

# QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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dquettavoice@gmail.com



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier H. E. Li Qiang unveiling a plaque to mark the completion of New Gwadar International Airport.

## No compromise on judicial reforms, says Bilawal

**NEWS DESK:** Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has asserted that judicial reforms will be implemented without any compromise. Speaking at the launch of the Hari Card in Karachi on Monday, he emphasised the party's commitment to the promises made in the Charter of Democracy.

He stated that the launch of the Hari Card follows the Benazir Income Support Programme and the Masood Card, highlighting the PPP's focus on small farmers and the working class.

Bilawal referred to the agricultural losses suffered during President Asif Ali Zardari's first term, noting that the government was forced to import food. He underscored the need to support farmers by buying their produce.

Addressing the need for agricultural deregulation, he urged that the sector should be regulated instead.

He called for transitioning farmers to solar power for irrigation and ensuring they receive quality seeds. "We face the dual challenge of combating climate change while supporting farmers," he added.

In his political remarks, the PPP chairman recalled that the late Benazir Bhutto had promised to implement the Charter of Democracy.



He expressed determination to fulfil those commitments and asked the public if they were satisfied with the current judicial system. He insisted that if the public is not content, the solutions provided by Benazir should be pursued, including equal representation for all provinces in the judiciary.

Bilawal rejected calls for him to back down, asserting that he remains committed to Benazir's vision. He highlighted past injustices by the judiciary and military, recalling the challenges faced by his party in the 1990s.

He reiterated that the PPP's approach is based on reconciliation but underscored the need for accountability. He announced a public gathering in Hyderabad on October 18, inviting citizens to join the demand for judicial reforms.

## Shehbaz Sharif and Li Qiang Inaugurate Gwadar International Airport

**News Desk:**

**QUETTA:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier H. E. Li Qiang officially unveiled a commemorative plaque today, marking the completion of the highly anticipated New Gwadar International Airport. The state-of-the-art airport, a key project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is expected to serve as a major hub

for trade, travel, and economic development in the region. Both leaders hailed the project as a significant step towards enhancing connectivity and boosting the region's economic growth. During the ceremony, Prime Minister Sharif emphasised the strategic importance of the airport, highlighting its role in improving Gwadar's global connectivity and strengthening Pakistan-

China relations. Premier Li Qiang expressed his gratitude for the collaboration between the two nations, reiterating China's commitment to supporting Pakistan's development. The New Gwadar International Airport is poised to handle domestic and international flights, opening new avenues for trade, tourism, and regional investment.

## University Teachers Call Off Strike After Successful Talks with CM Balochistan

**Syed Ali Shah:**



**QUETTA:** University teachers in Balochistan have called off their weeks-long strike after successful negotiations with Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti. The teachers had been protesting over financial constraints and resource shortages in the province's universities. Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durani, Provincial Irrigation Minister Mir Saadiq Umran, and opposition lawmakers Khair Jan Baloch and Syed Zaifur Ali Agha played key roles in brokering the agreement that led to the end of the strike.

Chief Minister Bugti expressed his commitment to addressing the universities' financial challenges. "We are fully aware of the difficulties our universities are facing. I have assured the teachers that we will resolve the ongoing financial crisis. An important meeting with all Vice

Chancellors has already been scheduled to discuss the issue in detail," said Bugti. Education Minister Raheela Durani also spoke on the importance of resolving the issues at hand. "Our priority is the future of our students, and we cannot afford disruptions in their education. The government is committed to supporting the universities and their staff," she remarked.

Opposition lawmakers Khair Jan Baloch and Syed Zaifur Ali Agha, who facilitated the negotiations, lauded the government's efforts in taking immediate action. "We are glad that the teachers' demands are being seriously considered. We hope this marks the beginning of long-term reforms for higher education in Balochistan," said Baloch. Dr. Kaleemullah Bareech, leader of the University Academic Staff

Association, expressed cautious optimism about the outcome. "While we have called off the strike, we expect the government to follow through on its promises. The financial health of our universities is critical to maintaining academic standards," Bareech said. Dr. Sohail and Dr. Hasrat of the BUTEMS were also present on the occasion.

Fareed Khan Achakzai, another leader of the association, echoed the sentiment. "We have been patient, but we need concrete actions. The government's commitment is a positive step, and we will continue to push for the fulfillment of our demands," he added.

The strike, which lasted several weeks, had caused a significant disruption in the academic schedule across various universities in the province.

## BUTEMS Ranked Among Top Universities Globally by Times Higher Education

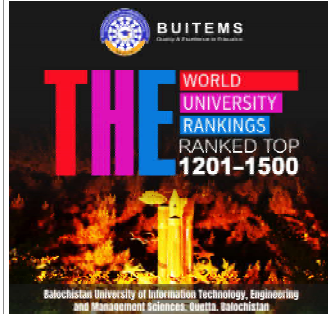
**Education Desk:**

**QUETTA:** Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences (BUTEMS) has earned a distinguished position among the top 1201-1500 universities worldwide in the highly respected Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2025.

