

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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dquettavoice@gmail.com



File photo of a Danish school provided by News Desk

Police Found 5 Dead Bodies In Dalbandin

Riaz Baloch: DALBANDIN: In a grim scene, police uncovered five lifeless bodies bound to power poles. Each victim bore the cruel mark of multiple bullets. The district headquarters hospital in Chaghi now holds these silent witnesses.



Levies sources suspect they were Afghan military personnel, abducted by the shadowy Jaish ul Adl—a militant group that casts its dark shadow across Iran.

VC SBK Removal Summary Sent to Balochistan Cabinet

Manan Mandokhail:

QUETTA: The Vice-Chancellor of Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University has been removed from service following a decision by the Balochistan Cabinet. The Cabinet has formally sent a summary of the removal to the Governor of Balochistan, who also serves as the Chancellor of the university, for final approval.

During a press conference, a government spokesperson revealed that the recruitment of 4,000 teachers under Sardar Bahadur Khan University will be conducted on a merit-based, contractual system. These candidates will be employed on contracts lasting one and a half years.

The spokesperson further stated that the Balochistan government is committed to ensuring transparency throughout the recruitment process.



The teachers will be hired at the Union Council level and will not be transferred from one school to another. The provincial committee will oversee the appointments, ensuring that interviews are conducted strictly on merit, with each candidate's credentials thoroughly reviewed.

Prime Minister Approves Danish Schools for Four Districts in Balochistan

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has officially approved the establishment of Danish schools in four key districts of Balochistan: Dera Bugti, Musakhel, Killa Saifullah, and Sibbi. This decision marks a significant step forward in the government's ongoing efforts to improve educational opportunities in underserved regions of the country.

Raufullah Khan Kakar, the Member (Social Sector & Science & Technology) at the Planning Commission of Pakistan played a key role in the approval of schools.

The new schools aim to provide high-quality education to students from low-income families, ensuring that children in these remote areas have access to the

same educational standards as those in more developed parts of Pakistan. The Danish schools, known for their rigorous curriculum and state-of-the-art facilities, are expected to play a crucial role in enhancing literacy rates and fostering social mobility in these districts. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the importance of education as a tool for national development. "By investing in the education of our youth, particularly in underprivileged areas, we are laying the foundation for a brighter future for Pakistan," he stated.

The decision has been widely welcomed by local leaders and communities in Dera Bugti, Musakhel, Killa Saifullah, and Sibbi, who have long advocated

for better educational resources in their regions. These new institutions are expected to serve as centers of excellence, offering a comprehensive education that includes not only academic subjects but also extracurricular activities designed to develop well-rounded individuals. This initiative is part of the broader vision of the federal government to uplift marginalized areas and ensure that every child in Pakistan has the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their socio-economic background. The schools will be fully funded by the government, and construction is set to begin later this year, with the first intake of students expected in the coming academic year.



LHC grills state counsel for lack of knowledge on internet disruptions

NEWS DESK: The Lahore High Court's (LHC) Justice Shakil Ahmad grilled the state counsel on Friday for his lack of "knowledge" and "seriousness" about recent internet disruptions across the country.

Major online platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp have been hit hard since last week with users reporting slowdowns and difficulties in accessing messaging and social media applications.

After months of speculation about the installation of a so-called "firewall" that could be leading to internet disruptions, the country's IT minister finally confirmed a day ago that the govern-

ment was indeed upgrading its "web management system" to cope with cyber security threats.

Minister of State for IT Shauqat Fatima Khawaja has said the government had sought a report from the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) and other institutions over the internet disruption. Meanwhile, PTA officials told a Senate committee that the telecom regulator was "assessing the issue" and the IT ministry would be in a better position to provide an overview in two weeks once the assessment is completed.

The Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) has warned that the country's

economy could lose up to \$300 million due to the internet disruptions.

Justice Ahmad took up a petition today filed a day ago by Advocate Muhammad Nadeem, a Lahore resident.

At the outset of the hearing, the judge ordered that the federal government's counsel appear before the court by 12pm after consulting the relevant authorities.

When the hearing resumed, state counsel Rana Nauman appeared before the court and requested that the government be given some time to submit a "detailed report on the internet out-

Return to IMF and inflation started under Imran Khan's watch: Nawaz Sharif

NEWS DESK: Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) supremo and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has blamed the country's current inflation crisis on policies initiated during the tenure of the Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. "We are not responsible for the inflation, it started during the tenure of the PTI founder," Sharif said during a press conference in Lahore on Friday, held alongside his daughter Maryam Nawaz, the current Punjab Chief Minister (CM). He emphasized, "We had said goodbye to the IMF, so who brought it back?"

Nawaz criticised those he deemed responsible for the economic challenges, stating, "The real culprits are those who are now sitting in jail and making grand statements." "We completed power projects in record time and controlled the crisis, yet today the public is suffering due to inflation and rising electricity bills". Reflecting on the economic con-

ditions during his tenure, the former PM remarked, "In my October 21 speech, I detailed the situation with electricity prices. In 2017, electricity bills were lower, and people lived comfortably. Vegetables were available for ten rupees per kilogram."

The PML-N leader also highlighted his government's achievements, noting, "We kept the dollar stable at 104 rupees for four years." "Those who now face bills of 18,000 rupees were paying only 1,600 rupees in 2017. Maryam Nawaz has already reduced the price of flour since her return and is working hard on health and sanitation."

