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QUETTA VOICE

Balochistan Launches First-Ever Air Ambulance Service for Emergency Medical Response

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA : In a landmark development for the healthcare sector, the Government of Balochistan has announced the launch of the province's first-ever air ambulance service aimed at

providing emergency medical assistance to the general public, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said the "Peoples Air Ambulance"

project is fully prepared for public service and will soon be formally inaugurated before beginning operations across the province.

According to the chief minister, the air ambulance service will play a crucial role in transporting victims of road accidents and

critically ill patients from distant and mountainous regions to major hospitals in urban centers without delay.

He emphasized that the initiative is expected to significantly improve emergency healthcare

response and help save precious human lives by ensuring timely medical treatment in critical situations.

The provincial government, he added, is actively working to modernize the healthcare sector and strengthen the emergency response

system by introducing advanced medical and rescue facilities throughout Balochistan.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti stated



that the Peoples Air Ambulance project reflects the government's people-centric

vision and its commitment to improving public healthcare services

in the province. The introduction of the air ambulance service is being

viewed as a major step forward for Balochistan, where vast distances and difficult ter-

rain have long posed serious challenges for emergency medical transportation.

Afghan Taliban Firing Kills Civilians in Bajaur, Questions Raised Over Global Silence

Ali Hamza,
Qaseem Shah:

Multiple civilian casualties have reportedly occurred due to unprovoked cross-border firing by the Afghan Taliban in Pakistan's Bajaur district, according to security sources. The incidents have sparked serious concerns over what locals describe as the "criminal silence" of international media outlets and global human rights organizations.

Security sources stated that, through coordinated efforts, the district administration of Bajaur conducted a detailed assessment of the damages inflicted on the civilian population following repeated firing incidents from across the border.

According to official figures, six separate firing incidents were reported during March and April. As a result, at least nine civilians were martyred, including three women, one minor girl, and five minor boys.

Another 12 civilians sustained injuries, among them seven women, one minor boy, and four adults. Several residential houses were also severely damaged in the attacks.

Local residents praised the timely response and support provided by Pakistan's security forces and the district administration.

Residents also expressed full support for measures aimed at countering what they termed as illegal aggression by the Afghan Taliban regime.



The incidents have also raised questions among locals regarding the silence of the United Nations,

international human rights bodies, and major global media organizations. Residents criticized inter-

national outlets for allegedly ignoring civilian casualties caused by Afghan Taliban firing while

widely covering other regional narratives. Security sources emphasized that the repeated target-

ing of civilian areas remains a serious humanitarian concern requiring international attention.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Fiscal Federalism and the Quest for Equity in Pakistan

AGHASANULLAH: Fiscal federalism forms the bedrock of governance in any federation, determining how financial resources are raised, shared, and spent to foster balanced development and social equity. In Pakistan, this relationship is constitutionally mediated through the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, a mechanism designed to rectify both vertical imbalances between the federal and provincial governments and horizontal disparities among the provinces themselves.

While the NFC Award represents a vital instrument for devolution and provincial autonomy, a critical examination reveals that its promise of equitable resource distribution is persistently undermined by deeper, systemic flaws in the country's fiscal governance.

The NFC Award has, over successive iterations, progressively increased the provincial share in national revenues, thereby strengthening fiscal decentralization.

This shift has the potential to improve public service delivery by bringing resources closer to the people.

However, the effectiveness of these transfers is contingent upon a healthy national fiscal environment—a condition Pakistan has rarely met.

The nation's fiscal narrative is characterized by structural weaknesses that choke the system at its source.

A chronically narrow tax base, heavy reliance on regressive indirect taxation, and inefficient revenue mobilization by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)



mean that the total pool of resources available for distribution is perpetually insufficient.

Consequently, even a well-intentioned NFC Award framework operates within a system of scarcity, limiting its capacity to achieve genuine equity.

"Hidden Deficits" and Contingent Liabilities

Beyond revenue inadequacy, the expenditure side of the fiscal

equation presents an equally formidable challenge.

A significant portion of the federal budget is consumed by non-development expenditure, most notably debt servicing and defense. This leaves limited fiscal space for development spending, which is crucial for long-term economic growth and for addressing regional inequalities.

The paper notes

that the fiscal year 2024-25 saw a nine-year low in the consolidated budget deficit, partly due to provincial surpluses.

However, this superficial stability masks the underlying reality that the cost of servicing past debt continues to crowd out investments in the human and physical infrastructure needed to level the playing field among provinces. A major contribution of the research

is its identification of "hidden deficits" and contingent liabilities as critical yet often overlooked sources of fiscal stress. Beyond the conventional budget deficit, factors such as off-budget expenditures, subsidies to loss-making public sector enterprises, and implicit guarantees for future

Cycle of Short-Term Fixes Rather Than Long-Term Solutions

obligations create a precarious financial reality. This lack of transparency in accounting for risks—from natural calamities to the collapse of state-owned corporations—exposes the federation to unpredictable fiscal shocks.

The failure to consolidate and disclose these contingent liabilities means that the true scale of fiscal vulnerability is rarely debated in parliament or under-

stood by the public, perpetuating a cycle of short-term fixes rather than long-term solutions.

By enhancing revenue mobilization, ensuring fiscal transparency, and prudently managing debt and liabilities, Pakistan can create an environment where the NFC Award can fulfill its constitutional promise—fostering a resilient, balanced, and truly equitable federation.

strengthen the entire fiscal ecosystem. Key among these are the establishment of an independent Fiscal Council (IFC) to provide unbiased analysis of fiscal policy and budget assumptions, thus reducing political discretion and enhancing evidence-based decision-making.

Furthermore, it calls for strengthening the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework by linking it to Public Service Agreements (PSAs) that tie resource allocation to measurable outcomes, ensuring that provincial transfers under the NFC Award translate into tangible improvements in education, health, and infrastructure.

In conclusion, the National Finance Commission Award is an essential but insufficient instrument for achieving fiscal equity in Pakistan. Its effectiveness is inextricably linked to the overall health of the nation's public finances.

As the research paper demonstrates, persistent issues such as a narrow tax base, unsustainable debt service, and opaque contingent liabilities undermine the very resources that the NFC Award is meant to distribute equitably.

Moving forward, the focus must broaden from negotiating provincial shares to implementing deep-rooted institutional reforms.

By enhancing revenue mobilization, ensuring fiscal transparency, and prudently managing debt and liabilities, Pakistan can create an environment where the NFC Award can fulfill its constitutional promise—fostering a resilient, balanced, and truly equitable federation.

It recommends a suite of reforms that move beyond the NFC Award itself to

Forced Marriage in Islam: A Clear Violation of Women's Rights and Human Dignity

By Musavir Durrani

Forced marriage remains one of the most damaging cultural practices in parts of the Muslim world today. Despite being justified in the name of honor, tradition, or family unity, Islam itself strictly forbids forcing any woman, or man, into a marriage they do not want. Islamic teachings make consent the

core of marriage, while coercion makes a marriage *batil* (invalid).

The Qur'an Clearly Forbids Forced Marriages. Allah states in Surah An-Nisa:

"O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will."

(Qur'an 4:19) This verse was revealed to abolish the jahiliyyah practice of controlling or forcing women into marriages.

Islam replaced oppression with dignity, choice, and responsibility.

Prophetic Example: Forced Marriages Declared Invalid

A woman once came to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)



complaining that her father had married her without her permission. The Prophet (PBUH) gave her the full right to reject or accept the marriage, proving that consent is mandatory.

Hadith References: Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 5138.

Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1419. These narrations confirm that the Prophet (PBUH) allowed the woman to annul her forced marriage.

One narration even states that she chose to remain married but wanted to teach women that fa-

thers have no right to force their daughters.

Parents Can Advise, But They Cannot Force.

Islam highly respects parents, but marriage choice is not their right. They can guide, suggest, and advise, but they have ab-

solutely no power to force their child into marrying someone. Even if parents think they "know what is best," they cannot override the choice of their daughter or son. The final decision always belongs to the person getting married.

