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# QUETTA VOICE

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## 91 Years After the 1935 Quetta Earthquake: How Building Code Violations Are Setting Up a Modern Catastrophe

SYED ALI SHAH:

**QUETTA** — Today, May 31, 2026, marks exactly 91 years since the deadliest earthquake in South Asian history completely flattened Quetta. Striking in the pitch black at 3:03 AM on this very day in 1935, the massive 7.7 magnitude earthquake took the lives of an estimated 30,000 to 60,000 people in a matter of minutes, turning a bustling regional hub into a vast graveyard of rubble. As the city passes today to remember the souls lost nearly a century ago, a terrifying reality confronts us: the very safety laws designed to prevent this tragedy from ever happening again are being openly violated across the provincial capital.

**The Colonial 30-Foot Rule: Quetta's Forgotten Shield**

Following the absolute destruction of 1935, English colonial rulers realized that Quetta sat directly on top of some of the world's most volatile seismic fault lines, including the Chaman and Ghazband faults. They knew standard construction was a death sentence.

In response, British administrators introduced a revolutionary, strict building code for the city in 1936 and 1937. The golden rule of this code was simple but non-negotiable: A strict height cap of 30 feet for all structures. Buildings were limited to a maximum of two stories, and individual rooms could not exceed 30 feet in length without a reinforced, transverse support wall to absorb tectonic shocks.

This colonial building code saved countless lives. When another major earthquake struck the region in 1955, these low-rise, reinforced structures held firm, resulting in very limited casualties and proving that

strict engineering laws could tame a deadly fault line. Substandard Materials and Tail Plazas: A Disaster in the Making. Fast forward to 2026, and

Quetta, directly violating the historical safety limits. Substandard Construction Materials: To cut costs, many modern builders are using poor-quality raw materials,

remain alarmingly low. Will History Repeat Itself? Quetta's population has ballooned from a few thousand in 1935 to millions today. Yet, our structural resilience has



File Photo: Quetta, June 1, 1935. Market District Completely Levelled

completely dismantled by rapid commercialization, lack of official oversight, and public indifference.

Today, public memory of the deadliest earthquake has faded, and the strict rules introduced by the English rulers are being bypassed daily.

Local urban planners and engineers are sounding an urgent alarm over four critical violations currently putting Quetta at extreme risk:

**Violating the 30-Foot Limit:** Multistorey commercial plazas and high-rise shopping centers now tower over the narrow streets of downtown

weak concrete mixes, and insufficient steel rebar. In a high-magnitude quake, these materials turn to dust.

**Flawed Architecture on Unstable Soil:** Heavy concrete basements and massive architectural spans are being erected on Quetta's loose, alluvial soil, which is prone to severe liquefaction (soil losing its strength and behaving like a liquid) during intense shaking.

**Neglect of the National Building Code:** While the Building Code of Pakistan exists on paper, actual implementation and field inspection in Quetta's expanding housing societies

gone backward.

If a 7.7 magnitude earthquake were to strike the valley today, the combination of illegal vertical construction and compromised materials could lead to a casualty count that would completely overshadow the horrors of 1935.

"Remembering the tragedy should not just be about looking at old archival photos once a year.

For Quetta to survive its tectonic reality, the government and civil society must immediately enforce the building codes that were bought and paid for with tens of thousands of local lives 91 years ago.

## 'Strict action' taken, says power minister after Khawaja Asif's claim of Lesco employees' corruption

NEWS DESK:

Power Minister Awais Leghari on Sunday said that "strict action" had been taken against a Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) line superintendent after Defence Minister Khawaja Asif complained of financial corruption.

In an X post on Saturday, Asif said he had sought a

the villagers had paid the amount, "Lesco refuses to give them a receipt".

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad today, Leghari referred to Asif's statement and said, "The tweet is a source of pride for us as we believe in self-accountability." He added that "strict action" has been taken against the relevant line superintendent after Asif's post.



former official's help for the repair of a transformer in the village of his domestic employee.

The minister alleged, "[Lesco] employees took Rs80,000 to repair the transformer. The villager collected donations to pay the Lesco employees, but they were not given a receipt.

"You can imagine the rest. This happens even when a former power minister, who is currently a cabinet member, intervenes. What will a common consumer be facing?" He reiterated that while

"This is a part of our self-accountability. It's the public representative's job to highlight people's problems [...] Even if anyone raises questions from within our cabinet, we address them publicly and will continue trying to improve our performance in the future," he added.

Leghari also acknowledged that while corruption existed within DisCos, "the prevalence cannot be more than 10-15 per cent". He added that the ministry had a complaint system and "will improve with time."

## Iran's top negotiator Ghalibaf says no agreement with US without 'tangible results'

NEWS DESK:

Iran's parliament speaker and top negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said on Sunday that Tehran will not accept any deal with Washington unless it ensures "the rights of the Iranian people are secured."