Nawaz also reiterated his longstanding grievance over his disqualification from office. "A few judges dismissed me for not taking a salary of 10,000 dirhams from my son. I still ask today, why was I removed? Those who removed me committed an injustice and a crime against the country."



3 TTP terrorists killed, 1 injured in North Waziristan intelligence based operation: ISPR

NEWS DESK: Three Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) terrorists were killed while one was injured during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in North Waziristan's Razmak area, the military's media wing confirmed on Friday. According to a press release from Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation was carried out after security forces were informed of the presence of terrorists in the area.

"During [the] conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between our troops and khwarji, as a result of which, 3 Khwarji of Fitna al Khawarij were sent to hell, while one khwarji got injured," the ISPR said.

It added that weapons and ammunition were also recovered from slain terrorists, who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as target killing of innocent civilians.

"Sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other Khwarji found in the area as security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of Khawarij and terrorism from the country," the statement added.

Earlier this month, the government declared TTP as Fitna al-Khawarij and all other terrorists

associated with the group as khwarji (outcasts).

Speaking during a press conference, ISPR Director General (DG) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said that the move was made because the TTP was a "mischievous-making group" that was "neither an ideology nor has anything to do with Islam or Pakistan."

He had added that security forces and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) conducted 23,622 small and large-scale IBOs in the country this year, out of which 2,045 operations were carried out in the second half of July. A day prior, seven TTP terrorists were killed by security forces during another IBO in KP's Kurram district.

The country has lately witnessed a sharp uptick in the number of attacks targeting security forces, other law enforcement agencies, and security checkpoints, particularly in Balochistan and KP.

Attacks escalated after the TTP broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the government in 2022 and vowed to target security forces.

Islamabad has blamed Kabul for allowing the TTP—a separate group but aligned with the Afghan Taliban—to use Afghan soil for launching attacks inside Pakistan.



Army chief honours Arshad Nadeem's historic achievement at GHQ ceremony

Pakistan has highest inflation rate in Asia: Bloomberg

Challenges and Reforms in Balochistan's Higher Education

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Fans remember NFAK on 27th death anniversary

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EDITORIAL VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Balochistan Needs Action, Not Another Failed Polio Campaign

Editorial:

The news of a children in Chaman and Dera Bugti contracting polio, in Balochistan after three years, is a damning indictment of the provincial health department and donor agencies entrusted with this critical public health mission. While a targeted vaccination campaign is a welcome response, it's a mere bandage on a gaping wound.

Imported Solutions Don't Work

For far too long, a top-down approach relying on imported solutions has dominated our fight against polio. We, the people of Balochistan, have the indigenous knowledge and cultural understanding necessary to effectively combat this disease. Yet, our voices and workable solutions are consistently sidelined.

The presence of poliovirus in environmental samples since last August is a glaring failure of our health department. This isn't just a recent oversight; it exposes a systemic weakness in surveillance and outreach programs.

Where are the more sensitive campaigns that cater to communities in the local languages? Where are the efforts to address vaccine hesitancy through dialogue and trust-building with local leaders? We need an overhaul of the health department's approach, one that leverages the strengths of our communities over public health initiatives.

Donor agencies should also shoulder some of the blame

Have they critically evaluated the effectiveness of their funding, or have they simply perpetuated a cycle of dependence on external solutions? We urge them to invest in building the capacity of our local healthcare system and empower Balochistanis to take charge of their health outcomes.

The upcoming vaccination campaign is crucial, but it cannot be a one-off effort. We need a sustained, multi-pronged approach that integrates local knowledge, strengthens healthcare infrastructure, and prioritizes community engagement. Only then can we truly eradicate polio from Balochistan and safeguard the health of future generations.

This is a wake-up call. Let Balochistan not be known for this resurgence of a preventable disease. Let's work together, with our own solutions at the forefront, to banish polio for good.

Economic revival

By Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry:

IN 1992, Bill Clinton ran his campaign for US president on three slogans, one of which was 'It's the economy, stupid!'. In the backdrop of the economic downturn of the early 1990s, Clinton's focus on economic revival resonated well with his voters, and within three years, economic growth picked up.

Ever since, the public service we have availed of, and the higher quality of life we desire can only be available if we pay taxes. An argument often advanced in response to the topic of increasing the tax net is that the revenue collected from the common man's taxes is used by high officials of the government to finance their over-extended lifestyles. It is, therefore, important that while broadening the tax base, the government make an equally robust and visible effort to cut wasteful public expense.

However, we have yet to see any concrete step being taken to give credence to the government's claims of belt-tightening. For instance, when the government announced cost cuts on international travel, one saw a long list of the categories of public office holders who would be entitled to travel business class.

When we are knee-deep in debt, should these not be minimised? Similarly, many high-ranking officials see the cavalCADE to move about, can cuts not be made here? The larger point is that austerity flows top down. As such, the surrender of a second car by the chief justice is a welcome precedent worth emulating.

We have yet to see any concrete proof of belt-tightening. Meanwhile, the 18th Amendment, which devolved several subjects to the provinces, was a step in the right direction, but its implementation has left much to be desired.

First, the federal ministries dealing with the subjects already devolved to the provinces have not been dissolved. Second, resources were not devolved by the provinces to local governments. Since living conditions in tehsils and villages have not improved, the common man is dissatisfied with the way the economy works in our country. In a related issue, the NFC award adopted in 2010 increased the share of provinces from the net proceeds of divisible pool taxes to 57 per cent (2011-12 onwards) up from 45 per cent (2009-10). As debt obligations have continued to rise.

