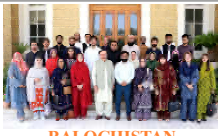




FRONT PAGE
Balochistan Local Polls Set for Feb 2027: Tax Breaks...



EDITORIAL
Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Defense Pact – A Historic Milestone in Bilateral...



BALUCHISTAN
Governor Balochistan Urges Youth to Combat Fake...



NATIONAL
Pakistan secures top position at international military drill...

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QUETTA VOICE

Govt unveils Rs18.8tr budget for FY2026-27; GDP growth targeted at 4pc

HASEEB KHAN:

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presented the FY2026-27 budget in the National Assembly (NA) on Friday, during a session that began two hours late and was marred by loud protests from the opposition.

Aurangzeb prefaced the numbers with a note of thanks to leaders of the coalition parties supporting the federal government, as well as a rumination on Pakistan's improved standing in the world, which he described as a culmination of events that started from last year's Operation Bunyan-un-Narves and which peaked with Pakistan brokering a ceasefire between Iran and the US amidst a dangerous regional escalation.

The finance minister then delved into a long note on the government's successes in keeping the public protected from the more devastating effects of the war, crediting the prime minister for taking "timely decisions" that prevented fuel shortages and economic chaos.

After recapping some of the highlights from yesterday's Pakistan Economic Survey report, and laying out his agenda for privatisation of government entities, including power generation companies, distribution companies, banks, insurance companies and airports, the finance minister turned his attention to proposed reforms for the Federal Board of Revenue, which he described as necessary for a self-reliant economy.

Aurangzeb said the budget for the coming year had been prepared with a "clear and purposeful" strategy, and that the top priority was to increase production capacity and promote exports.

"For this reason, we are giving tax concessions to large industries and are providing resources to exporters through the Export Financing Scheme," he added.

He further said initiatives had been taken to provide loans to farmers as "agriculture is the backbone of our economy."

The finance minister said the government was also focused on



Federal Finance Minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb presenting the federal budget for the financial year 2026-27

of 2pc would be targeted by the government.

Tax revenue has been estimated at Rs15,264 for FY2026-27, which is 17.6pc more than the outgoing year's Rs12,983. He further said that provinces would contribute Rs8,845bn to the federal revenue.

Aurangzeb said that the federal and provincial governments had agreed on a mechanism to meet "some national demands".

"The country will experience the positive impact of this mechanism," he said, adding that the mechanism was agreed on the basis of "federal cooperativeness" and without affecting the constitutional rights of provinces.

Under this mechanism, he continued, provinces' share in the federal divisible pool would remain in accordance with the 7th National Finance Commission award.

Reiterating that tax revenue for the coming fiscal year was estimated at Rs15,264bn, he said Rs13,250 would be set aside for "distribution between the federal and provincial governments".

"The amount of Rs15,264bn to Rs13,250 will be available to the provinces as grants under Article 164 of the Constitution to meet national strategic demands," he explained.

This mechanism would remain in place for FY2026-27, and would be "renewed along similar lines with provinces' consultation for FY28 and FY29," he added.

The minister then thanked the provincial governments for "stepping up for the national cause".

He added that the federal non-tax revenue was budgeted at Rs5,336bn and net federal revenue was budgeted at Rs11,751bn.

Moreover, Rs1,000bn had been set aside for the federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). After the inclusion of funds set aside for state-owned enterprises and public-private partnership, this amount increases to Rs, 1451bn.

He said that Rs2,224bn was set aside for provincial development schemes and Rs451bn for investment by state-owned enterprises.

"This distribution reflects the division of responsibilities under the 18th Amendment, under which provinces are largely responsible for the social sector and the federal government focuses on strategic projects," he added.

The finance minister said Rs3,000bn has been allocated for defence and Rs1,071bn for civil administration expenditures. Sharing these figures, Aurangzeb said defence was the government's topmost priority.

He added that the federal government's current expenditure was budgeted as Rs17,495bn.

