



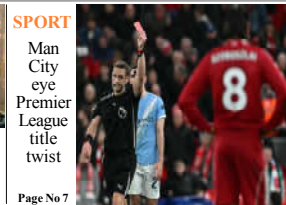
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First Digital, Print Daily of Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan.

QUETTA VOICE

Rs.10.00 Vol.VII:No:132

Email address: dquettavoice@gmail.com
Website: www.quettavoice.com

Wednesday 11, February, 2026



A Police Man Stands Alert In Quetta On The Eve Of Strike: File Photo

Balochistan CM Releases 50 Detained Minors, Urges Families to Contact Complaint Cell

Syed Ali Shah:

Quetta — Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Monday announced the release of 50 teenagers under the age of 18 who were detained following protests on February 8, saying the provincial government does not want minors to be caught in prolonged legal

processes. Sharing the update on social media platform X, the chief minister said the underage boys were taken into custody for allegedly forcing traders and commuters to observe shut-down and wheel-jam strikes in different parts of the province.

He confirmed that all 50 minors had now been freed by his administration.

CM Bugti appealed to families to come forward if they believed any underage boy was still missing or remained in police custody.

"If any family has concerns about a minor, they should immediately contact the Chief Minister's Complaint Cell so the issue can be resolved without delay," he said.

The arrests had sparked

criticism from opposition parties, including Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Aain Pakistan (TTAP), which strongly condemned the police action and described it as inhumane.

Opposition leaders claimed the protests were peaceful, a claim rejected by the provincial government, which maintained that incidents of violence and damage to public property

had occurred.

In a related development, six prisoners who had escaped from Mustang jail on January 31 voluntarily surrendered to the police, prison officials confirmed.

Earlier, a total of 29 inmates had fled from Mustang jail and 35 from Noshki district jail following unrest at the facilities.

Sindh govt notifies single-judge commission to investigate Gul Plaza inferno

NEWS DESK:

The Sindh government on Tuesday formally notified a single-member commission formed to further investigate the cause, among other things, of the deadly Gul Plaza inferno.

While the government had issued a notification appointing Justice Agha Faisal — who was nominated by the Sindh High Court (SHC) — as the judge for the task on February 4, the notification was officially published in the provincial Gazette today.

"The Commission of Inquiry will complete the inquiry within eight (08) weeks," read the notification seen by Dawn.

The office of Karachi Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi would provide secretariat support to the commission, it added.

It should be mentioned that the Sindh government had decided to seek a judicial inquiry into the fire, which claimed at least 73 lives, took nearly two days to be fully extinguished and left over 1,100 shops in ruins.

The move came after a cabinet sub-committee of the PPP-led Sindh government reviewed a report submitted by a two-member team. They discussed the circumstances surrounding the fire incident at Gul Plaza and agreed that an independent judicial probe was necessary.

Though the decision followed Sindh's major opposition parties' unanimous rejection of the preliminary findings, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon refuted that it was due to "pressure" from the political opponents.

After conducting its own probe, the Sindh government had said multiple officials were suspended and some would face departmental action.

Terms of reference
As outlined in the Home Department's notification earlier, the commission's terms of reference (TORs) include ascertaining "the causes and circumstances leading to the fire incident at Gul Plaza Shopping Centre".

It would also "examine and evaluate rescue operations for adequacy and swiftness".

Sindh High Court's Justice Agha Faisal — SHC website — The commission was also mandated to "fix responsibility for any acts of commission or omission committed prior to and subsequent to the incident".

Furthermore, it would assess whether Gul Plaza's construction was "in violation of the approved building plan, leading to difficulty in evacuation of people".

The SHC judge was also expected to examine whether building approvals and lease extensions from the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA).

Its predecessor organisations and the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) were granted in accordance with the applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Further, the commission would also have to assess the "arrangements in place at Gul Plaza building for fire prevention, detection and fire-fighting by building management as required under applicable laws and safety regulations".

It would also determine if the building management or any government department/agency had carried out fire safety audits and whether the recommendations were implemented by the building management.

Mir Salam Jogezi,
News Desk:

Punjab's announcement of Rs10 billion assistance for security forces emerged as the central outcome of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's official visit to Quetta on Monday, underscoring a strong message of national unity and collective resolve against security challenges.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti welcomed the announcement, describing it as a positive and commendable gesture.

He said the move reflected inter-provincial solidarity and added that in Balochistan both the government and opposition were united in their commitment to public welfare, peace, and long-term stability.

Maryam Nawaz's First Official Visit to Balochistan

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif arrived in Quetta on her first official visit to Balochistan since assuming office.

She was received at the Chief Minister Secretariat by CM Sarfraz Bugti, members of the provincial cabinet, and elected representatives.

She later called on Governor of Balochistan Jafar Khan



Mandokhail at the Governor House, where discussions focused on the prevailing law and order situation, political developments in the province, and

the need to strengthen inter-provincial coordination and harmony. Commitment to Peace, Stability, and National Unity. Addressing the meeting,

Maryam Nawaz said she was pleased that her first official visit as Punjab's chief minister was to Balochistan.

She praised the resilience,

patriotism, and strong national spirit of the people of the province and assured that Punjab would extend every possible cooperation.

"We stand shoulder to shoulder with Balochistan. Terrorism can only be defeated through national unity," she said, emphasizing that peace, stability, and prosperity in Balochistan were vital for the country's overall progress.

Call for Stronger Inter-Provincial Harmony

Governor Jafar Khan Mandokhail highlighted the importance of strong relations between the federation and the provinces and stressed the need for practical steps to further promote inter-provincial harmony. He thanked the Punjab chief minister for visiting Quetta, while Maryam Nawaz assured continued engagement and close coordination in the future.

Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation between the provinces and promote people-to-people contacts to further strengthen national cohesion.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Governor Mandokhail presented a commemorative shield and a traditional Balochi carpet to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif as a gesture of goodwill.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Modern Policing Training for Former Levies Is No Longer Optional — It Is Urgent



Editorial: Balochistan's decision to train 772 former Levies personnel under the Balochistan Police is not merely an administrative reform — it is a historic correction. For more than a century, security in large parts of the province relied on a tribal policing system introduced by Sir Robert Sandeman nearly 142 years ago — effectively one and a half centuries back. That system was designed around tribal customs, collective responsibility, and informal dispute resolution, not contemporary law enforcement.

While the Levies force earned respect within local communities, it was never equipped — nor trained — for the complexities of today's crime, terrorism, digital threats, and urban policing. Many of these officers have never undergone structured, professional police training. Expecting

them to perform modern policing duties without proper preparation is unfair to them — and unsafe for the public.

This is why the ongoing program at Police Training College Quetta is critically important. It must go beyond parade drills and weapons handling. The former Levies personnel need comprehensive training in investigation standards, human rights, evidence preservation, intelligence-led policing, community engagement, and the ethical use of authority.

Equally important is training in First Information Reports (FIRs), complaint handling, victim support, and documentation — the backbone of justice. Without accuracy at the first point of contact, the entire legal chain collapses. Upgraded hotels, mess facilities, sports grounds, and structured welfare support are welcome steps.

A secure, dignified environment produces confident officers — and confident officers make better policing decisions.

However, modernization must remain continuous, not symbolic. Training must be supported with modern equipment, digital crime management tools, body cameras, forensic support, and performance accountability. Most importantly, officers should learn that policing today is not simply force — it is law, service, and trust.

Balochistan stands at a turning point. Transforming former Levies into professional, community-oriented police officers can rebuild public confidence, improve crime prevention, and strengthen rule of law across the province. But success depends on sustained investment and a mindset shift — from tribal guardianship to professional policing.

Formation of Pakistan Peoples Party, its aims and objectives

By Bashir Nichari
Fifty-five years ago, an incredible journey began with the creation of the Pakistan People's Party. The history of the PPP is full of struggle and sacrifices, which makes it the People's Party. The first founding convention of the party was held on the night between November 30th and December 1st, 1967 at Dr. Mubasher Hussain's residence at Gulberg, Lahore.

The primary manuscript of the party had compiled by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, J.A. Rahim, and Dr. Mubasher Hussain, and was finalized after a lengthy discussion. The participants in this convention were aware that they would create a new life for the people of this land and thus presented the documents for approval in the same meeting. The aims and objectives of the party formation were to call for a socialist change in Pakistani society.

The ultimate goal of the party policy was to create a classless society which was possible in our circles only through socialism.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto made tempestuous visits to all corners of the country. While speaking at a public meeting at Lahore Mochi Darwaza, the People's leader, in his speech of 3 hours and 10 minutes, shed light on Islamic socialism, democracy, capitalism, and feudalism.

At that time, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto convinced the nation with arguments that society should embrace Islamic socialism and democracy as the foundation stones for a progressive State. He knew that these were the things upon which our future generations would have walked with pride.

These sentences of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto have become a part of our historical politics.

1- Islam is our religion.
2- Democracy is our politics.
3- Socialism is our economy.
4- The source of power is the People's strength.
5- Martyrdom is our wish.



(Added by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto the fifth point). Zulfikar

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 interim constitution.

Ali Bhutto said he had made a public manifesto to bring revolutionary changes to Pakistani society. He implemented agrarian reforms to slacken the



Then the parliament headed by the PPP majority gave the 1973 constitution, which was the first unified national constitution.