This remarkable accomplishment makes BUTEMS the only university in Balochistan to reach this global milestone, elevating its status on the international academic stage.

University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences (BUTEMS) and a testament to the collective efforts of our faculty, staff, and students. Our growing recognition in international rankings is a reflection of BUTEMS' commitment to excellence in education and research.

As BUTEMS marks its 22nd year, Prof. Dr. Hafeez highlighted the institution's ambitious vision: "We believe we are the youngest university in the world to



Additionally, BUTEMS has also secured a place among the top 1001-1500 universities in Times Higher Education's SDG Impact Rankings for 2024, a recognition that only a select few universities in Pakistan have achieved. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez expressed his excitement about the rankings, saying, "This is an extraordinary achievement for Balochistan

achieve this ranking. Our goal is to make BUTEMS one of the top 600 universities globally."

The university's continuous climb in global rankings showcases its dedication to fostering quality education, research, and international collaborations, positioning BUTEMS as a leader in higher education in Pakistan and beyond.

## 'Substantial agreement achieved' on constitutional amendments: JUI-F Chief

**NEWS DESK:** Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the head of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F), announced that significant consensus has been reached on constitutional amendments following discussions and negotiations.

Speaking to the media in Tando Allahyar, Fazlur Rehman said that while the parliament's role is to amend the constitution and laws, such changes often spark disagreements. Express News reported. However, he emphasised that legislation must be crafted according to the country's circumstances and needs, with a focus on the interests of the nation and its people.

Fazlur Rehman explained that his party had raised objections to the government's draft amendments, arguing that they would undermine both judicial and public rights. These concerns have now been addressed, with many rejected provisions withdrawn. He expressed opti-

mism that their demands would be met.

Referencing the extended timeframe required for the 18th Amendment, which took nine months to finalise, Fazlur Rehman noted that the 26th Amendment should also be given sufficient time to allow a thorough review of all aspects.

Fazlur Rehman further mentioned that his party had requested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to postpone its planned protests until after the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, reminding them that previous protests had yielded no results. He remained hopeful that their appeal would be considered.

Meanwhile, a consensus on constitutional amendments has also been reached between the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), with both agreeing to move forward transparently.



## The Persistent Polio Challenge in Balochistan

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## Educational divide

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## 10 students injured in clash with police over college girl's rape

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## THE PERSISTENT POLIO CHALLENGE

Editor: Asim Khan

### The Persistent Polio Challenge in Balochistan

#### Editorial:

The recent report of the 15th polio case in Balochistan, involving a 30-month-old child from Pishin, is a stark reminder of the ongoing battle against this crippling virus. With the total number of polio cases in Pakistan reaching 22 this year, it is evident that our efforts are falling short.

Ayesha Raza Farooq, the Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication, rightly expressed deep concern over the rising number of cases. Her statement, "Each case is a heartbreaking reminder that we are hurting our children," resonates with the harsh reality. Despite the simplicity of the solution—timely and repeated vaccination—the targets seem to be achieved only in media reports, not on the ground.

The traditional methods being applied are clearly insufficient. Vaccine hesitancy, population mobility, and insecurity are significant challenges that require innovative, out-of-the-box solutions. The Chief of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Balochistan, Inam ul Haq is undoubtedly a committed officer, but the sheer number of stakeholders involved often leads to fragmented efforts and diluted accountability.

It is time for a paradigm shift. We need to move beyond conventional strategies and adopt a more holistic approach. This includes leveraging technology for better tracking, engaging communities to build trust, and ensuring that vaccination campaigns are not just periodic events but a continuous, integrated effort.

The situation in Balochistan is dire, and it demands coordinated action from all sectors of society. The dream of a polio-free Pakistan can only be realized through collective responsibility and unwavering commitment. We owe it to our children to ensure that no more lives are marred by this preventable disease.

## Back in the news

By Huma Yusuf:

“YOU can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.” Those famous lyrics are going to haunt American officials after the 11th month’s US presidential elections as Washington again considers its Afghanistan problem. How it will broach this topic is unsurprisingly of interest to Pakistan’s establishment. But rather than endure a case of déjà vu, could our leaders pitch a new approach?

Just under 24-month Afghans require humanitarian assistance, 48 per cent of them live below the poverty line, and Afghan women’s rights are so decimated that women are now prohibited from even speaking in public. Over the past three years, these factors have not been sufficient to draw global attention to Afghanistan. The world remains focused on the conflict in the Middle East, Russia’s posturing, and US-China rivalry. And yet, Afghanistan is creeping back into America’s line of sight, and the recent arrest of an Afghan national in Oklahoma for allegedly planning Election Day attacks in the name of IS will put the issue into centre focus. The man was apprehended while trying to stockpile weapons after crawling through online IS propaganda. His detention is a reminder that the US is not secure against terrorism while militant safe havens persist. Even earlier, Afghanistan was back in US headlines, because security has become a useful

punching bag in the context of domestic politics. America’s chaotic departure from Afghanistan — based on a deal with the Afghan Taliban brokered by the Trump administration, followed by an exit plan executed by the Biden administration — has featured repeatedly on the campaign trail, with Republicans and Democrats blaming each other for all that went wrong.

