



**FRONT PAGE**  
World Environment Day: Balochistan CM Announces...



**EDITORIAL**  
Balochistan's Tree Plantation Drive Must Go Beyond Ceremonies



**BALUCHISTAN**  
BNP Holds Balochistan-Wide Protests Over Killing...



**NATIONAL**  
Govt launches scheme to bring small shop owners into tax net

Page No 1

Page No 2

Page No 3

Page No 4

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Editor: Asim Khan.

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Email address: dquettavoice@gmail.com

Website: www.quettavoice.com

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# QUETTA VOICE

## Six Terrorists Killed in Intelligence-Led Operation in Panjgur: ISPR

**Web Desk:**

Security forces killed six suspected terrorists during a targeted intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Balochistan's Panjgur district, the military's media wing stated.

According to a statement issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation was conducted after intelligence reports identified the presence of armed militants in the area.

Acting on credible information, security personnel launched a coordinated raid on multiple suspected hideouts during the night between June 3 and June 4.

The operation resulted in an intense exchange of fire, during which six terrorists were killed. Security officials also recovered a cache of weapons, ammunition, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and a vehicle allegedly used by the militants.

Authorities said the deceased terrorists were believed to have been involved in several terrorists activities and security-related incidents in the region.

A follow-up clearance operation is underway to locate and eliminate any remaining threats in the area.

The military reiterated its commitment to continuing intelligence-led operations



across the country, emphasizing that security forces and law enforcement agencies remain determined to dismantle terrorists networks and maintain peace and stability.

The latest development follows a series of intelligence-based operations carried out earlier this week in various districts of Balochistan, including Mastung, Nushki, Khuzdar, and

Kech, where security forces reportedly neutralized 17 terrorists as part of an intensified counterterrorism campaign.

Pakistan's security apparatus has recently increased in-

telligence-driven operations in Balochistan amid ongoing efforts to combat militancy, strengthen law and order, and protect strategic infrastructure across the province.

## CM Afridi threatens sit-in outside NA if denied meeting with Imran

**NEWS DESK:**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Thursday announced that if he wasn't allowed to meet PTI founder Imran Khan in jail by June 9, a sit-in would be staged by the party outside the National Assembly next day.

"All available constitutional and legal avenues have been exhausted, so peaceful protest constitutes our legitimate democratic right," the CM said after performing the groundbreaking for an underpass at Kabootar Chowk on the King Road, a major urban mobility project being undertaken under the provincial government's Flagship Revitalisation of Peshawar Programme. The initiative is meant to restore the provincial capital's glory and transform it into a modern, integrated and sustainable urban centre, according to an official statement from the Chief Minister's Secretariat.

The Kabootar Chowk Underpass is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs1.989 billion with a 60-day deadline.

The CM said that the upcoming provincial budget would embody Mr Imran's vision and place particular emphasis on the welfare of low-income and marginalised segments of society.

He said that people across the country wished to see Mr Khan receive appropriate medical care. Mr Afridi said that in line with the vision of the PTI founder, the provincial government had embarked upon a new phase of development focused on public welfare.

## Bilawal vows to ensure ownership rights, 18th Amendment protections for Gilgit-Baltistan

**NEWS DESK:**

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Friday promised to ensure the right of ownership and the protections of the 18th Constitutional Amendment for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

His remarks came during a public rally in Gilgit, part of his region-wide campaign ahead of the June 7 elections.

Addressing the rally, Bilawal said it was part of the PPP's election manifesto to grant all constitutional rights to the region, including the right to own land and financial protections under the 18th Constitutional Amendment.

He urged the people of GB to give the PPP a "heavy mandate", so the party could continue its struggle to secure the region's ownership rights, calling on them to spread his message.



## World Environment Day: Balochistan CM Announces Stronger Climate Action, Forest Conservation Measures



**NEWS DESK:**

On the occasion of World Environment Day 2026, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to tackling climate change, protecting natural resources, and promoting sustainable development across the province.

In a special message, the Chief Minister said environmental protection is directly linked to human survival, economic growth, and the well-being of future generations. He stressed that rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, water scarcity, and environmental degradation have made climate resilience a top priority for Balochistan. Highlighting the significance

of this year's World Environment Day theme, Bugti noted that Balochistan remains one of the regions most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, making immediate environmental action essential.

"The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly visible throughout Balochistan.

