



Page No 5

INTERNATIONAL
Bangladesh poll race heats up on final day of campaigning

Page No 3

NATIONAL
Non-bailable arrest warrant issued for KP CM Afridi...

Page No 8

SPORT

Man City eye Premier League title twist

Page No 7

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Email address:quettavoice@gmail.com

Website: www.quettavoice.com

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Editor: Asim Khan.

QUETTA VOICE



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 shutter-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.

Punjab Announces Rs10 Billion Assistance for Security Forces in Balochistan

**Mir Salam Jogeza,
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 sense 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 for 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,

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 pro-active 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 to 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.

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) — to 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 reported.

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 subcommittee 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 Imam Memon refuted that it was due to "pressure" from the political opponents.

After conducting its own probe, the Sindh government said senior 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. — Sindh website

The commission was also mandated to "fix responsibility for any act 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 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.

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 is welcome, but the Balochistan Police is not merely an administrative reform — it is a historic correction. For more than a century, security in large areas 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, terror,ism, digital threats, and urban warfare. Many of these officers have never undergone structured, professional police training. Expecting

them to perform modern policing duties without proper preparation is shortsighted and有害 to the public.

This is why the ongoing program at Police Training College Quetta is critically important. It must go beyond physical drills and weapons handling. The former Levies personnel need comprehensive training in investigation standards, human rights, evidence gathering, and intelligence. Modern police training today is not simply force — it is law, service and trust.

Equally important is training in First Aid, complaint handling, victim support, and documentation — the backbone of justice. Without accuracy at the first point of contact, the entire legal chain of collapse. Upgraded hostels, 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 symbiotic. Officers must be equipped with modern equipment, digital crime management tools, body cameras, forensic support, and performance accountability. Officer accountability, officer-led policing, community engagement, and the ethical use of authority.

Equally important is training in First Aid, complaint handling, victim support, and documentation — the backbone of justice. Without accuracy at the first point of contact, the entire legal chain of collapse. Upgraded hostels, mess facilities, sports grounds, and structured welfare support are welcome steps.

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 a 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 document 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 temperate 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, de-

mocracy, capitalism, and feudalism.

At that time, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto convinced the nation with arguments that society should em-

Ali Bhutto said he had made a public manifesto to bring revolutionary changes to Pakistani society.

He implemented agrarian reforms to slacken the tution. Then the parliament headed by the PPP majority gave the 1973 constitution, which was the first unified national con-

silhouette of Benazir Bhutto, the martyred of democracy.

Bhutto's personality is performed on the world's stage today in the former Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

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. Bhutto 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 dictators tried to 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

Postal address
Kili Badini saryab
road Quetta
51601.8629557.3
CII 033130905789

Formation of Pakistan Peoples Party, its aims and objectives



brace 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 pridefulness. 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 in the fifth point).

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 constitu-

tion 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-Azam also laid the foundation of the Party's newspaper "Musawat" to advance his party policies. Today, the party is led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who 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 strategic 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 tree-planting 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.

By addressing these critical issues, Balochistan can better adapt to the challenges posed by climate change, ensuring a more secure and sustainable future for its residents. The writer is a Balochistan-based journalist, she can be reached at @KakarChand97707

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 2019, the region 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-



The 2022 flood in Balochistan underscores the looming climate change threat

The 2022 flood underscored the looming

threat of climate change over Balochistan. Driven by 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-

eas.

CC affects economy

Climate change

decimated the

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

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 part of the race for 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, which like 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 those who waved flags 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

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

Hasina was over-

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



death in absentia in November for crimes against humanity, including the deadly crackdown on protesters in her failed but to cling to power and remains in hiding in India.

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

headed packed rallies, drawing thousands to protest against the violence will reduce," said Ashikuzzaman Shaon, a 21-year-old student. "They'll establish justice." The Jamaat-i-Islami said, thanking women supporters.

"If we lose, August 5 will also lose," he said. "People will still be shouting slogans from the uprising, including 'Long live the revolution!'" "Slavery or freedom?", they

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

"The actions of the oppressed must stop. The 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 "businesses of extortion and crime" for decades.

"If you elect me, I will dedicate myself to the betterment of the nation," Islam said, thanking women supporters.

"If we lose, August 5 will also lose," he said. "People will still be shouting slogans from the uprising, including 'Long live the revolution!'" "Slavery or freedom?", they

chanted, referring in unison, "Freedom, freedom!"