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Ghulam Ali Baloch:

In the landscape of Balochistan's higher education, several challenges have emerged, casting shadows over the educational prospects of its youth. These challenges, if not addressed promptly, could impede the region's progress and development. Here's an exploration of some pressing issues and potential avenues for reform:

1. Imbalance in Staffing Ratios: Investigations into the staffing levels following the 18th amendment reveal a concerning ratio of non-teaching staff to faculty members. The purported ratio of 8 non-teaching staff for every teaching faculty member is highly unworkable and warrants immediate attention.

2. Disbalance in Budget Allocation: The proliferation of new departments and the consequent construction of buildings have led to a disbalance in budget allocation within the higher education sector. Funds earmarked for teaching and infrastructure development are not proportionately allocated, leading to inefficiencies.

3. Lack of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Funds: Contrary to global best practices, there is a notable absence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund management for sponsorships and higher education initiatives in Balochistan. Major investors and entities have made negligible contributions towards the advancement of higher education, posing a significant barrier to educational progress.

4. Inadequate Resource Management: Internal disorganisation and the lack of decision-making power within departments has led to a wasteful use of resources, hindering the progress of educational projects.

5. Absence of Internal Consultation: The lack of internal consultation exacerbates the mismanagement of resources, resulting in irrational appointments and the illogical establishment of new campuses and departments. Collaboration and decision-making power should be decentralised to improve efficiency.

6. Irrational Construction Projects: The Highways Department's inclination towards constructing large buildings for Research Centers (BRCs) and Cadet Colleges at exorbitant costs further strains the funds allocated for higher education. These expenditures compete with essential agricultural lands under the untapped potential for revenue generation.

7. Need for Institutional Re-alignment: Several institutions under the Higher Education umbrella require re-alignment to improve the quality of both school and college education. Outdated practices, such as the establishment of Intermediate Colleges, need to be re-evaluated in favor of modern educational structures that align with contemporary needs.

8. Modernization of Curriculum and Institutions: The way for a brighter educational future for its youth is to update the curriculum and infrastructure. The author is a senior bureaucrat introduced under the BS program, leading to redundancy and inefficiency. Transforming these colleges into centers for skill development or upgrading them to universities could better serve the educational needs of Balochistan's youth.

9. Conclusion: Balochistan's higher education sector faces multifaceted challenges that demand immediate attention and reform. By addressing staffing issues, reallocating budgets effectively, fostering corporate partnerships, enhancing resource management, promoting internal collaboration, rationalizing construction projects, realigning institutions, and modernizing curriculum and institutions, Balochistan can pave the way for a brighter educational future for its youth.

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Targeting Chinese nationals

By Muhammad Amir Rana:

THE Shingla terrorist attack on the Chinese engineers' vehicle is having consequences. The same is the case for the recent Shingla attack. The names of all three groups are circulating in the media after the attack. The TTP has been projected as the prime suspect, as it has declared the mastermind behind a similar attack on the Chinese in Skardu in 2012. The names of a few TTP commanders who may have orchestrated the attack are circulating in the media. Quickly jumping to conclusions distracts investigations and impacts the state's ability to tackle the security situation comprehensively.

The state's history of dealing with militant groups has emboldened them. Pakistan's militant groups are not too complex but is diverse. Ideologies, sociopolitical factors, and the region's local contexts. In any counterterrorism inquiry, local elements and ideologies are more important than broader ideological and political motivations. The region's upper and lower Kohistan, and Battagram districts of the Hazara region in KP and the adjoining Diamer district in Gilgit-Baltistan share religious, social, tribal, ethnic, and cultural ties. The region has been frequently in the news due to 'honour' killings, burning of girls' schools, and the killing of Shia travellers. Recently, it has gained notoriety for attacks on Chinese workers involved in development projects in the area.

The region has always been difficult to govern. Security institutions, bureaucracy, and the area's political leadership have tried to run the administration while compromising on laws and rules. Even in the case of religious scholars, the administration tries to resolve them through local jirgas and by involving religious scholars. This can result in leniency towards criminals and elements taking the law into their own hands.

The Mujahideen Gilgit-Baltistan and Kohistan (MGB) are a perception of a 'win-win' scenario for militants and religious figures in the region. The MGB are a perception of a 'win-win' scenario for militants and religious figures in the region. The MGB are a perception of a 'win-win' scenario for militants and religious figures in the region.

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involved in the 2013 terrorist attack on the Nanga Parbat base camp targeting foreign climbers — and an end to the women's sporting activities in GB for the minister's release. They and modernisation of the road because the state failed to honour a 2019 agreement, and issued a demand ultimatum for the government to meet their demands.

Although a prominent actor, it is not the only one in the region. The MGB and other local militant groups reportedly maintain close links with the TTP and sectarian outfits based in Punjab.

