

QUETTA VOICE

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Balochistan Govt Orders Inquiry into Faculty Members Who Settled Abroad

Education Desk:

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has launched an inquiry into 50 faculty members from local universities who failed to return after completing government-sponsored advanced studies abroad.

These individuals, originally part of a program aimed at enhancing academic standards at Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS), Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, and Balochistan University, are believed to have settled in European countries, raising concerns over the misuse of public funds.

Previously, we reported on this alarming issue, highlighting the lack of proper guarantees from faculty members before their departure.

Experts argue that the absence of strict agreements allowed these scholars to leave without fulfilling their obligations.

A senior BUIEMS official stated, the government heavily invested in their education and travel, expecting them to contribute to our universities.

Their failure to return is a major setback for our education system.

Higher education plays a crucial role in nation-building and economic development, yet the province now faces a shortage of experienced faculty due to this



brain drain. The government's inquiry aims to introduce stricter compliance measures, ensuring future scholars fulfill their commitments to Balochistan's universities and students.

Negotiations with Afghanistan not domain of provincial govt: Amir Muqam

NEWS DESK: Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Kashmir Affairs, and Gilgit-Baltistan Amir Muqam said on Saturday that negotiations with Afghanistan fall outside the provincial government's jurisdiction.

Islamabad has repeatedly conveyed its concerns to the Afghan government over the presence of terror outfits, including the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), inside Afghanistan, saying that the militants have consistently used Afghan soil to launch terror attacks inside Pakistani territory. Kabul denies the allegations.

Last month, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur announced plans to send a delegation to Afghanistan for dialogue on bilateral issues. This week, the provincial government said it would engage cross-border tribesmen to curb militancy and ensure regional peace.

Four Levies personnel, driver martyred in K-P's DI Khan attack

NEWS DESK: At least five people, including four Levies personnel, were martyred when their vehicle came under attack in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's (K-P) Dera Ismail Khan (DI Khan) district, Express News reported on Sunday.

According to Assistant Commissioner Daraban, the Levies team was ambushed while en route to recover a stolen vehicle in tehsil Daraban. A private driver accompanying the officers was also killed in the attack.

The bodies of the slain personnel and the driver were moved to Daraban hospital. Security forces have launched an investigation, but no group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

Pakistan's security forces have been conducting widespread counterterrorism operations, particularly in K-P and Balochistan, which border Afghanistan.

On Saturday, the military's media wing, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), reported that 23 militants were killed in separate operations in Balochistan.

The operations also claimed the lives of 18 Frontier Corps (FC) soldiers in Mangocher during an attempt to clear militant roadblocks.

Quetta's Air Quality: A Beacon of Hope in Pakistan's Pollution Crisis

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US-Born Pakistani Girl Hira Anwar Murder: Father & Uncle Confess in Quetta

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: In a shocking development, 13-year-old US-born Pakistani girl Hira Anwa's father, Anwarul Haq, and maternal uncle, Tayyab Bhatti, have confessed to her murder in Quetta. The Serious Crime Investigation Wing (SCIW), led by SP Sattar Achakzai, is conducting a thorough probe into the case, which has sparked outrage.

Case Timeline & Investigation Updates

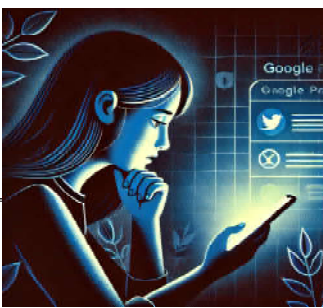
January 15, 2025: Hira and her family arrived in Lahore from New York.

January 22, 2025: They traveled to Quetta.

January 27, 2025 (11:15 PM): Hira was shot twice inside her home. Police state that her uncle, Tayyab, pulled the trigger while her father was directly involved in the crime.

Motive Behind the Murder

The accused claimed they disapproved of Hira's social media activity, dressing, and personal connections. Police are analyzing her social media profiles to gather further evidence.



A high-level investigation team has been formed to ensure a transparent inquiry. Family Background & Legal Action: Hira's father, Anwarul Haq, worked as an Uber driver in the New York. She had two sisters residing in the NY.

Islamabad lawyers announce strike tomorrow over 'unconstitutional' judicial appointments

NEWS DESK: The Islamabad Bar Council, Islamabad High Court Bar Association, and Islamabad District Bar Association, in a joint meeting on Sunday, announced a strike in the district courts and the Islamabad High Court tomorrow to protest what they call "unconstitutional measures" undermining the judiciary and legal profession.

The move comes a day after President Asif Ali Zardari approved the transfer of a Lahore High Court (LHC) judge, Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar, along with two others, to the LHC despite opposition from five HHC judges.

They warned in a letter to top judges that his elevation as HHC chief justice would "violate constitutional procedures and judicial norms".

