

# QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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daquttavoice@gmail.com



A view of the destruction caused by gas leakage in Quetta

## UAE agrees to roll over payment of \$2bn due by Pakistan: (PM)

**NEWS DESK:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday announced that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had agreed to roll over the payment of \$2 billion due by Pakistan this month. Securing external financing has previously been a key condition for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to approve the \$7bn bailout deal for Pakistan. Last year, friendly countries such as China, UAE, and Saudi Arabia had helped the country successfully clinch the IMF programme by providing timely confirmation of necessary financing assurances — with the IMF's fund disbursement tied to debt rollover confirmation from these countries.

Shehbaz also said that the government will have to approach the IMF to reduce electricity prices in the country. Under the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) signed in September last year, the global money lender has asked Pakistan to impose a substantial levy on gas supply to industrial captive power plants (CPPs) to eliminate any cost-benefit between the grid power and their in-house electricity generation. The country has to deliver on one of the major structural benchmarks that required gas disconnections to CPPs by the end of January 2025 to qualify for disbursement of the second of the seven \$1bn tranches in March.



While talking to cabinet members today, the prime minister said he met with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan while he was on a personal visit to Pakistan on Sunday. "I asked for the UAE to invest a few billion dollars in key investment projects and that would be helpful. "He (Nahyan) said the UAE was committed to this investment and the two countries share brotherly ties," the premier added PM

The two sides will meet for the first biannual review in the second half of February. The premier said that the government will have to move forward as our home-grown economic plan — the National Economic Transformation Plan 2024-29 — had already been initiated. "That is why I am calling a meeting — because until our electricity prices are not reduced, our industry, our exports, and our commerce cannot be successful," he said.

## Wheel Jam Strike in Balochistan: JUL-B Protests Alleged PB-45 By-Election Rigging

**Qassem Shah:** QUETTA: Jamia Ulema-e-Balochistan (JUL-B) has announced a complete wheel jam strike across national highways in Balochistan on Wednesday, January 8, 2025. The strike is in protest against alleged rigging in the PB-45 by-election, where JUL-B claims its victory was deliberately overturned.



JUL-B's provincial Ameer, Maulana Abdul Wasay, made the announcement during a press conference in Quetta, accompanied by senior party leaders Kamran Murtaza, Agha Mahmood Shah, Maulvi Kamaluddin, Usman Parkani, Maulvi Sarwar Musa Khel, Haji Nawaz Kakar, and Dilwar Khan Kakar.

**Claims of Electoral Malpractice** Addressing the press, Maulana Abdul Wasay condemned the election process, stating, "The re-polling in PB-45 was a calculated effort to snatch our win and manipulate the results. Democracy was sabotaged, and the election saw unprecedented levels of rigging." He accused election officials of barring candidates from leaving the Returning Officer's office, terming it clear evidence of malpractice.

The wheel jam strike is expected to disrupt major transportation routes across Balochistan, as JUL-B seeks justice and demands accountability for the alleged electoral fraud.

## Our internet is much better, cheaper than a number of countries: info minister

**NEWS DESK:** Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said that the internet in Pakistan was "much better and cheaper" as compared to several other countries, as he dismissed claims made in a recent report that internet outages in the country had caused massive financial losses last year.

In the second half of 2024, users frequently experienced sluggish speeds, difficulty downloading media on WhatsApp, and intermittent connectivity issues.

Digital analysts said the government had been testing a "firewall" to monitor some platforms and block content.

## Forests: The Unsung Guardians of Climate Resilience and Economic Prosperity

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## Gas Leakage Claims Two Brothers' Lives in Mastung's Killi Kongarh

**From Our Correspondent:**

**MASTUNG:** A tragic gas leakage incident in Killi Kongarh, Mastung, claimed the lives of two brothers while two children sustained burn injuries on Tuesday.

The incident occurred when a room filled with gas due to prolonged and unannounced gas load-shedding coupled with low gas pressure.

The deceased brothers' bodies

were shifted to a nearby hospital, while the injured children were rushed to Quetta for urgent medical treatment. Neighbors rushed to the site and began rescue efforts as news of the tragedy spread.

This heartbreaking incident happened just hours after a similar gas blast in Quetta's Sirki Kalan area injured a husband and wife. Such gas-related accidents are

becoming alarmingly frequent across Balochistan, particularly in winter, as families rely on gas for heating amid inadequate supply and unannounced load-shedding.

Residents are calling on authorities to address the root causes of these accidents, emphasizing the need for uninterrupted gas supply and improved safety mea-

## Gas Leakage Blast Injures Couple in Quetta's Sirki Kalan Area

**Staff Reporter:**

**QUETTA:** A gas leakage blast injured a husband and wife in the Sirki Kalan area of Quetta on Tuesday morning.

According to police, the blast occurred due to a gas leak, causing severe burns to the couple. They were rushed to the Burn Unit of Civil Hospital Quetta for emergency medical treatment. Health professionals acted swiftly to provide timely care, but inci-

dents like this are becoming increasingly common in Quetta due to low gas pressure and unannounced gas load-shedding. Residents blame prolonged gas outages, particularly during the ongoing winter season, for such tragedies.

As Quetta and other parts of Balochistan remain under the grip of cold and dry weather, families rely heavily on gas for

heating. However, the combination of inadequate supply and unannounced load-shedding has led to repeated accidents. Officials are urged to take immediate steps to address the issue and prevent further loss of life.

This latest incident highlights the growing risks faced by residents amid poor utility services in the provincial capital.

## Quetta: Police-Encounter Leaves 3 Injured, Child Killed in Sharifabad

**Manan Mandokhail:**



**QUETTA:** An exchange of fire between armed individuals and police in Sharifabad, Sarfabad, resulted in injuries to three police officers and the tragic death of a passer-by child, according to police reports. The incident occurred when miscreants opened fire, leaving a

team of police officers injured and endangering civilians in the area. A police response team swiftly arrived at the scene to control the situation. The injured officers and the deceased child were promptly shifted to Civil Hospital Quetta for medical assistance and further procedures.