"There is no trust in the enemy's words and promises. Our only criterion is to achieve tangible results "before we fulfill our commitments in return," the state broadcaster IRIB quoted Ghalibaf as saying during a virtual session of the parliament after he took an oath as the parliament's re-elected speaker.

US must accept Iran's rights or continue war, says IRGC deputy A senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander said Iran's enemies had made a strategic miscalculation in assessing the country's capabilities and resolve, arguing that Tehran had emerged in a stronger position while the United States faces decline and failure.

Speaking to IRNA News Agency, IRGC Deputy for Political Affairs Yadollah Javani said the enemies had wrongly assumed they could achieve a quick victory by imposing war on Iran. He said their strategic objectives included destroying Iran's nuclear capabilities, eliminating its missile defence capacity, and ultimately overthrowing the Islamic Republic.

Javani added that those goals have failed, resulting in a shift in regional equations in Iran's favour. He further said the United States must choose between accepting the rights and conditions of the Iranian people or continuing the war. Trump says Iran has agreed to no nuclear weapons.

US President Donald Trump said he had secured guarantees from Iran that it would not develop nuclear weapons, as reports emerged he had sent a tougher peace proposal back to

Tehran.

Any tweaks to the proposal could prolong even further an agreement to formally end the Middle East war and open the Strait of Hormuz maritime route after weeks of efforts to secure a deal despite fractious rhetoric and the occasional flare-up of armed conflict.

The New York Times and Axios media outlets reported on Saturday that Trump had sent back a new framework to be considered by Iran with "tougher" terms, though it was not immediately clear what that entailed.

Trump has said his priorities for any deal include stopping Iran from any nuclear weapon development and re-opening the blocked Strait of Hormuz.

"The one guarantee that I have to have is that there will be no nuclear weapons. They've agreed to that, and it was very interesting," he told his daughter-in-law Lara Trump in an interview broadcast on her Fox News program on Saturday night.

But Tehran has previously cast doubt on Trump's assertions and the parties appeared far apart on their key priorities.

Iran has said it requires the release of \$12 billion in frozen assets before it moved to substantive talks on issues such as its nuclear program and called earlier Trump comments that its enriched uranium — a precursor for nuclear weapons — would be destroyed "baseless", according to Iranian media. Tehran has also insisted that Lebanon must be included in any end to the war despite ongoing fighting, with Beirut accusing Israel of a "scorched-earth policy" as its forces advanced and carried out further airstrikes it says target Iran-backed group Hezbollah.

After Trump and US officials earlier said they were on the brink of striking a deal, he struck a less urgent tone and hinted at renewed military action in the Fox interview.

## CM Balochistan Welcomes South Air's First Successful Flight at Gwadar International Airport

Staff Reporter:

**QUETTA:** Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has expressed satisfaction over the successful arrival of South Air's first flight at Gwadar International Airport, calling it a significant step toward improving regional connectivity and

Friday, the chief minister said the launch of South Air's services would strengthen air links between Gwadar and several major cities across Pakistan, making travel more accessible for residents, businesses, and visitors.

According to the provincial government, the airline is expected to connect Gwadar

Pakhtunkhwa, helping bridge long-standing transportation gaps in the region.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said improved air connectivity would play an important role in boosting tourism, trade, investment, and broader business activities in Balochistan, particularly in Gwadar, which is increasingly emerging as a strategic centre

for maritime trade and regional economic cooperation. He added that better trans-

portation infrastructure and expanded flight operations would support local economic growth and create new employment opportunities for communities across the province.

The chief minister also described the successful trial and operational progress at New Gwadar International Airport as a positive sign for



economic development in the province.

In a statement issued on

with Turbat, Panjgur, Quetta, Sukkur, Lahore, Islamabad, and various cities in Khyber

for maritime trade and regional economic cooperation. He added that better trans-

Balochistan's development and a reflection of growing economic activity in the region.

Two Men Found Dead Near Charbandan Cross on Makran Coastal Highway in Pasni

From Our Correspondent: PASNI: Two men were found dead near Charbandan Cross along the Makran Coastal Highway in Pasni on Saturday morning, according to local police sources. Police said the bodies were recovered from an area near Charbandan Cross and transferred to the Rural Health Centre (RHC) Pasni for identification and procedural formalities. Health One of the deceased was identified as Ustad Muhammad



Siraj Kalanchi, son of Ustad Hasil Kalanchi and a resident of Bangla Bazar, Pasni. The second individual was identified as Sardal, son of Sher Muhammad, a resident of Zeren Kaur in the Shadi Kaur area. Following necessary procedures, the bodies were handed over to the families. Authorities have not yet shared further details regarding the circumstances of the incident. Police said relevant inquiries are ongoing.

