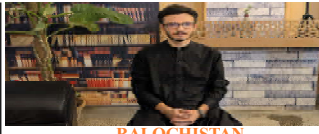




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QUETTA VOICE

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Friday 14, August, 2026

“Youth are Pakistan’s Ambassadors”: CM Sarfraz Bugti Interacts with Students

ALI HAMZA,
QASEEM SHAH:

QUETTA — Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, held a detailed interactive session with male and female students from across the province who were selected on pure merit for higher education scholarships at top universities across Pakistan.

The meeting, attended by Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan and Secretary Higher Education Saleh Baloch,

provided a platform for students to discuss governance, regional development, and educational opportunities directly with the province’s executive leadership.

Empowering Students from Modest Backgrounds

Speaking to the young scholars, Chief Minister Bugti emphasized that a majority of the selected candidates belong to underprivileged and middle-class families.

He described their admis-



Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti interacting with students at the CM Secretariat: Photo DGPR

sion into premier national institutions as a transformative milestone for their families and the region.

The merit-based selection of students from remote districts guarantees a bright

academic future for Balochistan.

Wherever our youth go, they represent our province as ambassadors of a united Pakistan.”

— Mir Sarfraz Bugti,

Chief Minister of Balochistan

The Chief Minister also expressed deep gratitude to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for supporting Balochistan’s students through fully funded uni-

versity seats, tuition cover, and hostel fee support in Punjab’s educational institutions.

A Call to Focus on Merit and Resist Anti-State Propaganda Addressing the socio-political challenges surround-

ing youth engagement in the region,

Bugti urged students to stay focused on discipline, research, and skill development while remaining vigilant against divisive narratives.

Bolan Gas Pipeline Explosion Causes Suspension Of Supply



Technical team at the spot of the blast that damaged the gas pipe line:

From Our Correspondent:

Gas supplies to Quetta and several parts of Balochistan were disrupted after an explosion damaged a major gas pipeline near Gokurt in Bolan, officials of the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) said.

According to SSGC officials, an 18-inch-diameter gas pipeline was damaged by an explosive device near its valve assembly.

The installation is located around 800 metres from the National Highway.

The blast led to the suspension of gas supplies to Quetta, Kolpur, Mach,

Mastung, Kalat, Pishin and Ziarat,

affecting a large number of consumers across the region.

Flames were seen rising from the damaged pipeline following the explosion, according to information from the site.

SSGC officials said the blast occurred at the pipeline’s valve assembly and that repair teams were ready to move to the site.

However, the teams will be dispatched only after receiving security clearance to ensure their safety.

The company will assess the extent of the damage before beginning repair and res-

toration work.

Officials have not yet announced how long it will take to fully restore gas supplies to the affected areas.

The disruption comes as households and businesses in several districts remain dependent on the pipeline network for their daily gas needs.

Any prolonged suspension could create additional difficulties for residents and commercial consumers.

Security officials are expected to investigate the circumstances surrounding the explosion and determine who was responsible for damaging the gas infrastructure.

14
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یوم آزادی

آزادی
نعمت بھی
ذمہ داری بھی

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محکمہ تعلقات عامہ، حکومت بلوچستان

World Bank Questions Balochistan Flood Housing Funds as 119,049 Families Remain Without Financing

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: A funding dispute has emerged over a major flood-rehabilitation programme in Balochistan, with the World Bank expressing concern about the decision to limit financing for housing reconstruction and the possible redirection of resources toward other development needs.

The issue is particularly significant for thousands of families whose homes were damaged or destroyed by floods and who were identified as eligible for assistance under the reconstruction programme.

According to World Bank figures, 119,049 verified and eligible households currently have no identified financing after the housing component of the programme was capped.

The affected households largely belong to economically vulnerable communities. The World Bank data shows that approximately 84 percent of eligible beneficiaries fall into the ultra-poor and



vulnerable categories, with many families depending on daily-wage work for their livelihoods.