Promoting green policies and sustainable environmental practices is no longer a choice but a necessity," he said. The Chief Minister described the historic Juniper forests of Ziarat, protected national parks, and rare wildlife species as invaluable natural assets that require urgent protection and restoration efforts.

He warned that deforestation, illegal hunting, plastic pollution, and the depletion of

water resources continue to threaten the province's fragile ecosystem.

Bugti said the provincial government is expanding its afforestation campaign under the Green Balochistan Programme to increase tree cover and strengthen environmental sustainability.

He added that dedicated conservation projects are underway to protect and restore the globally recognized Ziarat Juniper forests.

The Chief Minister further stated that the government is investing in wildlife conservation initiatives, water management projects, and dam construction to address growing environmental and water security challenges.

He also emphasized strict enforcement of laws aimed at

reducing plastic waste, including measures against plastic shopping bags and single-use plastic products.

Calling for public participation, Bugti urged citizens to adopt environmentally friendly lifestyles and contribute to environmental protection efforts by planting at least one tree and ensuring its proper care.

"Water is one of Balochistan's most valuable resources.

Preventing water wastage and promoting conservation must become a collective responsibility," he said.

Reiterating the government's environmental vision, the Chief Minister pledged to utilize all available resources to build a greener, cleaner, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable Balochistan.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Balochistan's Tree Plantation Drive Must Go Beyond Ceremonies



Editorial: Every spring, usually between February and March, Balochistan witnesses the launch of tree plantation campaigns. Saplings are planted at official ceremonies, photographs circulate on social media, and hopeful statements are issued about a greener future.

While these efforts matter, they fall short of what the province truly needs. Balochistan is one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in Pakistan and ranks among the hardest-hit areas globally by climate change.

Rising temperatures, recurring droughts, shrinking water resources, and disappearing wildlife are no longer distant threats—they are daily realities across the province.

In such circumstances, tree plantation cannot remain a symbolic activity limited to headlines and hashtags.

What is required is a serious shift toward sustainable plantation. Planting a sapling is only the first step.

Ensuring its survival—through protection, irrigation, monitoring, and community ownership—is what makes a difference. The success of plantation drives should be measured by how many trees survive after one, three, or five years, not by the number of photo sessions held.

The Forest and Wildlife Department must move beyond publicity-driven campaigns and focus on long-term environmental impact.

Native and drought-resistant species should be prioritized, while schools, universities, and local communities must be made partners in protecting and nurturing plantations.

At a time when climate change threatens livelihoods, Balochistan does not need unnecessary construction projects or decorative infrastructure. It needs a large-scale, province-wide plantation initiative—similar to a plantation tsunami—with clear targets aimed at reducing the effects of global warming, improving air quality, and restoring ecological balance.

A genuinely sustainable tree plantation campaign can help secure Balochistan's future. The province's environment cannot wait for another season of symbolic planting; it needs action that takes root and grows.

BUIITEMS Organizes Open Day to Inspire Students Across Balochistan

Syed Dara Shikoh Amir, QUETTA: The Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Man-

agement Sciences (BUIITEMS) Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez reaffirmed the university's mission of inclusive education and knowl-

edge sharing. He stated: "BUIITEMS is the university of every student from across the province by hosting a vibrant 'Open Day', showcasing its modern academic facilities, innovative programs, and lively campus culture.

The event attracted an enthusiastic response, with more than 2,000 students from 18+ colleges attending. Visiting students and their teach-

ings provided students with insights into BUIITEMS' wide-ranging degree programs, research projects, and campus life. Many participants

strengthened the bridge between the university and youth across Balochistan. By holding this large-scale Open Day, BUIITEMS has fur-



ther solidified its reputation as a center of excellence in higher education. Innovation, and student empowerment in Balochistan, encouraging young learners to strive for academic success and contribute to the province's development.

Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez applauded the organizing team for successfully conducting the Open Day, adding that such outreach efforts

praised the initiative, calling it a valuable opportunity to connect with higher education and future career options.

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South-West Asia and the War Against Narcotics: Where Does Pakistan Stand?

By Dr. B. Sultan: Lady Macbeth once remarked that "a little water clears us of this deed" after the assassination of the King. Yet, with time, she remained haunted, obsessively rubbing her hands in an attempt to cleanse the imagined stains of blood. The persistence of narcotics production and trade in South-West Asia resembles this unending struggle—a dark reality that cannot be easily washed away.