Balochistan Food Minister Inaugurates CCTV Surveillance Project in Sanjawi to Enhance Public Safety



SANJAWI: Haji Noor Muhammad Khan Dummar inaugurated a CCTV camera surveillance project in Sanjawi aimed at improving law and order and enhancing public safety. He emphasized that practical measures would continue to be implemented to address public concerns and improve living conditions in the area. The minister noted that peace is essential for development and that maintaining law and order, along with resolving public issues, remains a key priority of the government. He added that efforts would continue to eliminate crime and social divisions, while the newly installed CCTV cameras would contribute significantly to improving security and reducing criminal activities. The inauguration ceremony was attended by government officials, political leaders, tribal elders, and prominent members of the local community, who welcomed the initiative and expressed hope that the surveillance system would help create a safer environment for residents. The minister also announced that the special cleanliness operation will continue even after the Eid holidays to maintain sanitation standards, protect public health, and ensure a cleaner and more pleasant urban environment across Loralai.

Loralai Municipal Committee Continues Intensive Eid-ul-Adha Cleanliness Drive



LORALAI: Following the vision of Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the directives of Wali Muhammad Bareech, and the special instructions of Muheebullah Baloch, the Municipal Committee Loralai continued its special cleanliness operation across Loralai on the third day of Eid-ul-Adha. Municipal teams remained active throughout the city, promptly collecting and safely disposing of sacrificial animal waste from various neighborhoods. Disinfectant lime was also spread in affected areas to help prevent the spread of germs and ensure a clean and healthy environment for residents. As part of the operation, special cleaning, washing, and water-sprinkling activities were carried out inside the Teaching Hospital Loralai. Similar sanitation measures were completed at several key locations, including Qadri Complex, the city police station, Bhagi Bazaar, Bacha Khan Chowk, K h a t m e - Nabuwat Chowk, Jinnah Market, and the Girls High School. Chief Officer Muheebullah Baloch praised the efforts of municipal sanitation staff and stated that all available resources are being utilized to provide the best possible municipal services to citizens during Eid-ul-Adha. He appealed to the public to cooperate with the municipal committee by disposing of waste only at designated locations to help maintain cleanliness throughout the city. He further noted that under the Sathra Balochistan Program, daily sanitation activities are being carried out in different parts of the city to strengthen the waste management system and provide residents with a cleaner, healthier environment. The Municipal Committee also announced that the special cleanliness operation will continue even after the Eid holidays to maintain sanitation standards, protect public health, and ensure a cleaner and more pleasant urban environment across Loralai.

Quetta Administration Seals 68 Illegal Mini Petrol Pumps, Arrests 52 in Major Crackdown



QUETTA: Acting on the directives of Mir Sarfraz Bugti and in response to the public complaints, the district administration in Quetta launched a large-scale crackdown against illegal mini petrol pumps and profiteers. On the instructions of Mehrullah Badini, enforcement teams carried out operations across the City, Sadar, Sariab, and Kuchlal subdivisions. As a result of the campaign, a total of 68 illegal mini petrol pumps were sealed, while 52 individuals were arrested and transferred to jail. The crackdown was conducted under the supervision of Muhammad Amir Hamza, Ijaz Hussain Khoso, Musawar Ahmed Achakzai, Muhammad Yousaf Hashmi, Captain (R) Kabir Mazari, and Haseeb Sardar. According to the district administration, the operation targeted individuals involved in selling petrol at inflated prices, operating unauthorized fuel outlets, and engaging in illegal business practices. Officials stated that actions against violators will continue without discrimination. Deputy Commissioner Mehrullah Badini emphasized that strict measures will be taken against profiteers and hoarders, adding that the administration will not compromise on protecting the interests of citizens. The crackdown is part of ongoing efforts to regulate fuel sales, curb illegal business activities, and ensure that consumers receive petroleum products at officially approved rates throughout the district.

South Air Successfully Conducts First Proving Flight at New Gwadar International Airport

GWADAR: A significant milestone in the development of air connectivity in Gwadar has been achieved as the first proving flight of South Air Private Limited successfully landed at the New Gwadar International Airport. The enhanced air network is expected to provide passengers with faster, safer, and more efficient travel options while improving accessibility to one of Pakistan's most strategically important coastal cities. Gwadar holds a vital position in Pakistan's economic development, maritime trade, and regional connectivity initiatives. The introduction of new air services is anticipated to boost tourism, attract investment, facilitate trade, and encourage business activities throughout the region. Experts believe that improved air connectivity will not only strengthen regional transportation links but also contribute to local economic growth by creating new employment opportunities and supporting commercial expansion. The successful proving flight at New Gwadar International Airport is being widely viewed as a positive development for Gwadar's future, paving the way for enhanced travel facilities, increased economic activity, and greater integration of Balochistan into Pakistan's national transportation network. The proposed route network includes flights connecting Gwadar with Turbat, Panjgur, Quetta, Sukkur, Lahore, Islamabad, and various cities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The airline utilized an ATR 72-600 aircraft for the successful trial operation, marking an important step toward the commencement of regular commercial services from Gwadar. According to aviation officials, the launch of South Air's operations is expected to significantly improve regional connectivity by linking Gwadar with key destinations across Pakistan. The proposed