Statements such as: "If you don't marry this one, who will marry you?" "You have no choice." "Do it for family honor." "You must obey your parents."

These are pure emotional manipulation, and Islam does

not allow it. Emotional or Psychological

Pressure is Also Haram. Forced marriage is not only when someone is physically pressured. Even emotional, mental, or family pressure

counts as force. Any woman this right, and no one can take it away."

is invalid (*Batil*) in Islam. This ruling is based on multiple hadith in which the Prophet (PBUH) annulled marriages done without consent.

Modern Forced Marriages, A New Way of Burying Women Alive. Before Islam, Arabs used to bury baby

girls alive. Today, many scholars say: "We no longer bury women in the ground, we bury their dreams on the day of their Nikkah."

When a girl is forced into a marriage, pressured emotionally, or told she has no other choice, we destroy her life while she is still alive. This is the new form of burying women alive, and Islam came to end this injustice completely.

Forced marriage has no place in Islam. It is against the Qur'an, against the Sunnah, and against the dignity that Islam

gives to every woman and man. Parents must love, support, and guide, but never control or force marriage decisions.

"Allah gave women this right, and no one can take it away."

Gaza flotilla organisers say 211 activists 'kidnapped' by Israel

NEWS DESK: Organisers of a Gaza-bound aid flotilla on Thursday said Israel's army had "kidnapped" 211 activists, including a Paris city councillor, in a raid in international waters off Greece.

Helene Coron, a spokeswoman for the French contingent of Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF), told an online news conference that the operation had taken place near the Greek island of Crete, at an "unprecedented" distance from the Gaza coast.

Yasmine Scola, an activist on board the flotilla, said her colleagues had been "kidnapped" by Israel. Israel's foreign ministry had earlier put the number of those detained at 175.

Former Jamaat-i-Islami senator Mushahid Ahmad was also a part of the flotilla mission. But it was not immediately clear if he was among those taken into Israeli custody.

Coron said those intercepted included Paris Communist local councillor Raphaële Primet and another 10 French nationals.

"We don't have the information for the other nationalities, but the boats were mixed in terms of nationality, so there were crew members from all 48 delegations," she said.

Rome, in a government statement, called for the immediate release of "all the unlawfully detained Italians". Some ships still on route



The organisers of the latest flotilla of Palestinian activists seeking to break Israel's blockade on Gaza announced early on Thursday that their boats had been surrounded by Israeli military ships while off the coast of Crete.

"At the time of publishing this statement (06:30am Paris time, 04:30 GMT), at least 22 of the flotilla's 58 boats have been stormed by Israeli forces in complete violation of international law," the GSF said

in a statement. According to an AFP verification, based on tracking data from the organisers, the boats were intercepted in the Greek exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Around thirty boats from the flotilla are still en route, most now in Greek territorial waters south of Crete, according to the same source.

Coron said the operation had taken place over 1,000 kilometres from the Gaza Strip. The longest such operation to date had been 185 kilometres in June 2025, she said. Israel controls all entry points to Gaza, and has been accused by the United Nations and foreign NGOs of strangling the flow of goods into the territory, causing shortages since the start of the war in October 2023.

The flotilla, made up of more than 50 boats, set sail in recent weeks from Marseille in France, Barcelona in Spain and Syracuse in Italy.

"Our boats were approached by military speedboats, self-identified as 'Israel', pointing lasers and semi-automatic assault weapons, ordering participants to the front of the boats and to get on their hands and knees," the organisation added.

"Communications with 11 vessels have been lost," the organisation added. The flotilla is currently off the coast of Greece, near Crete, according to the organisation's live tracking on its website.

"Our boats were approached by military speedboats, self-identified as 'Israel', pointing lasers and semi-automatic assault weapons, ordering participants to the front of the boats and to get on their hands and knees," the organisation added.

Wednesday to Thursday, the GSF said its boats had been "illegally surrounded" by Israeli vessels.

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GSF. However, as it approached Gaza, Israeli forces intercepted it, detaining the activists on board before deporting them. He was detained in Israel for five days before being deported to Jordan.

Israel weaponising access to water in Gaza; MSF

Meanwhile, according to a report by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Israeli authorities have used access to water as a "weapon against Palestinians, systematically depriving people in Gaza, Palestine, of water in a campaign of collective punishment."

MSF, in a statement, said that the "deliberate denial of water from Palestinians is an integral part of Israel's genocide."

"After the local authorities, MSF is the largest producer and a main distributor of drinking water in Gaza, yet between May and November 2025, one in every five of our water distributions ran dry as our trucks were unable to carry sufficient water for all the people, who reported it," the organisation said.

Due to the Israeli military's displacement orders, MSF teams were unable to reach areas where it previously provided water, the statement said. It added that around "one-third" of MSF's requests to "bring in critical water and sanitation supplies have been rejected or left unanswered."

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Mamdani calls on King Charles to return Koh-i-Noor diamond

NEWS DESK: New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani called for King Charles to "return" the prized Koh-i-Noor diamond, which the British Empire took from the Indian sub-continent in the 1800s, on the third day of the monarch's state visit on Wednesday.

Before greeting Charles and Queen Camilla at a 9/11 memorial event, Mamdani was asked what he would discuss

with the king if he had the chance. "If I was to speak to the king, separately from that, I would probably encourage him to return the Koh-i-Noor diamond," the leftist mayor said, adding that his focus would be honoring those killed in the terror attacks.

It's unclear whether Mamdani followed through and brought up the contentious subject with Charles when the two

met. The monarch was seen laughing with Mamdani and having a brief conversation after they shook hands. Housed in the Tower of London, the massive 106 carat stone is the star of Britain's crown jewels, adorning the Crown of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

The ownership of the jewel has been contested over the centuries, passing through

the hands of Mughal emperors, Iranian shahs and Sikh maharajas before the Kingdom of Punjab gave it to Queen Victoria in 1849 as part of a peace treaty.

India has repeatedly and unsuccessfully sought the return of the priceless jewel. While there is little doubt it was mined in India, its history thereafter is a mixture of myth and fact, with several countries including Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan also laying claim to the gem.

A politician from the anti-immigration Reform UK party was quick to slam the comments as "insult to our King."

"This beautiful diamond is currently on display in the Tower of London," the party's home affairs spokesman Zia Yusuf said in an X post. "That is where it will stay".



Palestinian issue is 'root cause of instability' in ME, Pakistan tells UNSC

NEWS DESK: Pakistan has reminded the UN Security Council that the "root cause of instability in the Middle East" remains the unresolved question of Palestine and urged renewed diplomatic momentum toward a two-state solution.

Delivering Pakistan's statement in a high-level Council debate on Tuesday, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said the region remained "extremely volatile with multiple and interconnected crises", warning that restraint, dialogue and adherence to the UN Charter were essential to prevent escalation.

Iran's Ambassador Amir Saëd Irvan accused unnamed aggressors of "grave violations of international humanitarian law" and deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure. He recalled that "a girls school in Minab was destroyed, killing more than 168 stu-



And "at least 3,375 civilians" have been killed since the US invasion began. He further asserted that "more than 700 educational institutions, along with healthcare and cultural facilities, have been attacked", and demanded accountability from "the United States and the Israeli regime".

The meeting brought together a wide range of regional and international actors, many

of whom blamed Israel for the situation in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territories. Inadequate "humanitarian access" remained inadequate, calling for "sustained, unhindered and scaled up humanitarian assistance".

On the diplomatic track, he reiterated support for efforts involving the United States, Arab states and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation aimed at advancing a "time-bound political process" leading to a sovereign Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

New Zealand's Christchurch mosque killer loses bid to overturn convictions

NEWS DESK: White supremacist killer Brenton Tarrant lost an appeal Thursday seeking to overturn his conviction and sentence for shooting dead 51 people at two New Zealand mosques in 2019, court documents showed.

The 35-year-old admitted to carrying out New Zealand's deadliest modern day mass shooting before being sentenced to life in prison in August 2020.

He appealed to the Court of Appeal in February, saying "torturous and inhumane" detention conditions during his trial made him incapable of making rational decisions when he pleaded guilty.

