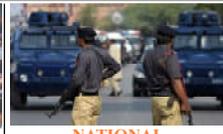




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First Digital, Print Daily of Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan.

QUETTA VOICE

Rs.10.00 Vol.VII:No:142

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Monday 23, February, 2026



Pakistan Strikes Back Hard: Air Force Wipes Out 7 TTP & ISKP Terror Camps on Afghan Border After Ramadan Suicide Attacks

Zeeshan Ahmed, Monitoring Desk:

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has taken strong and decisive action against terrorism. Early Sunday, the Pakistan Air Force carried out precision airstrikes that destroyed seven terrorist camps and hideouts linked to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) — locally called Fina al-Khawarij — and the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) right along the volatile Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting shared

the news on X, making it clear this was no random operation. It came as a direct response to the heartbreaking wave of suicide bombings that have rocked Pakistan in recent days, including the devastating attack on an Imam Bargah in Islamabad, blasts in Bajaur and Bannu, and yet another suicide bombing in Bannu on Sunday itself — all during the holy month of Ramadan.

Pakistani intelligence says it has rock-solid evidence that these attacks were planned and directed by TTP leaders safely based inside Afghanistan. Both the Afghanistan-based TTP factions and ISKP have openly

claimed responsibility for the killings. While Pakistan has always pushed hard for peace and stability in the region, the government has drawn a firm line: the safety of our people comes first — no compromises.

“These strikes were a carefully planned, intelligence-based retaliation against confirmed terrorist targets,” the ministry said, stressing that the action was selective and proportionate. Despite Islamabad’s repeated diplomatic requests, the Afghan Taliban regime has done little to nothing to stop these groups from using Af-

ghan soil as a launchpad for attacks on Pakistan. The statement urged the interim Afghan government to finally live up to its responsibilities and stop allowing terrorists to operate from its territory.

Pakistan also called on the international community to step up and pressure Kabul to honour the commitments it made in the Doha Agreement — a move that’s vital for lasting regional and global security. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Irtiq Fazal Chaudhry praised the Pakistan Air Force for delivering justice to the victims.

“These strikes are an answer to the tears of every mother who has lost her son defending our homeland,” he wrote on X.

Chaudhry added a clear warning: “Pakistan wants peace, but we will never compromise on the security of our land and our people. Whoever looks at us with evil intent will be destroyed — no one will be spared.” This bold cross-border action shows Pakistan’s zero-tolerance policy: terrorism from Afghan soil will not be tolerated, and the country is ready to defend its citizens at any cost.

Imran’s release in his own hands, dependent on PTI’s attitude: Sharjeel Memon

NEWS DESK:

PPP leader Sharjeel Inam Memon on Sunday said that PTI founder Imran Khan’s release was “in his own hands” as it depended on his party’s “attitude”.

The Sindh senior minister made the remarks while speaking to reporters during a visit to a site of ongoing development work in Karachi.

In response to a question regarding Imran’s release, the minister maintained that the incarcerated former premier’s release “was in his own hands and the attitude” of PTI.

“I do not have any knowledge of his release; however, it is the blessed month of Ramadan, and I pray for his health, particularly his eye issue,” Memon said.

Imran’s health has been garnering attention in recent days, with his family and party raising concerns since his eye ailment — right central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) — came to light in late January.

Memon assailed the party for “not focusing on the release of their leadership” and instead “creating fuss and staging protests outside of Adiala”.

“It is better if they focus on seeking Imran’s release,” he added.

Imran, imprisoned since August 2023, is serving a 14-year sentence at Rawalpindi’s Adiala jail in a £190 million corruption case and was convicted months ago in another case regarding state gifts.



He also faces pending trials under the Anti-Terrorism Act related to the protests of May 2023.

Speaking to the media, Memon further said the PTI’s social media teams “target leaders and national institutions on social media and through their teams abroad”.

The PPP leader advised the party to “improve their language and choice of words”, stressing that while one can hold disagreements, it was not appropriate to “verbally abuse people’s families and use below the belt language”.

“Improve your mindset. It will help you a lot,” he added.

Earlier this week, PPP Central Punjab General Secretary Syed Hassan Murtaza warned the PTI that any character assassination would be met with a forceful response, as he accused the PTI of unleashing a wave of online abuse against his party’s leadership.

Last week, in a series of public addresses during his visit to South Punjab, President Asif Ali Zardari also criticised Imran amid concerns about his health,

saying the jailed PTI leader should face imprisonment “like a man” and should not order his party leaders and workers to block roads.

“He has served less than two years of imprisonment and is exhausted. In fact, [one realises what jail actually is after two years of imprisonment,” he said.

Nine Construction Labourers Abducted in Khuzdar and Barkhan

News Desk, Asif Kareem Khetran:

A wave of fear has gripped parts of Balochistan after nine labourers working on development projects were kidnapped in two separate incidents in Khuzdar and Barkhan districts over the last 24 hours.

According to local officials, the first incident occurred on Saturday evening in the remote Moola area of Khuzdar, around 50 kilometres from the district headquarters. Unidentified armed men, riding motorcycles, stormed the camp of a private construction company engaged in a water channel project.

The attackers reportedly overpowered the workers at the site and forced six of them into a red double-cabin vehicle before driving away towards an unknown location. The abducted labourers include a project manager and five other workers. Police said two of the victims are residents of Sindh, while the remaining four belong to Khuzdar district.

Residents of the area said the sudden attack created panic among workers and nearby com-



munities, many of whom rely on construction projects as their only source of income.

A few hours later, a second kidnapping incident was reported from Barkhan district, where

armed men targeted a crushing plant operated by a private company working on a road construction project near the Dhola Nadi area. Police sources said that early Sunday morning, a large group

of armed individuals entered nearby areas, opened aerial fire, and abducted three labourers from the site before fleeing towards surrounding hills. The kidnapped workers are believed to

be residents of Musa Khel district.

Local authorities further confirmed that the attackers also assaulted a nearby police checkpoint, where three policemen were disarmed and their weapons taken. No casualties were reported during the attacks, but the incidents have raised serious concerns over the safety of workers and security personnel.

Deputy Commissioner Barkhan confirmed the incidents and said search operations were underway to trace and safely recover the abducted labourers.

Balochistan has seen repeated attacks on labourers involved in construction and development projects in recent years. Earlier this month, five workers from Sindh were killed in a shooting incident at a construction site in Noshki. Last year, 18 labourers working on a road project in Khuzdar’s Naal area were kidnapped and later released after several months.

The latest incidents have once again highlighted growing security challenges for development work in remote areas of the province, where labourers continue to risk their lives to earn a living.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Green Pakistan Initiative Must Put Transparency and Merit First



Editorial: The Balochistan government's decision to disburse Rs3.2 billion in interest-free agricultural loans to 847 farmers under Phase II of the Green Pakistan Initiative marks a significant policy intervention at a time when the province's rural economy is under pressure.

Announced by Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the initiative aims to bring more than 35,600 acres of land under cultivation, an ambition that, if realized in both letter and spirit, could meaningfully transform agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods.

