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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

BHC Judge Selection: Balochistan Bar Council Slams Nomination of Government Em- ployee as 'Mockery of Lawyers'

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: The Balochistan Bar Council (BBC) has fiercely lashed out at the ongoing process for appointing judges to the Balochistan High Court (BHC). The council accused authorities of completely sidelining the legal fraternity and causing outrage by recommending an individual who has been in government service for nearly two decades.

Addressing a press conference in Quetta, BBC Vice Chairman Munir Ahmed Kakar, and Executive Committee Chairman Ayaz Khan Mandokhail voiced serious reservations about the transparency of the judicial selection.

'A Mockery of the Legal Fraternity'

According to the council leaders, the Chief Justice was asked to recommend three names for the vacant positions at the BHC. However, the legal fraternity's representative body was entirely left out of the loop.

Highlighting a specific grievance, Jadin Baloch revealed that one of the nominated individuals had spent 18 years working as an instructor in the government's Manpower and Training Department.

"How can anyone justify nominating someone for a High Court judgeship who was hold-

ing a government job while claiming to practice law?" Baloch questioned. "The Balochistan Bar Council views this as a direct mockery of our dedicated lawyers and a blatant disrespect to their mandate."

Adding to the criticism, Munir Ahmed Kakar pointed out that while the Balochistan High Court has 15 sanctioned seats, the council believes attempts are being made to install "dummy characters" who would compromise the institution's integrity.

"The Bar Council is deeply concerned that there is an active effort to plant puppets in the judiciary who will follow external directives rather than delivering independent verdicts," Kakar stated, questioning why the legal community is consistently being pushed against the wall.

Echoing these concerns, Ayaz Khan Mandokhail emphasized that a state without an independent judiciary cannot sustain the public's trust in justice.

"The mandate of Balochistan's lawyers must not be treated as a joke," he added.

Province-Wide Strike Announced

In protest against what they term an unconstitutional and non-transparent nomination process, the Balochistan Bar Council has announced a complete boycott of court proceedings across the province on Monday.



Frontier Corps personnel stand alert near Pak Afghan border: Photo Quetta Voice

Balochistan to Launch Rs 25 Billion Dedicated Highway Protection Force Following Transporter Protests

Ali Hamza:

QUETTA: In a major policy shift aimed at curbing growing insecurity on national trade routes, the Government of Balochistan has formally approved the creation of a specialized, dedicated highway security force.

The initiative comes in response to immense pressure from traders, local transporters, and mine owners who have recently staged province-wide strikes protesting frequent attacks on freight trucks, passenger coaches, and critical infrastructure.

Funding and Implementation Timeline

Providing details on the multi-billion rupee security framework, Balochistan's Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Hamza Shafiqat confirmed that the provincial government is heavily prioritizing the safety of commuters and supply chains.

"This strategic project will cost approximately Rs 25 billion, with funding being reallocated from the provincial development budget to meet urgent security needs," Shafiqat stated. He added that

the newly formed force will be fully trained, equipped, and deployed across the province's sprawling highway network within the next six months.

Bridging the Interim Gap: Convoy Systems

Acknowledging that freight and passenger transport cannot remain suspended while the force is raised, the Home Department has simultaneously greenlit an interim convoy system.

Until the new highway force becomes operational, critical trade links—such as the route from the Taftan bor-

der to Quetta—will see transport vehicles escorted in secure, organized groups. This temporary measure will utilize the combined resources of the Frontier Corps (FC), the Anti-Terrorism Force (ATF), and the Pakistan Army to deter highway robberies and militant interference.

Beyond physical security, the provincial administration is actively negotiating with State Life Insurance to introduce a dedicated insurance scheme for cargo vehicles operating in Balochistan, promising fast-tracked compensation for transporters affected by past arson or attacks.

Governor Balochistan Breaks Silence on CM Sarfraz Bugti's Five-Year Tenure, Security Challenges, Cabinet Expansion

Qasem Shah:

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan has said that any question regarding whether Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti will complete his full five-year constitutional term should be addressed to the chief minister himself, while urging political circles to focus on the province's development rather than speculation over power-sharing arrangements.

Speaking to journalists in Quetta, the governor was asked whether Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti would continue in office for the entire five-year tenure or if an alleged two-and-a-half-year power-sharing agreement would determine the future of the provincial government.