These external groups appear to support local militants, as evidenced by the TTP's involvement in the 2022 Babusar Pass blockade. The state's history of compromise with militant groups has emboldened them. For instance, in the kidnapping incident, the administration agreed to ban girls' sports in the region. Similarly, a 2019 agreement had reportedly allowed for implementation of some Islamic laws to carry out large-scale attacks independently. While local groups may lack the capability to carry out large-scale attacks independently, the means of organising and transporting of Shia passengers and the attack on tourists at Nanga Parbat demonstrate their capacity for violence. Their ability is amplified by support from like-minded groups within Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The government's strategy of outsourcing the means of organising to local and external religious figures needs to be revised to address these sentiments. A more comprehensive approach is needed to calm tensions.

While anti-development sentiments are not that high in the area, and wider roads will trigger urbanisation, women's emancipation, and modernisation, which they perceive as threats to their religion and culture. The dominant perception suggests that most people are happy with the compensation money and employment prospects.

However, this doesn't diminish the level of religious extremism present. Some residents may sympathise with the Uighur community in Xinjiang, and others may dislike the presence of foreigners on their land. These factors could be nurturing negative perceptions about Chinese nationals in the region.

One possible explanation for the local dynamics is seen in the blasphemy accusation against a Chinese official in 2018. The incident highlighted that tensions could erupt.

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Sustainability of digital trade

By Hassan Nawaz Sheikh:

PAKISTAN'S ailing economy is undergoing a process of revival. The economic wizards have placed a lot of bets on IT in the hope that the enormous potential of this sector can help alleviate our economic woes. There have been claims by former federal IT ministers that Pakistan's IT exports would reach between \$10 billion to \$20 billion from the existing mark of \$2.6 billion within the next few years. The premise on which these claims are being made is that the IT sector has been recording consistent upward growth since the last few years.

The IT industry has gained further focus when it was picked up by the newly christened Special Investment Facilitation Council as one

of the five core areas on which Pakistan's economic revival is predicated. Under the auspices of the Special Investment Facilitation Council, opportunities are available for setting up special technology zones (STZs) at seven prime locations including Lahore, Peshawar, Swat, Abbottabad, Haripur, and Islamabad (Karachi). The Ministry of Information Technology & Tele-communication also has a plan for the establishment of 25 software technology parks (STPs) through Pakistan by converting public/private owned dilapidated or non-operational office buildings/factories into STPs. However, these are just infrastructural develop-

ments at best, whereby, a conducive environment for setting up businesses is being provided. The 'digital trade' has no clear definition, yet it is believed to refer to 'commerce and services' through digital means in both goods and services'. The Digital Trade Principles, as agreed upon by the G7, cover five areas: (1) open digital markets; (2) data flow with trust; (3) safety and security; (4) digital trading systems; and (5) fair competition and digital governance. While there is no clear measurement of this sector, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates it to constitute approximately 10 per cent of the entire world trade. How-

ever, given how quickly this sector is expanding, the domestic regulatory environment will become increasingly complex, making it more difficult for consumers and businesses to seize some of the emerging opportunities. How are these problems to be tackled? How would a new and emerging regulatory requirements as violations thereof might restrict their ability to do business with their customers? For all these key problems and other related issues, our country needs to have a robust and dynamic digital trade policy for sustainable growth in this sector. Digital economy trade agree-

ments: While digital trade policy would bring a holistic and competitive edge to our IT entrepreneurs so that they're able to compete at the international stage, digital trade agreements could trade them bilateral and preferential market access. DTAs are just a niche segment of the traditional free trade agreements. Whilst Pakistan is struggling to gain benefit from the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) model, the developed world is moving swiftly towards the advanced form of an FTA in the shape of DTAs. For instance, digital trade is a key element in the European Union's trade policy and every modern trade agreement that EU has concluded contains a dedicated digital trade

chapter. Pakistan should, thus, aim to have a DTa with the EU that is the world's largest exporter and importer of digitally deliverable services. Singapore can be taken as another example that has a trade agreement that includes negotiations on digital economy agreements with Chile, New Zealand, Australia, the UK and South Korea. So, the trend of digital economy and trade agreements is definitely picking up. If our IT entrepreneurs can have direct and preferential access to developed economies — through the medium of DTAs — then we can keep our hopes high that sustainable and continued business will come our way and that would then justify our near tripling of growth of STZs.

Oman achieves over 50% employment target in 2024

MUSCAT (INP): Oman has achieved over 50 per cent employment target in the first half of 2024 (January-June), announced Ministry of Labour Oman.

The Ministry of Labour in the Sultanate of Oman has reported notable progress in its employment plan for the first half of 2024.

A total of 14,074 Oman citizens secured employment across both the public and private sectors

during this period. According to the ministry's data, between January and June 2024, 30,394 jobs were filled, with over 50% of these positions being first-time jobs for the employees.

The ministry set a target to employ 10,000 job seekers in the government sector, with 6,963 positions already filled. In the private sector, the ministry aimed to employ 16,000 job seekers, of which 7,111 have successfully secured jobs.

In terms of training linked to employment, 1,412 individuals have completed their training, achieving a completion rate of 16%. The government sector welcomed 305 trainees, while the private sector accommodated 1,107 trainees during the first half of the year. The ministry's goal is to train 2,000 individuals in the government sector and 7,000 in the private sector throughout the year.

The Ministry of

Labour is also actively working to enhance the employability of individuals through training initiatives. The ministry aims to provide employment and training opportunities to 35,000 job seekers this year, with 15,486 jobs and training opportunities already completed, marking a 44.25% completion rate. Overall, the Ministry of Labour's initiatives to improve employment rates in Oman are showing positive outcomes.



