

QUETTA VOICE

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SC strikes down 15-year age relaxation for Sindh govt jobs

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court struck down a Sindh government decision of allowing age relaxation of up to 15 years in the upper age limit, and upheld the Sindh High Court (SHC) order regarding the September 8, 2020 notification.

The Sindh government had notified the age relaxation in the upper age limit for the recruitment of government employees through the Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC). It was communicated that the general age relaxation applied to vacancies in all the Sindh government departments.

"The powers to authorise age relaxation for up to 2 years was vested in the secretary of the concerned department while the chief secretary was authorised to accord age relaxation for up to 5 years only," said a 16-page judgment, authored by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar.



"Even in the APT Rules, the maximum age relaxation limit was 10 years which was by itself highly unjustified and excessive, and rather than curtailing this period by setting a well thought-out benchmark and being mindful of the norms of reasonableness and proportionality, the Government of Sindh, without any justifiable rhyme or reason, extended the age relaxation up to 15 years," it added. It said that on the judicial notice of an unstructured exercise of discretion, extending a huge benefit of upper age relaxation, the chief secretary categorically admitted the anomaly but also placed an irrational justification that since no major appointments were made in over a decade, this benefit was, thus, accorded.

"Nobody had stopped the government from initiating the recruitment process through the SPSC in line with the requirement of human resource and if, for any reason, the Government of Sindh discontinued or banned the recruitment, then it does not give license to exercise unbridled discretion in granting age relaxations beyond logic," the judgment said.

In the context of the recruitment in issue, the judgment noted that the maximum age was 30 years; if 15 more years were added, then a person, if selected for job, would join his duty under the age of 45 years and retire upon attaining the age of 60 years.

Balochistan to Launch First-Ever Pink Bus Service for Women in Quetta

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has taken a pioneering step in women's transportation with the planned launch of the Pink Bus Service in Quetta. Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has approved the purchase of three buses, aiming to have the service operational within the next three months.

The project, exclusively for female passengers, marks the first initiative of its kind in the province, following a similar service in Sindh.

Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan, Chief of Public-Private Partnership, highlighted the significance of this initiative in an exclusive interview with Daily Quetta Voice, emphasizing that it would address pressing safety and accessibility concerns faced by women in public transport.

"This is a transformative project that speaks to our commitment to creating secure and comfortable public spaces for women," he noted. The Pink Bus Service is expected to bring relief to female commuters, who often face challenges in crowded public buses.

Dr. Faisal added, "Launching a women-only bus service is about more than transportation; it's about empowerment, safety, and independence."

The decision reflects the provincial government's recognition of gender-specific transportation needs and aligns with their broader agenda for social progress.

"With the Pink Bus Service, we're setting a precedent for gender-focused urban development in Balochistan," Dr. Faisal stated. The government is optimistic that this service will enhance women's mobility, improve their access to education and work, and ultimately contribute to a more inclusive society in Quetta.

Gas Leak in Dukki Coal Mine Kills Two Miners, One Rescued After 8-Hour Operation

Hussain Zarkoon:



DUKKI: A deadly gas leak in a coal mine in Balochistan's Dukki district led to the tragic deaths of two miners, while one was rescued after an intensive eight-hour operation. The miners, working at a depth of 1,400 feet, were trapped when poisonous gas filled the mine, cutting off their escape route.

The deceased, identified as Habibullah and Saifullah, were recovered from the debris, while a third miner was saved and quickly taken to the hospital. Many miners in Balochistan's

coal industry, including these victims from Afghanistan, face severe risks due to poor ventilation and inadequate safety protocols.

This incident marks the second tragedy in Dukki's mines in just two days, with a separate landslide claiming another miner's life. Rescue teams and local authorities deployed specialized equipment and worked tirelessly through challenging conditions to retrieve the trapped miners. Despite their efforts, the toxic atmosphere inside the mine posed significant obstacles,

resulting in the loss of two lives. The incident has drawn renewed attention to the hazardous working conditions in Dukki's mines, raising calls for immediate safety reforms. Mines Department officials have promised an investigation to prevent future tragedies, with plans to address ventilation and safety standards across the region.

This latest accident serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for mining safety improvements to protect the lives of workers in Balochistan's coal sector.