Afghanistan is creeping back into America’s line of sight. The Republican Party timed its publication last month of a report that sharply criticises the Biden administration for failing to plan for the return to power of the Taliban, and taking steps to safely evacuate Americans and their Afghan allies. The report also defended the Republican record following last year’s After Action Review, an internal US government probe into both sides’ failings during the withdrawal, particularly the failure to anticipate and plan for worst-case scenarios. Having stirred the Afghan pot to win domestic political points, the next US government will have to contend with what it has brewed.

Repetition of Afghanistan will also be driven by the fact that Russia is seeking to emerge as a regional leader on the topic. The Moscow Format meeting involving regional governments earlier this month focused on Afghanistan, and stressed down in the name of the Taliban’s

ability to clamp down on militant groups operating from its soil. This is not a conversation Washington can easily ignore.

In this context, Pakistan is preparing for a throwback to the days when Washington voted against global terrorism threats emanating from Afghanistan, and sought to tackle them by a c a t i e r r i n g counterterrorism funding in Islamabad’s direction.

Increased CT cooperation was the focus of bilateral meetings between the US and Pakistan in May, and the government’s decision to re-investigate its national CT strategy in June appeared strategically timed. No doubt, Pakistan faces a grave and material security threat from groups such as the TTP that carry out cross-border attacks from Afghanistan. The rapid rise in militant attacks is alarming. August’s death toll of 254 people in militant absorption into the Indian union was in violation of UN Security Council resolutions and denounced across the occupied territory. This opened another bleak chapter in the disputed state’s tortured history, which involved intensified repression, incarceration of Kashmiri leaders, grave violation of human rights and crackdown on the media.

Many in the Indian media read the outcome of the J&K election as a denial of BJP and rekindled US interest in regional security offers it carte blanche to clamp down in the name of national security.

By Arshad Saeed Khan:

“HILE basic education is a constitutional right of every child in Pakistan, millions of children and youth remain deprived of this fundamental means of living a quality life. The recently launched District Education Performance Index (DEPI) by the Ministry of Planning and Development represents a significant step towards comparing the state of education across 134 districts in Pakistan.

The findings of the report reveal severe disparities in both access and quality of education, with a staggering 77 districts categorised as ‘low performers’. Most of these districts are concentrated in Balochistan and Sindh, revealing deep-rooted interprovincial inequalities. Despite its pioneering effort, the DEPI report raises important questions about the robustness of its design, methodology, and title.

A stark contrast emerges when comparing Islamabad and Rajanpur, two districts with nearly identical populations of 2.3 million.

By Malecha Lodhi:

“HE resounding message from occupied Jammu and Kashmir’s recent legislative elections is rejection of India’s August 2019 action that robbed the state of even the nominal autonomy it previously had.

The verdict handed a decisive victory to the National Conference (NC) and was a setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s aim of restoring the Indian constitution which gave the state special status. The state’s reversion to a regular state is a violation of UN Security Council resolutions and denounced across the occupied territory. This opened another bleak chapter in the disputed state’s tortured history, which involved intensified repression, incarceration of Kashmiri leaders, grave violation of human rights and crackdown on the media.

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According to the DEPI, Islamabad ranks at the top of the 134 districts, while Rajanpur languishes far behind in 80th place. Despite both districts being part of the same country, their educational realities could not be more different. In Islamabad, 84 per cent of individuals (aged 10-plus) are literate, reflecting its privileged educational infrastructure.

Meanwhile, in Rajanpur, the literacy rate is a mere 37 per cent, underscoring the region’s severe educational deprivation.

The disparities become even more striking when examining school attendance. In Islamabad, only 40-47 per cent of residents — roughly 2pc of the population — have never attended school, a stark contrast to Rajanpur, where a shocking 1.2m people (52pc) have been denied even this basic right. In Rajanpur, fewer than 90,000 children (15pc) are out of school, whereas in Islamabad, a staggering 442,819 children (56pc) remain outside the education system. Who bears responsibility for this? — are beyond the

authority of the districts and fall under the jurisdiction of provincial governments. Districts depend entirely on the discretion of officials and political leaders in provincial capitals for development budgets, teacher appointments, new school constructions, and essential facilities such as computer labs. How can a district’s performance be accurately judged in areas outside its control?

The disconnect between certain DEPI indicators and ground realities is clear in one notable example: the average tenure of a provincial secretary of education is used as an indicator of district performance under the domain of ‘governance and management’. How can the tenure of a provincial secretary when decisions, including premature transfers, are made by the chief minister or chief secretary —? District officers have no control over these matters.