QUETTA: Sardar Mukhtar Tareen and Syed Imran Agha is meeting with Director General Public Relations Balochistan Mohammad Noor Khetran.

Three patients monkeypox cases 'confirmed' in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): At least three patients have been diagnosed with the monkeypox virus in Pakistan, health authorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa confirmed on Friday.

All patients, whose cases have been confirmed by the health department in KP, were detected with the virus following their arrival from an Arab country, the department said.

Pakistan has had cases of Mpxox previously and it was not immediately clear which variant was detected in the patients. Earlier, surveillance at the airports was tightened across Pakistan after the country confirmed its first case of monkeypox in KP's Peshawar.

Meanwhile, the Border Health Ser-

vices (BHS) and provincial authorities have also been put on high alert in the wake of the case's detection in the country's north-western province.

Authorities have issued instructions to establish isolation wards in designated hospitals. Stocking antiviral medications and ensuring the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers and all healthcare facilities and points of entry.

Following the detection, additional samples have also been collected from individuals in close contact with the patient. The Health Ministry has also directed intensified monitoring at all entry points to prevent further cases from entering the country.

The country, on Thursday, confirmed its first monkeypox case this year after a resident of Dir, who currently resides in Mardan, tested positive after he returned to Pakistan from a Middle Eastern country on August 3, an official from the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHS&RC) told the publication.

"Provincial health authorities are now engaged in contact tracing," the official added. The case was confirmed just a day after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the disease a global health emergency of public concern.

The case marks the 11th instance of Mpxox in Pakistan over the past two years and

the first in 2024. Last year, a patient co-infected with HIV and Mpxox passed away at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad.

In the past year, Pakistan had 10 confirmed Mpxox cases, all linked to travellers from the Middle East and other regions.

The recurrence of cases among travellers highlights the critical need for rigorous border screening and monitoring. During a special NCOCC session, officials noted that around 15 African countries are currently reporting Mpxox cases, with 2,030 confirmed infections.

The spread to previously unaffected regions like Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda since mid-July 2024 indicates the virus's growing reach.

Indian doctors call for nationwide shutdown after brutal rape of medic

KOLKATA (INP): Anger over the brutal rape and murder of a doctor in eastern India showed no signs of dying down on Friday, as medicines called for the largest shutdown of hospital services in recent times and political parties geared up for protests.

A 31-year-old trauma doctor was raped and murdered last week inside a medical college in New Delhi in 2012. The Indian Medical Association, the country's largest grouping of medics, said it would implement a nationwide shutdown of most departments, except essential services, for 24 hours from Saturday morning, the largest such strike in at least a decade.

"Doctors, especially women are vulnerable to violence because of the nature of the profession. It is for the authorities to

provide for the safety of doctors inside hospitals and campuses," the IMA said in a statement issued on X late on Thursday night.

Political parties, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which is in opposition in West Bengal, of which Kolkata is capital, said they will hold protests in the city on Friday. Bollywood actors, other celebrities and politicians have voiced shock at the crime, calling for stricter punishments for perpetrators of

crimes against women. A police volunteer who worked at the hospital has been arrested and charged with the crime.

Doctors say the circumstances of the rape point to the vulnerability of medics left without proper protection and facilities.

The government brought in sweeping changes to the criminal justice system, including tougher sentences, after the Delhi gang-rape, but campaigners say little has changed since the tougher laws.



ISLAMABAD: President Aijaz Pakistan Traders Association Ajmal Baloch addressing a press conference at National Press Club (NPC).



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti presiding over the provincial cabinet meeting.

Gaza ceasefire talks resume in Doha as deaths top 40,000

DOHA (INP): A new round of Gaza ceasefire talks was underway in the Qatari capital Doha, officials said, with Israel's spy chief joining his US and Egyptian counterparts and Qatar's prime minister for the closed-door meeting.

The talks began as Gaza health officials reported separately that the death toll in the Palestinian enclave had surpassed 40,000 people, a threshold reached after more than ten months of fighting.

The round of negotiations, an effort to end the bloodshed in Gaza and bring 115 Israeli and foreign prisoners home, were put together as Iran appeared on the point of retaliating against Israel following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran

on July 31. White House national security spokesperson John Kirby confirmed that talks had officially begun but cautioned that they were unlikely to produce an agreement on Thursday and would likely continue on Friday.

Hamas officials, who have accused Israel of stalling, did not join Thursday's talks. However, mediators planned to consult with Hamas' Doha-based negotiating team after the meeting, the official briefed on the talks told Reuters.

Israel's delegation includes spy chief David Barnea, head of the domestic security service Ronen Bar, and senior military official Nitzan Alon, defence officials said on Thursday. CIA Director Bill Burns and US Middle

East envoy Brett McGurk represented Washington at the talks, convened by Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, with Egypt's intelligence chief Abbas Kamel also in Doha.

UK foreign minister David Lammy said the ceasefire talks represent a "crucial moment for global stability", that could "define the future of the Middle East".

Meanwhile, Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas told a special session of the Turkish parliament on Thursday that he would travel to Gaza. "I have decided to go to Gaza with other brothers from the Palestinian leadership," Abbas said to applause from Turkish lawmakers.

"I will do that," Abbas said in remarks translated into Turkish from Arabic. "Even if this would cost my life. Our life is not more worthy than the life of a child."