For such households, access to housing support is not merely a matter of rebuilding physical structures.

A safe home is essential for restoring liv-

hoods, protecting children and elderly family members, and reducing the risk of families falling deeper into poverty after a disaster.

World Bank raises concerns over funding decision
The World Bank

has reportedly objected to the change in the allocation of housing-related funds, warning that excluding eligible families could undermine the objectives of the broader reconstruction programme.

The concern comes at a time when Balochistan continues to face serious develop-

ment challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, poverty and growing exposure to extreme weather events.

The government, meanwhile, has its own development priorities and faces significant pressure to invest in roads, public infrastructure and other facilities across the province.

However, the funding dispute raises an important question: can infrastructure development move forward without reducing assistance meant for families who have already been identified as eligible for housing reconstruction?

A new road may improve access to a village,

but it cannot replace a safe home for a family whose house was destroyed by a flood.

Concerns over fraud need transparent investigation

The government has also expressed concerns about fraudulent or questionable claims within reconstruction programmes.

If irregularities have occurred, they should be investigated through a transparent and accountable process. Genuine beneficiaries should not be penalised because of fraudulent claims made by others.

Authorities can verify beneficiaries, investigate suspected fraud and recover misused funds while simultaneously protecting the rights of families who meet the programme's eligibility criteria.

Government, World Bank urged to find solution

The current disagreement does not necessarily have to become

a confrontation between the provincial government and the World Bank.

A joint review of the programme, beneficiary lists and available financing could provide a way forward.

Such an approach could address concerns about transparency while also ensuring that legitimate flood victims are not excluded from reconstruction assistance.

For Balochistan, where poverty and natural disasters have repeatedly affected vulnerable communities, resilient housing remains a critical part of long-term recovery.

The priority should therefore be to find a solution that allows the government to pursue essential infrastructure projects while protecting funds and opportunities meant for the province's poorest flood-affected families.

At the heart of the issue are 119,049 households waiting for a clear answer about whether the assistance they were deemed eligible to receive will ultimately reach them.

Balochistan Investment Board Marks 79th Independence Day, Highlights Province's Economic Potential

QUETTA: Vice-Chairman Balochistan Board of Investment and Trade (BBotT) Bilal Khan Kakar has said that Pakistan is the result of immense sacrifices, struggle and unparalleled determination, while Independence Day provides an opportunity to remember the sacrifices of the country's founders and renew the commitment to Pakistan's development, prosperity and stability.

He expressed these views while addressing an Independence Day ceremony at the Balochistan Investment Board office.

BBotT Chief Executive Officer Qamir Jashari,



officers and other officials attended the ceremony.

The event included the hoisting of the national flag, cutting of an Independence Day cake and special prayers for

the security, development and prosperity of Pakistan. Balochistan Has Vast Investment Potential Bilal Khan Kakar said Balochistan possesses enormous economic potential because

of its vast land area, natural resources, mineral deposits, coastline, Gwadar Port, renewable energy potential, agriculture, livestock, fisheries and tourism sectors.

He said these re-

sources and opportunities could be transformed into drivers of economic growth through modern technology, investment and effective planning.

The BBotT vice chairman said Independence Day should also be an occasion to pledge that Balochistan's economic potential would be utilized to contribute more effectively to strengthening Pakistan's national economy. He added that the Balochistan Investment Board was actively working to promote investment, create a business-friendly environment and facilitate local and foreign investors in the province.

sources and opportunities could be transformed into drivers of economic growth through modern technology, investment and effective planning.

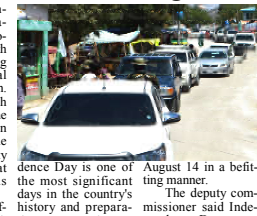
He said these re-

Ziarat Steps Up Independence Day Preparations with Grand Flag March

ZIARAT: Independence Day preparations have gained momentum in Ziarat, with celebrations beginning amid strong national spirit and enthusiasm. A grand flag march was organized by the district administration and police under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Abdul Qudus Achakzai.

