

QUETTA VOICE

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Tuesday, July.15.2025

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International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) calls on SC to review new PECA law amendments

NEWS DESK: The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has called on the Supreme Court of Pakistan to urgently review the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), citing what it says are escalating threats to press freedom and the safety of journalists in the country.

In a letter addressed to Chief Justice — and also sent to the prime minister, the chief justice of the Islamabad High Court, and the president of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) — the IFJ said that media professionals in Pakistan are facing mounting dangers while performing their professional duties.

Earlier this year, the National Assembly passed a set of amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) under a supplementary agenda, significantly expanding the government's authority to regulate online content and penalise digital offences. PECA (Amendment) Act 2025 included provisions for the formation of a Digital Rights Protection Authority (DRPA), which will be empowered to remove online content, restrict access to prohibited material, and impose penalties on individuals who share such content.

The amendments also broadened the definition of "social media platforms" to encompass tools and software used to access these platforms. The revised law now extends its jurisdiction to include websites, applications and various communication channels. As part of the legislative changes, the FIA Cybercrime Wing is to be dissolved and replaced with a stricter framework of enforcement. Under the new rules, individuals sharing expunged material from parliamentary or provincial assemblies on social media could face imprisonment of up to three years along with a fine of Rs2 million.

"Journalists are being sub-



jected to legal cases, harassment, and threats under the PECA law," the federation stated, adding that Pakistan's government is a signatory to international conventions such as those of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations, which obligate it to protect fundamental rights.

The IFJ noted that recent amendments to PECA have granted the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) powers to act without a formal complaint — a move it warns could be used to silence dissent and target journalists arbitrarily.

"These powers pose a serious risk of suppressing independent journalism and freedom of expression," the letter said, urging the top court to direct the government to amend the law in consultation with PFUJ and other relevant stakeholders.

The federation also expressed concern over the bypassing of high courts through direct appeals to the SC, calling it a "circumvention of judicial process."

In its letter, the IFJ reported that at least seven journalists have been killed in Pakistan over the past year, with no perpetrators convicted in cases involving attacks or threats. The latest Press Freedom Report, it said, documented 34 violations, including physical assaults, harassment, online hate campaigns, and intimidation.

Media workers, the IFJ said, also face systemic challenges such as non-payment of wages, unlawful dismissals, and significant security risks. Furthermore, legal barriers to unionization have been reinforced by recent state legislation, undermining workers' rights.

"Media professionals are be-

ing deprived of the right to unionize, and they do not have equal access to justice in the courts," the letter read.

The IFJ revealed it has dispatched two fact-finding missions to Pakistan, where representatives met with journalists, media owners, PFUJ leadership, and human rights advocates. The federation said it supports PFUJ's ongoing legal efforts, including a petition filed in the Islamabad High Court, which is still awaiting a final decision.

Underlining the urgency of the situation, the IFJ appealed to the Chief Justice to immediately initiate a comprehensive judicial review of PECA, especially the amendments that grant sweeping powers to the FIA.

Immediate action must be taken to protect press freedom under Article 19 of the Constitution," the federation concluded.

Riaz Baloch: HUMAN, DISTRICT CHAGAI:

Mark Bristow has described the Reko Diq mining project as a long-term opportunity that will bring sustained social and economic growth to Balochistan. Speaking during a visit to Humai village near the Reko Diq site on July 14, Bristow said the project would offer "generational benefits" through job creation, education, and healthcare development.

Mark Bristow emphasized that Reko Diq is not just a mineral extraction venture but a platform for creating local opportunities across multiple sectors.

and a Mother & Child Health Center in Humai village. These facilities now provide primary healthcare and specialized maternal care to residents who previously lacked such services.

Addressing community members, Bristow stated, "No large-scale resource development can succeed without the involvement and support of local communities." He assured residents that their partnership is vital to the project's future.

During the visit, Chief of Humai village, Liaqat Malik, and Taj Muhammad, Chairman of the Par-e-Koh Community Development Committee, expressed their



He highlighted that the Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC) is committed to ensuring active participation from the local population. "Currently, 75% of our workforce comes from Balochistan, most of them from District Chagai," Bristow said, adding that RDMC has initiated skills training and education programs to further improve local employment.

Bristow also noted RDMC's contribution to healthcare services, sharing that the company had established a Health Clinic

gratitude for Barrick's ongoing engagement with the community. Both leaders appreciated RDMC's role in improving livelihoods in the region and pledged full community support for the Reko Diq project.

Mark Bristow was accompanied by senior RDMC officials, including Country Manager Zarar Janani, Site General Manager Ryan Mitchell, Senior Vice President Woo Lee, Head of Sustainability Ashley Price, and Mineral Resources Management Executive Simon Bottoms.

German Consul General Dr. Rüdiger Lotz Honoured at Farewell Luncheon in Karachi

NEWS DESK:

A farewell luncheon was held in Karachi on July 14, 2025, in honour of Dr. Rüdiger Lotz, the outgoing Consul General of Germany. The event brought together diplomats, business leaders, civil society members, and other distinguished guests to acknowledge Dr. Lotz's dedicated service in Pakistan.

Speaking at the gathering, Mir Murad Baloch, Honorary Consul of Germany for Balochistan, praised Dr. Lotz's diplomatic leadership and his efforts to strengthen ties between Germany and Pakistan.

"Dr. Lotz has been more than just a skilled diplomat — he has been a supportive and thoughtful colleague."