Among the

crowds on Monday was Tota Mia, 58, a rickshaw puller who had attended rallies on all sides and took a pragmatic approach.

"I've seen every-

thing," he said. "And this time I will vote for Jamaat. It doesn't matter if I eat more or less, I want peace."

"Bangladesh poll

race heats up on final

day of campaigning."

N E W S

DESK: Bangladesh's

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change for the country of

170 million in

Thursday's election.

Muslim bloc warns Israel against West Bank annexation

NEWS DESK: A group of key Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar, on Monday issued a strong joint warning to Israel over what they described as accelerating efforts to annex and control the occupied West Bank, just days before US President Donald Trump is set to chair the inaugural summit of the Gaza Board of Peace.

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 territories.

The statement accused Israel of entrenching settlement enforcement and forcing 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.

The joint condemnation comes amid growing international alarm over Israel's moves to legalise settlements outside Jerusalem and its capital. "These acts 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 settlements as illegal, and affirmed the necessity of ending the occupation and rejected the legality of annexation of Palestinian land.

They also referred to the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which found Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories illegal, and 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 review 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 the enactment of investment law 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 substantive laws," Finance Minister Koo Yun-cheol 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 misunderstanding

with Washington was undesirable.

Koo, who is also deputy prime minister and finance minister, 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.

Trump said last month he would hike tariffs on autos and other imports from South Korea, blaming a day after the US president announced the deal 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 lawmakers to link the timeframe to Trump's sudden tariff threat.

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

Final decisions on selecting investment projects will still be made after the bill is enacted, based on comprehen-

sive consideration of commercial feasibility and foreign exchange market conditions, the ministry said in a statement.

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Koo told Reuters in an interview this month

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 regional strategic alliance 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 half a year

after Israel

recognised Somaliland,

a self-proclaimed

republic that seceded

from Somalia in 1991

but which Mogadishu

still considers to be

under its control.

Minister of Defence

Abdullahi Farah

and his Saudi counterpart,

Prince Khalid Bin

Salman, signed a "military

cooperation agree-

ment" Monday, ac-

cording to a message

on X from the Somali defence ministry.

"This agreement

further strengthens

defence and military

cooperations, while

expanding 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 mil-

lions of dollars in de-

veloping the deep-

water port of Berbera,

which it uses with little

regard for the govern-

ment in Mogadishu.

This port includes

an airport strictly con-

trolled 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.

against Herzog's visit to

Australia, which comes

after police shot at

a Jewish religious event

in Bondi Beach in De-

cember that killed 15

people.

Police had been

authorised to use rarely

permitted powers

against protesters

including

directing crowds to

move, restricting their

entry to certain areas

and searching vehicles.

A legal challenge to

these 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 protesters

were seen lying

on the ground while

police tried to restrain

them.

Police used tear gas

and pepper spray to dis-

perse protesters

pepper-spraying the

crowd, punching and ar-

resting people," the

group said.

Angus Boyd, an

opposition Green law-

maker in the state par-

liament, said she had

punched by officers

while attempting to va-

cate the site.

Police began

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

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azaz Sheikh 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, Shaheed Afzal Guru and India had hanged Muhammad Afzal Guru in February 1990 on February 9 in 2013 and sent prominent liberation leader Muhammad Afzal Guru to the gallows in the same jail on February 11, 1984. Their bodies were buried in the

premises of the jail.

He said in his 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 hanged and Afzal Guru was hanged to please the collective public opinion in the

words of the Indian court.

He said it was a matter of shame that the last remains of Shaheed Maqbool Butt and Shaheed Afzal Guru were not handed over to their respective ancestral graveyards.

Muhammad Farooq Rehmani said in spite of hating Muhammad Maqbool Butt and Shaheed Afzal Guru, India could not silence and suppress the freedom voice and struggle of the people and as a result thousands of young 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 handing over the license of 3rd Digital Retail 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 of around 3-4 per cent, climate change is estimated to erode an estimated 7-10pc of GDP, reversing development gains.

He highlighted the

severe humanitarian consequences of climate change, 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.

Malik said climate disasters were pushing vulnerable populations back into poverty and undermining economic stability, education and social cohesion.

He also criticised 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 requiring countries to constantly divert funds originally allocated for health and education towards reconstruction and debt servicing.

Emphasising adaptation measures, he said that although floods could not 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-pronged strategy, Dr Malik called for restoring existing environmental resources, expanding climate-resilient infrastructure development systems designed to withstand climate shocks.