There is no doubt that interest-free credit is a powerful tool for farmers who have long remained dependent on expensive informal borrowing. By reducing this burden, the government is not only easing immediate financial stress but also encouraging farmers to invest in better inputs, improved practices, and sustainable cultivation. In a province where agriculture remains the backbone of

rural employment, such measures can strengthen food security and contribute to long-term economic stability.

The success of Phase I, during which Rs6.85 billion was extended to 257 farmers, has rightly been cited as the foundation for expanding the program. Positive outcomes from the initial phase demonstrate that well-designed public financing can yield tangible results. However, scaling up also brings new challenges, chief among them transparency, accountability, and equitable access.

As Phase II unfolds, it is essential that the loan distribution process remains fully transparent and insulated from favoritism. Public confidence in such initiatives depends on clear criteria, open verification mechanisms, and timely disclosure of beneficiaries. Deserving candidates, particularly smallholders and genuinely low-income farmers, must remain the central focus, rather than politically connected or influential

individuals. The introduction of the Kissan Card for small and poor farmers is a step in the right direction, offering a structured and traceable way to access financial support.

Yet even this mechanism must be continuously monitored to ensure that it serves its intended purpose and does not become another bureaucratic hurdle or conduit for misuse.

Ultimately, the Green Pakistan Initiative has the potential to reshape Balochistan's agricultural landscape. But its long-term success will be judged not only by the amount of money disbursed or acreage brought under cultivation, but by how fairly, transparently, and merit-based these resources are allocated.

If transparency is institutionalized and deserving farmers are kept at the center, this initiative can become a genuine catalyst for inclusive rural development rather than just another well-intentioned policy headline.

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.

The 2022 flood in Balochistan underscores the looming climate change threat
The 2022 flood underscored the looming threat of climate

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

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

CC affects economy
Climate change also decimated the 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, Pajpore, and Khuzdar. However, Balochistan need not accept this grim fate. It requires comprehensive strategies tailored to its unique challenges. The provincial government must implement robust climate change policies, emphasizing water resource management and disaster preparedness. Learning from the tragic dam collapses of 2022, preventive measures, such as effective water reservoirs and early warning systems, are imperative. Spreading awareness about climate change and promoting sustainable agricultural practices are

equally crucial. **Tree plantations could mitigate sweltering temperatures**

In a province where tree 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.

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.

Quetta City, Proposed Master Plan

Abdul Latif Kakar : QUETTA: The mountain-ringed, Quetta city needs a comprehensive master plan to ensure the solution of problems faced by citizens and address the mega question of climate change.

Through the proposed plan, scarce resources would be transparently and rationally utilized to make it a better living city in the country.

For the first in the history of the province, the Urban Planning Development (UPD) under the leadership of chief minister Balochistan, Jam Kamal Khan has started the preparation of the master plan.

Geographical location, looming threat of natural calamities including earthquakes, drought, and floods, the need for making a comprehensive master plan for Quetta city is growing. Rather, it is now indispensable to make this plan, before it is already late.

Geography and Soil

Four main units may describe the soils of Quetta i.e. (1) piedmont plains (very deep and well-drained soil) (2) piedmont basins (3) salinity and alkalinity (4) gravelly piedmont fans and aprons bordering the mountains and plains.

The central part of the Quetta valley is covered by a soil that ranges from sandy loam to silt loam. This type of soil is good for crop production.



At the margin of the valley near foothills, the soil consists of sandy loam, mixed

with pebbles and rock fragments and is suitable for vegetation. In the Hanna valley,

the greater part of the valley floor is covered by barren rock about crops of low relief and dry mala bed.

The soil is restricted to the narrow banks and low terraces along the main stream. However, the nature of the soil in Belii is silty clay which is not suitable for cultivation. Similarly, the

Chiltan surface has soils that are predominantly gravelly loams.

The vegetation on these soils is mainly Haloxylon which provides poor grazing for livestock.

Soil erosion
As far as soil erosion is concerned, both stream erosion of soil and wind erosion is occurring in the district.

The stream erosion takes place in the piedmont plain along the banks and beds of streams.

Such streams are Sariah Lora, Hanna river, Habib Nallah near Hudda. Wind erosion occurs in the valley.

This all requires a review of the existing plans and documents and preparation of the digitized base map of Quetta with a protocol for its updating.

A review of existing policies, procedures, plans studies conducted by donor agencies, and other relevant data. Current and future population trends need to be reviewed.

Transportation, mass transit, and city traffic management and monitoring system, housing commercial, and industrial land use evaluation of the existing condition of buildings and housing schemes should be thoroughly reviewed.

To be precise, the city needs a master plan on an emergency basis to address the looming threat of climate change and natural disasters.

Virginia Lt. Governor Ghazala Hashmi calls for inclusion of US Muslims during Ramadan

NEWS DESK: In the US capital, the first week of Ramadan is unfolding with the familiar quiet of fasting and prayer — accompanied by a clear message: American Muslims will not be defined by fear or exclusion.

That message resonated on a Saturday night Iftar hosted by the Pakistani American Press Association, where Ghazala Hashmi, the 43rd lieutenant governor of Virginia, spoke about her journey into politics.

She recounted that she had never planned to run for office, but the 2016 proposal for a Muslim registry during Donald Trump's campaign made her realise the country was moving in the wrong direction.

When she first ran for the Virginia Senate in 2019, she was told she was "not the right type" and that nobody would vote for her.

Yet she defeated a Republican incumbent by more than 10 points, a sign, she said, that voters were ready for change.

She remained in the Senate, focusing on education, before run-



ning for lieutenant governor in 2024 — a campaign that culminated in her becoming the first Muslim woman elected to statewide office in the United States.

"Virginia is a place

that is changing," she told the audience. "It is inclusive. A state that was once the capital of the Confederacy has shown that it does not care about race or religion."

Muslims also have the right to speak about our faith and values, and every community feels represented here." Speakers at the gathering drew connections between her politi-

cal success and the spirit of Ramadan. Community leader Ghulam Nabi Fai described her rise as "an inspiration for all".

Highlighting Islam's inclusiveness,

he said Ramadan was "a month of blessing for all — Muslims and non-Muslims alike, even for those who have not been kind to you". Pakistan's Ambassador to the United

States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, called Ghazala Hashmi "the living example" of what can be achieved by refusing to retreat in the face of obstacles.

The significance of

her victory "can only be fully realised if you integrate yourself into the political and economic mainstream", he said. "Following the path Ms Hashmi has shown is advisable, prudent and wise." The first days of fasting carried that spirit of inclusiveness into homes, mosques, and community halls across the US capital.

As sunset approached, Muslims prepared to break their fast with dates and water, causing to offer Maghrib prayers in quiet reflection.

Muslim communities in Virginia, Washington, and Maryland have set up food distribution centres across the region, providing free groceries and meals. Most recipients do not share the Islamic faith.

Even as Washington moved at its usual hurried pace, the city's mosques and community centres became spaces of both devotion and affirmation.

The act of fasting — coupled with the knowledge of a historic political achievement — lent the day a sense of resilience and belonging.

Trump says he is sending a hospital ship to Greenland

NEWS DESK: US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he was working with Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry to send a hospital boat to Greenland, a Danish territory that Trump has said he wants to acquire.