Responding to the question, the governor said, "This question should be asked from Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti."

He added that discussions surrounding a reported two-and-a-half-year arrangement should not overshadow the real issues facing the province.

"The two-and-a-half-year arrangement is not that important. We should think more



File Photo: Governor Balochistan has said Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti will complete his full five-year constitutional term

about the future and development of Balochistan," he remarked.

Order Remains a Major Challenge
Commenting on the security situation, the governor ac-

knowledgeed that maintaining law and order in Balochistan remains a serious challenge. He said the provincial gov-

ernment and security institutions continue to face difficult circumstances, adding that "very big powers" are also in-

involved in attempts to disturb peace and stability in the province.

Despite the challenges, he expressed confidence that efforts to improve the security environment would continue.

Cabinet Expansion on the Cards
Replying to another question regarding a possible reshuffle or expansion of the provincial cabinet, the governor confirmed that the cabinet is still incomplete.

"The cabinet is incomplete. Of course, it is going to be completed," he said, indicating that additional appointments are expected in the near future.

Political Significance
The governor's remarks come at a time when political discussions in Balochistan continue over the future of the provincial government, reports of a power-sharing formula, the expected expansion of the cabinet, and ongoing security challenges.

While refraining from commenting directly on Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti's tenure, the governor emphasized that governance, stability, and the welfare of the people should remain the province's top priorities.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Plastic in the Womb: Balochistan's Invisible Health Crisis

By Myra Zahid:
In the dusty plains of Balochistan, where drought already strains farms and families, a different kind of threat is moving in quietly. It cannot be seen, smelled, or stopped at the door.

It is microplastics, plastic fragments smaller than five millimeters, and they are now turning up in the air we breathe, the soil we farm, and even inside newborn babies.

Microplastics form when plastic waste breaks down under sun, heat, and friction.

They have been found almost everywhere scientists have looked: household dust, farmland, drinking water, vegetables, and human tissue.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that the average person eats and breathes in roughly 39,000 to 52,000 microplastic particles every year.

In 2019, a global study commissioned by WWF International made headlines when it calculated that people may be ingesting close to a credit card's worth of plastic every week. The Express Tribune carried the story for Pakistani readers, a reminder that this is not a distant problem, but one already inside our food and water.

Pakistan's Plastic Problem

Pakistan generates

an estimated 6.41 million tons of plastic waste a year, according to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), with the vast majority never properly collected or recycled. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) says 86 percent of the country's plastic waste is mismanaged.

left in open dumps, burned, or washed into rivers and the sea. That puts Pakistan among the



world's worst plastic polluters.

When this waste breaks down in open dumps, fields, and gutters, it does not disappear. It fragments into microplastics that drift into the air or sink into the soil, eventually working their way into the crops we eat.

Mothers and Babies at Risk

The most alarming discoveries are happen-

ing before birth. In 2020, scientists in Italy found microplastics inside the human placenta for the first time, proof that plastic particles can pass from a pregnant mother to her unborn child.

Since then, researchers have also found microplastics in human breast milk.

According to exposure data reported in the Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association (JPMA),

microplastics can carry toxic chemicals such as BPA and phthalates, both known to disrupt hormones.

These chemicals are linked to low birth weight and long-term developmental risks in children.

In Pakistan, a 2024 study by the University of Karachi's Institute of Marine Science found microplastics in the breast milk of lactating mothers in fishing com-

munities along the Karachi coast,

where seafood is eaten almost daily. No equivalent study has yet been done in Balochistan, but the risk factors are familiar here too: communities along the Gwadar, Pasi, and Ormara coast-

line depend just as heavily on the sea, while facing even thinner access to maternal and child healthcare.

What Can Be Done

There are practical defenses. Lab tests show that fine water filters (around 0.2 microns, such as certified reverse-osmosis systems) can remove 94 to 100 percent of plastic particles from drinking water.

Balochistan's Agriculture Department is already distributing seeds for home gardening. Families

growing their own vegetables on terraces or small plots, using compost instead of plastic mulch, can cut their exposure while also improving food security.

Small daily habits help too: choosing cloth bags or glass or metal bottles over plastic, never heating

food in plastic containers, and never burning plastic waste, which releases microplastics and toxic fumes directly into the air.