Loralai Municipal Committee Launches Extensive Eid-ul-Adha Cleanliness Operation

LORALAI: Following the vision of Mir Sarfraz Bugti and the special directives of Wali Muhammad Bareech, a large-scale cleanliness operation is actively underway across Loralai during Eid-ul-Adha under the supervision of Tahir Khan Nasir and Muheebullah Baloch. The staff of the Municipal Committee Loralai remained active day and night during the Eid holidays to ensure a clean, healthy, and pleasant environment for citizens. Sanitation teams carried out operations in various zones of the city and promptly removed sacrificial waste and garbage from several expressed areas, including Al-Falah Mosque, Wakeel Ayaz Mosque, Ameer Zaman Ground, Sabzi Mandi Bakhma Mohalla, Dr. Saleh Colony, Levies

Assistant Commissioner Barkhan Conducts Surprise Visit to DHQ Hospital on Eid-ul-Adha

BARKHAN: On the special directives of Saeed ur Rehman Kakar, Ahsanuddin Kakar carried out a surprise inspection of the district Headquarters Hospital Barkhan on the first day of Eid-ul-Adha. During the visit, the Assistant Commissioner checked the attendance of doctors, paramedical staff, and other hospital employees while also inspecting different departments of the hospital. During the inspection, he took notice of the absence of several employees and expressed strong displeasure over the matter. The names of the absent staff members were noted for further action. Assistant Com-

Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail Pays Tribute to Pakistan's Nuclear Achievement on Youm-e-Takbeer

QUETTA: Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, in his message on Youm-e-Takbeer, said that the nation is reminded of the power of unity and determination when reflecting on the historic milestones of Pakistan's past. In his statement issued from Quetta on May 28, the Governor said that the day holds immense significance in Pakistan's history as it marks the occasion when Pakistan emerged as the first nuclear power among Muslim countries. He emphasized that providing timely and quality healthcare facilities to the public during the Eid holidays remains the top priority of the district administration and that no negligence or carelessness would be tolerated. He further instructed the hospital administration to keep emergency services fully operational and ensure that all medical staff perform their duties responsibly so that patients can receive immediate medical assistance in any emergency situation. He emphasized the importance of maintaining unity and harmony among the entire nation and all provinces of Pakistan. Looking toward the future, the Governor urged the nation to renew its commitment to the country's development, prosperity, and sustainable security. He called upon every citizen to play an active role in strengthening Pakistan and contributing toward national progress and stability.

Deputy Commissioner Usta Muhammad Visits THQ Hospital to Review Eid-ul-Adha Emergency Arrangements

USTA MUHAMMAD: On the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, Muhammad Ramzan Palal and Dr. Amir Ali Jamali conducted a detailed visit to the THQ Hospital Usta Muhammad to review the healthcare arrangements and emergency preparedness during the Eid holidays. During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner, accompanied by the DHO, inspected various departments of the hospital, particularly the emergency ward. They reviewed the medical facilities being provided to patients, availability of medicines, cleanliness conditions, and attendance of medical staff on duty. Officials closely monitored the ongoing hospital services to ensure that quality healthcare facilities are being provided to the public without interruption during Eid-ul-Adha.



## QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

## Balochistan's Historic Shift to Merit-Based Government Jobs: Ending Corruption and Empowering Youth



## Editorial:

In a province long plagued by nepotism and job-selling scandals, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has taken a bold and welcome stand. He has declared zero tolerance for corruption, favoritism, and the sale of government posts — and he is backing his words with action.

The announcement of filling 111 Finance Department vacancies through a fully online, paperless, and 100% merit-based recruitment process marks a genuine turning point for transparent governance in Balochistan.

For the first time in the province's history, candidates will apply and be tested entirely online.

Qualifications will be verified instantly, and successful applicants will receive appointment letters within an hour. This fast, fair system eliminates middlemen,

backdoor deals, and bribery — the very practices that have robbed deserving young people of opportunities for decades.

This merit-based recruitment drive in Balochistan is more than administrative reform; it is a lifeline for the province's educated youth.

By ensuring government jobs go to qualified candidates rather than relatives or those who can pay, the initiative restores hope and dignity.

As Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti has promised, the model will soon expand to all departments, creating a culture where talent, not connections, determines success.

The broader impact on Balochistan's development and stability could be profound.

Transparent hiring means better-qualified civil servants, leading to more efficient public services, reduced wast-

age of funds, and faster implementation of development projects.

