

QUETTA VOICE

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Breakthrough in Hira Murder Case: Police Recover Weapon, Probe Nears Completion

QUETTA: The investigation into the murder of 15-year-old American girl Hira in Quetta is nearing completion, with 90% of the probe finalized, according to SSP Serious Crime Wing Zohaib Mohsin.

Police have recovered the murder weapon and submitted a challan to the court. However, investigators are still waiting to record statements from Hira's father and sisters to uncover the full truth behind the case. "Something happened in America, or the father and uncle had ulterior motives in Quetta," said Mohsin, hinting at multiple possible angles. Within 10 hours of the crime, police arrested Hira's father and uncle, both of whom have confessed to the murder.

Authorities have also seized Hira's mobile phone, which has been sent to Lahore for forensic analysis. Additionally, 12 more individuals are under investigation to piece together the complete story behind the tragic incident.

Police remain in contact with Hira's family as they work to determine the motive behind the murder. Further updates



are expected as forensic reports and additional witness statements come in.

Sarfraz Bugti Criticizes Omar Ayub's Comments over Balochistan

QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has strongly criticized opposition leader Omar Ayub Khan's comments on Balochistan's law and order, calling them misleading and detached from reality. Bugti challenged Ayub to visit every district of Balochistan to witness the actual situation firsthand.

"Omar Ayub should come, and I am ready to take him across Balochistan. The state's stability is more important than politics, and we must keep Balochistan free from political propaganda," Bugti stated while addressing the media in Jaffarabad.

Bugti Slams Ayub's Remarks, Calls for Unity and Development in Balochistan

Bugti denounced Ayub's remarks as irresponsible, cautioning against the use of political rhetoric to distort the province's realities. He also dismissed separatist claims as baseless, highlighting the need to focus on national unity and progress.

"The youth of Balochistan are facing economic and social challenges, and such statements only add fuel to the fire. We must prioritize the stability of the state over political gains," he emphasized.

Reaffirming his government's commitment to dialogue and development, Bugti stressed that socio-economic progress remains the top priority. He assured that



his administration is focused on enhancing infrastructure, education, and healthcare across Balochistan.

Bugti Resolves 20-Year-Old Tribal Dispute, Emphasizes Peace for Progress

During his visit, Bugti played a pivotal role in resolving a 20-year-old dispute between two factions of the Bugti tribe, underscoring the importance of preserving

traditions and resolving tribal conflicts through mutual understanding.

"Before Jaffarabad, we successfully settled disputes in Sui, Tidal, another longstanding conflict has been resolved. Development is impossible without peace, and national unity is the foundation of Balochistan's stability," he said.

The Chief Minister reiterated that resolving tribal disputes is essential for Balochistan's progress. He affirmed that the

government is working in collaboration with tribal elders to ensure sustainable peace and development.

On this occasion, prominent political and tribal figures, including Provincial Minister Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, Parliament Secretaries Abdul Majeed Badini and Haji Muhammad Khan Lehri, PPP leader Mir Sajid Dashti, former provincial minister Mir Faik Khan Jamali, and esteemed members of the Bugti tribe, were present.

Imran Khan frustrated over Pakistan's loss to India, lashes out at PCB chairman

NEWS DESK: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed his frustration over the national cricket team's poor performance in the ICC Champions Trophy. Aleema Khan quoted him as saying on Tuesday, as he highlighted that appointing individuals based on recommendations instead of merit would lead to the downfall of cricket in the country.

After a meeting with the PTI founder, his sister, Aleema Khan, spoke to the media, revealing that Imran Khan was particularly upset about the cricket match. "Imran Khan watched the match on PTV and was deeply disappointed by the loss. His anger was directed at cricket today," Aleema Khan said.

She further mentioned that Khan had been visibly upset over the loss, commenting that "cricket would be ruined if I recommended



individuals are appointed to important positions."

Imran Khan also highlighted the role of Mohsin Naqvi, who was appointed as the Chairman PCB, criticizing his actions and stating that Naqvi's appointments

had caused harm to Pakistan.

Aleema Khan added that Imran Khan had also pointed out Naqvi's extensive hold on various key positions, saying, "No one in Pakistan holds as many positions as Mohsin Naqvi does." Khan

also remarked that under such poor leadership, a respectable person would have resigned by now, but Naqvi had not done so. "If asked, what experience does Naqvi have in cricket?" he questioned.

Regarding rumors about his health, Imran Khan dismissed them, clarifying that only party officials should speak about his health.

Aleema Khan confirmed that there was no truth to reports claiming Khan had collapsed, adding that her brother was in good health and had spoken to his children on Saturday, reassuring the family that he was fine.

She further clarified that PTI leader Qasim Khan Suri, who is currently abroad, was unaware of the situation. "There is a significant difference between reports from sources and face-to-face meetings," she stated.

Six security men among eight injured in Kalat attack

QUETTA: Eight people, including six security personnel, were injured in a bomb attack on a truck convoy guarding the copper project in the Mangoch area of Kalat district on Monday.

According to officials, a convoy of 29 trucks, transporting blaster copper from the Saindak project to Karachi, was targeted on the Quetta-Karachi National Highway in Mangoch.

Unknown armed men planted an improvised explosive device in front of the Nadra office on the main highway, and when the convoy, guarded by personnel from the FIC, reached the site, a powerful explosion occurred, hitting a security vehicle.

The officials said no Chinese nationals were traveling in the convoy. Following the blast, traffic between Quetta and Kalat on the highway was suspended; however, it was later restored after security clearance.

A senior official of MRDL, the company running the Saindak copper-cum-gold project for over 20 years, confirmed the attack on the project's convoy, saying two people were injured in the gunfire, including a truck driver who was shifted to Civil Hospital in Quetta. Quetta-Sibi Highway attack. Another victim of overnight's exchange of fire between security forces and armed militants, who had blocked the Quetta-Sibi High-



A heavy exchange of gunfire ensued and continued for some time. As a result of the blast, eight security personnel and a truck driver were injured.

