

# QUETTA VOICE

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Illegal immigrants handed over at Pak Iran border Taftan: Photo Riaz Baloch

## Earthquake Near Kozhak Pass Shakes Pak-Afghan Border Areas

Sardar Muhammad Khondak:

CHAMAN: A powerful earthquake struck near the Kozhak Pass along the Pak-Afghan border early this morning, according to the US Geological Survey (USGS). Tremors were strongly felt in Chaman, Qila Abdullah, Pishin, Toba Achakzai, and the Afghan region of Spin Boldak. The seismic activity caused widespread fear and panic among residents, forcing many to rush out of their homes for safety.



The epicenter was reported near the Kozhak Pass, a region known for its seismic activity due to its proximity to tectonic plate boundaries. No immediate reports of casualties or damage have surfaced, but local authorities are monitoring the situation closely. Residents are urged to remain cautious and follow safety protocols in case of aftershocks.

## At least 167 killed, two crew rescued in South Korea plane crash

NEWS DESK: A Jeju Air flight traveling from Bangkok to South Korea crashed on Sunday morning at Muan International Airport, resulting in at least 167 fatalities.

The Boeing 737-800, carrying 181 people, including 175 passengers and six crew members, collided with a barrier shortly after attempting to land.

The plane then burst into flames, leaving only two survivors, both flight attendants.

The accident occurred at 9:03 am local time (09:03 GMT), involving a Jeju Air flight that had just arrived from Bangkok, Thailand, carrying 175 passengers and six crew members. The Boeing 737-800 jet, which was attempting to land in Muan, reportedly encountered a malfunction in its landing gear.

South Korea's National Fire Agency reported that at least 167 people lost their lives in the blaze, including 79 women, 77 men, and 11 individuals whose genders were not immediately identified.

Two survivors, a crew member and a passenger, were rescued, but hopes for finding more survivors are fading.

The fire has since been extinguished, but the scale of the damage has left little chance for recovery.

## 10,500 Illegal Immigrants Handed Over at Pak-Iran Border in 2024

Syed Ali Shah:

Iranian authorities apprehended more than 10,500 illegal Pakistani immigrants in various parts of Iran and handed them over to Pakistani authorities at the Pak-Iran border in Taftan during 2024. This marks a significant rise compared to 2023, when 8,000 individuals were caught and deported. Sources in the Balochistan Levies Department revealed that most of the immigrants originated from Punjab and were attempting to reach European countries like Greece via Iran and Turkey. Poverty, unemployment, and rising inflation are the main factors driving this

trend. Aslam, a resident of Punjab, described his reasons for taking such a perilous journey. "There are no jobs, and inflation is crushing us. We are left with no choice but to risk everything for survival," he shared. Similar sentiments were expressed by Waqas Ahmed and Shahid Khan, who also cited economic hardships as their motivation for migration. A senior official at the Taftan border stated, "The increase is alarming compared to last year. Most of these immigrants are unemployed youngsters desperate

for better opportunities." The official requested anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media. Iranian security forces remain vigilant, intercepting illegal immigrants across the country before transferring them to Pakistani authorities at Taftan. The escalating numbers underscore the pressing need for economic reforms and job creation in Pakistan to prevent such hazardous attempts. This ongoing issue highlights the socio-economic challenges facing Pakistan's youth, forcing many to risk their lives in search of a better future abroad.

## 82 Coalminers Lost Lives in Balochistan in 2024 Amid Unsafe Working Conditions

Manan Mandokhail :



QUETTA: Balochistan's coal mining sector continues to claim lives, with 82 coalminers losing their lives in 2024 due to unsafe conditions. According to the Mines and Minerals Department, 48 incidents were reported from various coalfields across the province, including Dukki, Harnai, and Quetta. These accidents were primarily caused by landslides and malfunctioning trolleys, highlighting the hazardous conditions faced by coalminers. Most of the victims were impoverished workers from

Swat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and southern Afghanistan. Dozens of others sustained injuries, many of whom were left without proper medical care.

The Mines and Minerals Department, prompted by the rising fatalities, has sealed 126 coal mines across the province.

Six major inquiries into violations of mining laws are ongoing, with cases registered against several officials accused of negligence. Despite repeated appeals by the Human Rights Commis-

sion of Pakistan, civil society, and labor unions, little has been done to improve working conditions for coalminers. Many mines lack basic safety measures, leaving workers to risk their lives daily to extract coal.

Unsafe working conditions in coal mines have claimed thousands of lives in Balochistan over the years. Coalminers, often among the poorest and most vulnerable, continue to face deadly risks. Advocacy groups emphasize the need for urgent reforms to prevent further loss of life.

## 83,466 Pilgrims Secured, 7,000 Arrested in 2024: DIG Quetta

Manan Mandokhail:

QUETTA: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Quetta, Aitzaz Goraya, revealed that 83,466 pilgrims were provided security, and 7,000 individuals were arrested in 2024 during a press conference alongside senior police officials. Highlighting the department's achievements, he announced the creation of 140 new posts in the traffic police and the establishment of an Online Complaint Center to streamline citizen grievances.

