

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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Reko Diq Copper-Gold Project to Begin Production by 2028, Over 25,000 Job Opportunities for Locals: Barrick Gold Official

Syed Ali Shah, News Desk:

Barrick Gold Company's Communications Officer, Samia Ali Shah, has announced that production at the Reko Diq copper and gold project is expected to commence by the end of 2028. Addressing a media briefing at a local hotel in Quetta, Samia shared key details about the project's timeline, employment plans, and community engagement efforts.

According to Samia Ali Shah, the Reko Diq project will generate over 25,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities for the people of Balochistan. She emphasized that these jobs will not only come through direct hiring but also through contracts with suppliers, vendors, and service providers associated with the project.

During the construction phase, expected to span the next three years, around 7,500 to 8,000 temporary jobs will be created. Once the mine becomes operational, between 4,500 and 5,000 permanent positions will be maintained as part of regular operations.

Samia Ali Shah stressed three key points during her briefing:

Local Stakeholders as Prior-



She highlighted that local communities will be made key stakeholders in the project, ensuring their involvement and benefits from its long-term success.

Job Opportunities for Trained Graduates: Samia mentioned that Balochistan graduates who completed international min-

ing training through Barrick Gold's development program have returned and will play an essential role in the project's workforce.

Sustainable Community Engagement: She reaffirmed the company's commitment to prioritizing locals in both direct employment and supply chain opportu-

nities, aiming to boost the region's socio-economic development.

Samia concluded that Barrick Gold's approach is not just about mining resources, but about building capacity, creating livelihoods, and ensuring Balochistan's people directly benefit from the project's progress.

PAF to showcase advanced JF-17 Thunder jets at UK airshow

NEWS DESK:

A contingent of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) featuring the advanced JF-17 Thunder Block-III fighter jets arrived in the United Kingdom to take part in the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) 2025, a statement from the military's media wing said on Thursday. RIAT, which will run from July 18 to 20, is one of the world's largest military airshows. Has been running for over 50 years and powers the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust, according to its website. A PAF contingent comprising "state-of-the-art JF-17 Thunder Block-III fighter aircraft and the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, has landed at the Royal Air Force Base Fairford, United Kingdom, to participate in the prestigious 'RIAT 2025, a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

"PAF's participation in RIAT, one of the world's largest military airshows, underscores Pakistan Air Force's commitment to showcasing its professional excellence, operational capability and the indigenous strength of its aviation industry," the ISPR highlighted.

Adding to the operational significance of this international deployment, Pakistan Air Force's JF-17 Thunder Block-III fighters executed successful Air-to-Air Refuelling operations.

Pakistan, EU agree to strengthen cooperation in security during bilateral dialogue

NEWS DESK:

Pakistan and the European Union (EU) on Thursday agreed on bolstering cooperation in security and counter-terrorism among other sectors during a bilateral dialogue, according to a press release issued by the Foreign Office (FO).

EU Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Riina Kionka in March had announced that European companies recognised Pakistan as a potential business destination and were exploring new avenues for economic partnership.

The EU is Pakistan's second-largest trading partner, with the GSP+ status allowing the country to enjoy duty-free or minimum duty on European exports.

According to the press release, Pakistan and the EU held their 10th Political Dialogue in Brussels and discussed key regional and international issues, including multilateral cooperation. Both sides agreed to deepen dialogue and discussions on security during the event.

"The EU and Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP) signed in 2019," the FO stated. "Both sides aim to further deepen cooperation in all areas covered under the SEP."

Additionally, both sides agreed to continue close engage-

ment under the GSP+ framework. They also acknowledged meaningful cooperation on various aspects of migration, with the third Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Dialogue slated for later in 2025, the FO stated.

According to the FO, the EU and Pakistan acknowledged the importance of multifaceted cooperation on security matters, in-



cluding counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics.

"They condemned all forms of terrorism," the press release read. "Both sides agreed on the need for efforts based on dialogue and diplomacy in order to solve contentious issues and underscored the importance of upholding international law and the sanctity of international agreements."

[and] treaties."

The FO stated that both sides also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and India-occupied Kashmir and stressed the need to pursue peaceful solutions to conflicts, in respect of the principles of international law and the UN Charter.

"They agreed on the urgent need to improve the humanitarian



situation in Gaza," the statement read. "Both sides called for the resumption of a ceasefire and expressed support for initiatives that contribute to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in Palestine, in accordance with the two-state solution."

Pakistan and the EU reaffirmed their aspiration to convene the 7th Strategic Dialogue in 2025

to strengthen Pakistan-EU cooperation. According to the FO, they agreed to hold the next Political Dialogue meeting in Islamabad next year.