District Police Officer Abdul Malik Durani and Assistant Commissioner Sher Shah Ghilzai also participated in the flag march.

DC Ziarat Highlights National Unity and Patriotism Addressing participants, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qudus Achakzai said Pakistan's Indepen-



dence Day is one of the most significant days in the country's history and preparations were underway in full swing to celebrate the occasion with national spirit, enthusiasm and unity.

He said various government and public locations across the district were being decorated with national flags, banners and green-and-white decorations to mark

August 14 in a befitting manner. The deputy commissioner said Independence Day was a celebration of the nation's spirit of patriotism and a reminder of the responsibility to promote peace, security and brotherhood.

He expressed the resolve that the people of Pakistan must work collectively to make the country a developed, prosperous and invincible nation.

Balochistan's Genius: How Asadullah Khan Tareen Broke National Records and Made It to Global Research Stage

SYEDALI SHAH:

QUETTA/PISHIN: In a landmark achievement that proves talent knows no geographical boundaries, Asadullah Khan Tareen, a stellar student belonging to

Pishin district of Balochistan, has emerged as one of Pakistan's highest academic achievers. From shattering O-Level examination records to securing a rare spot in an elite global research program, Asadullah's journey stands as a beacon of hope and inspiration for youth across the province and the nation.

Breaking National Records in O & A Levels

Asadullah set a rare precedent during his O-Level examinations by appearing in 14 subjects—the maximum number of subjects a candidate can take. Demonstrating exceptional mastery, he secured 12 A* grades, earning him national distinctions and cementing his position among the top achievers in Pakistan's educational history.

Refusing to rest on his laurels, Asadullah carried his momentum



into his A-Level examinations. Taking on a rigorous load of 5 demanding subjects, he aced every single one, securing straight A/A* grades and cementing his spot at the absolute top of national academic rankings.

A Milestone for Pakistan: Pioneer Academics Selection

Beyond standardized examinations, Asadullah has achieved what very few high school students globally accomplish. He has been se-

lected for Pioneer Academics, recognized as the world's only fully accredited research program for high school students.

Did You Know? Pioneer Academics selects only 3 to 4 students from all of Pakistan each year, placing Asadullah among an elite group of young scholars worldwide.

As part of this prestigious fellowship, Asadullah is currently conducting cutting-edge medical science research on a critical healthcare topic.

Research Focus: "Does AI Help or Hinder

the Effectiveness of Diagnosis of Diffuse Gliomas?"

His research explores the intersection of artificial intelligence and neuro-oncology, analyzing how AI tools impact the clinical diagnostic accuracy of complex brain tumors. His paper is scheduled for international publication next month.

An Eye-Opener for the Youth of Balochistan

In a region often discussed for its educational challenges, Asadullah Khan Tareen's success story

serves as a powerful reminder that perseverance, discipline, and vision can overcome any barrier.

His trajectory from Pishin to international research cohorts shows that students from remote districts hold the potential to lead advanced technological and scientific discourse globally.

As Asadullah prepares to publish his research paper, his journey stands as an eye-opener and a rallying call for parents, educators, and young minds across Pakistan: with dedication, excellence is within everyone's reach.

Provincial Interior Minister Mir Ziaullah Langau Visits Kalat, Reviews Independence Day Preparations

KALAT: Balochistan Provincial Interior Minister Mir Ziaullah Langau visited Kalat, where tribal elders, party workers expressed their full confidence in the leadership of Mir Ziaullah Langau and appreciated efforts to ad-

dress local issues and promote development in the area.

Party workers said preparations for Pakistan Independence Day to participate actively in the Independence Day celebrations.

The provincial interior minister emphasized that the participation of citizens and political

spirit across Kalat.

He said various ceremonies and rallies would be organized on August 14, urging the public and party workers to participate actively in the Independence Day celebrations.