"I did not have the mind frame or mental health required to be making informed decisions at that time," Tarrant said at the time.

The panel of three judges said the court "does not accept Mr Tarrant's evidence about his mental state."

"There were no inconsistencies in Mr Tarrant's own evidence, and his evidence is at odds with the detailed observations of prison authorities and the assessments of mental health professionals at the time of him entering his plea."

The judges found Tarrant's guilty pleas were voluntary and "he was not coerced or pressured in any way to plead guilty."

The evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that he was not suffering any significant psychological impacts as a result of his prison conditions at the time he pleaded guilty," the court said.

Once firm allies, the UAE and Riyadh have developed a policy of mutual cooperation on issues from oil and regional geopolitics

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to the race for foreign talent and capital. The statement came amid intense speculation that Abu Dhabi could exit other regional bodies, including the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), following its surprise decision to leave OPEC+ effective May 1.

The UAE's exit, one of the group's biggest producers, widens rift with its neighbour Saudi Arabia, which is effectively OPEC's leader.

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The court said Tarrant's "proposed conviction appeal is utterly devoid of merit."

"The facts concerning Mr Tarrant's offending are beyond dispute. He has not identified any arguable defence, or indeed any defence known to the law."

"Tarrant's penalty of life imprisonment without parole was the stiffest in New Zealand history. Armed with an arsenal of semi-automatic weapons, Tarrant attacked worshippers at two mosques in Christchurch on March 15, 2019.

He published an online manifesto before the attacks and then livestreamed the killings for 17 minutes. His victims were all Muslim and included children, women and

the elderly. The court's decision was complicated one week after Tarrant's February hearing when he sought to abandon his appeal entirely.

The judges said the court received a notice of abandonment of appeal signed by Tarrant using a "self-styled moniker" but the document was thrown out because it was not dated or witnessed.

Tarrant filed a second notice later that week, again using a pseudonym, which was dated and witnessed.

He said he "no longer wishes to have a lawyer" and the appeal should not continue as "it would likely lead to a miscarriage of justice".

Lawyers acting for the survivors and families of victims told national broadcaster RNZ the decision had been a "huge relief".

"The law has now done its job," they said. "The families, and frankly all of us, will be spared the trauma of reliving the 15th of March all over again in a trial. It is a huge relief that the difficult and often unsupported journey families are on will not now be added to by the great burden of a new trial. It would have been unimaginably traumatic."

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NA-251 election petition case: Khushhal Khan Kakar declared successful

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court has issued a detailed verdict in the NA-251 election petition case, declaring Khushhal Khan Kakar as the successful candidate and directing the Election Commission to immediately issue his victory notification.

In its earlier short order, the apex court had already set aside the Balochistan Election Tribunal's decision to hold re-polling at 22 polling stations and the Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation, Islamabad, 30 April 2026. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offering Fatima at the demise of the mother of Pir Syed Imran Ahmed Shah, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offering Fatima at the demise of the mother of Pir Syed Imran Ahmed Shah, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation, Islamabad, 30 April 2026. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offering Fatima at the demise of the mother of Pir Syed Imran Ahmed Shah, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation.

Armed forces destroy Afghan Taliban posts, vehicles in Chaman sector: security sources

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Armed Forces have destroyed several Afghan Taliban posts and vehicles in Balochistan's Chaman sector, security sources said on Wednesday.

The operations, part of the ongoing 'Operation Ghazab il-Haq', were a response to the "unprovoked aggression" by Afghan Taliban forces and terrorists on the Pak-Afghan border, according to the sources. Security sources said that the army destroyed several Afghan Taliban posts and vehicles in Chaman with precision. "The Pakistan Army's effective operations have forced the Afghan Taliban and the Firqa al Khawarij to retreat."

Firma al Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). "Security forces have destroyed several Afghan Taliban posts and vehicles in Chaman sector, security sources said on Wednesday. The operations, part of the ongoing 'Operation Ghazab il-Haq', were a response to the "unprovoked aggression" by Afghan Taliban forces and terrorists on the Pak-Afghan border, according to the sources. Security sources said that the army destroyed several Afghan Taliban posts and vehicles in Chaman with precision. "The Pakistan Army's effective operations have forced the Afghan Taliban and the Firqa al Khawarij to retreat."

Commissioner reviews projects in Sargodha

SARGODHA (INP): Commissioner Hafiz Shaukat Ali on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review progress on urban development initiatives, beautification projects, sewerage management and public recreational facilities across the city.

According to the spokesperson for the Commissioner's office, the meeting focused on matters related to the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA), Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), city beautification, parks rehabilitation, green belts and the ongoing PDP project.

Officials also discussed challenges associated with the sewerage system and measures required for improving civic infrastructure.

Managing Director PHA Chaudhry Muhammad Arshad and Managing Director WASA, Abu Bakar Imran briefed the meeting on the progress of ongoing projects, operational challenges and future planning.

Addressing the meeting, the commissioner directed efforts to intensify the city's cleanliness and beautification. He emphasized special attention to green belts and landscaping projects, while also calling for the restoration and improvement of public parks to provide better recreational facilities for citizens.

Terrorist killed as attack on Bannu police post thwarted

BANNU (INP): A terrorist was killed early Wednesday when Bannu police repelled an attack on the Mazanga police post, officials said.

Police officials said heavily armed terrorists attacked the post in the early hours of Wednesday, but personnel responded promptly and foiled the assault.

An intense exchange of fire between police and the attackers continued for some time, leaving one terrorist dead and several others injured. The wounded attackers were taken away by their accomplices under the cover of darkness.

Zulfiqar Hameed praised the performance of the Bannu Police for their successful operation and announced cash reward for the police officers who participated in the operation.

He also recovered blood traces from multiple locations, indicating further casualties among the terrorists.

During the attack, a constable sustained minor injuries and was shifted to a hospital, where he was reported to be out of danger. Police recovered weapons and other equipment from the site, including magazines, hand grenades, bandoliers and other material.

Following the incident, Bannu District Police Officer (DPO) Yasir Afridi, along with Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Arshad Khan and teams from the Rapid Response Force and Quick Response Force, reached the scene immediately. They cordoned off the area and initiated a search operation.

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Minister inaugurates World Immunization Week 2026

NAWABSHAH (INP): Sindh Minister for Health and Population Welfare Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho inaugurated the World Immunization Week 2026 at SMB Fatima Jinnah Government school, reaffirming the government's commitment to ensuring 100 percent vaccination coverage for children across the province.

The provincial-level ceremony was attended by government officials, international partners, and civil society representatives, marking a renewed push to accelerate access to life-saving vaccines in all districts of Sindh.

Addressing the event, Dr. Azra Pechuho emphasized that immunization is not just a medical necessity but a fundamental right of every child.

She said that vaccines serve as the most powerful shield against disability and death, adding that government's mission is to protect every child in Sindh, whether living in urban centers like Karachi or remote areas such as Tharparkar.

Under her leadership, the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) Sindh has achieved significant progress. Routine immunization coverage has reached a historic 80 percent, while Penta-1 coverage has exceeded 95 percent, reflecting strong parental trust in vaccination services. BCG vaccination coverage has also surpassed 90 percent.

CDA records to be digitized within 120 days: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed that all Capital Development Authority (CDA) records be fully digitized within 120 days, allowing citizens to track the status of their applications online.

Naqvi chaired a high-level meeting to review ongoing public projects and new development initiatives in the federal capital. He emphasized that no illegal housing society will be permitted to operate in Islamabad. The meeting also covered the pre-qualification of three international firms for the construction of a new convention center, expo center, and Islamabad Arena, with instructions to complete the projects ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. Land has been allocated for a service center in F-6, and construction on recreational projects—including a top golf facility, hot air balloon rides, zip line, water park, and amusement park—will commence soon to provide modern leisure options for residents. The minister stressed the development of a modern sports complex and directed plans to transform F-9 Park into a high-standard recreational area similar to Hyde Park. A comprehensive plan for entertainment facilities around Shaladara Dam was also requested. Beautification and lighting work on Expressway and Club Road will start immediately.