A Policy Gap, and a Climate Connection

Experts say microplastic pollution needs to be treated as both an environmental and a public health

issue. That means enforcing waste management laws, banning single-use plastics and plastic

mulching in farming, and monitoring microplastics in soil, air, and food, something Pakistan currently does very little of.

Climate change is making the problem worse.

Rising heat speeds up plastic breakdown, drought driven dust storms carry particles further through the air, and floods wash plastic waste into farmland and waterways. Protecting mothers and children from microplastics is, in that sense, also a matter of climate justice.

Pakistan's progress on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals is already behind: official data shows

reliable figures exist for less than 10 percent of SDG indicators nationally and only 7 percent for

Balochistan. Microplastics sit at the intersection of two of these goals, SDG 13 (Climate Action) and

SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), yet remain almost entirely unmeasured here.

The Bottom Line

Microplastics are invisible, but the risk they carry is not. In a province already facing drought, poverty,

and stretched healthcare, this is a threat reaching the next generation before it is even born.

Waterfiltration, home gardens, and less plastic use can help right now. But lasting protection will need real monitoring, enforced policy, and research — starting with the studies Balochistan still doesn't have.

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 declining 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 Pa-

kistan? 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

Afghanistan, coupled with cross-border networks of drug traffickers, means temporary shifts in cultivation are often strategic rather than permanent.

Moreover, Afghanistan's pivot towards methamphetamine production—highlighted by satellite 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.

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, inde-

pendent 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.

Balochistan Security Shift: Secure Fiber Optics to Replace Vulnerable 3G and 4G Networks, Says CM Bugti



Monitoring Desk: QUETTA: In an unscripted, direct address on the social media platform X Spaces, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti provided key insight into how the government plans to regulate internet access in the province to counter ongoing safety threats.

He explicitly clarified that 3G and 4G wireless network infrastructures have frequently been intercepted and manipulated by militant cells to coordinate acts of violence and run logistics. This operational reality has often forced the government's hand to

implement mobile data shutdowns to preserve public safety. However, recognizing that constant communication blackouts harm local economies, students, and healthcare facilities, the Chief Minister announced a shift toward a tightly monitored, physically secure alternative.

"The government will provide internet services via fiber-optic cables to every village, school, and hospital in Balochistan," Bugti promised. By pivoting heavily toward fixed-line fiber optics, the provincial administration intends to guarantee uninterrupted internet access to key public institutions while cutting off the mobile channels historically weaponized by insurgent groups. Bugti reiterated that this tactical transition allows the government to secure the region's digital borders without leaving everyday citizens behind in the dark.

Water Supply to Balochistan Canals Increases, Says Nasirabad Irrigation Official

NASIRABAD: Superintending Engineer of the Irrigation Circle Nasirabad Division, Mudassar Zafar Khoso, has announced an increase in water supply to Balochistan's canal system, attributing the improvement to continuous coordination with the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) and Sindh Irrigation Department, as well as sustained efforts by Provincial Irrigation Minister Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani and Provincial Irrigation Secretary Sahal-ur-Rehman Baloch.

Balochistan had faced serious difficulties due to what he described as the rigid stance of Sindh irrigation authorities regarding water distribution. However, he emphasized that the provincial irrigation department remained actively engaged in securing Balochistan's constitutional and legal share of water in the Pat Feeder Canal and Kirihar Canal under IRSA regulations. According to the Superintending Engineer, the fair distribution of irrigation water is continuing under the supervision of Executive Engineer Farid Ahmed Pindrani. He added that monitoring reports from Sub-Divisional Officer Haji Mumtaz Ali Soomro, who is stationed in Sindh, indicate that the flow in the Pat Feeder Canal has increased from 4,000 cuses to 5,400 cuses. He expressed optimism that water availability would improve further in the coming days. Mudassar Zafar Khoso said that ensuring adequate irrigation water for farmers in Balochistan's green belt remains the department's top priority. He reiterated the

government's commitment to providing growers with their rightful share of water in accordance with IRSA rules. He further stated that officers and staff of the Irrigation Department are working around the clock to monitor the canal network, ensure the equitable distribution of water, and deliver irrigation supplies to tail-end farmers. Reaffirming the department's commitment, Mr. Khoso said that Balochistan would continue to pursue its legal share of water through all available forums in line with IRSA regulations while safeguarding the interests of farmers. He added that improved water availability would help increase agricultural production, strengthen rural livelihoods, and contribute to economic stability across the province. Balochistan Irrigation Division, Mudassar Zafar Khoso, Pat Feeder Canal water supply, Kirihar Canal, IRSA Pakistan, Sindh Irrigation Department, Balochistan farmers, irrigation water distribution, agriculture news Pakistan.