His achievements as a leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, and as Foreign Minister of Pakistan in a short span of 7 months are remarkable. Bhuttoism is still used as a political term even by Bhutto's opponents in this country 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 practical 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 workers should never be lost. Formation of the Pakistan People's Party and its aims and objectives By Bashir Nichari

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stition of the country after its creation. That was the first written pact of the Pakistani nation, which remains poignant as a thorn for martial law imposers. Quaid-e-Awam also laid the foundation of the Party's newspaper "Musawat" to advance his party policies. Today, the party formed by Quaid-e-Awam Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has echoed in the four corners of the land and will continue to resonate in the atmosphere of Pakistan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto stood alive in the form of Murtaza Bhutto Shaheed, in the character of Shah Nawaz Shaheed, and in the

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 planting could mitigate sweltering temperatures and climate change impacts, government initiatives should engage younger generations in green initiatives. Achieving a resilient future necessitates a collaborative effort involving government, local communities, civil society, and the commercial sector. Balochistan's path towards resilience begins with a symphony of collective action.

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, 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 threat. 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 heat waves. 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 ag-



riculture sector.
The 2022 flood in Balochistan underscores the looming climate change threat
The 2022 flood underscored the loom-

ing threat of climate change in 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 ar-

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, Pajure, 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.

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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 @KakarChand97707

Bangladesh poll race heats up on final day of campaigning

NEWS DESK: Bangladesh's election campaign entered its final day on Monday before this week's vote, with rival parties invoking the 2024 uprising that ended the autocratic rule of Sheikh Hasina.

Tens of thousands of flag-waving supporters attended a series of rival rallies across the sprawling capital Dhaka, as parties sought to harness the legacy of the mass uprising and pitch competing visions of change for the country of 170 million in Thursday's election.

The South Asian nation will elect a 350-seat parliament, with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) — led by Tarique Rahman, who returned in December after 17 years in exile — widely tipped as a frontrunner.

The BNP's key rival is Jamaat-i-Islami, Bangladesh's largest Islamist party that is led by Shafiqur Rahman and has allied with the National Citizen Party (NCP) that was formed by student leaders who

spearheaded the uprising.

Prime ministerial hopeful Tarique Rahman appeared confident as he bounced on stage to address a crowd of thousands of BNP loyalists and the party symbol, a sheaf of rice, and greeted their leader as if at a rock concert.

"The BNP alone has a plan to run the country and the experience to do so," he said, referring to his late parents, Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia, who both led the nation.

"No other parties have that," Rahman, 60, better known in Bangladesh as Tarique Zia, assumed leadership of the BNP from his mother, Khaleda Zia, who died in December at the age of 80. Police ringed the stage as he spoke and watched from the tops of tower blocks surveying the crowd.

Hasina was overthrown on August 5, 2024, after 15 years in power and her Awami League party was



banned by the interim government from running in the elections, a move criticised by rights groups.

The 78-year-old, known for her iron-fisted rule, was sentenced to death in absentia in November for crimes against humanity for the deadly crackdown on protesters in her failed bid to cling to power and remains in hiding in India.

Jamaat-i-Islami chief Shafiqur Rahman, leading a coalition of Islamist parties ideologically aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood — under the symbol of weighing scales — also

headed packed rallies. "If Jamaat comes to power, extortion and violence will reduce," said Ashikuzzaman Shaon, a 21-year-old student. "They'll establish justice." The Jamaat

chief has accused the former ruling party of widespread repression, but also warned that new forms of abuse had quickly followed its fall.

"A section of the oppressed turned into oppressors just a day after August 5," he told a rally on Sunday, alleging extortion and corruption by returning political figures.

"Common people, business owners — even beggars — are now fed up. Justice has been sent into exile."

"Long live the revolution" Jamaat's ally, NCP leader Nahid Islam, has also accused major parties of quietly sharing the "business of extortion and crime" for decades.

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Muslim bloc warns Israel against West Bank annexation

NEWS DESK: A group of key Muslim countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Qatar, on Monday issued a strong joint warning to Israel over what they described as accelerating efforts to illegally annex the occupied West Bank, steps the ministers said were designed to accelerate illegal annexation and forcibly displace the Palestinian population.

In a joint statement released by the Foreign Office here, the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar condemned in "the strongest terms" Israeli decisions and measures

aimed at imposing unlawful sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territory.

The statement accused Israel of entrenching settlement activity and enforcing a new legal and administrative reality in the occupied West Bank, steps the ministers said were designed to accelerate illegal annexation and forcibly displace the Palestinian population.

"They reaffirmed that Israel has no sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territory," the statement said, underscoring a rare show of coordinated diplomatic messaging from a geographically diverse group of Muslim-majority states. The

foreign ministers warned that continued expansion of Israel's policies in the West Bank were fuelling violence and deepening instability across the region, at a time when Gaza remains devastated by war and prospects for peace are increasingly fragile.

The joint condemnation comes amid growing international alarm over Israel's moves to legalise settlement outposts, expand civilian control mechanisms in the West Bank, and issue inflammatory statements by senior Israeli officials calling for permanent territorial control. Palestinian authorities and rights groups argue these steps amount to de facto

annexation. The ministers categorically rejected Israel's actions, describing them as a blatant violation of international law and a direct assault on the two-state solution.

They stressed that these measures undermine the Palestinian people's inalienable right to establish an independent and sovereign state on the 1967 lines, with occupied East Jerusalem as its capital. "These actions also undermine ongoing efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region," the statement warned.

Significantly, the ministers invoked binding international legal instruments to reinforce their position.

They declared Israel's measures in the occupied West Bank "null and void," citing UN Security Council Resolution 2334, which condemns all Israeli actions aimed at altering the demographic composition and status of territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

They also referred to the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which found Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal, affirmed the necessity of ending the occupation, and rejected the legality of annexation of Palestinian land.

South Korea to start reviewing US investment projects ahead of enacting bill

NEWS DESK: South Korea will set up a committee to conduct preliminary reviews of US investment projects as it seeks to speed up the implementation of a \$350 billion investment package pledged under a trade deal with Washington, officials said on Tuesday.

The move comes a day after parliament formed a panel to fast-track a bill enabling the investment fund by the end of February, following US President Donald Trump's threat to hike tariffs on South Korea, citing a delay in implementing the deal.

"Even if the special bill is passed, it will take an additional three months for implementation after preparations such as the enactment of subordinate laws," Finance Minister Koo Yun-choo told a policy meeting.

To bridge the gap, the government will establish a system to enable a preliminary review of potential projects until the enactment and implementation of the bill, Koo said, adding that any misunderstand-



ings with Washington were undesirable.

Koo, who is also deputy prime minister for economic affairs, will lead a temporary team to run the investment fund, while the industry minister will chair the committee conducting preliminary reviews, according to the finance ministry.

Final decisions on selecting investment projects will still be made after the bill is enacted, based on comprehensive consideration of commercial feasibility and foreign exchange market conditions, the ministry said in a statement.

Trump said last month he would hike tariffs on autos and other imports from South Korea, blaming a delay in enacting the bill introduced in November — a social media post that caught South Korean officials by surprise.

Koo told Reuters in an interview this month that the \$350 billion investment package was unlikely to kick off in the first half of 2026, prompting some opposition lawmakers to link the timeframe to Trump's sudden tariff threat.

Prime Minister Kim-seok told a parliamentary session later on Tuesday that South Korea had not breached the deal. "Nevertheless, we are taking seriously the new pressure created by dissatisfaction on the U.S. side," Kim said.

S. Arabia, Somalia ink defence agreement

NEWS DESK: Somalia and Saudi Arabia signed a defence agreement, as the Horn of Africa becomes an arena for proxy wars between Gulf monarchies, with Abu Dhabi at loggerheads with Riyadh.

The region, strategically located between the Indian Ocean and the Suez Canal on one of the world's busiest trade routes, has increasingly attracted the interest of the Gulf states.

The agreement comes a month and a half after Israel recognised Somaliland, a self-proclaimed republic that seceded from Somalia in 1991 but which Mogadishu considers to be under its control.

Somali Defence Minister Ahmed Moallim Fiqi and his Saudi counterpart Prince Khalid Bin Salman, signed a "military cooperation agreement" on Monday, according to a message



on X from the Somali defence ministry.

"This agreement further strengthens defence and military cooperation between the two nations, while covering various areas of mutual interest for both countries," it said.

In a separate post on X, Prince Khalid Bin Salman said he had "signed and witnessed

the signing" of "several" agreements on the sidelines of a military exhibition in Riyadh.

He did not provide further details.

Meanwhile, in Somaliland, the Emirati giant DP World has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in developing the deep-water port of Berbera, which it uses with little

regard for the government in Mogadishu.

This port includes an airport strictly controlled by Abu Dhabi, according to several witnesses and local sources. Saudi Arabia, once a staunch ally of Abu Dhabi, is now a vocal critic of the UAE, particularly on the Sudanese and Yemeni issues.

Australia urges calm after violent clashes in Sydney during Israeli President's visit

NEWS DESK: Australian leaders on Tuesday urged calm and called on protesters to remain peaceful after clashes between police and demonstrators opposing Israeli President Isaac Herzog's visit to Australia erupted in Sydney.