Abbas said the Palestinian people would stand tall despite the Israeli strikes. "Gaza is ours as a whole. We don't accept any solution that would divide our territories," he told the parliament.

A source in the Israeli negotiating team said on Wednesday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has allowed significant leeway on a few of the substantial disputes. Gaps include the presence of Israeli troops in Gaza, the sequencing of a prisoner release and restrictions on the free movement of civilians from southern to northern Gaza.

Senior journalist Hamid Mir files petition in IHC against internet firewall installation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior journalist Hamid Mir has filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court through lawyer Imaan Mazari, challenging the installation of an internet firewall on Friday. The petitioner appealed to the court to stop the installation of the firewall, which he argues infringes on citizens' fundamental rights, and to declare internet access for livelihood as

a basic human right under the constitution. The petition also requests that the court demand a detailed report on the firewall from the relevant parties and suspend the installation process until a decision is made. Furthermore, the petition appealed for the firewall installation should be contingent on consultations with all stakeholders and the protection of basic rights,

with orders to ensure citizens have uninterrupted access to the internet. The petition names the Cabinet Secretary, Secretary for Information and Technology (IT), Secretary of Interior, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and Ministry of Human Rights as respondents. Pertinent to mention here that a second successful trial of

the firewall installation was completed Thursday, with internet service providers installing the firewall after temporarily disabling social media apps. Audio and video downloading on social media platforms was suspended during the installation, and it is expected that social media services will return to normal in the next 2 to 3 days.

Fans remember Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (NFAK) on 27th death anniversary

LAHORE (INP): The legend Qawwali singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was remembered on his 27th death anniversary today (Friday). It's been 27 years since Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan passed away but his legacy is proof that he may be gone but never forgotten.

The legendary Qawwal was born on September 13, 1948 in Faisalabad and was son of Fateh Ali Khan—a musician, vocalist, instrumentalist, and renowned Qawwal.

He began his career by learning the tabla before moving on to vocals.

In 1964, Khan's father died, leaving his musical education under the supervision of his paternal uncles, Mubarak Ali Khan and Salamat Ali Khan.

He was signed by Oriental Star Agencies, Birmingham, England in the early 1980s. The renowned singer was popularly known as Shershah-e-Qawwali (The King of Kings of Qawwalis).

Nusrat was considered one of the greatest singers ever recorded in Pakistan's history possessed a six-octave vocal range and could perform at a high level of intensity for several hours. Extending the 600-year-old Qawwali tradition of his family, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is widely credited with introducing Sufi music to international audiences. His soulful masterpieces are still admired by both youngsters and old age people across the border. In addition, he also did several music projects with Indian musician composer A. R. Rahman and film lyricist Javed Akhtar.

He reached out to Western audiences through his work with Peter Gabriel on the soundtrack to 'The Last Temptation of Christ' in 1985.

As per the Guinness Book of World Records, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan holds the world record for the largest recorded output by a Qawwali artist—a total of 125 albums as of 2001.

Sadly, he left his life in grief as he died of a sudden cardiac arrest on 16 August 1997, aged 48.

S.No.	Name of Work/lot	Estimate
1	LAYING OF TILES, SOLAR STREET LIGHTS AT MUHAMMADABAD NEW KAJI BADAAN PANGOR, (S/O) ZODIA 1000 PANJOURI (S/O) ZODIA 1000	35,000,000

The Assistant Director LGRD Panjpur invites sealed percentage tender based on composite schedule of rates 2023, 2024. From interested contractors for the work listed below under PCEEP (S/O) ZODIA 1000 Panjpur. Tender Fee Rs. 10000/- PANJOURI (S/O) ZODIA 1000

Documents shall be made under the Societies Public Procurement rules - 2014. Eligibility of bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must be backed by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Subsequent Revenue Authority Registration is required. Relevant Category of contracts should apply. Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding. The bids must be accompanied by a Performance Bond Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the undersigned firm a schedule bank of Head Tender Documents can be obtained from the undersigned firm at the office of the undersigned (The NIT & Bidding Document can also be downloaded from www.bppra.gov.pk) Issuance of tender Documents From the date of publication of NIT & Bidding Document 2024 during office hours on working days. Last Date of bid submission: The tenders must be submitted latest by 02 September, 2024 at 12:00 PM at the office of the undersigned. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at 01:00 PM Address: Assistant Director Local Govt. Panjpur Phone no: 98558-0214 Email: adlg@panjpur.gov.pk

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT & RURAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PANJOURI

PRG No. 00216-08-2024

S.No.	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	ICT Equipment/Network, surveillance devices, storage device, Office Equipment (Total Items) Count: 40	100,000 PKR

The main Muhammad Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Institute of Cardiology invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items: TSE-24260812371. 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 EPPRA GOB. Tender Fee Rs. 1000/-

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity in Previous 3 Years Turn over of at least 5,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must be currently backdated by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure: Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee/Deposit at Call of amount 100,000 PKR specified above in the name of the undersigned from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk or by visiting the undersigned office. Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk. Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 27 August, 2024 at 10:00 AM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 11:00 AM on EPPS System Address: Sheikh Muhammad Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Institute of Cardiology Quetta Phone no: 9812922291 Email: procurement@gmail.com

MANAGER SHEKH MOHAMMAD BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN INSTITUTE OF CARDIOLOGY

AB No.18015-08-2024

Pakistan has highest inflation rate in Asia: Bloomberg

ISLAMABAD (INP). A latest Bloomberg report states that Pakistan has the highest inflation rate among the Asian countries. The report reveals startling insights into the recent inflationary trends in Pakistan noting that electricity prices increased by 18% in July causing electricity bills to surpass the rent of homes.