Authorities have launched an investigation into the incident, and a search operation is underway to apprehend the culprits. This tragic event has sparked concerns about public safety and law enforcement's challenges in maintaining order in high-risk areas of Quetta.

## Zhob: Fatal Quetta-Zhob Highway Crash Kills 5, Injures 6

**Ali Khan Mandokhail:**

**ZHOB:** A devastating collision on the Quetta-Zhob National Highway near Badinzi claimed five lives, including three women, and injured six others. The deceased were all from the same family, hospital sources confirmed. The injured and bodies were rushed to the Trauma Center in

Zhob, where an emergency was declared. The tragic incident has sparked concerns over road safety on this busy route. Authorities are investigating the cause of the accident, while a large number of people gathered at the Civil Hospital, expressing grief and urging for preventive measures on highways.



## Finance Minister announces slashing 150k govt jobs in major 'right-sizing initiative'

**NEWS DESK:** The federal government has decided to cut the number of affiliated agencies in half, reducing 150,000 vacant positions, as part of a sweeping cost-cutting and efficiency drive. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb announced on Tuesday. Speaking at a press conference, Aurangzeb highlighted the government's goal to complete these reforms by June 2025. "We are reducing the federal government's size step by step. So far, 80 agencies have been consolidated into 40," he stated.

The restructuring is part of a broader initiative launched in mid-2024 by a committee formed under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to rationalise expenditures and improve performance. Initially targeting 45 ministries and 400 associated organisations, the effort focuses on reducing the government's financial footprint, which currently costs

Rs900 billion annually. Aurangzeb explained that 60% of vacant federal positions have been eliminated, while other measures, such as merging the Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON affairs departments, are underway. The federal government also plans to transfer hospitals to provincial administrations. "This is not just about cutting costs; it's about improving efficiency," Aurangzeb remarked. The minister also shared plans to shift Pakistan's economic framework towards export-driven growth, supported by digitalisation and technology initiatives.



## PTI demands justice, accountability for Nov 26, legal delays

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## Musarrat Aziz's Killing Sparks Outrage Over Women's Safety

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Forests: The Unsung Guardians of Climate Resilience and Economic Prosperity

MUSARRAT AZIZ VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan
Musarrat Aziz's Killing Sparks Outrage Over Women's Safety

Editorial: The murder of Musarrat Aziz, a social activist and in-charge of the Touheed Technical Center near Jail Road, Zhub, underscores the growing violence, intolerance, and alarming torture faced by women in Balochistan. This heinous act, which claimed the life of a woman dedicated to empowering others through skills training, is a stark reminder of the escalating challenges women encounter daily. Disgracefully, there has been no condemnation from government high-ups, reflecting an appalling indifference toward such incidents.

According to District Police Officer (DPO) Zhub, Syed Saboor Agha, an investigation is underway, and one individual has been taken into custody for questioning. While the authorities' assurances of justice are welcome, they must translate into swift and transparent action. The tragic loss of Musarrat Aziz is not merely an isolated incident but part of a harrowing pattern of violence that targets women striving for progress and change.

As highlighted in a recent report by Quetta Voice during 2024, 'Balochistan recorded an alarming rise in violence against women, with over 200 cases reported in six months'. The report further emphasized that "systemic societal pressures and ineffective law enforcement mechanisms perpetuate a culture of impunity." This culture emboldens perpetrators while leaving victims and their families in despair. Without immediate and effective action, these statistics, shedding light on the state's failure to protect its most vulnerable citizens.

The ousting of our outrage on social media reflects public demand for justice and stricter measures to ensure women's safety. It is imperative for the government to heed this call. While high-ranking officials on such a grave matter is unacceptable and sends a chilling message of apathy, Balochistan's leadership must break this silence and address the systemic issues enabling such atrocities.

The government must expedite the investigation and ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice swiftly. Implement robust policies to combat violence against women, including special task forces and monitoring mechanisms.

Launch awareness campaigns emphasizing the importance of women's empowerment and their right to safety.

Strengthen law enforcement to ensure swift action against threats to women activists and workers.

Musarrat Aziz was more than just a victim; she was a beacon of hope for women in Zhub, striving to create opportunities in a challenging environment. Her death must not be in vain. This tragedy calls for collective introspection and decisive accountability, a commitment to change the status quo in Balochistan risks alienating and endangering the very individuals who work tirelessly to uplift their communities. Justice for Musarrat Aziz must be a priority. It is time for Balochistan's leadership to demonstrate that the safety and dignity of its women are non-negotiable.

Workplace harassment

By Mohsin Saleem Ullah: In Pakistan's public offices, harassment by bosses is an all-too-common reality. Far from being isolated incidents, these acts of intimidation and abuse are systemic. Manoeuvring in an environment that rewards power and protects the powerful. This culture of unchecked authority and impunity has created workplaces where fear and silence are the norm. Harassment in the workplace often goes beyond sexual misconduct. It encompasses verbal abuse, psychological pressure, public humiliation and excessive demands designed to exhaust and subjugate employees. In Pakistan, specifically, male bosses frequently use these tactics to consolidate their control and silence dissent. Unfortunately, the hierarchical structures of public offices, coupled with a pervasive "boss is always right" mentality, make it nearly impossible for employees to challenge such behavior. Female employees face gender-specific challenges, including objectification, inappropriate remarks and unwanted advances. Male employees are not exempt either; they endure unwarranted criticism and public ridicule. In both cases, the goal is the same: to assert dominance and ensure obedience. Adding to this toxic dynamic is the silence of bystanders. Colleagues, often witnesses to the abuse, choose self-preservation over intervention. A significant hurdle in addressing workplace harassment is the narrow interpretation of what constitutes harassment. Until recently, the Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010 defined harassment solely as sexual in nature. Women, in particular, face unique challenges. They often find themselves navigating a workplace where their presence is either represented or misrepresented. The revised law now includes conduct that creates a hostile or abusive work environment, offering broader protection for victims. However, while these legal advancements are commendable, their implementation remains inconsistent, particularly in the public sector. For many employees, reporting harassment is not a viable option. Investigations, if conducted at all, are often superficial, and complainants are frequently dismissed or subjected to retaliation. The fear of losing one's livelihood outweighs the desire to seek justice. For many employees, reporting harassment is not a viable option. Investigations, if conducted at all, are often superficial, and complainants are frequently dismissed or subjected to retaliation. The fear of losing one's livelihood outweighs the desire to seek justice.