His tenure in Karachi has deepened Germany-Pakistan re-



lations and opened new avenues for mutual cooperation," said Mir Murad.

The farewell event concluded with heartfelt messages of appreciation and best wishes for Dr. Lotz as he moves on to new responsibilities. His contributions during his time in Karachi were recognised as a lasting positive legacy in promoting international friendship and collaboration.

Aurangzeb dismisses criticism of enhanced Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) powers as 'propaganda'

NEWS DESK: Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday dismissed criticism surrounding the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) enhanced powers, calling it "propaganda" and reaffirming that the new authority was approved lawfully and designed only to counter large-scale sales tax fraud.

Speaking to reporters at the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), Aurangzeb said the measures had been formally passed by the National Assembly in consultation with the Standing Committee, countering claims that the powers were imposed without oversight. He clarified that the additional FBR powers apply exclusively to cases involving over Rs50 million in tax evasion not on ordinary businesses.

"The new legal tools have been implemented solely to prevent fraudulent activity related to



sales tax," Aurangzeb said.

He announced that an important meeting with presidents of chambers of commerce will be held tomorrow, where the government will explain the scope and intent of the FBR's actions to business leaders. Boosting investor confi-

dence Aurangzeb called for stronger cooperation between local and foreign investors, saying such collaboration is critical to boosting economic recovery and long-term stability.

He said that the government had paid \$2.3 billion in profits to

multinational companies, a move aimed at reinforcing investor trust amid ongoing fiscal reforms.

He added that refund issues facing multinational firms would be resolved soon, as part of wider efforts to improve Pakistan's business environment.

In a bid to deepen engagement, the senior leadership of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) has been invited to Islamabad for a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Aurangzeb also said remittance volumes were commendable, and that macroeconomic indicators are expected to show further improvement in the coming days. The finance minister said that the government had paid Rs75 billion in sales tax refunds this month and was encouraging private sector participation in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) facing financial losses.

Easing tax burden on low-income groups a priority: PM Shehbaz

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said expanding Pakistan's tax base and easing the burden on lower-income citizens were among the government's top priorities as he reviewed the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) ongoing digitisation and reform efforts.

Chairing a high-level meeting on Monday, Sharif praised the launch of simplified Urdu-language tax returns and called for the establishment of a helpline to assist the public in filing returns. "In tax reforms, the focus should remain on the convenience of the common man," he said.

He directed authorities to ensure third-party validation for all FBR reforms to maintain transparency. The prime minister emphasised that digital, concise, and database-linked tax returns would primarily benefit salaried individuals.

A public awareness campaign will soon be launched to encourage wider adoption of the new tax filing system. "For the first time in the country's history, the implementation of an AI-based tax



assessment system is a big success," he said, lauding the efforts of the finance ministry and FBR members of the economic team. Sharif also instructed that special support be extended to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for integrating into the new digital invoicing system.

The meeting was attended by senior ministers, FBR officials, and members of the economic team. Participants were briefed on the digitisation of invoicing, e-bill,

cargo tracking, and the establishment of a central command and control centre.

According to the FBR, bidding for the control centre will be completed shortly, with the system expected to be operational by September. The centralised system aims to enhance real-time data access and decision-making.

Officials also highlighted the AI-based advance goods declaration system.

CSA Launches CSS Preparatory Programme for Balochistan Graduates

Education Desk:

QUETTA: The Director General of the Civil Services Academy (CSA), Lahore, Farhan Aziz Khwaja, visited Chughtai Library in Quetta as part of the Academy's National Outreach Programme, announcing a special CSS Outreach and Preparatory Programme tailored for graduates from Balochistan.

The initiative aims to bridge the representation gap of Balochistan in Pakistan's civil services by providing structured training, skill development, and mentorship opportunities to local youths.

According to CSA, the programme will train 150 graduates from Balochistan in three batches, starting from October 2025 till January 2026, with 50 participants per batch. The curriculum will focus on preparing candidates for the CSS examination through comprehensive coaching and guidance from serving officers, especially those from Balochistan currently undergoing training in the 51st and 52nd Specialized Training Programmes (STPs).



During his visit, Farhan Aziz Khwaja held consultations with education stakeholders, civil society representatives, and aspiring youth, emphasizing CSA's commitment to building a diverse and inclusive civil service that truly represents all federating units of Pakistan.

"The programme is designed with active input from officers belonging to Balochistan, ensuring grassroots ownership," Khwaja said, adding that CSA looks forward to collaborating closely with provincial authorities to implement the initiative effectively.

The CSS Outreach and Preparatory Programme is seen as a significant step towards empowering Balochistan's talent pool and enhancing their national competitiveness in public service.

Balochistan in the Eye of Climate Change Storm: Calls for Resilient Climate Policies Surface

Continued to page 2

At least 6 die as heavy rains continue to wreak havoc across KP

Continued to page 3

Maulana Fazl's brother accepts Gandapur's electoral challenge

Continued to page 4

EDITORIAL VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Quetta-Karachi Highway Upgrade: Timely Action and Strong Leadership Key to Success

Editorial:

The federal government's recent announcement to upgrade the Quetta-Karachi (N-25) Highway to motorway standards marks a significant development for Balochistan.

Long known for its hazardous conditions, this vital route has long demanded urgent attention to improve safety and efficiency.

Yet, while the decision is a welcome step, it is crucial that the government now prioritizes a clear and realistic timeline for the project's execution.

Past experiences in Balochistan show that many major infrastructure projects have either faced indefinite delays or remained incomplete.