He said Rs1,169bn was set

Court directs ECP not to issue 'adverse order' against Afridi

NEWS DESK:

Peshawar High Court on Thursday extended a stay order, asking the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) not to issue any "order" adverse to Chief Minister Sohail Afridi in the proceedings it has started over the alleged violation of the election code of conduct by him during the Haripur by-elections in Nov last year.

A bench consisting of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Inamullah Khan adjourned hearing of a petition filed by Mr Afridi against ECP proceeding on the matter without first deciding the issue of its jurisdiction and maintainability. An application was submitted on behalf of the petitioner's counsel Bashir Khan Wazir seeking general adjournment in his counsel's cases. Next date of hearing will be fixed later.

"In the meanwhile, the respondent, Election Commission of Pakistan, may proceed with the matter; however, it shall not pass any final order adverse to the petitioner [Sohail Afridi] till further orders," the bench declared.

Past of hearing into CM plea challenging proceedings against him in Haripur bypoll case.

In Nov last year, the chief minister and candidate Shehraz Omar Ayub, supported by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf in the by-election, had challenged issuance of notices to them by ECP for allegedly violating election code of conduct. The chief minister had challenged the notice issued to him on Nov 20 by ECP wherein he had been accused of delivering provocative speech against government functionaries in connection with by-elections in NA-18 Haripur. ECP claimed that the speech of the chief minister was contrary to the code of conduct issued by the commission for the by-election, for which polling was held on Nov 23.

Mr Afridi had requested the high court to set aside the impugned notice issued to him on Nov 20 by ECP. However, the court turned down both petitions, observing that no adverse order has so far been passed against the petitioners.

The impugned proceedings are aimed at inquiring into the allegations of violation of the code

Balochistan Local Polls Set for Feb 2027: Tax Breaks for Health Projects & Rs 28k Nurse Stipend Approved

Qaseem Shah, Ali Hamza:

QUETTA — Balochistan's local government bodies will be officially dissolved on February 8, 2027, paving the way for a massive, single-phase election across the entire province—including Quetta.

The definitive timeline was locked in during a high-profile provincial cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. To prevent the legal and boundary disputes that frequently stall Pakistani elections, the cabinet ruled that all fresh district delimitations and pending court rulings will be handed over to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) well ahead of the vote.

Briefing the press on the sweeping administrative shakeup, Shahid Rind, the Advisor to the CM on Political and Media Affairs, revealed that the session also pushed through major financial relief, security expansions, and institutional rebrands.

The Big Takeaways: What Was Approved
Massive Healthcare Tax Cuts:

In a bid to pull in more international aid, all foreign-



Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti chairing the meeting of the provincial cabinet: Photo provided by DGPR

handed healthcare development projects in Balochistan are now 100% exempt from provincial taxes.

Pay Hike for Nurses: The cabinet officially approved a fixed monthly stipend of Rs. 28,070 for all Graduate Nursing Trainees to combat front-

line staffing shortages.

Interest-Free Housing Loans:

The newly formed Balochistan Secretariat Employees Cooperative Society will now provide interest-free loans specifically to help pro-

vincial government employees build their homes.

Crackdown on Narcotics:

To bypass judicial bottlenecks, the cabinet has given full Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) trial powers to

all Session Judges, Additional Session Judges, and First-Class Judicial Magistrates across the province.

Administrative Upgrades & Security Expansion

The cabinet approved a significant redrawing of local administrative boundaries and security infrastructure to match population growth.

Transparency, Policy, and Welfare On the policy front, the cabinet approved critical amendments to the Balochistan Right to Information (RTI) Commission Act 2021 to make public data significantly easier for citizens and journalists to access.

Additionally, the Balochistan Public-Private Partnership Rules 2026 were greenlit to drive private sector investment into provincial development.

For the workforce, a new contract appointment policy was passed for Grade 1 to 15 workers within the Culture Department's attached wings, alongside the formal adoption of a Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) framework by the Public Health Engineering Department.