"A total of six security personnel and a civilian driver have been injured in the blast," a senior official of the Kalat administration told Dawn, adding that security personnel transferred the injured to the district hospital in Kalat.

way, died on Monday, taking the death toll from the incident to two. Three others were injured.

Farooq Kurd, a resident of Quetta, was among those injured and succumbed to his injuries on Monday. SSP Kachhi, Muhammad Dilawar Rana, said security has been tightened and traffic, which was restored last night, is continuing as usual.

NEWS DESK:

Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani Urges Balochistan's Youth to Prioritize Education

Education Desk:

Karachi: Senior politician and former senator Nawabzada Haji Mir Lashkari Khan Raisani has urged the people of Balochistan to focus on education from primary schools to universities in the new academic year. He emphasized the need for a book-friendly resistance movement, calling on students to maintain peace in educational institutions and counter conspiracies against knowledge and learning.

He expressed these views while addressing a discussion session on "Book Friendship" at Street Library Karachi, organized by students from various educational institutions.

Responding to students' questions, Raisani warned that Balochistan and the entire region are undergoing significant changes, and if people fail to shape their future with knowledge, wisdom, and strategic planning, future generations will face severe crises.

He highlighted Balochistan's



geostrategic location and abundant resources, stressing that students must safeguard national unity, promote book culture, and resist educational disruptions. He further encouraged students to participate in book fairs and literary events across the province to foster a culture of reading and intellectual growth.

The event was attended by a large number of students who engaged in a thought-provoking discussion on the role of education, peace, and knowledge in shaping a prosperous future for Balochistan.

After Azerbaijan, PM arrives in Uzbekistan on official visit

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Tashkent, Uzbekistan for a two-day official visit, where he was received by Uzbek Prime Minister Abdull Nigmatovich Arifov.

During his visit, Shehbaz will hold bilateral talks with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, focusing on connectivity, trade, investment, energy, defence, regional stability, and education.

The two leaders will also exchange views on regional and international matters of mutual interest.

Officials have confirmed that multiple agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) will be signed to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

PM Shehbaz will also address the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Business Forum.



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

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FM emphasizes importance of well-regulated digital asset framework

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Maulana Fazl meets Hamas officials in Qatar, assures full support to Palestinians

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Editor: Asim Khan

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

Editorial:

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 afforestation. 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 requires a committed and fixed approach. 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.

Owning problems, and solutions

By Muhammad Hamid Zaman:

Sudan, a country in the midst of a brutal civil war for the last two years, has seen emergence of a deadly cholera outbreak in the last week. More than 50 people died and over a thousand got sick in the southern city of Kosti in just three days. Given the current state of war, the lack of medical supplies and a crumbling health infrastructure, it is all but likely that the deadly disease would spread not just in Sudan but also in neighbouring countries.

Cholera, a disease for which there are well-established treatments, has become a recurring calamity in war zones. Destruction of medical infrastructure, contamination of water systems, limited relief supplies, all contribute to emergence of the disease in communities caught in conflict. Yemen, a country bombarded endlessly in the last decade, became the global epicentre of the disease, one that is still devastating the country.

The emergence of cholera in Sudan comes at a time when, given the executive orders of the new US administration, the global health is under retreat, humanitarian efforts have been rolled back and international organisations are laying off thousands of front-line workers. Among my colleagues who have worked for USAID or affiliated groups, there is anger, anxiety and uncertainty. They see their life's work being evaporated with little clarity for the future. The impact is both professional and personal, and heart-breaking to read.

There is another group of people that I am in touch with. These are colleagues in low and middle income countries who have long been troubled by the way global humanitarian work is practised, the intent to use aid not for care and concern but for "soft power", and for ensuring the status quo of the global order. They are certainly not cheering about the personal loss of colleagues who have worked in the international aid sector, but they have been concerned about the real goal of aid. They have argued for more localisation, more ownership by developing countries and less dependency on aid agencies. These are valid points, but the solutions presented by these colleagues are far from practical. Some are asking for greater public sector spending by the local governments and regional cooperation. But looking at the current landscape, that is hardly a likely solution. For example, if we talk about Pakistan, can we really expect that the government will spend more to strengthen the sectors that were supported by international aid? They should, but would they? Can we imagine a larger tax base? Given the state of politics in the country and the region,

what hopes do we have of creating regional institutions that work across boundaries and prioritise real development issues that impact the most vulnerable? In the absence of USAID, are they thinking of self-sufficiency or new donors? Is this likely to change in the near future? Many of us know the answers - these are, of course, rhetorical questions.

This takes me back to the situation in Sudan. How to help people in the current moment? One way to think about it is that we simply do nothing. We say, "not our problem" and move on. We have been doing it forever and that is no different from what is happening in the corridors of power in countries all across the globe. The second option is more complicated, but one worth pursuing if we truly care. This option starts with recognition that lives in Sudan, or Yemen, or any other part of the world matter, and matter a lot, and that we share a sense of responsibility towards them and everyone around us. That option also requires coordination for care and kindness, and making a case for what it means to be human. There are individuals who are doing that in newspapers and in classrooms, in community centres and in centres of our own making. We need to support them in their pursuits.

It is the many problems made over the years to give us much of what we have today. The 1981 Saudi-led Fald Plan came at the height of the Cold War, but it actually masked a panic response by the West to Ayatollah Khomeini's militant fulminations on Palestine. The Oslo Accords on the other hand were a post-Cold War offer by a vastly different set of triggers.