Providing specific deadlines and milestones will not only enhance transparency but also rebuild public trust and ensure accountability.

Credit must also be given to Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, whose consistent advocacy at the federal level has played a vital role in moving this long-standing demand forward.

His engagement with national authorities reflects a results-driven leadership style, focused on securing tangible benefits for the province.

Importantly, the government's decision to redirect funds saved from declining global oil prices towards this highway upgrade demonstrates fiscal prudence and a commitment to public welfare.

Using these resources for critical infrastructure like the Quetta-Karachi Highway is a strategic move that aligns national savings with regional needs.

In summary, upgrading the Quetta-Karachi Highway is a transformative initiative—but one that demands a clear roadmap and transparent execution.

With strong leadership and timely action, this project could finally bring long-awaited progress to Balochistan's infrastructure landscape.

Heatwave Threatens Lives and Crops in Balochistan

By Ghaliq Nehad:

As temperatures soar across Pakistan, several districts of Balochistan are bracing for an intense heatwave.

According to the Balochistan Meteorological Department, Sibi is expected to record temperatures as high as 47°C in the coming days. Turbat may reach 46°C, Lasbela 44°C, Nokundi 43°C, Dabandin 41°C, and Quetta could experience highs of up to 35°C.

The Met Office has issued heatwave alerts for Sibi, Kachi, Kohatpur, Lehi, Naseerabad, Jhal Magi, Turbat, Lasbela, Washuk, Kharan, and Chaghi, warning of dry and extreme weather conditions.

The heat is not only endangering human

health but also threatening agricultural productivity. Khalid Hussain Bhat, Chairman of the Farmers' Union, emphasized that extreme heat severely impacts seed survival and crop growth.

He noted that wheat yields, which traditionally ranged from 50-60 maunds per acre, have dropped significantly to 20-25 maunds due to milder winters and erratic climatic patterns.

Bhat also highlighted the critical situation in canal-fed farming areas where declining water availability has exacerbated the risks. He urged the government to introduce heat-resistant crop varieties to prevent billions in agricultural losses and potential food shortages.

Meanwhile, Dr. Mahmood Ahmed warned that rising temperatures could lead to an increase in heat-related illnesses. He advised citizens to stay hydrated, avoid sun exposure between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., and wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Reducing meat consumption and eating more fruits and vegetables can also help mitigate heat-related risks.

Dr. Ahmed stressed the importance of early action to prevent heatstroke, outlining symptoms such as excessive sweating, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, rapid heartbeat, and in severe cases, unconsciousness. He urged both public awareness and government support to manage the growing threat effectively.

Balochistan in the Eye of Climate Change Storm: Calls for Resilient Climate Policies Surface

Chandni Kakar:

In the global battle against climate change, Balochistan, Pakistan, serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for climate resilience. The province is experiencing increasingly severe weather events as a consequence of human-induced climate change. However, many residents mistake these extreme weather occurrences for regular fluctuations, hindering recognition of the escalating climate crisis.

Balochistan becoming unbearably hot

Balochistan is becoming unbearably hot, with rising temperatures transforming heatwaves into a year-round reality. These heatwaves pose severe health risks, including heat stress, dehydration, and even fatalities. In 2017, Turbat recorded a scorching 53.5°C (128.3°F), setting a record for Pakistan. Unfortunately, forecasts suggest that temperatures will continue to rise.

However, the climate challenges in Balochistan extend beyond relentless heatwaves. The province grapples with devastating droughts and floods, both of which wreak havoc on homes and infrastructure. The floods of 2010 and 2022 left nearly 4 million people displaced, disrupting lives and triggering food shortages and price spikes due to their impact on the agriculture sector.

The 2022 flood in Balochistan underscores the looming climate change threat

The 2022 flood underscored the looming threat of climate change over Balochistan. Driven by intensified and increasingly frequent monsoon rains, the full extent of the damage is yet to be comprehended. However, it exposed the province's vulnerabilities and highlighted the urgent need for effective management strategies.

Balochistan's annual rainfall of just 200 mm barely meets the needs of its parched population. This water scarcity adversely affects food production, access to drinking water, and livestock numbers, exacerbated by climate change. The severe droughts of 1997-2003 and 2014-2017 forced migrations to water-rich areas.

CC affects economy

Climate change also decimated the region's economy through the loss of livestock. Between 2010 and 2022, over 1.5 million livestock were lost, costing over \$1 billion and displacing over 100,000 people, particularly in districts like Quetta, Pishin, Turbat, Pajjura, and Khuzdar.

However, Balochistan need not accept this grim fate. It requires comprehensive strategies tailored to its

unique challenges. The provincial government must implement robust climate change policies, emphasizing water resource management and disaster preparedness. Learning from the tragic dam collapses of 2022, preventive measures, such as effective water reservoirs and early warning systems, are imperative. Spreading awareness about climate change and promoting sustainable agricultural practices are equally crucial.

Tree plantations could mitigate sweltering temperatures

In a province where tree plantations could mitigate sweltering temperatures and climate change impacts, government initiatives should engage younger generations in green initiatives. Achieving a resilient future necessitates collaborative effort involving government, local communities, civil society, and the commercial sector.

Balochistan's path towards resilience begins with a symphony of collective action. By addressing these critical issues, Balochistan can better adapt to the challenges posed by climate change, ensuring a more secure and sustainable future for its residents.