Pak-China livestock agreement on "Sheep and Goat Embryos" signed

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a significant milestone for Sino-Pak cooperation in advanced livestock biotechnology, the Chinese company Beijing Asia has signed an agreement with Pakistan's VitaGene Farms to produce 2,000 high-quality sheep and goat embryos during the first phase.

These embryos will be sold commercially in the Pakistani market, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday.

The historic agreement was signed on April 28 in China between Dr. Jiang Yunji, Director of Beijing Asia, and Dr. Qaiser Shahzad, Head of VitaGene Farms. Beijing Asia owns over 10,000 sheep in

China and has expertise in sheep embryo transfer. VitaGene Farms, an animal breeding company, owns state-of-the-art embryo production and semen production units and provides services for embryo and semen production in Pakistan.

In an interview with Gwadar Pro, Dr. Qaiser Shahzad explained that initially, embryos from sheep and goats will be imported from China.

"Using Chinese technology, embryos will be collected from genetically superior female sheep and goats through in vivo methods. Hormonal treatments will then be applied to induce multiple ovulation, enhancing the chances of embryo transfer in Pakistani



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik was called on by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, H.E. Reza Amir Moghadam.

Pakistan expresses solidarity with earthquake, disaster victims worldwide

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said Pakistan stands in solidarity with communities worldwide affected by earthquakes and other natural disasters, while renewing its commitment to preparedness and resilience.

In a message issued by the Prime Minister's Office, the prime minister noted that the day, designated by the United Nations, serves both as a tribute to lives lost and a call to strengthen global cooperation in disaster risk reduction.

Mitigating the devastating impacts of natural disasters requires improved infrastructure, comprehensive planning, and widespread public awareness," he said, stressing the need for integrating safety standards into construction practices and advancing early warning technologies.

The prime minister highlighted the lasting impact of the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, which claimed over 80,000 lives and displaced nearly three million people across Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He described the tragedy as a defining moment in the country's history, while also praising the

resilience and unity shown by citizens in its aftermath.

He added that following the disaster, Pakistan undertook major institutional reforms, including the establishment of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), aimed at improving coordination and response capacity.

The authority now uses geospatial technologies, historical data, and fault-line analysis to identify high-risk areas and support preparedness efforts.

Prime Minister Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's alignment with global frameworks such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, emphasizing equitable access to early warning systems and the development of earthquake-resilient infrastructure.

He added that national priorities include strengthening community-level response capabilities, integrating disaster education into school curricula under the Pakistan School Safety Framework, and expanding the use of geographic information systems and satellite-based monitoring.



MULTAN: Hon'ble Chief Justice Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan addressing the delegation of Multan Bar Association at the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan.

Governor Balochistan Announces Increased University Budget and Promotes Digital Literacy at Laptop Distribution Ceremony

QUETTA: Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Governor of Balochistan, addressed participants at a laptop distribution ceremony held under the Prime Minister Youth Laptop Scheme at Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University.



During his speech, the Governor announced that the budget for all public sector universities has been increased to 8 billion rupees. He highlighted that initial institutional challenges have been addressed, and now it is the responsibility of vice chancellors and their teams to deliver strong academic performance and measurable results.

Mandokhail expressed satisfaction that all public sector universities have improved in both rankings and scoring systems. He specifically praised the Women's University for surpassing an 80% score, calling it a significant and encouraging milestone.

Focus on Skills and Digital Literacy as the New Standard Highlighting the changing landscape of education, the Governor stated that the world is entering an era of artificial intelligence and robotics, where traditional tools like pen and paper are becoming obsolete. He emphasized that true education today goes beyond basic literacy and is measured by digital literacy—the ability to effectively use technology.

He noted that parents entrust universities with high expectations for their daughters, making it essential for institutions to deliver quality education that meets those expectations. He pointed out that access to online knowledge, research materials, and digital platforms has become a fundamental necessity. Students now have unprecedented opportunities to conduct research, start online businesses, and explore science and philosophy.

Empowering Students Through Technology Addressing the students, he said the laptops are not just gifts but symbols of trust in their potential. He encouraged them to use these tools to enhance their knowledge, collaborate with peers, and turn their dreams into reality. He described the laptops as a "key" to unlocking new educational and employment opportunities, noting that thousands of resources are now just a click away.

Kalat Polio Campaign to Vaccinate Over 40,000 Children from May 18, DC Orders Strict Monitoring

KALAT: Deputy Commissioner Munir Ahmed Durrani chaired an upcoming anti-polio campaign in Kalat district, emphasizing zero tolerance for negligence. The meeting was attended by DSP officials, District Health Officer Dr Anjum Baloch, WHO District Polio Officer Dr Mujtaba Bajoi, and representatives from various departments and the World Health Organization.

A total of 40,269 children across 19 union councils in two tehsils of Kalat will be vaccinated during the campaign. He added that polio teams will visit all union councils to administer drops to children from birth up to five years of age. Addressing the meeting, DC Munir Ahmed Durrani said that polio is a dangerous disease and vaccination is essential to protect children.

He stressed that a healthy society depends on the well-being of its children and members to play their role in raising awareness about the importance of polio vaccination. The Deputy Commissioner directed monitoring teams to perform their duties diligently and ensure that no child is left unvaccinated. He made it clear that any negligence or carelessness during the campaign will not be tolerated at any level.



Keywords: Kalat news, polio campaign Pakistan 2026, vaccination drive Kalat, DC

Munir Ahmed Durrani, WHO polio program, child health Pakistan, anti polio efforts, public awareness campaign

Gwadar Open Court Addresses Public Issues, Authorities Order Immediate Action on Key Complaints

GWADAR: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Nageebullah Kakar, the district administration Gwadar organized an open court (Khuili Katcheri) to review local issues and development matters comprehensively. The session was attended by Member Provincial Assembly Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman Baloch, Chairman District Council Sheikh Mukhtar, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Dr Abdul Shakoor, Assistant Commissioner Saad Kaleem Zafar, and officials from various departments including health, education, irrigation, municipal services, and law enforcement agencies.

Participants stressed and sustainably to ensure long-term public benefits. Representatives of persons with disabilities highlighted the need to ensure implementation of job quotas and demanded more employment opportunities. The administration's initiative of providing a 50% discount on transport fares for persons with disabilities was appreciated, with calls for its extension to other public services.

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30 Youth Appointed to Protect Forests, Boost Local Employment in Kohar Jungle Initiative

LORALAI: A prestigious ceremony was held in the Kohar Jungle area of Loralai under the Balochistan Forest Department, where appointment orders were distributed among 30 to promote forest protection and local employment. The initiative was carried out on the special directives of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, while the appointment orders were facilitated through Chairman Israr-e-Shahed Khan Kakar.

He emphasized that the shared national responsibility. He also expressed confidence in the district administration is implementing a zero-tolerance policy against such activities. Strict legal action will be taken against those involved in damaging forest resources. Congratulating the newly appointed youth, he expressed hope that they would perform their duties with honesty and dedication, contributing to the protection and conservation of the forest. Participants welcomed the government's initiative, noting that it will not only help protect forests

but also create dignified employment opportunities for local youth, contributing to economic development in the region. According to Forest Department sources, illegal deforestation has become a serious issue in Loralai and other parts of Balochistan. To address this, authorities are introducing effective strategies including special patrols, community engagement, and awareness campaigns. Officials reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring forest conservation and providing a safe, green environment for future generations.

Keywords: Loralai news, forest protection Pakistan, Kohar Jungle initiative, youth employment

University of Turbat Students Visit Thalassemia Care Center to Promote Awareness and Prevention

TURBAT: Students from the Department of Natural and Basic Sciences at University of Turbat visited the Kech Thalassemia Care Center to raise awareness about Thalassemia prevention, patient care, and community services. The study tour was supervised by Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and IT, Dr. Hanif ur Rehman, accompanied by Department Chairman Dr. Jahangir Khan and faculty members.

During the visit, Dr. Hanif ur Rehman and Irshad Arif discussed potential collaboration between the university and the care center. Both sides agreed to initiate joint scientific and policy-level research activities aimed at controlling and preventing thalassemia in the region. A key proposal discussed was the introduction of mandatory thalassemia screening tests for university admissions.