When resources reach the people instead of corrupt pockets, infrastructure, education, and health services improve — laying the foundation for sustained economic growth.

Equally important, fair job opportunities address a major source of youth frustration in the province. Giving young Baloch the chance to serve their homeland on merit can reduce alienation and contribute to lasting peace.

Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti's focus on merit, technology-driven transparency, and accountability offers real hope. If these anti-corruption reforms in Balochistan are implemented with consistency, they can transform governance,

unlock the potential of the province's youth, and set a powerful example for the rest of Pakistan.

## Land Law and Its Importance in Pakistan

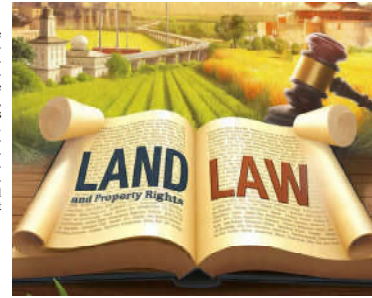
By Amir Hamza Bashir

Land is one of the most valuable and contested assets in Pakistan. The legal framework that governs the ownership, possession, and transfer of land is known as Land Law. It ensures that property rights are protected and that disputes over land are resolved through legal and transparent means.

## Historical Background of Land Law in Pakistan

The foundation of land laws in Pakistan was laid during the British colonial era through legislation such as the Land Revenue Act and the Registration Act.

After independence in 1947, these laws continued to guide Pakistan's land management system. Today, major statutes like the West Pakistan



Land Revenue Act, 1967, and the Transfer of Property Act, 1882, remain the cornerstone of land governance and property transfer in the country.

## Land Record Management and Reforms

Traditionally, the Patwari system has been responsible for maintaining land

records across Pakistan. However, it has often been criticized for corruption, manipulation, and lack of transparency. In recent years, the government has initiated significant reforms through the Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA) and other provincial projects to digitize land records and reduce human in-

terference in property registration and ownership verification.

## Challenges in Pakistan's Land System

Pakistan continues to face issues like illegal possession (land grabbing), forged documents, and slow judicial processes. These problems create un-

certainty for investors and ordinary citizens alike.

To overcome these challenges, there is a strong need for comprehensive digital record-keeping, specialized land tribunals, and public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about their property rights.

Land law is not just a legal framework — it is the foundation of economic stability and social justice in Pakistan. A fair, transparent, and efficient land management system encourages investment, infrastructure development, and public trust in state institutions. Strengthening land laws and ensuring their effective implementation are vital steps toward achieving legal certainty and sustainable growth in Pakistan.

The Author is a Student of LLB (7th Semester).

## Quetta's Traffic Chaos: Urgent Reforms Needed to Fix the Crisis

Anjela Kayan:

Quetta, once a city known for its peaceful ambience, now faces an escalating traffic crisis. Every day, thousands of commuters endure hours of gridlock, navigating congested roads, reckless drivers, and deteriorating infrastructure.

From rickshaws and motorcycles to private cars, the overwhelming number of vehicles clogs major roads, while encroachments and illegal parking worsen the situation.

The city's transport system is on the brink of collapse, demanding immediate intervention from both authorities and residents. This article explores the root causes of Quetta's traffic woes, identifies the most affected areas, and outlines urgent solutions to restore order to the roads.

## The Strain on Quetta's Road Infrastructure

Quetta's road network, originally designed during the colonial era, was never in-

tended to accommodate the city's rapid population growth and rising number of vehicles. Although the city was rebuilt after the 1935 earthquake, its road capacity has remained largely unchanged, struggling to support over 1.2 million residents and the thousands of vehicles added each year.

Key roads such as Jinnah Road, Sarfraz Road, Liaquat Bazaar, Masjid Road, and Zarghoon Road have become perpetual bottlenecks, choked by illegal encroachments, unregulated parking, and an ever-increasing number of vehicles. Without a structured urban transport model, these roads remain gridlocked, affecting daily life and economic activity.

Major Traffic Challenges in Quetta

Severe Congestion on Key Roads

Traffic congestion is worst in commercial hubs such as Liaquat Bazaar, Masjid Road, Jinnah Road, and

Zarghoon Road, where vehicles move at a snail's pace during peak hours.

With no alternative routes or bypasses, all traffic is funneled through these roads, causing massive delays. Key intersections, including Blockbuster University Chowk, Mezzan Chowk, and Prince Road, frequently experience severe traffic jams.

The Surge of Non-Custom Paid (NCP) and Unregistered Vehicles

The unchecked influx of non-custom paid (NCP) and unregistered vehicles has compounded the traffic crisis.

A 2010 report estimated over 50,000 NCP vehicles on Balochistan's roads, causing an annual revenue loss of Rs 15 billion to the national exchequer.