According to a resolution passed in a joint session of the capital's legal fraternity today, a strike will be observed tomorrow to protest the "unconstitutional measure affecting the judiciary



and the legal profession". The legal fraternity of Islamabad ensures its commitment to resist the unjustified transfers and appointments of judges from other provinces to the HHC, said the resolution, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com. Lawyers said that they would pursue "all legal and constitutional avenues to challenge this decision and safeguard the judicial independence of Islamabad".

Looming threat of climate change in Pakistan

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Levies Official Rasheed Zaman Kakar Among Five Martyred in Draban Bombing

Asmat Hanafi:

PSHIN: Levies official Rasheed Zaman Kakar was among the five martyrs in the Draban bombing that targeted a security vehicle in Dera Ismail Khan. He was a resident of Khanozai area of Pishin district. Family sources said the martyred official had married few months ago. The attack, which also claimed the lives of four other Levies personnel and a driver, has sparked outrage, with demands for justice and the arrest of those responsible.

Previously, we reported on the tragic incident that occurred in the Draban area. Rasheed Zaman Kakar, a native of the Khanozai area of Pishin district, had recently married.

His pictures, along with fellow family members, went viral on social media, intensifying calls



for action against the perpetrators. The attack is part of a worrying trend of militant violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, where security personnel remain primary targets. Authorities have vowed to bring the culprits to justice, as investigations continue.

PM launches first anti-polio drive for 2025; vows to eradicate disease from country

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday launched the year's first nationwide anti-polio campaign, running from February 3 to 9, by administering polio drops to children under five and vowing to eradicate the disease from the country.

Pakistan is one of the last two countries in the world, alongside Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic. Despite global efforts to eradicate the virus, challenges such as security issues, vaccine hesitancy, and misinformation have slowed progress.

Last year, the country reported more than 70 polio cases, with the virus detected in around 90 districts.

This year, the first case was reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan district.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the anti-polio drive today, the prime minister reaffirmed his determination to eliminate the disease from Pakistan.

According to The Associated Press of Pakistan, he said,

"The national polio vaccination drive would target millions of children to save their future and health."

The premier hoped that the dedicated teams would work "day and night to eradicate the disease, and would reach the far-flung areas and villages," adding these teams would successfully meet the huge responsibility by "utilising their complete energies."

The prime minister said that unfortunately, during the last year, a total of 77 polio cases were reported in the country which emerged as a huge challenge, besides posing a setback.

On the first case for the year reported last month, the premier expressed resolve to eradicate polio at all costs, with dedicated teamwork and support from the international partners.

The prime minister also expressed the hope that with international coordination and support, the crippling disease in the neighbouring brotherly country Afghanistan would end.



Interior minister, NA speaker discuss PTI's 'attitude' during talks with govt

NEWS DESK: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq met in Islamabad on Sunday with the PTI's "attitude" during the recent talks with the government coming under discussion.

After more than a year of heightened tensions between the government and the PTI, the two sides commenced dialogue in the last week of December to bring down political temperatures. But despite weeks of negotiations, the dialogue process stalled on major issues — the formation of two-judge commissions and the release

of PTI prisoners. The PTI boycotted the fourth meeting this week, calling off talks over a delay in the government forming judicial commissions to probe the protests of May 9, 2023 and Nov 26, 2024. While the government renewed the invitation to the PTI to rejoin the negotiation process by proposing a parliamentary committee, the latter rejected the offer.

Naqvi met with the NA speaker today, where both discussed matters of mutual interest and the overall situation in the country, a statement by the interior ministry said.



Funeral prayer held for policeman slain in fresh Upper Kurram firing

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ENVIRONMENT

Editor: Asim Khan

Quetta's Air Quality: A Beacon of Hope in Pakistan's Pollution Crisis

Editorial:

QUETTA: Quetta has earned recognition as the city with the best air quality in Pakistan, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 31, marking it as "good" and healthy, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Amid worsening air pollution and dense smog in urban centers like Lahore and Karachi, Quetta's clean air serves as a shining example of environmental resilience.

While Quetta's clear skies owe much to its geographical location, lower population density, and fewer industrial emissions, sustaining this air quality presents a significant challenge. Environmentalists emphasize that the focus must shift from temporary measures to sustainable strategies to preserve Quetta's atmosphere and mitigate the impacts of global warming.

Green Initiatives Must Be Long-Term
The Forest Department and local NGOs have launched tree plantation drives to beautify Quetta and improve its air quality. However, most of the saplings planted along roads have dried up within weeks due to inadequate care. This highlights the need for a sustainable approach where plants are nurtured consistently, rather than short-lived initiatives centered around photo sessions.