Trump announced the plan on social media moments before hosting a dinner for Republican governors at the White House, where he sat next to

and chatted with Landry. "Working with the fantastic Governor of Louisiana, — Jeff Landry, we are going to send a great hospital boat to Greenland, a Danish territory that Trump has said he wants to acquire. It's on the way!!!!" Trump said.

Neither the White House nor Landry's office responded to queries about the post,

whether the ship had been requested by Denmark or Greenland and which sick people needed help. The Department of War had no immediate comment.

Danish King Frederik paid a second visit to Greenland in a year last week, an attempt to demonstrate unity with the territory in the face of Trump's push to buy the island. Greenland, Denmark and the US late

last month held talks to resolve the situation following months of tensions within the NATO defence alliance. Trump's post came hours after Denmark's Joint Arctic Command said it had evacuated a crew member who required urgent medical treatment from a US submarine in Greenland's waters, seven nautical miles outside of Greenland's capital, Nuuk.



Three drown as migrant boat capsizes off Greek island

NEWS DESK: The bodies of three migrants were picked up in waters off the Greek island of Crete during a rescue effort involving a commercial ship, authorities said on Friday.

Twenty migrants were rescued by the commercial vessel which was directed to the area on the orders of the Greek Search and Rescue Centre.

Most of them were Egyptians and Sudanese, and there were four minors among them, the Athens News Agency reported.

According to Greek public broadcaster ERT, an accident occurred when the vessel approached the migrants' wooden boat.

As the passengers tried to climb up ladders into the vessel a sudden movement caused the small boat



to capsize. The search for survivors was continuing with four patrol boats, an aircraft, and two ships from the European border agency Frontex, a spokesperson for the Greek coast guard said.

According to ERT, survivors said about 50 people were aboard the wooden boat.

A second boat carrying around forty migrants was spotted in the area, triggering another rescue operation. For over a year, migrants have been attempting the perilous crossing from Libya to Crete, the gateway to the European Union. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR), more than 16,770 people seeking asylum in the EU arrived in Crete in 2025. Faced with the surge in arrivals, the conservative Greek government suspended the processing of asylum applications for three months last summer, particularly for those arriving from Libya.

UAE foils cyberattacks targeting country's digital infrastructure, vital media

NEWS DESK: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) thwarted organised cyber attacks targeting the country's digital infrastructure and vital sectors, the state news agency WAM said on Saturday.

The attacks "included attempts to infiltrate networks, deploy ransomware and conduct systematic phishing campaigns targeting national platforms",

and involved artificial intelligence technologies to develop offensive tools, it added. The report did not say who was to blame for the attacks.

WAM reported that cyberattacks of a "terrorist nature" aimed to "destabilise the nation and disrupt

essential services". It said that the UAE's Cybersecurity Council "affirmed that the safety of individuals, the protection of personal data, and the continuity of critical services remain top priorities".

The council said that attacks "also involved the exploitation of artificial intelligence technologies to develop sophisticated offensive tools, reflecting a qualitative shift in the methods employed by terrorist groups and their ability to harness modern technologies to carry out digital at-



tacks". As per WAM, the Cybersecurity Council advised the public to report cyber threats or suspicious activities to official channels. The council "reiterated its full commitment to safeguarding the digital domain, preserving stability", WAM reported.

South Korea protests Japanese event over disputed islands



NEWS DESK: South Korea on Sunday protested a Japanese government event commemorating a cluster of disputed islands between the two countries, calling the move an unjust assertion of sovereignty over its territory.

In a statement, the foreign ministry said it strongly objected to the Takeshima Day event held by Japan's Shimane prefecture and to the attendance of a senior Japanese government official, urging Japan to abol-

ish the ceremony immediately. The tiny islets, known as Takeshima in Japan and Dokdo in South Korea, which are controlled by them, have long been a source of tension between the two neighbours, whose relations remain strained by disputes rooted in Japan's colonial rule of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945.

Dokdo is clearly South Korea's sovereign territory historically, geographically and under international

law," the ministry said, calling on Japan to drop what it described as groundless claims and to face history with humility. The ministry summoned a top Japanese diplomat to the ministry building in Seoul to protest.

A person at Japan's foreign ministry said no one was available on Sunday to comment. A call to the Prime Minister's Office went unanswered. The government sent a vice-minister from the Cabinet Of-

fice, not a cabinet minister, to the ceremony. Seoul has repeatedly objected to Japan's territorial claims over the islands, including a protest issued on Friday over comments by Japan's foreign minister during a parliamentary address asserting Tokyo's sovereignty over the islets.

The territory lies in fertile fishing grounds and may sit above enormous deposits of natural gas hydrate that could be worth billions of dollars, Seoul has said.

Degari Murder Case: Nine Accused Get Interim Bail

NEWS DESK: Court proceedings in the Degari murder case were put off on Saturday after the prosecution failed to present its witness, preventing the hearing from moving forward.

The case, linked to the killing of a man and a woman on the outskirts of Quetta, was taken up by an Additional Sessions Court. During the proceedings, accused Sardar Sher Baz Satazkai appeared before the judge, while the prosecution could not produce its witness.

Given the circumstances, the court granted interim bail to nine additional suspects named in the first information report and adjourned the hearing until March 7. Advocates Taj Muhammad Mengal, Iqbal Satazkai, Jehanzaib Mustafa



Mengal, and Yasar Hayat represented the accused. Background of the incident

The case stems from a shocking incident in Digari, District Mastung, where a young couple, married

by choice about a year earlier, was brutally killed.

According to local accounts, the couple was lured to a dinner under false pretenses following a verdict by a local jirga that op-

posed their marriage. They were reportedly taken to a secluded area near Quetta and shot dead. Disturbing details later emerged that the woman was holding the Holy Quran and pleading for mercy

before being forced to let go of it and killed, an account that has sparked widespread debate over violence carried out under the guise of so-called honour.

Jaffarabad Establishes Ramadan Sasta Bazaar in Jhat Pat to Provide Maximum Relief to Citizens



JAFFARABAD: In line with government directives and the efforts of Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan, the district administration of Jaffarabad has established a Ramadan Sasta Bazaar in Tehsil Jhat Pat in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation and Anjuman-e-Tajirani to provide maximum relief to citizens during the holy month of

Ramadan. At the subsidized market, nearly all essential food items required during Ramadan are being made available at reduced prices.

A large number of citizens are benefiting from the initiative, purchasing daily-use commodities at reasonable rates.

The administration is also ensuring continuous monitoring of

both prices and quality standards.

On the occasion, Assistant Commissioner Arsalan Chaudhry and Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Ahmed Nawaz Jatak, along with other officials, visited the Sasta Bazaar and reviewed prices and availability of items at various stalls.

Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan issued clear directives stating that providing relief to the public during Ramadan is the district administration's top priority and all possible measures are being taken to achieve this goal.

He added that, alongside the Sasta Bazaar, an effective strategy has been adopted to maintain price stability in gen-

eral markets as well, and profiteering will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

He further stated that price control measures have been strengthened and the Price Control Committee has been fully activated to ensure indistinct criminate action against profiteers, so that citizens can receive genuine relief during the holy month of Ramadan.

Quetta Administration Inspects 145 Shops, Arrests 41 for Price Violations During Ramadan

QUETTA: On the directives of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the district administration of Quetta has intensified operations against violations of official price lists to ensure public relief during the holy month of Ramadan.