In addition to registering 5,988 cases, the police faced challenges, including the martyrdom of 8 personnel and injuries to 12 others while on duty.

DIG Goraya also emphasized that unresolved cases, such as the recovery of Muswar Khan, remain a priority, stating, "A case is not considered solved until all objectives are achieved."

Other updates included: Court Duties: 150 officers deployed for court security. Police Divisions: Quetta comprises 4 divisions and 9 circles. Government Escorts: 152 personnel assigned to escort duties.

DIG Goraya urged citizens to utilize the Online Complaint Center and reiterated the police's dual role in enforcement and service delivery.



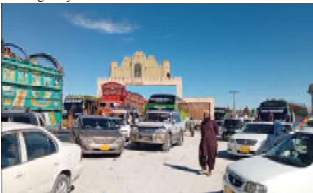
## Quetta-Karachi Highway Reopened After 30-Hour Protest Over a Missing Person

Abdullah Lehr:

KALAT: The Quetta-Karachi Highway was reopened after 30 hours of successful negotiations, ending a prolonged protest by the family of missing Syed Akhtar Shah.

The sit-in began when Syed Akhtar Shah's family blocked the highway for 24 hours, demanding action to locate their missing loved one. Women and children actively joined the protest, highlighting the family's distress and urging authorities to intervene. The highway closure caused

significant disruptions, leaving passengers stranded in freezing temperatures overnight. Travelers faced extreme hardships as negotiations between the protesters and authorities stretched into hours. After 30 hours, an agreement was reached, leading to the highway's reopening and the resumption of normal traffic. The incident underscores the need for timely action on missing person cases to prevent such disruptions in the future.



## Aurangzeb calls for unity to boost tax-to-GDP ratio across all sectors

NEWS DESK:

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Sunday said that all sectors would have to contribute towards increasing the country's tax-to-GDP ratio, adding that the salaried classes were at their limit and could not contribute anymore. The finance minister has repeatedly underscored the need for strict enforcement of tax laws amid plans for the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to undergo full digitalisation to reduce human interaction and enhance efficiency. FBR's performance will be reviewed as part of the tax transformation plan, and the second phase of "rightsizing" is expected soon. While speaking to the business community in Kamali, the finance minister said, "And they are certain segments that need to pay taxes and they will have to pay

taxes now, he said. He added that every single segment in this country will have to contribute towards Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio was only 9 to 10 percent while neighbouring countries had it around 18pc. He added that the government had only talked about reaching 13pc. "Then people say that your institution is very corrupt, that your institution harasses people — which is correct," he admitted, adding that it was important to acknowledge the problem to start working on it. "So we are tackling the issue with people-processed technology. The more technology comes, the less the human intervention," he stressed. On privatisation, the finance minister said that the government needed to play the role of a regulatory body rather than controlling businesses.

## Swift Action Needed to Bring Muhammad Musawir Home

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## Climate Tides and Raising Injustices: The Climate-Gender Violence Nexus in Balochistan

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## KP education experts plan provincial Jirga to address challenges, develop strategic reforms

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## EDITORIAL

Editor: Asim Khan

### Swift Action Needed to Bring Muhammad Musawir Home

#### Editorial:

The suspension of the two-week-long sit-in at Balochistan Assembly Chowk following Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugri's assurances offers a glimmer of hope to the grieving family of 10-year-old Muhammad Musawir, who was kidnapped in Quetta.

While the Chief Minister's empathetic stance and commitment to daily updates from the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) are commendable, words alone cannot heal the anguish of a family waiting for their child's safe return.

Now is the time for the provincial government to match its promises with decisive and effective action.

The heartbreaking ordeal of Muhammad Musawir is a stark reminder of the growing menace of kidnapping in Balochistan, where incidents of abduction have intensified fear among citizens.

The government's immediate focus must be on utilizing all available resources and modern investigative technologies, such as geo-fencing, surveillance, and artificial intelligence, to expedite the child's recovery. Delays in such cases not only shatter the trust of families but also embolden criminal elements operating with impunity.

Chief Minister Bugri's assurance that "all of Balochistan stands with the family" is a powerful sentiment, but true solidarity is demonstrated through action.

His administration must ensure that the JIT operates transparently and delivers concrete results within the promised timeframe.

Moreover, the CM House too to the public is a positive step toward accessibility, but it must be accompanied by robust systemic reforms to address the root causes of abductions and prevent similar incidents in the future.

Civil society's role in amplifying the plight of Muhammad Musawir's family and their insistence on long-term solutions deserve recognition.

Their demand for better law enforcement strategies, advanced training for police personnel, and community engagement programs to combat crime must be prioritized by the government.

The heartache of Musawir's parents is a tragedy no family should endure. As the sit-in committee has shown, the clock is ticking for the government to demonstrate tangible progress. Failure to recover the child within this period risks further eroding public confidence in the administration's ability to safeguard its citizens.

