

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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dquettavoice@gmail.com



File Photo: A beautiful view of Quetta after heavy rainfall: Photo Quetta Voice

Travel ban imposed on GHQ attack case accused

NEWS DESK: An anti-terrorism court (AIC) in Rawalpindi has imposed a travel ban on all individuals nominated in the GHQ attack case, preventing them from leaving the country.

The court has sent a formal letter to the Director General of Immigration, instructing that the accused be prohibited from traveling abroad.

The ban has been imposed under Section 28-A of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), which mandates such restrictions to ensure the accused remain available for legal proceedings.

The travel ban comes as part of the ongoing legal proceedings related to an attack on the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

A total of 23 individuals have been declared absconders in the case, and permanent arrest warrants have been issued for them. Among the absconders are prominent figures such as Shahbaz Gill, Murad Saeed, Hamad Azhar, and Zulfikar Bukhari.

A total of 120 individuals are currently facing trial in connection with the GHQ attack case.

Earlier on Nov 16, an anti-terrorism court (AIC) in the garrison city could not indict PTI leaders and workers for the third time in a case related to an attack by a mob on the General Headquarters (GHQ) after the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan on May 9, 2023.



During the proceeding of the case, the prosecution provided copies of supplementary charge-sheets among the accused present in the courtroom, including former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, former interior minister Sheikh Rashid and National Assembly opposition leader Omar Ayub. Some of the counsels for the accused 125 in total raised objections to the supplementary charge-sheet, claiming that new charges had been leveled against their clients without offering evidence.

During the proceedings, Public Prosecutor Zaheer Shah stated that 102 of the 125 accused had not submitted power of attorney of their counsels.

Quetta Declared City with Best Air Quality in Pakistan

Syed Muhammad Qaseem:

QUETTA: Quetta has been declared the city with the best air quality in Pakistan, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The city's Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 31.

Indicating a "good" and healthy atmosphere. While many cities across Pakistan are grappling with rising pollution levels and dense smog, Quetta stands out with its remarkably clean air.

The EPA's latest report highlights Quetta as an exception in a country where urban centers are struggling to combat air pollution.

As Pakistan battles deteriorating air quality nationwide, including hazardous conditions in Lahore and Karachi, Quetta's achievement

underscores the importance of regional environmental policies and natural factors in maintaining cleaner air. Residents and environmentalists have welcomed this development, attributing Quetta's clear skies to its geographical location, lower population density, and relatively fewer industrial emissions.

This milestone offers hope and sets an example for other cities to prioritize sustainable environmental practices.

As Pakistan battles deteriorating air quality nationwide, including hazardous conditions in Lahore and Karachi, Quetta's achievement

BlueSky Gains Popularity in Pakistan Amid Social Media Restrictions

Syed Ali Shah:

With the blocking of X (formerly Twitter) in Pakistan, a surge of social media users is migrating to alternative platforms like BlueSky.

Journalists, politicians, social activists, and members of civil society are actively creating accounts on BlueSky, announcing their presence on other platforms like Facebook to connect with followers.

Pakistan, the fifth most populous country in the world, has seen tightened internet restrictions, including the use of VPNs to bypass censorship.

This shift has created an opportunity for BlueSky to capture a significant user base in a country where social media plays a

critical role in communication and advocacy.

BlueSky, a decentralized social media platform, has gained traction due to its promise of freedom of expression and resistance to centralized control.

Influencers and activists in Pakistan view it as a viable alternative to X, which has been inaccessible to many amid growing government-imposed internet controls.

This migration highlights Pakistan's reliance on social media for activism, journalism, and community engagement.

The government's increasing restrictions on platforms and VPNs have sparked debates on digital freedom, giving platforms like

BlueSky a foothold in the market. As Pakistan embraces alternative platforms, BlueSky has the potential to significantly expand its global user base while promoting an open internet.

This shift also underscores the importance of uncensored online spaces for democratic discourse in the digital age.

The rise of BlueSky in Pakistan serves as a critical reminder of the resilience of social media users in navigating restrictions and fostering a space for free expression.

For global tech players, it signals a new chapter in digital competition, especially in emerging markets like Pakistan.



