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QUETTA VOICE

Quetta Acid Attack: Abdul Razzaq Tarakai Nominated for Civil Award, Dr Mah Noor Nasar Recovering

web Desk:

The Balochistan government has nominated Civil Hospital Quetta employee Abdul Razzaq Tarakai for a civil award after he risked his life to rescue Dr Mah Noor Nasar during the recent Quetta acid attack, an incident that has raised serious concerns about the safety of healthcare workers in Pakistan.

According to government spokesperson Shahid Rind, Abdul Razzaq Tarakai suffered burn injuries while attempting to save Dr Mah Noor Nasar immediately after the attack at Civil Hospital Quetta. His courageous actions helped provide urgent assistance to the injured doctor despite the danger to his own life.

Rind said Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti personally contacted the injured employee, praised his bravery, and announced a civil award in recognition of his exceptional service and humanitarian spirit.

The Chief Minister's Secretariat has formally forwarded his nomination to the Services and General Administration Department for further action.

Meanwhile, doctors treating Dr Mah Noor Nasar at Karachi hospital confirmed



that her condition is stable and she is out of danger. Medical reports indicate that nearly 13 percent of her body suffered burns, while 7 to 8 percent sustained deeper injuries. Despite moderate corneal damage in

both eyes, specialists have confirmed that her eyesight remains safe.

Police have also registered a case against the suspect, identified as Javed Shah, a lift operator at Civil Hospital

Quetta. Authorities said the suspect allegedly attacked Dr Mah Noor Nasar and injured another patient before being killed during an exchange of fire with police.

The Quetta acid attack on Dr Mah Noor Nasar has triggered widespread condemnation and renewed calls for improved hospital security and stronger protection for healthcare workers across Balochistan and Pakistan.

Quetta Acid Attack on Female Doctor: CM Balochistan Orders Probe, YDA Announces Province-Wide Strike Threat

NEWS DESK

QUETTA : Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti has taken immediate notice of the shocking acid attack on a female postgraduate (PG) trainee doctor at Civil Hospital Quetta and has sought a detailed report on the incident. According to CM's spokesperson Shahid Rind, the injured doctor has been shifted to Aria Institute of Medical Sciences, Quetta, for advanced treatment. An air ambulance has also been kept ready to transfer her to Karachi if specialized care becomes necessary. The Chief Minister directed health authorities to ensure the victim receives the best possible medical treatment and support, while law enforcement agencies have been instructed to expedite the investigation and arrest the suspect. Authorities said the investigation is underway from multiple angles, with CCTV footage and forensic evidence being reviewed to identify and apprehend the attacker. The provincial government has vowed to ensure strict legal action against those responsible. Young Doctors Association Condemns Attack The Young Doctors Association (YDA) Balochistan has strongly condemned the acid attack on the female postgraduate trainee doctor working in the Surgical Unit of Sandeman Provincial Hospital.

AJK arrests 72 in crackdown on banned group

NEWS DESK:

Police in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Saturday said they had arrested around 72 individuals allegedly affiliated with the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) during operations carried out over the past 18 hours, a day after the government outlawed the organisation under anti-terrorism laws.

The development came after the AJK government banned the JAAC, accusing it of involvement in terrorism, promoting hatred and creating anarchy in the state ahead of a protest announced for June 9. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday in Lahore and discussed the country's overall law and order and security situation.

The meeting reviewed in detail the prevailing security environment in the country and measures being taken to maintain peace and stability.

Naqvi briefed the prime minister on the steps being implemented to ensure law and order and safeguard citizens across the country.

The prime minister stressed the importance of close coordination among all relevant institutions and called for a unified strategy to further strengthen law and order and enhance national security. The prime minister reiterated the government's commitment to maintaining peace, protecting citizens and ensuring effective cooperation among all security and law enforcement agencies.



CM Sarfaraz Bugti Assures Full Support to 'Iron Man' Razzaq Tarakai After Quetta Acid Attack

Asmat Hanafi:

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti has highly praised the bravery of a young man, Razzaq

The CM also announced civil award for the Iron Man.

The victim, Dr. Mahnoor Nasir, was targeted by a hospital employee on Saturday. During the brutal assault, young Razzaq Tarakai put his

Bugti contacted the brave young man to express his deep admiration for his immense courage and noble gesture.