The participants emphasized that screening for thalassemia minor among incoming students could significantly improve student health and reduce the burden on the center. The visit highlighted the university's dedication to combining academic learning with practical social impact, particularly in addressing critical health challenges like thalassemia.



Keywords: Thalassemia awareness, University of Turbat, student health, community service

tailored briefing, he explained the center's operational framework, patient care services, diagnostic facilities, and ongoing initiatives for awareness and prevention of thalassemia. Collaboration and Research Initiatives

NOTICE INVITING TENDER. The Assistant Director Local Govt Dera Bugti Department invites a sealed Tender/Bid for execution of various development works under the scheme on from eligible contractor/firm with the Bid Security of 2% of estimated cost in shape of Call Deposit (Refundable). The non-refundable Tender Form Fee Rs.1500/- for each tender to be deposited in any National Bank of Pakistan Branch situated in Balochistan Province through Green Bank Chaitan in a hard account (SOBR): (verified by the District Accounts Officer).

Trump backs United State (US) investment of \$2.4b

NEWS DESK: President Donald Trump's administration has backed a \$2.4 billion investment offer by an American firm to install advanced security systems at major Pakistani airports to detect criminals and transnational threats.

Natalie Baker, the US Charge d'Affaires to Pakistan, has recently supported an investment proposal by Securiport, an American firm, to install Advanced Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) capability systems, official documents showed. She has urged the Pakistani authorities to consider the proposal.

The proposed solution guarantees data transport from the airport to the government while allowing Pakistan to retain full ownership and custody of all the data, with 24/7 support and training, the documents showed.

If Pakistan accepts the US offer, it may also help fast-track the installation of these systems. A separate move by the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) to install such systems has recently become controversial due to transparency concerns raised by the Senate Standing Committee on Defence.



Securiport has proposed funding all upfront investment related to the deployment of its system and offered to recover its costs over the contract term via a government-mandated passenger security surcharge model. Has the

company offered to invest \$2.4 billion over the proposed 25-year life of the contract? It would also establish a subsidiary in Pakistan through which it will train over 1,000 Pakistani citizens in these modern technologies, according to

the proposal. Baker extended the "support" of the US government for the Securiport investment proposal in a communication with the Ministry of Defence, which is the administrative division of the PAA.

"We appreciate your consideration of Securiport's proposal and continued partnership with the United States in advancing Pakistan's security and our efforts to achieve safe, secure and efficient travel," Baker

wrote in a correspondence with the Pakistani authorities. According to the offer, the API and PNR systems would be operated by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), which would provide the government

with an integrated biometric-enabled border management plan.

In her support letter, Baker wrote that Securiport has more than two decades of experience in numerous countries and adheres to a stringent compliance framework.

When contacted, the spokesperson of the US embassy in Islamabad said, "We do not comment on private diplomatic correspondence. We would direct you to the Pakistani government." The Minister of Defence also did not comment on whether Pakistan plans to accept the US offer for investment.

Securiport provides border security, biometric technology and threat assessment solutions to governments globally. The firm's installed system has the ability to "detect and interdict criminal and transnational threats in real-time at the border," Baker wrote. She added that the proposed solution guarantees data transport from the airport to the government while allowing Pakistan to retain full ownership and custody of all the data, with 24/7 support and training. The proposal is in line with Pakistan's efforts to install an auto-

matized border control system known as E-gates. However, those efforts have recently become controversial due to the decision to award the contract to a state-owned enterprise by invoking the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) direct contracting rules. The IMF has already asked Pakistan to withdraw under the Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment report.

In 2020, the PAA initiated a global competitive request for proposals for the deployment of E-gates, API and PNR systems. In 2024, a fresh expression of interest (EOI) was issued to invite experienced international firms. But subsequently, both EOIs were ignored.

In January this year, the Senate Standing Committee on Defence took a briefing from the airport authority on the automated project. The committee was informed that under the proposed system, E-gates custody of all the data, with 24/7 support and training. The proposal is in line with Pakistan's efforts to install an auto-

matized border control system known as E-gates. However, those efforts have recently become controversial due to the decision to award the contract to a state-owned enterprise by invoking the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) direct contracting rules. The IMF has already asked Pakistan to withdraw under the Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment report.

Govt orders seamless wheat movement

NEWS DESK: The federal government has directed provinces and relevant departments to ensure uninterrupted inter-provincial movement of wheat for smooth supply of the staple commodity across the country.

Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain chaired the 11th meeting of the National Wheat Oversight Committee to review the procurement drive, progress on harvesting and prevailing market prices.

He directed all provincial governments and relevant departments to ensure the uninterrupted inter-provincial movement of wheat, stressing that no administrative or logistical barriers should hinder its smooth supply.

The minister stated that wheat prices in the domestic market were aligned with international trends, ranging between Rs3,500 and Rs4,000 per maund, which provided fair returns to farmers

while maintaining affordability for consumers. He emphasized that the government was committed to safeguarding the interests of growers through just remuneration and smooth procurement operations.

Rana Tanveer expressed satisfaction over the current wheat reserves and assured meeting participants that sufficient stocks were available to meet domestic consumption requirements

and maintain food security. He highlighted that provinces had shown confidence in meeting their wheat production targets for the current season.

He underscored the importance of transparency and efficiency in the procurement process, instructing authorities to facilitate farmers through timely payments, adequate procurement centres and avoiding unnecessary delays. Measures to curb hoarding and profiteering were also discussed, with strict directives to take action against market manipulation.

The federal minister also gave directives for enhanced monitoring of wheat stocks and market trends, along with use of digital tools and data-driven mechanisms for better decision-making.

He underlined the need for strengthening storage capacity and minimising post-harvest losses.



CM Murad asks K-Electric to find practical solution to reduce loadshedding

NEWS DESK: Expressing concern over prolonged power outages particularly in underprivileged areas of the metropolis, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has asked the K-Electric to find a practical solution to reduce loadshedding, particularly in poorer neighbourhoods.

In a meeting with KE Chairman Shahryar Chishti and CEO Syed Taha here at the CM House on Wednesday, CM Shah directed the Sindh energy department and KE to jointly undertake a study on initiating a targeted subsidy programme for vulnerable electricity consumers in Karachi.

He directed the formulation of proposals to provide affordable electricity to low-income neighbourhoods and industrial areas, while stressing the need to reduce loadshedding in poor localities as summer begins. "We want loadshedding to be reduced, especially in low-income areas, and a sustainable solution should be worked out so poor communities are not bur-



dened by long outages," the CM said, according to a press statement. Body formed to propose targeted subsidy, provision of uninterrupted, affordable electricity to low-income and industrial areas.

Discussing long-term solutions, the CM stressed the need to generate cheaper electricity, particularly through the utilisation of Thar coal, and proposed that low-cost electricity generated from Thar be supplied to KE so it could be provided uninterrupted at affordable rates to poor localities. He also said

the Sindh government was exploring a partnership with KE to develop a plan for supplying competitively priced electricity to industrial areas to support productivity and reduce costs.

The KE chairman Chishti assured the chief minister that the utility was ready to work in cooperation with the Sindh government on measures aimed at relief and improved service delivery. He observed that low-cost power generation was essential for sustainable relief to consumers. The chief minister directed the energy department to prepare

multiple proposals for providing cheaper electricity and announced the formation of a committee comprising the largest oil and gas producer, Oil and Gas Development Company (OGDCL), dropped by 11 per cent to Rs115.3 billion in the first three quarters (July-March) of the current fiscal year.

While approving the financial results for the first nine months, the board of directors of the company on Wednesday declared a quarterly dividend of Rs2.25 per share — the highest third-quarter payout — taking the nine-month total dividend to Rs11.11 per share, the company said in a statement.