Afghanistan has long been recognized as the world's largest producer of opium, with its roots tracing back to the early 1900s. Over the decades, the repercussions of this industry spilled into neighboring Pakistan and Iran. In the late 2000s, Taliban leader Mullah Omar imposed a strict ban on poppy cultivation through threats, forced eradication, and severe punishments. However, as revealed by the UNODC Opium Survey 2007, the ban primarily targeted cultivation while the trade continued. After the fall of the Taliban, opium again became a major source of funding for logistics, weapons, and militia payments.

In 2022, the Taliban leadership once again announced a ban on poppy cultivation, with Hibatullah Akhundzada officially declaring significant reductions. Some Western reports, supported by satellite imagery, showcased de-



clining poppy fields in southern Afghanistan. However, this raises critical questions: Can Afghanistan realistically abandon such a central economic resource while facing sanctions? And what consequences does this shift have for Pakistan? While certain

international outlets hastily claim that Pakistan has become a new hub for narcotics, such narratives ignore key realities. The issue is not a simple matter of "shifting sands" but a complex regional security challenge. The porous border between Pakistan and Afghani-

stan, coupled with evidence of expanded ephedra processing hubs—reflects adaptive strategies of traffickers rather than genuine eradication. In Pakistan, however, the situation is markedly different. Since 2001, the country has largely maintained its "poppy-free"

status, despite sporadic spillovers from Afghanistan. Following the Taliban's 2022 ban, some illicit cultivations did emerge in border areas, particularly within Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Yet, these were swiftly addressed through

Pakistan's Poppy Elimination Campaign (PEC-2025). This multi-agency effort, led by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and provincial administrations, successfully destroyed thousands of acres of illegal poppy fields. Over 250 FIRs were registered.

dozens of arrests were made, and awareness campaigns were launched across educational institutions. Importantly, independent surveys after March 2025 confirmed the effectiveness of these eradication drives.

Pakistan's determination to combat narcotics often remains under-reported internationally, overshadowed by outdated or selective portrayals. The fact remains: Pakistan continues to fight this menace not only for its own stability but also for global security. What is urgently needed is greater recognition of these efforts by the international community and enhanced cooperation from agencies such as the UNODC.

As South-West Asia remains at the heart of global narcotics trade routes, Pakistan's role is both frontline and decisive. Balochistan, in particular, holds the potential to transform from a vulnerable transit zone into a hub of opportunity, stability, and resilience. Just as Lady Macbeth's imagined guilt could not be washed away with water, the global community cannot absolve itself of responsibility by ignoring Pakistan's sacrifices and achievements in this ongoing struggle. The fight against narcotics requires collective recognition, support, and action—not selective narratives.

BNP Holds Balochistan-Wide Protests Over Killing of Khalil Musayani

WEB DESK: The Balochistan National Party (BNP) organized protest demonstrations across Balochistan on Thursday, including a major rally outside the Quetta Press Club, condemning the killing of Khalil Musayani, son of former Khuzdar district chief Sardar Nasir Musayani, and the detention of several members of his family and associates.

The protests were held on the directive of the party leadership, drawing a large number of BNP workers, supporters, and political activists. Demonstrators raised concerns over the incident and called for transparency, accountability, and justice.

Addressing the gathering, BNP Central Senior Vice President Sajid Tareen Advocate, Central Finance Secretary Akhtar Hussain Langoo, and District



Deputy Organizer Javed Baloch, Labour Secretary Mus Baloch, Women Secretary Shakeela Naveed Dehwar, Human Rights Secretary Ahmed Nawaz Baloch, and members of the party's Central Executive Committee, also attended the protest. The speakers alleged that a security operation at the residence of former Khuzdar Nazim Sardar Nasir Musayani resulted in the death of his son Khalil Musayani and the arrest of other family members and relatives. They termed the incident a serious violation of civil liberties and demanded an impartial inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the operation.

Governor Mandokhail Lays Foundation Stone of HEC Regional Center in Quetta, Calls It a Historic Milestone for Higher Education

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail inaugurated the foundation stone of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Regional Center Quetta, describing it as a historic milestone and the realization of Balochistan's long-standing dream of expanding access to quality higher education.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, the Governor said the new facility represents far more than a regional office, calling it a significant step toward building an educated and progressive Balochistan.

HEC's Role in Strengthening Higher Education Governor Mandokhail praised the leadership role of the Higher Education Commission in advancing higher education across Pakistan. He noted that the commission has played a pivotal role in supporting nearly 300 public-sector universities nationwide and in creating a strong foundation for future academic growth and research.