Foreign Secretary Anura Bilal led Pakistan's delegation, while the EU delegation was headed by Olof Skoog, Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service.

The EU is not the only Western power with whom Pakistan has experienced improved relations.

US-Pakistan relations saw a major boost when US President Donald Trump hosted Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir at the White House last month in an unprecedented meeting. During the meeting, Trump "lauded Pakistan's ongoing efforts for regional peace and stability, and appreciated the robust counterterrorism cooperation between the two states," a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations said.

Additionally, United States Central Command chief Army General Michael Kurilla last month praised Pakistan as a "phenomenal partner in the world of counter-terrorism", citing the nation's struggle against terrorism in Balochistan and against terrorist groups like the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K).

PM Shehbaz directs authorities to provide easy loans to farmers

NEWS DESK:

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the relevant authorities to present a policy framework by the end of this month for the provision of easy loans to farmers engaged in medium and small-scale agricultural activities.

In June, the prime minister reaffirmed his government's commitment to revitalising the agriculture sector, urging relevant authorities to reduce the tax burden on the sector. He also called for introducing sustainable reforms to boost agriculture.

Chairing a review meeting on planning for agricultural development and agri-financing today, PM Shehbaz directed the authorities to "prepare and present a comprehensive plan by the end of this month for providing farmers with easy loans and introducing a system in the agri-financing sector aligned with modern requirements."

"Priority should be given to providing modern agricultural facilities to farmers owning less than 12 acres of land," the prime minister said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Ahsan Khan Cheema and Rana Tanveer Hussain, Advisor to the Prime Minister Muhammad Ali, Ministers of State

Bilal Azhar Kiani and Abdul Rehman Kanji, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar, Governor Sindh Jameel Ahmed, Chief Coordinator Musharraf Zaidi, and other senior officials attended the meeting.

He said the development of Pakistan was linked to the progress of the agriculture sector and value addition of the agri-products.

"Comprehensive planning should also be carried out for small-scale industrial machinery access, aimed at processing farmers' produce into exportable goods," the prime minister stressed.

The premier also pointed out that the government was accelerating the reform process to provide farmers with modern agricul-

tural equipment, quality seeds, artificial intelligence, better water use, on-farm small industries, and other facilities.

"Steps are also being included in the reforms for providing farmers with necessary facilities and training for increasing exports through the processing of agricultural produce," he added.

On the occasion, a detailed briefing was given on ongoing agricultural reforms, the performance of the Agricultural Development Bank Limited, and the loans being provided to farmers.

Earlier this month, PM had unveiled a scheme for offering soft agricultural loans to farmers under the Public Private Partnership model. In March, the PM had vowed to revitalise the country's agriculture sector.

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Three Killed in Separate Shooting Incidents in Balochistan's Bolan and Kohlu Districts

Yousaf Marri, Ayub Bhutto:

At least three people, including a woman, lost their lives in two separate firing incidents reported from Balochistan's Bolan and Kohlu districts, local law enforcement officials confirmed on Thursday. In the first incident, a man and a woman were killed in Goth Azmat, located within the jurisdiction of Levies Thana Bhag in Bolan district. According to Levies officials, the double murder is believed to be linked to an alleged honour-related dispute. The tragic event sparked panic in the area, while Levies personnel transported the bodies to a nearby hospital for legal formalities. Authorities have launched a formal

investigation into the matter.

In a separate incident in Kohlu district, a man was shot dead in the Mari Colony area due to what police described as a longstanding personal rivalry. The victim was identified as Shadi Khan. Upon receiving information, SHO City Sharif Mari and his team arrived at the crime scene, collected forensic evidence, and initiated an inquiry.

Both incidents highlight ongoing concerns over local disputes and violence in various parts of Balochistan. Officials have assured that investigations are underway and that all individuals involved in these acts will be brought to justice.



Balochistan Education Department Announces Summer Vacations in Cold Zones

Education Desk:

The Balochistan Education Department has officially announced a short summer break for schools located in the province's cold zones.

According to a notification issued by the department, all educational institutions in these colder regions will observe summer holidays from July 22 to August 1, 2025. Officials said the decision was made in consideration of rising temperatures, ensuring

the well-being of students and school staff during the warmer days. Although these areas usually experience cooler weather compared to other parts of the province, this break has been scheduled to provide relief from seasonal heatwaves.

The Education Department has instructed all schools in the designated cold zones to strictly follow the holiday schedule. Normal classes will resume after August 1.



3 terrorists killed during joint operation in KP's Bannu: police

NEWS DESK:

Three "wanted terrorists" were killed during a joint operation between the regional police and the Counter Terrorism Department in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district on Wednesday night, police said.