CM Balochistan Distributes Relief to Panjgur Martyrs' Families, Condemns Terrorism Involvement

From Our Correspondent:

MULIAN: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti visited Shujaband Tehsil in Multan on Thursday to distribute relief checks totalling PKR 1.515 million to the families of seven martyrs of the recent Panjgur incident.

In a solemn meeting, he conveyed his condolences to the families and assured them that those responsible for this heinous act of terrorism would face justice. He also announced that the Balochistan government would cover the education expenses for the martyrs' 16 children.

Speaking to the media, CM Bugti condemned the incident, stressing that "terrorists, not Baloch, carried out this act to fuel hatred among provinces." He clarified that some terrorists linked to the attack have been apprehended, while efforts to bring all responsible to justice continue.

CM Bugti accused the Indian intelligence agency, RAW, of orchestrating terrorism in Balochistan, stating "A dossier detailing RAW's involvement has been shared with the international community."

Promising a secure and peaceful Balochistan, he reassured the public that his government remains committed to eradicating terrorism. Accompanying him were prominent officials, including Provincial Minister Mir Saleem Khosa, Leader of the Opposition Mir Younis Azz Zehri, and Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan. Abdul Qadir Geelani expressed gratitude for Bugti's solidarity, underscoring that Balochistan's people stand firm against division and hostility.



PIA stake sale attracts sole bid of Rs10 billion below government minimum

NEWS DESK: The final bidding process for the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines attracted just one bid of Rs10 billion for a 60 per cent stake, the Privatisation Ministry said on Thursday.

The government had pre-qualified six groups in June, but only real-estate development company Blue World City participated in the bidding process, placing a bid that was below the government-set minimum price of Rs8.5bn.

Pakistan was looking to offload a 51-100pc stake in debt-ridden PIA to raise funds and reform state-owned enterprises as envisaged under a \$7bn International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

The Privatisation Commission said it had asked the bidder to match the minimum bid. Blue World City Chairman Saad Nazir however stood by his bid. "We wish the government all the best if they don't want to accept our bid," he said.

Officials from three groups that chose not to bid told Reuters on condition of anonymity that there were concerns about the government's ability to stand by agreements made for the flag carrier in the long term.

One executive voiced concern about policy continuity once a new government came in. The government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is reliant on a coalition of disparate political parties.

The government did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the concerns.

The disposal of PIA is a step former governments have steered away from, as it has been highly unpopular given the number of layoffs that would likely result from it.

Underpinning concerns over policy continuity and honouring contracts was the government's termination of power purchase contracts.

MDCAT Crisis in Sindh as IBA not ready to conduct test

Staff Reporter:

KARACHI, PAKISTAN: A new crisis has emerged in Sindh regarding the Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT). IBA Karachi has declined to conduct the test due to resource constraints and a lack of expertise, while IBA Sukkur has expressed its willingness to take on the task.

IBA Karachi's Stance: Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Khoja, Acting Executive Director of IBA Karachi, cited a 2002 decision by the Board of Governors to refrain from operating as a third-party testing agency until the institution acquires the necessary expertise and capacity. The letter further highlighted the difference in the governing acts of IBA Karachi and IBA Sukkur, which could potentially lead to inconsistencies in testing standards and administration.

IBA Karachi's Recommendation: IBA Karachi has recommended that the MDCAT be entrusted to a single entity, proposing IBA Sukkur as the most suitable candidate. The institution has pledged to provide logistical support to ensure the smooth conduct of the test.

High-Level Meeting: A recent meeting attended by Secretary Health Rehan Baloch and senior officials from both the Sindh High Court's ruling to nullify the MDCAT conducted by Dow Medical University and assign the task to two testing institutions, including IBA Karachi, adds another layer of complexity to the situation.

As the crisis unfolds, it remains to be seen how the Sindh government will address the issue and ensure the timely and fair conduct of the MDCAT for aspiring medical and dental students.



IBAs failed to resolve the issue. Despite the Sindh High Court's order, IBA Karachi remained adamant in its refusal to conduct the test.

Historical Context: It's worth noting that IBA Karachi, under the leadership of Dr. Abdul Wahab, successfully administered the MD CAT for many years. However, subsequent administrative changes led to the 2002 decision to discontinue the practice.