Irfan Khan Tareen: Quetta: Forests, often regarded as Earth's 'green friends', are vital for economic development, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience. They enhance natural beauty, mitigate climate change, and combat harmful greenhouse gases. Despite their significance, deforestation in Pakistan is escalating, posing severe threats to biodiversity, infrastructure, and human settlements.

Why Forests Matter: Forests play an irreplaceable role in ensuring clean air, water, biodiversity, and fertile soils. They improve oxygen levels, retain water in soil, and reduce land dryness. Beyond environmental benefits, forests significantly boost economic productivity through full-fledged food requirements, and reduce poverty by fostering a sustainable ecosystem.

Key Benefits of Forests: Biodiversity Conservation: Forests provide shelter for countless species, including local and exotic birds, and help preserve ecosystems. Natural Disaster Mitigation: Robust forest cover reduces risks of flash floods, landslides, and other calamities.

Climate Regulation: Forests act as carbon sinks, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions such as CO2, NOx, and SO2.

Deforestation: A Growing Threat in Pakistan: Pakistan's forest cover is alarmingly low, accounting for only 5.49% of the total land area. The country loses approximately 27,000 hectares of forest annually due to deforestation, driven by urbanization, agricultural expansion, and poverty.

Urgent Need for Action: To address these challenges, Pakistan must adopt comprehensive policies to curb deforestation, protect biodiversity, and restore forest ecosystems. Government initiatives, local community participation, and collaboration with international organizations like WWF, Pakistan and IUCN are crucial.

Proactive Measures to Combat Deforestation: Awareness Campaigns: Educate communities about the importance of forest conservation. Afforestation Drives: Plant more trees to increase forest cover. Sustainable Alternatives: Provide alternative fuel sources to reduce reliance on wood. Strict Policies: Implement and enforce anti-deforestation laws. Collaborative Efforts: Partner with international and local organizations for climate resilience projects.

The Role of Government and Communities: The government must lead by example, enforcing strict policies and investing in reforestation. Communities should be empowered to take ownership of their local forests, promoting sustainable practices and reporting illegal activities.

Conclusion: Forests are the unsung guardians of our planet's health and prosperity. By protecting and restoring them, we can ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

By Jawed Naqvi: Prometheus is also credited with the creation of humanity from clay, a description of the ever-self-effacing former PM would probably frown on. Manmohan Singh's policies shored up business captains who ganged up to promote Narendra Modi as prime minister. He condemned 'left wing extremism' as the biggest internal security threat to India. The sahurak-backed right wing agreed. Consequently, too many leftist intellectuals and academics are in jail over unfounded claims that they posed a threat to Indian democracy. By the time it was Singh's turn to hand over the baton to Narendra Modi, which he grudgingly but refused to see as a logical outcome of his economic policies. Singh was warning that Hindutva posed the real threat to India. In the end, it was too late to heed the corrected warning. The threat to Indian democracy was either posed by the left or by the right. It couldn't be coming from both, unless they had conspired, as they did self-servingly against Indra Gandhi's brief re-ascension to emergency. Dr. Sinha, who has hailed as India's economic Prometheus, after the Greek legend who defied the Olympian gods by taking fire from them and giving it to humanity. Dr. Sinha is showing on him for opening up India's economy, which strove to unleash the complex market-based energies. In some versions of the Greek myth, denying major and middle powers to interfere and preclude an impending disaster. Lack of consensus among the permanent members of the UNSC and other major stakeholders in world affairs to control the situation tends to expose their structural weaknesses. Fragility of the prevailing world order has been examined in three ways. First is the absence of an inclusive approach to world order but we face bewildered situation because of the existing conflicts involving the US, China, Russia, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and India. These countries are economically, technologically and militarily powerful but are unable to engage middle powers for a stable world order. When NATO, despite the Soviet disunion and collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, has expanded threatening Russia and to some extent China, there is no effort to mitigate the American policy of containing Moscow and Beijing. It is not merely the Russian attack on Ukraine which destabilized peace in Europe but NATO's aggressive posture by arming Kiev which is a major threat to the reigning world order. It is not un-derstandable that Switzerland and Austria, all countries of Europe are now members of NATO encircling Russia? Second, the surge in global military expenditures to \$2.2 trillion, with the US being the largest spender of \$920 billion, is a source of alarm. Forty years ago, world military spending was \$700 billion which have surged to \$2.2 trillion in 2024. Unless, serious efforts are made for mitigating arms race and controlling military ex-

penditures, there is no way the world will prevent further escalation of violent conflicts and deal with issues like poverty, hunger and diseases. It is not only surge in military expenditures that adds to the fragility of world order, meager efforts for peace-making and peacekeeping also motivate various forces to violate international law and carry out genocide of innocent people. Since October 2023, more than 46,000 Palestinians have been killed as a result of the Israeli attacks on Gaza.

When Israel has been given a free hand to carry out Gaza genocide, it means there is world disorder. Likewise, when millions of people are uprooted because of the war in Ukraine and Sudan, those who are the so-called custodians of the world order look the other way, which means there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

Finally, as long as a global movement is not launched against genocide, illegal use of force

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But let us begin at the beginning, or somewhere around there, to assess Dr. Singh's fraught experiment. A major earthquake in Maharashtra in 1993 required me to cover the devastation for a Western news agency. Several instructive lessons lay in store, one such was watching Shiv Sena cadres removing with bare hands and unmatched dedication the rotting bodies and animal carcasses.