Police said 27 people were arrested, including 10 for allegedly assaulting officers, after violence broke out on Monday evening when police moved in to clear thousands of protesters who had gathered near Sydney's town hall.

Protesters, including an opposition lawmaker, said on Tuesday they had been assaulted by officers.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he was "devastated" by the violence and urged protesters to express their views peacefully.

"Australians want two things. They don't want conflict brought here. They want killing to stop, whether it's Israelis or Palestinians, but they do not want violence to erupt in Sydney," he said.

The causes are not advanced by these sorts of scenes — they are undetermined."

There were no reports of serious injuries, New South Wales state police said in a statement.

Thousands gathered in central Sydney on Monday to protest



against Herzog's visit to Australia, which comes after a mass shooting at a Jewish religious event in Bondi Beach in December that killed 15 people.

Police had been authorised to use rarely invoked powers during the protest, including directing crowds to move, restricting their access to certain areas and searching vehicles.

A legal challenge to those restrictions was dismissed by a Sydney court on Monday.

Herzog was not present at the protest site. Television footage showed some protesters

trying to push through blockades as officers forced them back.

Some were seen lying on the ground while police tried to restrain them.

Police used tear gas and pepper spray to disperse the crowd.

New South Wales state Premier Chris Minns defended police actions, saying officers were required to make rapid decisions in tense and volatile situations, and urged calm.

"I understand there's criticisms of New South Wales Police, but just want to make it clear they were caught in an

impossible situation," he told a press conference.

In a statement, the Palestine Action Group Sydney said protesters were unable to leave the event because they were surrounded by police on all sides.

"The police began charging the crowd with horses, indiscriminately pepper-spraying the crowd, punching and arresting people," the group said.

Angail Boyd, an opposition Green lawmaker in the state parliament, said she had been punched by officers while attempting to vacate the site.

Kashmiris will always remember sacrifices of Shaheed Maqbool Butt, Shaheed Afzal Guru: Rehmani

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Chairman of People's Freedom League Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, has said that the people of

Kashmir will always remember and eulogize sacrifices of Shaheed Maqbool Butt and Shaheed Afzal Guru who embraced martyrdom for a just and noble cause. India had hanged Muhammad Afzal Guru

in New Delhi's Tihar Jail on February 9 in 2013 and sent prominent liberation leader, Muhammad Maqbool Butt, to the gallows in the same jail on February 11, 1984. Their bodies were buried in the

premises of the jail. He said in their lifetime the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir courageously and peacefully made endeavours on a hazardous path of freedom struggle with martyrdom

of thousands of young men to awaken the world conscience but instead, Maqbool Butt was judicially murdered and Afzal Guru was hanged to please the collective conscience of the Indian public opinion in the

words of the Indian court. He said it was a matter of shame and sorrow that the last remains of Shaheed Maqbool Butt and Shaheed Afzal Guru were not handed over to their families for burial in

their respective ancestral graveyards. Muhammad Farooq Rehmani said that in spite of hanging Muhammad Maqbool Butt and Muhammad Afzal Guru, India could not silence and sup-

press the freedom voice and struggle of the people and as a result thousands of youth are incarcerated in jails and many more have been martyred or killed in fake encounters or in police custody.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif awarding license of 3rd Digital Retail Bank for Raqami Islamic Digital Bank to Chairman Abdullah Al-Mutari.

Climate change effectively becomes form of "natural terrorism" for Pakistan: Musadik Malik

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Masood Malik on Tuesday warned that climate change has effectively become a form of "natural terrorism" for Pakistan, as recurring climate disasters continue to inflict heavy economic and human losses.

Addressing the 4th Pakistan Climate Conference 2026 in Karachi, the minister said that while Pakistan maintains an average economic growth rate of around 3-4 per cent, periodic floods wipe out an estimated 7-10pc of GDP, reversing development gains.

He highlighted the

severe humanitarian consequences of recent floods, noting that more than 6,000 people have lost their lives and around 40 million have been displaced, including approximately 20 million children whose education has been disrupted.

Dr Malik said climate disasters were pushing vulnerable populations back into poverty and undermining economic stability, education and social cohesion. He also criticised on global inaction on climate change, arguing that a small number of countries generate the bulk of carbon emissions while developing

nations disproportionately suffer the consequences. The minister expressed concern over climate financing mechanisms, saying that "green financing" often takes the form of loans rather than grants, while repurposed loans frequently divert funds originally allocated for health and education towards reconstruction and debt servicing.

Emphasising adaptation measures, he said that although floods could not always be prevented, their impact could be reduced through improved planning, protection of natural floodplains, restoration of mangroves and forests, aquifer recharge initiatives and preservation of clean river systems.

Outlining a three-pillar strategy, Dr Malik called for restoring existing environmental resources, expanding climate-resilient infrastructure and developing new systems designed to withstand climate shocks. He also urged industries to invest in youth-led green innovation. The minister announced that youth-driven climate initiatives, along with a Virtual Green University aimed at promoting sustainable ideas and climate action, would be launched after Eid.

Around 1,100 Pakistani students returned home from Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Tuesday informed the National Assembly that around 1,100 Pakistani students have already returned home following the closure of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Of these, 26 entered Pakistan via land routes, while the remaining students were repatriated by air, he said while responding to a calling attention notice moved by Anjum Aqeel Khan regarding Pakistani students stranded in Afghanistan due to closure of border.

The minister said that 947 Pakistani students are currently still

in Afghanistan. He added that before October 2025, when the border remained open, a large number of Pakistani students regularly travelled via land routes to pursue their education in Afghanistan. However, the border was closed in October, 2025 following recent cross-border attacks.

He further informed the House that Pakistan held several rounds of talks with the Afghan Taliban authorities, including meetings in Doha and later in Turkey. While Afghan representatives acknowledged that attacks originate from Afghan soil, they did not offer firm assurances to end cross-

border terrorism or dismantle militant safe havens. The minister said Pakistan could not allow a situation where cross-border terrorism continues while trade and movement remain open, adding that border crossings with Afghanistan were closed as a security measure.

He acknowledged that the closure created difficulties for Pakistani students but said temporary facilitation through land routes earlier allowed around 1,100 students to return. The Pakistani Embassy in Kabul, he added, continues to assist students by resolving visa-related and other issues.

SC names senior advocate Salman Safdar to review the living conditions, health of Imran Khan in jail

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Tuesday appointed senior advocate Salman Safdar as a friend of the court to independently review the living conditions and health of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) jailed leader Imran Khan.

Opening the proceedings, Chief Justice of Pakistan Yousaf Ali Khan instructed prison authorities to extend full cooperation to the court-appointed coun-

sel. He stressed that Safdar should be treated with respect and granted prompt access to Imran Khan without being made to wait. The chief justice added that his personal staff officer would facilitate the visit if any issue arose.

A two-member bench comprising CJP Afridi and Justice Shah Bilal Hasan directed Safdar to visit Adiala Jail and submit a written assessment of the PTI founder's living

conditions, facilities, and overall treatment. The court further ordered that the amicus curiae be allowed to inspect Imran Khan's jail barrack to complete the assignment.

The bench set Wednesday as the deadline for submission of the report and adjourned further proceedings until the following day. During the hearing, Salman Safdar sought clarification on the scope of his mandate

and informed the court that certain health-related concerns had emerged following a preliminary eye examination of the PTI founder. In response, the chief justice directed that the report be submitted in chambers. Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan informed the court that a compliance report had already been submitted in chambers pursuant to the Supreme Court's August 24, 2025 order.

