade barriers and identify practical opportunities to increase bilateral trade.

The Ethiopian ambassador informed the minister that he had taken up the pending pharmaceutical registration issues with the relevant Ethiopian health authorities and received positive assurances regarding their early resolution.

Secretary Commerce Jawad Paul stressed the importance of expediting the proposed visit of the Ethiopian technical team to Pakistan for the necessary inspection and evaluation of pharmaceutical companies.



Bulgarian President Iliana Yotova (L) and her deputy Kiril Valchev (R) receive their certificates of election from Central Election Commission (CEC) Chairman Georgi Horozov during a ceremony at the Parliament building in Sofia

Shaza Fatima says: Pakistan's satellite internet framework nearing completion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday said that Pakistan is in the final stages of preparing a Fixed Satellite Service (FSS) framework for satellite internet services,

Addressing the APT Symposium on Digital Transformation and the Universal Service Fund (USF), she said the framework would be finalised soon after consultations with relevant institutions.

The government would provide a favourable and business-friendly environment for companies investing in the satellite internet sector, she added.

The minister said Pakistan had made significant progress in expanding digital connectivity, improving internet infrastructure and narrowing the gender gap in mobile internet usage.

She said the gender gap in mobile internet usage had declined from 38 per cent to 8 per cent. Citing the GSMA, she said Pakistan had recorded the world's fastest progress in reducing the gap over the past two years.

Shaza Fatima said three new submarine internet cables had landed in Pakistan over the past two and a half years. Work was also underway on alternative routes and new cable connections to improve international internet connectivity.

Through the Universal Service Fund, more than 17, 000 kilometres of optical fibre had been laid across the country, she added.

The number of fibre broadband home passes had increased from fewer than three million in 2024 to more than five million, the minister said.

She added that the proportion of mobile towers connected to fibre had risen from less than 15pc to over 19pc. The government aimed to increase this rate to at least 60pc.

The minister said Pakistan had introduced fifth-generation (5G) technology through the auction of 480 megahertz of spectrum in March 2026.



In Washington, D.C., the official 2026 Christmas tree for the White House was brought to North Drive. Melania Trump, wife of US President Donald Trump, greeted the Christmas tree upon its arrival at the White House.

Chinese delegation visits IPC Ministry to explore investment opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): To further promote trade and economic cooperation between Pakistan and China and explore new investment opportunities, a high-level Chinese delegation—under the auspices of the Pak-China Business Forum—visited the Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) on Tuesday.

The meeting was chaired by Federal Secretary for Inter Provincial Coordination, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, and was attended by heads, general managers and managing directors of Chinese enterprises associated with the sectors of energy, international trade, industrial services, construction and development, rock wool technology and automobiles, said a press release.

From the Pak-China Business Forum, Chief Patron Lt. Gen. ® Qayyum, Patron Brig. ® Sultan Mehmood Satti, Patron Sheikh Ijaz Asghar and other representatives also attended the meeting.

On the occasion, the Chief Patron of the Forum said that the Pak-China Business Forum was established about ten years ago to promote investment opportunities and strengthen business linkages between the two countries. At present, it has 22 offices operating in China.

Financial constraints should not become barrier to justice: CJP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this regard, the Chief Justice informed the delegation about the recently launched free legal aid programme of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, which can be accessed through its dedicated helpline 1818.

The Chief Justice, who also chairs the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, stressed that financial constraints should not become a barrier to justice and reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that no individual is left without legal representation.

The meeting was also attended by the Director General (Reforms) of the Supreme Court, Director General of the Federal Judicial Academy and Secretary of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi presenting a souvenir to former President of the Swiss Confederation and a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Commission on Drug Policy Ruth Dreifuss



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing the inaugural ceremony of NTC Data Center.

Pakistan, Türkiye agree to boost exchange of judicial expertise, institutional cooperation

ISLAMABAD, (APP): A seven-member Turkish judicial delegation, led by President of the Court of Cassation Ömer Kerkez, visited the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan and discussed ways to strengthen judicial cooperation between the two countries. The delegation met Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, other judges, Registrar and Secretary to the Chief Justice. During the meeting, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan highlighted the historic and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Türkiye and stressed the need for greater exchange of legal and judicial expertise, professional engagement and institutional cooperation. Ömer Kerkez acknowledged the longstanding friendship and shared values between the two countries, saying increased interaction between their judicial institutions would promote mutual understanding and enable them to benefit from each other's experiences.