Legal Implications: The Sindh High Court's ruling to nullify the MDCAT conducted by Dow Medical University and assign the task to two testing institutions, including IBA Karachi, adds another layer of complexity to the situation.

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"She Power" Project: Empowering Women in Balochistan Through Hygiene and Sanitation

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Iran and Israel - hesitance to war

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Two Coal Miners Trapped in Dukki, Balochistan Mine - Rescue Operation Underway

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VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

“She Power” Project: Empowering Women in Balochistan Through Hygiene and Sanitation

Editorial:

The launch of the “She Power” initiative in Balochistan marks a significant step toward improving the lives of women and girls by addressing critical hygiene and sanitation issues. Supported by the Chinese government as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), this project aims to enhance the health, quality of life, and educational opportunities for young women in the province.

Balochistan, known for its harsh climate and socio-economic challenges, is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Women and girls in the region face additional hardships due to poor access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. These vulnerabilities are compounded by the increasing frequency of extreme weather events, which further strain the already scarce resources in rural areas.

Tackling Hygiene for Empowerment

During the high-level event to distribute hygiene kits, Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, highlighted the close connection between women's socio-economic empowerment and access to adequate hygiene facilities. She emphasized that hygiene challenges directly affect women's education, work opportunities, and leadership, making it crucial to tackle these issues to foster healthier, more equitable communities.

The “She Power” initiative plans to distribute 20,000 hygiene kits to schoolgirls across four districts in Balochistan. Each kit contains essential hygiene products and educational materials aimed at promoting better health practices. These efforts will not only improve the health and well-being of young girls but also reduce absenteeism in schools, thus enhancing educational outcomes.

Climate Change and Women's Vulnerability

The harsh realities of climate change in Balochistan, including droughts, water scarcity, and food insecurity, disproportionately affect women and girls. Senator Samira Munir Zehri, Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights, stressed that lack of access to clean water and sanitation facilities exacerbates these vulnerabilities. Women, often responsible for household chores, spend hours fetching water, leaving them with little time for education or income-generating activities.

Moreover, the lack of climate-resilient products can pose significant health complications, and missed opportunities for girls and women, further entrenching gender inequality. The “She Power” initiative seeks to change this narrative by providing the necessary resources for improved hygiene and health, creating a supportive environment that empowers women to lead healthier lives.

Driving Socio-Economic Change

The “She Power” project's focus on hygiene and sanitation goes beyond immediate health benefits. By initiating these essential resources, the initiative lays the groundwork for long-term socio-economic change in Balochistan. With better health and education, women are better equipped to participate in the workforce and contribute to the economic development of their communities.

This initiative represents a vital step toward gender equality in Balochistan, where women continue to face significant barriers to education, employment, and leadership. By addressing these challenges, “She Power” is paving the way for a more inclusive and resilient future for women and girls across the province.

As climate change continues to threaten livelihoods and amplify inequalities, projects like “She Power” are critical in ensuring that women are not left behind in the fight for sustainability and empowerment.

From Bretton Woods to the Kazan Declaration

By Shazia Anwer Cheema:

The world is facing a multiplicity of challenges and events such as increasing poverty in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania; the Ukraine proxy war; and the genocide of the Palestinians are challenging the world but more established in Bretton Woods. But the West is desperately trying to uphold its longstanding hegemony over the Global South. Any multinational alliance that does not have the patronage of NATO or Five Eyes is considered an adversary by the Global North instead of a global partner, and BRICS is no exception.

Held in Russia, the Kazan Summit had a symbolic relevance that voiced against genocide in Palestine, demanded a peaceful resolution to the Ukraine conflict, challenged Western sanctions over developing countries, and is why the “protectionist approach” is a reason for global poverty BRICS is an indicator of new multipolarity and the decay of the old normal. It does not mean that the world is going to divide itself again into left right blocs rather all

onstrates the complexity of the task ahead, the post-Bretton Woods system lasted for almost eight decades, so its replacement is an enormous task. Nevertheless, its death by thousand cuts has begun in Kazan which may take two or three decades to fully materialise. It may be essential, as a critical component of the current day to the effective functioning of government is the budgetary and business cost of its overextended mandate.