The ceremony was attended by HEC Chairman Dr. Niaz Ahmed Akhtar, Vice Chancellor of University of Balochistan Dr. Zahoor Bazzi, Vice Chancellor of Sardar Bahadur Khan



Women's University Prof. Dr. Rubina Musthaq, Vice Chancellor of University of Turbat Prof. Dr. Ghalib Hassan, Vice Chancellor of University of Loralai Dr. Ehsanullah Kakar, Vice Chancellor of Mir Chakar Khan Rind University Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Ali Baloch, and Pro Vice Chancellor Dr. Alam Tareen, along with several education experts. Rs78.61 Million Project to Be Completed This Year Officials informed the gathering that the HEC Regional Center is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs78.61 million and is expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

The Governor emphasized the importance of maintaining high construction standards and ensuring the project's timely completion. He also recommended shifting the facility to a solar energy system to reduce operational costs and improve sustainability. Proposal for Guest House and Modern Facilities The Governor Mandokhail further suggested the inclusion of a guest house within the regional center to facilitate visiting academics, researchers, and university officials. He stressed that modern infrastructure, efficient energy solutions, and quality facilities would help maximize the center's long-term benefits for educational institutions throughout the province.

Balochistan Minister Zuhoor Ahmed Buledi Highlights Key Role of Bureaucracy in Governance and Public Service Delivery

QUETTA: Balochistan Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zuhoor Ahmed Buledi has emphasized that the bureaucracy serves as the backbone of any state system, playing a vital role in resolving public issues, implementing government policies, and improving administrative governance.

He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the 46th Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC) at the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), Quetta.

The provincial minister stated that government officers face emerging complex responsibilities in dealing with the increasingly complex administrative and internal challenges of the modern era.

He stressed that these responsibilities must be carried out with professionalism, integrity, and a strong commitment to public service.

Highlighting the challenges facing Balochistan, Buledi noted that the province continues to grapple with issues related to socio-economic development, infrastructure improvement, and public welfare. He said the



role of the civil service is crucial in addressing these challenges and ensuring the effective delivery of services to the people. Efficient and capable administrative officers are indispensable for the development of Balochistan and the provision of better facilities to citizens," he said.

The minister observed that the bureaucracy, overall, is performing its duties effectively and that positive results are emerging across various sectors.

Addressing the course participants, he said professional training programs provide officers with opportunities not only to acquire new skills but also to exchange experiences and enhance their administrative capabilities. Buledi praised institutions such as NIPA for their contribution to the professional development of public servants.

He said that the knowledge, experience, and modern management techniques gained through such training programs help officers make better decisions and improve performance in practical administrative settings. Congratulating the officers who successfully completed the course, the minister expressed hope that they would utilize the skills, knowledge, and experience acquired at NIPA to further improve the quality of public service and governance.

Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jatak Meets Constituents, Reaffirms Commitment to Public Welfare and Development

QUETTA: Senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party and Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jatak held a meeting at his residence with local residents, community leaders, friends, and representatives from various walks of life belonging to his constituency.

During the meeting, participants carefully discussed key issues affecting their areas, including infrastructure challenges, ongoing development projects, and matters related to public welfare.

The provincial minister assured them that every possible effort would be made to address their problems and improve living conditions across the constituency. He stated that practical measures are being implemented to accelerate development, enhance public welfare, and improve the quality of life for citizens across the region. Haji Ali Madad Jatak, Pakistan Peoples Party, PPP leader, Provincial Minister, constituency-level public welfare, community meeting, development projects, public issues, local governance, Pakistan politics, citizen services.

He affirmed that the party will continue utilizing all available resources and capabilities to promote sustainable development, enhance public welfare, and improve the quality of life for citizens across the region. Haji Ali Madad Jatak, Pakistan Peoples Party, PPP leader, Provincial Minister, constituency-level public welfare, community meeting, development projects, public issues, local governance, Pakistan politics, citizen services.

He further noted that continuous engagement with the public is essential for effective governance and ensuring that development initiatives align with the needs of the people. The provincial minister highlighted the readiness of the government to address the concerns raised by the attendees and assured them that every possible effort would be made to address their problems and improve living conditions across the constituency.