Protests Over Kidnapping of 10-Year-Old Muhammad Muswar Paralyze Quetta

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: Demonstrations against the abduction of 10-year-old Muhammad Muswar from Multani Mohalla have entered their fourth consecutive day, creating widespread disruptions in the city. A major traffic jam at Balochistan Assembly Chowk has paralyzed daily life, with protesters demanding urgent action for the child's safe recovery.

Political leaders, tribal elders, and civil society members have joined the protests, expressing outrage over the incident. The prolonged demonstrations have severely impacted routine activities, including students' access to educational institutions.

Adding to the outcry, the High Court Bar Association and Quetta Bar Association boycotted court proceedings on Monday, urging the provincial government to ensure the child's immediate and safe recovery.

Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandukhel has taken serious notice of the situation. He contacted Inspector General of Police (IGP) Moazzam Jah Ansari,

instructing law enforcement to expedite their efforts to locate the child. Governor Mandukhel emphasized the importance of holding those responsible accountable to prevent similar incidents in the future.

IGP Moazzam Jah Ansari reassured the Governor that all resources are being mobilized, including specialized teams and intelligence networks, to locate Muhammad Muswar. He also affirmed that strict action would be taken against the culprits.

The abduction of Muhammad Muswar has triggered widespread concern about the rising security challenges in Quetta. Political parties and local communities are calling for stronger measures to protect citizens and ensure justice.

The ongoing protests reflect the growing frustration of residents over the delay in resolving the case. As tensions continue to rise, authorities face mounting pressure to bring the perpetrators to justice and restore public confidence in the security apparatus.



Leaders of political parties addressing a joint press conference at the main assembly chowk: Photo Muhammad Ismail

Balochistan Wildlife Department Dismantles Illegal Hunting Pits in Gwadar and Ormara

Behram Baloch:

The Balochistan Wildlife Department has dismantled illegal hunting pits in Gwadar and Ormara's Talaband plains, targeting the poaching of rare birds like peregrine falcons and sea hawks.

The operation, led by Assistant Conservator Zahiduddin and Sub-Divisional Officer Ismat Ali Dagarzai, involved a thorough inspection by Deputy Ranger Wildlife Sanaullah Baloch. Multiple pits used by poachers were destroyed.

Game watchers Shah Nawaz and

Khalid Dad assisted by identifying and monitoring these sites. These pits, often occupied for months, pose a significant threat to endangered bird species and the region's ecological balance.

The Wildlife Department has vowed to continue anti-poaching efforts, which have earned praise from environmentalists and local communities.

This initiative underscores the department's commitment to preserving Balochistan's unique wildlife heritage.



PM Shehbaz calls for intensified crackdown on tax evaders

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed authorities to intensify measures against tax evaders, underscoring the importance of accountability in driving economic stability.

Chairing a meeting to review the country's economic situation, PM Shehbaz was briefed by the Ministry of Finance on recent discussions with an International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation.

The prime minister said Pakistan is moving towards economic stability, attributing progress to government-led initiatives that have bolstered investor confidence and revitalized the stock market.

He highlighted a sharp decline in inflation, which fell from 38% to

7%, and a reduction in the interest rate from 22% to 15%, fostering business growth and creating new employment opportunities.

"Our economy is stabilising, and we are prioritising public relief," said PM Shehbaz. "We are taking all necessary steps to fulfill promises made to the people."

The prime minister also commended Punjab's leadership for agricultural reforms while announcing a focus on increasing exports and remittances to strengthen foreign exchange reserves.

Calling for stricter action against tax evaders, PM Shehbaz said, "Tax evasion and its enablers will be held accountable. For national progress, everyone must shoulder their share of responsibility."

Polio Crisis in Balochistan: Turning Words into Action to Achieve 60% Immunization

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Champions Trophy saga: Blame lies with ICC leadership

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Constitutional bench rejects plea to declare candidates successful with 50% votes

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OPINION VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Polio Crisis in Balochistan: Turning Words into Action to Achieve 60% Immunization

Editorial:

Balochistan's battle against polio has reached a critical juncture, with the confirmation of another case in Jafarabad district, bringing the provincial tally to 24 this year. Across Pakistan, the total number of cases now stands at 49, underscoring the nation's struggle to eradicate this crippling disease despite over three decades of efforts.

The immunization rate in Balochistan remains alarmingly low at just 38%, despite extensive anti-polio campaigns. Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Buzi has set a crucial goal to increase this to 60%, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding children's futures. He has directed health authorities and relevant departments to intensify efforts, stressing that vaccination and awareness campaigns must reach the most vulnerable communities.