To truly maintain Quetta's air quality, authorities must prioritize sustainable efforts. Ensure saplings are planted in suitable areas and looked after until maturity.

Vehicular emission controls: Introduce stricter policies to reduce pollution from vehicles.

Community involvement: Engage citizens in green initiatives to create awareness and responsibility.

A Call to Action
Quetta's achievement is a reminder that clean air is possible, even in challenging conditions. However, it is not a one-time fix. Policymakers, environmentalists, and citizens must work together to implement effective green initiatives that go beyond temporary fixes. As Pakistan battles the adverse effects of climate change, Quetta's example underscores the importance of sustainable practices to ensure a healthier future for all.

Green skills revolution: are we ready?

By Mirza Mujtaba Baig:

Those who fully grasp the severity of the climate crisis understand that the next few decades will be crucial for climate mitigation and adaptation. While such individuals may not be the majority, many hold positions of authority and are bound to acknowledge this reality as signatories to various global climate protocols, most notably the Paris Agreement. This is a unique global crisis, unlike any other, dividing the world into two groups: the perpetrators of climate change and its victims. No country exists entirely within one group; all must choose a side, as each group carries mandatory obligations that their members must fulfill to remain part of the global compact.

As signatories of the Paris Agreement, all countries are obligated to adhere to its provisions. These include quantified targets, such as halving GHG emissions by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Whether these targets are deemed ambitious or conservative, they must ultimately be met in full. Mere rhetoric will not suffice; all nations must demonstrate tangible progress at the annual COPs.

Failure to take serious steps towards meeting these targets may result in penalties, such as the withdrawal of support for both mitigation and adaptation efforts. While this may not be immediate, the increasing

intensity and frequency of climate disasters, along with other devastating impacts like food and water crises, will necessitate such measures against non-compliant nations. This enforcement is crucial to ensure the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Both Global North and South nations must transition their fossil fuel-dependent economies, most notably the Paris Agreement. This is a unique global crisis, unlike any other, dividing the world into two groups: the perpetrators of climate change and its victims. No country exists entirely within one group; all must choose a side, as each group carries mandatory obligations that their members must fulfill to remain part of the global compact.

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Looming threat of climate change in Pakistan

Muhammad Jehangir Kakar:

Pakistan is threatened with the challenges of climate change. Be it global standing or regional vulnerability caused due to climatic threats, Pakistan is on crossing the red line. This is so alarming as much as it is so interesting. Is there someone looking after climate change at the provincial or federal level in Pakistan? There is none!

Ministry of Climate Change at the federal level is doing a lot. Not at any provincial level one could ensure that any climate-oriented data is being collected. The aforementioned agencies only ensure the quality of air by recording the various gaseous emissions in the ambient air. The Pakistan Meteorological Centers throughout the country

pick up conventional weather data by various agencies but hardly translated into making a meaningful statement where we stand on climate change.

As for policies, laws, rules and regulations, we are more affluent than the developed countries. When it comes to drafting policies, orders are worth writing to our expertise but when given to see them on the ground being implemented, only darkened eulogies and eulogized at shrieks ad infinitum. The laws are being multiplied each day and have become so difficult as to remember the exact number of laws on a single sector.

The National Climate Change Policy 2012 remains a document of the past being pushed to nullity though it was the vital document that elevated the Division of Climate Change to a Ministry level yet its promising implementation never has come off until this date.

Though a devolved

subject yet the NCCP grants the legitimacy to the Ministry of Climate Change to breathe all the provinces together in one garland of beautiful working and legal integration to manage the national issue of climate change.

The Climate Change Act 2017 was another move towards climate consolidation that promised to establish the Pakistan Climate Change Authority, Climate Change Council, and Climate Change Fund all of which were last time seen in 2017 when the said Act was passed. The vision 2030 remains a virgin vision thus far.

Ministry of Climate Change must realize that it is the organization that the federal level entirely responsible for catering for climate change affairs. The integration of such a central body with the provinces would be the next challenge given the next generation over politicization of everything. Climate is something which should not be made political though globally it is

something which has become an element of political decisions as in the Biden-Trump thaw.

Nature and nurture along with the potential of Pak-Met office and reach are to be integrated and enhanced fully at the federal and provincial levels with the climate change organizations so formed above. The data and statistics need to be enhanced and made up to the mark as being internationally accepted and enhanced fully at the federal and provincial levels with the climate change organizations so formed above. The data and statistics need to be enhanced and made up to the mark as being internationally accepted and enhanced fully at the federal and provincial levels with the climate change organizations so formed above.