Six days after the victory of the Iranian Revolution, Yasser Arafat was meeting Khomeini on Feb 18, 1979. It also marked the Palestinians' right to their ummah will never give up. The Iranians brought a sense of solidarity around the Palestinians. This great revolution of yours is the guarantee of our own. The Iranian journalists at Tehran's

By Arifa Noor:

On the sidelines of politics, it seems that political parties and their governments have much in common despite their constant snarling at one another. And I do not refer to their lack of power vis-a-vis the establishment or their eagerness to spend money they have done little to earn. Indeed, they are united in quite a lot, including their efforts to assert control over the higher education institutions in their domain.

Consider the recent news items from different provinces. In Sindh, the government has passed a law, which would allow bureaucrats — to be appointed vice-chancellors (VCs) of universities. The law has also caused the criticism for appointments removing the PhD condition. The bill was opposed by opposition parties such as the MQM and the Jamaat-e-Islami, but such is the numbers game in the assembly that legislation by the government faces no hurdle, and opposition by the governor did little except delay the law for a short while. As the opposition leader, according to a story in Dawn, commented, "Now an SP (senior superintendent of police) can be appointed as VC in a university."

In KP, another comfortably placed government also took advantage of the numbers in the assembly and amended the law to give the chief

minister the powers to appoint VCs. The amendments also give the government the powers to assess the performance of those appointed halfway through a four-year term. Once again, the governor's opposition to the law only caused a delay.

Since then, however, a petition filed in the relevant high court says that the change in law translated to "interference in the transactions and performance of universities and to interfere in their autonomy". The petitioners argue that under the earlier arrangement, these powers were with the governor who exercised them in consultation with the provincial government and chief minister, which also allowed some checks and balances.

Recent moves simply reveal the attitude of all governments towards education.

Punjab seems to not have passed any law yet but there are reports that the government in Lahore is planning to flex its muscles similarly and centralise the sector. According to media reports, the changes being considered would make the chief minister and ministers the head of the syndicates governing higher education institutes and remove the VCs from chairmanship. That the institutes are fearing such moves is evident from the views expressed by educationists who spoke at a recent conference organised in Lahore

by the Punjab Higher Education Commission and Higher Education Department.

Even for someone who does not follow the education sector closely, it is striking that three different governments run by three different political parties seem to be trying to make similar changes to a sector at more or less the same time. Just a coincidence?

The simplest explanation is the provincial governments face governors from other parties and changing the rules is the easiest way to stay in charge. This is possible because there have been reports of tussles or friction between the governor and the chief minister in Punjab over the appointments to universities, which had also caused delays. Similarly, in KP the PTI government had refused to appoint the VCs finalised under the caretaker government.

However, it might not be simply an effort to address administrative hurdles and crush the "crushable" opposition; after all, most chief ministers these days really can't do much about the bureaucrats who are appointed in their provinces, but surely other political parties and their appointees, such as governors, should not think they can also assert themselves.

There may be more to it, however. It is also an effort to gain more direct control over the spoils system which governance has become

for provincial governments, and the higher education sector (mostly still funded by the centre) is a frontier that can do with some conquering, especially in an environment where budgets are shrinking, as is fiscal space.

Indeed, in larger political environments where governments are helmed by political parties that win the elections through their domination of the state apparatus or the assistance of the said apparatus, rather than popular vote in fair elections, there is much clarity on what governance is aimed at. It is focused less on the electorate and more on keeping its beneficiaries and facilitators happy through doling out state patronage. The bureaucracy is, for example, kept to their existence.

This can help explain the recent decisions for more direct control over universities, by allowing bureaucrats to be appointed to universities or by allowing the government to crush the opposition by appointing others as VCs as reward for that service. (It goes without saying that the bureaucracy itself might need to create more space for itself as mission creep may be denying it many of the positions it earlier assumed were the former's hunting ground.)

Indeed, these recent moves simply reveal the attitude of all governments towards education; it is seen to be different from any other

department to be used for providing 'naked' and patronage, regardless of what is said in public about the importance of higher education. And in this, higher education is treated no differently from other government-run enterprises. In fact, it may as well be a stepchild where the financial crunch within the sector is concerned.

Indeed, even those who do not read newspapers regularly may have heard of the financial crunch at most higher education institutes. One only has to turn into students or teachers at public sector institutes to learn how departments are now even short of stationery at times. Students barely get funds for their activities while more and more admissions are given to those who can afford to pay rather than expect subsidised education. Indeed, successive governments have tried to reduce the higher education budget, citing the lack of fiscal space. Or the IMF conditionalities — despite the fact that these constraints never stop governments from increasing expenses elsewhere such as the salaries of the judiciary, the bureaucrats, and even parliamentarians. Or build unnecessary roads in Islamabad.

But if the stepchildren can provide more opportunities for patronage, no government or political party will let go of it. In this quest, they are all united.

Uncorking the bottled peace

By Jawad Naqvi:

Of the many problems made over the years to give us much of what we have today, the 1981 Saudi-led Fald Plan came at the height of the Cold War, but it actually masked a panic response by the West to Ayatollah Khomeini's militant fulminations on Palestine. The Oslo Accords on the other hand were a post-Cold War offer by a vastly different set of triggers.

Six days after the victory of the Iranian Revolution, Yasser Arafat was meeting Khomeini on Feb 18, 1979. It also marked the Palestinians' right to their ummah will never give up. The Iranians brought a sense of solidarity around the Palestinians. This great revolution of yours is the guarantee of our own. The Iranian journalists at Tehran's

Mehrabad Airport. The remarks made the Fald summit an urgent necessity.

Arab opponents of the self-styled "steadfast coalition" comprising Iran, Iraq, Syria, Iraq, and South Yemen (at the time a Marxist state) were the USSR collapsed, they would be overthrown one by one. Oslo experienced a similar fate with a different set of triggers.