This flaw in the DEPI framework highlights the need for significant revision. True performance can only be gauged when districts have the power and the means to meet their goals — which they clearly do not. Districts remain mere spectators, wholly dependent on provincial decisions. So, what the DEPI really shows is not ‘performance’ but the current state of educational deprivation and neglect.

The right to free and compulsory education (Article 25-A) is a constitutional duty shared by federal, provincial, and local governments, and none can shirk this responsibility. Shockingly, over 25m children aged five to 16 are currently out of school. Pakistan, while the literacy rate is high, the illiterate population has swelled from 50m in 1998 to 60m in 2017 and is projected to reach 70m in the 2023 census. We must move beyond superficial rankings and enact meaningful reforms that empower districts and ensure equitable resource distribution. Only then can we build a society where every child has the chance to access quality education and thrive.

## Kashmir’s no to BJP

Modi apologists may want to sleep it. Another writer called it “an electoral and moral defeat” for BJP. The New York Times acknowledged that “Modi’s heavy manoeuvring to assert BJP ascendancy was foisted on the people.”

NC leader Farooq Abdullah said, “The results were a ‘verdict’ against Modi’s government... [they] prove the steps taken on Aug 5 are not acceptable to the people.” Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) declared: “By the vote people have rejected the unilateral changes imposed in August 2019, which led to their systematic disenfranchisement.”

Before assessing the electoral outcome, it is important to consider the backdrop in which the elections took place — after a decade, they occurred in the coexistence of half a million Indian troops deployed across J&K, with additional forces in the region for the election that patrolled the streets and set up checkpoints. APHC leaders were taken to languish in jail or house detention. Curbs remained on the media and foreign journalists were prevented from travelling to the region.

The unmistakable message of the election verdict was rejection of

the lieutenant-governor, imposed by New Delhi, to sharply limit the authority of the elected government. The LGA an instrument of direct rule by New Delhi since 2018, was given sweeping administrative and security powers and authority to nominate five members to the 90-member legislative assembly.

This was condemned across Kashmir with political leaders describing it as an effort to reduce J&K to a municipality while NC leader Omar Abdullah said the chief minister’s office had been downgraded to a powerless rubber stamp. The Congress party called it the “murder of democracy”.

The election result was a reaction to these moves and above all to the state’s truncation and disenfranchisement. Significantly, there were no boycott calls. This reflected the public eagerness to use the ballot box to vent their anger against New Delhi as an act of resistance, especially as the election was seen as a referendum on the BJP government’s policies. The National Conference that won 42 seats out of 90 secured an absolute majority in the assembly.

The final blow came weeks before the election when the BJP government’s strategic decision increased the powers of

and eroded its support. All regional parties campaigned on promises to reverse the post-2019 changes.

The much speculated ‘wave’ in favour of independent candidates — a record number contested the election — failed to materialise with only two seats won by them in the Kashmir Valley. The People’s Democratic Party was decimated, winning only three seats with voters punishing it for its opportunistic alliance with the BJP in the past. The BJP failed to win a single seat from the 19 it contested in the Valley but secured 29, all from Jammu’s Hindu-majority constituencies.

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regional dynamics created by the imperialist excursion in Afghanistan, and the absence of any transparency or accountability of security forces helped provide a platform for rights-based mobilisation through PTM.

Whatever its critics may say, there is no denying PTM’s organic appeal. It speaks to the marginalised reality of large swathes of the population, which is marginalisation, which has been created, not outright created. And like clockwork, the response has been to subjugate its leaders, and declare it to be a proscribed organisation.

The PTM’s organic and frankly surreal, straw is the chain of events, leading to PTI becoming a condition for ethnic nationalist undertones in its politics, with parts of its leadership and its support base finding the common cause with the

PTM. In a truly remarkable feat of own-gaism, the biggest civilian proponent of both Pakistan nationalism and centralised state power is now a sceptic. This is the denial of an electoral mandate, harassment and coercion, and pitting

Adopting a national security perspective makes us state see the world in terms of threats and conspiracies. But there is a reason why most successful states, and those with stable, productive relations with their citizens, only draw their power as one among several.

Most will prioritise development, enhancement of human capacity, and cultural fulfillment as valuable goals as well. Not the Pakistani state, though. It has stumbled into one conflict with its own population after the other. And this wrong way so many act hostile to it.

## Restless natives

By Umair Javed:

“N the national security perspective on Pakistan, the country is besieged by hostile forces seeking to undermine the security apparatus and/or alter its geographic integrity altogether.

On this list, the identity of external hostile forces remains broadly unchanged since 1947, though the Americans tend to drop in and out depending on regional considerations.

The list of internal collaborators/ fifth columnists sees a bit more churn. At various times, it has featured communists, socialists, mainstream political parties questioning military rule, mainstream political parties demanding federalism, mainstream political parties seeking constitutional rule, a few shades of Sharia-demanding Islamists, and, of course, hardline ethnonationalists striving for political and cultural autonomy.