Honoring the Fallen: The cabinet session opened with solemn prayers for the elevation of ranks of the security forces and civilian martyrs, with the leadership extending its deep condolences and wishes of patience to the families of those lost.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Defense Pact - A Historic Milestone in Bilateral Relations



Editorial: For over eight decades, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have enjoyed close and cordial relations rooted in faith, friendship, and mutual cooperation.

SMDA An Unprecedented Event

The signing of a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement between the two brotherly nations.

The signing of a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement between the two brotherly nations.

political importance of Pakistan in the wider Middle East and South Asia. Over the years, Saudi Arabia has stood firmly by Pakistan, extending support in critical times, whether financial, diplomatic, or strategic.

China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia Fully Support Pakistan

China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia Fully Support Pakistan

consolidate its role as a bridge between the Muslim world and the global community.

The defense agreement with Saudi Arabia is, therefore, a matter of immense pride for the Pakistani nation. It not only secures Pakistan's strategic interests but also strengthens the balance of power in the region.

This Is Indeed A National Achievement

This historic step deserves to be celebrated as a national achievement. It is a reflection of Pakistan's enduring diplomacy and its ability to transform long-standing friendships into strategic partnerships that ensure stability, prosperity, and peace for generations to come.

Balochistan in the Eye of Climate Change Storm: Calls for Resilient Climate Policies Surface

Chandni Kakar:



In the global battle against climate change, Balochistan, Pakistan, serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for climate resilience. The province is experiencing increasingly severe weather events, a consequence of human-induced climate change.

Balochistan becoming unbearably hot

Balochistan is becoming unbearably hot, with rising temperatures transforming heatwaves into a year-round threat. These heatwaves pose severe health risks, including heat stress, dehydration, and even fatalities.

2017, Turbat recorded a scorching 53.5°C (128.3°F), setting a record for Pakistan. Unfortunately, forecasts suggest that temperatures will continue to rise.

The 2022 flood in Balochistan underscores the looming climate change threat

The 2022 flood underscored the looming threat of climate change over Balochistan. Driven by intensified and increasingly frequent monsoon rains, the full extent of the damage is yet to be comprehended.

through the loss of livestock. Between 2010 and 2022, over 1.5 million livestock were lost, costing over \$1 billion and displacing over 100,000 people, particularly in districts like Quetta, Peshin, Turbat, Paigaur, and Khuzdar.

CC affects economy

Climate change also decimated the region's economy

equally crucial. Tree plantations could mitigate sweltering temperatures. In a province where tree planting could mitigate sweltering temperatures and climate change impacts, government initiatives should engage younger generations in green initiatives.

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

Israel and Iran Conflict and Its Impact on Middle East Stability

Syed Muhammad Wasem:

Israel and Iran are exchanging deadly attacks. Israeli strikes have hit homes, hospitals, and aid workers in Tehran. Iran responded with missile and drone attacks on cities like Tel Aviv and Haifa.

The conflict is drawing global attention. President Trump left the G7 early due to the crisis. UK leaders warn against military action without approval. Tensions are rising, and the risk of a wider war is growing.

The violence is shaking the region's stability. Political alliances are shifting, economies are under pressure, and millions fear what comes next.

Behind the strikes and statements lies a deeper struggle for military power, especially between Iran and Israel. From the origins of their rivalry to current military actions, regional fallout, and global reactions, this article breaks down what you need to know.

Historical Background

The Iran-Israel conflict history began intensifying after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which transformed Iran from a close ally of Israel into one of its fiercest opponents.



drawn repeated warnings and attacks from Israel. Both nations have launched cyberattacks against each other, with incidents like the Stuxnet virus and strikes on nuclear sites.

Current State of the Conflict

External powers have also shaped the conflict's course. The U.S. strongly supports Israel with military aid and intelligence, while Iran receives political backing from Russia and economic support from China.