Challenges in Eradicating Polio

Balochistan's vast and remote terrain, coupled with vaccine refusals and misinformation, has posed significant challenges. Regions like Qila Abdullah, Noskhi, and Pishin have reported new cases, highlighting the virus's stronghold in hard-to-reach areas. Decades of campaigns have struggled against logistical barriers, low public trust, and security concerns.

Turning the Tide: Translating Words into Action

To translate CM Buzi's directive into action, a multi-pronged strategy is essential:

Community Engagement: Mobilizing religious leaders, educators, and local influencers to counter vaccine hesitancy.

Enhanced Logistics: Improving access to remote areas through mobile vaccination units and robust monitoring mechanisms.

Awareness Campaigns: Launching province-wide media campaigns in local languages to educate communities about the importance of polio immunization.

A Call to Action

Achieving a 60% immunization rate is not just a target but a moral obligation. Strong political will, adequate resource allocation, and coordinated efforts can turn the tide in Balochistan's fight against polio. Every child vaccinated brings Pakistan closer to a polio-free future. This is the time for action. The health emergency declared by the provincial government must lead to tangible outcomes. Safeguarding children from polio is indeed paramount, and the road to eradication lies in fulfilling this promise.

Asking questions

By Neda Mutji:

RECENTLY, a student

of Grade 8 asked a few questions in a rapid sequence during a science lesson. Her mind was racing and one question led to another. The questions were met, as they inevitably are, with suspicion, and the teacher retaliated with 'don't talk too smart'. That rebuttal is flawed at many levels.

Firstly, aren't students being sent to school to become smart? Isn't the purpose of all learning geared towards asking questions relentlessly to engage with content on a deeper level?

Unfortunately, our schools have always laid more emphasis on discipline and compliance than relentless learning. Any behaviour that breaks the flow of the teacher's talk time is met with rebuke. It's almost as if the teachers are racing against the clock to regurgitate what they know in each chapter of the textbook being taught. Students are often being in learning in depth, nor can they learn to answer questions if they don't understand. Questions don't arise in a vacuum; they are the result of a thinking process. Fostering a culture where questions are encouraged and appreciated helps instil a love of learning in students. It teaches them that curiosity is a strength and that questions demonstrate

critical thinking.

This mindset is particularly crucial in primary and secondary classrooms, where students are still shaping their view of the world and belief systems and at this stage, it is important for adults to value their self-expression as they learn to think, express and share ideas. Besides, questions in class, and indeed later on in professional life, provide valuable feedback and learning opportunities as well as gaps in knowledge. They also encourage collaboration, help students develop a voice and gain confidence in their abilities. Questions can create a vibrant learning environment, albeit noisy and chaotic. Chaos is often misunderstood in our culture as a lack of discipline, even though the sparks of intelligence and revelation often take root in chaos.

Educators who fear too many questions are often trying for control. Educators who fear too many questions in class are often trying to control, hoping that they can orchestrate an environment where the teacher remains the main character in the movie. If students are to develop the confidence to ask, explore and un-lock their potential, they need a safe, non-

judgemental environment where the quality and frequency of questions is understood. In an ideal world, students would not hesitate to ask or answer questions.

There is much literature and work being done on the foundational skills of learners in early years. Yet, the power of engaging them through questions is underrated. One of the fundamental ways that children develop communication skills is through practice relating their thoughts, and the transformation to active learning, comes from being involved, engaged and motivated.

When questions are unwelcome, it not only stifles curiosity, it discourages creative thinking and out-of-the-box solutions and negatively affects students' self-esteem as they lose their ability to express themselves and start relying on another authority to simply 'transfer' content to them as they are expected to learn and reproduce.

Fast forward a few years — when these learners engage with technology, they will no longer have the skill to conduct research on their own using their digital literacy skills. The synergy with AI, for example, rests on asking the right questions, using relevant prompts and leading their own learning.

By Shahid Javed Burki:

Trump's victory is not China's loss

Even though there are a couple of months left before Donald Trump moves back into the White House, something he will do on January 20, 2025 — analysts are asking how his victory would affect the relationship with China. "A lot of people here including the government, I think are preparing for certain upheaval or storms but nobody knows," said Tang Shuping, an international professor at Fudan University in Shanghai. He released a computer model that predicted Trump's victory. "I don't think anybody really understands or has a rough idea what Trump in his second term, will be able to do."