The writer is a Balochistan-based journalist, she can be reached at chandni@kakar.com or [9997707](tel:9997707).

Four tier service system: A milestone towards uplifting Agriculture department

By: Ifthikhar Ahmed:

Balochistan Agriculture Officers are highly obliged to Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, Minister Agriculture, Mir Asad Ullah Baloch, Secretary Agriculture, Mr. Umair Akbar, Balochistan Agriculture Officers Association's president Dr Qasim Kakar, General Secretary Shaked Zehri and all others that rendered efforts in the approval of the Four Tier system. Hopefully the said service structure may diminish the prevailing frustrations amongst the agriculture officers.

This will boost the performance of agriculture department

This may increase the performance of the overall agriculture department. Currently agriculture is the least privileged department of the province though major segment of the popula-

tion is directly or indirectly dependent upon the agriculture. Agriculture must be given due respect and regular flow for the survival of the masses.

The longtime lingering demands of the Agriculture Service Structure is the most effective apparatus that would not only strengthen the Department but also would benefit the officers in order to maintain smooth, timely and regular flow of promotions.

Through four-tier service, officers to get promotion chances

Absence of Four Tier Service Structure is one of the main hindrances in the progress of Agriculture department, because chances of promotions are limited and large number of officers presently retired in the same grade wherein they were appointed. However,

through the implementation of the Four Tier Structure, officers might get equal promotional chances in a flow, as much as officers in the other departments of the province.

Fortunately, financial impacts of the four tiers upon the department are so meager.

Discrimination with the agriculture professionals

There is terrible discrimination with the agriculture professionals rather with agriculture altogether as in the entire service most of the officers hardly avail only one promotion which is totally against the equity, fundamental right and natural justice. Pakistan is an agricultural country, presently it contributes 19.2 percent to the GDP and provides employment to around 38.5 percent of the labour force.

More than 65-70

percent of the population depends on agriculture. It is suffice to mention that from 1960 to 2018 agriculture was contributing 27.38% to GDP with a minimum of 20.22% at the lowest.

These figures show diminishing trend for the last few decades because agriculture and agriculture professionals/officers have not been given due respect. The officers with inferior qualification and technical knowledge, as compared to agriculture professional, in other departments are bestowed with attractive service careers.

They are given several promotions in the service moreover there is huge difference in the allowances, perks and privileges; agriculture department has kept deprived from all these allowances, perks and privileges which is badly affecting the overall agriculture in the province. These discriminations

are potentially exponential which is intensifying the magnitude of the frustration amongst the agriculture professionals.

Agriculture sector plays a key role in the development of Balochistan

The progress of the agriculture in province, the same is highly dependent on the agro-professionals so it is obligatory that the agriculture professionals must be given due privileges. The delightful agriculture officers mean advanced agriculture in the province. Hopefully this service structure would bring new wave of happiness and joy amongst the officer.

The perks and privileges would also be increased, ultimately they would multiply their efforts for the progress and prosperity of the agriculture in the province.

Withering Public Institutions

Asghar Harifal:

A growing number of employees adding public grievances

The growing number of employees associations, in the name of their welfare, underscores the growing utility of forming pressure groups to protect spheres of influence. Taking a cue from the past, the growing trend will bring serious pressure on the frail institutional framework adding to public grievances.

One of the phenomena, engendered by growing pressure groups in the public, is written writ large that institutions have exponentially grown in size, while at the same time trended into pathetically ossified entities, foretelling their imminent fall. The eventually will not only bring down for all employees associated with these institutions but will also add to the flight of the public at large. The bloated oversize of public departments in association with their old-fashioned nature has turned them into a self-serving

superstructure and lost relevance to the common man.

A department created for the general public turned into a service provider for employees only

A department created for the service of the general public has turned into a service provider for their respective employees. All the offices at district, divisional or provincial levels have more affairs related to employees than that of the ones for whose welfare the same are created. The resources placed at the disposal of these institutions with the aim to alleviate the issues of citizens, are arrogated to themselves and have turned into a bone of contention for members of the institutions. Speaking of personal experience of a department, with district and divisional level offices, it was noted that more than 90% of the correspondence made with office was related to the personal affairs of the employees.

After the creation. That was the first written pact of the Pakistani nation, which remains poignant as it bears a martial law imposed by Quaid-e-Awam also laid the foundation of the Party's newspaper "Musawat" to advance his party policies.

Formation of Pakistan Peoples Party, its aims and objectives

By Bashir Nichari:

(Added by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto the fifth point) Zulfikar Ali Bhutto said he had made a public manifesto to bring revolutionary changes to Pakistani society. He implemented agrarian reforms to slacken the grip of feudal lords, improve the economic welfare of laborers, and established social security system to prevent capital accumulation.

Besides, the acknowledgment of laborers' rights under the constitution, the self-respect of the ordinary person, the eradication of social inequality, and the essential honor of vote were some of the significant points in the basic manuscript. People's leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took over the leadership of a defeated nation in 1971.

But after only a few months, he gave democracy to the country by providing an alternative constitution. Then the parliament headed by the PPP majority gave the 1973 constitution, which was the first unified national constitution of the country.

It is the case with every public sector institution. Their raison d'être is service unto self.

Element of powers keep their opponents at bay

The element of powers among employees' associations also include larger size, the larger the size, the more nuisance value to keep the opponent at bay. At the provincial secretariat with the aim to enlarge its own size decades-old clerical staff positions are exponentially expanded leading to a 'one size fits all' structure. Despite specialization in every field turning into a norm, the public sector is stuck in an age-old management model. The information technology development has turned the public sector structure into an obsolete entity.