Bureaucrats claim to be neutral and disciplined implementers of the demands of the political leadership, blaming the latter for bad decisions and the ‘ills’ of the system. In fact, our government is of civil servants, and for civil servants, they have not fully deflected attention from the reality that they are a self-perpetuating oligarchy. Any government expanding enlightened views is invariably an ex-civil servant.

As indicated elsewhere in a more detailed piece on civil service reforms by this writer, the government's institutional architecture has evolved from structures inherited at indepen-

By Inam Ul Haque:

On Saturday, October 26, Israel finally retaliated against the October 1, 2024 missile strike comprising about 200 missiles fired by Iran on Israel proper, leveling the recent round of escalation. Israel for the first time acknowledged striking Iran in this shadow war. Around 200 jets and support aircraft attacked Tehran and western Iran in three ways of stand-off attacks mainly staying over the Iraqi territory. Israeli targeting and Iran's subsequent posturing indicate an end to the Iraq-led attack series with no likelihood of further intentional escalation.

First the Israeli targeting strategy. Israel attacked Iran's missile factories, storage sites, air defence radar systems and other military targets (like Parchin nuclear complex and Revolutionary Guards bases) near Tehran and in the provinces of Ilam, Khuzestan in southern Iran. IDF centred on attacking Iran's nuclear sites, population centres and oil infrastructure, presumably because of the US pressure. While Washington claimed having no part in the attack, President Biden hoped the strikes were “the end of the escalation” attacks by both sides and Iran reportedly relieved that an uncontrollable Israel struck only the military targets. PM Netanyahu also provided alibi to the US saying IDF target selection was based on Israeli national interest, not under the American dictate.

DF chose to target Tehran's worst missile capability, employed against it twice this year, in April and October, wherein some missiles had sneaked through despite the Israeli Iron Dome AD System. Iran's use of decoys at some sites and lack of surprise in the Israeli attack also contributed to the scaled-down destructiveness of the IDF strikes, despite the criticism within Israel for not hitting harder.

Technically, the warplanes, as per Iranian claims, used “very light warheads” apparently because of the route restrictions and the consequently reduced payload. Iran and Saudi airspace restrictions, IDF warplanes took the relatively longer route through Syria and Iraq (under 2,000 km one way) to attack south of Iran. Litter and attack from Iraqi airspace was a compulsion to enhance warplanes' time to remain airborne (around 1,700 km). Both the US-supplied F-16 (cruising range 340 miles/450 km) and F-35 (around 1,200 km) needed air-to-air refuelling, limiting their reach.

With a quoted figure of 200 planes in the attack, the attack echelon would have been further light and less lethal if the relatively small numbers of planes for nuclear AD, electronic warfare, and command and control are excluded.

In order to target deep bunkerised strategic assets like nuclear command and control centres etc, the IDF

needed more planes for long range, heavier munitions (like bunker busting 2,000 pounds US supplied bombs) hence heavier payloads. Heavier bombers with bunker busting and more potent munitions needed to enter the Iranian airspace for precision strikes, and hence were to remain vulnerable to the Iron AD with S-300 and perhaps S-400 systems. Reportedly, the S-400 is more versatile and potent than Israel's Iron Dome System, therefore America rushed the latest THAAD batteries to IDF.

Israel could have hit the targets of its choice in Iran through Jericho missiles and reinforced especially Jericho-3 with (range over 4,800 km), however, that missile system reportedly is not yet field-tested, and Jericho-2 was short in range (around 1,700 km). Through an indirect attack (IDF also wanted to demonstrate its audacity and its potency), Iranian arsenal comprises relatively inexpensive missiles (around \$2-3 million apiece) compared to the IDF's limited array of very expensive missiles (\$2-3 million apiece). Iran's tactics of swarming the Iron Dome with inexpensive drones, allowing its system reportedly to miss, is also a formidable military capability that Israel cannot target.

So, Tel Aviv was content to limit the counterstrike limited to air force, safe and quick.

denance, the constitutional division of subjects between the centre and provinces, the agencies and positions created by bureaucracy for career progression, non-technical proficiency and ad hoc decisions driven by domestic socio-political demands and the conditions laid down by international partners.

The trends have been for structures to grow. It has been relatively easy for new departments, agencies and regulatory powers but there is little accountability.