Yitzhak Rabin, then Israeli prime minister, finally ended the Oslo offer to return to the Arabs some of the territory Israel captured in 1967. It also marked the Palestinians' right to their ummah will never give up. The Iranians brought a sense of solidarity around the Palestinians. This great revolution of yours is the guarantee of our own. The Iranian journalists at Tehran's

Bank for Arabs was an extremist who to Zionist peace moves. With the bullets in the air, Rabin's lungs at a large rally.

The Fald Plan presented possibly the most agreeable resolution of the conflict yet, but with a caveat. Their leaders boycotted the summit, which explains how, as soon as the USSR collapsed, they would be overthrown one by one. Oslo experienced a similar fate with a different set of triggers.

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by Benjamin Netanyahu's violent opposition to Rabin's peace moves. With the bullets in the air, Rabin's lungs at a large rally.

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gious state for Muslims in Palestine, while supporting its militant campaign against Israeli occupation. Leila's comrades favoured a single multicultural state for both Jews and Arabs, with equal rights for both.

Considering the ongoing discourse, the Fald Plan presented possibly the most agreeable resolution of the conflict yet, but with a caveat. Their leaders boycotted the summit, which explains how, as soon as the USSR collapsed, they would be overthrown one by one. Oslo experienced a similar fate with a different set of triggers.

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Ukraine - a pawn on the diplomatic chessboard

By Dr Moonis Ahmar:

John Bolton, the national security adviser during the first Trump administration, believes that "Trump has effectively surrendered before Putin before negotiations have begun on Ukraine." In an interview with CNN, Bolton also lamented that Trump had reversed American position that Ukraine should be returned to full sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The meeting between the Russian and American officials in Riyadh on February 18 also reflected that the Trump administration had bypassed Ukraine in the negotiations with Moscow.

During the recent Munich Security Conference, US Vice President JD Vance blasted Europe for "not adhering to the principles of democracy. Three years after the Russian attack on Ukraine and within a month of Trump taking charge, it seems there is a complete reversal of the

American position on Ukraine, indicating that Washington now wants Ukraine to accept Moscow's occupation of around 20% of its territory as well as the seizure of Crimea in 2014.

Given the direct US talks with Russia, it seems Ukraine has been reduced to a mere pawn on the diplomatic chessboard laid out by Trump and Putin. Ukraine's state of politics in the country and the region, what hopes do we have of creating regional institutions that work across boundaries and prioritise real development issues that impact the most vulnerable? In the absence of USAID, are they thinking of self-sufficiency or new donors? Is this likely to change in the near future? Many of us know the answers - these are, of course, rhetorical questions.

This takes me back to the situation in Sudan. How to help people in the current moment? One way to think about it is that we simply do nothing. We say, "not our problem" and move on. We have been doing it forever and that is no different from what is happening in the corridors of power in countries all across the globe. The second option is more complicated, but one worth pursuing if we truly care. This option starts with recognition that lives in Sudan, or Yemen, or any other part of the world matter, and matter a lot, and that we share a sense of responsibility towards them and everyone around us. That option also requires coordination for care and kindness, and making a case for what it means to be human. There are individuals who are doing that in newspapers and in classrooms, in community centres and in centres of our own making. We need to support them in their pursuits.

lions of dollars of assistance to Kiev without proper audit, Trump wants Russia to secure its gains by sustaining its occupation of Crimea and parts of Eastern Ukraine.

If Trump succeeds in his objective then not only Ukraine will be a war criminal, as declared by the ICC, but he will be challenged, but Putin will also be encouraged to give a practical shape to Russia's expansionist ambitions in its neighbourhood. How NATO and Europe will deal with Trump's pro-Putin policies and withdrawal of American assistance to Ukraine depends on the unity of European leaders despite attempts by the US to divide them. Zelenskyy for starting the war instead of condemning Putin for committing aggression against a sovereign state, Trump is putting American national security at stake. The Biden administration for agreeing to isolate Moscow, Russia's Foreign Minister

ter Sergei Lavrov, and Putin's chief foreign policy adviser, Yuri Ushakov, were photographed sitting across Rubio, who attended the talks alongside the US national security adviser, Mike Waltz, and Steve Witkoff, Trump's special envoy to the Middle East." It shows that Ukraine, the pawn, will be coerced to accept a deal between Putin and Trump to the advantage of Moscow.

One needs to analyse the Russian position as a pawn for three sides.

First, if Trump tries to impose a deal on Ukraine while negotiating with Russia, it can cause a sharp divide within the US. Zelenskyy for starting the war instead of condemning Putin for committing aggression against a sovereign state, Trump is putting American national security at stake. The Biden administration for agreeing to isolate Moscow, Russia's Foreign Minister

will deal with the Trump-Putin courtship is yet to be seen. But certainly, he will not get a free hand from power centres to let Russia get away with Ukraine territories, including Crimea. Europe, which has still not recovered from Vance's attack on its sovereignty, will need to put its own house in order and counter Russian ambition in Ukraine with unity.

Striking a deal with Russia over Ukraine and with Israel over Gaza reflects Trump's mindset as a real estate icon and head of an oligarchic system.

Second, the US-Russia meeting in Riyadh not only marginalised European efforts to end the war in Ukraine but also the US State Department after the meeting

announced that the two sides decided to appoint "respective high level teams to begin working on a path to ending the conflict in Ukraine as soon as possible."

Since 2014 when Russia occupied Crimea, an integral part of Ukraine, the West excluded Moscow from G8 and embarked on a policy to isolate Putin. Now, the US has taken a U-turn under the Trump administration by ending isolation of Russia.

Trump's new rehabilitation of Putin who is viewed as a persona non grata and implicated by the ICC in war crimes. On Sept 23, 2023, the ICC issued Putin's arrest warrant on the charges of genocide in Ukraine, but the Trump administration has no regard for the ICC's verdict. He is blaming Zelenskyy for not ending the war and calling him a "dictator" in power without holding elections.