This case should serve as a wake-up call for Balochistan to overhaul its approach to security. Preventing such incidents in the future requires not only swift responses but also robust legal frameworks to prevent and deter criminal activities. For Muhammad Musawir and countless others who may fall victim to similar crimes, the government must act with urgency, determination, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

The people of Balochistan demand action, not just assurances. Let the safe return of Muhammad Musawir be a testament to the government's resolve to protect its most vulnerable citizens.

## Spoiling the youth potential

BY Muhammad Amir Rana:

**P**OLITICAL parties in Pakistan generally do not have a plan to engage the youth in constructive activities or to capitalise on their potential.

The exception is the PTI, which has managed to attract a large segment of the youth to fuel an agitation movement in the country.

Nevertheless, the party's approach stems from its focus on its leader Imran Khan's personality, rather than a deep connection between the youth and democratic values, rights, freedom, and hope. In their comparison of PTI-led activism with the recent student movement in Bangladesh, which led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina Wajed, political commentators overlooked several vital points. First, the student movement was centred on the pursuit of rights and freedoms, which Sheikh Ha-sina's government had curbed.

The student movement was not sudden but the result of a continuing dialogue and debate about the situation in Bangladesh, which primarily took place on university campuses, with Dhaka University as the main point. Social media platforms amplified the impact of these discussions, but they were essentially underpinned by robust intellectual discourse.

It was Gen Z — all too often stereotyped as self-centred — which actually came up with compelling arguments for change and successfully executed plans and strategies, drawing strength from marginalised segments. By contrast, PTI-led youth activism lacks the organisation and strong intellectual discourse of the student movement in Bangladesh. In fact, it is mainly jobless youth from KP that constitute the bulk of the party's street power. Moreover, the PTI lacks strong organisational roots on campuses, which has limited its ability to foster sustained youth engagement. A more fitting comparison for the student movement in Bangladesh might be

drawn with the Jamaat-e-Kashmir Joint Awami Action Com-mittee and the Awami Action Committee of Gilgit-Baltistan, which effectively mobilised the public against the government's efforts to eliminate subsidies.

Moreover, political and ideological parallels exist between the youth around Imran Khan's movements like the Haq D Tehreek in Gwadar and the Baloch Yagheti Council led by Mehrang Baloch, which have galvanised marginalised segments around the issue of rights and the missing persons.

Imran Khan's political agenda does not address the structural challenges the youth face.

What unites the youth around Imran Khan is his consistent narrative and political rhetoric, coupled with his populist leadership style.

For many, he represents a heroic figure, a symbol around which have formed movements against the establishment, and a beacon of hope in a political landscape where mainstream parties have compromised mainly with the establishment. Most importantly, he serves as a symbol of change for the growing middle class of Pakistan, a demographic burdened by the demands of the country's 59 per cent youth.

However, the PTI is similar to other political parties in the country, many of which have transformed into political dynasties. Power and leadership within the PTI are increasingly concentrated around Imran Khan and his family, with crucial decisions made only with his consent. Despite widespread public support, the party needs a solid organisational structure and an effective secondary leadership capable of uniting its cadre no concern for the broader quality of education, the future of the youth, or the development of a knowledge-based economy. Their primary focus remains on controlling the youth rather than empowering them.

stances of social trauma but deeply intermingled phenomena in Balochistan.

Official reports show a disturbing trend of 157 cases of domestic violence were reported in Balochistan in 2022, with 35 individuals being killed on the pretext of pandemic, regrettably women, and 40 women becoming victims of sexual abuse.

Before this, in 2021, the number of reported cases of domestic violence was 127, with 30 women being victims of sexual violence.

In 2021, according to the Balochistan Gender-Based Violence Case Management System, close to 3726 cases of GBV were reported. The following year, in 2022, this figure swelled to 4082, illustrating a staggering increase of nearly 9%. Digging deeper reveals an uncanny coincidence. An upward

Chandni Kakar:

trend in extreme climate events in the same timeline correlates with this rise, painting a chilling picture. Climate change isn't incidental but consequential, a nexus amplified by the continuous environmental changes and socio-economic fallout they induce.

Climate Change in Balochistan: More Than Just an Environmental Issue

Climate change in Balochistan isn't calming down, like a sea-quake ceases sandstorm it obliterates ways of life. In July 2022, unprecedented torrential rains in Quetta led to submerged communities, damaged infrastructure, and homeless families.

Similarly, Naseerabad faced daunting floods in August, with farmlands, the vital backbone of their economy, laid to waste.

This consistent harsh climate rattles the socio-economic bal-

anced, the smog situation in Lahore has been deteriorating for over two decades, but more rapidly after 2016. Multiple factors are responsible.

Urban expansion: Rapid growth in Lahore has amplified both vehicular and industrial activities, leading to the release of 5.3 billion high levels of nitrogen and sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere.