We still need someone who will look after the climate change in Pakistan! The author is a Civil Servant based in Quetta, Balochistan He can be contacted at jahangeerkakar@gmail.com

Economic diplomacy as a game changer in Pak-BD ties

By Dr Moonis Ahmar:

Pakistan, after 15 years of standstill between Dhaka and Islamabad during the Hasina regime - high level contacts have been established between the two sides.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has held two meetings with Bangladesh's Chief Minister Dr Mohammad Yunus in New York and Cairo in which the two sides agreed to take steps to boost the bilateral ties.

While in Dhaka, the FPCCI delegation visited the International Trade Fair and explores prospects for augmenting trade and commercial ties. The FPCCI President, M. Iqbal Khan of Bangladesh counterpart, identified several areas of cooperation in machinery, electrical, industrial machinery, carpets, toys, ceramics, sanitary products, handicrafts, fabrics, furniture, plastic goods, cosmetics, sports goods and jewelry.

The FPCCI delegation also held meetings with the office-bearers of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority for exchange of delegations, collective trade promotion and holding a single-country exhibition. In order to promote trade and economic relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan have eased the visa issuance procedure and pledged maximum referrals to businessmen from both sides.

The recent meeting

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restrictions on Pakistan's economy remind one of the visit of President Pervez Musharraf to Dhaka in July 2002. During the visit, Pakistan gave duty-free access for jute and tea exports to Pakistani markets and revisited the Bangladesh-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission. Unfortunately, the visit was derailed in 2009 when Awami League came to power and Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister.

Economic diplomacy has been the process of political reconciliation in the Pak-BD relations and promote economic security between the two countries is essential and should be a part of economic diplomacy. The resumption of direct shipping cargo services between the ports of Karachi and Chittagong is a welcome development. Pakistan has got an order to export 25,000 tonnes of sugar to Bangladesh. Dhaka can send its products to the port of Karachi, using the shipping cargo services.

Resumption of the direct air link between the two countries, suspension of visa restrictions, also help boost the economic relations. Before 1971, there used to be frequent flights between Lahore-Dhaka direct flights, but then India banned its airspace for Pakistani flights under the pretext of Ganga plane hijacking. While India cannot impose any

restrictions on Pakistan's economy remind one of the visit of President Pervez Musharraf to Dhaka in July 2002. During the visit, Pakistan gave duty-free access for jute and tea exports to Pakistani markets and revisited the Bangladesh-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission. Unfortunately, the visit was derailed in 2009 when Awami League came to power and Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister.

The recent meeting

The curious case of Trump punitives

By Jawed Naqvi:

THERE was a time when the British embassy was the most interesting diplomatic enclave in Delhi. Then the Soviets usurped the slot, and now the Americans are unbeatable at the game.

India has been both close and aloof with major countries without compromising its principles or seldom losing diplomatic graces. Relations with Pakistan were always difficult but rarely bereft of composure.

It's been embarrassing, therefore, to watch endless discussions about the prime minister of India being keen to attend Donald Trump's inauguration only to be passed over for the invite.

One hopes for the sake of diplomatic dignity with which one grew up in Nehru's India that the stories about denied invitations are untrue. The fact that the foreign

minister is attending the event instead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi also doesn't deserve to be played up as a great achievement.

All manner of global supracemocrats and right-wingers adorning the event was a good enough reason for proud nations rich or poor to shun the melee. Many did.

Wide coverage is also being given to tycoon Mukesh Ambani being invited by Trump personally. We should wait for the American readout of the liaison.

The two have met before. Also, Ambani hosted Ivanka Trump at some international event in India. If memory serves, Mukesh and his brother Anil Ambani have been invitees also at the Clinton and Bush inaugurations, respectively.

On the other hand, Hillary Clinton had rapidly the bhanga at

an Ambani wedding. American politicians are notorious for coveting money and Trump has already raised a few hundred million from the several events leading to Monday's inauguration. How much useful foreign exchange India spent while being in the economic doldrums to catch Trump's eye, is worth investigating.

What should not escape being marvelled at is how the fate of two Indian tycoons close to Modi differ in their relations with the US. Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani led the chorus that prompted business captains to back Modi over the Congress as prime minister after Manmohan Singh, and they succeeded. Both were seen as pals of Modi.

Then Adani fell foul of the American establishment and now cannot visit the country for fear of being arrested in a corruption scandal. Ambani

is buying Russian oil in rubles, and still getting involved to Trump's second coming.

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the way for Mrs Gandhi's return. The Soviets had emerged victorious from the turbulence in India but were not as lucky in Afghanistan and Iran where a CIA tip-off led to the mullahs decimating the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party.

The Cold War over, India promptly bartered the Non-Aligned Movement and Saarc for the West's treasure chest. When George W. Bush was in bud only throughout the world, including his own country, for invading Iraq, the Cong for some minutes in 2006 welcomed him, telling the hugely relieved guest: "We love you in India."

It inspired a memorable repartee when communist leader Prakash Karat offered a rare quotable quote, "Speak for yourself," he told Manmohan Singh.