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Balochistan Home Department Official Babar Yousafzai Praises Security Forces for Successful Counterterrorism Operation in Panjgur

PANJGUR: Assistant Secretary of the Home Department Babar Yousafzai, has expressed satisfaction and commending the bravery, professionalism, and dedication of the personnel involved. Speaking on the operation, Babar Yousafzai stated that the successful action carried out by security forces in Panjgur is a clear demonstration of the state's unwavering resolve against terrorism.

He emphasized that terrorist elements are promptly and effectively thwarting the enemy's nefarious plans, and ensuring the protection of citizens' lives and property. According to Yousafzai, the operation highlights the readiness and capability of Pakistan's security institutions to respond to security threats.

Babar Yousafzai further stated that operations against terrorist networks allegedly operating under Indian patronage will continue with full force, and such elements will be defeated on every front. He reiterated that the people of Balochistan stand firmly with the security forces and law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism.

He added that security forces are committed to the complete eradication of terrorism and the establishment of lasting peace across the country. Concluding his statement, he paid tribute to the officers and soldiers who participated in successful counterterrorism operations, saying that their courage, sacrifice, and dedication are a source of pride for the entire nation and deserve the highest appreciation.

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Rakhni-Bekar Road Project to Boost Connectivity and Economic Growth in Balochistan: Secretary Communications

QUETTA: Secretary Communications and Works (C&W) Balochistan, Babar Khan, has said that the Rakhni-Bekar Road Project will serve as a catalyst for social and economic development of the region.

The completion of the highway is expected to significantly improve transportation facilities between Rakhni, Bekar, and Upper Dera Bugti, while also promoting trade, agriculture, mineral transportation, and business activities. He expressed these views while chairing a review meeting on the progress of the Rakhni-Bekar Road Project.

The meeting was attended by Chief Engineers Zia Zuberi, Zubair Ahmed Khosa, Chief Engineer Federal Projects Dr. Sajjad Baloch, Superintendent Engineer Nasirabad Circle Muhammad Ahsanul-Haq, Technical Officer Zia Zuberi, and other officials.

During the meeting, officials presented a detailed briefing on the project's progress and ongoing construction activities. Speaking on the occasion, Babar Khan emphasized that the road will connect remote areas with major highways,

making it easier for local communities to access essential services such as education, healthcare, and other public facilities. He noted that the project will also create new employment opportunities for local residents and enhance prospects for investment in the region. The completion of the Rakhni-Bekar Road Project will open a new chapter of development and prosperity for the area by improving connectivity and supporting economic growth," he said.

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Public Notice section containing multiple notices from various departments including the Registrar of Companies, District Registrar, and others, detailing legal and administrative matters.

# Pakistan remains committed to 'Shanghai spirit', Naqvi tells SCO moot

**NEWS DESK:** Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the "Shanghai spirit" and called for a joint strategy among SCO members to counter terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, cybercrime and terror financing.

Naqvi said this at a special meeting of the Ministers of Interior and Public Security of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

He said the region faced "serious and complex security challenges" that were interconnected, noting that criminal and terrorist networks were rapidly adapting to technological advancements, exploiting artificial intelligence, digital platforms, online networks and cryptocurrency transactions to expand their activities.

The interior minister emphasised the importance of modernising institutional coordination and enhancing intelligence-sharing mechanisms across the region to tackle these threats.

Shared threats demanded shared solutions, Naqvi further delegates, further call-



ing for a comprehensive regional strategy to tackle transnational crime and emerging security risks.

Highlighting Pakistan's commitment to the principles of the SCO, he said: "Pakistan fully adheres to the principles of the Shanghai Spirit, which is based on mutual trust, equality, cooperation, and respect for sovereignty."

Naqvi further stated that Pakistan

had rendered "unparalleled sacrifices" against terrorism and organised crime."

Under the National Action Plan, he said, Pakistan had strengthened intelligence coordination, border management and anti-money laundering measures.

"These initiatives strengthened the

country's capacity to combat terrorism and organised crime."

He called for more effective cooperation under SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist

Structure (RATS) for intelligence sharing, joint threat analysis and countering online radicalisation and extremist propaganda.

Pakistan, he said, fully supported workshops and expert ex-

change programmes building collective capabilities.

Turning his attention to cybersecurity, he said cyber intelligence and digital forensics cooperation were

"the need of the hour" and noted that technological advances had created new opportunities for criminal organisations and terrorist groups.

On the issue of narcotics trafficking,

he warned that the illegal drug trade remained a major source of terror financing.