Some key arguments and proposals regarding civil service reforms are summarised here. The old systems of government do not equip bureaucrats with the requisite skills to manage the growing regulatory powers but there is little accountability.

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BY Shahid Kardar:

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not only for ramifications of wider conflagration with Iran, the US's reluctance and the world opinion, but also because of its own technical and military constraints.

Second, Iran's response. In attacks' aftermath, Tehran sounded conciliatory, declaring it was “entitled and obligated” to defend itself, but it “recognises its responsibilities towards regional peace and security”. Tehran also downplayed the consequent damage and claimed deterring the Israeli warplanes from entering the Iranian airspace. Iranian media also emphasised normalcy of domestic challenges, especially the impact of IDF attack by projecting routine functioning at Tehran's Mehriz Airport.

Third, the outlook. In one's opinion, this is the end of intentional escalation from both sides. The recent round will lead to de-escalation.

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Reforming the civil service

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Afghanistan's internal fault Lines

BY Durdana Najam:

Recent months have unveiled significant internal fractures within the Taliban's leadership in Afghanistan, raising questions about the group's capacity to govern effectively amid a myriad of challenges. Despite official statements asserting unity, reports indicate deep-seated ideological divisions among Taliban leaders regarding governance strategies, resource distribution, and relations with the international community. This rift reveals a precarious balance between power consolidation and pragmatic governance, from posing a substantial threat to the regime's stability.

At the core of this discord is the leadership of Supreme Leader Hibakhtullah Akhundzada, whose

hardline approach emphasises a strict adherence to traditional Islamic principles. This centralisation of authority often sidelines moderate voices within the government. Figures such as Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani and Defense Minister Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob advocate for a more flexible governance model that recognises the need for international engagement to complement a more pragmatic approach face resistance within the inner circle, which is characterised by ideological rigidity and a desire for centralised control. This internal power struggle reflects broader tensions within the

Taliban regarding the best way to govern a nation grappling with unprecedented economic challenges and international isolation. The Taliban's internal discord is exacerbated by controversial economic policies, particularly the recent ban on opium cultivation, a vital source of income for many rural Afghans. This decision has resulted in widespread poverty and hunger, igniting dissent especially among those who depend on the opium trade for their livelihoods. The lack of viable alternatives to replace this income raises critical questions about the sustainability of the Taliban's policies and the economic future of the Afghan society. Leaders who benefit from other trade ventures are expressing concern that the

have reportedly been blaming external forces for the growing tensions within their ranks. This narrative serves to deflect criticism from their governance failures and unites their base against perceived external economic hardships. However, such accusations may ultimately undermine their legitimacy and distract from addressing the pressing issues facing their government.

Historically, Afghanistan has witnessed similar patterns of internal strife within leadership structures. The Soviet invasion in the late 1970s and subsequent civil war showcased how external pressures could exacerbate existing divisions among factions, leading to the fragmented state. The rise of the Taliban in the 1990s was also marked by internal rivalries, as

various factions vied for power, ultimately contributing to their initial fall in 2001 due to international intervention. These historical precedents highlight the cyclical nature of power struggles within Afghan governance. For the Taliban, navigating these internal divisions and factions is critical for achieving the stability they claim to seek. Relying on the narrative of external threats only serves to postpone necessary reforms. Instead, the solutions lie in introspection and genuine efforts to address the economic and social challenges while presenting a cohesive approach to governance.

Addressing internal discrepancies and engaging in constructive dialogue is paramount for the Taliban's success. Acknowledging the legitimacy of differing perspectives within their ranks is essential not only for effective governance but also for fostering trust among the Afghan populace, which is increasingly disillusioned by ongoing turmoil and economic hardship. The Taliban must confront its internal divisions and strive to create an inclusive governance model that considers the diverse needs of the Afghan people.

The international community, too, has a role to play. While the Taliban seek legitimacy and recognition, they must demonstrate a commitment to human rights, particularly concerning women's rights, which have been severely curtailed since their takeover. The lack of progress on this front has drawn significant criticism from global organisations and has hindered the Taliban's efforts to gain international recognition. Historically, regimes that fail to address the aspirations of half their population face severe legitimacy crises, which can destabilise their hold on power. Afghanistan's stability depends on the willingness of its leaders to embrace pragmatic and ideological differences in favour of national unity, economic development and a clear vision for the future. The time has come for the Taliban to break from the past's divisive legacy and guide Afghanistan towards a more stable and prosperous path.