Barkhan Hosts Farmer Field Day to Promote Organic Cotton and Sustainable Agriculture

BARKHAN: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Saeed-ur-Rehman Kakar, Assistant Commissioner Ehsamuddin Kakar participated in a Farmer Field Day organized jointly by the Agriculture Department and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to promote sustainable farming practices and organic cotton cultivation.



Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Commissioner Ehsamuddin Kakar praised the joint efforts of the Agriculture Department and WWF in encouraging climate-smart and eco-friendly farming methods. He emphasized that the promotion of

sustainable agricultural practices has become increasingly important in addressing environmental challenges while improving agricultural productivity. The Assistant Commissioner said that adopting modern and environmentally responsible farming techniques can help increase crop yields, improve farmers' livelihoods, and ensure the effective conservation of natural resources. He urged farmers to work closely with agricultural experts and adopt modern cultivation methods to achieve higher productivity and support the long-term sustainable development of the agricultural sector.

The Farmer Field Day highlighted the importance of collaboration between government institutions and development organizations in equipping farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to improve agricultural resilience, protect the environment, and strengthen the rural economy. Balochistan Farmer Field Day, organic cotton Pakistan, sustainable agriculture Barkhan, WWF Pakistan agriculture, Agriculture Department Balochistan, Ehsamuddin Kakar, Saeed-ur-Rehman Kakar, organic farming, climate-smart agriculture, July 2026 news.

Gwadar Administration Intensifies Price Control Campaign in Jiwani to Ensure Fair Prices

G W A D A R / JIWANI: In line with the vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and the special directives of Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Naeqebullah Kakar, the district administration has further intensified its price control campaign in Jiwani to ensure the availability of quality essential commodities at government-approved prices. As part of the campaign, Tehsil Dar Jiwani Azam Khan Gichki, leading the Price Control Committee, conducted a surprise inspection of Jiwani shops to monitor compliance with official pricing regulations. During the visit, the inspection team examined various shops to check the availability of government price lists, the quality of food items, expiry dates, sanitation standards, hoarding practices, and over-

strict legal action under the relevant laws. Deputy Commissioner Naeqebullah Kakar stated that the district administration remains committed to protecting consumer interests, maintaining price stability in local markets, promoting a transparent business environment, and providing maximum relief to the public. He further instructed the concerned officials to continue the price control campaign with a regular, effective, and impartial basis to safeguard consumers from inflation, profiteering, and unfair market practices. Gwadar price control campaign, Jiwani Bazaar inspection, Deputy Commissioner Naeqebullah Kakar, Azam Khan Gichki, Gwadar administration, price monitoring Balochistan, consumer protection Pakistan, anti-profiteering drive, Jiwani market, July 2026 news.

PPP Leader Haji Ali Madad Jatak Inaugurates New Tube Well, Bringing Clean Drinking Water to Hundreds of Families in Quetta

QUETTA: Provincial Minister and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Haji Ali Madad Jatak inaugurated a new tube well under his Annual Development Programme (ADP) at Bhosa Mandi near Muhammad Shahi Town, serving the Eastern Bypass, Badini Link Road, Killi Akhtarabad Bangalzai, and surrounding areas. Both the completion of the project, hundreds of households have started receiving a regular supply of clean drinking water, providing long-awaited relief to residents who had faced severe water shortages for years.