Finally, forcing a deal to end the war in

Ukraine without the consent of Kiev would be counter-productive and destabilise the world order. So far the US has provided \$550 billion to Ukraine since its war with Russia began three years ago. Europe has also provided \$100 billion to Ukraine.

Thus a total of \$450 billion have been granted to Kiev, enabling it to prevail over the Russian annexation of Ukrainian territory.

A win-win solution requires Moscow's withdrawal from the occupied Ukrainian territories, including Crimea, as well as Kiev's assurance that it will not join NATO. Already, the war has devastated Ukraine, besides causing colossal military losses to Russia.

The US must prevail over Putin to return the occupied Ukraine to its sovereignty by Russia since 2014 instead of forcing Kiev to accept Moscow's aggression and its occupation of Ukrainian territories.

National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) introduces new facility for masses

KARACHI (INP): The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has introduced a new facility for masses.

As per details, Citizens across Pakistan can now deposit funds into accounts of over 50 banks through NADRA e-Sahulat, following an agreement between NADRA

Technologies Limited and ILINK. The agreement signing ceremony was

attended by State Bank of Pakistan's Deputy Governor Saleemullah and NADRA chairman. With this initiative, more than 9,000 e-Sahulat franchises nationwide will offer the service, ensuring biometric verification of depositors.

According to National Database and Registration Authority, this step will enhance accessibility to financial services and expand the scope of digital banking in the country.

Earlier, the National Database and Registration Authority clarified that biometric verification issues are not caused by its system.

According to the NADRA spokesperson, the facility for identity verification through the "Verisys" system is available to all financial institutions. Banks and financial institutions can utilize NADRA's services when needed.

National Database and Registration Authority further stated that, in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), it is introducing a facial recognition verification system.

Once the process is completed, this facility will be made available to all banks and telecom operators, the National Database and Registration Authority spokesperson said.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for industries and production Rana Tanveer Hussain visited the Ramadan Festival Control Room at the National Highway Authority Corporation in Islamabad.

Putin says Europe is needed in Ukraine talks, but suggests deal still distant

MOSCOW (INP): Europe's participation in Ukraine peace talks will be needed eventually but Moscow first wants to build trust with Washington. President Vladimir Putin said on Monday, while suggesting that a deal to end the conflict may still be far off. As Ukraine marked the third anniversary of Russia's invasion that has killed thousands of civilians and displaced millions, US President Donald Trump suggested the war could end within weeks. But he did not elaborate.

Putin told Russian state television that Trump was approving the Russia-Ukraine conflict rationally and not emotionally, but gave the impression it might not end as soon as Trump would like.

Both his telephone conversation and Trump and recent talks between the United States and Russia in Riyadh touched on the issue of resolution of the conflict in Ukraine, Putin added.

"But it was not discussed in detail," he

said in an interview. "We only agreed that we would move forward this. And in this case, of course, we are not refusing the participation of European countries."

Ukraine and Kyiv's European allies both opposed the invitation to the initial round of talks in Ukraine, held last week in Saudi Arabia by the United States and Russia.

Putin said Europe had "nothing with" the talks in Riyadh, as they were focused on establishing trust between Moscow and Washington, which he said was key.

"In order to resolve complex and rather acute issues, such as related to Ukraine, both Russia and the United States must take the first step," Putin said.

"What does it consist of? This first step should be devoted to increasing the level of trust between the two states," he added.

"But what do the Europeans have to do with it?"

The next few rounds

of talks and high-level contacts will be devoted to building that trust, he said, but on the talks turn to reaching a settlement to the conflict, the presence of European partners will be logical.

Putin dismissed any notion that Trump's sharp alteration of Washington's policy on Ukraine, including criticism of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and suggestions that Kyiv might not recover all lost territory, was based on emotion.

Trump, he said, was acting logically and free of the constraints of promises to Ukraine made by European leaders.

"Unlike them, the new president of the United States has his hands free from shackles that don't allow you to move forward," he said.

"He is moving in a straightforward manner and without particular constraints. He is in a unique position; he doesn't just say what he wants. This is the privilege of the leader of one of the major powers."

Two flights added in New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) flight operation in week

ISLAMABAD (INP): After one month of commercial operation of New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA), flight operation has picked up momentum as two flights have been added into weekly flight operation management. Before opening up of NGIA, Gwadar used to see three flights in a week. Now since January 20, 2025 to February 20, 2025, five flights have come into formal operation in a week. These five flights include "on Monday PK-503 and PK-504 from Karachi to Gwadar and Gwadar to Muskat. Then on Wednesday PK-503 and PK-504 from Karachi to Gwadar and Gwadar to Karachi. Meanwhile on Friday, PK-503 and PK-504 from Karachi to Gwadar and Gwadar to Muskat and Muskat to Gwadar."

This is heyday for NGIA as encouraging development has also led to like in passenger traffic, said by CAA of

official to Gwadar Pro. He laid bare the fact that further uptick in flight operation is in line with many private airlines including Fly Jinnah, Air Sial, Air Blue and Serene Air have submitted their requests to operate for Gwadar through New Gwadar International Airport. Private airline "Air Sial" official said that since NGIA is overbrimming with profuse benefits and lucrative incentives like no landing charges, no parking charges, no handling charges, we expect more bangs for our bucks. Covering an area of 4,300 acres as the second biggest airport in Pakistan, NGIA is ready to accommodate ATR 72, Boeing B-737, Airbus A-380 and Boeing B-747 for domestic and international routes. The New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) officially opened to the public and all forms of commercial air traffic as the first commercial flight, successfully landed at the airport on January 20.

PIA flight PK-503, departed from Karachi at 9:50 am and touched down at the state.



NASEERABAD: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Provincial Irrigation Minister Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani and Divisional President of Pakistan Peoples Party Mir Bilal Sadiq Umrani participate in the reception of ceremony.