There were several among the thinking people in China who believed that Elon Musk who had strong business interests in China and was now a close adviser of President-elect Donald Trump could be a bridge between Trump's America and Xi's China. China would be happy to see him play a role in bringing the two countries to an understanding — there are billions of mutually beneficial opportunities in working together," said Xiang Hai, who writes the Pekingology newsletter on Substack.

In congratulating Trump for leaving the presidency again, Xi Jinping, China supreme leader, hoped their two countries could work together to achieve a better world. "House" tells us that China and the United States gain from the cooperation between the two nations. The Chinese leader said in his message. "A stable, sound and sustainable relationship serves the two countries' shared interests and meets the aspiration of the international community." However, Trump had a mixed record in dealing with Xi and China. At the start of his first term in 2017 he attempted to strike a deal with Xi, inviting him to visit at his residence, Mar-a-Lago on the Florida coast.

His hospitality was returned by Xi. The Chinese arranged an elaborate state visit for the newly elected American president. Trump often spoke with great warmth about Xi, calling him a "friend" and "incredible guy".

But this warmth did not last for even a year. In 2018, Trump changed his attitude towards China, accusing the country of having unleashed on the world the COVID-19 virus that took millions of lives across the world. Hundreds of thousands of people died in the United States before the Trump team was able to devote resources to develop a vaccine that addressed the disease. Trump said openly that a laboratory in Wuhan in China was responsible for exactly releasing the deadly virus.

However, even more important for relations

between the two countries was the American president's belief that China stood in the way of his achieving the objective of 'Making America Great Again'. The slogan MAGA was adopted by millions of Trump followers in the United States and no doubt contributed to his victory in the poll on November 5, 2024. It appeared on the red hats worn by the Trump followers that attended the rallies Trump held across the country while campaigning for the elections.

In his first term in office, Trump launched a trade war against China by imposing tariffs on \$360 billion worth of imports into the United States as well as imposing restrictions on the technology firms. Especially targeted was Huawei, the giant electronics firm that had deeply penetrated not only the United States but also Western Europe.

On the campaign trail in 2024, candidate Trump pledged to "bring back" on his harsh policies adopted in the period 2017-2021 including the indication that he would impose 60 per cent tariffs on all Chinese imports. When Trump begins his second term, it seems unlikely that his relations with Xi would be smooth and friendly. The trade war would come at a very awkward time for Beijing and its leader Xi Jinping. By the time Trump re-

turns to the White House, China would be struggling to have its troubled economy to rebound and hit the target of 5 per cent growth. Given the fact that the economy had grown at 8 to 10 per cent a year in the early part of this century has been demoralising for the Chinese leadership. The property sector in particular was faced with difficulties, having been given financial and regulatory support by the state in the past.

Despite the tough trade talk, Trump has gone back to underscoring his personal relations with Xi Jinping. In an interview with Joe Rogan, the American journalist who specialises in studying China, Trump once again talked of his special relations with the Chinese leadership. Speaking of his relations with Xi, he boasted, "We got along very well. They treated me better than anybody else ever has."

Beijing leaders have learned that showing utmost respect to "a very powerful leader" who thinks highly of himself can go a long way," said Wang whom I have quoted above.

"China has been preparing for a long time," said Tong Zhao, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, "but another trade war would be hugely damaging."

He emphasised that the Beijing leadership could hope to undermine American support to iso-

late China through a broader Western coalition. China would certainly strive to establish its own image of a more responsible power in contrast to the declining American international standing. "In the statements made while campaigning for winning the presidency, Trump vowed in particular to wrench apart the US economic relationship with China. Writing for The New York Times, journalists Peter Baker and Charlie Savage, worried about "a turbulent change for the world's two largest economies, which exchange about \$750 billion in goods and services each year". He has said he would enact aggressive new restrictions on Chinese ownership of assets in the United States, bar Americans from investing in China and eventually ban Chinese-made goods like electronics, steel and pharmaceuticals. What he never said was how he would change back to underscoring his personal relations with Xi Jinping. In an interview with Joe Rogan, the American journalist who specialises in studying China, Trump once again talked of his special relations with the Chinese leadership. Speaking of his relations with Xi, he boasted, "We got along very well. They treated me better than anybody else ever has been treated."