It was the same Shiv Sena, remember, that had violently targeted Muslims in the '92-'93 Mumbai carnage after the destruction of the Babri masjid, but in the same with rightwing groups in Pakistan, where, too, the government is outpaced by the Jamaat or Jamiat cadres in rescue missions; in the flood-ravaged mountains? A stark lesson in the Latur visit was unrelated to the earthquake - 'havoc' captains who ganged up to promote Narendra Modi as prime minister.

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Prometheus or Dr Frankenstein?

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As the fragility of the world order continues

By Dr Moonis Ahmar: In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia established the modern world order, a pattern repeated to other regions. This was largely because the then prevailing treaty-based world order did not encourage or even permit the operation of a single global system. He lamented that "no truly global order has ever existed, what passes for order in our time were devised in Western Europe nearly four centuries ago, at a peace conference in the German region of Westphalia."

As compared to the Westphalian world order established after three centuries of religious wars in Europe in 1648, the world order of 2025 reflects the diversity of states including middle powers influencing the patterns of international system. In 1648 the world lacked technology and geographical connectivity in the form of airplanes, high-speed trains, modern roads and vehicles, there were less than 500 million people living on this planet as compared to 8 billion today. The transformation in the art of war with the advent of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction along with four pillars of world order consisting of globalisation, information technology, soft power and geo-economic reflects how different the world order is today than in 1648. One wonders why the world has become so dangerous because of violent conflicts, terrorism wars and an impending environmental catastrophe and how in 2025 issues which threaten the very survival of this globe can be dealt with.

Why do conflict zones in the Middle East, Ukraine and parts of Africa continue to claim thousands of lives? And why have the so-called custodians of world order utterly failed to establish peace? As compared to 1648 when hardly any global institution existed to shape a world order, in 2025 there are dozens of organisations ranging from the UN to G7, NATO, OIC, BRICS, SCO, G-20 and I-D-8 shaping a world order. Yet, the world is so insecure and volatile because of the failure of so-called global world order to maintain order in international system.

Paradoxically, when there are numerous global and regional organisations engaged in different areas, one can observe vacuum in world leadership to prevent wars and conflicts and deal with issues related to the environment, water, energy, food and migration.

At a time when the world is facing a serious existential crisis, global and regional powers are least interested in resolving issues that threaten the survival of millions of people.

The war in Ukraine, the arms conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, Chad and fragile peace in Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar and other vulnerable areas reflect how tenuous the world order is. Adding to the prevailing crisis in different regions of the world is internal polarisation in South Korea, Bangladesh and Pakistan and the surge of populism in the West following the election triumph of Donald Trump. Fragility of world order is not a new phenomenon but its danger is that it possesses the potential to destabilise the world. If Russian President Vladimir Putin urges his people to unite their country in 2025 against predictable NATO onslaught, President-elect Donald Trump after assuming power on January 20, 2025 is expected to complete his agenda which remained unfulfilled because he lost the 2020 presidential election. When the UN is unable to assert its position to deal with violent conflicts, a technologically and militarily powerful but are unable to engage middle powers for a stable world order. When NATO, despite the Soviet disunion and collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, has expanded threatening Russia and to some extent China, there is no effort to mitigate the American policy of containing Moscow and Beijing. It is not merely the Russian attack on Ukraine which destabilized peace in Europe but NATO's aggressive posture by arming Kiev which is a major threat to the reigning world order. It is not understandable that Switzerland and Austria, all countries of Europe are now members of NATO encircling Russia? Second, the surge in global military expenditures to \$2.2 trillion, with the US being the largest spender of \$920 billion, is a source of alarm. Forty years ago, world military spending was \$700 billion which have surged to \$2.2 trillion in 2024. Unless, serious efforts are made for mitigating arms race and controlling military ex-

Prometheus or Dr Frankenstein?

By Jawed Naqvi: Prometheus is also credited with the creation of humanity from clay, a description of the ever-self-effacing former PM would probably frown on. Manmohan Singh's policies shored up business captains who ganged up to promote Narendra Modi as prime minister. He condemned 'left wing extremism' as the biggest internal security threat to India. The sahurak-backed right wing agreed. Consequently, too many leftist intellectuals and academics are in jail over unfounded claims that they posed a threat to Indian democracy. By the time it was Singh's turn to hand over the baton to Narendra Modi, which he grudgingly but refused to see as a logical outcome of his economic policies. Singh was warning that Hindutva posed the real threat to India. In the end, it was too late to heed the corrected warning. The threat to Indian democracy was either posed by the left or by the right. It couldn't be coming from both, unless they had conspired, as they did self-servingly against Indra Gandhi's brief re-ascension to emergency. Dr. Sinha, who has hailed as India's economic Prometheus, after the Greek legend who defied the Olympian gods by taking fire from them and giving it to humanity. Dr. Sinha is showing on him for opening up India's economy, which strove to unleash the complex market-based energies. In some versions of the Greek myth, denying major and middle powers to interfere and preclude an impending disaster. Lack of consensus among the permanent members of the UNSC and other major stakeholders in world affairs to control the situation tends to expose their structural weaknesses. Fragility of the prevailing world order has been examined in three ways. First is the absence of an inclusive approach to world order but we face bewildered situation because of the existing conflicts involving the US, China, Russia, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and India. These countries are economically, technologically and militarily powerful but are unable to engage middle powers for a stable world order. When NATO, despite the Soviet disunion and collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, has expanded threatening Russia and to some extent China, there is no effort to mitigate the American policy of containing Moscow and Beijing. It is not merely the Russian attack on Ukraine which destabilized peace in Europe but NATO's aggressive posture by arming Kiev which is a major threat to the reigning world order. It is not understandable that Switzerland and Austria, all countries of Europe are now members of NATO encircling Russia? Second, the surge in global military expenditures to \$2.2 trillion, with the US being the largest spender of \$920 billion, is a source of alarm. Forty years ago, world military spending was \$700 billion which have surged to \$2.2 trillion in 2024. Unless, serious efforts are made for mitigating arms race and controlling military ex-

penditures, there is no way the world will prevent further escalation of violent conflicts and deal with issues like poverty, hunger and diseases. It is not only surge in military expenditures that adds to the fragility of world order, meager efforts for peace-making and peacekeeping also motivate various forces to violate international law and carry out genocide of innocent people. Since October 2023, more than 46,000 Palestinians have been killed as a result of the Israeli attacks on Gaza.