He called for a coordinated joint strategy against drug trafficking networks, online criminal operations and illicit financial flows facilitated through digital currencies.

Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force, he said, remained actively engaged in SCO-led counter-narcotics ini-

tiatives and stood ready to deepen cooperation with partner countries.

He said border security was key to regional peace and stability and stressed greater cooperation on preventing the use of forged documents for travelling, watchlist coordination and human smuggling.

He also said that stopping terror financing was among Pakistan's key priori-

ties, adding that the country had reformed its anti-money laundering (AML) regime and that the country's enhanced financial monitoring framework was playing "an active role" in detecting and preventing illicit financial activities.

Moreover, strong regional cooperation was indispensable for dismantling terror financing networks, he said, emphasising that no country could effectively confront transnational threats in isolation.

"Our challenges are common, so our efforts must also be collective and coordinated," Naqvi said. "The common goal of our joint efforts is a peaceful and secure SCO region."

Concluding his address, Naqvi said that Pakistan looked forward to welcoming participants at the SCO summit to be held in Islamabad in 2027.

A day earlier, Naqvi met his Iranian counterpart, Eskandar Momeni, on sidelines of the SCO moot and the two discussed bilateral relations and the current regional situation.

Both ministers also exchanged views on Pakistan-Iran relations and the latest regional situation.

## Govt launches scheme to bring small shop owners into tax net

**NEWS DESK:** Finance Minister M u h a m m a d Aurangzeb on Friday announced a fixed tax rate scheme for small shop owners.

The voluntary 'Asaan Scheme' aimed at small shops with annual earnings of Rs200 million, seeks to broaden the tax net by imposing a 1 per cent fixed tax on net income of the business. Shop owners will have to sign up for the scheme via a form available in multiple local languages.

The announcement was made during a press conference

by the finance minister along with State Minister for Finance Bilal Azhar Kiani.

According to Kiani, shop owners who opt in for the scheme will receive Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) plaques displaying a unique QR code on them to be placed outside their shops and a point of sale system inside their shops.

Tax inspectors making the rounds of the market will be able to acquire tax details for these shops using their QR codes. Any irregularities will be up for audit in consulta-

tion with local traders' associations.

Both non-filers and filers can enter the scheme. Filers will be able to opt for the scheme under the condition that, in the past three years, the business' turnover must not exceed Rs200m, Kiani said.

He added that kiosks are exempt from the scheme.

At the outset of the press conference, Aurangzeb termed the development an "important milestone", emphasising the need for a more "equitable, balanced and sustainable" tax system.



## PIA to resume Islamabad-Beijing flights from July 3

**NEWS DESK:** Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Friday announced the resumption of its direct flight service between Islamabad and Beijing, effective July 3, restoring a key air link between Pakistan and China and further reinforcing the longstanding ties between the two countries.

The revival of the Islamabad-Beijing-Islamabad route comes amid growing demand from students, business professionals, tourists, and families seeking efficient and convenient travel options between the two nations.

The direct service is expected to significantly enhance connectivity while offering passengers competitive fares, generous baggage allowances, and a more comfortable travel experience.

The restored route is particularly welcomed by the large number of Pakistani and Chinese students pursuing

higher education in each other's countries.

Educational institutions, student groups, and travel industry stakeholders have described the development as timely, especially with the upcoming academic sessions and peak travel season approaching.

Industry observers believe the direct flights will facilitate smoother mobility for students, academics, and researchers, while also promoting stronger educational exchanges between Pakistan and China. The service is also expected to benefit tourists and families planning summer travel, providing greater flexibility and reducing journey times compared to indirect routes.

Travel agencies and tourism operators have reported strong interest from passengers since the announcement, reflecting the importance of direct air connectivity between the capitals of the two friendly na-

tions. Many prospective travelers have welcomed the move, noting that the restored service will make travel more convenient and cost-effective.

In a statement, PIA management reaffirmed the national carrier's commitment to strengthening bilateral connectivity and supporting cooperation in tourism, trade, education, and cultural exchanges.

The airline emphasised that the resumption of direct flights aligns with efforts to further deepen people-to-people contacts and foster closer relations between Pakistan and China. The restoration of the Islamabad-Beijing route marks another positive step in enhancing transportation links between the two countries.

PIA's role in facilitating travel and contributing to the enduring friendship and strategic partnership between Pakistan and China.