On the fourth day of Ramadan, the administration conducted inspections of 145 shops and markets across different subdivisions.

As a result of overpricing and violations of government-notified rates, 41 individuals were arrested and sent to jail, while



28 shops were sealed. According to details:

In Sub-Division City, 34 shops were inspected; 11 individuals were arrested and 10 shops sealed.

In Sub-Division Saddar, 35 shops were checked; 11 individuals were arrested and 6 shops sealed.

In Sub-Division Sarhab, 30 shops were inspected; 8 individuals were arrested and 5 shops sealed.

In Sub-Division Kuchlak, 38 shops were inspected; 12 individuals were arrested and 7 shops sealed.

All Tehsil Assistant Commissioners

and Special Magistrates participated in the crackdown. The district administration reiterated that profiteering, hoarding, and violation of official price lists will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Operations will continue without interruption to address public complaints and ensure the availability of essential commodities at controlled rates during Ramadan.

Citizens have been urged to immediately report cases of overpricing to the relevant authorities so that timely action can be taken.

Chaman Launches Tree Plantation Drive; DC Habib Ahmed Bangalzai Sapling at Khojak Park

CHAMAN: The district administration of Chaman has officially launched a tree plantation campaign across the district. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Habib Ahmed Bangalzai, along with other government officials, inaugurated the campaign by planting a sapling at Khojak Park, located in the Darra Khojak area.

During the plantation drive, various types of plants were planted in different parts of the district, including Khojak Park, the Press Club, and other public and private locations. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Habib

Ahmed Bangalzai stated that a green and vibrant Chaman is among the top priorities of the district administration.

He emphasized that trees play a vital role in environmental improvement and are essential for maintaining ecological balance.

He appealed to citizens to actively participate in making Chaman lush and colorful by planting at least one tree at their homes, along roadsides, and in other suitable places.

He also stressed the importance of proper care and watering of the planted saplings to ensure their growth.

Police Foil Kidnapping Attempt at Barkhan Crusher Plant; Three Personnel Recovered, Search for Workers Continues

BARKHAN: Barkhan partially foiled a kidnapping attempt after dozens of armed men attacked a private construction company's crusher plant late last night.

According to sources, 25 to 30 unidentified armed assailants stormed the crusher plant located in the district, held staff hostage, and abducted three laborers along with three police personnel deployed for security.

The attackers reportedly fled towards nearby mountainous terrain.

Upon receiving information about the incident, a heavy police contingent led by SP Dr. Saad Afridi rushed to the scene. The police immediately launched a search operation and set up blockades while pursuing the suspects.

Due to the swift and professional response by police, the kidnappers were forced to abandon the three abducted police personnel and flee. SP Dr. Saad Afridi stated.

The recovered police officials are now safe and in police custody. However, the assailants managed to escape with the three laborers. Search teams and multiple police units are currently conducting operations in the rugged mountainous areas to trace the fleeing suspects and recover the kidnapped workers.

Entry and exit points of the district are being strictly monitored.

Police authorities have expressed determination to recover the abducted laborers at the earliest and bring those involved in the attack to justice.

Nasirabad Sasta Bazaar Launched in Dera Murad Jamali to Provide Ramadan Relief



NASIRABAD: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Zulfiqar Ali Kakar, a Sasta Bazaar (subsidized market) was organized in Dera Murad Jamali to provide relief to citizens during the holy month of Ramadan.

The arrangements were reviewed in detail by Assistant Commissioner Bahadur Khan Khoso.

During the visit, the Assistant Commissioner inspected various stalls offering vegetables, fruits, meat, sugar, flour, ghee, cold drinks, and other essential food items.

He reviewed both prices and quality standards to ensure compliance with government directives.

On the instructions of Chairman Market Committee Mir Bilal Sadiq

Umrani, a special stall for vegetables and fruits at subsidized rates was established under the supervision of Deputy Director Market Committee Ubaidullah Pindrani.

A large number of citizens were seen purchasing essential items at the Sasta Bazaar and appreciated the government's relief initiative. The administration ensured

basic facilities, including tents and necessary arrangements to facilitate both traders and customers.

The visit was also attended by Medical Superintendent Dr. Habibullah Pindrani, Tehsildar Moazzam Ali Jatoi, Deputy Director Agriculture Zaheer Ahmed

Umrani, Chairman Shehri Action Committee Muhammad Rahim Lehri, Presi-

dent Anjuman-e-Tajirani Taj Baloch, along with other officials and trader representatives.

Assistant Commissioner Bahadur Khan Khoso interacted directly with shoppers, inquired about prices, and directed stallholders to prominently display official price lists to prevent profiteering.

He stated that the Sasta Bazaar was organized by the district administration under the directions of the Government of Balochistan to provide maximum relief to citizens during Ramadan.

He further assured that continuous monitoring would be carried out to keep prices under control and strict action would be taken against violators to ensure maximum public convenience.

Ramadan Relief Package Distributed in Khuzdar Under CM Sarfraz Bugti's Vision

KHUZDAR: On the directives of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and under the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Sasoli, the distribution of the Ramadan Relief Package is continuing in an organized and transparent manner across Khuzdar district.

In view of the

was attended by President Anjuman-e-Tajirani Khuzdar Hafiz Hameedullah Mengal, Chairman All Parties Action Committee Bashir Ahmed Jatak, journalists including Danish Mengal and Bashir Ahmed Raisani, and DC Office Cashier Munir Ahmed Zehri.

The distribution process was supervised by Assistant

such as flour, rice, ghee, sugar, tea, and various pulses, enabling families to meet their basic needs with dignity during Ramadan. The district administration ensured systematic and transparent distribution of ration supplies across different areas of Khuzdar. In line with the vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, relief distribu-



blissings of the holy month of Ramadan, the Government of Balochistan has launched a special relief package for the needy, disabled, and underprivileged individuals.

On the fourth day of Ramadan, a formal distribution ceremony was held at Jinnah Stadium Khuzdar, where hundreds of deserving families received ration packages.

The ceremony

Commissioner Hafeezullah Kakar and Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Alam Din Tarreen, ensuring smooth arrangements and transparency.

During the ceremony, ration packages were provided on a priority basis to poor, needy, disabled, and vulnerable families.

The Ramadan relief package included essential items sufficient for one month.

tion is continuing across all districts of Balochistan with transparency and accountability.

This welfare initiative reflects the Chief Minister's commitment to public service and support for vulnerable segments of society, marking a significant and commendable step toward easing the hardships faced by underprivileged communities during the holy month.

Chaman Launches Tree Plantation Drive; DC Habib Ahmed Bangalzai Plants Sapling at Khojak Park

CHAMAN: The district administration of Chaman has officially launched a tree plantation campaign across the district. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Habib Ahmed Bangalzai,



along with other government officials, inaugurated the campaign by planting a sapling at Khojak Park, located in the Darra Khojak area. During the plantation drive, various types of plants were planted in different parts of the district, including Khojak

Park, the Press Club, and other public and private locations.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Habib Ahmed Bangalzai stated that a green and vibrant

Chaman is among the top priorities of the district administration.

He emphasized that trees play a vital role in environmental improvement and are essential for maintaining ecological balance.