China's AI model DeepSeek sparks debate: U.S. will be overtaken by 2030

ISLAMABAD (INP): A new report by Chinese academics predicts that "DeepSeek", a home-grown AI Large Language Model (LLM), launched in January 2025, could propel China to global AI leadership by 2030, challenging long-held U.S. dominance.

The report, released at a seminar held in Beijing on February 23 predicts that China's AI development, led by the DeepSeek model, will surpass the United States by 2030. It argues that DeepSeek's "low-cost, high-performance and open-source" strategy has triggered a "technological, competitive, and geopolitical leap" that could reshape global tech and economic power dynamics.

Hosted by Renmin University and organized by the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China (RDCY), the event attracted attention from industry experts, think tanks, and media.

Experts believe that this breakthrough could not only reshape the AI industry but also alter the global geopolitical landscape, shifting power dynamics and giving developing countries a stronger voice in technological advancements.

Wang Wen, Dean of RDCY, shared firsthand observations, "I just got back from Malaysia three days ago, met a bunch of Malaysian politicians and professors - they were all talking about

DeepSeek, and how Chinese AI developers are making this technology freely available to Malaysians. This is real global tech sharing, breaking away from those centralized AI ecosystems dominated by Western tech giants."

The report also emphasizes how DeepSeek challenges traditional Western perceptions of China's technological capabilities and signals a shift in the global tech competition.

After DeepSeek's January launch sent Nvidia's stock price plunging and sharply eroded valuations across other tech giants, some observers labeled this development a "Sputnik moment" in the U.S.-China AI competition, marking a pivotal challenge to American technological dominance.

Analysts note that this breakthrough marks a turning point for the industry, one that could impact the future of U.S. markets, technology policies, and global strategies. The report concludes by predicting that, despite current gaps in areas like AI patents and computing resources, China's vast data and rapidly advancing technology will position it to lead the AI revolution within the next decade. It also highlights the importance of international collaboration and responsible AI development to ensure that the technology benefits society globally.



NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY
(KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA REGION)

INVITATION TO BIDS

FOR 14x PERIODIC MAINTENANCE WORKS (FUNCTIONAL & STRUCTURAL OVERLAY)

ON N-25, N-40-I, N-40-II, N-50, N-65, N-70 & N-10

& 08x REHABILITATION WORKS ON N-85

(FOR AMP 2022-23 & 2023-24)

1. National Highway Authority (NHA), invites Bids from the Candidates, registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments who are on Active Taxpayer List of the Federal Board of Revenue having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council for the latest year in Category with Specialization as mentioned below inside the table for the following items:

| S# | DESCRIPTION | CHINA/ROUTE | PEC Category & Specialization |
|-----|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | PM-RN-2022-23-01-N-35 (FUNCTIONAL OVERLAY) | Km 790 +000-800 +000 (N-35) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 2. | PM-RN-2022-23-02-N-40 (FUNCTIONAL OVERLAY) | Km 30-35, 36-38, 45-51, 52-55 (N-40) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 3. | PM-RN-2022-23-03-N-40 (STRUCTURAL OVERLAY) | Km 56 +000-58 +000, 93 +000-58 +000 (N-40) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 4. | PM-RN-2022-23-04-N-40 (STRUCTURAL OVERLAY) | Km 109 +000 -112 +000, 117 +000-120 +000 (N-40) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 5. | PM-RN-2022-23-05-N-40 (STRUCTURAL OVERLAY) | Km 123 +000 -131 +000 (N-40) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 6. | PM-RN-2022-23-05-N-40 (FUNCTIONAL OVERLAY) | Km 175 +000-189 +000, 230 +000-211 +000 (N-40) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 7. | PM-RN-2022-23-06-N-40 (FUNCTIONAL OVERLAY) | Km 252 +000-270 +000 (N-40) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 8. | PM-RN-2022-23-06-N-40 (STRUCTURAL OVERLAY) | Km 300-307, 541-544, 555-564 (N-40) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 9. | PM-RN-2022-23-04-N-40 (STRUCTURAL OVERLAY) | Km 457 +000-470 +000 (N-40) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 10. | PM-RN-2022-23-07-N-50 (STRUCTURAL OVERLAY) | Km 037 +000-049 +000 (N-50) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 11. | PM-RN-2022-23-04-N-10 (FUNCTIONAL OVERLAY) | Km 283 +000-293 +000 (N-50) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 12. | PM-RN-2022-23-08-N-70 (STRUCTURAL OVERLAY) | Km 181 +000-200 +000 (N-70) | C-2 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 13. | PM-RN-2022-23-01-N-10 (FUNCTIONAL OVERLAY) | Km 29 +000-36 +000 (N-10) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 14. | PM-RN-2022-23-02-N-10 (FUNCTIONAL OVERLAY) | Km 270 +000-280 +000 (N-10) | C-3 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 15. | PM-RN-2022-23-01-N-45 (REHABILITATION) | Km 219 +000-216 +000 (N-45) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 16. | PM-RN-2022-23-02-N-45 (REHABILITATION) | Km 218 +000-223 +000 (N-45) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 17. | PM-RN-2022-23-01-N-45 (REHABILITATION) | Km 224 +000-230 +000 (N-45) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 18. | PM-RN-2022-23-04-N-45 (REHABILITATION) | Km 318 +000-323 +000 (N-45) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 19. | PM-RN-2022-23-05-N-45 (REHABILITATION) | Km 325 +000-330 +000 (N-45) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 20. | PM-RN-2022-23-06-N-45 (REHABILITATION) | Km 353 +000-356 +000 (N-45) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 21. | PM-RN-2022-23-07-N-45 (REHABILITATION) | Km 385 +000-390 +000 (N-45) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |
| 22. | PM-RN-2022-23-08-N-45 (REHABILITATION) | Km 410 +000-415 +000 (N-45) | C-4 or Above with Specialization in CE-01 & CE-10 |

2. Bidding documents, containing Method of Procurement (Single Stage - Two Envelopes), detailed terms & conditions etc. will be available on the website mentioned from March 13, 2025 for downloading free of cost. Prospective Bidders are also advised to follow the said website for updates of schedule and addendum (s), if any.