The ceremony was attended by Ali Muhammad Bangalzai, Mir Yousaf Bangalzai, Chief Abdul Aziz Bangalzai, Samee Bangalzai, Khalid Sagar, former Councillor Fazal ur Rehman Bangalzai, and other local elders and community representatives. Speaking on the occasion, PPP leaders said the party remains committed to public service and that, under the leadership of Haji Ali Madad Jatak, development work is continuing across the constituency. They highlighted ongoing projects in clean drinking water, road infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other essential public services, reaffirming

their commitment to extending basic facilities to every community. The leaders added that the development journey would continue with the same dedication to ensure improved living standards and sustainable infrastructure for local residents. The newly completed tube well project, funded through Haji Ali Madad Jatak's Annual Development Programme, is expected to provide a permanent supply of clean drinking water to residents of the Eastern Bypass, Badini Link Road, Killi Akhtarabad Bangalzai, and adjoining localities. Local residents described the project as a long-awaited necessity and appreciated it as an example of practical public service and community-focused development.

Haji Ali Madad Jatak, PPP Quetta, Quetta tube well project, clean drinking water Quetta, Eastern Bypass Quetta, Badini Link Road, Annual Development Programme Balochistan, drinking water project, Pakistan Peoples Party development, Quetta news July 2026.

Harnai Administration Provides Emergency Relief to Family Affected by Wall Collapse After Heavy Rain

HARNAI: Acting on the vision of Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and the special directives of the provincial government, the Harnai district administration has stepped up efforts to provide immediate assistance to people affected by natural disasters and resolve public issues without delay. As part of these efforts, Additional Deputy Commissioner Saleem Tareen paid an emergency visit to Shahrag Tehsil, where he met the family of four children injured in a wall collapse caused by recent heavy rainfall and strong winds.

During the visit, he delivered emergency relief assistance on behalf of the provincial government. According to the district administration, the heavy rain and powerful winds struck during the recovery period. Speaking to the family, Muhammad Saleem Tareen assured them that the district administration would continue to stand by them during this difficult time. He said that, under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner Harnai, the administration remains on high alert around the clock to ensure the safety and property and ensure timely disaster response. He added that all available government resources would be utilized to support the complete rehabilitation and assistance of those affected by the incident. Residents of the area appreciated the swift humanitarian response and thanked Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and the district administration for providing immediate relief to the affected family.

Harnai rain emergency, Shahrag wall collapse, Harnai relief operation, Muhammad Saleem Tareen, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Balochistan disaster relief, Harnai district administration, heavy rain Balochistan, emergency assistance, July 2026 news.

Loralai Municipal Committee Intensifies Cleanliness, Drainage Improvement, and Anti-Mosquito Drive

LORALAI: In line with the Balochistan Government's vision and the directives of Loralai Division Commissioner Wali Muhammad Barech, the Municipal Committee Loralai has intensified its citywide cleanliness, drainage improvement, and anti-mosquito campaign. The initiative is being carried out under the leadership of Chief Officer Mohibullah Baloch, with municipal teams conducting extensive sanitation operations across various parts of the city. As part of the campaign, municipal workers cleaned drains, removed accumulated garbage and debris, and carried out special sanitation measures in Babu Mohalla, Cinema Gali, Habib Plaza, Darul

House, Deputy Commissioner's Office, Commissioner's House, Judges Colony, SSP House, DIG House, TNT Colony, Bacha Khan Chowk, Jinnah Road, Tehsil Road, Teaching Hospital, and other important public areas. Chief Officer Mohibullah Baloch directed the municipal staff to further strengthen sanitation services, drainage maintenance, tree care, and mosquito control measures to ensure residents have access to a clean, healthy, and pleasant environment. He also appealed to the public to cooperate with the Municipal Committee by disposing of waste only at designated locations and playing an active role in maintaining cleanliness throughout the city.



Uloom Road, Sadar Bazaar, Bahi Bazaar, Kakri Masjid Road, Government Garden, and several other areas. The objective of the operation is to improve the drainage system ahead of the monsoon season, prevent waterlogging, and provide residents with a cleaner and healthier urban environment. In addition to sanitation efforts, the Municipal Committee continued its tree plantation maintenance campaign by regularly watering trees and saplings planted across the city to ensure their healthy growth and contribute to a greener environment. To protect public health, anti-mosquito spraying was also carried out at several key locations, including the Deputy Commissioner's

Islamabad frontrunner to host US-Iran talks

NEWS DESK: Islamabad is emerging as the leading venue for the next round of technical negotiations between the United States and Iran, diplomatic sources told Dawn.