Without addressing these internal fault lines, the Taliban risk repeating historical patterns of fragmentation and instability that have long plagued Afghanistan.

APHC flays India's brutal military tactics to silence self-determination movement

SRINAGAR (NP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has said that India is resorting to brutal military tactics in an attempt to quash the legitimate struggle for right to self-determination of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

which grant Indian forces excessive powers without accountability. APHC leaders called upon the international community to address India's human rights abuses in the occupied territory and pressure New Delhi to revoke these oppressive laws.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail, Member of Provincial Assembly Zarak Khan Mandokhail and President of Muslim League-N Youth Wing Balochistan Sajjad Raisani are meeting.

Japanese Ambassador lauds Pakistan, Japan deep rooted friendship

ISLAMABAD (NP): WADA Ambassador and ambassador of Japan to Pakistan hosted a reception at his Official Residence in Islamabad to bid farewell to Pakistani dignitaries and friends.

economic cooperation, cultural exchange and personal interaction to further deepen the historical ties between our two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Ambassador for Bosnia and Herzegovina Emin Colodarcic.

Speakers want Pakistan takes steps to extend CPEC to Afghanistan

LAHORE (NP): Speakers at a seminar suggested that Pakistan must make progress towards China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) extension to Afghanistan as a priority.

global power struggle, Pakistan's own political and economic fragility, nose-diving relations with Afghanistan and opposition to the BRI by countries like India.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) approves \$606m lending to Kenya

NAIROBI (NP): The IMF said it has cleared \$606 million in lending to Kenya to help it to pay off debts and boost taxes after mass protests led to financial reforms being scrapped.

two-thirds of its annual revenue, more than its bills for health or education.

The participants made thought provoking remarks regarding the opportunities that exist for building economic linkages through CPEC's extension to Afghanistan and beyond to the central Asian countries and Eurasia as well as the impediments and challenges that continued to hinder the progress in achieving this goal.



ABU DHABI: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi and CEO of Al-Ansari Exchange, Mr. Rashed Al Ansari inaugurating the consular halls at Pakistan Embassy.

Pakistan ready to boost educational exchanges with University Alliance of BRI Forum

BEIJING (NP): University Alliance of Belt & Road Forum at its meeting held in Lanzhou University in Gansu Province has called for digital and green development.

According to Yang Yongping, Member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and President of Lanzhou University, since its establishment in 2015, the Alliance has promoted exchanges and cooperation in education, science and technology, and culture among 184 universities from 27 countries and regions along the Belt and Road.



ISLAMABAD: Minister Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON in a meeting with PML-N leadership Azad Jammu Kashmir.

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Two Coal Miners Trapped in Dukki, Balochistan Mine – Rescue Operation Underway

Hussain Zarkoon:

D U K K I , BALOCHISTAN: Two coal miners have become trapped deep inside a mine in Balochistan's Dukki district while working at a depth of 1400 feet, according to Mines Department sources.

The trapped miners, identified as Habibullah and Saifullah, encountered difficulties that led to their entrapment. Emergency response teams have launched a rescue operation to secure the miners and bring them to safety.

Dukki's mining sector, known for its hazardous conditions, has seen frequent incidents involving mine workers facing dangerous circumstances due to inadequate safety measures.

Local authorities and the Mines Department are closely monitoring the situation, with specialized equipment and rescue teams deployed.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mr. Mistuhiko Wada, called on Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, at Aitwan-e-Sadr.

Speakers urge world, HR bodies to take notice of Indian atrocities in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (INP): Alama Iqbal Open University (AIU), Islamabad, organized a seminar and walk today in connection with Kashmir Black Day, condemning India's illegal occupation and inhuman actions in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

In the first phase, a rally was held within the university, with active participation from faculty, officers, staff and students.

The participants held banners and posters with messages such as, "We stand with you," "Kashmir is Pakistan's jugular vein," and "Islam defines our bond with Kashmiri people," chanting slogans for Kashmir to become part of Pakistan.