Pakistan's space milestone reflects commitment to science, innovation: President Zardari

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, Tuesday, felicitated the nation on Pakistan's historic participation in China's Shenzhou-24 mission to the Tiangong Space Station, describing it as a landmark achievement in the country's scientific journey and a moment of immense national pride.

The President said the mission reflects Pakistan's growing commitment to science, research and technological advancement.

He appreciated SUPARCO, Pakistani scientists and engineers and China's cooperation in making this historic opportunity possible, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

The president said the mission would strengthen Pakistan-China scientific cooperation and open new horizons for Pakistan's space programme.

He expressed hope that the scientific experiments to be undertaken during the mission would contribute to advancing research and knowledge in areas of scientific interest.

Pakistan's participation in human spaceflight is not only about reaching space but also about harnessing its opportunities for research, learning and innovation to address challenges on Earth, he added. Recalling Allama Iqbal's vision, "Sitaron se aagay jahan aur bhi hain", the president said this milestone should inspire Pakistan's young generation to pursue knowledge, innovation and scientific discovery with confidence and ambition.

Violence against women threatens equality, justice, society: Sherry

Says a woman's safety, dignity and freedom are not negotiable

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Senator Sherry Rehman, Vice President Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, said violence against women was not an isolated or private matter but a systemic social crisis that undermined equality, justice and the very fabric of society.

She said the scale of violence, coupled with persistently low conviction rates, exposed serious failures in protection mechanisms, reporting systems and the administration of justice. "Too many women and girls continue to endure violence in their homes and communities, while fear, social stigma, family pressure and impunity prevent them from speaking out or seeking help. We cannot continue to look away or treat this as a private matter."

Recalling years of parliamentary advocacy and legislative efforts, Senator Rehman said Pakistan had taken important steps through laws addressing honour killings, workplace harassment and child marriage. "The Anti-Honour Killing legislation, the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act and our efforts to prevent child marriage reflect years of struggle to secure women's rights. I tabled Pakistan's first bill against domestic violence in 2004. But legislation without implementation, protection and accountability cannot deliver justice. Our laws must work for women where they need them most."

She said entrenched social attitudes and harmful norms continued to normalise violence, making it imperative to confront the culture of silence that enabled perpetrators and failed survivors. "Awareness alone is not enough. We need to challenge the mindsets that excuse violence, institutions that fail to protect survivors, and a system where perpetrators can evade accountability. The burden must never fall on women to endure, stay silent or fight alone for their own protection."

Senator Rehman called on society to move beyond symbolic solidarity and make ending violence against women a collective responsibility. "We must raise our voices, challenge outdated attitudes and stand unequivocally against violence in every form. A woman's safety, dignity and freedom are not negotiable, nor are they privileges to be granted. They are fundamental rights. The Pakistan Peoples Party remains committed to this struggle, and our measure of progress must be a Pakistan where no woman lives in fear, no survivor is denied justice, and no perpetrator is protected by silence, influence or impunity."



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

NCCIA detains suspect for harassing, blackmailing multiple women

ISLAMABAD, (APP):The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Islamabad has arrested a suspect allegedly involved in blackmailing, harassing and extorting money from multiple women through fake job advertisements, false marriage promises and a fraudulent British identity.

An NCCIA spokesperson told on Tuesday that the Cyber Crime Reporting Centre (CCRC) Islamabad received a complaint regarding online harassment and blackmailing through private photographs and videos.

During the inquiry, the agency arrested the suspect, identified as Irfan Siddique, and seized his digital device for technical examination.

The technical analysis revealed his alleged involvement in systematic blackmailing, harassment and extortion targeting multiple women through social media platforms. According to preliminary investigations, the suspect allegedly used fake job advertisements to lure women and impersonated a British citizen using a fake identity card.

He allegedly persuaded women to establish intimate relationships under false promises of marriage and subsequently recorded their private videos during personal meetings and video calls.

The suspect allegedly used these recordings to blackmail the victims and extort money from them.

The investigation also revealed that the suspect allegedly used AI-generated photographs showing him alongside senior state figures to further his unlawful objectives. The spokesperson said a case had been registered against the suspect, while the investigation had been entrusted to Inspector Waqar Masih Ghouri. Further investigation was underway to identify additional victims and determine the full extent of the suspect's alleged criminal activities.



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

PM Shehbaz urges country's youth to remain ambitious, steadfast

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, congratulated the nation on the historic departure of Pakistani astronaut Zeeshan Ali for China's Tiangong Space Station aboard the Shenzhou-24 mission.