He appealed to citizens to actively participate in making Chaman lush and colorful by planting at least one tree at their homes, along roadsides, and in other suitable places. He also stressed the importance of proper care and watering of the planted saplings to ensure their growth.

The Deputy Commissioner noted that collective efforts in tree plantation would help create a peaceful, beautiful, and oxygen-rich environment for future generations.

Exploration firm faces case over governance

NEWS DESK: Jura Energy Corporation is confronting a corporate and legal crisis as a minority shareholder has initiated oppression proceedings before Ontario's Commercial List against the company and its directors.

The shareholder claims that governance failures and decisions have allegedly placed the company's entire business at risk.

In a lawsuit, the petitioner said that Jura directors allowed the transfer of effective corporate control without securing mandatory approvals required under Pakistani petroleum laws, despite knowing that the company's survival depended entirely on petroleum concessions held in Pakistan through its subsidiaries Frontier Holdings and Spud Energy.

According to the petitioner's claims available with The Express Tribune, this decision has exposed the company's licences to regulatory action and jeopardised its only revenue-generating assets. However, the current litigation represents only the latest chapter in a

series of challenges that have followed Jura's operations in Pakistan for years.

Regulatory records and whistleblower complaints referenced in the proceedings revealed that Jura and its subsidiaries were previously involved in the sale of gas to a related or subsidiary entity without proper authorisation, raising serious compliance and safety concerns.

The matter reportedly drew attention at the highest level of Pakistan's government, leading to intervention by the Prime Minister's Office and subsequent recovery of unpaid royalty that authorities alleged were outstanding.

Transparency International whistleblower reports further intensified the scrutiny, alleging violations of petroleum rules and irregularities in corporate conduct.

These complaints triggered regulatory examination and ultimately led to the issuance of formal show-cause notices by Pakistan's Director General of Petroleum Concessions (DGPC), which questioned the legality of



corporate actions and compliance with petroleum concession agreements.

The oppression claim now before the Ontario court argues

that Jura directors failed to learn from earlier controversies and instead allowed a major change of corporate control to proceed despite foreseeable and regulatory conse-

quences. The minority shareholder claimed that company directors either ignored or downplayed the risks associated with failing to obtain

prior government approval, while minority investors were not reportedly fully informed of the seriousness of the ongoing legal and regulatory challenges.

The remedies sought are sweeping. The claimant asks the court to declare the directors' conduct oppressive and unfairly prejudicial, compel disclosure

of corporate information, appoint an independent inspector to investigate Jura's affairs, order forensic accounting and award damages – including punitive damages – against the directors.

If granted, such orders could place Jura's governance under direct judicial oversight.

The litigation unfolds alongside escalating legal developments in Pakistan, where courts and regulators have already examined issues tied to the disputed change of corporate control and compliance with petroleum regulations.

Pakistani court proceedings referenced in related matters have directed authorities to proceed with enforcement actions under applicable petroleum rules, which has significantly increased pressure on the company's operating subsidiaries.

Industry observers note that Jura's situation is increasingly precarious, as a Canadian-listed company facing shareholder revolt at home while regulators abroad scrutinise the legality of its core operations.

Non-textile exports dip 17pc in July-January

NEWS DESK: Exports of non-textile products dipped by 17.32 per cent to \$7.286 billion in the first seven months of the current fiscal year from \$8.817bn, largely attributed to a steep reduction in exports of agricultural produce and value-added shipments.

The contraction reflects mounting pressure on key sectors, especially agriculture-based products, which have struggled with lower volumes and weaker external demand.

Analysts suggest that without a rebound in value-added products, overall export performance may remain under pressure in the coming months.

However, poultry growth was recorded in leather, footwear, and engineering products. FY26 compared with a year ago, according to data compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Proceeds slumped to \$7.3bn on poor agriculture sector performance.

The agriculture sector bore the brunt of the slowdown, with rice exports suffering the steepest setback. During

the first seven months of FY26, the value of rice exports plunged by 40.51pc to \$1.305bn on a year-on-year basis.

The decline was not limited to prices alone. Export volumes also fell sharply, dropping 32.94pc YoY to 2.439 million tonnes.

The decline was observed across basmati and non-basmati varieties. The dual fall in both value and quantity points to a combination of lower international prices and weaker de-

mand in key markets. In response, the government has unveiled a \$1.5 billion subsidy package aimed at stabilising the sector and supporting exports.

In contrast to the contraction in agriculture, parts of the non-agricultural sector posted paltry gains during the review period.

Exports of engineering goods rose by 5.85pc in the first seven months of FY26 compared with the same period a year earlier.

The expansion was driven by higher shipments of industrial machinery, transport equipment, electric fans, auto parts and rubber tyres.

Cement exports also showed resilience in volume terms. During the first seven months of the current fiscal year, export quantities edged up by 0.33pc YoY.

In value terms, however, growth was more pronounced, with cement exports rising by 9.91pc over the same period.



Wheat procurement price fixed at Rs3,500

NEWS DESK: The federal government has set an illustrative wheat procurement price at Rs3,500 per 40 kilograms and has sensitised the provinces to ensure the smooth implementation of the procurement drive during the upcoming harvesting season.

The current procurement framework will remain applicable for one year, as the federal government is working on a comprehensive long-term wheat policy for 2026-2030, aimed at strengthening national food security through modern reforms. Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain said while chairing a meeting of the national wheat oversight committee on Saturday.

Mr Tanveer highlighted that the upcoming policy will focus on comprehensive long-term mechanisms, improved supply chain monitoring, enhanced transparency, and sustained price stability, enabling better coordination between the federal and provincial governments. Reaffirming the



government's commitment to safeguarding food security, the minister stated that coordinated federal-provincial efforts will continue to ensure stable wheat availability, protect farmers' interests, and maintain affordable prices for consumers across the country.

Senior officials of the federal and provincial governments gave detailed briefings on procurement preparedness, stock positions, and supply management strategies ahead of the upcoming harvesting season. During the meeting, provinces shared up-

dates on their respective procurement strategies. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has adopted a hybrid wheat procurement model comprising 75 per cent public sector participation and 25pc private sector involvement to enhance efficiency and market responsiveness.

The Sindh government informed the committee that wheat procurement will be carried out through the public sector to ensure strict monitoring and take effective administrative measures to prevent any unnecessary increase in flour prices.

Special emphasis was also placed on consumer protection during the holy month of Ramadan. The minister directed all provinces to ensure strict market monitoring and take effective administrative measures to prevent any unnecessary increase in flour prices.

SPI inflation accelerates to 5.19% YoY

NEWS DESK: Short-term inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), recorded a year-on-year increase of 5.19% for the week ended February 19, 2026, reflecting increasing pressure from food staples and household energy tariffs despite notable declines in several perishable commodities, official data showed on Friday.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the combined SPI rose to 335.67 points compared to 319.12 points in the corresponding week of last year, while also registering a 1.16% week-on-week increase, which signalled a renewed uptick in consumer prices for essential goods after a brief easing earlier this month.

The annual SPI rise was largely driven by sharp increases in key food items and utility charges. Tomato prices surged 85.2% year-on-year, followed by wheat flour (31.33%),



gas charges for the first consumption slab (29.85%) and electricity tariffs (17.33%). Other notable increases included bananas (15.83%), red chilli powder (15.2%), beef (13.28%) and liquefied petroleum gas (12.22%).