According to the report, electricity prices have risen by 155% since 2021 making high bills a significant burden for the public. Bloomberg's report also mentions that electricity rates were raised as part of the IMF loan programme and the inflation rate in Pakistan has now reached 12%.

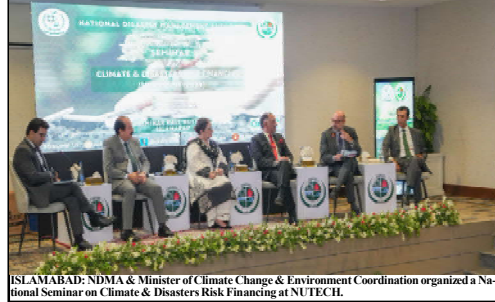
The report said the inflation rate in the country has fallen, but the ratio of electricity bills is higher than the house

rent, adding hike in power tariff meeting IMF loans' conditions and other reforms sparked countrywide protests.

Bloomberg report said: "The South Asian nation — where nearly half the population survives on less than \$4 a day — has seen electricity prices surge 155% since 2021, after the government started hiking industrial and retail rates to bolster its chances of securing loans from the International Monetary Fund. "The energy sector has become an acute pain point as Pakistan grapples with chronic economic crisis. Inflation of around 12% — the highest in Asia — has eroded purchasing power and pushed electricity consumption to the lowest in four years as people and companies abandon the predominantly gas-powered

national grid in favor of installing solar panels. "The average per-unit electricity price for residential users rose 18% in July, when the country secured a new \$7 billion loan from the IMF.

Many residents have since seen electricity bills — typically a fraction of household expenses — surpass rents that range from \$100 to \$700 a month, said Samiullah Tariq, head of research at Pakistan Kuwait Investment Co. "Protests by citizens, business groups and opposition political parties have spread across the country, prompting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to announce a Rs50 billion subsidy over the next three months to cushion the poorest electricity users from the blow of price hikes.



ISLAMABAD: NDMA & Minister of Climate Change & Environment Coordination organized a National Seminar on Climate & Disasters Risk Financing at NUTECH.

KP minister Shakil Ahmad resigns over 'corruption' in govt

PESHAWAR (INP). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Communication and Works Shaked Ahmad Khan has resigned from his position, citing disagreements with the Chief Minister and allegations of corruption within the provincial government.

Khan, a PTI MPA, submitted his resignation to Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, expressing his dissatisfaction with the current administration. He stated that his differences with the Chief Minister were based on principles, but he maintained his loyalty to PTI. He also declared his willingness to be held accountable on all platforms.

Khan accused the Chief Minister of operating under someone else's direction and

compromising the party's core principles and promises. He claimed that the government had deviated from its original stance, and that poor governance and corruption had undermined the party's manifesto.

Khan had previously accused the Chief Minister of interfering in his ministry and limiting his ability to work effectively due to rampant corruption and mismanagement in the province. He vowed to continue raising his voice against corruption and bad governance.

Sources indicate that Khan had also raised concerns about corruption within the Chief Minister's cabinet, leading to the formation of a committee to investigate corruption

in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Khan reportedly had disagreements with other cabinet members and had previously expressed his dissatisfaction with former Chief Minister Mahmood Khan.

Sources suggest that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur was considering a cabinet reshuffle and had reportedly planned to remove Khan from his position. However, Khan pre-empted this move by submitting his resignation.

The provincial government, however, claims that Khan was removed based on a report from a committee formed by PTI Chairman Imran Khan. A summary recommending Khan's removal from the ministry has been sent to the Governor for approval.

Pakistan refrains foreign govts from interfering in internal affairs

ISLAMABAD (INP). Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch Friday said that foreign governments should refrain from interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs.

The spokesperson of the Foreign Office stated in the weekly briefing that no information has been provided by the US government regarding Asif Merchant. Pakistan is waiting for it.

She added that the people of Bangladesh can solve their problems, but Pakistan is worried about the situation in the Middle East.

Mumtaz Zahra further said that Iran has every right to defend itself. Israel should be held accountable for such actions.

The spokesperson of the Foreign Office also stated that Israel's humanitarian atrocities

are continuing in Gaza. 40,000 innocent civilians have been killed in Gaza so far. Pakistan condemns the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza. Israel should be held accountable for the genocide in Gaza.

She continued to say that Indian atrocities are continuing in Occupied Kashmir. Pakistan condemns the martyrdom of four Kashmiris in Occupied Kashmir. United Nations should take notice of human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir.

Mumtaz Zahra said that Pakistan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Iraqi government regarding arrangements for pilgrims.

Talking about the health issues, the spokesperson stated: "We have seen the

(WHO) advisory on monkeypox, the Ministry of National Health can only give a formal response in this regard".

The spokesperson of the Foreign Office added that there are active diplomatic missions of Pakistan and Afghanistan and there are high-level contacts in all areas of mutual relations between the two. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has changed the visa guidelines for officials of the National Assembly Secretariat and Senate Secretariat. It is to discourage the misuse of the visa policy.

He also said that Pakistan is presiding over the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the process of ensuring the participation of the participating governments in the SCO meeting is ongoing.