He urged industries to invest in youth-led green innovation.

The minister announced that youth-driven climate initiatives, including a Virtual Green University, established under the PTI-led leader Imran Khan.

Emphasising adaptation measures, he said that although floods could not 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.

He urged industries to invest in youth-led green innovation.

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

The bench set

Wednesday as the dead-

line for submission of

the report and ad-

judged further pro-

ceedings until the fol-

lowing day.

During the hearing,

Salman Safdar sought

clarification on the

scope of his mandate

MOST WANTED TERRORISTS

REWARD FOR INFORMATION



	Name: Brahmang Khan Bugti FName: Rehan Akbar Bugti Address: Bugti House, Dera Bugti		Name: Hybair Marri FName: Khair Baksh Marri Address: Marri Sreet Arbab Karan Khan Road		Name: Cpt Rehman Gul FName: Mir Rehman Gul		Name: Bashir Zaih FName: Dr. Bashir Zaih		Name: Mir Saifee Ahmed FName: Dr. Mir Saifee Ahmed		Name: Nadeem FName: Jameel Ahmed
	Name: Samand Khan FName: Esra of Muhammad Khan Address: Pehlu Tola Pehluwah, District Dera Bugti		Name: Riaz Gul FName: Muhammad Jan		Name: Sher Muhammad Bugti FName: Mala Khan		Name: Jaffer Khan FName: Peer Bahadur		Name: Muhammad Farooq FName: Commander Azam		Name: Abdur Rehman FName: Abdur Rehman
	Name: Zahid Hussain FName: Mohammad Hussain		Name: Fida Shah FName: Syed Abdul		Name: Allah Gul FName: Mokbel Syed Noor		Name: Waliullah FName: Sangan Sibi		Name: Muhammad Sadiq FName: Ghulam Sadiq		Name: Jaffi Ahmed FName: Shahzad Sibi
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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 accumulating these toxic metals," said Tahir Naqash.

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 exports.

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 fruits.

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

He said 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, stating 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 3.75-4.75% for FY26, with further improvement expected in FY27. The eco-

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

Inflation is projected to remain in the 5-7% target range for most of FY26 and FY27, despite near-term volatility, the report said.

The report noted that macroeconomic conditions have improved, supported by a prudent

monetary policy stance and continued fiscal consolidation. The current account deficit is projected to remain within the range of 3.0-3.5% of GDP for 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.

State authorities to reopen these contracts to reduce the annual outflow of foreign currency by \$750 million per annum and, on the other hand, potentially cut electricity prices by Rs1 per unit.

Pakistan sought a five- to seven-year extension in the repayment of Chinese energy debt, while responding to a question during a press conference, the minister clarified that repaying 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 dams, wind farms and 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-



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 also expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti leadership for their support to Pakistan at various

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

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-

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

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

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

melting of more than 13,000 glaciers, he said

existential threat to Pakistan.

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

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

The stress was underlined by stark statistics: the human toll has already exceeded that of past conflicts. Over

Economically, Mr. Malik added, Pakistan's updated climate commitments under Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 2.0, which target a 50pc emissions reduction by 2035, would require an estimated \$565.7bn in investment under the most optimistic scenario of the transition ahead.

In a recorded message, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb reiterated that climate change now poses an existential threat to Pakistan.

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

The problem, he noted, was not the absence of capital but the inability of the government to operationalise compounded by large bureaucracies and prolonged accreditation delays, a frustration echoed by several speakers.

The finance minister called on companies to prioritise knowledge transfer from their global operations in Pakistan, noting that climate



1pc of GDP lost to climate damage: Musadik

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

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

The stress was underlined by stark statistics: the human toll has already exceeded that of past conflicts. Over

The stress was underlined by stark statistics: the human toll has already exceeded 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 reduce them by 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

existential threat to Pakistan.

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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 Staffs (COAS & CDS), Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, as the chief guest.

The Team 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 par-

ticipating 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, Turkey, the United States, and Uzbekistan.

In D o n s i a , Myanmar, and Thailand attended as observers.

Sixteen domestic teams from the Pakistan Army and Pakistan Navy also took part, with observers from the Pakistan Air Force were present at the event.

Addressing the closing ceremony, COAS & CDS 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 the newly established Technical Simulator.

He lauded the efforts of the troops and technical teams 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 com-

mitment 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, 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 PAF's strength in pilot training solutions. The statement added.

ISPR said the aircraft is known for its reliability, cost-effectiveness, and ease of maintenance, and has been inducted by several friendly countries.