MOST WANTED TERRORISTS

REWARD FOR INFORMATION



 <p>Name: Brahmadh Khan Bugti F/Name: Rehman Akbar Bugti Address: Bugti House, Dera Bugti Rs. 10 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Hyrbayir Marri F/Name: Khair Baksh Marri Address: Marri Street, Arbab Karam Khan Road Rs. 10 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Cpt Rehman Gul F/Name: Ghani Ahmad Address: Kili Mangal, Nushki Rs. 25 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Bashir Zaid F/Name: Dr. Abdullah Address: Ahmed Wali, Nushki Rs. 25 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Mir Safer Ahmed F/Name: Abdul Ghani Address: Mir Safer Ahmed, Nushki Rs. 15 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Nadeem F/Name: Jameel Ahmed Address: Nadeem, Nushki Rs. 15 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Rustum @ Gaidi F/Name: Malik Khan Address: Rustum, Nushki Rs. 5 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Mushtaq Mangal @ Lali F/Name: Bashir Ahmed Address: Mushtaq Mangal, Nushki Rs. 5 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Khair Baksh @ Khair @ Farooq F/Name: Solrab Address: Khair Baksh, Nushki Rs. 2 crore</p>	 <p>Name: Zahoor Shah @ Majid Commander F/Name: Ali Nawaz Address: Kili Sada Colony, South City, Khair Rs. 2 Crore</p>
 <p>Name: Samand Khan F/Name: Samand Khan Address: Peshawar, Peshawar, District Dera Bugti Rs. 50 Lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Riaz Gul F/Name: Muhammad Jan Address: Marri Pukhrawag, Colony Sui Rs. 25 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Sher Muhammad Bugti F/Name: Malookan Address: Gul mohab Mandori, Colony Sui Rs. 25 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Jaffer Khan F/Name: Peer Baksh Address: Sangun Sibi Rs. 10 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Muhammad Farooq F/Name: Illahi Baksh Address: Village Bagatari, Colony District Kadi Rs. 10 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Mujib ur Rehman F/Name: Abdul Rasool Address: Zehri Khuzdar Rs. 5 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Muhammad Siddique F/Name: Muhammad Raza Address: Yottak Khuzdar Rs. 5 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Haibat F/Name: Kaseel Address: Peshawar, Peshawar, District Dera Bugti Rs. 2 Crore</p>	 <p>Name: Sanaullah F/Name: Riaz Gul Address: Sanaullah, Nushki Rs. 2 crore</p>	 <p>Name: Shah Muhammad F/Name: Durak Khan Address: Sangun, District Sibi Rs. 1 Crore</p>
 <p>Name: Zahid Hussain F/Name: Muhammad Address: Shohi House, Dera Bugti Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Pasha Shah F/Name: Abdul Mutalib Address: Pasha Shah, Nushki Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Allah Gul F/Name: Muhammad Address: Kili Kargap, District Sibi Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Wajid Baksh F/Name: Sozi Khan Address: Sangun District Sibi Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Jafar Ahmad F/Name: Ali Muhammad Address: Sangun District Sibi Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Jafar F/Name: Ali Muhammad Address: Sangun District Sibi Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Raza Baksh F/Name: Pathan Khan Address: Margat, Mach Rs. 25 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Aftab ur Rehman F/Name: Abdul Majid Address: Kili Mangal, Nushki Rs. 70 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Mirza Khan F/Name: Raza Khan Address: Kili Mangal, Nushki Rs. 10 lakh</p>	
 <p>Name: Chanda Code F/Name: Wajid Baksh Address: Chanda Code, Nushki Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Gali Mir F/Name: Kashmir Khan Address: Gali Mir, Nushki Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Shahid Inail F/Name: Muhammad Inail Address: Sakun Road, Hub Rs. 50 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Shah Mir F/Name: Muhammad Baksh Address: Nushki, Nushki Rs. 30 Lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Pervais F/Name: Mengal Address: Pervais, Nushki Rs. 25 Lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Nisar F/Name: Haider Address: Nisar, Nushki Rs. 25 Lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Jambor Khan F/Name: Jambor Khan Address: Jambor Khan, Nushki Rs. 10 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Faraz Khan F/Name: Faraz Khan Address: Faraz Khan, Nushki Rs. 5 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Raza Khan F/Name: Raza Khan Address: Raza Khan, Nushki Rs. 5 lakh</p>	 <p>Name: Shah Mir F/Name: Shah Mir Address: Shah Mir, Nushki Rs. 5 lakh</p>



Governor Balochistan Meets Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in Quetta

QUETTA: Governor of Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail met Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz at the Governor House Quetta.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest were discussed, including the overall law and order situation in the country and the current political landscape of Balochistan.

The meeting was attended by Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, provincial ministers and members of the assembly, Maryam Aurangzeb, Uzma Bukhari, and Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman.



Speaking on the occasion, Governor Jafar Khan Mandokhail stated that cordial relations currently exist between the federal government and the provinces, emphasizing the urgent need for concrete steps to promote inter-provincial harmony and further strengthen mutual co-operation.

The Governor thanked Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for visiting Quetta. In response,

Maryam Nawaz said that she would remain in contact in the future and assured full co-operation.

Both leaders agreed to further enhance inter-provincial relations and promote people-to-people con-

tacts between the provinces. At the conclusion of the meeting, Governor Balochistan presented a commemorative shield and a traditional carpet to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

Commissioner Quetta Division Reviews EPI Quarterly Performance and Strengthens Vaccination Measures

QUETTA: Under the chairmanship of Commissioner Quetta Division, Shahzeb Khan Kakr, the fourth quarterly review meeting of

the EPI presented the quarterly performance report highlighting measures taken to protect children from infectious diseases.

Performance Indicators (KPIs) to improve results. He instructed officials to ensure daily monitoring of atten-

ding tracking of zero-dose children to increase coverage. He emphasized strict action against vaccinators involved in

IR services at EPI centers to improve coverage. Commissioner Shahzeb Khan Kakr highlighted the impor-



the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) Divisional Task Force was held.

The meeting was attended by Provincial EPI Coordinator Dr. Aftab Kakr, Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehruallah Badini, DHO Quetta, Deputy DHO Quetta, WHO, UNICEF, National STOP Program, PPHI, MSPRC, SAKU, and other district officials via video link, including Deputy Commissioner of Chaman, Pishin, and Killa Abdullah.

During the meeting, the EPI presented the quarterly performance report highlighting measures taken to protect children from infectious diseases.

Speaking at the meeting, Commissioner Shahzeb Khan Kakr directed strict action against absent or underperforming vaccinators, including suspension, and emphasized focusing on Key

Performance Indicators (KPIs) to improve results. He instructed officials to ensure daily monitoring of atten-

ding tracking of zero-dose children to increase coverage. He emphasized strict action against vaccinators involved in

IR services at EPI centers to improve coverage. Commissioner Shahzeb Khan Kakr highlighted the impor-

Deputy Commissioner Jafarabad Oversees Transparent Open Tendering for BSDI Phase-II Development Projects

JAFARABAD: Under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Jafarabad Khalid Khan, the open tendering process for various Phase-II development schemes under the Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI) was successfully completed.

The process was attended by Public Health Engineering Officer Mohammad Kazim Loni along with other relevant district officials. All tenders were conducted transparently and on merit in the presence of contractors to ensure fairness and eliminate any doubts.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Khalid

Khan stated that, in line with the Government of Balochistan's directives, the tendering process for all BSDI Phase-II schemes is being carried out with complete transparency and adherence to merit. He emphasized that the schemes initiated under BSDI are being implemented with commitment and seriousness to promote the district's development and public welfare.

The Deputy Commissioner further assured that all responsibilities assigned by the government would be executed diligently to ensure that BSDI development projects are sustainable, long-lasting, and genuinely beneficial for the people.

Assistant Commissioner Musa Khel Inspects Matric Exam Centers and Security Arrangements in Darg

MUSAKHEL: Following the directives of the Government of Balochistan and under special instructions from Deputy Commissioner Musa Khel, Assistant Commissioner Darg Gul Nawaz Baloch visited Government Boys High School

Darg to review arrangements for the ongoing Matriculation annual examinations. During the visit, the Assistant Commissioner inspected the examination halls to ensure transparency, discipline, and proper conduct. He emphasized that strict measures must

be taken to maintain fairness, and no malpractice or cheating should be tolerated under any circumstances. Additionally, the Assistant Commissioner conducted a detailed inspection of security arrangements within the school premises.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

S.No: 1 & 2 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, it is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Procurement System of BPRA G.O.B.

The Executive Engineer (Roads) CWP/PA Department District Killa Abdullah invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee 1500 PKR and Bid Security 3% for each work

S. No	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost
1	Resurfacing of Road from Muzia Abda towards KIR Irrigation Length: 4.0m TSE-25062871183	36,696.323
2	Through S-Bid: Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI) Phase-II	
3	Link road from Jungle Bazar to Kili Khanat, Shahr-e-Paizai Length: 0.50km TSE-25062871123 (Through S-Bid) Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI) Phase-II	58,405.806
4	Rehabilitation of Road from KIR to Qambar (S-Bid) Length: 1.50km TSE-25062871103	19,896.690
5	Construction of PCC road Kili Murad Khan Killa Abdullah TSE-25062871113	29,795.140
6	Construction of Passenger road at Kili Gulistan Near Police Station (Length 800 Meters) TSE-25062871147 Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI) Phase-II	3,903.312
7	Construction of Passenger road at Kili Gulistan Near Police Station (Length 800 Meters) TSE-25062871183	4,050.294

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work Turnover of at least for S.No: 1 RS: 27,724,426/-; for S.No: 2 RS: 4,154,285/-; for S.No: 3 RS: 13,860,480/-; for S.No: 4 RS: 20,790,750/-; for S.No: 5 RS: 5,932,432/-; and for S.No: 6 RS: 3,440,200/- PIR Amount in subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 3% specified above in the name of the tender-issued from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The TIR & Bidding Documents can be obtained electronically from www.bprpa.gov.pk Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bprpa.gov.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 04 March, 2026 at 11:59 AM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 11:59 AM on EPPS and manual System Address: Executive Engineer Road CWP/PA Department District Killa Abdullah Phone no: 3525502495 Email: ee@chongreemadobalochistan@gmail.com

EXTENSION

The office was called notice inviting tender for various development schemes under BSDI published in Daily newspapers Quetta with PRD No: 3704/10-02-2025 on 22nd January 2025, in which the date of bid submission and opening was fixed on 08th February - 2026, due to some indispensable reasons the date of bid submission and opening has been extended. Now the said tender will be submitted and open on 18th February - 2026. All other conditions and time will remain same as mentioned in bidding documents.