By 2024, this number has surged to nearly 80,000, with a significant concentration in Quetta (Excise and Taxation De-

partment, 2024).

Despite periodic crackdowns, including the 2023 seizure of 115 NCP vehicles worth Rs 982 million (ARY News, 2023),

enforcement efforts have failed to stem the tide. Quetta's traffic police estimate that 40% of vehicles in the city are either unregistered or unlicensed on the roads.

Lack of a Proper Public Transport System

Unlike other major cities in Pakistan, Quetta lacks an organized public transport system. With no buses or mass transit options, residents rely on rickshaws, motorcycles, and private cars, further clogging the roads. Over 50,000 rickshaws operate within the city, creating congestion in already packed areas like Masjid Road and Liaquat Bazaar (Traffic Survey: Quetta Smart and Safe City, 2023).

Although the gov-

ernment has revived the Quetta Mass Transit Train project,

financial constraints have delayed its execution, leaving residents without an efficient alternative to private transport.

Encroachments and Illegal

Parking Worsen Congestion

Unauthorized stalls and illegal parking occupy nearly 30% of road space in busy commercial zones such as Prince Road and Jinnah Road (Think Transportation, 2023). Street vendors set up shops on sidewalks, forcing pedestrians onto the roads, while shopkeepers extend their businesses onto public spaces, further restricting traffic flow.

Deteriorating Road Conditions

Over 60% of Quetta's roads are in disrepair, riddled with potholes, cracks, and poor drainage systems (INRIX, 2024). Roads such as Joint Road, Sanab Road,

## Neither Capitalism nor Communism

Aziz ur Rehman Agha

The Cold War may have ended, but the ideological clash between Capitalism and Communism continues to shape global politics, economics, and international relations. Even today, global alliances reflect these old ideological divisions.

However, both Capitalist and Communist systems have failed to manage political and socio-economic affairs effectively. One system suppresses personal freedom, the other deepens inequality. Both carry serious structural flaws that make them unsuitable for modern societies.

This calls for a new, balanced approach — one found in the Islamic socio-economic and political philosophy, which follows a middle path between the two extremes.

## The Flaws of Communism

Communism lies at one extreme of the ideological spectrum. It suppresses individual freedoms such as speech, press, and trade.

Historical examples from Maoist China during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) show how intellectual expression was crushed — books and music not aligned with party ideology were banned, and private libraries were destroyed. Similarly, in the USSR, any deviation from party thought was treated as a crime.



Economically, Communism eliminates private property and discourages entrepreneurship. Without personal incentive, individuals lose motivation to innovate and work for economic growth. As a result, this system ham-

pers development and limits prosperity. The severe restrictions on basic rights and freedoms make Communism unsustainable in modern nation-states.

The Problems with Capitalism

On the other end

lies Capitalism, which has enabled just 1% of the world's population to control more wealth than the remaining 99% combined.

This system inherently promotes economic inequality, empowering elite industri-

alists while exploiting the working class. Under Capitalism, profit takes precedence over people — workers are overburdened, and ethical values are often sacrificed for industrial gains.

Furthermore, Capitalism's obsession

with rapid industrialization and profit maximization has led to environmental destruction, resource depletion, and climate crises.

It prioritizes wealth accumulation over sustainability, thus internal contradictions —

growing inequality, moral decay, and ecological harm — make Capitalism an unfit model for an equitable, sustainable society.

The Islamic Socio-Economic Philosophy: A Balanced Approach

Both Capitalism and

Communism fail because they represent extremes — one suffocates freedom, the other breeds inequality. Islam, however, offers a balanced socio-economic philosophy that harmonizes justice, freedom, and social welfare.

The Islamic economic system allows private ownership and business freedom, but regulates them through moral and legal checks. The obligation of Zakat (charity) redistributes wealth, preventing concentration in the hands of a few.

Meanwhile, the prohibition of Riba (usury) ensures financial fairness and discourages exploitation. Together, these principles foster economic justice, social cohesion, and sustainable development.

Conclusion

Neither Capitalism nor Communism provides a complete solution to humanity's political and economic challenges. Both contain inherent flaws — one curtails human freedom, the other destroys social equality.

The Islamic socio-economic model, however, offers the ideal middle path — balancing individual rights with collective welfare. With its emphasis on justice, equality, and moral responsibility, Islam presents the most sustainable and humane political and economic philosophy for the modern world.

## FIA offloaded nearly 39,800 passengers in 2025 to curb human smuggling, official says

**NEWS DESK:** The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) offloaded 39,786 passengers in 2025 under a "lawful, intelligence-driven and risk-based system" to curb irregular migration and human smuggling, a top official said on Sunday.

Speaking to a select group of senior journalists, Immigration Additional Director General Nouman Siddiqui said passenger offloading, often criticised publicly, was primarily a preventive step aimed at saving lives, protecting citizens from exploitation abroad and safeguarding Pakistan's international image.