While most others go in and out depending

on political circumstances, and the communists/socialists remain a figment of the distant past, ethnonationalists occupy a great deal of head space in the national security policymakers and thinkers (the latter term used here very broadly).

A common narrative is that ethnonationalist movements — principally the Pakhtun nationalists in KP and the Baloch nationalists in Balochistan (Bengalis in the past, and occasionally, Sindhis and Mohajirs in the present) — are present in any social and political movement, and the actions of these movements would be different.

But where the Natives let its analysis wrong is in its reading of history. Hard-liners did not necessarily have the upper hand in movements from day one. Instead, the turn towards secessionism usually occurred towards the chain of events featuring

the state’s national security apparatus and various identity groups. The clearest example of this phenomenon is in the case of Bangla nationalism between 1947 and 1971. The Muslim League was its heaviest mandate in the 1946 elections in East Bengal, an explicit platform for an autonomous state for Indian Muslims. The same reformed its leadership sourced post-1947 as

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repressed secessionism. Instead of accommodation through the democratic process, the security state doubled down on centralisation through the One Unit scheme in 1956. The distribution of resources, and continued repression of provincial politics, were the late 1990s. If anything, the rise of the PTI — a party with countryside appeal paying homage to Pakistan’s and its entrenched popularity in the province showed the region’s politics evolving towards a different, more centripetal direction.

What changed? Military support of the province’s peripheries,

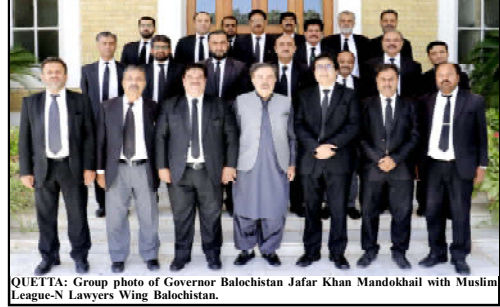
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Brian Lara to Matthew Hayden: 7 highest individual scores in Test Cricket history

BARBADOS (INP): Test cricket has always been considered the pinnacle of the sport, with its five-day format testing the patience, skill, and endurance of cricketers. Over the years, several legendary batters have etched their names in history with jaw-dropping individual scores. These innings have not only redefined the limits of batting but also demonstrated immense concentration and technique. Here are the seven highest individual scores in Test cricket history. Brian Lara (400): The undisputed king of Test cricket records, Brian Lara of the West Indies, holds the highest individual score in

Test cricket, a monumental 400 not out against England in Antigua in 2004. This iconic knock helped the West Indies declare at 751/5, and to this day, no batter has surpassed his record-breaking feat. Matthew Hayden (380): Australian opener Matthew Hayden briefly held the record for the highest Test score before Brian Lara reclaimed it. His 380 against Zimbabwe in Perth was a brutal display of Hayden's aggressive batting style. In just 437 balls, Hayden's power and precision saw him smash 38 fours and 11 sixes. Mahela Jayawardene (374): Sri Lankan legend Mahela Jayawardene played one of the greatest Test innings against South Af-



QUETTA: Group photo of Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail with Muslim League-N Lawyers Wing Balochistan.

The rise and fall of Pakistan batting maestro Babar Azam

LAHORE (INP): Babar Azam was on top of the world two years ago as Pakistan captain and top-rated batsman in all three formats but he will celebrate his 30th birthday at home on Tuesday when the second Test against England begins in Multan. Pakistan on Sunday left out Azam from the second Test squad after a poor run of form where he has failed to pass fifty in his last 18 Test innings. It is the first time Azam has been dropped from the Pakistan team since his white-ball debut against Zimbabwe in Lahore in 2015 and Test debut against the West Indies a year later. Azam shot to prominence with three successive hundreds in an ODI series against the West Indies in 2016. He replaced India great Virat Kohli as world number one ODI batsman five years later, a place he still occupies having been briefly de-

posed in between. He is still ranked fourth among Twenty20 batsmen but it is the long form where his form has suffered the most and his slump has seen him fall outside the world's top 10. A 13-year-old Azam was a ball boy in Pakistan's Test against South Africa in Lahore in 2007, where he could watch his childhood idol AB de Villiers. Karachi's streets of Lahore he rose to play in the 2010 Under-19 World Cup in New Zealand, topping the batting charts for Pakistan with 298 runs in six games. Two years in at the U19 World Cup in Australia he was captain and again leading run-scorer, with 287. In 2015 he was picked for the senior side and after thrilling in the white-ball game developed into a modern-day great in all three formats, often drawing comparison with Kohli. His opening part-

Australia announce 14-member squad for Pakistan ODIs

PERTH (INP): Cricket Australia on Monday unveiled their 14-member squad for the upcoming three-match one-day international (ODI) series against Pakistan set to commence on November 4 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. With Mitchell Marsh and Travis Head ruled out of the series due to paternity leave, Pat Cummins has returned to the side as captain along with Jake Fraser-McCork and Matt Short as openers. The Green Shirts

are set to take on the Kangaroos in three ODIs followed by a three-match T20I series scheduled from November 14 to 18 after the culmination of the ODI series with the second and third 50-over games on November 8 and November 10 at the Adelaide Oval, and Perth Stadium, respectively. Australian head coach George Bailey, as reported, said: "This is our last ODI series before the Champions Trophy (in Pakistan) and the balance of the squad was focused on that as well as con-

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QUETTA: Former Provincial Minister Prince Ali Ahmed Baloch is meeting Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti.