Crop burning: Crop stubble is burnt by farmers both in Pakistan and across the border in India. The practice releases fine particulate matter into the environment, which, when added to the pollution in the cities, results in a thick cocktail of toxic smog.

Construction: The never-ending construction in Lahore adds significantly to the dust that contributes to the smog.

By Masood Lohar:

**T**ODAY, a staggering 25 per cent of Pakistan's population is struggling for clean air. The Air Quality Index caps at 500, yet this year, Lahore alarmingly reached an AQI of 1,900, with Multan soon surpassing 2,000. With a population of 13 million, 5.3 billion people respectively, Lahore and Multan have compact spaces that raise pollution to dangerous levels. Districts nearby undergo similarly strong smog with which a large chunk of the country breathes toxic air.

Although the government periodically imposes lockdowns, such steps do not offer long-term solutions. In-

stead, the smog situation in Lahore has been deteriorating for over two decades, but more rapidly after 2016. Multiple factors are responsible.

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By Abbas Nasir:

**P**AKISTAN'S history is replete with the heroism of political and social workers who have repeatedly demonstrated that their commitment to democratic ideals is total and that they will risk life, limb, and liberty to defend a cause. Whether you call them heroes or villains will depend on your point of reference. Ergo, many of you will see the political workers who reached D-Chowk in Islamabad on the call of their leadership as valiant heroes.

Malliant heroes because they defied all the odds and overcame every obstacle in their path to keep what they thought was a just and righteous cause. A rendezvous which, they believed, would result in their jailed leader being freed, vindicated and possibly on route to the corridors of power once again.

At the other hand was the state, with all the might at its disposal. It was prepared to await what it saw as a conspiracy to destabilise the country and the economy which, in its view, was now showing signs of a revival and growth on the path of progress. So, the trouble-makers, the "miscreants" had to be stopped.

Unlike many of Pakistan's chattering classes, political workers put their money where

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Unlike many of Pakistan's chattering classes, political workers put their money where

charge, rubber bullets and even live fire and they dare to dream a dream and continue to be deterred. One can be sure there are always those who break the law and display a propensity to violence.

But I remain convinced that the vast majority of the protesters wish to peacefully assert their rights.

Yes, they may be committed to a leader or an ideology but don't wish to press for their demands through violent means.

In fact, from my own recollection of the MRD movement of the 1980s, which I first witnessed as a student and then as a journalist, the story of the political worker is one of dreaming a dream and offering sacrifices, even their lives, as they pursue their dreams.

Just look at those who formed a protective cordon around Benazir Bhutto, despite knowing she was on the terrorists' hit list as became clear from the mayhem in Karachi in October 2007 in Karachi when her procession was bombed.

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Just look at those who formed a protective cordon around Benazir Bhutto, despite knowing she was on the terrorists' hit list as became clear from the mayhem in Karachi in October 2007 in Karachi when her procession was bombed.

Even that bombing and mass murder did not dissuade the loyal workers who were guarding her with their own bodies and lives and not weapons when she was assassinated in Rawalpindi in December

charge, rubber bullets and even live fire and they dare to dream a dream and continue to be deterred. One can be sure there are always those who break the law and display a propensity to violence.

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### Qatar PM meets Hamas delegation for Gaza ceasefire talks

DOHA (INP) - Qatar's prime minister met a Hamas delegation in Doha on Saturday to discuss a "clear and comprehensive" ceasefire deal to end the war in Gaza, a statement said.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani held talks with a Hamas team led by senior official Khalil al-Hayya, the foreign ministry statement said.

It is unusual for Sheikh Mohammed, who is also Qatar's foreign minister, to be publicly involved in the mediation process that has appeared de-locked for months.

"During the meeting, the latest developments in the Gaza ceasefire negotiations were reviewed, and ways to advance the process were discussed to ensure a clear and comprehensive agreement that brings an end to the ongoing war in the region," the statement said. Earlier this month, the sheikh expressed optimism that "momentum" was returning to the talks following Donald Trump's election victory in the United States. "We have sensed, after the election, that the momentum is coming back," he said at the Doha Forum political conference. The incoming Trump administration had given "a lot of encouragement in order to achieve a deal, even before the president comes to the office," the premier added. The Gulf emirate, along with the United States and Egypt, has been involved in months of unsuccessful negotiations for a Gaza truce and hostage release.

In November, Doha announced it had put its mediation on hold, saying that it would resume when Hamas and Israel showed "willingness and seriousness".

But Doha then hosted indirect negotiations this month, with Hamas and Israel both reporting progress before again accusing each other of throwing up roadblocks.



President Asif Ali Zardari offering Fataha and Showering petals at the shrine of Sakhi Ial Sheikhz Qalandar in Sehwan Sharif.

### Authorities concerned asked to complete development projects within stipulated time frame

RAWALPINDI (INP) - Chairman of District Coordination Committee (DCC), Rawalpindi Qamarul Islam Raja has directed the authorities concerned to make all-out efforts to complete the ongoing development projects within stipulated time frame.