The manpower and the machine have found no compatibility. The only change in the last 75 years is that number of positions has shifted from one service group to another. Mutual bargaining among the ser-

vice groups is termed reform in the system. A third-body assessment guided only by the public interest has never taken place.

The resistance to change has not only left the public sector unworkable, the private sector has overtaken it in the market.

When private sector services are required from the market, the public sector functionalities are found totally useless about the trend in the market. Resultantly, the public sector is uniformly characterized by sub-standard quality.

The public sector has still not parted from the role, long performed by it but is now overtaken by the private sector with better performance. A role swap from a player to a regulator has still not taken place.

The role of regulator, which should have been taken by the public sector, is distasteful for it.

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to gain public support.

In fact, throughout the political history of Pakistan, the Pakistan People's Party is a Party that won 3 to 4 times in General Elections and took electoral measures for the welfare of the population and the progress of Pakistan.

The country has seen long, dark days of dictatorial regimes. The tyrants tried to derail democracy again and again by usurping people's mandate.

This bitter truth must be remembered by our nation.

No great leader of South Asia can compete with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's political insight. The love for people and democracy that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto instilled among the political leaders should never be lost. Formation of the Pakistan People's Party and its aims and objectives By Bashir Nichari

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PM-N questions granting of more reserved seats to JUI-F in KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Counsel for the PM-N on Monday wondered how the JUI-F could be granted more reserved seats than the PM-N when both parties had an equal number of seats.

Speaking in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) during the hearing of the case related to the distribution of reserved seats among political parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), he said that the JUI-F had 10, while the PM-N had eight

seats. "Both parties should have got nine seats each," he argued, adding that there could be a toss in case both parties had an equal number of seats.

A four-member bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, heard the case and later reserved its verdict.

The PM-N's counsel said that the notifications for the successful PM-N candidates were issued in phases. "Every

winning candidate then has three days to join any political party after the issuance of the notification," he said, adding, "Then each party's position in terms of its strength in the national and provincial assemblies becomes clear. And it is on the basis of these seats that the parties are granted reserved seats."

Speaking on the occasion, PPP's lawyer Nayer Bukhari said that the nature of his party's case was different from both the PM-N and the JUI-F.

"First, let these parties resolve their dispute," he added. "PM-N may lose its seats, says JUI-F's counsel. Later, talking to the media, counsel for the JUI-F Kamran Murtaza said that the PM-N's claim was that it should get more reserved seats. "They say that they should get more seats after the joining of Tariq Awan," he said, adding, "If any independent joins a political party after the time given in the constitution, the party's seats reduce and do not increase."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Muhammad Hanif Abbasi chairs key meeting on transforming Rawalpindi Railway Hospital into a model healthcare institution under a joint venture with HIMCT.

PTI withdraws from second round of talks on disqualification references against 26 MPAs

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) opposition in the Punjab Assembly has decided not to participate in the second round of negotiations regarding the disqualification references filed against 26 of its members.

Opposition Leader in the Punjab Assembly, Malik Ahmad Khan Bhachar, confirmed the decision, stating, "We are currently engaged with our guests today. We haven't submitted any list of members nor have we held consultations regarding the negotia-

tion committee." He added that he is currently accompanying Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and will address the matter after the visit concludes.

It is worth noting that on July 11, a meeting with Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan and opposition members resulted in an agreement to continue dialogue over the disqualification issue. The controversy stems from a June 28 protest by PTI lawmakers during a speech by the Punjab Chief Minister in the

Assembly. In response, Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan suspended 26 opposition members and announced that disqualification references against them would be sent to the Election Commission.

The committee includes Finance Minister Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, Samiullah Khan, Rana Muhammad Arshad, and Industries Minister Chaudhry Shafay Hussain.

Other members of the ruling committee include Syed Ali

Haider Gilani, Chaudhry Ifthikhar Chahachhar, Raheela Khadim Hussain, Amjad Ali Javed, Ahmad Iqbal, and Shoab Siddiqui.

26 suspended opposition members of the Punjab Assembly held a detailed meeting on Friday where Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan and agreed to continue talks in the coming days. The meeting, which lasted for over an hour, focused on various key issues and saw participation from both sides in a bid to break the ice.

BCB unveils ticket prices, digital sale plan for Pakistan T20I series

DHAKA (INP): The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has announced ticket prices for the upcoming three-match T20 International series against Pakistan, set to begin on July 20 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

In a bid to cater to a wide range of cricket enthusiasts, the ticket prices have been set between Tk 300 and Tk 3,500. The BCB has also adopted a digital-first approach for the ticketing process, with tickets going on sale online from July 15 through the board's official e-ticketing platform.

Fans will be able to select their preferred match, gallery, block and number of tickets before completing their purchase via card or digital wallet. Each registered account will be

permitted to buy a maximum of four tickets per match. Both digital and printed versions of the tickets will be accepted for entry at the stadium.

According to the BCB, any remaining tickets not sold online will be made available at designated booths near the stadium on match days. The locations of these booths will be announced on the board's official digital platforms ahead of each game.

The ticket pricing categories are as follows: Tk 300 for the Eastern Gallery, Tk 400 for the Northern Gallery, Tk 800 for the Shaheed Abu Sayed Stand and Club House, Tk 1,500 to Tk 3,500 for the Lounge and International Gallery, and Tk 2,500 for the Grand Stand. All three T20Is will be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National

Cricket Stadium, with the second and third matches scheduled for July 22 and 24 respectively. The fixtures are scheduled to begin at 6:00pm local time.