Hurricane Milton: Biden tours Florida's storm-hit streets as debris piles up

WASHINGTON (INP): After surveying battered communities and debris-filled streets in Florida, President Joe Biden vowed to continue supporting the state's recovery from Hurricane Milton, the second major storm to pummel the region in recent weeks. Rising floodwaters, fuel shortages and power outages are hindering cleanup efforts after Milton, which made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane. The devastation was compounded by the earlier Hurricane Helene. Recovery is expected to take a long time with the two storms hitting within two weeks of each other. Residents of hard-hit St. Pete Beach are "heartbroken and exhausted and their expenses are piling up," Biden said. Patrick De Haan said on X, six more fuel distribution sites were scheduled to open on Sunday, according to the state's emergency operations center. Biden had a bird's eye view of the destruction as his helicopter thundered along Florida's coast from Tampa to St. Petersburg over a landscape of golf courses, water-front skyscrapers and destroyed neighborhoods, including the shredded roof of Tampa Bay Rays' baseball stadium, Tropicana Field.

Sanford area northeast of Orlando, according to the National Weather Service. "Rivers are continuing to rise," Florida Division of Emergency Management Executive Director Kevin Guthrie told reporters at a separate news conference with Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, adding that some residents should prepare to evacuate as needed. About 75% of Florida's power is back online, with full restoration expected by Tuesday evening, said Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, who is traveling with Biden. Five days after the storm hit, about 818,000 customers remained without power, DeSantis said. About one-third of Florida's gas stations did not have fuel, including nearly 88% of those around Tampa, GasBuddy.com analyst Patrick De Haan said on X. Six more fuel distribution sites were scheduled to open on Sunday, according to the state's emergency operations center. Biden had a bird's eye view of the destruction as his helicopter thundered along Florida's coast from Tampa to St. Petersburg over a landscape of golf courses, water-front skyscrapers and destroyed neighborhoods, including the shredded roof of Tampa Bay Rays' baseball stadium, Tropicana Field.

At least 17 deaths have been reported from Milton, far more than the more than 200 people killed by Helene, in part, officials say, because more people heeded calls to evacuate ahead of the second hurricane. Climate change

peals to approve more disaster assistance, telling NBC News' "Meet the Press" program: "The states have to go and calculate and assess the need and then they submit that to Congress, and that takes some time." Relief efforts have also been hampered by a trail of misinformation, including by Republican lawmakers and former President Donald Trump, who is challenging U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris for the White House, as politics infiltrates the storm recovery. Biden's last week before the election. A number of local officials greeted or accompanied Biden on his tour, including Florida Representative Anna Luna. DeSantis, a Republican who also did not attend Biden's last visit following Helene, declined the White House's latest invitation and Biden told reporters that he did not speak with the governor. DeSantis, speaking to reporters in front of a heap of destroyed office furniture on Treasure Island, did not address Biden's visit. He said the state would remove as much debris as possible within the next three months to take advantage of federal state lawmakers ap-

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## Dar once again urges PTI to postpone protest in national interest

ISLAMABAD (INP): Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has said that holding protests during a nationally important event does not send a positive message, urging those wishing to protest to wait until after the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.

Talking to media in Islamabad, Dar highlighted Pakistan was fully prepared to welcome participants of the SCO summit, including leaders and delegates from member and observer states.

He emphasized that this event marked a significant diplomatic opportunity for Pakistan, occurring after 27 years, with

around 1,000 foreign delegates expected.

Dar urged the PTI leadership to postpone its protest planned for October 15, stressing the importance of national unity during such critical international engagements.

The deputy prime minister further stated that the Chinese prime minister will also pay a bilateral visit to Pakistan, while the Indian foreign minister has not requested a bilateral meeting.

He mentioned that all institutions and departments have made excellent arrangements through mutual cooperation, and the SCO Secretary-

General will brief the media about the conference.

Dar said that the assumption of Pakistan's global isolation had been disproven, as the visits of the Malaysian Prime Minister and the Saudi delegation were highly successful, and the Chinese Prime Minister is arriving a day before the meeting.

"Peace and stability in the region are essential for sustainable development.

Pakistan has highlighted the issues of Palestine and Kashmir at all international forums, and the process of sending aid to Palestinians is ongoing," he added.



DUBAI: H.E. Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Ambassador to UAE during his visit to Pakistan Pavilion at GITEX GLOBAL, held at Dubai World Trade Centre.