The Chief Minister declared that Razzaq Tarakai has set an absolute example of hu-

manity by risking his life for another. CM Bugti directed the health authorities to ensure the best possible medical treatment and provide all possible official

care. Officials confirmed that the desperate suspect was later killed in a police encounter while attempting to flee Quetta



Tarakai, calling him an "Iron Man" for his heroic efforts to save a female doctor during the horrific acid attack at the Provincial Civil Hospital Quetta.



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care. Officials confirmed that the desperate suspect was later killed in a police encounter while attempting to flee Quetta

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 Sarifaz 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 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 Sarifaz 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

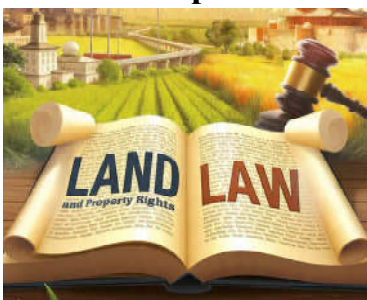
By Amir Hamza Bashir:

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

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-

certainly 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

Anjeela Kaynat:

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 rapid population growth and rising number of vehicles. Although the city was rebuilt after the 1955 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, Sariab 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 Baloachistan University Chowk, Meezan 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.

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 revisited 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, Sariab 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.

NEITHER CAPITALISM NOR COMMUNISM THE ISLAMIC MIDDLE PATH

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

Further more, 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. These internal contradictions — growing inequality, moral decay, and ecological harm — make Capitalism an unfit model for an equitable, sustainable society.

Communism fails 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.

BUJ Strongly Condemns Killing of Journalist Lala Asrafil in Musa Khel, Calls for High-Level Investigation

NEWS DESK QUETTA: The Balochistan Union of Journalists (BUJ) has strongly condemned the killing of private TV journalist Lala Asrafil, who was reporting from Musa Khel, and demanded a transparent, impartial, and comprehensive investigation into the incident.

In a joint statement, BUJ President Manzoor Ahmed Rind, General Secretary Shah Hussain Tareen, and other executive members expressed profound grief and sorrow over the tragic incident.

They extended heartfelt condolences



and solidarity to the family of the slain journalist. The BUJ leadership urged Chief Minister Balochistan Mir

Sarfraz Bugti and Provincial Interior Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Deputy Commissioner Farida Tareen has issued strict directives to maintain control over the prices of essential commodities and ensure relief for consumers.

They stressed the need to identify the motives behind the killing and ensure that those responsible are swiftly brought to justice. The union noted that the repeated targeting of journalists in Balochistan has intensified concerns within the media fraternity and created an environment of fear. It added that the BUJ will soon announce its future course of action regarding the situation.

Sohbatpur Administration Cracks Down on Overpricing and Encroachments to Ensure Consumer Relief

SOHBATPUR: In line with the vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Deputy Commissioner Farida Tareen has issued strict directives to maintain control over the prices of essential commodities and ensure relief for consumers.

The prices of food items and other daily-use commodities were also reviewed to ensure that citizens receive quality products at officially approved rates. As a result of the inspection, immediate action was taken against

Officials emphasized that maintaining public convenience, ensuring smooth traffic flow, and preserving urban order are top priorities. They warned that indiscriminate and continuous action against illegal encroachments will



shopkeepers involved in overpricing. The union noted that the repeated targeting of journalists in Balochistan has intensified concerns within the media fraternity and created an environment of fear. It added that the BUJ will soon announce its future course of action regarding the situation. Authorities imposed fines totaling Rs. 3,450 on violators, while seven shopkeepers were issued strict warnings and directed to avoid future violations. The primary objective of the inspection was to ensure strict implementation of official price lists, review the prices of essential goods, and take effective action against illegal encroachments affecting public convenience and traffic flow. During the market visit, officials inspected a total of 34 shops, where government-issued price lists were thoroughly checked.