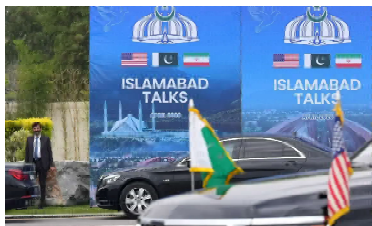
The resumption of the talks is part of ongoing efforts to keep the diplomatic process on track and resolve longstanding disputes between Washington and Tehran.

"There are two possible venues for the technical talks: Islamabad and the Burgenstock resort in Switzerland," one diplomatic source said. "Islamabad, however, is the more likely option."

The technical talks are expected to take place on July 11, although a final decision on the venue has yet to be announced.

According to diplomatic sources, the negotiations will focus on Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions relief and Iranian assets frozen abroad. The discussions are also expected to address regional security issues, including efforts to preserve stability in the Strait of Hormuz and maintain the recently agreed ceasefire in Lebanon.

The July 11 meeting is intended to advance the framework established under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, signed two weeks ago, which gave both sides 60 days to negotiate a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear programme and



related issues.

The talks were temporarily delayed because of the multi-day state funeral ceremonies for Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iranian officials have indicated that the composition of Tehran's delegation will be announced after the funeral ceremonies conclude.

The latest diplomatic efforts follow indirect technical discussions held in Doha earlier this week. US President Donald Trump described those talks as "very good", while Iranian officials said the two sides had reached an understanding on the partial release of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets.

The US officials, however, reportedly disagreed that any such agreement had been reached. Diplomatic sources said mediators from Qatar and Pakistan continued to facilitate indirect contacts during the pause in negotiations, with discussions focusing on ensuring freedom

of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and preserving the 60-day ceasefire agreed after June negotiations in Switzerland.

The most recent high-level negotiations were held at Switzerland's Burgenstock resort and were mediated by Qatar and Pakistan. Those talks produced what negotiators described as a roadmap for reaching a broader agreement covering Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions relief, maritime security and regional de-escalation.

Diplomatic sources said marathon negotiating sessions addressed nuclear restrictions, sanctions relief, security in the Strait of Hormuz and the Lebanon ceasefire. Although negotiators reported progress, they cautioned that the process remained fragile amid continuing tensions between Washington and Tehran.

Officials familiar with the negotiations said the next round of

high-level direct talks is expected to take place in Doha during the third week of July, after technical teams complete work on the details of a possible agreement.

US, Iran trade fresh barbs

Meanwhile, Washington and Tehran continued to exchange sharp verbal barbs during Khamenei's funeral. Speaking at an Independence Day event at Mount Rushmore, President Trump mocked the funeral ceremony, saying Washington had "given Iran a week off for a funeral because we're nice".

"We beat Venezuela in one day, and we knocked the hell out of Iran. They are dying to settle, they want to settle so badly," he said during a speech marking the start of celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

"We gave them a week off for a funeral because we're nice," he added. He also claimed that Tehran was "dying to settle".

Tehreek-e-Insaf rift spills into open

NEWS DESK: Internal divisions within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spilled into the open after a tense exchange between Imran Khan's sister Aleema Khan and the party's Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram on a WhatsApp group, prompting both to leave the group in quick succession.

According to sources familiar with the

responded that he had not spoken to Aleema Khan personally and was therefore not privy to the details. He said Aleema had herself made her position public and that, beyond that, he was unaware of the matter.

However, he added that Bushra Bibi's daughter and sister-in-law (bhabi) had been allowed to meet her, implying that the offer for

Taking a dig at the strongest assets of the party's workers and leaders were enduring the same pain in light of those who had died and those who remained behind bars because of Imran Khan's struggle.

Sheikh Waqas further wrote that the position he had expressed during the television programme, as well as in other talk shows, reflected the party's position and also her point



matter, the dispute stemmed from Sheikh Waqas Akram's remarks during a television programme when he was asked about reports that Imran Khan's sisters had missed an opportunity to meet the jailed PTI founder, while only one of his sisters had been allowed access.

"I'm taking a cautious position, Sheikh Waqas

meetings with Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi existed, albeit on terms set by the authorities.

According to sources, Aleema Khan took exception to Sheikh Waqas Akram's response and used the main WhatsApp group created to coordinate efforts and strategies for Imran Khan's release, to vent her frustration.

of view. He wrote that he had been explaining the party's stance long before Babar Awan.