Pakistan's national side is expected to arrive in Bangladesh on July 16. The series will mark a rematch between the two teams following their last meeting in May, when Pakistan completed a 3-0 sweep on home soil.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on July 8 confirmed its 15-member squad for the tour, with all-rounder Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Ahmed Daniyal, Faheem Asrar, Fakhar Zaman, Hassan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Harris (wk), Mohammad Nawaz, Sahibzada Farhan (wk), Saim Ayub, Salman Mirza, Suftan Moqim.

Haris Rauf, meanwhile, sustained a Grade I hamstring injury while representing the San Francisco Unicorns during the ongoing 2025 edition of Major League Cricket (MLC) in the United States.

The Bangladesh squad is yet to be announced as the team is currently engaged in a T20I series against Sri Lanka, which is levelled 1-1. The final match of that series is set to be played on July 16 in Colombo.

Pakistan squad for Bangladesh T20I series: Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Ahmed Daniyal, Faheem Asrar, Fakhar Zaman, Hassan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Harris (wk), Mohammad Nawaz, Sahibzada Farhan (wk), Saim Ayub, Salman Mirza, Suftan Moqim.



ISLAMABAD: Candidates for Police recruitment hold protest in favour of their demands outside National Press Club (NPC).



QUETTA: Dr. Abdul Nasir Khan Kasi meeting with Governor Balochistan Jaffer Khan Mandokhail.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protests aim to destabilise country: Sanaullah

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Monday criticised the PTI for seeking dialogue with the establishment instead of talking with politicians, suggesting the party only wanted to "destabilise the country with protests".

His statement came as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, a day after he demanded that they hold themselves accountable. Gandapur's words made it clear that the PTI leadership was on a visit to Lahore to formally launch a movement to seek the release of party

founder Imran Khan and devise a strategy for its nationwide protest, which will reach its crescendo on August 5 — marking two years since the ex-premier was imprisoned.

Since Imran's incarceration in several cases, which he claims are politically motivated, his party's relationship with the government and the establishment has turned sour. The PTI has held several protests over the last year, most of which escalated into violence after facing state repression.

Sanaullah said that Gandapur's words made it clear that the PTI wanted to "destabilise the country, right after Marka-i-Haq" (referring to the recent Pakistan-India escalation) and the government's "success in economic revival, which lent Pakistan an opportunity for stability."

"Besides this, it is unknown what other agenda they have," he added.

Referring to the planned 90-day and August 5 protests, Sanaullah said, "If they remain peaceful, then it's fine (...) it is their democratic right. But if they take the law into their own hands and attempt to destabilise the country (...) then the law will take its due course."

He added that this destabilisation "has been their (PTI's) agenda from the beginning", referring to the party dem-

At least 6 die as heavy rains continue to wreak havoc across KP

NEWS DESK: At least six people have died, including four children, while one person was injured over the last 24 hours in rain-related incidents as heavy downpours continue to lash parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said on Monday.

Last week, PDMA alerted the district administrations across KP to the possibility of floods due to a new spell of torrential rains from July 11 to 17.

Heavy rainfall and flash floods have wreaked havoc in the province in June and are set to continue.

Pakistan experienced monsoon rainfall from June to September every year. The heavy rains also trigger deadly floods, landslides and displacement, particularly in vulnerable, poorly drained, or densely populated areas.

In Bajaur, a woman died after the boundary wall of her house collapsed due to heavy rain and gusty winds, according to the PDMA report, while in Khyber district, two children were swept away in a flash flood after heavy rains.

Per the report, Rescue 1122 officials found the body of one of the children, adding that efforts were underway to find the other missing child.

Another child — who was injured after being struck by lightning — was taken to the hospital and is now in a stable condition.

Kohat, a man died after the roof of his house caved in, while two children, aged seven and 12, died as a result of a wall collapse in Malakand.

According to the report, a total of three houses were partially damaged due to rain and flash floods. The PDMA has directed the relevant administrations to provide immediate assistance to the bereaved families and remain on high alert in case of an emergency.

According to the KP PDMA spokesperson, the authority was in touch with all district administrations and relief agencies. He added that

PDMA's Emergency Operation Centre was fully functional and urged the public to report any untoward incident on their helpline 1700.

The PDMA, in its countrywide weather advisory, warned that there was a risk of flooding in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Shanghala, Manshara, Muree, Galiat, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Buner, Swabi, Nowshera, Mardan, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, DG Khan, North East Punjab, Balochistan and Kashmir as heavy rains continue.



QUETTA: Balochistan Private Schools Association Alliance Head Haji Saleem Nasir addressing a press conference.

Nation will eliminate terrorism at all costs: Abdul Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Communication and Public Relations Abdul Aleem Khan, visited Khanewal and Lodhran to express condolences and solidarity with the families of those martyred in the recent tragic bus attack in Balochistan.

In the village of Katkhab, he expressed sympathies with the bereaved family of Shaheed Lance Naik Gulam Saad, who offered condolences over the martyrdom of the soldier and the passing away of his father.

While expressing love and affection with the children of Gulam Saad, Abdul Aleem Khan was quite sentimental and just as it faced

departed souls that may Allah Almighty grant them eternal mercy and strength and patience to bear this irreparable loss.