Impact on Middle East Stability

The violence has strengthened support for Iran's hardliners, with global concerns rising over the ongoing conflict.

Iran retaliated with missile strikes on Israel, causing damage in places like Herzliya, though no injuries were reported. The conflict has led to at least 224 Iranian and 24 Israeli casualties, with countries like India and Pakistan evacuating their citizens from Tehran.

Security and Military Impact

The Israel-Iran conflict has triggered a regional arms race. Countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt are increasing their defense spending.

Economic Consequences

The conflict has sent shockwaves through oil markets. Brent crude spiked by nearly 7%, reaching \$74.60 per barrel. Investors fear Iran could close the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for global oil.

Humanitarian and Social Consequences

The human toll is rising fast. Over 220 Iraqis, including women and children, have been killed. Israeli casualties are also growing. Missiles and airstrikes are displacing families, destroying homes, and leaving civilians trapped in unsafe areas.

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

on, regional alliances are shifting. Syria is moving closer to the West. Iraq struggles to balance relations with Iran and the U.S.

Humanitarian and Social Consequences

The human toll is rising fast. Over 220 Iraqis, including women and children, have been killed. Israeli casualties are also growing.

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

producers and consumers. Trade routes and airlines are also affected. Several carriers suspended flights to Iran, Iraq, and nearby nations.

Humanitarian and Social Consequences

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International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

The United States strongly backs Israel and warns Iran of tougher retaliation. President Trump stated that future strikes could be even more brutal if Tehran doesn't step back.

Humanitarian and Social Consequences

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International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

Governor Balochistan Urges Youth to Combat Fake News Through Media Literacy

QUETTA: Governor of Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, emphasized the importance of media literacy and responsible digital engagement, stating that the misuse of media has contributed to widening the gap between governments and young people.

He made these remarks during an interactive session at the Governor House with around 30 media activists from various districts of Balochistan participating in a Media Literacy and Digital Rights training program organized by Individual Land.

Fake News and Propaganda Fuel Distrust Addressing the participants, Governor Mandokhail said that negative and destructive content often receives greater attention on social media, while propaganda, rumors, and misinformation contribute to growing mistrust and misunderstanding within society.



He stressed that in the ongoing battle of narratives, both government institutions and the public can effectively counter fake news and false statements only through accurate, verified, and fact-based information.

Today, every mobile phone has become a counter fake news and false statements only through accurate, verified, and fact-based information.

The Governor highlighted the transformative impact of digital information technology, noting that modern communication tools have

brought global information directly into people's homes.

Media Literacy Essential for an Informed Society Governor Mandokhail described media literacy training as a necessity in the digital age.

He pointed out that individuals now have access to more information on their smartphones than what was once available in many major

libraries, making critical thinking and fact-checking skills more important than ever.

He said participants would learn how media organizations operate, how messages are created, and how to identify and verify fake news.

He emphasized that

the first line of defense for a civilized society is the ability to recognize and counter misinformation, fabricated stories, misleading images, and rumors that can quickly spread fear and confusion.

Media Activists Encouraged to Become Fact-Checkers The Governor urged all trainees to serve as "fact-checkers" within their communities by promoting verified information and discouraging the spread of false content.

He stated that responsible digital behavior and fact-based reporting can help protect society from the harmful effects of misinformation and social media manipulation.

Digital Rights and Community Leadership Go Hand in Hand Speaking on digital rights, Governor Mandokhail said that protecting online privacy, freedom of expression, and digital security are fundamental rights in the modern era.

Balochistan Validates Rangeland Mapping Reports to Support Sustainable Resource Management

QUETTA: Secretary Forest and Wildlife Balochistan, Imran Gichki, said that the validated reports prepared under the Rangeland Resource Assessment and Mapping (RRAM) initiative will serve as a strong scientific founda-

tion for policymaking, investment planning, and the sustainable management of grazing resources across Balochistan.