PRD No: 3704/10-02-2025

Executive Engineer (Roads) CWP/PA Department District Killa Abdullah

PRD No: 3708/10-02-2026

Executive Engineer (Roads) CWP/PA Department District Killa Abdullah

Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Orders Strengthened Security Measures Amid Current Situation

ZIARAT: District Coordination Committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qadoos

Balochistan, it was decided that security measures in the district will be further strengthened. Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qadoos

to take further measures to ensure public safety. He directed the security agencies to enhance vigilance, keep a close watch on criminals, and



Achakzai, attended by district officers from FC Major Amarsi TD, Police, IB, and other relevant departments.

During the meeting, a zero-tolerance policy was adopted for maintaining peace and order in the current situation in

Achakzai stated that there will be no compromise on law and order in District Ziarat. He emphasized the adoption of a zero-tolerance policy for maintaining peace and order in the current situation in

bring them to justice. He assured that District Ziarat will be developed as a peaceful, progressive, and model district, setting an example for governance and public safety.

BEEF Conducts Eligibility Test for Admissions at Sadiq Public School under CM Scholarship Program

QUETTA: An eligibility test for admissions at Sadiq Public School Bahawalpur was successfully conducted under the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund (BEEF).

This initiative is part of the Chief Minister Scholarship Program, equal access to quality education at the country's leading educational institutions.

A dedicated team from Sadiq Public School Bahawalpur is present in Quetta to oversee the test, while BEEF is providing all administrative and technical facilities to ensure the smooth and efficient conduct of the examination process.



fully funded by Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

transparently and on merit, continuing the successful tradition of 2025.

when over 100 students from Balochistan gained admission to Sadiq Public School under the same scholarship program.

The program aims to provide deserving and talented students from underprivileged and less-developed districts of Balochistan with

deserves the Government of Balochistan's commitment to promoting education and creating equal learning opportunities for students across the province, particularly those from marginalized areas.

Balochistan Government Conducts Training on BFC Software to Promote Digital Governance

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has taken a significant step towards digitizing government operations in line with the vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti to modernize public services across the province.

Under this initiative, the Balochistan Investment Board (BIB) organized a training session on the operation of the Business Facilitation Center (BFC) software, attended by focal persons from various government departments.

to improve transparency, efficiency, and service delivery in government operations. Speaking at the event, Quam Lashari, Chief Executive Officer of Balochistan Investment Board, said that the Chief Minister's vision is to promote digital reforms to strengthen government systems and encourage investment in the province.

The training session focused on the modern digital systems not only improve institutional performance but also help in better services to investors and the public. He added that the Business Facilitation Center was established to promote business and industrial activities, facilitate ease of

doing business, and provide all services to investors under a one-window system. The BFC software is designed to eliminate departmental bottlenecks, ensuring that all services are available on a single digital platform. This initiative forms a key part of the government's on-going reform agenda, and such training sessions are expected to enhance the professional capacities of government officials. "At the conclusion of the session, participants described the training as highly useful and expressed confidence that it would further strengthen transparency and efficiency, facilitate ease of

doing business, and provide all services to investors under a one-window system. The BFC software is designed to eliminate departmental bottlenecks, ensuring that all services are available on a single digital platform. This initiative forms a key part of the government's on-going reform agenda, and such training sessions are expected to enhance the professional capacities of government officials. "At the conclusion of the session, participants described the training as highly useful and expressed confidence that it would further strengthen transparency and efficiency, facilitate ease of

Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training

Bid No. 01/FEDSL/25-26 For UPGRADATION AND PROVISION OF SCIENCE LAB EQUIPMENT EPAD F-2602742603

Invitation to Bids

Date: 06-02-2026

- This Invitation to Bids follows the Procurement Notice (PN) or Procurement Advertisement (PA) for the subject Project/Procurement which appeared in national dailies vide date 06-02-2026.
- The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has received credit from the World Bank towards the cost of Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education Program, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to cover eligible payments under the contract for PROVISION OF SCIENCE LAB EQUIPMENT.
- The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training now invites sealed bids from eligible Suppliers to provide for "Lot 1" (Renovation & Repair) and "Lot 2" (Science Lab Equipment).
- The bidding shall be conducted in line with the 366 (Single Stage, Two Envelope) procedure of the Public Procurement Rules 2004 and any Regulations, Regulatory Guides, Procurement Guidelines or Instructions issued by the Authority (from time to time), and is open to all potential bidders.
- All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in an acceptable form of Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) in the name of Procurement Specialist, (ASPIRE) with the amount of PKR 1,000,000/- (One Million Pakistan Rupees) for Lot-1, and with the amount of PKR 1,000,000/- (One Million Pakistan Rupees) for Lot-2.
- The original technical and financial bid, properly filled in, and enclosed in sealed envelope(s), must be submitted on PPRA EPADS and also delivered to the address Procurement Specialist/Office, PCU-ASPIRE, M/o FE&PT, Pakistan Manpower Institute (PMI) Building, Shahr-e-Suhrawardy, G-7/1, Islamabad at or before 24-02-2026, 2:30 PM. The bids will be opened promptly thereafter in public and in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend in the opening at the:

Procurement Specialist/Officer,
PCU-ASPIRE, M/o FE&PT, Pakistan Manpower Institute (PMI) Building, Shahr-e-Suhrawardy, G-7/1, Islamabad

PRD ID: 6494/25

Heavy metal pollution threatens tomato exports

NEWS DESK: Tomatoes, a vital crop for Pakistan's economy, are facing a growing threat from heavy metal pollution, raising concerns over food safety, farm incomes and export sustainability.

With annual production exceeding 569,000 tonnes, tomatoes provide livelihoods to millions of smallholders and generate more than \$100 million in export revenue.

However, contamination of soil and water is increasingly putting the industry at risk.

Rapid industrialisation, particularly the expansion of tannery industries in cities such as Sialkot, Kasur and Lahore, has contaminated irrigation canals and agricultural soils with hazardous metals, including chromium, cadmium and lead.

These metals are absorbed by tomato plants and accumulate in edible parts of the fruit, posing serious health risks to consumers, including carcinogenic effects.

"The situation is



further exacerbated by the fact that tomatoes have a relatively high metal translocation factor, making them particularly susceptible to accumulation

of these toxic metals," said.

Tahir Naqash, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology,

Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. He warned that farmers could face yield losses of up to 50%, along with a sharp decline in fruit

quality. According to Naqash, contamination levels in some areas exceed permissible limits set by international bodies such as

the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the European Union, threatening the safety and competitiveness of Pakistan's tomato ex-

ports. The risks extend beyond trade, he added, as contaminated produce also raises public health concerns domestically.

To address the challenge, researchers are exploring biological alternatives to conventional soil treatment methods.

Naqash said a collaborative system is being developed with Shenyang Normal University in China, in which microbes and plants work together to detoxify contaminated soils.

With a particular focus on cadmium, a major pollutant in industrial zones.

The aim is to prevent cadmium from entering tomato plants and accumulating in their fruit.

He said participation in a training camp on ecological and green development at Shenyang Normal University last year helped broaden the scope of the research.

"It makes me consider not only how to remove heavy metals from soil but also how to manage the residues after the bioremediation process,"

he said, adding that extracted metals could potentially be reused for processing purposes.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) revises up GDP growth for FY26

NEWS DESK: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has projected upward GDP growth in the wake of increased economic activity and continued momentum in high-frequency indicators.

The SBP released the data and analysis in the bi-annual Monetary Policy Report on Monday, noting that the growth outlook for FY26 has improved by 0.5 percentage points relative to the previous report, and real GDP growth is now projected at 3.75-4.75pc in FY26, with further improvement expected in FY27. The eco-

nomonic growth has picked up noticeably, as reflected by higher year-on-year growth in Q1FY26 and improving trends in agricultural and industrial production, with positive spillovers expected for services sector activity, said the report.

Inflation is projected to remain within the 5-7pc target range for most of FY26 and FY27, despite near-term volatility, the report said. The report noted that macroeconomic conditions and the outlook have improved, supported by a prudent

monetary policy stance and continued fiscal consolidation. The current account deficit is projected to remain contained at 0-1pc of GDP in FY26, with a higher trade deficit partly offset by robust workers' remittances and planned official inflows.

As a result, SBP's foreign exchange reserves are expected to rise to \$18bn by June 2026. The SBP recently reduced the CRR from 6pc to 5pc to increase banks' liquidity and enhance the availability of funds to the private sector.

NEWS DESK: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Monday ruled out renegotiating over \$15 billion in Chinese energy debt deals and said that Beijing should not be victimised for Pakistan's own faults, taking a clear stance after multiple attempts by the finance and power ministries to reopen these contracts failed.

"Pakistan should honour its commitments and others should not be blamed for our past mistakes," said Iqbal, while responding to a question during a press conference here. The minister clarified that reopening these deals would increase Pakistan's financial risk premium and compromise the country's credibility in the eyes of foreign investors.

China has set up 21 energy projects in Pakistan with a total cost of \$21 billion, including about \$5 billion in equity. Chinese investors obtained loans for these projects at an interest rate equal to the London Interbank Offered Rate (Libor) plus 4.5%.

Western financial institutions have also been pressuring Paki-

stani authorities to reopen these contracts to reduce the cost of energy. However, China did not agree to any arrangement under which Western debt, accounting for over 45% of Pakistan's total debt and largely owed to multilateral institutions, would not also be renegotiated.