Diplomatic bluntness did not help India. It hasn't helped Modi. The author is a former diplomat and has been involved in the diplomatic arena for over 30 years. He can be contacted at jnaqvi@rediffmail.com

PTI to observe 'Black Day' on Feb 8, protesting election rigging

SWABI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Qaiser has announced that the party will observe February 8 as a Black Day, marking a significant protest against what they call the rigging of the 2018 elections.

Qaiser condemned the election results, reiterating that despite the majority of people voting in favor of PTI and its leadership, the party's rights were "robbed overnight." He accused the government of suppressing the will of the people, calling it a dark day in Pakistan's history.

He reiterated that PTI workers would protest in solidarity, voicing their opposition to what they believe was election rigging. PTI's demands were clear: the release of political prisoners and the formation of a commission to investigate election rigging.

Despite a month of negotiations, Gohar said no progress was made, and the government had not shared any written proposals. The Black Day protest on February 8 is a direct challenge to the government's handling of the situation and a call for accountability regarding the elections.



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Developers Association Present and CEO Centaurus Group Sardar Ilyas Khan, President Centaurus Group Rashid Ilyas Khan and MNA Hanif Abbasi inaugurating Auto Mative Show 2025 at Centaurus Mall.

Greek farmers worry about crops drying up as Bulgaria water deal expires

KASTANIES (INP): On an unusually balmy January day, Dimitris Marinoglou ploughed his field in northern Greece fearing the worst: that water supplies from neighbouring Bulgaria that have kept his family's crops alive for decades will dry up come summer.

Since 1964, water from Bulgaria's mountains has flowed freely along the Arda River into 50,000 acres (20,000 hectares) of the Evros plain in Greece, under a World War Two reparations agreement between the two countries.

But the deal expired last July and it is not clear if it will be renewed as Bulgaria assesses its own water needs. The situation highlights just how vital - and precarious - water resources have become in southern Europe where climate change has made summers hotter and rain less frequent.

186 million cubic metres of water a year from hydroelectric dams to Evros, a poor region with no functioning reservoirs or dams. The supply was delivered from May to September when the crops most needed it. Although the deal expired in July, Greece and Bulgaria's national electricity company signed a last-minute agreement for supplies through September, terms of which have not been disclosed.

Judicial Commission approves appointment of 10 additional judges for PHC

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Judicial Commission meeting, chaired by Chief Justice Yahya Afridi, has concluded with the approval of 10 additional judges for the Peshawar High Court (PHC).

The commission reviewed 40 candidates before finalizing the appointments. It reports in media that the approved names included District and Sessions judges Farah Jamshed and Inamullah, as well as Qazi Jawad, Mudassar Amir, and Abdul Fayaz.

Additionally, Salahuddin, Sadiq Ali, Tariq Afridi, Sabit Ali, and Aurangzeb Khan were also approved for appointment as additional judges. During the meeting, PHC Chief Justice

It must be noted that on Friday, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges had written a letter to the president and prime minister in which they raised their concerns over the IHC CJ firm on the high courts. The letter also suggested that one of the three senior most IHC judges should be made the IHC CJ.



PESHAWAR: Activists of Khyber Union of Journalist hold protest against PECA Act 2025 at PPC.



RAWAL PINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari laying a floral wreath at the grave of Maj Hamza Israr Shaheed who embraced martyrdom in North Waziristan.

Warning issued after tourists through Murree to enjoy snowfall

MURREE (INP): Thousands of tourists thronged Murree on Saturday as heavy snow covered the hill station with authorities issuing warning urging would-be tourists to avoid unnecessary travel. The warning came as many cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu and Kashmir received snowfall and rain since last night and the Met Office was predicting there would be more snowfall in these areas during the next few days.

The mercury has dropped well below the zero and it is expected to touch minus seven degree centigrade in Murree where so far two and a half inches of snow has fallen. When the public was getting ready to bid an early adieu to winter in Punjab and other parts of the country, the dense fog on Saturday

morning brought back the chill to weather, darkening plain cities including Lahore and slowing down movement. Simultaneously, heavy snowfall and rain in a number of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cities and parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir played a role in challenging the early winter departure.

The people who came out of their homes heading to offices or schools to drop their children found themselves standing amid thick white snowfall and intermittent rain since last night. Snowfall on mountains of Muzaffargarh continued till Saturday morning. SDO Roads Altair Awan said that traffic on all roads was operational smoothly while heavy machinery was available to clear the roads. He said that traffic was restored which was

Russian air attack kills four in Ukraine, Kyiv says

KYIV (INP): Russia launched a barrage of drones and missiles on Ukraine on Saturday, killing at least four civilians and damaging residential buildings and infrastructure across the country, Ukrainian officials said.