## 1,505 Islamabad police deployed to AJK ahead of JAAC protest call for June 9

**NEWS DESK:** A total of 1,505 Islamabad Police personnel on Friday were deployed to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in view of a protest call by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) for June 9, as authorities moved to tighten security arrangements in the region ahead of the upcoming AJK elections, a spokesperson confirmed.

According to police spokesperson Taj Jawad, the deployment was approved by the Islamabad Inspector General of Police Nasir Rizvi as part of a special security plan aimed at maintaining law and order.

The move comes hours after the AJK Election Commission announced that general elections for the AJK Legislative Assembly will be held on July 27. The commission added that preparations are underway to ensure transparent, orderly, and impartial elections under judicial supervision.

The contingent includes senior officers as well as field formations, with one deputy inspector general, two senior superintendents of police, and four superin-

tendents of police among those sent to supervise operations on the ground. The force also comprises eight assistant superintendents of police/deputy superintendents of police, 16 inspectors, two sub-inspectors, 70 assistant sub-inspectors, and 1,382 constables, forming a multi-tier security structure. Jawad said the personnel are being deployed with full anti-riot gear, while units from the counter-terrorism department, Safe City, Operations, and Security Divisions have also been included in the arrangement.

Security has been placed on high alert across Azad Kashmir in view of the protest call by the Joint Awami Action Committee, with reserve forces kept on standby for further deployment if needed. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said in a post on X that the demand to abolish 12 AJK Assembly seats elected from Pakistan ahead of the elections amounted to "disrupting the electoral process", urging that such issues be taken to the public instead of being used to derail the vote.

"Democratic thinking requires that those making this demand should present it before the public on July 27," he said, adding that voters should be allowed to decide and "shape the form of representation."

He warned that raising such demands before polling would otherwise be seen as "blackmail", arguing that electoral matters should be settled through a democratic mandate.

Referring to representation from Pakistan-based constituencies, Asif said Sialkot city tehsil alone return one seat to the AJK Assembly, while two National Assembly seats also exist from the region, with other constituencies spread across Pakistan.

He highlighted the presence of a large number of Kashmiri migrants, particularly from Jammu, saying they had settled in Sialkot after the 1947 partition at great human cost. "In October 1947, more than two hundred thousand migrants arrived in Sialkot city and tehsil after sacrificing their lives," he said, adding that many families endured decades of hardship and deprivation of basic facilities. "How can you deprive these migrants of their rights?" he asked, stressing that they had "paid a very heavy price for freedom."

Asif said that those raising concerns should pursue their objectives through "a democratic path" to ensure acceptance of their views.

Refugee seats dispute resurfaces in AJK

AJK's 53-member legislative assembly includes 12 seats reserved for Kashmiri refugees — people who fled Indian-controlled Kashmir in 1947 and 1965 and are now scattered across Pakistan. Six seats represent refugees from the Jammu division (~434,000 people) and six from the Kashmir Valley (~30,000 people) — an already lopsided arrangement that many see as unfair.

## AJK general elections to be held on July 27, Election Commission announces

**NEWS DESK:** The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Election Commission on Friday announced that general elections for the AJK Legislative Assembly will be held on July 27 from 8am to 5pm, according to a notification issued today.

According to the notification, elections will be conducted in all constituencies of the AJK Legislative Assembly as approved by the Delimitation Commission.

As per the schedule, nomination papers will be submitted from June 9 to June 19 until 4pm. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on June 20.

Candidates aggrieved by the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers may file appeals before the Election Commission between June 21 and June 24.

Hearings on the appeals will be conducted on June 26 and June 27, while decisions on appeals will be announced by June 28.

Candidates will be able to withdraw their nomination papers by June 30, while the final list of candidates will be published on July 1.

Election symbols will be allotted on July 2, after which the official campaign process will move into its final phase.

According to the notification, polling will be held on July 27 from 8am to 5pm.

The Election Commission said the election schedule has been issued, while all necessary arrangements for the polls are being finalised in consultation with relevant institutions.

With the issuance of the schedule, the process of appointing returning officers (ROs) will begin, officials said.

The commission added that preparations are underway to ensure transparent, orderly, and impartial elections under judicial supervision.



Security arrangements are also being finalised, with the deployment of additional personnel from the armed forces.

Rangers, and other law enforcement agencies expected to maintain law and order during the polls.

More than 3.4 million voters in AJK are expected to exercise their right to vote, while over 500,000 new voters have been added to the electoral rolls, Election Commission sources said.