After assuming office, the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reached out to Beijing with a proposal to spread debt repay-

ments over a longer period. This was aimed at reducing the annual outflow of foreign currency by \$750 million per annum and, on the other hand, potentially cut electricity prices by Rs3 per unit.

Pakistan sought a five- to seven-year extension in the repayment of Chinese energy debt obtained for setting up 21 power projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Against the existing remaining Chinese energy

debt of \$15.4 billion, payments by 2040 would total \$16.6 billion, according to government sources.

Under these agreements, the current power tariff structure requires debt servicing repayments during the first 10 years of the deals. This has placed a significant burden on consumers, who are paying both interest and principal through higher electricity tariffs.

Iqbal also spoke about corruption in Pa-

kistan, claiming that its incidence was much lower than public perception. A recent survey by a trade body showed that while 67% of people spoke of high corruption, only 27% said they had personally faced situations where they had to pay bribes.

However, last week the Chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) presented the organisation's annual performance report, claiming recoveries worth Rs6.2 trillion last year. The stated recoveries are more than double Pakistan's Rs2.5 trillion defence budget. It is, however, unclear how much of the Rs6.2 trillion recovered amount has been deposited with the central bank.

According to details provided by NAB to the media, the recoveries were made through the retrieval of encroached state and other organisations' land, as well as cash.

These included the reclamation of three million acres of encroached state and forest land, valued at approximately Rs6 trillion.



PM Shehbaz hails Pak-Kuwait ties as Raqami Islamic Digital Bank issued licence



NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said Pakistan and Kuwait share strong brotherly relations, which were set to further strengthen through bilateral economic, investment and trade cooperation.

He made the remarks while addressing a ceremony in Islamabad in connection with the issuance of a digital licence to Raqami Islamic Digital

Bank. The prime minister congratulated Raqami Islamic Digital Bank on becoming the third licensed digital retail bank in Pakistan.

He expressed hope that the bank would not only be Sharif-compliant but would also offer features that would significantly support and promote the growth of banking in the country.

"This development will go a long way in

further enhancing bilateral economic relations between Pakistan and Kuwait," the prime minister said.

He also expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti leadership for their support to Pakistan at various times. Raqami Islamic Digital Bank Limited was awarded a restricted banking license by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) in May 2025, under the Licensing and Regula-

tory. Framework for Digital Banks to commence pilot operations as a digital retail bank.

Raqami is backed by Pakistan Kuwait Investment Company (Private) Limited, a joint venture between Pakistan and Kuwait governments and Enertech Holding Company KSC, a subsidiary of the sovereign wealth fund of Kuwait, the Kuwait Investment Authority.

1pc of GDP lost to climate damage: Musadik

NEWS DESK: Pakistan is losing close to 1 per cent of its gross domestic product every year to climate-related damage from floods, heatwaves and infrastructure destruction, despite contributing less than 1 per cent to global emissions.

Speaking at the fourth Pakistan Climate Conference, organised by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Monday, Climate Change Minister Musadik Malik stressed the need to fight climate challenges with the same intensity as the fight against terrorism.

The stress was underlined by stark statistics: the human toll has already surpassed that of past conflicts. Over the last four floods alone, 6,000 people have died, and 19,000 have been disabled or injured, while more than 40 million have been displaced.

Economically, Mr Malik added, Pakistan celebrates growth rates of 3-4pc, only for floods to wipe out nearly 10pc of GDP, erasing years of progress in a single season. From record 53°C heatwaves to floods that displaced millions last year and the accelerated

melting of more than 13,000 glaciers, he said the crisis could no longer be treated as an existential economic challenge. Pakistan's updated climate commitments under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 3.0, which target a 50pc emissions reduction by 2035, would require an estimated \$565.7bn in investment, underscoring the scale of the transition ahead.

In a recorded message, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb reiterated that climate change now poses an

existential threat to Pakistan. While key frameworks such as the National Adaptation Plan, Climate Prosperity Plan and green taxonomy are in place, he said the emphasis must shift decisively from policy design to execution.

Although the devastating 2022 floods were largely confined to one river system and two provinces, last year's floods affected all provinces and three river systems, which is clear evidence of rising intensity and frequency.

Rather than lamenting financing gaps, Mr Aurangzeb urged stakeholders to better utilise

funding already on the table from multilateral donors. The problem, he noted, was not the absence of capital but the inability to operationalise compounded by large bureaucratic and prolonged accreditation delays, a frustration echoed by several speakers.

The finance minister called on companies to prioritise knowledge transfer from their global operations into Pakistan, arguing that climate excellence depends as much on institutional capacity, data and governance as it does on capital.



Buttler calls McCullum 'as sharp a coach as I ever worked with'

NEWS DESK: Senior England player Jos Buttler on Tuesday backed under-fire Brendon McCullum, saying the New Zealander was "as sharp a coach as I've ever worked with".

McCullum is desperate for success at the T20 World Cup in India, where England face the West Indies in Mumbai on Wednesday, after facing flak for the torrid 4-1 thumping in the Ashes.

England coach McCullum was accused of being too laid-back and allowing a drinking culture in the camp.

White-ball captain Harry Brook had to apologise after being involved in an altercation with a night-club bouncer on the eve-of-Ashes tour of New Zealand.

On Sunday, McCullum was seen sending messages via walkie-talkie to the England players during drinks breaks as they squeezed home against Nepal in a last-ball nail-biter in Mumbai.

It appeared to be

part of a more hands-on, proactive coaching approach, and Buttler welcomed it.

"I think he's had those walkie-talkies for a while now, but then communication from top to bottom has always been

really good in the group," former captain Buttler told reporters at the Wankhede stadium ahead of training.

"Baz' can sit with his feet up and pass on to all the

players. His relationship with Harry Brook has been a great one for them. They're really close."

Brook took over after Buttler stood down as captain last year, following England's group

stage exit from the 50-over Champions Trophy in Pakistan and the UAE.

That followed an embarrassing title defence at the 50-over World Cup in India in 2023 and a semi-final exit as defending champions

at the 2024 T20 World Cup in the Caribbean. Buttler, who led England T20 World Cup glory in 2022 in Australia, said it had been tricky to adjust to just being a player again after being captain.

England team to play West Indies; Phil Salt, Jos Buttler (wk), Jacob Bethell, Tom Banton, Harry Brook (capt), Sam Curran, Will Jacks, Liam Dawson, Jamie Overton, Jofra Archer, Adil Rashid.

In his second game after giving up the role, he sought advice from Joe Root, who had stood down as Test captain but played on under Ben Stokes.

"He was stood at slip and I was keeping wicket. We had five or 10 minutes just talking about it," he said.

"How different it is when he's been captain... and some of the various emotions he felt, the challenges that he found, and yes it was really helpful."

England on Tuesday announced one change from the team that beat Nepal, seamer Luke Wood being replaced by Jamie Overton.

Wood conceded 14 runs from the 19th over against Nepal on Sunday in taking 1-31 from three overs.

England team to play West Indies; Phil Salt, Jos Buttler (wk), Jacob Bethell, Tom Banton, Harry Brook (capt), Sam Curran, Will Jacks, Liam Dawson, Jamie Overton, Jofra Archer, Adil Rashid.

Only purpose was to get respect for Bangladesh, says PCB chief Naqvi after talks with ICC



NEWS DESK: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Moinis Naqvi on Tuesday said in the context of his recent engagements with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and International Cricket Council (ICC) officials that the purpose was to "get respect for Bangladesh".

Naqvi said this while speaking to the media in Peshawar, a day after the government announced it was withdrawing its decision to boycott the group-stage match against India in the T20 World Cup, scheduled for February 15.

The development followed protracted negotiations between the ICC, the cricket boards of Pakistan and

Bangladesh, consultations among national leaders and interventions by friendly nations such as Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates.

The now-withdrawn decision to boycott the match against arch-rival India was announced by the government on February 1 after Bangladesh were replaced by Scotland in the tournament, following their refusal to tour India over safety concerns in the wake of soured political relations between the Asian neighbours.

The matter was raised during Naqvi's Peshawar on Tuesday, where he was asked about several conditions that were reportedly put forward

during his meeting with the ICC and BCB officials on Sunday.

In his response, Naqvi said: "We did not discuss anything apart from Bangladesh; our only purpose was to get Bangladesh respect, to highlight the injustice done to them."

"And you saw that whatever demands Bangladesh made, they were accepted. That's it. He added, "We had no personal interest in the meeting... our task was purely related to Bangladesh. The government made the decision on that [basis]. When their demands have been accepted, and it has been acknowledged that injustice was done to them, we are playing after that."

The developments unfolded as the ongoing T20 World Cup, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, began on February 7. It was, however, overshadowed by an acrimonious political build-up after Bangladesh, who refused to play in India citing security concerns, were replaced by Scotland.

Bangladesh remained firm on not taking part in the event after the ICC rejected their request to move their matches to Sri Lanka.

After mulling its stance, Pakistan gave its cricket team the nod to participate in the World Cup, but said the Green Shirts would not play their match with arch-rivals India, scheduled to be held in Colombo.