On the occasion marking the milestone, the prime minister declared that Pakistan has officially embarked on a journey 'beyond the stars.'

He emphasized that the mission represents not merely the flight of a single astronaut, but the collective aspirations of 240 million Pakistanis, the nation's youth, and its scientific community, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He also commended both Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Dawood for completing rigorous training in China with exceptional hard work, discipline, and dedication.

Highlighting the strategic significance of the mission, the prime minister noted that Pakistan has become the first country after China to send an astronaut to the Tiangong Space Station.

Describing the achievement as a testament to the "iron-clad friendship" between Islamabad and Beijing, he expressed deep gratitude to China for including Pakistan in the landmark expedition.

The two nations are now aligned not only in pursuing peace and mutual development on Earth, but also as partners in space exploration—reflecting the depth and breadth of their bilateral ties, he added.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to placing science, technology, and space research among its top priorities, he observed that the mission marked a major stride toward a new Pakistan, where the country's youth will not merely compete with the world, but lead it.

The prime minister also paid tribute to the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), as well as the Pakistani universities and scientists whose scientific experiments were accompanying the mission into orbit.

Dera Bugti to get Rs 257 mln for two road projects

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Balochistan government will spend Rs256.76 million during the current fiscal year on two federally funded road projects in Dera Bugti to improve regional connectivity and transportation infrastructure under the Dera Bugti Development Package.

According to an official document available with Wealth Pakistan, the funds have been allocated under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) as part of the Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan Package (AHBP).

Of the total allocation, Rs156 million has been earmarked for the construction of a black-topped road from Lehri to Sangsila under Phase-I, while Rs100.757 million will be spent on a 57-kilometre black-topped road connecting Sui with Uch Field.

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

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

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

Two of the five schemes have recorded releases or expenditure equal to their respective approved costs.

These include a Rs335.690 million black-topped road connecting Dera Bugti with Pitokh, Habib Rahi and Vedara Killi Mured, and a Rs952.353 million scheme for electrification of villages in the district.



Three Palestinians were killed early Tuesday in an Israeli airstrike targeting a police post in southern Gaza as Israel continued daily violations of last year's ceasefire agreement

China, Pakistan deepen marine science ties with new Qingdao initiative

BEIJING, (APP): The first seminar on Marine Geology, Resources and Environment in Offshore Pakistan was held in Qingdao, bringing together more than 40 experts and scholars from Chinese institutions and eight Pakistani visiting scholars and students to discuss key scientific issues and chart a path for deeper cooperation.

The event was organized by the Qingdao Institute of Marine Geology under the China Geological Survey. Discussions centered on oil and gas resources and gas hydrates in offshore Pakistan and adjacent areas, tectonic evolution, and coastal resources, environment and geological hazards, with 19 academic presentations covering offshore oil and gas exploration, gas hydrate accumulation models and numerical simulation, regional tectonic evolution and mineralization, coastal resource and environmental hazard risk assessment, and satellite remote sensing for marine environmental monitoring.

During the seminar, participants released the "Qingdao Initiative on China-Pakistan Marine Geoscience Cooperation," calling for deeper joint research in marine geoscience, accelerated development of marine science and technology innovation platforms, strengthened training of young researchers.

Online harassment, targeted campaigns against public figures requires serious attention: Shaza

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speakers at an international seminar on Tuesday called for stronger accountability of social media platforms and balanced, risk-based regulation to counter disinformation, extremist content and other online threats without undermining freedom of expression, innovation and the digital economy.

They were speaking during the second session, titled "Global Platforms and Local Laws: How to Ensure Digital Accountability," of the seminar on Social Media Platforms (SMPs) and the Post-Truth Era, organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and moderated by senior journalist Fahd Hussain.

While speaking in the event Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja called for improved coordination with social media platforms and specialised regulatory institutions to address online threats, harassment and security-related complaints.

She said gender-related issues, particularly online harassment and targeted campaigns against public figures, also required serious attention and proper contextualisation to ensure effective responses from social media platforms.

The minister pointed out that differences between local laws and social media platforms' community guidelines often created challenges in addressing harmful online content.

She said complaints needed to include relevant legal provisions and sufficient local context, as submitting a large number of complaints without proper explanations could reduce the likelihood of appropriate responses.

Shaza Fatima said specialised institutions, including the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), could play an important role in providing expertise and improving coordination with social media platforms.



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.