The Interior Ministry said that a Russian missile slammed into a residential building in the central city of Poltava, killing three people and injuring 10. The ministry posted pictures on the Telegram messaging

app showing the residential building with several top floors smashed and thick columns of smoke rising into the sky. Fire brigades and dozens of rescuers were going through the rubble. One person was killed and four were wounded in the city of Kharkiv in the north-east as the result of a drone attack, the Kharkiv mayor said. Officials said that the Russian forces also damaged buildings in the city of Zaporizhzhia in southeastern Ukraine.

Ukrainian air defence was also repelling the attacks in Kyiv, but there were no immediate reports of major damage or casualties in the capital, they said. "Russia's daily attacks on Ukraine are a signal that the aggressor will not stop committing its crimes," Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said on Telegram. "Last night and in the morning, Russia shelled Ukraine again: Odesa, Poltava, K h a r k i v, Zaporizhzhia... The



KARACHI: Commander Pakistan Fleet, Rear Admiral Abdul Mumib addressing the crew of Pakistan Navy Ship YAMAMA upon arrival at Karachi.

Independent journalism faces state repression in IIOJK, India

ISLAMABAD (INP): Those who expose government failures or criticize BJP policies often face relentless abuse by Hindutva forces on social media and are subjected to threats and harassment. Since August 5, 2019, the day India revoked IIOJK's special status the crackdown on Kashmiri journalists has reached alarming levels.

According to Kashmir Media Service, journalists and media outlets are increasingly being targeted through harassment, intimidation and coercion, as the ruling BJP continues its efforts to align the press with its Hindutva agenda. The Modi regime's systematic dismantling of press freedom has created a hostile environment for journalists across India and IIOJK.

Those who expose government failures or criticize BJP policies often face relentless abuse by Hindutva forces on social media and are subjected to threats and harassment. Since August 5, 2019, the day India revoked IIOJK's special status the crackdown on Kashmiri journalists has reached alarming levels.

These entities push Hindutva-driven narratives, while critical voices are stifled or sidelined. Investigative journalism and impartial reporting have all but disappeared, with dissenting journalists facing relentless online abuse, death threats, and targeted harassment by Hindutva mobs. Journalists exposing

ing Modi government failures, human rights violations, and corruption are systematically vilified and attacked. Press freedom in India has steadily declined under Modi, as reflected in global rankings such as the Press Freedom Index, which shows a significant drop in India's standing. The international community has been urged to take immediate action to protect journalists in India and IIOJK. Press freedom advocates argue that without intervention, the erosion of democratic values in IIOJK and India will deepen further, leaving millions without access to unbiased news and information.

Naqvi announces major reforms in NADRA, passport offices and the FIA

LAHORE (INP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has announced major reforms in NADRA, passport offices, and the FIA to improve public services and tackle illegal immigration. He stated that Pakistan enjoys good relations with the United States and that a passport authority will be established soon.

He made these remarks while addressing the inauguration ceremony of new passport counters at the NADRA Mega Center on Peco Road here on Saturday. Speaking to the media, Naqvi emphasized that the government is implementing large-scale reforms to address public grievances. Naqvi said that passport demand in Pakistan is high, and the introduction of new counters at NADRA centers will speed up

processing times, ensuring no delays in passport issuance.

He announced that 14 major cities across the country will have similar centers to facilitate citizens and prevent long queues. He stressed that strict action is being taken against those attempting to travel abroad illegally using fake documents, as well as against agents involved in human smuggling. He warned that these agents will soon be brought to justice.

Referring to the Champions Trophy match scheduled in Lahore on February 8, Naqvi criticized a political party's decision to hold protests on the same day. He accused the party of damaging Pakistan's international image by organizing demonstrations whenever foreign dignitaries visit the

country. "Their politics promote chaos rather than constructive development," he remarked.

Dismissing negative reports on social media about Pakistan-US relations, Naqvi assured that the ties between the two countries are strong and improving. He highlighted that Pakistan's recent delegation visit to the US has yielded significant benefits and that better days are ahead for Pakistan.

In response to a question, he revealed that major reforms are planned for the FIA, particularly in Faisalabad and Gujrat, as a large number of youth from these areas attempt to go abroad illegally. While legal migration is encouraged, he warned that illegal routes tarnish Pakistan's reputation and harm its global standing.



LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi offering dua after inaugurating new passport office at NADARA center on Peco road.

Dense fog brings back chill to many Punjab cities

LAHORE (INP): When the public was getting ready to bid an early adieu to winter in Punjab and other parts of the country, the dense fog on Saturday morning brought back the chill to weather, darkening plain cities including Lahore and slowing down movement. Simultaneously, heavy snowfall and rain in a number of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cities and parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir played a role in challenging the early winter departure.