The spokesperson for the Bannu police, Khanzila Quraishi, told Dawn.com, "The three terrorists, belonging to the Zarar group, had been eliminated in an intelligence-based joint operation conducted in the Bannu city outskirts at midnight."

He said that the "terrorists were wanted for attacks on security forces and the targeting of police personnel."

According to the spokesperson, the terrorists were identified and all of them were residents of Bannu. "Three Kalashnikovs, magazines, pistols and handmade improvised explosive devices were recovered from their possession," he said.

Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities over the past year, especially in KP and Balochistan, after the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

KP has seen an increasing trend of terrorism-related incidents, with a series of attacks across Peshawar, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, and Bajaur in the

last few months.

Yesterday, two policemen were gunned down in a terrorist attack in Kulachi area of KP's Dera Ismail Khan district, police said.

In early July, at least five people, including an assistant commissioner, were killed and 11 others injured in an explosion targeting a government vehicle in Bajaur.

Meanwhile, a terrorist was killed and six others were injured during a search operation in Dera Ismail Khan area against assailants who attacked police personnel, according to the District Police Officer (DPO).

A statement issued by DI Khan DPO Sajjad Khan said that a search and strike operation was conducted in the Kulachi area under his supervision. It added that an exchange of fire took place between terrorists and police, leaving one terrorist dead and six others injured.

The process of identifying the dead terrorist is underway, the statement read. "A Kalashnikov with a magazine and ammunition was recovered from his possession."

Separately, six people were killed as a result of a clash between two parties over personal enmity in the Panjvala area of KP's Dera Ismail Khan area on Thursday morning.

Balochistan's Rs250 Billion Federal Allocation Must Drive Inclusive, Transparent Infrastructure Development

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Dam bursts as record 427mm rain wreaks havoc in Chakwal

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World Day of International Justice has no meaning for Kashmiri people

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Balochistan's Rs250 Billion Federal Allocation Must Drive Inclusive, Transparent Infrastructure Development

Editorial:

The federal government's allocation of Rs250 billion for Balochistan in the upcoming Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) is a significant step that, if properly implemented, can transform the province's economic future. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement at the Balochistan Grand Tribal Jirga in Quetta reflects a welcome shift toward prioritizing infrastructure investment, socio-economic development, and regional connectivity in a province often overlooked.

However, we emphasize that this federal funding must be utilized for high-impact, long-term infrastructure projects — not short-term political schemes or small-scale, non-transparent initiatives. Balochistan requires mega projects that foster job creation, enhance public health systems, modernize education infrastructure, and develop transportation networks to uplift the Human Development Index (HDI) of the province.

For maximum return on investment and to ensure value for taxpayer money, funds must be directed toward projects like the dualization of the Quetta-Karachi Highway, smart road infrastructure, clean drinking water systems, renewable energy integration, and digital education access. These projects not only promote regional growth but also boost national economic indicators and reduce rural-urban disparities.

From a public finance and fiscal policy standpoint, transparency and accountability mechanisms must be enforced. We urge the government to establish an independent monitoring authority to ensure that every rupee is spent efficiently. Government transparency, financial accountability, and public-private partnerships should guide the implementation process to avoid corruption and misuse of development funds.

This is not just an economic opportunity; it is a national security imperative. Without addressing the root causes of underdevelopment — poverty, unemployment, and lack of education — extremism, insurgency, and foreign-sponsored sabotage will continue to find fertile ground. National security, economic resilience, and social cohesion are directly tied to how well we invest in the country's largest and most resource-rich province.

As a platform committed to investigative journalism, public interest reporting, and development policy, we insist that there be no individual projects, no ghost schemes, and no politically motivated allocations. Only inclusive economic development, guided by data-driven planning and evidence-based policy, can deliver the sustainable growth Balochistan needs.

This is a defining moment. The Rs250 billion fund should not be another missed opportunity. It must become the foundation for a new era of economic empowerment, smart city development, and infrastructure modernization in Balochistan. This will not only enhance the province's GDP contribution, but also attract foreign direct investment (FDI), boost e-commerce logistics, and reduce the digital and physical divide that isolates communities.

We call on the federal and provincial governments to act decisively, inclusively, and transparently. This is about nation-building, not narrow interests. The people of Balochistan deserve no less.

Starting a Small Business in Balochistan: Funding & Growth Tips

Starting a small business in Balochistan is one of the most promising ways to generate income, create jobs, and uplift the local economy. With government-backed business loans, startup grants, and low-cost business ideas, Balochistan offers untapped opportunities for entrepreneurs. This guide explains step-by-step how to register, fund, and grow your business in the region.

Why Start a Small Business in Balochistan?