He made these remarks while addressing a validation workshop jointly organized by the Forest and Wildlife Department, Government of Balochistan, and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The workshop focused on Four Major River Basins. The purpose of the workshop was to validate comprehensive reports containing field survey findings, data analysis, and recommendations related to

diversity conservation, improving livestock productivity, protecting water resources, and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

He noted that the effective and sustainable management of grazing resources has become increasingly important for ensuring environmental sustainability and supporting rural livelihoods across the province.

The Secretary also praised the efforts of the Forest Department and FAO teams for successfully completing the project despite various challenges. Workshop Focused on Four Major River Basins The purpose of the workshop was to validate comprehensive reports containing field survey findings, data analysis, and recommendations related to



He explained that the assessments were conducted under an agreement between the Forest and Wildlife Department and FAO.

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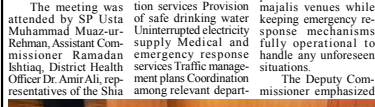
Usta Muhammad Administration Finalizes Muharram Security and Public Service Arrangements

U S T A MUHAMMAD: Deputy Commissioner Usta Muhammad, District Health Officer Dr. Amir Ali, representatives of the Shia

from various government departments. Comprehensive Review of Muharram Preparations During the meeting, participants conducted a detailed review of arrangements related to Muharram processions and religious gatherings, including Security measures for processions and religious gatherings, including Provision of safe drinking water, uninterrupted electricity supply Medical and emergency response services Traffic management plans Coordination among relevant depart-

menting the district administration's highest priority. He directed all concerned departments to ensure the availability of essential facilities at procession routes and majalis venues while keeping emergency response mechanisms fully operational to handle any unforeseen situations.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized



Mekran Medical College Turbat Still Awaiting ECFMG Recognition After 9 Years of Operation

Syed Muhammad Yassen

TURBAT: Students of Mekran Medical College (MMC) Turbat, the only public-sector medical college in Balochistan's Makran division, have expressed serious concerns over the institution's continued lack of ECFMG recognition, despite being operational for nearly nine years.

According to students, college administration and the designated focal person have repeatedly stated that an application for Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) recognition has been submitted. However, more than a year has passed without any official progress or approval.

Medical students argue that most medical colleges receive the required certification and



recognition within a much shorter timeframe after completing the application process.

The delay has raised concerns about the future of MMC graduates, particularly those aspiring to pursue international medical ca-

reers. Due to the absence of ECFMG recognition, students of Mekran Medical College are currently ineligible to apply for the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), limiting their opportunities for postgraduate training and medical practice in the United States.

Students have pointed out that other medical institutions in Balochistan, including Loralai Medical College (LMC), Bolan Medical College (BMC), and Jhalawan Medical Col-

lege (MCC), have already achieved recognition, while MMC remains pending.

The student community is calling upon the Principal of Mekran Medical College, the Directorate of Medical Education (DME), and the concerned focal persons to expedite the process and provide transparency regarding the status of the application.

Key Issues: - Mekran Medical College not yet recognized by ECFMG

- MMC graduates remain ineligible for USMLE registration.

- Nine years of operational status without international recognition.

- Students demand action from college administration and health authorities.

- Concerns over future career opportunities abroad.

Gadani Liquor Smuggling Bid Foiled as Excise Department Seizes 3,717 Bottles

Staff Reporter :

QUETTA: The Excise & Anti-Narcotics Department Balochistan has thwarted a major attempt to smuggle foreign liquor in the coastal area of Gadani, recovering thousands of bottles during a joint operation conducted with the Pakistan Navy.

According to officials, the intelligence-gathered operation was carried out on June 10 in District Hub under the supervision of Director General Excise & Anti-Narcotics (South Zone) Muhammad Zaman. During the raid, authorities recovered 3,717 bottles of foreign liquor, preventing their illegal distribution in the province.