Conversely, several essential food items posted substantial annual declines, partially offsetting the inflationary impact. Potato prices dropped

45.43% year-on-year, garlic (27.51%), gram pulse (23.3%), chicken (19.36%) and onions (18.1%), which reflected improved supply conditions and base effects from last year's price spikes.

On a weekly basis, the SPI accelerated mainly due to higher prices of fresh produce and administered energy costs. Bananas recorded a steep 16.05% week-on-week increase, while electricity charges rose 15.41%, followed by garlic (5.86%), chicken (5.49%), onions

(3.83%) and tomatoes (3.82%). Fuel rate adjustments also contributed, with diesel and petrol climbing 2.69% and 1.93%, respectively.

PBS data showed that out of 51 essential items, prices of 17 items (33.3%) increased, 12 items (23.5%) decreased and 22 items (43.1%) remained unchanged during the week, indicating that inflationary momentum was concentrated in a limited but high-weight segment of the consumption basket.

Panda bond plan hits a snag

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's plan to raise \$250 million through Chinese Panda bonds has hit a snag due to the selection of disputed sites for two projects, which will be funded against the bond proceeds, including the \$760 million worth Jinnah Medical Complex.

Because of its weak credit rating, Pakistan cannot directly access Chinese debt markets and has sought credit guarantees from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

Government officials told The Express Tribune that lenders had raised objections to one telemetry project location in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and private ownership claims over the land originally allocated for the Jinnah Medical Complex.

According to officials of a multilateral lending agency, the AJK site issue was resolved after Pakistan agreed to remove the location following objections raised by India. However, the land issue for the Jinnah Medical Complex remains unresolved.

Of the \$250 million total debt that Pakistan is desperately trying to raise through Panda bonds in Chinese markets since 2019, \$152 million



is planned for two projects. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has set multiple deadlines for the bond issuance, with the latest expiring on February 28.

Sources said \$76.5 million had been projected to be used for the installation of a telemetry system for real-time discharge monitoring at 27 key sites on the Indus Basin irrigation system. Another \$76 million is meant for the Jinnah Medical Complex and Aurangzeb has set multiple deadlines for the bond issuance, with the latest expiring on February 28.

The AIIB and ADB agreed to provide guar-

antees for the Panda bond issuance on the condition that the loan would fund sustainable green projects. However, sources said the projects were selected hastily without adequate due diligence, leading to delays and embarrassment for Pakistani authorities.

Sources also cited internal procedural issues hampering the issuance of the bonds. The external finance wing of the Ministry of Finance, responsible for foreign commercial loans, sovereign bonds and budget support, raised objections to the process.

They said the external wing objected to being

bypassed by the debt management office in Panda bond negotiations and in the hiring of consultants and foreign firms. Concerns were also raised over the process used to appoint transaction underwriters, Chinese legal counsel and a Chinese credit rating agency. In several instances, discussions were conducted by contractual staff, while the bureaucracy was not kept in the loop.

The Express Tribune waited four days for an official response from the Ministry of Finance spokesperson, but no reply was received despite repeated requests.

Handling pressure key in high-profile India clash in T20 World Cup, says South Africa's De Kock

NEWS DESK: Who "deals with the pressure better" will decide the India-South Africa Super Eight match, a repeat of the T20 World Cup final two years ago, said Quinton de Kock on Saturday. The two unbeaten teams are familiar foes and both came through their T20 World Cup groups with perfect four-out-of-four records ahead of the clash in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Aiden Markram's South Africa toured India late last year, losing 3-1 in a T20 series.

"I think that's what's going to make for quite a good game tomorrow, because we've played against each other quite a bit over the last two months," said South Africa opener De Kock.

"And to be honest, the teams haven't really changed much."

"So, I think it's more when you're out there on the pressure side, who deals with the pressure better and wins the small



Quinton de Kock is the number one T20 batsman in the world at the moment, according to the rankings, so he must keep doing what he's doing," said de Kock of the 25-year-old.

"He's obviously quite young, he's bound to fail. So I'm sure at some point he's going to play an important knock," South Africa are being billed as strong contenders to meet India in the final in Ahmedabad on March 8. There were no favourites in the T20 format, said De Kock.

"I think the nature of World Cups, that it doesn't allow

enough firepower in the rest of the line-up as they face South Africa.

"People who are worried about Abhishek's form, I worry for them," a smiling Suryakumar said.

"It is a team sport, if you think about those teams against whom he is going to fire as he has not been able to score till now. When he gets the runs then you know how it is," Suryakumar added.

The left-handed Abhishek, the world's number one ranked T20 batsman, has handed the team many explosive starts since his debut in July 2024.

Big totals were predicted at the start of the 20-team tournament with India tipped to cross 300 on home ground, but the reality has been

different. Ireland's 235 against Oman in the group stage has been the highest total so far, with India reaching their best of 209 in a win over minnows Namibia.

"We are trying to explode from the start because everyone knows their T20 template, but we don't want to become a team that's always blasting away," said Suryakumar. There could arise a situation where two-three wickets fall early and we have to be a smart team to do well between 21-50 overs and we have enough firepower that if the base is strong then we can smash 60-70 runs in last five overs."

India boast of a potent spin attack led by Varun Chakravarthy, who has claimed nine wickets in four matches.

South African spinners including Keshav Maharaj have also made their presence felt and Suryakumar said there will be no favourites in the Sunday game.

PHF forms governance committee to chart course for hockey's revival

NEWS DESK: The Pakistan Hockey Federation announced on Sunday the formation of an Adhoc Governance and Management Committee, marking a structural shift aimed at modernising the sport's administration and elevating the standards of hockey across the country.

In a move for technical excellence, Olympians Hassan Sardar and Ishaquddin will co-chair the newly formed Professional Development Committee. Their mandate includes overseeing national team selection, specialised training protocols, and establishing rigorous benchmarks for coaches and players.

According to an official statement, the two icons will also co-chair the Professional Advisory Committee, which will be responsible for long-term management selection, with additional members to be appointed in consultation with the two.

As part of the restructuring the PHF has separated corporate and governance, marketing, and resource mobilisation from technical operations to ensure specialised over-



sight. The newly appointed committee members are as follows. Captain Farrukh Atique will handle Human Resources and Finance; Shaked Shah (Member Customs) will oversee Departmental Coordination and Outreach; Amin Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of Jazz, will lead Corporate and Marketing Support; Ghulam Ali Mallah, Executive Director of Inter Board Coordination Commission (IBCC), will manage to come back and college Sports Promotion; and Brigadier (ret'd) Akmal Aziz will be more than any other team.

"Like I said many times, it feels like a dream to come back and play for this club again. I'm happy to be here and bring extra energy," said Abraham, who had helped Villa secure promotion in 2018-19 with 25 goals while on loan at the club.

"I had to sniff

Leaders Real Madrid stung at Osasuna

NEWS DESK: Raul Garcia's superb 90th-minute strike consigned leaders Real Madrid to a 2-1 defeat at Osasuna in La Liga on Saturday, in a blow to their title hopes.