3. The bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions provided in the Bidding Documents, must reach at office of Member (West-Zone), NHA, Zonal Complex Airport Road, Quetta on or before March 28, 2025 @ 1200 Hours. Technical bids, will be opened on the same day at 1200 Hours in the presence of interested Bidders. Those Bidders who are not present will be deemed to have withdrawn their bids.

4. All Firms are advised to get SPADs (PPRA) Registration of www.esproc.gov.pk immediately as Manual Bid/Proposal Application (hard copy) will be eliminated in upcoming procurement.

5. "Firms, can apply as single bidder and in J (as a separate entity) as many works as they can within their financial capacity, but will be awarded with only "One Work" on the basis of lowest most advantageous bid."

6. The Advertisement is also available on PPA website at www.ppa.gov.pk

DIRECTOR (COORD) WEST ZONE
National Highway Authority
NHA Zonal Complex, Near Airport Road, Quetta
Phone: 081-8241063 & Email: director-west@nha.gov.pk
Website: www.cbidding.nha.gov.pk

Maulana Fazl meets Hamas officials in Qatar, assures full support to Palestinians

LAHORE (INP): Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman met with Hamas officials in Qatar, assuring them of Pakistan's full support for the Palestinian cause. According to party spokesperson, the meeting took place with Hamas' Shura Council, and discussed the current situation in Gaza and Palestine.

Maulana Rehman reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the Palestinian struggle for freedom, stating that Palestine is an independent state and that Israeli occupation cannot be supported.

He also expressed support for the Palestinian people's fight for the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque and Palestine.

The Hamas leadership thanked Maulana Rehman for his support, reaffirming the strong bond between Pakistan and Palestine.

The meeting came at the time when Israel said it was delaying the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners it had planned to free the day before until group Hamas met its conditions, underscoring the fragility of the Gaza ceasefire accord.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced early Sunday that Israel would wait to release 620 Palestinian prisoners and detainees until it was certain the next hostages would be freed, and without any degrading ceremonies. This refers to recent

handovers by Hamas that the U.N. said were disrespectful and broke international law. Hamas made hostages appear on stage and speak in front of crowds before being released, and even carried coffins with hostage remains through crowds.

Israel's announcement also accused Hamas of breaking the month-old ceasefire multiple times. This came after Hamas handed over six hostages from Gaza on Saturday as part of a truce.

These six hostages were the last living Israeli captives to be freed during the first phase of the ceasefire. The bodies of four deceased Israeli hostages will be released next week.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Albert Khorev.

Situation on ground contradicts Amit Shah's normalcy narrative in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (INP): Indian Home Minister Amit Shah's claims about so-called stability in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir following the revocation of Article 370 are based on blatant lies and contrary to the ground situation in the territory.

Interaction with some Kashmiri youth in New Delhi, Amit Shah claimed that following the abrogation of Article 370, IIOJK has attained complete stability and that violence in the territory has reduced by over 80 per cent.

Despite the Indian Home Minister's assertions, the situation on the ground paints a very different picture. Since the India's illegal actions in August 2019, besides a siege of months, IIOJK is witnessing a continued military presence with over a million Indian forces deployed, and there has been an increase in human rights violations. These include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary

detentions, raids, and cordon and search operations. Rather than a stable, peaceful environment, Kashmiris face heightened repression, with stringent laws in place to suppress dissent and control the population.

The recent killings of two civilians in Baramulla and Kathua districts are tragic examples of the ongoing blatant human rights violations in the occupied territory. These incidents highlight the continued use of extrajudicial killings and custodial torture by Indian troops, which have become disturbingly routine.

In Baramulla, truck driver Waseem Majeed was shot dead after Indian troops opened fire on his vehicle at Sangrama Chowk. In Kathua, a youth named Makhani Din was arrested in the Billawar area later tortured to death in custody. These incidents are not isolated cases but represent a broader pattern of extrajudicial killings by Indian troops in

Kashmir.

Since the illegal abrogation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019, Indian troops, operating under draconian laws, have killed 966 Kashmiris, including many in custody. Additionally, 25,628 Kashmiris have been arrested, with many falsely charged under oppressive laws to prolong their illegal detention.

These grim figures expose the blatant falsehood of Amit Shah's claims of "normalcy" in IIOJK. Far from stabilizing, the situation continues to deteriorate under the Modi government's iron-fisted approach, deepening the suffering of Kashmiris with each passing day.

The BJP-led Indian government's false narrative of normalcy in IIOJK serves only one purpose, that is to mislead the international community. However, India's attempts to mask the grim reality on the ground will not succeed.

He mentioned that by utilizing waste properly, we can create many useful items. He urged people to dispose of household waste in designated areas instead of throwing it in the streets, ensuring that sanitation workers can collect it efficiently.

He highlighted the need for awareness regarding solid waste management, which was the Primary reason for organizing this seminar under the guidance of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood.

He also mentioned that, following the Vice Chancellor's directions, the university will continue to organize seminars on various topics to enhance students' educational awareness.

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) holds seminar on Solid Waste Management

ISLAMABAD, Feb 25 (INP): A seminar on Solid Waste Management held here on Tuesday at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU).

The Chief Executive Officer of Akhtar Hameed Khan Memorial Trust, Sumaira Gul, delivered the keynote lecture, emphasizing that a significant portion of the waste generated in Pakistan is lost due to the lack of a proper system and awareness. She stressed the need for recycling, highlighting that the trend of recycling is gaining momentum globally, whereas in Pakistan, the industry faces several challenges.