The people who came out of their homes heading to offices or schools to drop their children found themselves standing amid thick white foggy clouds on streets and roads.

Commuters who normally wore four or five layers of winter clothes and have reduced the layers to three as the mercury dropped in recent days went back inside to bolster their defences against the foggy cold outside.

Cold and dry weather prevailed in most parts of the country, while very cold was experienced in hilly areas af-

ter snowfall and rain.

The lowest recorded temperature (°C) was 1ch -09, Kalat -08, Gupis -07, Kalam -06, Skardu, -05, Quetta, Bagrote -04, Malamajabba, Astore and Parachinar -03. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Aih Maqam, Neelum Valley, Jagran Valley, Lowat Bala, Urang Keel, Shomtar, Greece, Sargan Valleys and other rural areas received heavy snowfall and intermittent rain since last night.

Snowfall on mountains of Muzaffarabad continued till Saturday morning. SDO Roads Altaf Awan said that traffic on all roads was operational smoothly while heavy machinery was available to clear the roads.

He said that traffic was restored which was closed due to landsliding from Keel Sri to Neelum Valley. He further said that people can travel in 4x4 vehicles.

He advised people to adopt precautionary measures to avoid any incident. Heavy snowfall in the area

dropped the temperature to zero. Meanwhile, heavy snowfall in Thandiani badly affected the daily life in Abbottabad.

Sources said that the area received at round one and half feet snowfall, blocking Thandiani Road. Local residents facing lot of difficulties due to suspension of electricity in the area. Acting promptly in wee hours of Saturday, Motorway police announced closure of Motorway M-2 from Lahore to Hiran Minar, M-3 from Faizpur to Nankana Sahib and M-11 from Lahore to Sialkot due to the thick fog. Motorway Police spokesperson Syed Imran Ahmad said the motorways were closed to ensure safe travel for the commuters.

He advised motorists to prefer travel during daylight hours, particularly between 10 am and 6 pm, during foggy weather conditions. Drivers were also urged to use fog lights for both front and rear visibility, avoid unnecessary travel, maintain appropriate distances from other vehicles, and reduce speed.

Funeral prayer held for policeman slain in fresh Upper Kurram firing

PESHAWAR (INP): Funeral prayer held on Saturday morning for a policeman martyred in a firing incident a day earlier in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Upper Kurram tehsil.

The policeman, Syed Ashiq Hussain, embraced martyrdom after he was shot at by a sniper while posted on security duty last evening, according to Superintendent of Police (SP) Operation Muhammad Abbas.

His funeral was held with official honours at the office of the Parachinar District Police Officer, after which he was buried in his native area of Noorki in Kurram district. In attendance were SP Abbas, SP Investigation Mazhar

Jahan, military leadership, and police personnel, who laid a wreath on the coffin which was draped in the national flag. They paid tribute to Hussain's services.

Two of Hussain's brothers were also martyred in previous terrorism incidents. Kurram has been beset by intermittent flare-ups of violence between tribes that have been feuding for decades over lands. Most recently, at least 130 lives were lost in attacks and ensuing clashes since November, before a hard-core ceasefire agreement was brokered on January 1. However, attacks on government and aid convoys this month have put the fragile peace in peril. The ceasefire suf-

fered another major setback when Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Saeed Manan, who was mediating to halt fresh clashes between the warring sides, was shot in the stomach and injured along with two others in a separate firing incident in the Bushehra area of the restive district yesterday.

Manan underwent surgery at DHO hospital and was later transferred to Peshawar via helicopter. On Jan 4, an attack in the Bagan area injured Deputy Commissioner Javedullah Mehsud and six others.

In a Jan 16 attack on a convoy in the same area, two security officials were martyred and five others injured.



QUETTA: President of Killa Saifullah Education affected Sheer Zaman addressing a press conference Quetta Press Club (QPC).



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired an Inter-Ministerial meeting to review the preparation for the second round of Pak-Qatar Bilateral Political Consultations scheduled to be held in Doha at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

SC to hear KP Universities' Vice Chancellors appointment case on Feb 6

ISLAMABAD (INP): A three-member bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan will hear the case regarding the appointment of vice chancellors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) universities on February 6. The bench will be headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan.

The vice chancellor positions in 19 universities of KP have remained vacant for over one and a half years. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, led by KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, has refrained from acting on the recommendations made by the caretaker government in February 2022.

The vice chancellor positions were advertised in 2022 during the previous PTI government, but interviews for potential candidates were not conducted, leading

to the matter being transferred to the caretaker government. After obtaining permission from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the caretaker government completed the interview process and prepared panels of three candidates for each university.

During this period, three members of the Academic Search Committee (ASC) resigned, and the caretaker government replaced them as per routine to continue the process. By the end of January 2024, the process was completed, but due to administrative issues, the file containing summary of the recommendations could not reach the Governor KP for his final approval.