In response to the development, even before the official communication from the PCB, the ICC, in a statement, said the position of "selective participation is difficult to reconcile with the fundamental premise of a global sporting event where all qualified teams are expected to compete on equal terms per the event schedule."

It expressed the hope that the PCB would consider the significant and long-term implications for cricket in its own country.

What next for crashed Vonn?

NEWS DESK: Lindsey Vonn said on Monday she had suffered a "complex tibia fracture" to her left leg in a heavy crash that brutally ended her hopes of winning the fourth Olympic medal of her career in a remarkable comeback.

AFP looks at the latest developments after the heavy crash at Cortina d'Ampezzo on Sunday and whether it could spell the end of the 41-year-old American ski star's career.

Leg break will need "multiple surgeries"

In her first statement since the crash on Sunday, Vonn said she had suffered a complicated fracture of her tibia

that would need "multiple surgeries to fix properly".

But she insisted: "While yesterday did not end the way I had hoped, and despite the intense physical pain it caused, I have no regrets."

Vonn said the ruptured anterior cruciate ligament she had sustained in a crash in a World Cup race before the Milan-Cortina Games "had nothing to do with my crash (at the Olympics) whatsoever."

"I was simply 5 inches too tight on my line when my right arm hooked inside of the gate, twisting me and resulted in my crash," she

added on her social media, from the hospital in the Italian city of Treviso where she is being treated.

Just seconds after pushing off from the start gate in Sunday's final, Vonn hit a gate on the piste and lost balance, her skis remaining attached to her ski boots as she uncomfortably slid to a halt.

"I sustained a complex tibia fracture that is currently stable but will require multiple surgeries to fix properly," she said.

A race too far? Vonn's attempt to compete at the Olympics looked risky given the extent of her ACL injury,

even wearing a brace designed to stabilise her injured knee.

She was trying to complete a remarkable comeback from retirement with an Olympic medal, 16 years after she won her only Olympic gold in the downhill in Vancouver.

Rivals and teammates all spoke of the inherent risks in alpine skiing, and in particular the downhill, in which athletes regularly reach speeds of over 120 kilometres per hour (74 miles per hour).

Breezy Johnson, Vonn's American teammate who went on to win the Olympic downhill gold, described the impulse to compete even in precarious physical condition as a form of "madness" common to top skiers.

"It can hurt you so badly but you keep coming back," she said.

Johann Elia, head of the International Ski Federation, said on Monday of Vonn's decision to compete in the fateful downhill.

"This has to be decided by the individual athlete."

"What is also important for people to understand is that the accident that she had yesterday, she was incredibly unlucky, one in a thousand."

"This is something which is part of ski racing and it's a dangerous sport," Elias added.



Man City eye Premier League title twist

NEWS DESK: Manchester City can ramp up the pressure on Premier League leaders Arsenal by cutting the gap at the top to just three points when they face Fulham on Wednesday, a day before the Gunners travel to in-form Brentford.

Arsenal remain in pole position for a first title in 22 years, but City's dramatic late rally to beat Liverpool on Sunday could prove a turning point for Pep Guardiola's men.

Another defeat damaged Liverpool's chances of Champions League qualification and Arne Slot's threshold squad face another tough task in midweek away to Sunderland.

Tottenham and Newcastle are in even deeper trouble in the bottom half of the table, raising doubts over the future of respective managers Thomas Frank and Eddie Howe.

AFP Sports looks at three talking points from the midweek round of fixtures.

Can City provide title twist?

over with had they not turned around a 1-0 deficit with six minutes remaining at Anfield.

The question now is whether a seismic win for Guardiola's side can be the launching pad towards another league title. City have made a habit of finishing strongly in Guardiola's six title-winning seasons in England, but have won just two of their seven league games in 2026.

"We need to be-

lieve and to start winning games."

This is what matters in the end," said Erling Haaland, who is demanding more of himself in the title run-in.

The Norwegian is the runaway leader for the Golden Boot but has scored just once from open play in his last 13 appearances.

"I haven't scored enough goals since the start of this year and I know that I need to improve," added Haaland.

With a favourable run of fixtures before Arsenal visit the Etihad in mid-April, City have the chance to really test the Gunners' mettle in the run-in.

Mikel Arteta's men have bounced back from their own January wobble with four straight wins in all competitions.

But a buoyant Brentford that have lost just twice at home all season will provide a stiff test of Arsenal's title

challenge.

Liverpool face tough trek to Sunderland in the second round of the FA Cup, while the Reds will be without their star performer in a difficult season.

Dominik Szoboszlai, after his controversial late red card against City.

With Manchester United and Chelsea having on paper easier tasks this week, Liverpool could find themselves cut further adrift to ramp up speculation on Slot's future. Spurs' 'desperate' to avoid relegation battle.

It says much for the domination of the Champions League by English sides this season that both Tottenham and Newcastle cruised into the knockout stages but find themselves mired in the bottom half of the Premier League.

Australia humiliated by Ecuador in Davis Cup qualifier

NEWS DESK: Australia slumped to their worst Davis Cup result under long-serving captain Lleyton Hewitt, suffering a 3-1 humiliation away to lowly Ecuador in the first round of qualifiers on Sunday.

With Australia's number one Alex De Minaur opting out of the tie in Quito, the 28-times champions crashed out when Rinky Hijikata and Jordan Thompson were beaten 7-6(7/5), 6-4 by Gonzalo Escobar and Diego Hidalgo in the decisive doubles rubber.

Lacking a player in the top 200, Ecuador set back the charge of Meza downed Hijikata in three sets before 25th-ranked Andrus Andrade hooked inside the number 86 James Duckworth, also in three.

Ecuador next face Britain in the second round of qualifiers in September.

With De Minaur leading the charge, Australia reached back-to-back finals in 2022-23 and the semi-finals in 2024. However, the Ecuador shock continues the



team's decline following their failure to reach the eight-nation Finals in 2025, Hewitt's 10th year in charge. Meanwhile, Dhakshinewar Suresh won both his singles matches and partnered Yuki Bhambhani to victory in the doubles as India beat Netherlands 3-2 in Bengaluru.

The 25-year-old held his nerve under immense pressure in the final rubber against Guy de Ouden to win 6-4, 7-6(7/4) and guide India to the second round of qualifiers for the first time since the new Davis Cup format began in 2019.

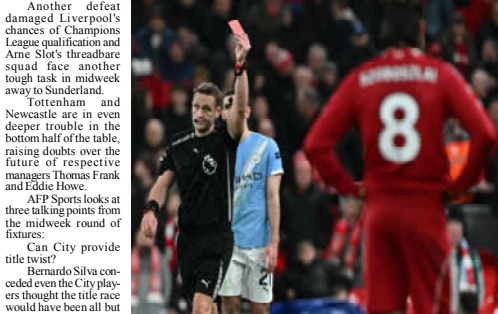
"It's just a different feeling when you're playing for your country," Suresh, who has a world ranking of 470, told the

Davis Cup website after the win.

"You are not playing for yourself, you're playing for the whole nation."

India meet South Korea in the next round in September after the Koreans defeated Argentina 3-2. The United States beat Hungary 4-0 while Britain also secured a 4-0 win over Norway and Canada beat Brazil 3-2.

In Tata Bay, Hungary, Christian Harrison, the Australian Open doubles champion, paired with Austin Krajicek to claim the clinching point for record 32-time winners the US with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Fabian Marozsan and Zsombor Pros.





Pakistan Army's 19-nation patrolling exercise concludes at Kharian

NEWS DESK: The 9th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Competition concluded at Kharian on February 9, 2026, the military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday.

According to ISPR, the closing ceremony was attended by the Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, as the chief guest.

The Team Spirit Competition is a 60-hour-long patrolling exercise designed to enhance professional military skills through the exchange of innovative ideas, tactical experiences, and best practices among participating teams, the statement said.

Conducted from February 5, the exercise took place in the semi-mountainous terrain of Punjab, providing a realistic and challenging operational environment.

ISPR said PATS has evolved over the years into a prestigious and highly competitive military exercise, recognised for promoting professional excellence and mutual learning among participating nations.

The forum continues to strengthen military-to-military cooperation and understanding while fostering camaraderie and team spirit in a demanding operational setting.

This year's competition saw participation from 19 countries, including Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Nepal, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, the United States, and Uzbekistan.

Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand attended as observers. Sixteen domestic teams from the Pakistan Army and Pakistan Navy also took part, while observers from the Pakistan Air Force were present at the event.

Addressing the closing ceremony, CDF Munir commended all participating teams for their "exceptional professionalism, physical and mental endurance, operational competence and high morale" demonstrated during the exercise.

He highlighted the importance of such multinational engagement.

ments in enhancing collective preparedness and adapting to the evolving character of modern warfare.

Reaffirming the core values of the Pakistan Army, he underscored the enduring soldierly attributes of "character, courage, and competence," saying these had been consistently demonstrated by Pakistani soldiers, particularly in the ongoing fight against terrorism.

At the conclusion of the event, the COAS & CDF presented awards to outstanding participants. International observers and defence attaches from participating countries also attended and praised the high standard of professionalism, organisation and conduct throughout the exercise.

Separately, the COAS & CDF witnessed various training activities at the National Counter Terrorism Centre in Pabbi, including a visit to the newly established Tactical Simulator.