When Israel has been given a free hand to carry out Gaza genocide, it means there is world disorder. Likewise, when millions of people are uprooted because of the war in Ukraine and Sudan, those who are the so-called custodians of the world order look the other way, which means there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

Finally, as long as a global movement is not launched against genocide, illegal use of force

enabled the tycoons to become super rich and which left the poorer masses living in hope of the bonanza trickling down into their dingy homes. One shudders to see crisis-stricken Pakistan picking up the discredited IMF model, which has led to the disintegration of democracy in India and elsewhere.

But let us begin at the beginning, or somewhere around there, to assess Dr. Singh's fraught experiment. A major earthquake in Maharashtra in 1993 required me to cover the devastation for a Western news agency. Several instructive lessons lay in store, one such was watching Shiv Sena cadres removing with bare hands and unmatched dedication the rotting bodies and animal carcasses.

It was the same Shiv Sena, remember, that had violently targeted Muslims in the '92-'93 Mumbai carnage after the destruction of the Babri masjid, but in the same with rightwing groups in Pakistan, where, too, the government is outpaced by the Jamaat or Jamiat cadres in rescue missions; in the flood-ravaged mountains? A stark lesson in the Latur visit was unrelated to the earthquake - 'havoc' captains who ganged up to promote Narendra Modi as prime minister.

In other words, the logic of Singh's reforms dictated the dissolution of the democracy that

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But

## CM Gandapur launches initiative aimed at empowering KP youth in tourism sector

PESHAWAR (INP): Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has launched an initiative aimed at empowering youth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism sector. Under this scheme, young individuals residing in popular tourist areas will receive interest-free loans to improve local accommodation options.

The first phase targets areas such as Kalam Swat, Kumrat Upper Dir, Laram Top Lower Dir, Upper Chitral, Lower Chitral, Galyat Abbottabad, and Kaghan Manshehra.

Residents will be able to build or renovate rooms for tourists in their homes with the support of these interest-free loans.

The project is a joint effort between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority and the Bank of Khyber.

Up to Rs 3 million will be provided for the construction or renovation of accommodation spaces.

Special preference will be given to women entrepreneurs under this scheme.

Loan recipients will ensure high-quality services for tourists staying in these rooms.

The project is designed to promote financial independence among youth in the province.

The deadline for submitting applications is January 28, 2025.

Those who benefit from the loan will be required to provide services to tourists for a period of up to 10 years.



KARACHI: Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research witnessing an agreement between International Centre for Chemical and Biological Sciences and Ministry of National Food Security & Research at ICCBS, INP

## Quake in China's Tibet kills 53 with tremors felt in Nepal, India

BEIJING (INP): A devastating earthquake in China's remote Tibet region killed at least 53 people and collapsed many buildings on Tuesday, state media reported, with tremors also felt in neighbouring Nepal's capital Kathmandu and parts of India.

Videos published by China's state broadcaster CCTV showed houses destroyed with walls torn apart.

Rescue workers waded through rubble strewn across the ruins in the aftermath of the earthquake, footage showed, while some gave locals thick blankets to keep warm.

Surveillance images published by CCTV showed people running through a store's aisles as shelves shook violently, sending objects like toys tumbling to the ground.

In the town of Lhatse, videos geolocated by AFP showed debris scattered in front of streetside eateries.

The powerful quake struck Dingri county with a magnitude of 6.8 near the border with Nepal at 9:05 am (0105 GMT), according to the China Earthquake Networks Center (CENC).

The US Geological Survey reported the tremor as magnitude 7.1.

"Fifty-three people have been confirmed dead and 62 injured as of Tuesday noon, after a 6.8-magnitude earthquake jolted Dingri County in the city of Xigaze in Xizang Autonomous Region at 9:05 am Tuesday," Xinhua news agency said.

Over 1,000 houses have sustained varying degrees of damage, it added.

"Dingri county and its surrounding areas experienced very strong tremors, and many buildings near the epicentre have collapsed," state broadcaster CCTV said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday emphasised "the full-scale search and rescue efforts, minimizing casualties to the greatest extent possible, properly resettling affected residents, and ensuring their safety and warmth through the winter", CCTV added.

Xinhua said that local authorities are reaching out to various townships in the county to assess the impact of the quake.

"Temperatures in Dingri are around minus 8 degrees Celsius (17.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and will drop to minus 18 this evening," according to the China Meteorological Administration.

Disaster relief aid, including cotton tents, quilts and items for high-altitude and frigid areas, had been dispatched by central authorities to areas impacted by the quake, Xinhua said.

The high-altitude region is home to around 62,000 people and situated on the Chinese side of Mount Everest.

While earthquakes are common in the region, Tuesday's quake was the most powerful recorded within a 200-kilometre radius in the last five years, the CENC added.

Chinese earth-quake experts are common in the region, Tuesday's quake was the most powerful recorded within a 200-kilometre radius in the last five years, the CENC added.

## Talks succeed or not, PTI founder coming out of jail: Hamid Raza

ISLAMABAD (INP): The talks with government succeed or not, PTI's founder coming out of jail, PTI negotiating team's spokesman Hamid Raza said.