Champions Barcelona trail Madrid by two points but can overtake them on Sunday if they beat Levante at Camp Nou.

Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid, fourth, got back to winning ways with an entertaining 4-2 victory over Espanyol.

Alvaro Arbeloa's Real Madrid put on a below-par performance in Pamplona and fell behind to an Ante Budimir penalty, before Vinicius Junior pulled the visitors level. The second leg of Madrid's Champions League play-off against Jose Mourinho's Benfica

on Wednesday seemed to play on their minds as they failed to kick on at El Sadar.

Vinicius, who scored a sensational goal to give Madrid a slender first-leg lead but was then the victim of alleged racial abuse, thought he had earned his team a point before Garcia blasted home the winner.

"It was not a good game from us... we have to play a lot better," Arbeloa told reporters.

"We had control at some points but we lacked speed in our play... on Wednesday we have another final, another game that is very important for us."

Croatian target man Budimir forced a goal save from Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and hit the post as he gave the visitors a host of problems.

The hosts, ninth, took the lead after Budimir burst into the area and went down under a challenge from Courtois.

Although he was initially booked for diving a VAR review showed the goalkeeper stood on his foot, and the veteran forward sent Courtois the wrong way from the spot.

"I knew it was a penalty and I wanted to stay cool (while it was being reviewed)," said Budimir. Chasing an equaliser, Arbeloa threw on creative duo Trent Alexander-Arnold and Brahim Diaz and his team began to take control.

French superstar Kylian Mbappe put the ball in the back of Osasuna's net but had edged offside, although a VAR review.

"It was the first time Osasuna have beaten Madrid in La Liga for 15 years. It's an incredible feeling... I think (that fact) is crazy. The fans deserved a victory like this after so many years," Raul Garcia told DAZN. Real Betis, fifth, were held 1-1 at home against Rayo Vallecano earlier Saturday, leaving them six points behind Atletico, after Diego Simeone's side put four past Espanyol.

Alexander Sorloth struck twice as Atletico earned their first victory in four league matches in a goal-riddled game at their Metropolitan stadium.



Villa salvage late point against Leeds



NEWS DESK: Tammy Abraham's homecoming hit another sweet note as his late equaliser rescued Aston Villa from defeat in a 1-1 draw with Leeds United on Saturday, keeping alive their unlikely title chase.

The striker, who returned to Villa Park last month in an 18 million pounds deal after a stint with Besiktas, grabbed his first league goal since his return, in the 88th minute when the home side were trailing.

Leeds appeared destined for all three points after Anton Stach's spectacular free kick, but Abraham's late

intervention means three-placed Villa remain seven points behind leaders Arsenal.

The equaliser was Villa's 19th point salvaged from losing positions in the Premier League this season — more than any other team.

"Like I said many times, it feels like a dream to come back and play for this club again. I'm happy to be here and bring extra energy," said Abraham, who had helped Villa secure promotion in 2018-19 with 25 goals while on loan at the club.

"I had to sniff

Sri Lanka bowl first in T20 World Cup's Super Eight match against England



NEWS DESK: Sri Lanka on Sunday won the toss and chose to bowl against England in their Super Eight match of the ongoing T20 World Cup in Pallekele.

England, the two-time champions, have gone in with an unchanged team for the fourth match in a row, ESPNcricinfo reports.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka made two changes to their XI, with Dushmantha Chameera returning in place of Pramod Madushan and Kamil Mishra rejoining the team in place of Kusal Perraera.

"We've been chasing well in the past few occasions and we'll be chasing again," ESPNcricinfo

quoted Shanaka as saying at the toss.

"The boys are very confident playing here."

Ahead of the match, captain Harry Brook said on Saturday that England can adapt to whatever the weather throws at them, as rain threatened to disrupt their opening Super Eights match.

"I think you just have to prepare as it is a T20," Brook told reporters.

"I think you can sometimes go down a bit of a rabbit hole thinking that you're going to play a five-over game and then it ends up being a T20 and you kind of play it slightly differently."



Suspension of 5 cops ordered over man's 'custodial torture' at Karachi's Sharifabad police station

NEWS DESK: Central Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Dr Imran Khan on Sunday ordered the suspension of five cops for their alleged involvement in the custodial torture of a man at the city's Sharifabad police station.

According to a statement issued by the Sindh Police's Central District branch, SSP Imran took serious notice of the alleged incident and issued directives for the five cops to be suspended.

The statement noted that an initial inquiry was conducted by the Liaquatnagar sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) on the orders of the Central SSP.

According to the probe, four personnel of Sindh Police's Shaheen Force and a sentry of the Sharifabad police sta-

tion were found to be involved in the torture. "All five personnel were immediately suspended and the [case] was closed, while further departmental inquiry is under way," the Central District police statement read.

"Further departmental action will be taken after the inquiry has been completed," it added.

SSP Imran warned, "Unlawful and unethical behaviour towards citizens would not be tolerated, and indiscriminate action will be taken against police officers and personnel violating the law."

On Wednesday, a large number of people gathered outside the Karachi Press Club on Wednesday to protest the killing of a man during an alleged encounter by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD). The protest and a

NEWS DESK: Pakistan carried out intelligence-based strikes on seven terrorist camps along the border with Afghanistan after a series of recent suicide bombings, including an attack on an imambarah in Islamabad and incidents in Bajaur and Bannu, officials said.

Security sources said Pakistan conducted a large intelligence-based aerial operation in eastern Afghanistan targeting seven key hideouts, killing several terrorists, including Taliban commander Akhtar Muhammad.

According to sources, jet aircraft struck terrorist shelters in Bermal district of Pakitka, where loud explosions were heard across the area. Facilities used by terrorists were reported heavily damaged.

Afghan media reported that after Pakitka, airstrikes were also carried out in Khost province, targeting terrorist hideouts and suspected training centres.

In Afghanistan's Margha area, an explosion at the Banooosi madrassa killed more



than 10 people and injured several others. The area is linked to the network of commander Akhtar Muhammad. Two more targets were hit by jets in Kami district of Jalalabad, while aerial patrols continued, sources said.

Explosions at terrorist hideouts in Bermal resulted in multiple deaths, while sources said Akhtar Muhammad was killed in Pakitka. Bombings across several Afghan areas destroyed terrorist infrastruc-

ture. A Taliban spokesperson said the attacks had killed and injured dozens of people, including women and children, but Reuters was unable to independently verify the remarks.

Afghanistan's defence ministry condemned what it called the blatant violation of national sovereignty as a "breach of international law, the principles of good neighbourliness and Islamic values."

It added in its statement, "An appropriate and measured response will be taken at a suitable time."

Earlier Sunday, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said Pakistan had "conclusive evidence" that recent attacks were carried out by terrorists described as "Khawarij" on the instructions of Afghanistan-based leadership.

"In the aftermath of recent suicide bombing incidents in Pakistan, including Imambarah

at Islamabad, one each in Bajaur and Bannu followed by another incident today in Bannu during the holy month of Ramadan, Pakistan has conclusive evidence that these acts of terrorism were perpetrated by Khawarij on behalf of their Afghanistan-based leadership and handlers," the ministry said.

It added that responsibility had been claimed by Afghanistan-based members of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, their affiliates, and Islamic State-Khorasan Province.