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The impasse persists

By Malecha Lodhi:

FOR all the speculation during last month's SCO summit about a thaw in relations, there has been no melting of the ice between the two neighbours. Instead, subsequent developments indicate the long-standing diplomatic impasse persists and may even have deepened.

The speculation was sparked by the visit by Islamabad last month of S. Jaishankar to attend the meeting of the 10-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the first by an Indian foreign minister in over a decade. But by the end of the trip that no bilateral engagement was envisioned. Nor did Islamabad see any progress on the sidelines. The media noise over the customary exchange of good wishes between the two countries did not obscure the reality that Jaishankar's 24-hour stay did nothing to break

the diplomatic deadlock — and wasn't intended to.

In fact, overtures to New Delhi by Indian prime minister and head of the ruling party Nawaz Sharif and his daughter, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, elicited no response from the Indian government.

Jaishankar's visit as a positive sign that might lead to improved relations and hoped the two countries would restore sports and trade ties. Maryam Nawaz publicly called for "climate diplomacy" with India to deal with the growing challenge of smog on both sides of the Punjab border. This was met by silence from New Delhi. But the chief minister of Punjab, Charanjit Singh Brar, said Maryam's claim that smog from the Indian side was reaching Lahore was "unfounded".

Expectations that sports would help to pave the way for a thaw did not materialise. Al-

though cricket diplomacy has played a part in the past to ease tensions and bring the two sides to the negotiating table, this time. Despite informally conveyed officials by Pakistani officers, In- border rivers. The fate of the treaty may now be at risk due to India's insistence on modifying on grounds of what it calls "fundamental and unforeseen change" in circumstances as well as security concerns.

The latest communication follows an earlier one in January 2023, when India notified Islamabad of its intention to amend the treaty's dispute settlement provisions. According to Indian media reports, the latest one includes India's concerns over issues such as "demographic changes, environmental challenges, and the need to accelerate clean energy development".

Islamabad responded by a terse statement expressing will-

ness to discuss any concerns in the relevant body, the joint India-Waters Commission, and to comply with the treaty. The two countries have disagreed in recent years over the treaty's dispute settlement mechanism; India boycotted a court of arbitration held in January 2023 at the Hague on Indian hydro-electric projects on the Chenab and Jhelum rivers disputed by water-stressed Pakistan.

These developments do not create a propitious climate for India-Pakistan diplomatic re-engagement. But the biggest obstacle is India's obstinate refusal to discuss the Kashmir dispute. Relations, in fact, were ruptured in August 2019 when India illegally annexed, bifurcated and absorbed the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian union — in violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

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A sport above the clouds

By Waqas Bin Najib:

Pakistan has a unique mountain landscape, where the Himalayas, Karakoram, and Hindu Kush ranges converge and have different characteristics.

It is home to five of the 14 peaks higher than 8,000 metres, collectively called the eight-thousanders, including two of the most beautiful mountains in the world: K2 and Nanga Parbat.

Compared to the sea level, the partial pressure of oxygen in the air, reflecting the oxygen concentration, is around half at 5,000m and only a third above 8,000m, where the oxygen pressure is so low that the human body cannot adjust any more. Hence, it marks the start of the death zone. Without pressurised oxygen, cells die, and the organ systems slow down. Cerebral and pulmonary oedema are only a mat-

ter of time as the body struggles to find oxygen by increasing blood circulation, which is already thicker with more red blood cells at that altitude.

Last month, Sirbaz Khan became the first Pakistani to summit all 14 eight-thousanders. A few days later, Sheheryar Kashif completed his 14 at the young age of 22. These are tremendous personal achievements that deserve a celebration. It takes tremendous physical and mental strength to complete an eight-thousanders.

An expedition to climb an eight-thousanders is not a few weeks long. There are days-long hikes to reach the base camp at around 5,000m. From there, members make day trips to the higher camps and return to the lower camps, helping the body acclimatise to lower oxygen levels. The

high-altitude porters carry the equipment, tents, gear, fuel, and food to the higher camps in these rotations. Pakistani high-altitude porters remain invisible.

Expedition companies mostly hire Nepalese sherpas, even for the mountains in Pakistan. Climbing expeditions depend on high-altitude porters. Above the base camp, all the way to the death zone where life is not meant to exist, these porters lead the climbing, make routes, fix air-cylinders, and carry equipment and supplies, pit-ch tents, cook food, and care for the climbers who need to climb the mountains.