Govt talks committee's spokesman Irfan Siddiqui has said that the dialogue is facing stalemate and no progress yet made in the talks with the PTI.

PTI spokesman said that the party's founder has been acquitted or granted bails in all cases, "he could not be kept imprisoned more in fake cases".

He said, if the tension persists, "we will go towards a protest movement".

"We have no information about permission for meeting with the party's founder in jail," he replied to a question.

Meanwhile, Irfan Siddiqui has said that the PTI didn't submit their written demands yet. "An earlier warmth during the dialogue has not remained same," he said. He denied any backdoor process, "what is happening, being done through the negotiating committee." "We will see their demands on merit. The government's people had also remained in jails and didn't come out of a prison with an executive order," government spokesman said.

"They are putting the delay in meeting with the PTI's founder in account of the talks," he said. "The daily meetings in jail have also security issues," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board Investment, Privatisation & Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan presiding over 9th meeting of Approval Committee of BOI.



QUETTA: Former provincial ministers Mir Majeed-ur-Rahman and Tariq Khattar are meeting Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail.

## IIOJK people facing Indian state terrorism for demanding freedom: APHC

SRINAGAR (INP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has condemned the Indian government's ruthless and militaristic policy regarding the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC spokesman Abdul Rashid Minhas, in a statement issued in Srinagar, said that the freedom- and peace-loving people of Kashmir are enduring severe political injustice with great resilience in their rightful struggle for self-determination.

Paying glowing tributes to the martyrs of Sopore, Gawakadal, Handwara, and Kupwara, he said the invaluable sacrifices made by the brave people of Kashmir for the sacred cause of freedom from Indian subjugation will not go in vain.

He stated that despite India's suppression and repression, the unwavering resolve shown by the people of Kashmir has shaken Indian military arrogance and thwarted its sinister designs to break their will.

The APHC spokesman praised the courage of freedom-loving prisoners of conscience, including Masarat Alam Butt, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Aasiya Andrabi, Nabeeda Nasreen, Fehmeeda Sofi, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, Ayaz Akbar, Pir Saifullah, Merajuddin Kalwal, Shahid-ul-Islam, Farooq Ahmed Dar, Mushtaqul Islam, Bilal Siddiqi, Molvi Bashir Irfani, Ameer Hamza, Dr. Hameed Fayaz, Hayat Ahmed Butt, Abdul Ahad Parra, Zaffar Akbar Butt, Muhammad Yousaf Falahi, Dr. Muhammad Qasim Fakhtoo, Dr. Muhammad Shafi

Sharifi, Rafiq Ahmad Ganai, Fayaz Hussain Jafari, human rights defender Khuram Parvaiz, and others languishing in Tihar and other jails across India and the occupied territory.

The spokesman urged the United Nations Human Rights Council and other human rights organizations to visit the grim jails in India and IIOJK to assess the plight of the illegally detained Hurriyat leaders and activists.

He also called on the international community to support Kashmiris' just struggle for self-determination, help stop the worst human rights abuses perpetrated by Indian forces in IIOJK, and play a role in resolving the longstanding Kashmir dispute in line with UN resolutions.

Meanwhile, Kashmir Council Europe (KCEU) Chairman Ali Raza Syed has called for international attention to the 1993 Sopore massacre in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), where Indian forces killed over 60 civilians, burned more than 500 buildings, and committed heinous atrocities, including setting a passenger bus on fire with over 25 passengers.

Speaking at a core committee meeting in Brussels to mark 31 years since the tragedy, Ali Raza Syed condemned the massacre as a grave violation of human rights and an example of state oppression against Kashmiris. He urged the global community, including the UN and EU, to investigate the incident, hold perpetrators accountable, and ensure Kashmiris' right to self-determination under UN resolutions.

## SHOs of four Islamabad police stations suspended for negligence

ISLAMABAD (INP): Station house officers (SHO) of four police stations in Islamabad have been suspended for negligence in performing their duties and failure to control crime, says in media reports.

SHO Noon police station was sentenced to two years of service confiscation. Further, a Dolphin official was dismissed from service on a bribery complaint. Among those suspended are Ashfaq Warrach of Secretariat police station, SHO Noon police station, Sharaft Ali, SHO Shams Colony police station, Muhammad Yousaf and SHO Sabz Mandi police station Irfad Ahmed included. DIG Islamabad punished SHOs of four police stations for negligence in performing duties and failure to control crimes.

In this regard, Deputy Inspector General of Police Islamabad Syed Ali Raza said there is no room for corrupt officers in the department.

DIG Islamabad warned that any police officer who exceeds his powers and neglects his duty will face strict legal and departmental action.



ISLAMABAD: Hon'ble Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, Chief Justice of Pakistan addressing the probationary officers of the Civil Service Academy, Lahore at Supreme Court, Islamabad today.

## Indonesia welcomes its entry into BRICS bloc

JAKARTA (INP): Indonesia increasingly active role in global issues and commitment to strengthening multilateral cooperation to create a global structure that is more inclusive and fair," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday.

BRICS was created in 2009 by founding members Brazil, Russia, India and China.

South Africa joined the following year. The bloc was expanded again last year with Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates becoming full members.

The Brazilian foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday that Southeast Asia's most populous country "shares with the other members the will to reform the institutions of global governance and contribute positively to cooperation within the Global South".

Brazil, which holds the rotating presidency of the grouping in 2025, said Indonesia's bid to join the bloc had been approved during a summit in 2023 in Johannesburg.

Indonesia in turn said it "welcomes" the announcement of its inclusion.

"This achievement shows Indonesia's in-

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS

Balochistan Education Endowment Fund (BEEF) is a not for profit Public Sector Company owned and controlled by the Government incorporated with SECP as 44 of Companies Act, 2017 to award scholarships to the students of Balochistan and other objects as mentioned in the Memorandum of Association.