"Offloading decisions are not arbitrary," he asserted.

They are based on immigration concerns, suspicious travel patterns, document verification, destination country requirements and established standard operating procedures.

The primary objective, he said, was "the protection of human life and prevention of irregular migration at the hands of human traffickers".

At least 132 passengers were offloaded from their scheduled flights at various airports across the country in the last year by FIA immigration officers, while 85 of its officials were penalised for misuse of authority during this period, according to a re-



port submitted to the Senate.

A National Assembly standing committee was told in December that at least 51,000 passengers were offloaded at airports in 2025 after failing immigration checks, with a large number of them being offloaded at Lahore and Karachi airports.

Rising risks and deadly consequences across the country in the last year by FIA immigration officers, while 85 of its officials were penalised for misuse of authority during this period, according to a re-

victim to such incidents, with at least 377 reported deaths. According to International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) data, 109 Pakistani nationals lost their lives in 2025 alone while attempting irregular migration.

He said the issue gained urgency after the June 2023 Greece boat tragedy, in which a large number of Pakistani migrants perished in the Mediterranean Sea.

Siddiqui said the crackdown followed multiple tragedies linked to illegal migration routes. Over the past three years, around 460 Pakistanis have fallen

which are now being implemented. To dismantle criminal networks, the FIA registered 2,421 cases since December 2024, resulting in the arrest of 3,130 agents. Authorities seized property worth Rs961.71 million, recovered Rs87.7m and froze bank accounts amounting to Rs239.63m.

"These figures reflect the scale and seriousness of human smuggling and trafficking in Pakistan," he said.

In many cases, passengers were found travelling through suspi-

ous routes, fake overseas employment schemes, forged documents, fraudulent sponsorships or high-risk transit patterns linked to organised smuggling and trafficking networks, he added.

The FIA's Risk Analysis Unit developed five risk profiles to help immigration officers segregate suspected travellers from genuine passengers. The profiles are reviewed and updated periodically. The measures led to a 75 per cent reduction in deportations related to beggary and a 31pc decrease

in deportations due to forgery. Overall deportations from various countries fell 10pc in 2025 compared to 2024. The agency also cited a 64pc reduction in illegal border crossings into Europe by Pakistani nationals in the first two months of 2025-26, according to Frontex data.

Two categories of offloaded passengers, Siddiqui said, fell into two categories: those offloaded by FIA on immigration or risk grounds, and those not offloaded by FIA, in-

cluding cases involving airline issues, technical faults, flight cancellations, bad weather, self-offloading, seasonal border closures or requests from other departments.

Besides the 39,786 passengers offloaded by FIA in 2025, another 34,688 were offloaded for non-FIA reasons.

These included airline-related disruptions and arrests required by the FIA, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis has also been formed.

To reduce inconvenience for genuine travellers, FIA Immigration has established pre-departure facilitation desks at zonal offices to help passengers verify travel documents before ticket purchase. Passengers who believe they were offloaded due to a misunderstanding or incomplete information can approach the concerned border checkpoint in charge for immediate review, and are allowed to travel if found eligible.

A 24/7 helpline has also been set up for complaints and facilitation.

Siddiqui noted that immigration staff face challenges in making real-time decisions, often under public pressure and media scrutiny. "Many passengers initially present legitimate purposes, but deeper checks reveal links with traffickers or illegal im-

migrations. The PML-N's AJK chapter opposes their abolition, partly because it expects to perform strongly in the 10 refugee constituencies located in Punjab. The PPP, which currently enjoys the support of five refugee lawmakers, is reportedly less invested in retaining the arrangement.

After a break, the second round of talks resumed at 6:10pm and lasted till 11:20pm.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Rana Sanaulah insisted the dialogue process remain alive. "The negotiations have not failed; this process will continue," he said. He added that discussions had taken place in a positive atmosphere and that both sides had exchanged proposals.

According to him, the AJK government and the opposition PML-N have agreed to convene an all-parties conference on the situation and the JAAC's demands. Another round of talks is expected on June 6 or 7 following the conference.

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## Mayor Wahab says construction work near Karachi's Hill Park halted; MQM-P demands probe into 'NOC'

**NEWS DESK:** Mayor Murtaza Wahab on Sunday said construction work around Karachi's Hill Park had been halted, while the opposition Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) demanded that the PPP-led Sindh government investigate the matter.

Spread over 62 acres and located in PECHS, Hill Park was built in the early 1960s and is one of the largest parks in the city.

In a statement issued on Saturday night, a Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) spokesperson said that the construction work was halted a week ago following a public complaint.

Confirming this during his media talk on Sunday, Wahab clarified that the KMC had not "auctioned or allotted any land to anyone".



He recalled that a week before Eidul Azha, he received a complaint, following which he sent a KMC team to the area. "I instructed them that if the construction is taking place within the KMC land, then proceed with demolition," he said.