## 10 students injured in clash with police over college girl's rape

LAHORE (INP): Tensions escalated at a private college in Gulberg, Lahore, after the alleged rape of a first-year female student by a security guard.

The incident, which occurred during college hours in the basement of the institution, sparked outrage among students, leading to violent protests and clashes with law enforcement.

"The suspect raped the girl in the basement of the college, and ran away

The suspect, a security guard employed by the college, fled the scene following the alleged assault but was later arrested by the police in Sialkot.

Authorities have confirmed that an investigation is underway and that further details will be revealed in due course. In response to the incident, a large number of students gathered on campus, demanding justice and swift ac-

tion. The situation quickly turned volatile, with students vandalizing the college, damaging property, and breaking CCTV cameras. Some students also brought out college property and set it on fire, while the police force attempted to evict the students from the premises.

The local police, including the anti riot force, were deployed in and outside to control the unrest.

Attempts to negotiate with the students initially failed, leading to a confrontation between police officers and protesters. In the ensuing clash, 10 students and four police officers were injured. Rescue teams provided medical aid to the injured students, staff, and law enforcement personnel.

As the protests grew, parents arrived at the campus to take their children home. Reports from the scene suggest that the college administration

locked the students in classrooms and shut the gates, preventing students from leaving to join protests outside.

"We want to go out for protest but are not being allowed to," the students complained. This action further enraged students, leading to clashes with the teachers and additional property damage.

The police are continuing efforts to restore order at the Gulberg campus, while investigations into the alleged rape are ongoing.

The incident has prompted widespread condemnation and calls for accountability, with many demanding justice for the victim and stricter security measures at educational institutions. Meanwhile, Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar reached the college for talks with students. He told them their demands will be heard, and urged them not to damage the college.

## Ji strongly rejects Govt's proposed constitutional amendment

KARACHI (INP): Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, the Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, has voiced strong opposition to the government's intention to amend the constitution to appoint a Chief Justice of its choosing.

He made it clear that Ji strongly rejected the Government proposed constitutional amendments. He described this move as unacceptable and a direct affront to the integrity of the judicial system.

During a press conference, Rehman highlighted the deteriorating infrastructure in Karachi, particularly criticizing the city's broken roads and failing sewage system.

He noted that recent rains exacerbated these issues, underscoring the rampant corruption within Sindh's administration. "Corruption is embedded from the top down in this sys-

tem," he stated, lamenting the lack of accountability for those responsible.

Rehman emphasized that resources should be allocated fairly, stating that the wealth of Karachi should benefit Sindh first.

"Problems arise when rights are denied," he said, insisting that only a fair justice system can address these grievances.

He also pointed out the prevalence of white-collar crime, criticizing the "electric mafia" for evading justice with legal loopholes.

"These criminals are protected, and even after their misdeeds, they manipulate the legal system to their advantage," he lamented.

Rehman further commented on the recent local elections, alleging that MQM Pakistan was awarded 17 seats

despite not winning any polling stations, which he claimed was indicative of electoral manipulation. He denounced the ruling party for allegedly tampering with ballot boxes during the ongoing recounting of by-elections.

In response to ongoing protests by Tehreek-e-Insaf, Rehman urged the party to postpone their demonstrations, suggesting a meeting with former Prime Minister Imran Khan to discuss the situation.

He also mentioned that the government has terminated contracts with five Independent Power Producers (IPPs), hinting at further controversies within the administration. Jamaat-e-Islami remains steadfast in its commitment to opposing any unconstitutional measures and advocating for the rights of the citizens of Sindh.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier H.E. Li Qiang in delegation level talks.

## China, Pakistan to jointly build Growth Corridor: Says Chinese Envoy

ISLAMABAD (INP): China to work with Pakistan to jointly build a growth corridor, a livelihood-enhancing corridor, an innovation corridor, a green corridor and an open corridor, said Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong.

As for the temporary difficulties faced by CPEC construction and even the entire China-Pakistan practical cooperation, there are both constraints from Pakistan's security environment and the impact of the global economic downturn.

He told reporters here that the first thing to solve is not what to do, but how to look at it. The key is to hold confidence.

For example, Pakistan's new government has often called CPEC a "game changer" for Pakistan. President Zardari and H.E. Prime Minister Shehbaz also spoke highly of CPEC, believing it to be the "cornerstone" of Pakistan's development.

Pakistan's CPI has dropped from 28.7% at the beginning of this year to 6.9% last month, reaching a new low in 44 months.

As for the long-standing foreign exchange reserve issue, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves rose to nearly US\$16 billion last month, reaching the highest over the past several years.

Therefore, when he visited Karachi and Lahore recently, especially told Chinese and Pakistani entrepreneurs to thank the efforts made by Pakistani government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and to have confidence in your country's development prospects.

The better Pakistan develops, the more favorable conditions China and Pakistan have to promote cooperation.