Deputy Commissioner Sohbatpur Reviews BSDI Development Projects, Inspects DHQ Hospital Services

SOHBATPUR: Deputy Commissioner Farida Tareen conducted a detailed inspection of ongoing and completed development projects being implemented under the Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI), reaffirming the district administration's commitment to improving public services and infrastructure across the region.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed several key development schemes, including the Bhand Sharif Water Supply Scheme, Government Boys Middle School Sawan Khan, Government Boys Middle School Hafiz Luqman, and other important public welfare projects. While inspecting the projects, Farida Tareen directed the concerned officials to ensure that all development schemes are completed within the stipulated timeframe while maintaining transparency, quality standards, and accountability. She stated that the



government of Balochistan has prioritized the provision of quality education, healthcare, and access to clean drinking water for citizens. She emphasized that timely completion of these projects will provide much-needed relief to the public and contribute to the overall development of the district. Following the inspection of development projects, the Deputy Commissioner visited the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Sohbatpur, where she conducted a comprehensive review of healthcare facilities and services being provided to patients. She further noted that strengthening public health trust in the healthcare system requires improved service delivery, accountability, and a patient-centered approach. Highlights "Deputy Commissioner Farida Tareen reviews BSDI-funded development projects in Sohbatpur. Inspection includes water supply schemes and government school infrastructure projects. Officials directed to ensure transparency, quality, and timely completion of projects. Education, healthcare, and clean drinking water identified

as key government priorities. DHQ Hospital Sohbatpur inspected to assess patient care and medical facilities. Doctors and paramedical staff instructed to improve service delivery and maintain professional standards. District administration reiterates commitment to public welfare and infrastructure development. Sohbatpur development projects, BSDI Balochistan, Farida Tareen, DHQ Hospital Sohbatpur, water supply scheme Bhand Sharif, education infrastructure Balochistan, healthcare services, Balochistan Special Development Initiative, public welfare projects, Sohbatpur news.

Deputy Commissioner Musakhel Conducts Surprise Visit to Livestock Office, Reviews Medicine Stock and Service Delivery

MUSAKHEL: Deputy Commissioner Musakhel Abdul Razaq Khajjak conducted a surprise visit to the District Livestock Office on Friday to review departmental resources, inspect facilities, and assess the availability of veterinary medicines for livestock owners.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner carried out a detailed inspection of various sections of the office building and thoroughly examined the department's main medicine store. He reviewed the overall condition of the facility and evaluated the management of veterinary resources aimed at supporting livestock farmers across the district.

Key Highlights Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Khajjak conducted surprise inspection of District Livestock Office Musakhel. Detailed review of office departments, infrastructure, and medicine store. Veterinary medicine stock records and inventory management examined. Officials directed to improve medicine availability and monitor expiry dates. Livestock sector described as a key pillar of the local economy. Emphasis on timely veterinary healthcare services for livestock owners. Department instructed to improve performance and strengthen public service delivery. Musakhel Livestock Department, Abdul Razaq Khajjak, livestock office inspection, veterinary medicine stock, livestock services in Balochistan, Musakhel administration, animal healthcare, livestock farmers support, district livestock office, Musakhel news.

Gwadar Administration Intensifies Dengue Prevention Campaign with District-Wide Vector Control Measures

GWADAR: On the special directives of Deputy Commissioner Nageebullah Kakar, a comprehensive dengue prevention and vector control campaign is being carried out across Gwadar district in collaboration with the Health Department and district administration to protect public health and prevent any potential outbreak of dengue fever.

The campaign, launched under the supervision of District Health Officer Dr. Yasir Tahir, includes extensive fogging operations, larvicidal treatments, and residual insecticide spraying (RIS) in dengue-prone and high-risk areas.

The first phase of the initiative commenced on May 8, 2026, and continued successfully until May 22, 2026. To maximize public health protection, authorities prioritized areas considered most vulnerable to dengue transmission. During the campaign, vector control teams covered 1,020 households in Naya



Abad Ward 521 households in Faqeer Colony and Shambay Ismail Ward 610 households in Shambay Ismail Ward following health advisories issued by the Health Department. Emergency fogging initiated in Pasi following reported dengue cases. Preventive spraying activities will gradually be expanded to all union councils and thehsils of Gwadar district. Deputy Commissioner Nageebullah Kakar urges citizens to eliminate stagnant water and maintain cleanliness. Campaign to be expanded across all union councils and thehsils of Gwadar district. Gwadar dengue campaign, Nageebullah Kakar, dengue prevention campaign, fogging operation Gwadar, Dr. Yasir Tahir, Pasi health advisories, union council, public health Gwadar, dengue awareness Pakistan.

high-risk areas during the first phase. Follow-up operations underway in Faqeer Colony and Shambay Ismail Ward. Emergency fogging initiated in Pasi following reported dengue cases. Preventive spraying activities will gradually be expanded to all union councils and thehsils of Gwadar district. Deputy Commissioner Nageebullah Kakar urges citizens to eliminate stagnant water and maintain cleanliness.