Upon assuming power, the PTI government rejected these

recommendations and, in July 2024, decided to re-advertise the positions and form a new ASC, which

included the same members except for one. However, some top-listed candidates challenged this decision in the Peshawar High Court (PHC) in August 2024. The government argued to PHC that the ASC members substituted by the caretaker government were not legally appointed, as the ECP's approval was mandatory.

The petitioners, however, contended that while the caretaker government had sought ECP permission to proceed with the vice chancellors' appointment process, replacing a few members for a short 28-day period was a routine matter and did not require ECP's approval.

AJK leaders pay tribute to Kashmiris' bravery against Indian oppression

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): AJK leaders on Saturday unequivocally condemned the Indian brutality in Kashmir and paid tribute to the brave Kashmiris who have been fighting for their freedom, in a show of solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren, the leaders, including Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, Raja Farooq Haider Khan and Mulana Saeed Yousuf, reiterated their unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. In an exclusive conversation with pvt news channel AJK, leaders have come out strongly in support of their Kashmiri brethren, paying tribute to their bravery against Indian oppression and hailing their struggle for freedom.

The AJK leadership reiterated their unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination, urging the international community to take notice of the human rights abuses in Kashmir.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, Former Prime Minister AJK said, "we stand firmly with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters in

their struggle for freedom. Their bravery in the face of overwhelming odds is a testament to their unwavering commitment to their cause. We salute their courage and resilience in the face of Indian occupation, he added.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said despite India's efforts to suppress their movement, the Kashmiris will not be defeated and their spirit of freedom will only continue to grow stronger with each passing day.

Raja Farooq Haider Khan, Former Prime Minister AJK also added the people of Kashmir have shown extraordinary bravery in their fight for freedom.

"We pay tribute to their sacrifices and reaffirm our support for their right to self-determination. We will continue to raise our voice against Indian atrocities and advocate for a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir dispute, he added.

Raja Farooq has also strongly condemned India's revocation of Article 370 and the resulting demographic changes in the region.

He noted that the actions of

the Indian government have fueled widespread resentment and anger towards India, with many Kashmiris now harboring a deep-seated hatred for the country.

Mulana Saeed Yousuf, Ameer Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam AJK also strongly condemned India's actions in Kashmir, stating that the deployment of 10 lakh army personnel is a clear sign of the Indian government's insecurity.

He saluted the bravery of the Kashmiri people for facing such a massive military operation, saying "the presence of over a million Indian soldiers in Kashmir is a testament to the Indian government's fear of the Kashmiri people's struggle for freedom."

AJK leaders, including Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, Raja Farooq Haider Khan, and Mulana Saeed Yousuf, have collectively called upon the international community to take immediate action to stop India's atrocities in Kashmir and to play a role in resolving the long-standing dispute.

They urged the world leaders to break their silence and hold India accountable for its human rights abuses in the region.



HYDERABAD : Vice Chancellor ISRA University Dr. Ahmad Waliullah Kazi is giving away gold medals among to the successful graduate student during 22st convocation of ISRA University.

Alem Khan-led Pakistani delegation in Baku to finalize \$2bn investment deals

BAKU (INP): A high-level Pakistani delegation led by Federal Minister for Investment, Privatisation Abdul Alem Khan held crucial meetings in Baku to strengthen ties and enhance cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

The meetings attended by Azerbaijan's top officials were focused on boosting investment, energy, transport, and economic collaboration. The Pakistani delegation, which included senior officials and experts, engaged in talks with Azerbaijan's Energy Minister Pervez Shahbazov, Transport

Minister Rashid Nabiev and Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs Samad Bashiri.

The discussions centered around increasing bilateral cooperation in key sectors such as oil and gas, energy, and transport infrastructure.

Federal Minister Abdul Alem Khan highlighted that significant progress had been made with 15 agreements currently being negotiated between the two countries.

These agreements cover a wide range of areas, including energy projects, motorways, and privatization initiatives.

The minister further stressed that the two nations are set to sign investment agreements worth up to two billion dollars, which will serve as a catalyst for long-term economic growth.

During the talks, Minister

Khan also extended an invitation to Azerbaijani authorities to participate in Pakistan's privatization projects.

As part of the ongoing diplomatic efforts, the Prime Minister of Pakistan is expected to visit Central Asian countries later this month, further solidifying ties between the two regions.

The Azerbaijani leadership warmly welcomed the Pakistani delegation, expressing eagerness to explore new avenues for bilateral cooperation.

In a further sign of the growing partnership, Abdul Alem Khan is scheduled to meet with Azerbaijani Prime Minister Ali Asadov today to discuss expanding economic collaboration.