He said that different projects including Dadocha Dam, Ring Road, 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' Scheme, Green Trace Livestock Card and Polio Campaigns Government should complete attention by the current financial year.

The construction work on Khawaja Corporation Flyover has been started after approval of the funds and the project would be completed by June, 2025. The Chairman directed the authorities concerned to accelerate the pace of work on Rawalpindi-Kahuta Road as further delay on the project would not be tolerated.

All the schemes for which funds are being released under 142 Schemes of Local Government should be completed in the current financial year.

He informed that three polio campaigns were launched during the current year and 99 percent of the targets set for the campaigns were achieved.

No polio case was reported in Rawalpindi since 2010, he said adding, solid steps would be taken to rehabilitate the District Rural Dispensaries so that people could get medical facilities at their doorsteps.

The Chairman further said that a dam has been completed, the Chairman informed.

constructed in Boys School, Naseerabad, so that the problem of water in the area could be resolved. A government school in Rawalpindi would be made state-of-the-art, he added.

Dodcha Dam would be completed as soon as possible so that the water shortage problem of clean water in Rawalpindi could be addressed.

40 percent construction work of Rawalpindi Ring Road has been completed, the Chairman informed.



QURETA: Emir Jamaat-Islami Balochistan, Maulana Hidayatullah Baloch addressing the Tribal Consultation Jirga.

### At least 120 dead in fiery South Korea airliner crash, 2 crew rescued

SEOUL (INP) - At least 120 people were killed when an airliner landed without wheels, veering off the runway and erupting in a fireball as it slammed into a wall at South Korea's Muan International Airport on Sunday, the national fire agency said.

Jeju Air flight 7C2216, arriving from Bangkok with 181 people on board, was attempting to land shortly after 9am (0000 GMT) at the airport in the south of the country, South Korea's transport ministry said.

It is the deadliest air accident involving a South Korean airline in nearly three decades, according to ministry data.

The twin-engine Boeing 737-800 can be seen in video from local media skidding down the runway with no apparent landing gear before slamming into a wall in an explosion of flame and debris. Other photos showed smoke and fire engulfing parts of the plane.

Two crew members, a man and a woman, were rescued from the tail section of the burning plane, Muan fire chief Lee Jung-hyun told a briefing. The fire was extinguished as of 1pm, Lee said.

"Only the tail part retains a little bit of shape, and the rest of the plane looks almost impossible to recognise," he said. Authorities have switched from rescue to recovery operations and because of the force of the impact, are searching nearby areas for bodies possibly thrown from the plane.

The two crew were being treated at hospitals with medium to severe injuries, said the head of the local public health centre. Hours after the crash, mortuary vehicles had been established.

The crash site smelled of aviation fuel and blood, according to Reuters witnesses, and workers in protective suits and masks combed the area while soldiers searched through bushes. Yonhap news agency cited a fire official as saying most of 175 passengers and six crew were presumed dead. Authorities had worked to rescue people in the tail section, an airport official told Reuters shortly after the crash.

The crash is the worst by any South Korean airline since a 1997 Korean Air crash in Guam that killed more than 200 people, according to transportation ministry data.

Investigators are looking into bird strikes and weather conditions as possible factors, Lee said. Yonhap cited airport authorities as saying a bird strike may have caused the landing gear to malfunction.

A passenger texted a relative to say a bird was stuck in the wing, the News1 agency reported. The person's final message was, "Should I say my last words?"

The passengers included two Thai nationals and the rest are believed to be South Koreans, according to the transportation ministry.

The Boeing 737-800 jet, operated by Jeju Air, was manufactured in 2009, the transport ministry said.

He said the cause of the crash was still unknown, that the aircraft had no record of accidents and there were no early signs of malfunction. The airline will cooperate with investigators and make supporting the bereaved its top priority, Kim said. No abnormal conditions were reported when the aircraft left Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, said Kerati Kijmanawat, president of Airports of Thailand. Founded in 2005, Jeju Air is a low-cost airline that operates international routes to Japan, Thailand, and the Philippines, in addition to numerous domestic flights.

Boeing said in an emailed statement, "We are in contact with Jeju Air regarding flight 2216 and stand ready to support them."

### IWMI launches WRAP in KP to assist provincial govt in addressing water governance

PESHAWAR (INP) - The International Water Management Institute (IWMI), a leading research-for-development organization, has expanded its operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by launching Water Resource Accountability Programme (WRAP) to assist provincial government in addressing critical water governance and management challenges.

The program, launched as a pilot project in two districts of KP: Charsadda, which relies on irrigated agriculture, and Manshehra, where agriculture depends on rainfall.

The WRAP initiative is designed to enhance water governance and management mechanisms are outdated and unable to address the growing complexities of water management, especially under the pressures of climate change.