Talking to the media, Abdul Aleem Khan reaffirmed that the nation would eliminate terrorism at all costs and stand firm behind its Armed Forces. He emphasized that targeting residents of other provinces by removing them from buses in Balochistan is a conspiracy aimed at creating divisions among the Pakistani people.

However, he asserted that the nation will remain united and resilient by the grace of Allah Almighty. Federal Minister pointed out that the involvement of India's war and just as it faced

humiliation in recent conflicts it will continue to set its back in the future.

Abdul Aleem Khan said that in recent past Pakistan defeated India and now its nefarious designs will again be nethered. He further stated that Pakistani soldiers are making the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty and the entire nation stands behind them like a solid wall.

Abdul Aleem Khan reiterated that his visit to Khanewal and Lodhran was to share the grief of the affected families and to express solidarity. He prayed for the swift eradication of this menace of terrorism from the country. He also noted that victims of this incident were not wealthy or

privileged but rather belonged to poor, low-income and common households.

In addition, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan visited Duniyapur in Lodhran district where he offered condolences on the martyrdom of two brothers, Usman Toor and Jabir Toor in the Balochistan attack.

He especially commended the patriotic spirit displayed by their mother stating that no power in the world can defeat such nation blessed with brave and courageous mothers.

Abdul Aleem Khan declared that this mother in Duniyapur has set a new global example of resilience and bravery and her courage is a matter of pride for every Pakistani.

Rain disrupts life, causes power outages in Lahore, other cities

LAHORE (INP): A spell of light to heavy rain continues across Lahore and several cities in Pakistan, submerging low-lying areas and severely affecting normal life due to widespread power outages in many areas.

According to the Meteorological Department, the present weather spell is expected to persist until July 17.

In Lahore, intermittent light and heavy rain has reduced humidity. The minimum temperature is 27° C, while the maximum could reach 33° C.

In Faisalabad, rain with light breeze reduced the intensity of the heat and turned the weather pleasant.

Meanwhile, in Dera Ghazi Khan, Kamalia, and Kohli, torrential rain has inundated low-lying areas causing hardship for residents.

Rain has continued since last night in Dera Ghazi Khan,

Taunsa, and the Koh-e-Suleiman mountain range, with water entering homes and shops in some areas.

In Kamalia, heavy rain has flooded major roads including areas around the courts, Assistant Commissioner's office, and Iqbal Bazaar. Several electricity feeders have tripped, cutting off power to many areas. The sewage system near Mamu Kanjan Road has also been severely affected.

Rain was also reported from other parts of Punjab, including Gujrat and Hafizabad. Over 20 villages in the eastern parts of Taunsa have been submerged. Many families have started moving in search of safer places, fearing further flooding.

While the local administration claims that arrangements are in place, many residents are reluctant to leave their homes. Floodwaters have cut off

ground access to several areas, leaving people and their livestock trapped in dangerous conditions.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Gilgit-Baltistan Met Office forecast partly cloudy in Peshawar and other Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts. Rain is expected in Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Swabi, Dir, Chitral, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Bajaur, Abbottabad, Torgar, Mansehra, Battagram, Shangla, Kohistan, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand, Orakzai, Kohat, Hangu, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, D.I. Khan, Tank, and North and South Waziristan.

It warned of flash floods in local streams and landslides in upper regions like Chitral, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Kohistan, Torgar, and Battagram. Authorities have been instructed people to stay on high alert.



LONDON: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan presents a souvenir to UK Minister Lord Wajid Khan during their meeting in London—the two discussed enhancing bilateral trade, investment, and cooperation in urban development.

ECP reserves verdict on distribution of reserved seats in KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday reserved its verdict on pleas filed by PML-N, JUI-F and others on the allocation of reserved seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly.

A four-member bench of the ECP, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, reserved the verdict after hearing arguments from all parties.

During the hearing, lawyers from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) and other parties appeared before the election body.

On July 8, the PHC nullified the ECP's notification on the distribution of reserved

seats, particularly following the inclusion of independent candidate Tariq Awan into their ranks.

"If independent candidates join a party after the legally defined period, the number of reserved seats allocated to that party would not increase," said

Murtaza while explaining the seat distribution formula. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the opposition alliance is closing in on a simple majority as it is now just 20 seats away from tipping the balance of power in the provincial assembly following the reserved seats verdict.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led government currently holds 92 seats, while the opposition's numbers have risen to 53.

IFJ urges CJP to review PECA Law, citing threats to journalists, press freedom

ISLAMABAD (INP): International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has written a letter to the Chief Justice of Pakistan, expressing concern over the challenges faced by journalists in the country, particularly under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA).

The letter, also sent to the prime minister and the chief justice of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), highlights the increasing risks journalists face while performing their professional duties in Pakistan.

The IFJ stated that journalists are being subjected to cases, harassment, and threats under PECA, which is being used to curtail freedom of expression and fundamental rights.

The organization reminded Pakistan of its commitments under the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations conventions.

According to the IFJ, Pakistan recorded at least 34 violations against press freedom, including attacks on journalists, harassment, hate campaigns on social

media, and incidents of violence. The federation noted that at least seven journalists have been killed in Pakistan over the past year, yet no perpetrators have been convicted.

The letter also raised concerns over non-payment of salaries, unlawful dismissals, and security threats faced by media workers.

It further criticized restrictions on the right of media workers to unionize and argued that amendments to PECA have granted excessive powers to the FIA, potentially enabling the law's misuse to suppress dissent.