Some hardcore climbers still climb in alpine style without the help of porters or oxygen, but they are few in number. Most climbers today join commercial expeditions. Commercial mountaineering has changed the sport over the past few decades.

Mountaineering used to be a sport of elite athletes carrying national flags in a race to be the first to conquer a mountain. It's different now. Commercial mountaineering started with Mount Denali in the US, where enthusiastic amateurs were taken to the summit. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, many trained Russian climbers became available as mountain guides, and the industry took off. Today, mountaineering is a commercial industry.

Expedition management companies offer a range of options, services and luxuries, including personal high-altitude porters.

For decades, sherpas and high-altitude porters climbed mountains in Pakistan, whereas the local high-altitude porters will only be paid

\$1,000 for a six-week expedition. Local porters are given poorer life and health insurance than the sherpas. For example, the life insurance for a local high-altitude porter is only \$1,500, a tenth of what a sherpa's is. The image of Western climbers hopping over the dying Hassan Shagi K2 in a storm in late August, New Delhi formally asked Islamabad for a review of the Indus Waters Treaty (1960

camp before the summit and not allowed to the summit. The Western expeditions wanted to keep the glory private. The Nepalese climbing community has changed the status of the sherpas and started marketing the expeditions themselves, ensuring that sherpas are paid well and recognised for their achievements.

Pakistani high-altitude porters remain invisible, and the industry is still nascent. Expedition companies mostly hire Nepalese sherpas, even for the mountains in Pakistan.

The sherpas do the rope-fixing and lead climbing, and Pakistani porters are used to carry the loads.

Local companies offer emergency services only for the base camps. There are numerous other stories of deaths and apathy among lost porters and guides. The industry adds more stories.

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high-altitude porters. However, private initiatives are inadequate without government support in porters' training, certification, and skills development. The government's mountain tourism policy should address aspects related to the environment, sustainability, and safety. The government should also establish mountaineering schools in Skardu and Hunza for the well-being of porters and guides. The government should be allowed to offer mountain helicopter rescue and transport services, a requirement for the sector's growth.

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BTEVTA to Send 30,000 Skilled Youth Abroad for Jobs

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: Balochistan Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (BTEVTA) has launched a groundbreaking program aimed at sending 30,000 skilled youth abroad to enhance their employment opportunities and boost the province's socio-economic development.

Tariq Khan Mengal, Chief of BTEVTA, highlighted the program's vision, stating,

"This initiative is a game-changer for Balochistan. By equipping our youth with technical skills,

we are not only creating individual success stories but also uplifting entire communities."

The training program focuses on imparting technical education in high-demand sectors,



such as construction, healthcare, and IT, ensuring candidates are well-prepared for global job markets.

Youth Share Their Dreams

Adil Khan, a participant from Quetta, expressed his excitement, saying, "This program is my ticket to a brighter future. I've always dreamed of supporting my family, and now it feels within reach."

Similarly, Muhammad Aslam, a resident of Kachhi, shared, "I'm being trained in electrical engineering. Once abroad, I'll not only secure a better job but also inspire others in my village to pursue technical education."

Niamatullah, another candi-

date, added, "BTEVTA's support has given me hope. I'm looking forward to making a difference in my life and contributing to my family's welfare."

Impact on Balochistan

The initiative promises to address unemployment and alleviate poverty in the province.

"This program ensures that our youth are job-ready and globally competitive, paving the way for sustainable economic growth," Mengal emphasized.

As thousands apply for this transformative program, BTEVTA's efforts are a beacon of hope for Balochistan's youth, setting a precedent for impactful development in the region.

PAC Expresses Concern Over Slow Progress of Quetta Development Project

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: Members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) expressed dissatisfaction over the slow progress of the Quetta Development Project during their visit to the site, accompanied by representatives of Quetta City.

Chairman Asghar Ali Fareen criticized the subpar condition of newly constructed roads, including Sarab Road and Sabzal Road, emphasizing the significant inconvenience faced by residents. "The slow pace of work disrupts the city's traffic system. This reflects poorly on us as legislators," he remarked.