Pakistan's water resources have declined drastically, from 5,260 cubic meters per capita in 1951 to less than 1,000 cubic meters today, putting the country under severe water stress. Despite having one of the world's most extensive irrigation systems, inefficient groundwater extraction, inefficient flood irrigation practices, inadequate water data systems, weak resource planning, and the impacts of climate change, said Dr. Haqez.

Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Science Policy Advisor at IWMI Pakistan, highlighted that the country's water governance mechanisms are outdated and unable to address the growing complexities of water management, especially under the pressures of climate change.

"WRAP aims to provide policymakers with evidence-based insights on water stress caused by misuse and climate change," Dr. Ashraf added.

Since July 2024, IWMI has been collecting scientific data on water requirements in Charsadda and Manshehra. The insights will guide policy decisions, with the intention of scaling successful strategies to other districts, shared Engr Muhammad Naeem, IWMI's Science Policy Advisor for KP.

Efforts are also underway to build the capacity of officials in implementing water conservation policies such as Integrated Water Resources Management, the KP Water Act, and the KP Water Commission.

Engr Kifayat Zaman, Assistant Project Leader for KP, emphasized the importance of raising awareness among communities, particularly farmers, about water conservation. "Currently, there are no effective tools to monitor or regulate water usage, which leads to wastage," he said.

### First shipment of 146 electric buses lands in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The first batch of 146 out of 160 electric buses reached Islamabad to provide smooth travel experience to the people.

According to the Capital Development Authority (CDA) officials, the last batch of 14 electric buses has departed from China.

CDA officials said that the construction of the zero-point charging station has started.

CDA officials said that earlier the construction of the charging station was delayed due to the cancellation of the tender twice and now CDA has issued a tender for the charging station at reduced rates. Officials said that first, chargers and parking areas will be prepared for the new routes. CDA officials said that in the first phase, officials will be set up in containers and operations will be started. They said that one month will be required to train drivers on the new routes.

Officials said that buses will soon be operated on Park Road, B-7, PWD, I-8 and I-9 routes, while approval has already been given to operate buses on these four routes. On December 4, the Punjab government announced a plan to operate 102 electric buses in Rawalpindi.

The electric buses will play on an 84-km route that will include 10 major public transport routes. So far, the provincial government has allocated Rs 200 million for this. Rs 4.7 billion for the initiative.

The project is expected to significantly improve air quality in the region by curbing environmental pollution.

Punjab Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan confirmed in June that the e-bus service will start next year. These buses will cover several major routes, one of which connects Taxila, Wah Cantt, and JLP Road to Aktree 26, and the other connects Daulatala to Rawalpindi.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Awais Leghari held a press conference on the performance of Power Division in last nine months along with major reforms and their implications.

### Shutter-down strike observed in Kashmir over lawlessness

KASHMIRE (INP) - A complete shutter-down strike is being observed in district Kashmir over poor law and order situation and recovery of kidnapped persons.

The Hindu community of the area called this shutter-down strike a demand for business centres and bazars, including Shahi Bazar, Muslim Bazar, Alamdar Chowk, Ladies Market, and small markets, remained close.

The Hindu community stated that district Kashmir has already become a hub of kidnapping for ransom and dacoity killings.

They said that dacoits kidnapped, murdered, and snatched goods from innocent citizens in day light and managed to escape successfully.

They demanded Sindh chief minister and IGP Sindh to take stern action against these dacoits and provide safety to citizens.

Police operation continues against dacoits in Kutchha area of Khairpur.

Khairpur police continued targeted operations in the Kutchha area against the dacoits. The operation was started three days earlier.

The targeted operation was carried out under the supervision of DSP City and DSP Gambat. During the operation, police destroyed hidden locations of dacoits. The police are also monitoring the hide-outs of dacoits through drone cameras.

SSP Khairpur said that no one will be allowed to create a law and order situation in the area and any bid will be dealt with as per law.

He said that any dacoit who will surrender before the police will be provided full legal assistance. He said that curbing crime is his top priority.

SSP Khairpur said that this targeted operation is being conducted to provide secure and safe environment to the people, and any terrorist will be dealt with iron hands.



PESHAWAR: An old man warming himself during cold day at Vegetable Market.

## MWM continues protest against Kurram incident in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Protests by the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) over the Kurram issue have disrupted traffic in several parts of Karachi, with demonstrations continuing at multiple key locations of the port city.

As per details, MWM is continuing protests at 10 spots in Karachi against Kurram issue, the Karachi traffic police said.

They further said that sit-in at Malir 15 and National Highway.

Township protest have ended and roads have been cleared for traffic.

Powerhouse Chowringi, University Road, Abul Hassan Isfahani Road, Abbas Town

Five Star Chowringi, Korangi's D.A. Flats, Shara-e-Pakistan, and Gulistan-e-Johar's Kamran Chowringi are still going on.

The blockages have led to significant traffic congestion, with commuters facing difficulties in their daily travels.