Balochistan has emerging markets, low competition, and a rising demand for basic and digital services. Entrepreneurs can benefit from:

• Low initial investment requirements

• Government incentives and grants for startups

• High demand for localized services and products

• Tax relief and SME support schemes

Step-by-Step Guide to Launching a Business in Balochistan

1. Choose a High-Profit Business Idea

Select a profitable business in Balochistan based on local market needs. Top ideas with high CPC potential:

• Solar energy installation business

• Organic farming or livestock trading

• Handicrafts export via e-commerce

• Freight, delivery, and logistics services

• Freelance digital services (graphic design, SEO, content writing)

These are low-risk and high-demand ventures suitable for the region.

2. Register Your Business Legally

To apply for business loans and government grants, you need to legalize your startup.

Register with SECP or local Chamber of Commerce

Apply for an NTN (National Tax Number) via FBR

Set up a business bank account

bank account

Ensure compliance with local business laws

Tip: Use the SECP eServices Portal for quick online registration.

3. Apply for Small Business Grants in Pakistan (2025 Update)

Looking for free money to start a business in Balochistan? These grant programs can help:

• SMEDA Small Business Grants

• The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) offers:

• Capacity-building programs

• Matching grants for business improvement

• Free feasibility studies and training

Visit: www.smeda.org

Kambyar Jawan Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES Loan 2025)

Loans up to PKR 5 million

No interest (Tier-1)

Priority for Balochistan youth and women

Apply now: yes.kambyarjawan.gov.pk

4. Access Small Business Loans in Balochistan

Akhwath Islamic Microfinance

Interest-free loans (Qarz-e-Hasana)

Targeted at low-income and women entrepreneurs

National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) – SME Finance

Loan range: PKR 100,000 – 5 million

Grace period and flexible repayment terms

For registered startups in rural and urban areas

Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP) Community-led loan schemes

Enterprise development training

Ideal for agri-businesses and home-based work

Growth Strategies to Scale Your Startup in Balochistan

1. Digital Market-

ing for Local Businesses

Use local SEO techniques and social media platforms to get visibility.

Create a Google My Business listing

Use geo-targeting with go-go-targeting

Promote on WhatsApp Business and TikTok

2. Join Business Networks

Balochistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI)

Women Business Development Center (WBDC) shows

Trade shows and local SME expos

3. Reinvest Profits Wisely

Buy inventory in bulk

Invest in customer service and staff training

Explore B2B sales within Pakistan and abroad

Most Searched Questions (FAQs)

Can I get a government grant to start a business in Balochistan?

Yes. Programs like SMEDA and Kambyar Jawan offer grants and interest-free loans to qualified individuals, especially youth and women entrepreneurs.

What is the easiest business to start in Quetta?

Low-investment options include freelancing, handicrafts, mobile accessories, and home-based catering.

Is registration required for small businesses?

Yes. Legal registration opens access to government loans, grants, and tax incentives.

Final Thoughts

With the right knowledge, funding, and execution, starting a business in Balochistan can be both impactful and profitable.

By leveraging SME grants, low-interest loans, and digital tools, you can build a sustainable business that contributes to your community and secures your future.

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Israel and Iran Conflict and Its Impact on Middle East Stability

Syed Muhammad Waseem:

Israel and Iran are exchanging deadly attacks. Israeli strikes have hit homes, hospitals, and aid workers in Tehran. Iran responded with missile and drone attacks on cities like Tel Aviv and Haifa. Many civilians have been killed or injured on both sides.

The conflict is drawing global attention. President Trump has also shaped the conflict's course. The U.S. strongly supports Israel with military aid and intelligence, while Iran receives political backing from Russia and economic support from China. These global ties have made the situation more complex, raising the stakes and limiting diplomatic solutions.

The violence is shaking the region's stability. Global alliances are shifting, economies are under pressure, and millions fear what comes next. Behind the missiles and statements lies a deeper struggle for military power, especially between Iran and Israel. From the origins of their rivalry to current military actions, regional fallout, and global reactions, this article breaks down what you need to know.

Historical Background

The Iran-Israel conflict history began intensifying after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which transformed Iran from a close ally of Israel into one of its fiercest opponents. Iran's support for armed groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, along with Israel's targeted assassinations and airstrikes, deepened the divide.

The October 7 Hamas attack and Israel's retaliation marked a sharp escalation, pushing the conflict into more direct and dangerous territory.

Over the years, the tensions have played out through a timeline of provocative events. Iran's controversial nuclear program has drawn repeated warnings and attacks from Israel. Both nations have launched cyberattacks against each other, with

Israel and Iran conflict and its impact on Middle East stability

Political Instability

The Israel-Iran conflict is deeply affecting neighboring nations. Syria's new Sunni-led government has moved away from Iran. It sees Israel's strikes as helpful in reducing Iranian influence.