After the rally, a seminar was held to express solidarity with the people of Kashmir. Speakers urged the international community and human rights organizations to take notice of the atrocities committed against the Kashmiri people, emphasizing that the Kashmir issue should be resolved according to United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the people of Kashmir.

They condemned the grave human rights violations and breaches of international laws by Indian forces against the Kashmiri population and highlighted the need for effective use of social media to raise global awareness about the Kashmir issue and Indian oppression.

General Secretary of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) Sheikh Abdul Mateen in his address expressed gratitude towards the government and people of Pakistan for their consistent political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiri people.

He emphasized that after Aitwan, the only hope for Kashmiris is Pakistan and stressed the need for financial and moral support for their struggle.

He said that a strong Pakistan is the guarantee of Kashmir's freedom, as Kashmiris look towards a prosperous Pakistan for assurance.

The speakers included Mudasir Kasheed, President of Baha'ali Foundation, Jarnshad Sultan Malik, Executive Producer at PTV World, Mian Sanaulah, TV anchor and scholar, Dr. Syed Akmal Shah from IUI, Professor Dr. Shams-ur-Rahman, Chairman of the Secrat Chair at the university, Syed Ghulam Kazim Ali, Director of the Directorate of Student Advisory and Counselling Services, Dr. Kishwar Sultana, Chairperson, History Department, and Dr. Abdul Basit Mujahid.

The event was organized by the Department of History with support from the Directorate of Student Advisory and Counselling Services.

KP CM inaugurates solarization of colleges project.

PESHAWAR (INP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Thursday visited the Government College, Peshawar, and inaugurated solarization of colleges project.

Under the project, 10 KVA solar system has been installed in 80 government colleges across the province.

Out of which solarization of 10 colleges has been completed so far.

The total cost of installation of 10 KVA solar system per college is Rs 2.41 million.

The installation of the solar system would reduce the consumption of electricity by 11,000 to 12,000 units per month.

By installing solar system, each college would save 55 thousand rupees per month in terms of electricity bill.

The cost of this solar system would be paid off in less than 3 years.

During the function, the Chief Minister also distributed prizes to the students who secured prominent positions in MDCAT and Boards examinations. In his speech the CM announced restoration of students' unions in the province and said that the students are our future.

He urged students to work hard to inculcate in themselves those qualities which were needed for the development of the country. "We have to create a system in which no section is deprived, everyone gets equal opportunities," he said adding that everyone could become a great person by thinking big. He said there was no substitute for hard work, and advised the students to defeat inefficiency in the system by moving forward.

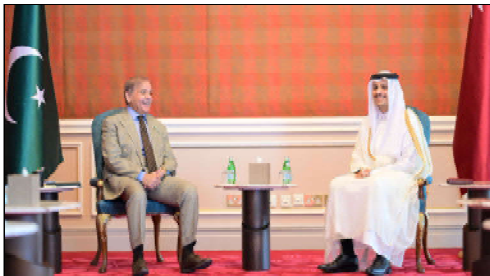
"You have to keep going, one failure doesn't mean you stop."

He said that despite limited resources, the provincial government would continue to take steps for the welfare of students.

He said the number of scholarships for students had been increased to provide more opportunities to them.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Ahsan Iqbal (Chairing a meeting to review the progress of ongoing projects under the CPEC.



DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with Prime Minister of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

Pak-Qatar ties bringing mutual benefit to both nations: PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that his visit to Qatar would further solidify the strong bonds of friendship, mutual respect, and cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar, bringing mutual benefit to both nations.

He expressed these views during an extensive and productive meeting with Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman Al-Thani in Doha on Thursday. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed avenues to further strengthen bilateral relations, particularly focusing on enhancing cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, energy, and cultural exchange.

The Prime Minister acknowledged Qatar's contributions to Pakistan's economic growth and expressed his gratitude for Qatar's continued support in various sectors.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to deepening economic ties and emphasized the potential for expanded collaboration. He also thanked his Qatari counterpart for hosting a large number of Pakistani diaspora who act as a human bridge between the two brotherly countries.

The two leaders discussed global and regional issues, underscoring the need for peaceful solutions and mutual cooperation to address challenges.