Read more: Traffic police launches 24/7 helpline to assist Karachiites amid protests

Meanwhile, traffic police have launched a 24/7 helpline to assist the residents of Karachi amid ongoing Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM).

According to reports, the demonstrations, ongoing for three days, have resulted in road closures, causing frustra-

tion among residents. However, the traffic police have taken proactive measures to ease the situation.

To assist citizens, the Karachi Traffic Police have established a 24-hour operation at their 1915 helpline office, working in three shifts to provide real-time traffic updates.

Speaking to Sub-Inspector Ilyas Syal explained, "We are utilizing four telephones exclusively for the helpline and monitoring the situation through cameras.

While the protests have disrupted traffic for three days, we are guiding citizens on which routes are blocked and suggesting alternative paths to their destinations."



KAMALIA: Federal Minister for Finance Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, talking to the Media Persons during his visit to Kamalia.

## Residents demand new PHA-Colony stop on FR-7 Electric Bus Route

ISLAMABAD (INP): The residents of the Federal Capital sector G-8/4 area have urged upon the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to immediately establish a new bus stop on the FR-7 electric bus route at the G-8/4 roundabout.

The petition comes as thousands of residents from local colonies including PHA Colony, Radio Colony, and Postal Colony, PWD Colony, and T&T Colony express frustration over the lack of convenient access to public transportation.

At present, the FR-7 electric bus route, which runs from PIMS to the Police Foundation, has only one stop at Noori Hospital, located several kilometers away from these densely populated colonies.

Local residents, especially women, elderly passengers, and those with mobility challenges, have reported significant difficulties in reaching the

existing stop. Residents argue that the current distance to Noori Hospital is particularly inconvenient for families and individuals who rely on public transport to commute to work, healthcare facilities, and other essential services.

Many have highlighted that the absence of a nearby bus stop exacerbates daily hardships for the local population, making the journey longer and more physically demanding.

In response, community leaders have called for the CDA to urgently consider the establishment of a new stop at the G-8/4 roundabout, which they believe would provide much-needed relief for thousands of commuters.

The location is seen as central and accessible to the majority of residents in the area, ensuring a more convenient and efficient transport link for the local community.

"We are asking the CDA to take immediate action and

make this essential change," said one local resident. "A bus stop at the G-8/4 roundabout would significantly improve our daily commute and make a real difference for people who are struggling, particularly women and the elderly."

Local representatives have already initiated discussions with the relevant authorities, urging them to prioritize this demand to improve the quality of life for those relying on public transportation in G84.

The CDA has yet to issue a formal response to the request, but it is expected that further talks will take place as community pressure continues to grow.

The FR-7 electric bus service is part of the city's ongoing efforts to expand and improve its public transport infrastructure, and the residents of G84 are hopeful that their voices will be heard as they seek better access to essential services.

## Fazl-ur-Rehman hints at conditional meeting with PTI founder

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman revealed that he has not received any formal message from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan regarding a meeting, says in media reports. In an informal conversation, Fazlur Rehman discussed various political matters, including his stance on the (PTI) founder Imran Khan, elections, and governance. He further added that if Imran Khan wishes to meet him, he would decide after careful consideration. On the relationship with Imran Khan's PTI, the JUI-F leader clarified that there was a working relationship at the federal level but expressed differing views on provincial matters.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman

highlighted the ongoing terrorism concerns in Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, and Tank, stating that the situation in these areas was deeply troubling. He pointed out that courts and government offices had been moved from Tank to Dera Ismail Khan. Regarding governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Maulana Fazlur Rehman criticized the lack of government authority, noting that the government's influence was hardly visible in the region.

The JUI-F chief expressed dissatisfaction with the level playing field during the general elections, stating that their concerns about being sidelined were valid. Fazlur Rehman mentioned that while some individuals were used in the elections, his party had refused to be used. Regarding the 26th

Amendment, Maulana Fazlur Rehman emphasized that it prioritised strengthening institutions over personalities.

He also spoke on the issue of the seminary registration bill, claiming that unnecessary complications had been introduced, though the matter was now being resolved amicably. Earlier on December 27, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, halted all political activities due to health concerns.

According to details, doctors have advised Fazlur Rehman a complete bed rest and avoid walking due to swelling in his left foot, the sources said. They further say upon returning from the meeting with the prime minister last week, Maulana Fazlur Rehman experienced swelling in his left foot.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on performance of Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOs).

## PM Shehbaz expresses grief over deadly South Korea plane crash

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his profound sorrow over the tragic plane crash at Muan International Airport in South Korea, which claimed the lives of 120 people.

In a statement issued on Sunday, PM Shehbaz offered heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the people and government of South Korea.

"I am deeply saddened to hear about the devastating plane crash at Muan Airport. The loss of precious lives in such a tragic accident is heart-wrenching. My sympathy and prayers are with the affected families and the Korean government during this difficult time," Prime Minister Sharif

said. The crash occurred at 9:03 am local time when a Jeju Air flight, originating from Bangkok, Thailand, attempted to land at Muan International Airport, located about 289km southwest of Seoul.