Department officials said legal action



has been initiated and the latest seizure reflects the department's ongoing campaign against drug trafficking and the illegal trade of prohibited items across Balochistan. He noted

that recent joint operations with the Pakistan Navy have yielded significant results, including the recovery of 425 kilograms of crystal meth (ice), 20 kilograms of hashish, and more

than 5,000 bottles of foreign liquor and beer. He said these operations have dealt a substantial blow to organized smuggling networks operating along the province's coastal belt and border regions.

The director general added that over the past three months, anti-narcotics teams have confiscated narcotics worth billions of rupees and seized more than 10,000 bottles of liquor and beer during a series of enforcement actions.

Apart from anti-smuggling efforts, the department is also focusing on eliminating poppy cultivation, taking action against non-custom-paid vehicles, broadening the provincial tax base, and improving revenue collection.

Panjgur Open Forum Highlights Public Concerns on Border Trade, Education, and Healthcare

PANJGUR: The district administration of Panjgur organized a public open forum (Khuli Kachehr) at the District Council Hall to address community concerns and strengthen public engagement, and promote cooperation between citizens and government institutions.

The event was attended by Deputy Commissioner Iftikhar Zaidi, Deputy District Education Officer Jahanzeb Baloch as the chief guest, while Commandant Panjgur Rifles Brigadier Zafar Iqbal participated as the guest of honor.

Senior officials, including Additional Deputy Commissioner Atta Asad, Assistant Commissioner Iftikhar Zaidi, District Superintendent Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Baloch, representatives of PPHI, District Education Officer Saeed Ahmed Baloch, DSP Amir Jan Baloch, and local residents

attended the gathering in large numbers. Citizens Raise Key Issues During the forum, participants presented constructive suggestions regarding several important issues affecting the district, including: Further improvement in law and order.

Attendance of medical staff at hospitals/ Rehabilitation and functionalization of educational institutions/Simplification of the Pakistan-Rifles border trade sticker (token) system Improved cross-border trade opportunities for local residents.

He directed all departmental heads to enhance their performance and ensure the timely delivery of public services.

The Deputy Commissioner also announced that additional projects are being initiated to modernize healthcare facilities and educational infrastructure across the district.

that close coordination among the district administration, police, health department, municipal authorities, PHED, and QESCO is essential to provide a safe and peaceful environment for mourners.

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MQM-P delegation calls on PM Shehbaz ahead of budget; party leader says Rs20bn allocation sought for Karachi projects



NEWS DESK: A delegation of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Friday and discussed the budget for FY2026-27 and development projects for Sindh were discussed, according to the MQM-P leader Aminul Haque.

Haque told Dawn that the matter of a "special development package" for Sindh's urban areas was raised during the meeting and that his party sought an allocation of Rs20 billion for projects for Karachi and another Rs5bn allocation for Hyderabad in the budget.

He said that PM Shehbaz had assured the delegation that "sufficient" allocations had been made in the budget for Karachi and Hyderabad.

The prime minister also "promised the release of the required funds" for the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme or K-IV project, Haque said.

"He told us that the government is taking all-

out measures to complete the project by December 2026," he said.

Moreover, he said, the MQM-P delegation also raised the issue of the M-9 Motorway, which connects Karachi and Hyderabad.

"The prime minister said that M-9 should be considered an expressway or highway, and not a motorway."

Haque said the premier was urged to ensure that Sindh "gets a proper motorway connecting Karachi and Hyderabad."

He said Main Line-1 (ML-1) — a railway project, a section of which connects Karachi to Rohri — was also discussed during the meeting.

Haque said the MQM-P was of the view that it was the federal government's flagship project and work on its Karachi-Rohri section should be initiated in the fiscal year 2026-27.

He said the meeting continued for half an hour and PM Shehbaz, as well as PML-N's top leadership, "promised to address all issues raised during the meeting."

ECONOMIC SURVEY 2026-27: Poverty surges 7pc, pushing 27m people into financial distress

NEWS DESK: National poverty rate has surged by seven per cent, pushing approximately 27 million additional people into financial distress over the last six years and bringing the total number of the impoverished population of the country to 70m, according to the Economic Survey 2025-26.