BEEF intends to appoint independent directors as per the requirement of Public Sector Companies Rules, 2013 (amended upto July, 2019).

Qualification: Must have done Directors Training Program (DTP) from any institution approved and accredited by BECP and should be registered in the Data Bank of Independent Directors with Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance as per Clause 196 of Companies Act, 2017.

Regulatory Criteria:

The candidates should be listed in the data bank of Directors maintained by Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance (PICG) as per section 196 of Companies Act, 2017.

i. The candidate should meet the criteria of independence as well as fit and proper criteria defined in the Public Sector Companies Rules, 2013 (amended upto July, 2019).

ii. Not being a Director in more than Public Sector Companies.

iii. Not having served in BEEF as Independent Director for consecutive two terms.

Application Submissions: Interested individual may apply on the address given below (in hard or email). Application comprising of comprehensive CV/Resume and Covering letter shall be received till 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2025. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for further interview. TADA is used address.

AB No.667/01-2025

Balochistan Education Endowment Fund BEEF Office, House, 114/14A, 6th Street, Near Main Arms Magazine, Jinnah Town, Quetta Ph: 081-2571141 Email: aed\_hshby@bheed.gov.pk

0336417099

## Sarwat Fatima Meets Balochistan CM, Awarded Cash Prize and Malaysia Training

Qaseem Shah:

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti met 12-year-old badminton prodigy Sarwat Fatima, the South Asia Badminton Champion and three-time national champion, to celebrate her exceptional achievements in sports. During the meeting, the Chief Minister appreciated Sarwat Fatima's outstanding accomplishments at a young age and awarded her a cash prize of Rs. 500,000. He also announced that she would be sent to Malaysia for advanced

training to further hone her skills. Mir Sarfaraz Bugti described Sarwat Fatima as a "talented daughter of Balochistan" who has brought pride to the province through her hard work and dedication. He assured full support for her education, including covering expenses if she chooses to study at any educational institution in Pakistan. Sports Adviser Meena Majeed Baloch praised the Chief Minister's initiative, calling it an exemplary step toward en-

couraging young talent. "Players like Sarwat Fatima are a source of pride for Balochistan," she said. Sarwat Fatima expressed her gratitude to the Chief Minister, stating that his encouragement motivates her to strive for greater success. Secretary Sports Tariq Qamar and Director General Yasir Khan Bazzi were also present at the occasion. This initiative highlights the government's commitment to promoting sports and supporting talented athletes in Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, Chairing a research review meeting on the Jinnah Medical Complex and Research Center project.

## RIUJ condemns delaying tactics by PJHF, Punjab govt and demands inquiry into Media Town's affairs

ISLAMABAD (INP): Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalist has strongly condemned the delaying tactics by the Punjab Journalist Housing Foundation and Punjab government in granting the processions of the plots allotted to two senior journalists in Media Town, Rawalpindi, by the then Punjab government as their plots had been encroached by an influential figure in connivance with the PJHF and Punjab government.

The two senior journalists, Muhammad Asghar and Abdul Latif Chaudhry, associated with prestigious media organizations had appealed to the interim chief minister Mohsin Naqvi and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to intervene and ensure justice and to give the right of the two journalists. Even the directives of Mr Naqvi were ignored by the concerned authorities.

Tariq Usmani, President RIUJ, General Secretary Rizwan Ghilzi and executive council also demanded a top level inquiry into the malpractices, allegedly done by the concerned authorities in the affairs of Media Town Rawalpindi and bring the responsible to justice.

Justice Jawad Hassan of Lahore High Court Rawalpindi Bench Justice Hassan on December 23, while hearing peti-

tions of senior journalists Muhammad Asghar and Abdul Latif filed against the encroachment of their plots 334/A and 335/A allotted to them in Rawalpindi press club cooperating housing Society (Media Town) by the then government of Punjab in 2009, has directed the Assistant Advocate General to ensure the presence of responsible officers from Punjab Journalist Housing Foundation and Punjab government along with relevant record within ten days of return of courts after winter vacations.

According to advocate Saeed Yousof Khan, counsel for the petitioners, the Punjab Journalist Housing Foundation and Media Town management in connivance with some journalists allegedly encroached the allotted plots to the two senior journalists in order to compensate an influential figure.

The Rawalpindi bench of the Lahore High Court has also called the Deputy Commissioner,

Assistant Commissioner and the concerned SHO to give possession of their plots to the allottees on a writ petition against the change in the layout plan of the plots allotted to two senior journalists in Media Town.

The petitioner's lawyer

## PTI demands justice, accountability for Nov 26, legal delays

NEWS/DESK: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders have questioned why they are being denied a meeting with Imran Khan, despite ongoing discussions about negotiations. They demanded accountability for the events of November 26, vowing to pursue justice for the bloodshed, Express News reported.

This statement was made during a press conference on Tuesday by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Omar Ayub, Salman Akram Raja, and Shibli Faraz, who were joined by other party leaders.

Barrister Gohar addressed claims that the delays in the Al-Qadir Trust case were due to a

potential deal. He described the case as frivolous, asserting that the witnesses had clarified that the PTI founder had neither taken money nor caused harm to the government.

He stated that PTI had opened the door for dialogue after a long period, yet over 200 cases had been filed against the party's leadership. He pointed out that the party's electoral symbol, the bat, was unjustly taken away, and their victories were turned into defeats.

The party chairman also referred to the violence faced by PTI workers, many of whom were still missing. He added that PTI had started negotiations based on two

demands, and two meetings had already taken place.

He maintained that a third meeting would only occur once the PTI founder Imran Khan was allowed to meet with them. He clarified that the negotiations were not about striking a deal but were for the people, urging that no delay should occur in the draft of the negotiations.