Shehbaz Sharif also commended Qatar's principled stance on the Gaza conflict and its persistent efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

He praised Qatar's humanitarian initiatives and diplomatic engagements aimed at resolving the conflict and easing the suffering of the people of Gaza.

The Prime Minister appreciated Qatar's role as a facilitator of dialogue and an advocate for a just resolution to regional conflicts, recognizing its efforts as vital to promoting lasting peace in the Middle East. During the meeting, the Qatari Prime Minister highlighted Pakistan's strategic importance in the region and expressed his enthusiasm for strengthening ties with Pakistan.

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in line with Qatar's vision for economic growth and regional stability. Both leaders agreed on the importance of continuing high-level exchanges to promote understanding, foster cooperation, and identify new areas for growth.

The Prime Minister of Qatar showed his resolve to work with Pakistan for peace in the region including Afghanistan.

Shehbaz Sharif extended an invitation to Qatari investors to explore Pakistan's diverse economic sectors, including agriculture, Information Technology, and tourism.

He outlined the Pakistani government's commitment to providing a conducive environment for foreign investors and discussed potential incentives to facilitate their entry into the Pakistani market.

The Prime Minister expressed his deep appreciation to the Amir of Qatar and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman Al-Thani for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation.

Govt committed to ensuring equal rights for all communities: PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had envisioned a Pakistan where all communities enjoy equality and freedom regardless of religion, race, or caste.

"My government is firmly committed to upholding these values and ensuring that each community in Pakistan enjoys equal rights and opportunities, irrespective of their beliefs," the prime minister said in a message on the occasion of Divali being celebrated on Thursday.

The prime minister also extended his warm greetings to all the members of Hindu community across Pakistan and around the world on the occasion of Divali.

Divali, he said, the festival of lights, symbolized the triumph of light over darkness and hope over despair.

"As we come together to celebrate, let this occasion inspire us to look toward the future with optimism and unity," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

As Pakistanis, he further said, they cherished their diversity, which strengthened their national fabric and enriched the shared culture.

On this occasion, the prime minister also paid tribute to the valuable contributions of the vibrant Hindu community in Pakistan, whose role in the socio-economic and political spheres continued to strengthen the nation.

The diversity of faiths in Pakistan was a true source of resilience and unity amongst the people, he added.

"It gives me immense pleasure to see members of the Hindu and other minority communities working alongside their Muslim brothers and sisters for the progress of our country," he observed.

The prime minister wished the Hindu community that the festival of lights might bring peace and prosperity to their lives and foster stronger bonds of unity and brotherhood among people of all faiths in the country.

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LAHORE: Federal Minister Interior Mobsin in Naqvi in a meeting with Sikh Yaaris Delegation from USA at State Guest House.

Punjab govt implements Sectoral Smog Mitigation Plan

LAHORE (INP): Amid the worsening smog conditions in Punjab, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has issued comprehensive directives aimed at protecting vulnerable groups and reducing pollution sources.

Senior Provincial Minister Maryam Aurangzeb stressed the severity of the smog crisis, urging the public to report pollution violations to the EPA hotline (1373).

Special instructions were given to prevent children with respiratory and other health conditions from attending school, with online classes mandated across special education institutions.

In a pioneering move, the Punjab government introduced a Sectoral Smog Mitigation Plan, marking the first of its kind in the region.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif outlined a clear roadmap with assigned targets and timelines, while personally monitoring departmental progress through a dedicated anti-smog dashboard over the past six months.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), led by Dr. [Director General's Name], has taken decisive action, demolishing nine kilns and four industrial units for violating smog regulations.

EPA teams are on night surveillance along the Ravi River, checking the filling of sand trolleys and enforcing environmental regulations on vehicles across major zones, including Thokar Niaz Baig.

To combat smog, the Punjab government has enforced a "Green Lockdown" within the Green Ring area of

Shimla Hills, where the Air Quality Index (AQI) has reached hazardous levels of 229.

All parking has been banned near government buildings, including the NADRA office, and construction activities have been prohibited. Two barbecue restaurants on Durand Road were sealed last night for violating anti-smog regulations.

In addition, 40 lakh trees have been planted across Punjab, with digital monitoring ensuring their survival.

Authorities have inspected 170 smog-emitting vehicles, issued 60 fines, and collected penalties amounting to Rs. 120,000.

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