The company said it recorded net sales of Rs300.127bn for the nine months ending March 31, about 3.5pc lower than Rs311.1bn for the same period last year. Profit after tax amounted to Rs115.263bn in the first three quarters of FY26, compared with Rs129bn in FY25 and

Global oil price retreats after hitting 4-year high on concern of US-Iran war escalation

NEWS DESK: Global oil prices retreated after hitting a four-year high of more than \$126 a barrel on Thursday as concerns that the US-Iran war could worsen and lead to a protracted Middle East oil supply disruption that could hurt global economic growth. Earlier in the day, the market moved higher after OPEC+ cited unidentifiable sources, reported late on Wednesday that US sanctions on Iran would be lifted. Trump is slated to receive a briefing on Thursday on plans for a series of military strikes on Iran in hopes it will return to negotiations on its nuclear programme. Prices later dropped without any obvious catalyst.

Tamas Varga of oil broker PTM said the decline did not look related to a specific development and reflected the heightened volatility in the market since the Iran war started on February 28. "It just sums up the unpredictable nature of trading in a Trump world," he said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures were down \$2.05, or 1.7%, to \$115.98 a barrel as of 1016 GMT, after trading in a Trump world, he said.

The \$115bn profit in 9MFY26 translated into earnings per share (EPS) of Rs26.80. "The results were impacted by production curtailments, lower realised crude oil and LPG prices, and other government levies, while its oil and gas production generated estimated foreign-exchange savings of \$2.3bn through import substitution.

Average daily net saleable production in 9MFY26 stood at 32,022 barrels of crude oil, 648 mmmcf of natural gas,

contract was at \$109.93, down 51 cents, or 0.5%.

Two large sell orders for June Brent "traded shortly before 0930 GMT, traders noted and LSEG data showed. The US and Israel began air strikes on Iran on February 28 and it is estimated by closing off almost all shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for energy supplies from Middle Eastern producers. Amid a ceasefire that has paused combat, the US has imposed a blockade on Iranian ports. Talks to resolve the conflict, which has killed thousands and caused what analysts say is the world's biggest energy disruption ever, have deadlocked, with the US insisting on discussing Iran's alleged nuclear weapons programme and Iran demanding some control

over the strait and reparations for damage from the war. "Prospects for any near-term resolution to the Iran conflict or a reopening of the Strait of Hormuz remain dim," IG market analyst Tony Sycamore said in a note.

In a sign that the conflict and resulting energy supply disruptions are set to continue for longer, Trump spoke on Wednesday with oil companies about how to mitigate the impact of a possible months-long US blockade, a White House official said. "In the near term, market participants remain focused on the dynamics of the US-Iran conflict and the risk of a prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz. This focus currently outweighs the long-term implications of the potential 'waning influence of OPEC+ follow-

ing the UAE's exit from the cartel," said OANDA senior market analyst Kelvin Wong. The OPEC+ grouping of members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies is likely to agree a small increase of "around 188,000 barrels per day in oil output quotas on Sunday, sources told Reuters on Wednesday.

The meeting comes just after the United Arab Emirates' withdrawal from OPEC, effective May 1, which is expected to deal a blow to the oil producer group's ability to control prices. Although the Gulf nation's exit would allow it to raise production after exports restart, analysts say that is unlikely to affect market fundamentals this year, especially with the Hormuz closure.

Production curbs hit OGDCL profit

NEWS DESK: Marred by forced production curtailment, the profitability of the country's largest oil and gas producer, Oil and Gas Development Company (OGDCL), dropped by 11 per cent to Rs115.3 billion in the first three quarters (July-March) of the current fiscal year.

While approving the financial results for the first nine months, the board of directors of the company on Wednesday declared a quarterly dividend of Rs2.25 per share — the highest third-quarter payout — taking the nine-month total dividend to Rs11.11 per share, the company said in a statement.

The company said it recorded net sales of Rs300.127bn for the nine months ending March 31, about 3.5pc lower than Rs311.1bn for the same period last year. Profit after tax amounted to Rs115.263bn in the first three quarters of FY26, compared with Rs129bn in FY25 and



Rs17bn in FY24.

The \$115bn profit in 9MFY26 translated into earnings per share (EPS) of Rs26.80. "The results were impacted by production curtailments, lower realised crude oil and LPG prices, and other government levies, while its oil and gas production generated estimated foreign-exchange savings of \$2.3bn through import substitution.

Average daily net saleable production in 9MFY26 stood at 32,022 barrels of crude oil, 648 mmmcf of natural gas,

and 653 tons of LPG, compared with 31,710 barrels, 676 mmmcf and 654 tonnes, respectively, in the corresponding period last year.

Production remained affected by curtailments, which reduced daily net output by approximately 3,482 barrels of crude oil, 141 mmmcf of gas and 48 tonnes of LPG," the company announced, adding that the extent of curtailment moderated towards the latter part of the period.

US-Iran war caused disruption in LNG imports.

Usman Khan, Maaz Sadaqat star to take Kingsmen into second Eliminator as Sultans falter

LAHORE: Half-centuries by Usman Khan and Maaz Sadaqat powered Hyderabad Kingsmen into the second Eliminator of the HBL Pakistan Super League as they cruised past Multan Sultans at the Gaddafi Stadium on Wednesday night, capping a collectively disciplined bowling performance that had earlier restricted their opponents to a modest total.

The comprehensive victory marked a continuation of Hyderabad's remarkable turnaround this season. After losing their first four matches, the Kingsmen stormed into the playoffs by winning five of their last six league fixtures — a surge that has now carried them into Eliminator 2, where they will face Islamabad United on Friday.

For Multan Sultans, the defeat brought an abrupt end to a campaign that had promised much. They had finished second on the points table with six wins in the league stage but faltered when it mattered most.

Chasing 160, Hyderabad suffered an early setback when captain Marnus Labuschagne was dismissed for 11, edging a back to Saibhazda Farhan off Mohammad Ismail. At 18-1, the fixture briefly hinted at a contest, but what followed was a decisive shift orchestrated by Usman



and Maaz. The pair stitched together a blistering 102-run partnership off just 53 balls, effectively taking the game away from the Sultans.

Maaz set the tone early, launching pacer early, complementing him with equal authority. He unfurled a series of crisp strokes, including a powerful pull off Ismail and a flowing drive through covers off Siddie.

His assault on Mohammad Nawaz's left-arm spin proved decisive — a 19-run over featuring two boundaries and a towering six straight down the ground brought up his half-century and reduced the chase to a formality.

Usman's innings of 64 off 35 balls ended when he miscued a slog-sweep off Steven Smith to long-on, but by then

the required rate had dipped below five an over. Maaz, who reached his fifty soon after, ensured there were no late hiccups. He finished unbeaten on 64, sealing the victory alongside Saam Ayub.

Earlier, Sultans had endured a stuttering innings after being put into bat. Despite a promising start from Sahibzada, who struck two early boundaries, Hyderabad's bowlers quickly seized control. Pacer Mohammad Ali removed Steven Smith with a well-directed short-of-length delivery, before his fast-bowling partner Akif Javed dismissed Sahibzada with a

leading edge. The collapse gathered pace as Hunain Shah trapped Josh Philippe lbw, and Saam accounted for Sultans captain Ashton Turner. When Glenn Maxwell had Anafiq Minhas adjudged leg-before, Sultans were reeling at 52-5 inside eight overs.

Amid the wreckage, Shan Masood stood firm. Initially cautious, he began to rebuild the innings with measured strokeplay. He broke the shackles with a deft cut off Maxwell and gradually shifted gears, pulling Saam to the fine-leg boundary and driving Hunain majestically down the ground for six.

Shan's innings gained further momentum in the latter stages. He launched Maxwell for back-to-back sixes over cover, displaying exquisite timing, and later carved Ali through point before following it up with a classical cover drive. His ability to farm the strike and find boundaries under pressure was crucial in lifting Sultans from a precarious position.

Wickets, however, continued to fall at the other end. Nawaz briefly threatened with a couple of boundaries before perishing, while Imran and Siddie fell trying to accelerate.

Even as the tail struggled, Shan carried on, reaching a fighting half-century and pushing the total towards respectability.

His unbeaten 69 off 46 balls — featuring four fours and four sixes — was the backbone of Sultans' 159-9. He added valuable runs in the death overs, including a towering six off Hassan Khan in the final over, but the lack of support from the rest of the batting line-up proved costly.