As President Xi Jinping pointed out, conditions are not static. If you actively strive for them, they may get better. If you don't work hard, they will definitely get worse. This is called "the matter depends on the individual".

Sharing some personal opinions about Sino-Pak friendship, Ambassador Jiang said, "we are all-weather strategic cooperative partners and ironclad friends."

We have just celebrated the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, and

have reviewed the glorious history of China and Pakistan together.

We deeply feel that the relationship between the two countries has withstood the test and remains rock-solid.

We would like to cooperate with Pakistani side based on the existing achievements, promote China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to achieve new development, and take new steps forward in building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

Over the past 11 years, CPEC has indeed made outstanding contributions to Pakistan's economic development. Pakistani firms have often called CPEC a "game changer" for Pakistan. President Zardari and H.E. Prime Minister Shehbaz also spoke highly of CPEC, believing it to be the "cornerstone" of Pakistan's development. The Chinese tradition is to help friends without taking credit for it, but the statistics speak for themselves.

CPEC has brought to Pakistan a total of US\$25.4 billion in direct investment, created 236,000 jobs, and helped Pakistan add 510 kilometers of motorways, 8,220 megawatts of electricity and 886 kilometers of national core transmission grid.

Ultimately, these all thanks to the "1+4" cooperation layout determined by President Xi Jinping together with Pakistani side, and to the fruitful work done by all sectors from both China and Pakistan to implement this cooperation layout.

During H.E. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China in June this year, President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang reached important consensus with him, emphasizing the need to promote the aligning of high-quality "Belt and Road" cooperation with Pakistan's development plan, and to forge an "upgraded version" of CPEC, which further pointed out the direction for CPEC construction in the new stage. What I want to emphasize is that the more difficult the time is, the more we should face up to the challenge and work hard, instead of just talking the talk and

complaining.

As Premier Li Qiang pointed out at a recent symposium held in China domestically, we should both recognize the general trend and strengthen our confidence, and also face up to the difficulties and respond to them positively. Of course, I am not blindly optimistic, but there are facts to support my views.

For example, Pakistan is a major agricultural country, and its cotton, mango and wheat production respectively ranks fifth, sixth and seventh in the world. Pakistan is also the world's fourth largest producer of dairy products, but its modernization level needs to be improved.

For this, one of our Chinese companies are cooperating with Pakistani side to establish a modern high-efficiency water-saving agriculture demonstration base covering an area of 660 thousand square meters, and will train 1,000 technical and management personnel and talents for Pakistani agriculture sector.

Another Chinese company has established buffalo embryo lab in Pakistan, and has exported buffalo embryos to China, and has also successfully launch dairy products production in Pakistan, exporting 4,000 tons to China each year.

Another Chinese company has developed new rapeseed varieties in Pakistan, increasing the rapeseed oil content by 20% and the oil yield by 10%. This year, it will promote the planting by 66 thousand hectares.

These are all proactive actions, trying to find a way out at the end of the road and open up a new chapter in the predicament.

The Chinese people now believe that even when you have good wine, you still need to make it well-known, in addition to producing good things, one must also be able to sell them at a good price. This year, we will hold a new round of China International Import Expo in November, and we welcome more Pakistani companies to promote products. I believe that as long as both sides make solid efforts, we will surely overcome difficulties and challenges, promote China-Pakistan practical cooperation.



KARACHI: Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) visiting Dynamic Registry Center (DRC) Clifton BISP.

## PTI leader criticizes Govt over restrictions on Imran Khan

PESHAWAR (INP): Faisal Anjum, brother of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Chief Minister, has voiced strong criticism of the current government, stating it has "crossed all limits" in its treatment of Imran Khan, the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). During a recent statement, he emphasized that Pakistan is a democratic country and called for reflection on its political direction.

He asserted that the PTI's struggle is centered around Pakistan and the rule of law, underscoring the party's ongoing constitutional and legal battles.

He accused the government of engaging in "fascism" and criticized the ban on meetings with Imran Khan, allegedly enforced under the pretext of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting.

He highlighted that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has made significant strides in governance, with a reported 41% increase in revenue, resulting in a surplus of 100 billion rupees. Khan insisted that public funds should be used wisely across all districts, with a focus on the 99-point agenda provided to the district administration.

Amid escalating tensions, PTI has called for a protest at Islamabad's D Chowk, scheduled for October 15, highlighting the broader implications for democracy in Pakistan.

officials have been instructed to prepare for the upcoming demonstration.

In response to the government's restrictions, PTI leader Sheikh Waqas Akram stated that if arrangements for a meeting with Imran Khan can be made, the protest could be called off. He emphasized the need for a meeting between Khan and his family, expressing concerns over the health and well-being of PTI workers during this tumultuous period. As political tensions rise, the PTI remains firm in its demands for justice and the right to meet with its leader, highlighting the broader implications for democracy in Pakistan.



QUETTA: Provincial Irrigation Minister Mir Sadiq Umrani is presenting the resolution in the Assembly session.