According to sources, Aleema Khan subsequently exited the WhatsApp group.

Sheikh Waqas Akram then responded to the messages directed at him. Acknowledging the unmatched sacrifices made by Imran Khan, he

with such patterns of trade and investment."

With changes in the global system, FM Dar stated, "countries that work together, diversify their partnerships, and build resilient economic linkages will be better positioned to prosper in the future."

The foreign minister stressed, "Pakistan and Turkey have every reason to be among those countries."

Discussing the strategic location of both countries, FM Dar stated that they are "strategically located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia." He added that such positioning allowed Istanbul and Islamabad to "connect markets, regions, and opportunities that extend far beyond our own borders."

"This strategic geography must become an economic advantage to both of our people," FM Dar urged.

Saying that diplomacy today is "no longer confined to political dialogue alone," he stated, "Economic diplomacy is the name of the game."

Foreign women abduction case: Police ordered to treat 'minister-linked suspect' like any other criminal

NEWS DESK: Lahore Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations Faisal Kamran said on Sunday that the police were ordered to treat a suspect — reportedly linked to a senior government minister — as any other criminal.

The suspect was involved in the case of alleged abduction and assault of two foreign women like "any other criminal."

On Thursday, the police booked five suspects over alleged abduction and sexual assault after the two women were rescued. Four of the suspects, including a close relative of a senior political personality, were arrested and later sent on a five-day physical remand.

Addressing a press conference, he recounted the events lead-

ing as this up to the recovery of the women and the subsequent arrest of the suspects.

"We got the priority was to ensure the recovery of the women."

"We carried out raids in Sardogha and several other locations; at the same time, when we found the family tree of one of the suspects and after speaking to inhabitants at one of the raided houses, it emerged that the family of suspect used to live in the house some time back on rent and were probably related to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar," he said.

The police official identified the suspect as Muhammad Raza Dar. He continued: "As soon as this was flagged, we had to confirm the information, and we confirmed it from the family; we got the number (of the suspect) from them and began tracing his location."

"The family definitely would have told him to surrender," the police official remarked. "Within this context, there are a couple of things which should be kept in mind: Raids were being carried out in Sardogha, the Shadara house, and DHA, so people were starting to pick up on it," he said.

Kamran recalled that around this time, the suspect told the women he was taking them to the airport, claiming that he had received the ransom.

Islamabad seeks Turkish investment in energy, mining, defence and IT among other sectors: Dar

NEWS DESK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Saturday said that Pakistan particularly seeks Turkish investment in key sectors including energy, mining, minerals, power infrastructure, information technology, manufacturing, agriculture, logistics, tourism, and defence industries.

"These sectors, the foreign minister said during a Pakistan-Turkey Business Conference, "offer tremendous opportunities not only for commercial success but also for technology, transfer, industrial modernisation, and employment generation."

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on Sunday, FM Dar noted during the conference that the Pakistani government "has embarked upon an ambitious programme of economic reforms under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif."

The CM also said the programme aims to improve macroeconomic stability, enhance investment confidence, create an

enabling environment, and doing business for business leaders and houses.

With this, he highlighted the equal importance of collaboration in emerging technologies. "Artificial intelligence, digital innovation, FinTech, advanced manufacturing and research partnerships with increasingly determine the competitive-ness of our two economies," he noted, adding



that there is "enormous potential for our universities, research institutions, and private sectors to work together in these fields."

In his address at the conference, the foreign minister noted that Islamabad and Istanbul "enjoy a relationship that is unique in international affairs and history."

He added that the two countries have "consistently stood by each other" throughout the decades, "whether on matters of regional peace and security, humanitarian assistance, or

political trust is among the strongest assets of our two nations."

Addressing the purpose of the conference, FM Dar stated that the challenge both countries face "is to transform this extraordinary political and brotherly relationship into an equally dynamic economic partnership," adding that "the international landscape is changing rapidly; the global economy is being reshaped by geopolitical competi-

tors to work together in these fields."

support for each other's core national interests."

According to the foreign minister, "this

new patterns of trade and investment."

With changes in the global system, FM Dar stated, "countries that work together, diversify their partnerships, and build resilient economic linkages will be better positioned to prosper in the future."

The foreign minister stressed, "Pakistan and Turkey have every reason to be among those countries."