No team better than PSG, says Enrique ahead of Bayern semi

NEWS DESK: Holders Paris St Germain take on Bayern Munich in a Champions League semi-final clash of two of the top attacking teams in Europe, and while Luis Enrique says the German club are the most consistent, no team is better than his side.

Three of the last four teams, PSG, Bayern and Arsenal, are top of their domestic leagues and the German side have clinched the Bundesliga, losing one game, having also lost once in Europe.

While PSG and Atletico Madrid had to come through the playoffs, Arsenal and Bayern were the top two in the league phase. In the last 16 and quarter-finals, PSG netted 12 goals and Bayern 16.

"It's not just about attacking statistics, but if you look at the defensive ones too, these are the best teams in Europe," Luis Enrique told reporters ahead of Tuesday's first leg at home.

"Arsenal have done an incredible job this

season also, in terms of consistency. Bayern are a bit ahead of us because they have only lost two games, but if we speak about what we have shown as a team, we're right up there.

"And no team is better than us. I said this after we didn't finish in the top eight in the league phase, that I didn't see any team better than us.

Last season, PSG also finished outside the top eight in the league stage before going on to lift the trophy, and in Ligue 1, having battled with Lens for long periods, they are six points clear.

"Every coach wants to head into the run-in in the best possible conditions," the PSG manager said. "It's the magic of the Champions League which gives special energy to the players, everyone wants to be here and to make the most of this time."

Luis Enrique is well aware of the attacking threat posed by Bayern, including wingers Luis Diaz and Michael Olise,

but that will not change the way his side approach the tie.

"We won the Champions League last season with (full-backs) Achraf Hakimi and Nuno Mendes doing what they do," he said.

"Of course they have to defend as well, but we know that they are to attack more than they defend if we want to win.

"We know how difficult it will be and we have to know how to defend well."

The French club had long set their sights on winning the Champions League, and having finally realised that dream last season, there is no chance of a less ambitious PSG this time.

"The first run was a relief, now it's a different source of motivation because last year was great," Luis Enrique said. "We made history. And now, we're hungry for more."

KANE PROPELLING BAYERN TO GLORY
For Bayern, the team-first approach of Harry Kane, having decisively ended his own silverware drought with a back-to-back Bundesliga titles, has been the key.

Whoever makes it through Bayern's Champions League semi-final against Paris St Germain will be the favourites for the final in Budapest in May.

Last season's Bundesliga title was Kane's maiden team trophy, at the age of 31. Having added another league crown this season, Bayern's habit of hoovering up trophies is already rubbing off on the England captain.

As always, Kane's individual statistics this year have been stunning. The former Tottenham forward has 53 goals in 45 games in all competitions, the most by an Englishman in any league in almost a century. And this time around, Kane's goals have come at crucial moments of big games.

Against Real Madrid, his long-range strike proved to be the winner.

It was an innings that seemed to encapsulate both his past struggles and his re-

newed clarity. The century — his fourth in PSL history — not only propelled Zalmi into their first final in five years but also took him to the summit of the batting charts this season. With 588 runs, he now equals Fakhar Zaman's record for the most runs in a single PSL campaign, with one match still to play.

Yet, the numbers tell only part of the story. For nearly two years leading into this

tournament, Babar had endured scrutiny. Babar had end-ured what, by his own lofty standards, could only be described as a lean patch. Questions were raised, criticisms grew louder — particularly around his strike rate — and the burden of expectation weighed heavier with each passing inning.

Rather than deflecting that scrutiny, Babar chose introspection. "Time teaches you everything," he reflected. "With time and experience, you keep learning. These things are part of life. I've learned a lot from this phase and it has also helped me a lot. When you fall and come back stronger, it feels really good."

Central to that resurgence has been a return, not to reinvention, but to familiarity. In a cricketing landscape increasingly obsessed with power-hitting, Babar admitted that he had briefly strayed from his natural method in an attempt to evolve his game.

Now, he has recalibrated. "There is no big difference," he explained. "The only thing is that I have become more disciplined and more focused."

"Sometimes in a short period you feel that what you are doing is right, but actually it isn't. So sometimes you have to go back to normal, to your basics." That decision, he suggested, was less about external advice and more about self-realisation.

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Babar rises above the noise with match-winning statement

NEWS DESK: For Babar Azam, the roar that echoed around the National Bank Stadium on Tuesday night was more than just an ovation for a match-winning century.

It was a release — of pressure, of scrutiny, and perhaps most of all, of a phase that had tested both his game and his resolve.

Standing at the centre of Peshawar Zalmi's emphatic 70-run victory over Islamabad United in the HBL Pakistan Super League Qualifier, Babar cut a composed figure in the post-match press conference. But beneath the calm exterior was a quiet acknowledgement of the significance of the moment.

"I can definitely say it is quite different in the sense that it was a semi-final of sorts for us," he said. "That's why it's a big match, the team needed me to stay out there as long as possible, and I think that's exactly what was required."

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Ipswich left sweating on EPL promotion

NEWS DESK: The race for automatic promotion to the Premier League will go down to the final day of the regular season after second-placed Ipswich were held to a thrilling 2-2 draw at Southampton on Tuesday that ended the hosts' bid for a guaranteed return to the top flight.

Ipswich's Wes Burns opened the scoring early in the second half but the visitors' lead lasted just 10 minutes, with Southampton, fresh from their FA Cup semi-final defeat by Manchester City, equalising through Ryan Manning's free-kick.

And home fans at St Mary's had even more to celebrate when Cyle Larin put the Saints ahead with 10 minutes of normal time remaining.

But Ipswich were back level in the 87th minute when, following a corner, substitute Jack Clarke drilled a left-footed shot from the edge of the area past Saints goalkeeper Daniel Perez into the bottom left corner.

Only the top two at the end of the regular season are guaranteed places among the lucrative elite of English foot-



ball, with leaders Coventry already assured of the Championship title. Clarke, Ipswich's leading scorer this season, almost sealed victory two minutes later when his shot hit the base of the post, ricocheted past Perez and then rolled past the post for a corner.

And in the third of five minutes of added time, Ipswich put the ball into the net again only for the effort to be rightly ruled out for offside before Perez denied Clarke with a superb save.

Had Ipswich — like Southampton relegated from the Premier League last season — won they would have been three

points clear of Millwall and all but guaranteed promotion such is their vastly superior goal difference.

But the draw means they must win at home to Queens Park Rangers on Saturday to assure themselves of second place, with Ipswich now a point ahead of Millwall and two clear of fourth-placed Middlesbrough, both of whom could finish runners-up to Coventry.

Millwall are at home to already-relegated Oxford United, while Middlesbrough travel to Wrexham, who need a good result to secure a place in the play-offs.

"Love where we're

at." "You probably can't come much closer to getting promoted than we were at the end," Ipswich manager Kieran McKenna told Sky Sports.

"It was a matter of inches from the ball going in the net, but I loved where we are and looking forward to Saturday now." The draw extended Southampton's unbeaten run in the league under Tonda Eekert to an impressive 18 games but ended their hopes of automatic promotion. The Saints, however, will be involved in the play-offs, featuring the teams finishing third to sixth.

The colourful seats of the arena were finally occupied by real people, adding life to the Karachi breeze, that swept through the stadium.

But these enthusiastic lovers of the sport had hard-earned the privilege of attending the match almost 24 hours after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif gave the go-ahead to allow fan entry in the PSL playoffs following a ban due to the government's fuel-saving measures taken in the wake of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Responding to the premier's green light, arrange-

ments had to be made hurriedly by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the circumstances had their effect on the fans' experience of buying the tickets.

Fans had started reaching the location as early as 10:00am. And the frustration of many, who "had literally filed the whole ground" — as per one of the workers of the ticket vendor told Down — the sales, which started at 12:00 noon were stalled in an hour after "people started getting violent."

The ticket sales at the China Ground resumed by 3:00pm again, but there were still issues of Computerised National Identity Card registrations while sole fans stood confused after not receiving their tickets, despite having paid online.