The survey figures show that poverty was 21.9pc in 2018-19 which increased to 28.9pc in 2024-25.

Poverty remained significantly higher in rural areas.

Rural poverty increased from 28.2pc to 36.2pc, while urban poverty increased from 11.1pc to 17.4pc over the same period.

At the provincial level, poverty increased across all major provinces.

In 2024-25, poverty was estimated at 23.3pc in Punjab, 32.6pc in Sindh, 35.3pc in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 47pc in Balochistan. In 2018-19, the corresponding rates were 16.5pc, 24.5pc, 28.7pc, and 41.8pc, respectively.

Balochistan continued to record the highest

poverty incidence, while Punjab remained the lowest among the four provinces, the survey says.

The surge in poverty is attributed to prolonged economic shocks, including record-high inflation, currency depreciation, IMF stabilisation measures, catastrophic climate

from 28.4 in 2018-19 to 32.7 in 2024-25.

The increase was visible in both urban and rural areas.

Urban inequality rose from 31.0 to 34.4, while rural inequality increased from 23.4 to 36.6 during 2018-19 and 2024-25.

This suggests that the recent rise in poverty was accompanied

equality increased across all provinces, with Sindh recording the highest level in 2024-25.

These results suggest that the recent pressures on household welfare were accompanied by widening disparities in income distribution.

According to the survey, Pakistan's na-



events like floods and the Middle East conflict.

The adverse situation has weakened people purchasing power, raised food security and strained remittance-receiving families, the survey says.

The updated estimates also indicate a rise in inequality.

The national Gini coefficient increased

by wider disparities in income distribution. Provincial inequality also moved upward over the same period. In 2024-25, the Gini coefficient stood at 32.0 in Punjab, 35.9 in Sindh, 29.4 in KP, and 26.5 in Balochistan.

In 2018-19, the corresponding values were 28.4, 29.7, 24.8, and 21.0.

The provincial pattern indicates that in-

ternational poverty estimates are based on the cost of basic needs (CBN) approach, which has remained the standard framework for estimating consumption-based poverty.

Under this approach, the poverty line represents the minimum expenditure required to meet essential food and non-food needs.

Pakistan secures top position at international military drill competition in UK: ISPR

NEWS DESK: The Pakistan Army team has clinched first position at an international military drill competition in the United Kingdom, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday.

"In a remarkable display of excellence, the Pakistan Army team, represented by the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA), has clinched 1st Position at the prestigious International Pace Sticking Competition 2026 held at the Royal

Military Academy (RMA) Sandhurst, United Kingdom," the ISPR said in a statement.

"The Pakistan Army PMA team "made a clean sweep at the competition, securing all major honours, that is 1st Overall Team Trophy, Best Pace Sticker and Best Driver Awards."

According to the ISPR, the nine-member contingent, led by Major Haider Gulzar, arrived in the UK on June 5. A total of 16 international teams from different armies participated in the fierce annual event.

"The Pakistan Army team's victory is reflective of the highest standards of professional training, excellence and dedication maintained by the Armed Forces of Pakistan," the ISPR said.

Pakistan had also won the International Pace Sticking Competition in 2020 for a third consecutive year.



President Zardari approves bill, 'fulfilling all legal formalities' for PIA's privatisation

NEWS DESK: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday gave his assent to the Pakistan International Airlines Corporation (Conversion) (Repeal) Bill, 2026, fulfilling all necessary legal requirements for the national carrier's privatisation.

The original bill, which now stands repealed, was passed in January 2016, and sought to convert the national flag carrier into a public limited company.

Confirming the development in a statement, the presidency said that following the approval, "all the necessary legal formalities and requirements for the privatisation process of Pakistan International Airlines Company Limited (PIACL) have been fulfilled."