Pakistan said it had repeatedly urged Afghanistan's interim Taliban authorities to stop terrorist groups from using Afghan territory to launch attacks, but "no meaningful action" was taken.

"Despite repeated efforts by Pakistan to urge the Afghan Taliban Regime to take verifiable measures to deny use of Afghan territory by terrorist groups and foreign proxies to carry out terrorist activities in Pakistan, the Afghan Taliban Regime failed to undertake any substantive action against them," the ministry said.

Pakistan, US express desire to enhance economic cooperation

NEWS DESK: Pakistan and the United States on Saturday expressed the desire to enhance economic cooperation, especially in the fields of trade and investment, according to the finance ministry.

In a post on the social media platform X, the ministry said that a delegation led by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb met US Commerce Secretary Howard A. Lutnick in Washington.

It said that finance minister was accompanied by the commerce secretary, Pakistan's ambassador to US, and trade and economic ministers.

"Both sides expressed the desire to enhance our economic cooperation, especially in the fields of trade and investment, besides discussing the USA's interest

in investing in fields of information and communication technology, mining, minerals and energy," the ministry said.

According to the ministry, Aurangzeb appreciated the role of the US Chamber of Commerce in

organising the US-Pakistan Trade and Investment Forum, which will take place on March 31 and will be attended by re-

nowned companies and ministerial representation from both countries.

He expressed the hope that the office of the US commerce secretary would also participate in the forum, the ministry said.

"Both sides reiterated their commitment to further their engagements on investments in major projects in the coming

months," it concluded. Earlier this week, the two countries signed a memo-randum of understanding (MoU) to launch a structured framework for cooperation on the future of the Roosevelt Hotel in New York.

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Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) faces internal backlash

NEWS DESK: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is grappling with escalating internal strife apparently rooted in a leadership crisis, with its general secretary emerging as the latest target of criticism from within the party.

Amid growing unrest, he has reportedly assured detractors that he would request the party's incarcerated founder to relieve him of his charge, according to two party leaders holding organisational portfolios, one in Punjab and the other at the Centre.

With the PTI's actual decision-makers aggressive posturing having brought the party to a near breaking point, a crisis of trust has surfaced across its ranks and file.

Several leaders told The Express Tribune that resistance was no longer seen as a viable option for the party. However, confusion persists over whether the option should be abandoned entirely, as some believe the threat of mass resistance must remain intact to provide leverage whenever the party decides to sit across the table with the powers that be.

These divergent PTI's Central

strategic approaches have led many within the party to conclude that General Secretary Salman Akram Raja was not living up to expectations, particularly given his polite and composed demeanour.

According to a party officer-bearer from Punjab, Raja was confronted by some members of an internal group who demanded his resignation over what they described as his failure to lead the party effectively. Responding to the criticism, the source said Raja assured his detractors that he would place the matter before party founder Imran Khan and request him to bring in someone from the youth to relieve him of the charge so that he could refocus on his legal practice, which had suffered due to his political commitments.

The source further claimed that Raja, who enjoys full support from Aleema Khan, Imran Khan's sister, has no experience in running a political party, let alone steering it out of a crisis. "Their plan is legal firefighting, which is going to take the party nowhere," the source said.

Spokesperson Sheikh Waqas Akram, however, rejected the notion of any calls for the general secretary's resignation. Talking to The Express Tribune, he said that isolated voices of estranged office-bearers should not be construed as internal strife, adding that the entire leadership was operating in accordance with the guidelines of party founder Imran Khan.

A senior party leader and key office-bearer endorsing Sheikh Waqas Akram's assertion that the WhatsApp altercation was an isolated incident. However, he noted that sentiment against both the acting chairman and the general secretary existed internally, even if such demands had not yet been verbalised. He acknowledged that Raja's legal practice had suffered since joining the party, saying his sacrifices should not be overlooked.

"He is a loyalist, and people like him are an asset in any party," the leader said, adding that Raja lacked the political acumen required to create the much-needed elbow room for the party.

Suspended civil servants entitled to full salary: SC

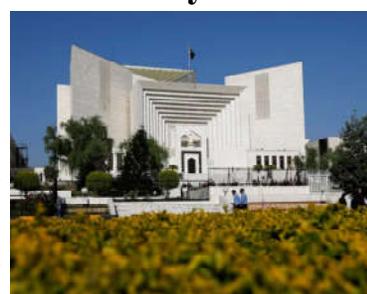
NEWS DESK: The Supreme Court has held that a suspended civil servant is entitled to receive full salary and other service benefits during the period of suspension, declaring that suspension does not sever the employer-employee relationship nor extinguish contractual rights.

In a four-page judgement authored by Justice Shakeel Ahmad, the court held that a suspended civil servant is entitled to receive full salary and other service benefits during the period of suspension, declaring that suspension does not sever the employer-employee relationship nor extinguish contractual rights.

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remain enforceable during the suspension period. The employee had been serving as a senior clerk/inspector in the FBR. After completing more than 31 years of qualifying service, he applied for retirement on medical grounds. However, his application was not considered by the department. Subsequently, on the directions of the petitioner department, he appeared before a Medical Board for examination. The Board opined that he was suffering from mul-

multiple diseases and declared him unfit for further service. Following an inquiry, he was compulsorily retired from service on July 12, 2024, with the observation that the period of his suspension be treated as extraordinary leave without pay, and that the pay and allowances paid to him during the period from 06.11.2023 till the imposition of a major penalty be recovered from him.

His departmental appeal remained undressed, prompting him to file an appeal before

ment order, it enters into a binding contract of service with the employee. Any unilateral withholding of salary, without the authority of law, is inconsistent with the terms and conditions of such appointment.

Depriving a suspended employee of full pay, salary and service benefits is not only unjust and oppressive, but also contrary to the express mandate of Fundamental Rule 53 (b)

"In the case of a Government servant under suspension, other than that specified in clause (a), he shall be entitled to his full salary and all other benefits and facilities provided to him under the contract of service, during the period of his suspension."

"Allah, the Almighty, commands justice and forbids oppression, as ordained in the Holy Quran. Similarly, the Holy Quran unequivocally prohibits the unlawful deprivation of property to a person, and declaring an employee cannot be deprived of lawful remuneration without express legal sanction."

The order observes that when the government issues an appoint-

ment order, it enters into a binding contract of service with the employee. Any unilateral withholding of salary, without the authority of law, is inconsistent with the terms and conditions of such appointment.

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The order observes that when the government issues an appoint-

ment order, it enters into a binding contract of service with the employee. Any unilateral withholding of salary, without the authority of law, is inconsistent with the terms and conditions of such appointment.

Depriving a suspended employee of full pay, salary and service benefits is not only unjust and oppressive, but also contrary to the express mandate of Fundamental Rule 53 (b)

"In the case of a Government servant under suspension, other than that specified in clause (a), he shall be entitled to his full salary and all other benefits and facilities provided to him under the contract of service, during the period of his suspension."

"Allah, the Almighty, commands justice and forbids oppression, as ordained in the Holy Quran. Similarly, the Holy Quran unequivocally prohibits the unlawful deprivation of property to a person, and declaring an employee cannot be deprived of lawful remuneration without express legal sanction."

The order observes that when the government issues an appoint-