World from a bipolar to a multipolar world.

Pakistan is cited as one of the countries blessed with strategic locations connecting extremely important geographical regions of Central and South Asia. Historically speaking, the dividends of geography did accrue and they included the fortification of security by enlarging the security apparatus with the help of western powers and economic progress of a few decades, albeit ephemeral in nature. The country was the cynosure of Western attention from its origin thanks to its location. In the decades of the sixties, eighties and later during the period of the so-called war against terrorism, Pakistan played a crucial role owing to its location. The security compulsions of the western countries, led by America, turned out to be aligned with Pakistan's security concerns in the region, leading to trusted relations of cooperation.

Pakistan's predominant predilection has seriously come under strain

Pakistan is again the hub of changes but, this time, not as the traditional fire-arm battleground, but challenged by growing economies and information technology bewildering advancement, defining states' power. With the end of the last Afghan war in the neighbourhood and seismic political changes at the world chessboard, metamorphosing the

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China-made generic antibiotic to counter drug-resistant infections

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's national drug regulator has officially approved the marketing of a generic version of the potent antibiotic Daptomycin, made by a Chinese drug maker, in a move that could provide a new, potentially more affordable option for treating severe, drug-resistant infections.

The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) granted the market approval for the injectable drug, manufactured by China-based Hainan Poly Pharm, the Chinese firm announced in a post, according to Gwadar Pro.

This development is significant for Pakistan, a country facing a severe public health crisis from antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

According to a 2019 global study by The Lancet, drug-resistant infections are the third-leading cause of death in the country, directly attributable to over 59,000 deaths and associated with 221,500 others that year.

Daptomycin is a last-resort antibiotic used to treat complicated skin and bloodstream infections caused by pathogens like *Staphylococcus aureus*, particularly its methicillin-resistant strain (MRSA). Its effectiveness against bacteria that have become immune to other treatments makes it a critical tool for clinicians.

The original drug, marketed as Cubicin, was first developed by U.S.-based Cubist Pharmaceuticals and approved in 2003.

The introduction of generic versions is a standard step in the lifecycle of a drug after primary patents expire and is often associated with increased market competition and lower prices.

The approval marks the second pharmaceutical product from Hainan Poly Pharma to be registered in Pakistan, and a third is under review in the country, the firm said in the announcement.



QUETTA: National Party leader and provincial assembly member Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch meeting with Education Minister Rubelha Hameed Khan Durran.

60 killed, several missing as fire rips through Iraqi mall

BAGHDAD (INP): At least 60 people have been confirmed dead and 11 others are missing following a massive blaze that tore through the Corniche Hypermarket Mall in the Iraqi city of Al-Kut.

Videos shared widely on social media showed flames engulfing the multi-storey shopping centre as firefighters struggled overnight to bring the fire under control.

The five-storey building, located in the heart of Al-Kut — approximately 160 kilometres southeast of Baghdad — had opened just five days prior, according to local reports.

City health authorities, alongside two police sources, confirmed the death toll to Reuters on Thursday. "We have compiled a list of 59 victims whose identities have been confirmed, but one body was so badly burned

that it has been extremely difficult to identify," a health official told the agency.

City official Ali al-Mayahi said that more bodies remained trapped under debris and that search and rescue operations were ongoing.

Footage aired by state media outlet INA showed intense flames and thick smoke pouring out of the building, with firefighters working under perilous conditions to rescue those trapped. Other videos circulating online showed people stranded on the roof, awaiting help, while others captured the aftermath — a charred and gutted interior.

"A tragedy and a calamity has befallen us," said provincial governor Mohammed al-Miyahi, who confirmed that lawsuits had been filed against both the owner of the building and the mall operator. He said that preliminary findings from an official probe would be released within 48 hours.

"The tragedy is a major shock," the governor added, noting that a "serious review of all safety measures" in commercial buildings would be undertaken.

The Corniche Hypermarket Mall, one of the city's newest commercial centres, was reportedly crowded at the time of the incident, with many families seeking relief from the summer heat and widespread power cuts at home.

An air conditioner exploded on the second floor and then the fire erupted. "We couldn't escape it."

While the exact cause of the fire remains unknown, initial reports suggest an electrical fault may have triggered the disaster. Local officials have not ruled out negligence in enforcing building codes and fire safety regulations.

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Rescue efforts are ongoing as authorities continue to search the remains of the building. Medical teams are working to identify the deceased and treat those injured, while the city mourns one of the deadliest fire incidents in recent years.