The Boeing 737-800, carrying 175 passengers and six crew members, was unable to deploy its landing gear, causing it to crash-land on its belly, veering off the runway and striking a concrete fence. The plane then erupted into flames, leading to the deaths of 120 people, including 46 women and 39 men.

Rescue teams managed to recover three survivors, but authorities fear that the death toll could rise, as many are critically injured. The aircraft had 173 South Korean nationals and two Thai citizens aboard.

Premier's statement also extended support to South Korean authorities as they continue their investigation into the cause of the crash. "I stand in solidarity with the people of South Korea and assure them of our full support in this moment of grief," he added. World leaders, including the heads of state from neighboring countries, have also expressed their sorrow over the incident.

Global organizations have offered assistance in the ongoing investigation, while officials have called for swift action to understand the cause of the malfunction that led to the crash.

## Traffic police launches 24/7 helpline to assist Karachiites amid protests

KARACHI (INP): Traffic police have launched a 24/7 helpline to assist the residents of Karachi amid ongoing Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) at 12 locations across the city.

According to reports, the demonstrations, ongoing for three days, have resulted in road closures, causing frustration among residents. However, the traffic police have taken proactive measures to ease the situation.

To assist citizens, the Karachi Traffic Police have established a 24-hour operation at their 1915 helpline office, working in three shifts to provide real-time traffic updates.

Speaking to a private TV channel, Sub-Inspector Ilyas Syal explained, "We are utilizing four telephones exclusively for the helpline and monitoring the situation through cameras. While the protests have disrupted traffic for three days,

we are guiding citizens on which routes are blocked and suggesting alternative paths to their destinations."

He added that the team is working tirelessly in three shifts around the clock to ensure uninterrupted assistance. Meanwhile, citizens have urged the authorities to resolve the situation through negotiations and bring the sit-ins to an end. Earlier, MWM spread its sit-ins from Numaish Chowringi to across Karachi to protest against Parachinar situation. The protests have resulted in the closure of several major roads, including MA Jinnah Road, which is closed for traffic at Numaish Chowringi. Abul Hasan Isfahani Road is also closed on both sides near Abbas Town.

Additionally, Five-Star Chowringi is completely closed while University Road is also closed from Metro

Shopping Center to Nipa Chowringi. Main Shahrah-e-Faisal is closed from Kala Pul to Malir Road, while National Highway is closed on both roads near Malir 15 Bridge.

To manage the traffic flow, diversions have been made. Traffic from Malir, Korangi Industrial Area, and Clifton Defence can use the route from Sanghar Chowringi to Shah Faisal Colony, Rita Plot, Shama Shopping Center, and Shah Faisal Colony Bridge to reach the airport, according to Karachi Traffic Police.

Traffic from Pehlwan Goth to the airport can use the route via Karsaz, Drig Road, Millennium, and Johar Chowringi. Traffic police have diverted traffic from Power House Chowringi to Service Road. An alternative route has been provided from Power House Chowringi to Service



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aileen Khan visited this private museum named "Sobia Mahal".

## KP education experts plan provincial Jirga to address challenges, develop strategic reforms

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prominent education experts from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) held an inclusive meeting in the Federal capital and decided to organize a Provincial Educational Jirga in a bid to identify challenges in the education sector and formulating actionable recommendations.

They gathered to attend the 6th meeting of the board of Governors of the think tank Forum for Inquiry, Knowledge, and Review (FIKR), organized under the aegis of the Pakistan Development Foundation (PDF) the other day.

The meeting, focused on the state of education in KP, was chaired by PDF Chairman Muhammad Bilal Sethi and attended by a distinguished panel, including Lt.

Mahmood, Justice Q. Jibla Ayaz of the Supreme Court's Shariah Bench, Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Prof. Dr. Attaulah Shah, Vice-Chancellor of the Karakoram International University, Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Director of the IM Sciences, Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana, Member of the Public Service Commission, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, industrialist Masood Rehman, PDF Patron-in-Chief Dr. Fatima Shaheen, Halima Ikram, Waseem Gohar, Prof. Dr. Abdul Rehman Khalil, senior journalist Rahan Khan, and Ghazala Yousefzai.

This Jirga will engage stakeholders, including parents,

to ensure a holistic approach to improving education standards.

To oversee the planning and organization of the Educational Jirga, a committee was formed comprising Justice Dr. Q. Jibla Ayaz, Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed, Waseem Gohar, and Muhammad Bilal Sethi.

The Board also approved the development of a ten-year strategic plan for FIKR. A dedicated committee, including Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Prof. Dr. Attaulah Shah, Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana, and Muhammad Bilal Sethi, was tasked with this responsibility. The forum reiterated its unwavering commitment to improving education in the region, pledging to utilize all available resources to achieve this goal.



TIMERGARA: Emir Jamaat-e-Islami, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman addressing a ceremony at Ihyal Uloom Balambat.