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.

The exhibition provides an opportunity for international delegations, defence officials, and defence industry leaders to engage with PAF representatives and explore prospects for collaboration, training, and technology transfer.

In response, the chief justice directed that the living conditions report be submitted in chambers. The statement added.

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

NEWS DESK: President Asif Ali Zardari welcomed Uzbek 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, the President's Secretary, the president met with Uzbek Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev, who called on him at Awan-e-Sad and handed over a letter from Uzbek president, who had visited Pakistan for two days last week.

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

President Zardari accepted the invitation



Mirziyoyev reiterated his invitation to President Zardari, earlier presented to the Pakistani side to coordinate with their agenda, it added, referring to the track president's invitation to President Zardari to visit Pakistan "at a convenient time in order to further develop comprehensive cooperation."

President Zardari accepted the invitation

and directed the concerned authorities from the Pakistani side to coordinate with their agenda, it added, referring to the track president's invitation to President Zardari to visit Pakistan "at a convenient time in order to further develop comprehensive cooperation."

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 concluded that Afdidi and others had "knowingly and deliberately, with bad 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 YouTube channel.

The FIR stated that

the video contained "offensive, profane, false, misleading, and untrue statements" made with the intent to malign and defame state institutions, as well as harm their reputation and integrity.

Subsequently, the court directed that the concerned authorities ensure his production before the court. The hearing was adjourned till February 21.

This is not the first time the court has taken action over Afdidi's non-appearance.

Last month, the same court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant after observing that the KP chief minister had repeatedly ignored court summons and remained absent without lawful

justification.

At that time, the court, in its terms of reference, directed to conduct a deliberate attempt to expedite the legal process and emphasized that it had been given multiple opportunities to appear and respond to the allegations.

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

following remarks he made during a media

interaction outside Adiala Jail on November 6.

During the interaction, Afdidi alleged that security forces in KP had brought dogs inside mosques and tied them to trees, which sparked widespread outrage and condemnation for allegedly violating the sanctity of holy places.

Following an inquiry conducted on November 8, authorities

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

NEWS DESK: Advocate Salman Saifur said on Tuesday after a meeting with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan that his health was "fine" and 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, Saifur 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 he was in the meeting as per the court's orders. Questioned about Imran's health, he responded: "Fine. Rest you should be in the report."

At the end of the SC hearing, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afdidi said Saifur should be treated with respect and not be made to stand in the dock.

He is expected that our friend of the court will be given access to the PTI founder at Adiala jail with due respect," the chief justice said.

He added that if the friend of the court faced any difficulty, his personal staff officer would be available to assist.

The senior attorney, CM Afdidi and Justice Shahid Hasan, directed Salman Saifur to visit Adiala Jail and submit a written report on the PTI founder's living conditions and available facilities.

The court also ordered that Saifur be given access to the PTI founder's jail bar before he could prepare the report.

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, Saifur asked whether the scope of his report would include living conditions. He told the court that "after a physical eye examination, there are some concerns regarding the PTI founder."

He responded that the living conditions report be submitted in chambers. Attorney General

Usman Awan told the court that, in compliance with the August 24, 2023, order, a written response had already been submitted to the court.

He said that the same order was issued in the PTI founder's case.

"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 submitted.

However, the chief justice observed that after the August 24, 2023, order, "there is no order on record on which this writ was issued."

The court said it had full confidence in Salman Saifur 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 Lala Khosa and advised the court that the end of the proceedings, Khosa again approached the rostrum and requested permission to leave the court.

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

A day earlier, the Supreme Court had received an urgent request by Imran Khan's counsel to allow an immediate meeting with the chief justice.

The court said it had full confidence in Salman Saifur 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.

During the hearing, the chief justice directed the formation of a three-member bench to hear appeals against the actions of Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the case.

Saifur meets Imran

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

On Tuesday, Barrister Salman Saifur, appointed as friend of the court by the Supreme Court, will meet the PTI founder in jail today, officials said.



Imran Khan had taken up 13 cases, including appeals by the Punjab government against Imran Khan's bail and an appeal 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 to appear before the court for a hearing seeking permission to meet his client. CJP Afdidi had observed that no order could be passed without consulting the other party and said the court would first decide objections related to the maintainability of the petition. He noted that two other writ petitions were pending before other courts and remarked that the case appeared to have become infertile, as it stemmed from the August 24, 2023, order.

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

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

Saifur meets Imran

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