The PAC identified several issues, including a lack of essential road safety features such as cat eyes, spikes, and road signs. Members also highlighted the withering of roadside trees due to insufficient water and care. The absence of a bridge near the kid-



ney center was another critical concern, as it lacks forces vehicles to take one-way routes, causing traffic congestion and accidents.

Project Director PAC's commitment to improving Quetta's infrastructure and ensuring efficient project implementation for the benefit of its citizens.

Unique opportunity to revitalise Pak-US ties exists under incoming Trump admin: Ahsan Iqbal

NEWS DESK: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said on Monday that a "unique" opportunity existed to revitalise the partnership between the United States and Pakistan with the incoming administration of US President-elect Donald Trump.

The 78-year-old clinched the White House in the US elections with 291 electoral college votes against Kamala Harris' 223, becoming only the second man in the country's history — after Grover Cleveland in the late 1800s — to win two non-consecutive terms in the Oval Office. He also led Harris by more than five million votes in the popular count.

The Foreign Office emphasised earlier this month that 'non-interference' should be the cornerstone of Pakistan-US ties, expressing the hope for a strengthened relationship under the Trump administration.

remarking on potential ties with the new administration while addressing an event of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Islamabad, the planning minister said: "With the new US administration taking the helm, we have a unique opportunity to revitalise our partnership and adapt it to the needs of a rapidly changing world."

"This renewed era of collaboration can address shared challenges while creating new opportunities for growth and mutual prosperity. By deepening our ties in key areas, we can achieve transformative outcomes."

He called for collaborative research in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and modern infrastructure to build a more resilient future. Iqbal also stressed the need

to engage the Pakistani diaspora in the US to strengthen cultural, academic and economic ties between the two countries.

Pakistan, with its strategic location at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, was a "natural partner" for the US in promoting regional connectivity and economic integration, Iqbal said.

He said the significant contributions of the US to Pakistan's infrastructure projects reflected the enduring strategic importance of the bilateral relationship and outlined a roadmap for future cooperation under the new incoming leadership.

The planning minister highlighted the historical foundation of US-Pakistan relations, which he said began with defence cooperation and evolved into a "robust development partnership".

He stressed the importance of fostering a new dimension of collaboration focused on education, infrastructure and economic development to address emerging global challenges.

Iqbal said Pakistan would establish friendly and cordial relations with all nations, particularly the US, which always stood for justice and humanity.

He lauded the transformational impact of US-supported infrastructure projects in Pakistan, citing the Mangla and Tarbela dams that he said continued to serve as lifelines for the agriculture and energy sectors.

He also mentioned US-funded initiatives in healthcare, education and transportation sectors, which significantly improved the quality of life for millions.

The planning minister viewed these projects as not only addressing Pakistan's im-

mediate needs but also laying the foundation for long-term sustainable growth.

The minister also recalled the US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor, describing it as a "critical initiative to strengthen academic and research collaborations".

He acknowledged the Fulbright Scholarship programme, the "largest in the world for Pakistan", as a "transformative opportunity that empowered thousands of Pakistanis to contribute meaningfully to national progress".

The planning minister underscored the potential for expanding bilateral trade, which exceeded \$6.5 billion in 2023, and called for enhanced market access and joint ventures in key sectors such as information technology, agriculture and manufacturing.

He highlighted that Pakistan's key exports include textiles, surgical instruments and IT services which contribute significantly to our economy.

Iqbal also said that trade relations would create jobs and drive innovation, emphasising the vast untapped room for trade growth.

He said the two countries could build a stronger and mutually beneficial economic partnership by tackling trade barriers and promoting joint ventures.

The planning minister also pointed out that while bilateral relations had flourished, both nations needed to respect each other's sovereignty and work together constructively to address shared challenges.

He said the Pakistan-US relationship remained "critical" to addressing global challenges and achieving regional stability.



QUETTA: Lawyers hold protest at Balochistan Assembly Chowk.

Karachi schools closed for four days amid IDEAS 2024

KARACHI (INP): Sindh government has announced the closure of schools in Karachi due to the upcoming 12th edition of the International Defence Exhibition and Seminars (IDEAS) 2024.

The decision has been taken by the Private Schools Directorate in the light of the recommendation of the DIG Traffic ahead of the IDEAS 2024.

foolproof security arrangements have been taken by the Sindh government to ensure smooth conduct of the international event in the port city. According to the notifica-

tion issued by the Sindh Education Department, schools located near Karachi's Karsaz and Sharah-e-Faisal will remain closed for four days from November 19 to 22, 2024.