The IFJ urged the Supreme Court to review the PECA law and direct the government to introduce necessary amendments. It also called for immediate action to protect press freedom under Article 19 of the Constitution.

The federation appealed to the Chief Justice to ensure media workers have equal access to justice and that the PECA law undergoes a thorough assessment to safeguard freedom of the press in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan (Desig) to Czech Republic Shehryar Akber Khan called on Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at NHQ.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting review progress on Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

Maulana Fazl's brother accepts Gandapur's electoral challenge

PESHAWAR (INP): A fiery political exchange has erupted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as Engineer Zia-ur-Rehman, the brother of Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl group (JUI-F) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman, has accepted Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's challenge for a direct electoral battle.

In a strongly worded video message, Zia-ur-Rehman responded to the CM's earlier dare directed at Maulana Fazlur Rehman, saying, "Ali

Amin Gandapur, your challenge is accepted—but you are not even worthy of challenging Maulana Fazlur Rehman."

He further added, "Ali Amin

Gandapur, if you're serious, have your brother resign and bring him to contest against me!"

He further remarked, "Your tone and desperation clearly show that your political era is coming to an end. Soon, the people of KP will get rid of this corrupt government."

Taking a jab at Gandapur's political stature, Zia stated, "Maulana Fazlur Rehman ousted your leader Imran Khan from power corridors. Do you really think you can stand against me?" Zia-ur-Rehman also questioned Gandapur's tribal lineage, boldly claiming, "I once said in Dera Ismail Khan Chowk that if

you conduct his DNA, it'll prove he's not even a real Gandapur, as the Gandapur tribe is known for its bravery and honour, and he lacks both."

"In a final punch, Zia concluded, "Your behaviour confirms that your exit from politics is near. The people of KP are ready to send you home."

This exchange follows recent heated comments by KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, who had challenged Maulana Fazlur Rehman to face him directly in elections. Zia-ur-Rehman's fiery rebuttal now sets the stage for a potential high-stakes political duel in the region.

Pakistan Stock Exchange hits all-time high mark of 135,000 points

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) maintained strong upward momentum as it surpassed a historic milestone of 135,000 points on Monday after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) praised Pakistan's strong performance under Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme and improved macro-economic indicators.

During the opening session of trading, the PSX's benchmark KSE-100 index gained 1,207.86 points or 0.89% to reach 135,007.62 points.

Analysts pointed to China's rollover of \$3.4 billion in deposits and loans, a \$1 billion mobilization from Middle Eastern commercial banks through the ADB's \$500 million policy-based guarantee, and another \$500 million from

multilateral lenders as major contributors to PSX rally. No additional inflows were reported after June 30. Strong macroeconomic fundamentals and earnings optimism are expected to sustain market momentum in the near term. Earlier on Friday, the index continued with bullish trend, gaining 517.42 points, a positive change of 0.39 percent, closing at 134,299.77 points. A total of 765,079,448 shares were traded during the day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs40.165 billion. As many as 477 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 220 of them recorded gains and 228 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 29 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 94,133,007 shares at Rs13.08 per share, Aisha Steel Mills with 25,050,249 shares at Rs12.11 per share, and Kohinoor Spinning with 23,604,546 shares at Rs6.69 per share.

PIA Holding Company Limited B witnessed a maximum increase of Rs2,337.54 per share price, closing at Rs26,152.94, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with Rs169.67 rise in its per share price to Rs2,129.67. Bhanero Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs48.92 per share closing at Rs962.82 followed by Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs37.66 decline in its share price to close at Rs1,425.80.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed pleasure over the Pakistan Stock Exchange crossing a historic level of 135,000 points, saying that it reflected the confidence of the business community in Pakistan's economy. In a statement issued in Islamabad,

Shehbaz Sharif said the current positive economic indicators showed the government's policies moving in the right direction. He said that providing a conducive environment to the business community was the government's priority.

He said the government was working tirelessly for the country's development and public welfare.

FAISALABAD: State Minister for Interior and senior PML-N leader Senator Iqbal Chaudhary along with Commandant FC Raiz Nazir Gara addressing a press conference in DC office Faisalabad.

PML-N slams Gandapur as Gallup survey exposes his 'corrupt' governance

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has lashed out at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government led by Ali Amin Gandapur, citing the latest Gallup survey as a public indictment of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) governance.

Speaking to the media, Azma Bokhari said, "The Gallup survey is a slap on the face of PTI's so-called 12-year-long 'fake revolution' in KP. As many as 73% of citizens of the province have effectively charge-sheeted the Gandapur administration."

She claimed even PTI's voters have admitted that development funds in KP are being consumed by corruption, adding that 71% of respondents demand transparent investigations into mega-project corruption.

Bokhari further criticised Barrister Saif's defence of the KP government, stating, "Given KP's condition, no survey is needed to highlight the mess. Those who danced in joy over Gallup surveys in the past are now offended when the mirror is held up to them."

Taking a direct jab at the KP Chief Minister Gandapur, Azma Bokhari alleged, "Ali Amin has emerged as the

Chairman of the Loot Association."

Contrasting Punjab with KP, she lauded Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, saying, "Maryam Nawaz has set a new standard of merit, transparency, and good governance."

Even Gandapur and his cabinet witnessed Punjab's development during their GT Road travels."

Azma Bokhari concluded with a strong endorsement of Maryam Nawaz's leadership: "No one can raise a finger at Maryam Nawaz's projects. Every single development initiative in Punjab is being completed with transparency."

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