Health Department on High Alert as Diarrhea and Gastroenteritis Cases Rise in Chaman

CHAMAN: Following reports of an increase in cases of diarrhea and gastroenteritis in Chaman district, the Health Department has declared a state of high alert and mobilized emergency response teams to contain the situation and protect public health.

Deputy Commissioner Nageebullah Kakar, who is overseeing the response, has issued strict directives to health officials to ensure timely medical attention and prevent further spread of illness. The Health Department emphasized that public cooperation, adherence to preventive guidelines, and early medical intervention are

Maintaining strict personal and household hygiene is crucial. Avoiding unhygienic food and beverages from unverified sources. Ensuring proper food storage and sanitation practices. Health officials warned that if any cases of diarrhea, gastroenteritis, or other communicable diseases are reported in any area, residents should immediately contact the Old DHQ Hospital Chaman or nearby Medécins Sans Frontières (MSF) health services for timely medical attention and prevent further spread of illness. The Health Department emphasized that public cooperation, adherence to preventive guidelines, and early medical intervention are

Balochistan Adviser Nasim-ur-Rehman Mullahkhal Calls for Collective Action on Climate Change and Plastic Pollution

QUETTA: On the occasion of World Environment Day, Balochistan Adviser for Climate Change and Environment Nasim-ur-Rehman Mullahkhal emphasized the need for collective and decisive action to address growing environmental challenges, including climate change, pollution, deforestation, and water scarcity. In his special message marking the global

observance, the adviser stated that environmental issues pose serious threats to sustainable development and require coordinated efforts from government institutions, communities, and stakeholders at all levels. Mullahkhal highlighted that the Government of Balochistan is actively implementing a range of initiatives aimed at environmental protection and the sus-

tainable management of natural resources. These efforts include large-scale tree plantation campaigns, monitoring of air and land pollution, improved water resource management, and the formulation of environmentally friendly policies. He further noted that public awareness campaigns are being conducted across the province to educate citizens about environ-

mental conservation and encourage responsible environmental practices. Referring to this year's global World Environment Day theme, "Ending Plastic Pollution," the adviser said the international focus aligns closely with Balochistan's environmental strategy. He stressed that reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable alternatives are essential steps toward protect-

ing ecosystems and public health. Nasim-ur-Rehman Mullahkhal also underscored the importance of preserving Balochistan's rich natural heritage, including its mountains, deserts, forests, and coastal regions. Balochistan's ecosystems not only support biodiversity and local livelihoods but also play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance.

Gilgit-Baltistan elections begin as 130 candidates contest 24 seats

NEWS DESK: Voting is underway on Sunday for the 2026 Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Legislative Assembly elections, with more than 958,000 registered voters expected to cast their ballots across 24 constituencies.

Polling will be held from 8am to 5pm, with 13 seats required to form the next government in the strategically important region. It has begun at 1,691 polling stations, with more than 7,500 polling staff deployed. A total of 130 candidates from 24 political parties and 266 independent candidates are contesting the elections.

The G-B Assembly comprises 33 seats, including 24 elected through direct elections, 6 reserved for women, and 3 reserved for technocrats and professionals. Reserved seats are allocated to political parties based on proportional representation.

G-B's caretaker Information Minister Ghulam Abbas said polling had begun peacefully across the region, with a large number of voters exercising their right to vote.

He said the caretaker government and the Election Commission had made comprehensive security arrangements, with personnel from the Frontier Rangers, Gilgit-Baltistan Scouts, and the Pakistan Army deployed at sensitive locations.

Ghulam Abbas urged citizens to come out and vote, expressing



hope that the electoral process would contribute to the continued development and prosperity of G-B.

However, PML-N candidate and former chief minister Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman was seen recording a video while casting his vote.

Chief Election Commissioner Raja Shahbaz Khan visited several polling stations in Gilgit, accompanied by Provincial Election Commissioner Abid Raza, to review polling

arrangements, security measures, and the overall electoral environment.

During visits to polling stations at Jutal Elementary College and Khomar City Park, the chief election commissioner expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and sought reports from relevant officials.