The most awaited exhibitions and seminars show will kick off tomorrow, and several international defense leaders and foreign delegations will attend the event.

The Karachi police have also revealed a traffic plan for the people of Karachi ahead of IDEAS 2024.

The International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2024 will kick off

PTI's Nov 24 protest to be 'final, decisive': Gandapur

PESHAWAR (INP): In a strong statement, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur announced that the protest called for by Pakistan

People's Party (PTI) founder Imran Khan on November 24 will be "final and decisive," with the party determined to continue their struggle until all demands are met.

Speaking during a consultative meeting with PTI parliamentarians and party leaders in Peshawar, Gandapur emphasized that the protest would not end until their objectives are fulfilled, underscoring the significance of the upcoming demonstration.

"The call given by Imran Khan on November 24 is final. This protest will continue until our demands are approved. We will not back down under any circumstances," Gandapur stated, stressing the party's firm resolve in the face of ongoing political

challenges. He assured that every effort would be made to ensure the protest's success, with all party workers mobilized for the cause.

The meeting, chaired by Gandapur, saw party officials from various regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—including Hazara, Matakand, Peshawar, and South KPK—discuss the logistical arrangements and the strategy for the protest. The Chief Minister called on PTI parliamentarians and leaders to intensify their mobilization efforts, encouraging them to engage with party organizations and local communities to ensure maximum participation in the protest in Islamabad.

Gandapur also outlined a detailed plan to organize party workers at the union council level, urging leaders to hold meetings with sub-organizations and finalize preparations for the massive rally.

"We need to evacuate as

many people as possible from our areas and bring them to Islamabad," he urged, highlighting the need for well-coordinated efforts across the province.

Reiterating that the November 24 protest is part of a broader struggle against what he called the "fascism of this government," Gandapur assured that the PTI would not waver. "Our fight has entered a decisive phase. We will not retreat," he said.

The Chief Minister's remarks reinforce the determination within PTI to carry forward the protest movement initiated by Imran Khan, positioning the November 24 rally as a key moment in the party's ongoing resistance against the current government.

With the stakes high, the party appears fully committed to its course of action, rallying its supporters for what it hopes will be a turning point in the political struggle.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with delegation of Asian Development Bank (ADB) led by Senior Director Tariq H. Niazi and ADB Country Director Emma Fan.

Constitutional bench rejects plea to declare candidates successful with 50% votes

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court's seven-member constitutional bench on Monday commenced hearing pending cases before the apex court.

The bench, led by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, includes Justice Ayesha Malik, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Musarrat Hilal.

During the hearing, the court dismissed the petition seeking to declare candidates receiving over 50% of votes as successful in elections. The petitioner, Advocate Chaudhry Akram, was also slapped with a Rs20,000 fine for filing a "frivolous" petition.

Justice Mazhar questioned under which constitutional provision a candidate must secure 50% of votes to win an election. He emphasised that election outcomes are determined by the

votes cast.

Justice Ayesha asked what fundamental right of the petitioner was violated and which constitutional provisions were being breached. She added that the Supreme Court does not have the authority to legislate new laws.

The petitioner argued that the court should consider the course of people's lives, to which Justice Khan responded that Parliament does not make such decisions.

Justice Hilal remarked that everyone has the right to vote but noted that people often watch television on polling day instead of voting. She stated that if voters fail to cast their votes, it reflects their own shortcomings.

Justice Mandokhail inquired if the petitioner had cast their vote in the February 2024 election. When the petitioner admitted they had not, Justice Mandokhail remarked that

such behaviour disrespects the Constitution.

The bench then imposed a Rs20,000 fine for frivolous litigation, with Justice Khan dismissing the petitioner's suggestion of a Rs100 billion penalty to reduce the national debt, pointing out the petitioner's inability to pay such an amount.

The seven-member bench also heard a plea regarding making it mandatory for independent candidates to join political parties.

The petitioner appeared before the bench via video link.

Justice Khan remarked that the permission granted to the petitioner to appear on court premises should suffice. The petitioner acknowledged that the matter had already been resolved, rendering their appeal, in effect, futile. Subsequently, the constitutional bench dismissed the petition on the grounds of ineffectiveness.