ISLAMABAD: Barakat Jameel, Deputy General Secretary Muslim League-N Gilgit Balistan and former Parliamentary Secretary is holding a press conference at National Press Club (NPC).



ISLAMABAD: Director of Agha Khan Foundation for Economic Development Sultan Ali Allana called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

CDA Chairman reviews ongoing plantation drive, beautification plan

ISLAMABAD (INP). Chairman of Capital Development Authority Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Friday, in a meeting reviewed the ongoing plantation campaign and beautification plan for Islamabad.

The meeting outlined the steps taken so far and the future plans to make Islamabad a more eco-friendly and beautiful city.

As part of the plantation drive, free saplings are being distributed to citizens through stalls set up in various centers, markets, and parks. Additionally, door-to-door distribution of

free plants is also underway. The Chairman emphasized the importance of involving the business community and civil society to make the drive more successful.

To ensure effective implementation, the city will be divided into four zones, with concerned officers and staff responsible for landscaping and beautification work in each zone.

The corporate sector is also expected to play a significant role in making Islamabad eco-friendly and beautiful. Renowned architects

and landscaping experts will be consulted for the beautification and upliftment of Islamabad.

The plan includes beautifying interchanges, flyovers, loops, and highways, as well as planting fruit trees on medians and green belts along roads. Inspiration will be drawn from other cities' horticulture, and adequate lighting arrangements will be made along flyovers and bridges.

With this comprehensive plan, Islamabad is set to become a model city for beauty and sustainability.

Modernization of railway system crucial for ensuring long-term well-being: Senate body

ISLAMABAD, Aug 16 (INP). The Senate Committee on Railways emphasized on Thursday that the modernization and enhancement of the railway system are crucial for ensuring the long-term well-being and prosperity of the nation.

The Committee's meeting was chaired by Senator Jam Saifullah Khan.

During the session, the Committee discussed measures to control corruption within the railway system and inquired about the number of officials held responsible or penalized for corruption charges over the past five years.

Senator Shahadat Awan suggested that the Ministry of Railways provide comprehensive details regarding instances of fraud within the department. He further argued that attributing the entire loss to pension issues is not justifiable.

Senator Jam Saifullah Khan, Chairman of the Committee, recommended that the Ministry deliver a detailed briefing on the issues raised by Senator Shahadat Awan, particularly concerning theft, corruption, monetary losses, and the actions taken against the perpetrators.

The Secretary of the Ministry of Railways informed the Committee that there is a clear directive of zero tolerance for corruption. He added that the Ministry is prepared to scrutinize matters as extensively as this august house deems necessary.

He emphasized that the Ministry will thoroughly review audit reports, guided by the Committee's direction, and assured the Committee that all decisions will be made in strict accordance with rules and regulations.

The Committee members also engaged in an in-depth discussion on the ML-1 Project. Senior

officials provided a briefing on the project's operations, key milestones, and the status of existing railway lines.

Senator Kamil Ali Agha inquired about the cessation of railway tracks following recent floods. It was reported that despite the complications caused by the floods, the ML-1 design is structured with environmental resilience in mind. Officials asserted that the project is transformational for the Railways.

Senator Jam Saifullah Khan recommended that the Ministry ensure the loan for this project is cost-effective and results in reduced travel time, as well as positive environmental impacts.

In response, the Secretary reiterated that the project is indeed cost-effective and includes favorable conditions for loan repayment. He also mentioned that private-sector investment is being sought for the project.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister coordinator on health Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Bhattarai Chaired high level meeting regarding M pos today in ministry health.

Flood alert sounded as rain rage predicted across country

NAROWAL (INP). Flood alert has been sounded in many cities of the country as the weather pundits predicted another surge in rain with India as usual playing the spoiler.

Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Punjab warned of high flood level in River Chenab during next 24 hours after India released water in the river without any prior information. There was also low-level flood in River Ravi at Justar and Shahdri near Lahore. The Rescue and district administrations were also on alert in Narowal, Shakargarh and other Punjab cities.

The heavy rains have already wreaked havoc in several KP cities particularly in Khyber District where two people have died, several houses collapsed, crops damaged and a number of cattle were dead. National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) has stated that more monsoon rains are expected in DG Khan Division over next 48 hours.

The hill torrents and local nullahs of DG Khan Division are likely to experience medium to

high level of flash flooding which may result in damage to infrastructure. All villages/towns or settlements near nullahs, especially along the flood plain, can be affected by increased flows. The public has been advised to stay informed by keeping track of weather updates and alerts.

NDMA has issued instructions to all relevant departments to take necessary precautions to mitigate the possible effects of flooding and extreme weather.

Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 489,500 cusecs water from various run stations with inflow of 555,900 cusecs. According to the data

released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1549.00 feet and was 151.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 313,000 cusecs and 283,500 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1212.30 feet, which was 164.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 46,900 cusecs

and 10,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 309,800, 324,500, 385,600 and 350,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 58,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 119,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday informed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif that the foreign tourists in the flash flood-hit Astora area were safe and away from the affected area.

The prime minister had directed the NDMA to ensure the safety of the tourists and protect the locals from any troublesome situation.

In a report submitted to him, the NDMA informed the prime minister that the Authority took immediate action on his direction to protect the foreign tourists in the flood-affected area.

It was told that two Italian and an Argentinian tourist were on safe and at a distant location from the affected area.