Omar Ayub, the opposition leader in the National Assembly, reiterated their demand for a meeting with the PTI founder, stressing that there had been no response from the government. He expressed dissatisfaction with the government's failure to facilitate a meeting without conditions.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the Federal Cabinet Meeting.

## Sindh CM to inaugurate first segment of Malir Expressway on Jan 11

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah is set to inaugurate the first segment of the highly anticipated Malir Expressway, a state-of-the-art, high-speed corridor on January 11.

The initial 9.1 km stretch, which runs from Korangi Causeway to Shah Faisal, represents a significant milestone in Karachi's infrastructure development, promising improved connectivity and reduced traffic congestion.

This decision was taken during a high-level meeting chaired by Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah at the New Secretariat, where the project's final progress was reviewed.

Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Mayor of Karachi Murtaza Wahab, PSCM Agha Waseif, Commissioner of Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Adl IG Karachi Javed Odho, Secretary Local Government

Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, and PD Malir Expressway Niaz Soomro attended the meeting.

The Malir Expressway (MEW) is the largest Public-Private Partnership (PPP) project in Sindh. It features a three-lane dual-carriageway with modern, access-controlled infrastructure. Spanning approximately 40 km, the expressway connects Korangi Creek Avenue (DHA) to the M-9 Motorway (Superhighway) near Kathore, offering a critical link for commuters and significantly reducing travel time.

The expressway will include dedicated interchanges, providing seamless access to key residential and commercial areas along the route. The first segment will feature a ramp to facilitate immediate traffic flow and will be complemented by a connecting flyover from Korangi, which is expected to be completed within two

months.

The construction of the Jam Sadiq Interchange and road rehabilitation projects at the EBM and Shah Faisal Interchanges are progressing steadily. Encroachments at the Quaidabad Interchange have been cleared, and construction is ongoing to enhance connectivity.

A Toll Plaza will manage traffic flow, charging Rs100 for cars and jeeps, and Rs200 for heavy vehicles. Security measures will include patrols by traffic police, fire brigades, and Rescue 1122 ambulances.

The CM directed law enforcement agencies to deploy district and traffic police at key entry and exit points, including the Jam Sadiq, EBM, and Shah Faisal Interchanges.

The traffic police will patrol both sides of the expressway continuously in vehicles. Dedicated traffic police will be present on the expressway to ensure proper traffic flow.

## Rightsizing of 43 ministries, their 400 attached departments to be completed by June 30

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday expressed confidence in completing the rightsizing of 43 ministries and their 400 attached departments by June 30 of the current fiscal year to reduce expenditures and improve efficiency of the government.

"During course of this fiscal year, before June 30, all of this process will be done. All 42 ministries, (As CAD has already been abolished) and their attached departments, their recommendations and implementation (will be done)," the minister said at a press conference while sharing the six-month performance of the High-powered Committee on Rightsizing of the Federal Government.

The minister was accompanied by Convener of the National Parliamentary

Taskforce on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Bilal Azhar Kayani and Ambassador at Large Dr Salman Ahmad, who is heading the Implementation Committee.

Briefing the journalists, the minister said, 60% vacant regular posts (that have not come in payroll), which stood at 150,000, would be abolished or declared as dying posts, creating a real financial impact. "All is being done after proper ratification from the federal cabinet."

The committee, he said, also decided to outsource general non-course services including cleaning, plumbing and gardening to bring efficiency, adding the number of continuing posts would also be reduced. He said, it has also been decided that the ministry of finance would have live visibility on the cash balances of the all government entities. "It

cannot happen that at one side we are borrowing and on other government departments have idle cash balances." However, he added, it has nothing to do with people, but to improve efficiency, adding it was being implemented in all ministries.

He said, under Wave-1, six ministries including Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, SAFRON, Information Technology and Telecom; Industries and Production; National Health Services Regulations and Coordination; Capital Development Authority (CAD) were processed.

The minister said the committee has decided to merge Ministries of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, and States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) whereas CAD was abolished, adding there were 80 entities associated with these ministries, these have now been reduced to 40.



ISLAMABAD: Members of National Assembly Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Malik Ibrar Ahmed and Anjum Aqeel Khan presenting congratulatory flowers to Senator Capt. Shahen Khalid Butt on his recent appointment as Managing Director of Pakistan Bail-out-Mal (PBM), during their visit to PBM Head office.

## Irfan Siddiqui warns of consequences if PTI fails to submit 'Charter of demands'

ISLAMABAD (INP): A government negotiating team member Senator Irfan Siddiqui Tuesday expressed concerns about the PTI's delayed written charter of demands, which has slowed talks and criticized inconsistencies in the PTI leadership's statements.

In an interview with a private news channel, he said that the PTI had committed to presenting a written charter of demands in the next meeting, following agreements made in the previous two sessions, however, the PTI has yet to fulfill this promise, causing an alarming delay in the negotiation process.

Talks between the government and PTI have stopped

because PTI has not given its demands, he said, adding there will be consequences if PTI does not give its demands.

Responding to a query, Senator said that the government has not set any conditions for the talks and we have even not asked PTI to stop their civil disobedience campaign on social media, adding, however, despite our efforts, PTI is still not serious about achieving fruitful results from these talks.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui expressed surprise that despite PTI setting January 31 as the deadline for conclusive talks, no progress has been made so far. Senator Siddiqui stated that PTI has not proposed a new date for the next negotia-

tion meeting, suggesting that they should consult Imran Khan to decide the next course of action.

Irfan Siddiqui categorically stated that PTI's founder cannot be released through executive orders, emphasizing that only the courts will decide.

Siddiqui urged PTI to first present their charter of demands, adding, then we will explore alternative solutions and suggest ways to address their concerns once their demands are on the table.

Siddiqui also drew parallels with PML-N's leadership, who bravely faced jail time and were released on bail, underscoring their commitment to the rule of law.



MALDIVES: H.E. Vice Admiral (R) Faisal Rasool Lodhi, high Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Republic of Maldives is escorted in Cultural procession to President Office.