He lauded the efforts of the troops and technical team and emphasised the importance of simulator-based training to complement traditional training methods.

PAF showcases JF-17 Block-III, Super Mushshak at World Defence Show in Saudi Arabia



NEWS DESK: A Pakistan Air Force (PAF) contingent is participating in the World Defence Show 2026 in Saudi Arabia, showcasing the JF-17 Thunder Block-III multi-role fighter jet and the Super Mushshak basic trainer aircraft, the military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday.

ISPR said the World Defence Show 2026 serves as a premier global platform for defence and security, adding that PAF's participation reinforces Pakistan's position as an emerging hub of aerospace innovation, operational competence, and reliable defence solutions.

The participation reflects PAF's commitment to highlighting Pakistan's rapidly advancing indigenous aerospace capabilities and its proven operational excellence, the statement said.

The JF-17 Block-III, described as the pinnacle of Pakistan's combat aviation technology, features state-of-the-art avionics, an advanced AESA radar, an enhanced electronic warfare suite, and beyond-visual-range combat capabilities.

ISPR said these features make it a formidable 4.5-generation fighter jet designed to meet the operational requirements of modern air forces.

Alongside the fighter jet, the Super Mushshak trainer aircraft is also on display, showcasing Pakistan's strength in pilot training solutions.

ISPR said the aircraft is known for its reliability, cost-effectiveness, and ease of maintenance, and has been inducted by several friendly countries, serving as a benchmark platform for basic flying training worldwide.

ISPR said PAF's presence at the exhibition reflects its leadership's vision of promoting defence cooperation, encouraging defence exports, and strengthening strategic partnerships with friendly nations.

He added that if the friend of the court faced any difficulty, his personal staff officer would be available to assist. The bench, comprising CJP Afridi and Justice Shahid Bilal Hasan, directed Salman Afridi to visit Adiala Jail and submit a written report on the PTI founder's living conditions and available facilities.

President Zardari welcomes Uzbek president's invitation to visit, emphasises strengthening ties

NEWS DESK: President Asif Ali Zardari welcomed Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's invitation to visit the country and emphasised strengthening ties between Islamabad and Tashkent, the president's media wing said on Tuesday.

According to a press release by the President's Secretariat, the president met with Uzbek Ambassador Alisher Tukhtayev, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr and handed over a letter from the Uzbek president, who had visited Pakistan for two days last week.

In his letter, Mirziyoyev thanked President Zardari, the government and the people of Pakistan for the extraordinary hospitality and warm welcome extended to him during his visit. He also expressed gratitude for the honours conferred the Nishan-e-Pakistan, Pakistan's highest civil award, as well as the honorary professorship and doctorate, according to the statement.

President



Mirziyoyev reiterated his invitation to President Zardari, earlier conveyed during their tête-à-tête," it added, referring to the Uzbek president's invitation to President Zardari to visit Uzbekistan "at a convenient time in order to further develop comprehensive cooperation".

President

and directed the concerned authorities from the Pakistani side to coordinate with their Uzbek counterparts to finalise the visit later this year. "The president said that Pakistan attached great significance to its close brotherly relations with Uzbekistan, while underscoring the importance of effective follow-up on the outcomes of

Mirziyoyev's recent "historic and result-oriented" state visit to Pakistan, the statement said. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening cooperation with Uzbekistan in "key sectors including food and agriculture, mining, information technology, tourism, health and banking". The president

also welcomed Uzbekistan's interest in importing halal meat, fruits and potatoes from Pakistan as a positive step towards enhancing bilateral trade, it added.

"President Zardari also conveyed his gratitude to Mirziyoyev for his message of solidarity and support following the recent terrorist attack in Islamabad," the statement said. Zardari reaffirmed the shared resolve of Pakistan and Uzbekistan to "continue their joint journey of peace, stability and development". During Mirziyoyev's two-day visit to Pakistan, the two sides signed a protocol for enhancing bilateral trade between the two countries to \$2 billion within the next five years. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his delight that the Uzbek president and his delegation visited Islamabad, his "second home", for the second time in four years. Meanwhile, Mirziyoyev declared that Pakistan was Uzbekistan's "time-tested, reliable partner and closest friend" in South Asia.

Non-bailable arrest warrant issued for KP CM Afridi in Peca case

NEWS DESK: An Islamabad court on Tuesday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi in a case pertaining to leading statements against state institutions and damage to their reputation.

The case was registered by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016, following allegations that the chief minister made false and defamatory claims against state institutions.

During the hearing on Tuesday, presided over by Senior Civil Judge Abbas Shah, the court noted that CM Afridi had once again failed to appear despite being summoned multiple times.

Subsequently, the judge ordered his immediate arrest and directed summons to remain absent without lawful justification.



At that time, the court had termed his conduct a deliberate attempt to evade the legal process and emphasised that he had been given multiple opportunities to appear and respond to the allegations.

The first information report (FIR) against CM Afridi was registered on November 9, 2025.

Following remarks made during a media

interaction outside Adiala Jail on November 6, During the interaction, Afridi alleged that security forces in KP had brought dogs inside mosques and tied them there, an accusation that sparked widespread outrage and condemnation for allegedly violating the sanctity of holy places.

Following an inquiry conducted on November 8, authorities

concluded that Afridi and others had "knowingly and deliberately, with mala fide intentions and ulterior motives, made false, misleading, derogatory and intimidating statements against state institutions."

These remarks were allegedly recorded, disseminated, and widely propagated through social media platforms, including a video uploaded on the PTI's YouTube channel.

The FIR stated that the video contained "offensive, profane, false, misleading and unfounded allegations" made with the intent to malign and defame state institutions, as well as harm their reputation and integrity.

Investigators further alleged that the content formed part of an organised campaign to undermine public trust in state institutions, incite hatred, and destabilize national security.

Imran Khan's health 'fine', Salman Safdar says after SC-mandated meeting

NEWS DESK: Advocate Salman Safdar said on Tuesday after a meeting with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan that his health was "fine".

The Supreme Court earlier appointed him as a friend of the court to submit a report on the living conditions of Imran, who is currently incarcerated at Adiala Jail.

Talking to the media briefly after the nearly three-hour long meeting, Safdar said: "It is not appropriate for me to talk until I submit the report. The meeting has taken place and there was full access."

He said the meeting was ensured as the court's orders, questioning Imran's health, he responded: "Fine. Rest you should see in the report."

At the onset of the SC hearing, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi said Safdar should be treated with respect and not be made to wait outside the jail. "It is expected that our friend of the court will be given access to the PTI founder at Adiala Jail without delay," he said.

He added that if the friend of the court faced any difficulty, his personal staff officer would be available to assist. The bench, comprising CJP Afridi and Justice Shahid Bilal Hasan, directed Salman Afridi to visit Adiala Jail and submit a written report on the PTI founder's living conditions and available facilities.

In response, the chief justice directed that the living conditions report be submitted in chambers. Attorney General



founder's living conditions and available facilities. The court also ordered that Safdar be given access to the PTI founder at Adiala Jail without delay, he said.

The court directed the friend of the court to submit the report by Wednesday and adjourned the hearing until the day after tomorrow.

During the proceedings, Safdar asked whether the scope of his report was limited only to living conditions. He told the court that "after a physical eye examination, there are some concerns regarding the PTI founder's health".

In response, the chief justice directed that the living conditions report be submitted in chambers. Attorney General

for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan told the court that, in compliance with the August 24, 2023, order, a written response had already been submitted in chambers. He said that at the time the order was passed, the PTI founder was lodged in Atrick Jail.

"We submitted the written report in chambers on August 28, 2023," the attorney general said, adding that medical reports from August 5 to August 18 were also attached.

However, the chief justice observed that after the August 24, 2023, order, "there is no order on record on which this court has expressed satisfaction".

The court said it had full confidence in Salman Safdar and found it appropriate to seek a fresh report on the PTI

founder's living conditions, as he is now detained at a different jail. Earlier during the hearing, the chief justice stopped senior lawyer Latif Khosa from addressing the court. At the end of the proceedings, Khosa again approached the rostrum and requested permission to meet his client.

The Supreme Court rejected Khosa's request and ordered that Salman Safdar be allowed to visit Adiala Jail the same day.

A day earlier, the Supreme Court had rejected Khosa's request by Imran Khan's counsel to allow an immediate meeting with the jailed former prime minister, while referring multiple appeals related to the PTI founder to the same division.

bench had taken up 13 cases, including appeals by the Punjab government against Imran Khan's bail and four appeals against the grant of bail to his wife, Bushra Bibi.

During that hearing, the court declined the request for an immediate meeting but issued a notice to the government on Khosa's application seeking permission to meet his client.

CJP Afridi had observed that no order could be passed without issuing notice to the other party and said the court would first decide objections related to the maintainability of the petition. He noted that several related matters were pending before the other court and remarked that the case appeared to have become infructuous, as it stemmed from the August 24, 2023 order.

"We will first determine whether the case is infructuous or still maintainable," the chief justice had said.

Meanwhile, the court also directed the formation of a three-member bench to hear appeals against the acquittal of Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the cipher case.

Safdar meets Imran today In Rawalpindi, Barister Salman Safdar, appointed as friend of the court by the Supreme Court, will meet the PTI founder in today, officials said.