"Not even an inch of KMC land has been allotted," the mayor reiterated, dismissing MQM-P's claims of granting permission for construction work as political posturing.

Mayor Wahab stressed that Hill Park "had always been KMC's property and will continue to remain as such". In the Saturday statement, the KMC spokesperson said that legal action had been initiated as its Land Department "sent a letter to the police Constables that the construction be stopped and action

should be taken against those responsible. As per the statement, "an investigation into the public complaints revealed that the KMC made no allotment or that any construction permission was issued".

The statement added that the mayor had issued instructions to relevant officers to take action, further stating that any attempt to "legalise" the matter had also sought "formal verification from PECHS to confirm the ownership of the land".

It said that KMC had also sent a formal letter to the police to take "legal action against illegal occupation of the government land".

In the letter, dated May 25 and available with Dawn, the KMC land director categorically rejected having granted "any permission, approval, no-ob-

jection certificate (NOC), allotment, lease, development right, possession right, or construction authorisation" over Hill Park's land.

He added that certain individuals were using various "misinterpreted" documents and NOCs to justify the construction.

It contended that a Conditional NOC, dated April 30, had been "deliberately misinterpreted by certain parties".

The land director stated that the attempt to use that NOC to justify "occupying, encroaching upon, construction on, or claiming right over government land or KMC property is entirely unlawful, mis-

leading and contrary to the express contents of the document itself. "A careful reading of the Conditional NOC clearly establishes that the subject plot was

stated to pertain to PECHS Society and not to KMC," the letter read, adding that the NOC stated it did not confirm ownership, title or possession or legal rights.

MQM-P raises questions on NOC granted earlier in the day, MQM-P's Farooq Sattar and Waseem Akhtar held a press conference, where they called on the Sindh government to initiate an inquiry into the matter of alleged encroachment upon Hill Park.

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"Today, we held talks with the representatives of the governments of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir throughout the day on all issues, including the 12 refugees," JAAC core members Shaukat Nawaz Mir told reporters after the talks ended at 11:20pm.

"Despite the breach of trust, we had detailed discussions, and proposals were exchanged as we he said, adding that government repre-

responsibility. However, what is happening here is the exact opposite of that," Sattar said.

Sattar claimed that the activity was part of Karachi's larger "land grabbing mafia", which he alleged the Sindh government has "allowed" to operate.

The MQM-P leader also mentioned a "high court order which stipulated that the hills cannot be used for commercial or residential purposes", adding that the construction was also in violation of the PECHS layout.

"The plot we are talking about is 39-G4. The plot next to it is 39-3G and despite a boundary wall being built around it, no construction was able to take place because it was not in the master plan," Sattar said. Although he acknowledged that the mayor had halted the work,

## Centre-JAAC talks end without success; June 9 strike to go ahead

**NEWS DESK:** Marathon talks between a federal ministerial team and the core leadership of the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) ended without a breakthrough late on Saturday night, prompting the latter to announce that its June 9 strike would proceed as planned.

The lengthy dialogue, convened to address the JAAC to withdraw its strike call and resolve differences over its charter of demands, stretched for more than nine hours with intermittent breaks.

The talks assumed added significance amid growing fears that any prolonged agitation could affect preparations for the upcoming elections. Although the election schedule has yet to be announced, political observers believe sustained unrest could complicate the polling process.

The federal delegation included cabinet members Rana Sanaulah, Tariq Fazal Chaudhry and Ahsan

representatives had requested them to postpone the planned strike. "But we have decided to keep our strike call intact," he said.

However, he added, the JAAC remained open to future engagement.

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## Bilawal Bhutto to arrive in Skardu as PPP ramps up Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) election campaign

**NEWS DESK:** Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is due to arrive in Skardu at 2pm on Sunday,

where he will begin a series of organisational meetings ahead of the formal launch of his party's election campaign for the upcoming Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) elections.

According to the campaign schedule, Bilawal will meet PPP candidates and party office-bearers in Skardu before commencing public election activities on Monday.

He is expected to travel in a rally from Skardu Airport to Shah Villas, where he will stay overnight. On Monday morning, he will depart for Shigar, where he is scheduled to address an election

activities. Senior party leaders are scheduled to address public meetings at several locations across G-B on Sunday.

Khawaja Saad Rafique is expected to speak at a gathering in Skardu, while Murtaza Javed Abbasi will address supporters in Gilgit.

Abid Sher Ali is scheduled to attend a rally in Diamer, while Abid Raza Kotla will address a public meeting in Gilgit.

The G-B Assembly elections are due to take place on June 7, with political parties making a final push to mobilise voters across the region before campaigning officially ends later this week.

On Friday, senior

representatives had requested them to postpone the planned strike. "But we have decided to keep our strike call intact," he said.

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