She pointed out that due to a lack of awareness regarding waste collection methods, a considerable amount of waste is not properly disposed of,

which affects the quality of recyclable waste. Consequently, the cost of waste collection is also increasing.

Sumaira Gul emphasized that an effective management strategy is required for proper waste disposal, as waste can be converted into useful products that can play a pivotal role in the country's economic development. The seminar was organized by the Faculty of Sciences, Department of Environmental Sciences, and was presided over by the Dean of the Faculty of Sciences, Professor Dr. Sher Muhammad.

He stated that Pakistan is rich in natural resources, and to keep the country clean and benefit from these resources, we must set our priorities right.

Dr. Sher Muhammad fur-



UZBEKISTAN: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, along with Federal Minister for Investment Abdul Aleem Khan, is warmly received by Uzbekistan's Minister Lazir Kudratov in Tashkent. The Ministers are set to attend Pivotal Bilateral meeting and the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Business Forum.



TASHKENT: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulla Nigmatovich Aripov visiting Independence Monument Tashkent.

FM emphasizes importance of well-regulated digital asset framework

ISLAMABAD, Feb 25 (INP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting on digital assets.

The meeting was attended by foreign delegates, including President Trump's Advisors for Digital Assets, Minister of State for IT & Telecom, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Governor State Bank, Secretary Finance, and Secretary IT & Telecom were also present.

Participants discussed the global evolution of cryptocurrency, its increasing adoption, and the regulatory frameworks being implemented internationally, in line with U.S. government policies. The deliberations focused on financial security, risk mitigation, and the potential impact of digital assets on Pakistan's economy.

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb emphasized the importance of a well-regulated digital asset framework, aligning Pakistan with international best practices and complying with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) guidelines. He highlighted the government's commitment to exploring digital as-

sets and integrating blockchain technology as part of its broader strategy to modernize the financial sector.

Discussions also included the tokenization of key infrastructure and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) assets, allowing for increased liquidity, broader investor participation, and greater efficiency in capital markets. It was noted that various stakeholders, including foreign and domestic investors, have already developed product-ready digital asset solutions that could be explored within a regulatory sandbox.

Pakistan currently has over 20 million active users in the digital asset market who face significant challenges, including high transaction fees. The Finance Minister reaffirmed his commitment to regulating and encouraging this industry by adopting appropriate frameworks, laws, and incentives to ensure transparency and facilitate digital business growth.

The Finance Minister directed relevant stakeholders to formulate a comprehensive framework that ensures security, transparency, regulatory compliance, and economic vi-

ability while safeguarding against financial crimes and illicit activities. He also stressed the need for a balanced approach—one that encourages innovation and investment in digital assets while maintaining strict regulatory oversight in line with international standards.

To enhance this initiative, the government will consider establishing a National Crypto Council, which will serve as a dedicated advisory body comprising key government representatives, regulatory authorities, and industry experts.

This Crypto Council will oversee policy development, address regulatory challenges, and ensure that Pakistan's digital asset ecosystem evolves in a secure, compliant, and sustainable manner. The Council will also collaborate with friendly countries to develop standardized frameworks for international digital economic engagement. The meeting concluded with a consensus on adopting a cautious yet forward-looking approach, ensuring that future developments in the digital asset space align with national interests, FATF guidelines, and global financial standards.

Rana Afzal asks PTI to shun ego politics for national interest

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Prime Minister's Coordinator, Rana Ihsan Afzal Tuesday appealed to PTI to set aside arrogance and adopt a conciliatory approach, emphasizing that engaging in constructive talks is the only viable path forward to address grievances.

In an interview with a private news channel, he stressed that instead of resorting to undemocratic measures, PTI leaders should refrain from portraying themselves as victims.

He emphasized that PTI should prioritize the nation's well-being over political inter-

ests, considering the welfare of Pakistan and its innocent citizens.

By adopting this approach, PTI can work towards finding solutions that benefit the country as a whole, rather than perpetuating political polarization, he warned.

Rana Ihsan Afzal strongly condemned PTI's involvement in the 9th May and 26 November incidents, terming them as undemocratic steps that undermined the country's stability and rule of law.

He emphasized that such actions were unacceptable and went against the principles

of democracy, which PTI claims to uphold.

"It is imperative for PTI leaders to respect the democratic process and refrain from inciting violence and chaos," he stated. Rana Ihsan Afzal also expressed his admiration for the policies of his party, praising their efforts to steer the country out of default and put it on the path to economic stability.

He acknowledged the challenging circumstances under which the government was operating, but expressed confidence in their ability to navigate these difficulties and implement effective solutions.



HYDERABAD: Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, taking to media at a press conference at Mayor office Hyderabad.

Over 100 Hindu pilgrims from India arrive in Pakistan to visit Kataras Raj

LAHORE (INP): Over 100 Hindu pilgrims from India arrived in Lahore to attend religious festivities at Shri Kataras Raj temples in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) spokesperson Ghulam Mohayuddin in a statement issued in Lahore confirmed that "A group of 109 Hindu pilgrims from India arrived Lahore via Wagah border to perform religious rituals at Shri Kataras Raj for Maha Shivratri event".

He said that the pilgrims led by Trilok Chand and Raghu Kant were warmly received at the border by Additional Secretary (Shrines) of ETPB Saifullah Khokhar, Deputy Secretary Umar Javed Awan, members of the Pakistan

Hindu Mandir Management Committee, senior officials, and local Hindu leaders.

"The Hindu pilgrims have come from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Rajasthan to visit their holy places in Pakistan," he said, adding that the statement issued in Lahore confirmed that "A group of 109 Hindu pilgrims from India arrived Lahore via Wagah border to perform religious rituals at Shri Kataras Raj for Maha Shivratri event".

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