It added that the bill was passed by the Senate on June 10 and subsequently received approval from the National Assembly on June 11, before being sent to the president for his assent.

A consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation Limited had won the auction for 75 per cent shares of PIA in December last year, making a winning bid of Rs135 billion.

The documents pertaining to the transaction were signed during a ceremony in January, which was attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The Arif Habib-led consortium aims to transform the loss-making airline through operational restructuring, fleet expansion, and improved customer service.

To ensure the success of its revival plan, the consortium has plans to acquire the remaining 25 per cent government stake in

PIA, thereby taking full control of decision-making.

Arif Habib, chairman of the investment firm that headed the consortium, has said that PIA's privatisation would lead to an increase in employment in the airline as the new owners were looking to expand its business.



JAAC protesters in AJK's Poonch district disperse on fears of major crackdown

NEWS DESK: All three gatherings of the activists and supporters of the proscribed Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) at the fringes of Rawalakot dispersed and their participants returned to their respective areas shortly after midnight, officials said on Friday.

The development reportedly came after indications that authorities had planned a major operation to uproot the protesters, who had converged from various districts on the eastern outskirts of Rawalakot in Poonch district.

The regional administration and the JAAC have been at odds over various issues most notably the committee's demand to abolish the 12 seats in the region's Legislative Assembly that are reserved for refugees from Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir who settled in makeshift camps in Pakistan after 1947.

"There is not a single participant at any of the three sit-in sites on the outskirts of Rawalakot. All have un-

conditionally surrendered before the state and have returned, rather fled, back to their respective areas," Poonch Divisional Commissioner Sardar Waheed Khan told Dawn in the early hours of Friday. On Thursday evening, the administration had constituted a deputed contingent of around 1,000 Rangers, Federal Constabulary, Islamabad and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) police personnel for a "decisive action", apart from staging a large march of between 70 and 80 armoured and other vehicles.

Recalling that the administration had sent a law enforcement team on Thursday morning to arrest Umar Nazir Kashmiri, one of the hard-line JAAC core members, Khan claimed the move had "already chilled his blood."

In the meantime, Khan said, backchannel messaging with Kashmiri was carried through two seasoned

local station house officer (SHO).

At this, Khan said he told JAAC leaders to carry on their sit-in while he consulted his higher authorities. It was then that the tone of JAAC leaders changed, and they started saying that they would continue a peaceful sit-in, he added.

However, when the message of a huge flag march in Rawalakot reached the JAAC camp, they became apprehensive that the administration was contemplating launching a decisive action, "perhaps a blitz," he added.

According to Khan, by midnight, the administration started receiving reports about "chaos and panic" in the proscribed organisation's camp, and after an hour, the entire Eidgah area was rendered "completely unoccupied."

When the message reached the other two sites where activists had gathered, they also interrupted the move and dispersed, he said.



اطلاع برائے شہسوار / انٹرویو

پولیسٹان صوبائی اسمبلی و ایم پی ایز فہرست

ক্রম	আসনের নাম	সংসদ	পার্টি	বয়স	শিক্ষা	পেশা
1	আবদুল হক	সংসদ	পিএস-19	58	বিএ	সিআই
2	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-14	52	বিএ	সিআই
3	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-11	52	বিএ	সিআই
4	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-11	52	বিএ	সিআই
5	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-11	52	বিএ	সিআই
6	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-10	52	বিএ	সিআই
7	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-08	52	বিএ	সিআই
8	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-05	52	বিএ	সিআই
9	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-05	52	বিএ	সিআই
10	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-05	52	বিএ	সিআই
11	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-04	52	বিএ	সিআই
12	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-04	52	বিএ	সিআই
13	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-04	52	বিএ	সিআই
14	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-01	52	বিএ	সিআই
15	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-01	52	বিএ	সিআই
16	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-01	52	বিএ	সিআই
17	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-01	52	বিএ	সিআই
18	আবদুল মান্নান	সংসদ	পিএস-01	52	বিএ	সিআই

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