QUETTA: Balochistan Agriculture College Academic Staff and Labour Union head Zafar Ullah Resani addressing a press conference.



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Second, improve security mechanisms. All parties reaffirmed the need to fully implement the important common understandings reached by the leaders of member states and continuously enhance the SCO's ability to respond to security threats and challenges, including combating the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, and safeguarding information security.

All parties decided to accelerate the building of "four security centers", including a universal center and its branches to address the challenges and threats to the security of SCO member states and the Anti-Drug Center.

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All parties also discussed the establishment of an SCO development bank and other financing support mechanisms, and reached a principled consensus.

Fourth, consolidate good-neighborliness and friendship. An important source of the SCO's enduring vitality lies in understanding and affinity among the people of its member states.

PM calls emergency meeting after urban flooding in twin cities

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Responding to the developing situation, the Deputy Commissioner of Murree has issued a stern advisory, urging both tourists and residents to refrain from using the affected section of the GT Road.

"We urge full cooperation from all citizens. Until further notice, please use the alternative route," the DC stated.

Meanwhile, due to heavy rain part of a road also caved at Bochhal Road in Matan Khurd locality in Chakwal on Thursday.

Rescue 1122 and Rescue officials rushed to the site and took control of the situation.

Rescue 1122 personnel and traffic authorities remain stationed at the site, working to manage the situation and ensuring the safety of the public.

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QUETTA: Vice Chancellor Bolan University Dr. Shabbir Lehi and Vice Chancellor Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University Dr. Rubina Mushtaq is being met by Governor Balochistan Jaffer Khan Mandokhail.

Dam bursts as record 427mm rain wreaks havoc in Chakwal

CHAKWAL (INP): Record 427 millimetres of rain, recorded in Chakwal and its suburbs in only 10 hours, led to flooding prompting the district administration to declare a rain emergency, while the death toll in rain-related incidents in the country during the entire monsoon season rose to 149.

The flood triggered by the heavy rain caused a breach in a Chakwal dam, which led to mass evacuation of the population residing in nearby areas. Rainwater entered people's homes, forcing them to spend the night under open skies.

A man and his son were killed in Khewal area of Chakwal, while a pregnant woman and her child were seriously wounded. In Budhial area, walls collapsed while the floodwater also washed away cattle.

Rain drains Bhanao, Kuldevyan, Saroli and others burst their banks, while two vehicles and three people were washed away, following a breach in a dyke in Panwal Dam; two were rescued, while the search for the third one was underway till last reports came in.

According to the spokesman for the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), the rescue operation was underway to shift the stranded people to safe locations. "In view of an alarming situation, the district administration is in contact with the Pakistan Army," he said, adding that the operation would continue till the last person was rescued.

He informed that the Rescue 1122, the district administration and the Civil Defence were participating in the operation. "PDMA DG Irfan Ali Kathia is supervising the operation," the spokesman said, and appealed to the people to stay in safe places. On the other hand, heavy showers lashed the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) during the last 24 hours, disrupting routine life in these areas. The downpour led to a significant rise in the water level in Rawalpindi's Nullah Lai; it was recorded at 18 feet at both Katarian and Gawalmandi, prompting the administration to declare a holiday in Rawalpindi.

The deputy commissioner issued a notification in this regard and directed the people to stay indoors.

These efforts will become an important

Muqam, Sardar Yasir discuss boosting tourism investments in AJK, GB

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Engineer Amir Muqam, held an important meeting with Prime Minister's Coordinator for Tourism, Sardar Yasir Ilyas, in Islamabad.

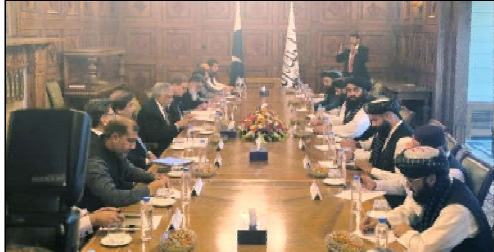
The meeting focused on exploring new avenues to boost tourism across Pakistan, with particular emphasis on enhancing tourism-related investments in Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan—two of

the country's most scenic and culturally rich regions.

Both sides exchanged views on developing short-term and long-term strategies to strengthen the tourism infrastructure, attract international tourists, and create employment opportunities in the sector. The discussion also included identifying key areas where immediate interventions could lead to sustainable economic impact. Minister Amir Muqam extended

heartfelt congratulations to Sardar Yasir Ilyas on his recent appointment as the Prime Minister's Coordinator for Tourism and expressed confidence in his ability to bring visionary leadership to the tourism portfolio.

The meeting was described as productive and aligned with the government's broader agenda of economic revival through sustainable tourism and foreign investment.