The chief election commissioner also inspected facilities available to voters and met polling agents representing candidates. According to election officials, polling agents ex-

pressed satisfaction with the peaceful atmosphere and arrangements at polling stations.

As part of his review of security preparations, Khan visited the Gilgit Safe City Control Centre, where he was briefed on security measures and monitoring arrangements. Officials informed him that election-related activities were being continuously monitored through a modern surveillance system.

The inspector general of police and other officials briefed the chief election commissioner on the security plan and special measures put in place for election day.

Speaking during the visit, Raja Shehbaz Khan said all available resources were being utilised to ensure free, fair, peaceful and transparent elections. He also praised the performance of the district administration and law-enforcement agencies and urged voters to participate fully in the democratic process while helping maintain a peaceful environment.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) shared a video on X of the party's election camp in Skardu (G-BLA-7), where voters and supporters gathered throughout the day, with party workers claiming strong public support for their candidate.

PTI also shared a similar video of supporters gathered at the Dornal Haiderpura polling station in Gilgit, chanting slogans in support of the PTI founder Imran Khan.

Candidates The PPP has fielded 23 candidates, followed by PML-N with 22 and the PPP with 15.

PTI candidates are contesting as independents after the party lost its electoral symbol ahead of the 2024 general elections. The party has allied with the Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen (MWM), with the alli-

ance backing 22 candidates.

Other parties in the race include PML-Q, JUI-F, Jamaat-i-Islami, MQM-P, ANP and ANP. Only three women have been nominated by political parties, while five women are contesting as independents.

Among the key contenders are Amjad Hussain of the PPP, contesting from GBA-1 (Gilgit-I), and former chief minister Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman of the PML-N, contesting from GBA-2 (Gilgit-II).

Video statements PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in a video message posted on polling day, urged voters in Gilgit-Baltistan to turn out in large numbers, saying the region's future could be transformed through political change and constitutional rights.

He said the party wanted to bring what he described as "real rights" and constitutional recognition to the region. "I want to give the people of Gilgit-Baltistan their real rights," he said, adding that he also aimed to secure "constitutional rights" for the region.

The PPP chairman said the party wanted to work towards integrating Gilgit-Baltistan more into Pakistan's constitutional framework. "Come and make the Pakistan Peoples Party successful so that we can make Gilgit-Baltistan the fifth province," he said.

Peshawar-Torkham Highway reopens after protests against recent 'targeted attack'

NEWS DESK: The Peshawar-Torkham Highway was reopened on Sunday following a temporary closure by Sultan Khel tribesmen protesting the handling of "targeted killings" in their area by Zaka Khel elders and government authorities.

Two Sultan Khel residents were gunned down by unidentified assailants on Friday evening — in the same area where two policemen had been targeted over the last few months.

The fresh violence prompted Sultan Khel residents from the Zaka Khel tribe to block the Peshawar-Torkham Highway by staging a protest on Saturday. The road closure also tempo-

rarily suspended the repatriation of Afghan families via the Torkham border.

Murad Hussain, a leading figure among the protesters, said that a negotiating committee comprising young Sultan Khel tribesmen was formed to hold talks with government functionaries to find ways to restore peace in the Landi Kotal tehsil, while also securing the main Peshawar-Torkham Highway from nighttime terrorist movement reported in the area. The committee demanded that the local administration either completely ban pillion riding on the main road or allow it only for those who were officially reg-

istered with the traffic police and security forces. The committee also agreed to end residents' boycott of the police vaccination drive, and stated that all government and private educational institutions would be reopened on Monday. Sources among the protesters said that the majority of residents — mostly youngsters — were outraged as elders had not taken them into confidence while negotiating with government officials over putting an immediate end to targeted killings.

No date for negotiations between the concerned authorities and the newly formed committee was announced.

AJK govt cracks down on JAAC after imposition of ban

NEWS DESK: A through unconstitutional and violent actions.

He urged the public to remain peaceful, restrict movements and avoid taking part in any activity by any outlawed organisation and extend cooperation to law enforcers in their own interest.

The police statement came in the wake of a tense situation in Poonch, where a trader, Shahzeb Habib, was killed by a gunshot wound late on Friday night.