Discussing the strategic location of both countries, FM Dar stated that they are "strategically located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia." He added that such positioning allowed Istanbul and Islamabad to "connect markets, regions, and opportunities that extend far beyond our own borders."

"This strategic geography must become an economic advantage to both of our people," FM Dar urged.

Saying that diplomacy today is "no longer confined to political dialogue alone," he stated, "Economic diplomacy is the name of the game."

Punjab to digitally map citizens' health, demographic profiles

NEWS DESK: In order to compile comprehensive information on citizens' health and lifestyles, the Punjab government has created a unique identification number through digital mapping, while 14,300 community health workers under its first digital health census.

In a meeting on Saturday, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was informed that the digital health census was near completion and that nearly 94.3 million health and demographic profiles had been registered across Punjab. "More than 95 per cent of the population in 18 districts has been covered through health and demographic profiling. Five districts have achieved 100 per cent coverage while another five districts were completed over 95 per cent profiling," the meet-

ing was informed.

The meeting was informed that every household in Punjab had been assigned a unique identification number through digital mapping, while 14,300 community health workers under its first digital health census.

The CM reviewed the programme's digital dashboard, which contained comprehensive information on citizens' health status, lifestyle, economic conditions, access to drinking water and disabilities.

Nearly 94.3m profiles registered; CM health and demographic population management campaign It was announced that 16 cardiac catheterisation laboratories (cath labs) would be made operational

across the province by December. Five labs were already functional, while facilities in Bahakara, Bahawalpur, and Layyah had been directed to become operational at the earliest.

The CM also sought weekly performance reports on the operational labs and directed officials to improve the home delivery system for medicines. She instructed the health department to launch a comprehensive population management campaign to address the province's growing population.

"Without authentic data, no policy can be effective," the CM said, adding that healthcare services would now be planned and delivered on the basis of 100 per cent verified digital data instead of estimates.

Chief Justices (CJs) submit names for additional judges to Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP)

NEWS DESK: The chief justices of four high courts have submitted their nominations to the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) for the appointment of additional judges, as the process to fill vacant positions in the superior judiciary from now on.

The JCP had invited nominations for 10 additional judges of the Lahore High Court (LHC), five of the Sindh High Court (SHC), five of the Balochistan High Court (BHC) and five of the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi, in consultation with the chief justices of the high courts, had sought nominations from JCP members by July 4. It is learnt that the chief justices of the three high courts have now forwarded their nominations to the commission.

Out of 11 nominees for the LHC, Chief Justice Asfiaz Neelum has recommended the names

of five serving law officers. Legal circles say this is perhaps the first time that a high court chief justice has recommended such a large number of serving law officers for appointment as additional judges.

The law officers recommended by the LHC chief justice are Advocate General Punjab Anjad Pervez, Prosecutor General Punjab Syed Farhad Ali Shah, Prosecutor General Islamabad Capital

Territory Ghulam Sarwar Nihung, Additional Attorney General Munawar Iqbal Dugal and Deputy Attorney General Asad Bajwa.

The remaining nominees are Shreef Imran, Muhammad Ajmal, Kashif Rajwana, Usman Ghani, Amer Ajam Malik and Khalid Bin Aziz. Interestingly, the two opposition members of the JCP did not recommend any candidate for appointment to the LHC.

"We have sent names for the SHC but could not find anyone willing for other courts," said JCP member Senator Ali Zafar of the PTI. It is learnt that many lawyers are reluctant to give their consent to opposite members because of difficult circumstances. Even nominees proposed by chief justices, they argue, cannot be approved unless they receive government support in the commission. For the SHC, Chief Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput has recommended five names.

According to sources, the nominees are Sessions Judge Suresh Kumar, Humayun Advocate, Sarfraz Malik, Advocate General Zeeshan Adhi and former Additional Advocate General Sault Rizvi. It is learnt that the chief justice has once again nominated a candidate belonging to a minority community for appointment to the SHC.

several lawyers with strong professional reputations, but they failed to obtain the majority vote required in the JCP. Lawyers generally believe that, without the backing of the executive, appointments to the superior judiciary are difficult to secure. Even nominees proposed by chief justices, they argue, cannot be approved unless they receive government support in the commission. For the SHC, Chief Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput has recommended five names.

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