KABUL: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met with Acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in Kabul, along with senior-level delegations from both sides.

Maryam Nawaz govt announces interest-free Punjab E-Taxi Scheme

LAHORE (INP): The provincial government has finalised plans to announce interest-free electric vehicles in the name of the Punjab E-Taxi Scheme, focused on promoting sustainable transport and as an innovative step towards empowering unemployed youth.

The Punjab Transport Minister, Bilal Akbar Khan, chaired an executive committee meeting. He, along with officials, reviewed the technical specifications, pricing, and infrastructure requirements for the upcoming Punjab E-Taxi Scheme.

Bilal Akbar Khan mentioned that 100 electric vehicles will be given in the first phase through interest-free instalment plans. It will help eligible applicants to own and operate eco-friendly taxis without any financial burdens.

The Punjab E-Taxi Scheme is part of the broader

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz's E-Taxi Program 2025, which aims to displace conventional fuel-based taxis with electric alternatives.

Dewan Motors is the government's partner in this initiative to offer locally assembled models such as the Honi VC20 and VC30, including ranges of 200 km and 300 km per charge, respectively.

The initiative concentrates on 100% electric vehicles, precisely zero-emission taxis designed to fight regional pollution.

To make this more available, there are interest-free instalment plans that permit for affordable monthly payments without any markup.

Additionally, a powerful charging infrastructure is being established, with stations created every 3 kilometres in Lahore and plans for development throughout the province.

This project also plans to create thousands of new job opportunities, mainly promoting youth and women in the community.

Bilal Akbar Khan highlighted that in the coming weeks, the scheme will be launched to the public via public advertisements officially. He mentioned that the application criteria will be kept simple to ensure maximum participation, especially from marginalised groups, including women, disabled individuals, and rural residents.

The Punjab E-Taxi Scheme is expected to transform the province's transportation landscape by offering a cleaner, quicker, and more cost-effective alternative to traditional taxis. With over 60,000 applications already received, the program is poised to become a model for green mobility across Pakistan.

KP Governor summons assembly's session on July 20

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor has summoned the provincial assembly's session on July 20, one day ahead of the Senate elections.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has signed over the summary for convening the provincial legislature's session.

Twenty-five nominees for the reserved seats will take oath in the assembly session. It is to be mentioned here that the Senate elections are scheduled to be held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on July 21.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the first week of July issued schedule for Senate elections on 11 seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), with the polling to be held on July 21.

According to a notification issued here, the elections will be held for seven general, two women, and as many technocrat/ulama seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The polling has been fixed for July 21, 2025, at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly building.

The ECP has also announced election on the Senate seat vacated by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Sania Nishtar.



HYDERABAD: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah addressing a press conference at Mayor office.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding PSDP projects.

World Day of International Justice has no meaning for Kashmiri people

ISLAMABAD (INP): The political and legal Justice continues to elude the people of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir even as the World Day of International Justice is being commemorated across the globe, today.

The report released by Kashmir Media Service in connection with the day maintained that the defenseless and oppressed people of Kashmir continue to suffer under the Indian colonialism for their the righteous demand of right to self-determination.

The report said Kashmiris face deepening atrocities, discrimination and injustice on the part of India. Indian forces including Army, Rashtriya Rifles (RR), Border Security Force, paramilitary forces, Special Operation Group and police, enjoying impunity under draconian laws like AFSPA, PSA and UAPA, are committing war crimes in the disputed territory to suppress the just struggle for right to self-

determination. The massacres, extra-judicial killings, fake encounters, custodial killings, arrests, atrocities, cordon and search operations, house raids and harassment by Indian forces and seizing of properties including ancestral houses and agricultural lands are order of the day in the occupied territory.

The report deplored that justice had not been delivered to the victims of mass killings like massacres of Gaw Kadal, Chota Bazar, Zakoor-Tengpora, Khaniyar Srinagar, Chattisingpora, Kupwara, Handwara, Sopore, Bijbehara, Kishtwar, Doda and Shopian and Kunanposhpora mass rape, Shopian double rape and murder and rape and murder of Kathua minor girl in the territory.

The report said the Indian judiciary is biased against the Kashmiris and it never provided justice to them as Indian courts had not punished a single Indian

soldier or policeman involved in war crimes in the territory.

It said that the Indian judiciary, without fulfilling the basic requirements of justice, executed the Kashmiri liberation leaders, Muhammad Maqbool Butt and Muhammad Afzal Guru and martyred Shaikh Abdul Aziz, jailed Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, Altaf Ahmed Shah and Ghulam Mohammed Butt just for being Kashmiris.