PSL comes to life as fans return to stands

NEWS DESK: For once, everything felt normal. The stands were no more deserted as echoing chants replaced deafening silence.

While the National Bank Stadium has been home to HBL Pakistan Super League action for the last 20 days, it was only on Tuesday evening when cricket was well and truly back at the historic venue as Peshawar Zalmi and Islamabad United clashed in the Qualifier.

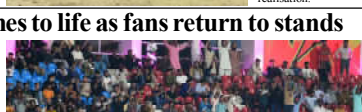
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Commissioning ceremony of Pakistan's first Hangor-class submarine held in China: ISPR

NEWS DESK: The commissioning ceremony of Pakistan's first Hangor-class submarine, PNS Hangor, took place on Thursday in Sanya, China. The event was attended by President Asif Ali Zardari and Pakistan's Naval Chief, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, to mark this significant milestone for the Pakistan Navy, the military's media wing said.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), "President Zardari described the commissioning of Hangor as a historic milestone in Pakistan Navy's modernisation, affirming Pakistan's resolve to maintain a robust, balanced, and credible defence posture."

"He stated that Pakistan is fully capable of defending its sovereignty, protecting its maritime interests, and ensuring the security of its economic lifelines," the statement added. Admiral Ashraf



highlighted that disruptions at critical maritime choke points increasingly threaten global trade and energy security. He stated that maintaining a

stable, rule-based maritime order demanded technologically advanced naval forces. He added that Hangor-class submarines, equipped with modern weapons, advanced sensors, and Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) systems, would play a key role in maintaining regional

maritime stability and deterring aggression. "These submarines will play a pivotal role in deterring aggression and ensuring the security of vital Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) across the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean region," he said. The ISPR state-

ment further noted that the naval chief reiterated the significance of the name Hangor in Pakistan's national history. "In 1971, the carrier Hangor became the first submarine since World War II to sink a warship. PNS Hangor will carry this illustrious legacy forward. This is an important milestone for Pakistan Navy that will bolster our maritime defence and modernise our fleet with cutting-edge technology," it stated. The statement also said that the commissioning of the first Hangor-class submarine marks another chapter in the time-tested and enriching friendship between Pakistan and China. The ceremony was attended by senior officials from the Pakistan Navy and the People's Liberation Army (PLA(N)).

"The prime minister and Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Asim Munir have congratulated the entire nation and the Pakistan Navy on achieving this historic milestone," the statement concluded.

Quetta Gripped by Panic After Rockets Land in Residential Areas

WEB DESK: QUETTA: Fear and uncertainty spread across several neighborhoods of Quetta after rockets were fired from an unidentified location, landing near Akhtar Mohammad Road, Shanti Nagar, and Fakhir Mohammad Road late on Tuesday.

The sudden blasts alarmed residents, prompting many to rush out of their homes in confusion before quickly returning in-

doors as panic took hold. Witnesses described scenes of chaos and anxiety as people struggled to understand the situation.

Law enforcement authorities confirmed that no casualties or injuries were reported in the incident. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Quetta Imran Shaukat stated that police and security personnel swiftly reached the affected sites, cordoned off the

areas, and launched search operations. "No loss of life has been reported, and efforts are underway to trace those involved," he said, adding that investigations are ongoing.

The DIG urged citizens to remain vigilant and cooperate with authorities by reporting any suspicious activity. Security has been heightened across the city as officials continue their probe into the incident.



Sindh education department to introduce religious textbooks for Hindu students

NEWS DESK: The Sindh Education and Literacy Department is set to introduce religious textbooks for Hindu students to be taught in grades three to five across government schools in Sindh, it emerged on Thursday.

In a letter dated April 29 to the chairman of the Sindh Textbook Board (STBB), the education department requested the distribution of "three religious books for grades III to V for the current academic year 2026-27," referring to a decision taken at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Sindh Curriculum Council on April 20.

Chief Executive Advisor Dr. Fauzia Khan wrote in the letter that the cost of publication will be borne by a social welfare organisation, Prem Sagar Sanstha Karachi, for the current academic year.

"The distribution of the books will be carried out through STBB,"

the letter said. Khan also requested the board to "allocate/adjust budget for the publication of the religious books for the next academic year."

A similar move was made by the federal government in 2023, when the National Curriculum Council (NCC) issued

no-objection certificates (NOCs) for publishing religious books for students from seven minority groups enrolled in federally supervised educational institutions.

The NCC issued NOCs for publishing books on religions, including Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity, Baha'i, Zoroastrianism, Kalasha and Buddhism.

According to a study by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), it was found that there appeared to be a direct link between exclusionary narratives in textbooks and rising

social intolerance against religious and sectarian minorities in the country.



Lawyer seeks Imran's release on humanitarian grounds as IHC hears appeals in £190m graft reference

NEWS DESK: Counsel for former prime minister Imran Khan on Thursday urged the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to consider his client's release on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, citing prolonged solitary confinement and an eye infection.

Defence counsel Salman Safdar's request came as the IHC took up appeals filed by Imran and his spouse, Bushra Bibi, against their conviction in the £190 million corruption reference.

During the hearing, Safdar requested the court to suspend the sentence, arguing that the case had remained pending for over 16 months and had already faced 17 hearings in the appeal.

Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar questioned whether the petitioner was willing to settle the matter conclusively through a final decision on the appeal, observing that suspension of sentence could be decided without a final relief, but the appeal itself should be concluded expeditiously.

Safdar maintained

Labour inspections with zero convictions

NEWS DESK: The Labour department has carried out 27,005 inspections across textile

factories and workshops over the past one and a half years to check violations of child labour laws, minimum wage regulations and occupational health and safety rules, officials said.

According to the department, 527 cases were registered against violators while 12,107 challans were forwarded to courts, though no convictions have been recorded so far.

Director Labour (East) Rai Yasin Khral said inspections were conducted on complaints from workers and labour unions as well as on departmental initiative.

He said 20,041 inspections focused on occupational safety and health

compliance in power looms, textile sizing units, spinning mills and other industrial and commercial establishments.

He added that 3,669 factories were checked for child labour violations, while 3,295 units were raided during enforcement drives.

that despite the passage of over a year, the defence had not received any relief. He highlighted that both Imran and Bushra Bibi were facing issues related to solitary confinement.

He further contended that the IHC could verify prison conditions through the inspector general for prisons and consider relief on humanitarian grounds.

However, Justice Dogar emphasised that the best course would be an early disposal

of the main appeal, assuring the defence that the court was mindful of the urgency and would decide the matter promptly.

During the proceedings, the bench was informed about problems in signing a formal power of attorney and accessing medical reports. Ad-dressing senior lawyer Latif Khosa, Justice Dogar questioned how representation was being made without proper documentation.

Safdar responded that he was arguing under powers of attorney

and that Khosa had earlier represented Imran in the case. He reiterated his request for suspension of sentence as an interim relief.

On the other hand, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Senior Prosecutor Rayat Maqsood argued that once the appeals were fixed for hearing, a separate plea for suspension of sentence could not be entertained.

In a lighter moment, the chief justice remarked that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief min-

ister often complained about not receiving a response to his greetings. "Walaikum Assalam," he added, asking the counsel to convey this to CM Sohail Afridi.

The hearing was subsequently adjourned.

Imran — imprisoned since Aug 5, 2023, for concealing details of Toshakhana gifts — is serving a 14-year sentence at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail in the £190m case, also known as the Al-Qadir Trust case.

بیکرمی
محدث کشوں کا عالی دن

مزدوروں کی فلاح
ہماری اولین ترجیح

وزیر اعلیٰ بلوچستان میر سرفراز بگٹی کی قیادت میں

حکومت بلوچستان
مزدوروں کے حقوق کے تحفظ اور فلاح و بہبود کیلئے
ہر پل مصروف عمل ہے

اپنی محنت سے مٹی کی تقدیر بدلنے والے،
تکلی ترقی میں شامل تمام محنت کشوں کی عظمت کو سلام!

محکمہ تعلقات عامہ | حکومت بلوچستان