According to sources, Habib was last seen accompanying Umar Nazir Kashmiri, a JAAC core member from Poonch, on Friday night when they were returning from Khaigalla to Rawalakot. Their vehicle was intercepted by law enforcers near Barnang bridge, which reportedly led to "an exchange of

fire" between the two sides during which Habib was believed to have been critically injured and later died.

"At 11:45pm on Friday, when police tried to intercept a suspicious vehicle near Khaigalla, its armed occupants opened fire on them. Police also retaliated with firing, which led the armed men to escape, claimed a post on the Facebook page of the AJK police. It made no mention of any death.

Sources said the body of Habib was brought to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Rawalakot, but his relatives did not allow the post-mortem. Mr Kashmiri was also said to have received minor injuries, but he had managed to escape arrest, according to some of his associates. On Saturday, relatives placed Habib's body outside

the hospital where they staged a sit-in for about four hours. Afterwards, it was taken to Tarar, his native village. Initially, it was decided that the lying in state would be held at 6pm. However, later his family and colleagues changed their mind and brought the body back to the CMH for a post-mortem examination, which could not be conducted when the report was dictated on phone, amid an internet shutdown.

Witnesses said that a man route from the Azad Pattan Bridge had been blocked by protesters by placing boards and other obstacles in the jurisdiction of the Mang police station, but other roads were mostly open. Traffic was thin on the roads. Police staged a flag march in various parts of the city.

Meanwhile, a senior official at the AJK Supreme Court told Dawn that the two-member bench,

chines, and restaurants, which recorded a "rush of panic buyers," according to witnesses.

"Rangers and police personnel are staying alert at many important points in the town. But I tell you there is bustle and bustle here," a resident told Dawn by telephone.

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Naqvi takes CDF's message to Tehran amid stalemate

NEWS DESK: Pakistan on Saturday stepped up efforts to break the impasse in the US-Iran dialogue, with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi arriving in Tehran carrying a message from Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir for Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.

Mr Naqvi was received by his Iranian counterpart Eskandar Momeni. Pakistan's newly appointed ambassador to Iran, Imran Ahmad Siddiqui, was also present.

The visit comes at a delicate moment in the diplomatic process that Pakistan has been facilitating for months, as indirect negotiations between Washington and Tehran have drifted into what diplomats describe as a fragile stalemate despite both sides continuing to published prime

Iran's official news agency IRNA, quoting an informed source, reported that Mr Naqvi was carrying an "important message" from Field Marshal Munir for Mojtaba Khamenei.

The source said the interior minister had held extensive consultations with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other senior officials before leaving for Tehran.

The source further claimed that PM Shehbaz had given special instructions to Mr Naqvi regarding the future course of the Iran-US talks. The Prime Minister's Office, meanwhile, said in a statement that PM Shehbaz had met the interior minister in Lahore and discussed his visit to Tehran.

According to the official statement, Mr Naqvi's visit to Tehran is part of Pakistan's ongoing efforts to break the stalemate in the Iran-US talks.

million from the suspects, as well as foreign currency, including \$1,080, AUS\$20, AED\$ 015, 885 and 160 Saudi riyals.

Documentary records and digital evidence related to hawala/hundi transactions were also recovered from the suspects' possession.

In separate actions, FIA arrested two other suspects for their alleged involvement in violations of the Copyright Act, 1962.

The suspects were found to be in possession of a large quantity of counterfeit products of well-known registered companies.

The spokesperson said the suspects were allegedly involved in stocking and selling falsely branded products.

The interior ministry, in collaboration with the finance ministry, in March, announced a massive crackdown on money-laundering and hawala-hundi networks across the country.

In a meeting in January, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi made it clear that false hawala/hundi business would not be tolerated under any circumstances, and directed the officials that indiscriminate action must be visibly ensured.

FIA arrests 2 in Lahore over 'illegal' currency exchange, another 2 for copyright violations

NEWS DESK: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) said on Sunday that its Lahore unit has arrested four suspects during separate raids for their alleged involvement in hawala/hundi operations and copyright violations of the Copyright Act.

An FIA spokesperson told the media that the raids were conducted by the agency's Lahore Corporate Crime Centre at different locations in the provincial capital.

Two suspects were arrested for allegedly running illegal currency exchange and hawala/hundi businesses.

During the operations, FIA said it recovered cash worth Rs20.4

million from the suspects, as well as foreign currency, including \$1,080, AUS\$20, AED\$ 015, 885 and 160 Saudi riyals.

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