The report pointed out that thousands of Kashmiris, including APHC chairman, Masarat Aalam Butt, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Aasiya Andrabi, Naveem Ahmed Khan, Nabeeda Nusrat, Felmeida Sofi, Ayaz Muhammad Akbar, Peer Saifullah, Raja Merajuddin Kawai, Shahid-ul-Islam, Farooq Ahmed Dar, Syed Shahid Yousuf, Syed Shakeel Yousuf, Muzaffar Ahmad Dar, Ghulam Muhammad Butt, Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Maulvi Bashir Ahmed, Bilal Siddiqi.

Section 144 imposed across Punjab, 'emergency' in parts as rains claim dozens of lives in past 24 hours

NEWS DESK: Section 144 was imposed across Punjab along with a state of emergency in several districts on Thursday as heavy rains triggered flooding and claimed over 60 lives across the province in the past 24 hours, according to authorities.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Monday issued a warning of torrential rains with wind-thundershowers that would last throughout the counter-tyrill today. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has forecasted that heavy rains are poised to lash parts of the country over the next 24 hours.

Data from the Punjab Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) showed that 61 people were killed and 268 injured in the last 24 hours, warning that more deaths and injuries were expected in the coming days.

An order from the Punjab Home Department said there was a significant increase in the accumulation of rainwater in low-lying areas, streets and open spaces, posing serious risks to the safety of children who often bathed in standing water.

"Dams, rivers, canals, ponds, lakes and distributaries across the province of Punjab experience heightened water levels and stronger currents during these periods, making swimming and unauthorised boating activities extremely hazardous for human life, leading to a high potential for drowning and other tragic incidents."

"Prevailing weather conditions and the inherent dangers associated with these activities, necessitates immediate preventive measures to safeguard public safety and prevent loss of precious human lives," the order said.

It added that the home secretary was thus imposing a complete ban under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure across the province on bathing in unauthorised rainwater on streets, roads, open spaces, or any other area where rainwater has collected; swimming in dams, rivers, canals, ponds, lakes and distributaries; and boating by any unauthorised person or for unauthorised purposes in dams, rivers, canals, ponds, lakes and distributaries.

"This order shall remain in force for a period of 45 days from the date of issuance unless withdrawn."

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also announced that "a rain emergency has been imposed in different areas of Punjab due to unprecedented torrential rains and a flood situation." She added that directives were issued to keep the public alert through sirens and announcements. The chief minister urged the public to cooperate with the local authorities and take

safety precautions.

In Jhelum, rescue operations were underway to evacuate citizens trapped in floodwaters in Dhadra, Bhok, Shah Arif, Sohawa, Rasoolpur, Chak Muhammad and Bhanpur villages, according to Punjab Rescue 1122 spokesperson Farooq Ahmad.

Around 57 people have been rescued so far with the help of the Pakistan Army, he said in a statement, with more than 50 rescue boats involved in the Jhelum operations.

The spokesperson added that rescue teams have been deployed across the province, including Mianwali, Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Attock, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rahim Yar Khan, Rajanpur and Layyah. Over 15,000 rescue personnel and 800 rescue boats were on high alert, Ahmad added.

"Pakistan Army personnel and rescue teams are currently rushing the citizens to safe locations," he said.

"Children were screaming for help, and women stood on rooftops, waving their shawls and begging to be rescued," Tariq Mehboba Bhatti, a 51-year-old farmer in Gujrat's Ladian village, was quoted as saying by AFP.

Punjab Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) Director General Tayyab Farid said that "rivers have overflowed due to heavy rains in Rawalpindi, Chakwal and surrounding areas", leading to a flood situation.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani addressing as Chief Guest at closing ceremony of (FIDIC) Asia Pacific mid-year conference 2025

Interior Minister approves civil awards for 71 national heroes

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a notable move reflecting the country's appreciation for its true heroes, a high-level meeting was conducted at the Cabinet Division in Islamabad, chaired by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

The meeting focused on reviewing nominations for civil awards aimed at honouring individuals who have exhibited outstanding courage and commitment in defending and serving the nation.

The meeting concluded with formal approval of civil awards for 71 individuals, each honored for their exceptional bravery, selfless sacrifices, and unwavering service to the motherland.

The awards reflect the state's gratitude toward those who have upheld national interests above self.

Speaking at the meeting, Interior Minister stressed the moral obligation to recognize the nation's defenders, stating

that "These courageous sons of the soil have rendered unparalleled service, showing no fear in the face of danger." He further emphasized that the martyrs are the crown of the nation.

"Our Gazis represent the finest example of courage and dedication," the minister said, while also adding "Their valor fills us with pride, and we will never let the sacrifices of our martyrs and Gazis be forgotten or go unhonored."