The provincial interior minister emphasized that the participation of citizens and political



projects and party affairs. Tribal elders and party workers expressed their full confidence in the leadership of Mir Ziaullah Langau and appreciated efforts to ad-

dress local issues and promote development in the area. Party workers said preparations for Pakistan Independence Day to participate actively in the Independence Day celebrations.

The provincial interior minister emphasized that the participation of citizens and political

Balochistan Finance Minister Shuaib Noshervani Calls for Unity and Development on Independence Day

QUETTA: Balochistan Provincial Finance and Minerals Minister Mir Shuaib Noshervani has extended Independence Day greetings to the nation, particularly the people of Balochistan, saying that Pakistan is the result of the tireless struggle, sacrifices and unwavering determination of its founding generations.

In his message ahead of August 14, the provincial minister said the occasion reminds

the nation of the sacrifices of its forefathers, renews the commitment to love for the homeland and encourages citizens to work together for the country's development and prosperity.

He said the security, sovereignty and stability of Pakistan are a collective responsibility and called for unity in facing the challenges confronting the country.

Balochistan's Sacrifices for Pakistan Recognized Mir Shuaib Noshervani said the

people of Balochistan had always made valuable sacrifices for the security, stability and development of Pakistan. He said the Balochistan government was taking comprehensive measures for the province's economic and social development, employment generation, provision of basic facilities and sustainable growth.

The minister stressed the need to promote national unity, brotherhood.

QUETTA: Senior Provincial Minister of Balochistan, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Central Executive Committee member, Parliamentary Leader, and Provincial Irrigation Minister Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani has extended heartfelt greetings to the

people of Pakistan on the occasion of Independence Day, August 14.

In his Independence Day message, the provincial minister said that freedom is one of the greatest blessings bestowed by Almighty Allah, for which the nation can never be suffi-

ciently grateful.

He said the foundations of Pakistan were laid with the blood and sacrifices of the country's forefathers, while thousands of people sacrificed their precious lives to secure the nation's freedom.

Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani said that it

is now the collective responsibility of every citizen in the country for the development, progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

He emphasized that Independence Day should be an occasion to renew the national commitment to upholding the Constitution,

rule of law, peace, justice and supremacy of Parliament in the country's struggle, sacrifices and unwavering determination of its founding generations.

In his message ahead of August 14, the provincial minister said the occasion reminds



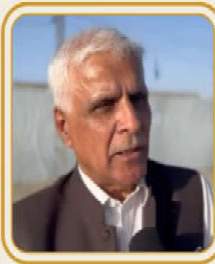
**14 AUGUST - A COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT,
A COMMITMENT TO QUETTA, A COMMITMENT TO PAKISTAN**

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT
CHIEF MINISTER PACKAGE FOR QUETTA DEVELOPMENT**
Government of Balochistan



Mir Sarfraz Bugti
Chief Minister of Balochistan

"The development of Quetta is a commitment to our people and a vital investment in the future of Balochistan."



Project Director
Engineer Muhammad Rafiq Baloch

"We remain committed to quality infrastructure and to creating a better connected, more accessible and developed Quetta."



Chief Secretary Balochistan
Shakil Qadir Khan

"Quality, transparency and timely completion of development projects remain essential to building sustainable infrastructure for our people."



BUILDING A BETTER QUETTA, TOGETHER

On this Independence Day, we reaffirm our commitment to building a modern, connected, safe and accessible Quetta. Under the vision and leadership of Honourable Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, PMU-Chief Minister Package for Quetta Development is transforming the city's urban infrastructure through quality development and improved connectivity.



OUR PROGRESS — OUR PRIDE

- ▲ 12 Major Arterial Road Projects Completed
- ▲ 07 Major Projects Under Execution
- ▲ 05 New Development Projects Initiated
- ▲ Modern Traffic Signals Introduced
- ▲ Model Traffic Police Supported
- ▲ Dedicated Maintenance Office Established

TOWARDS A BETTER QUETTA

Improved connectivity • Alternative routes • Reduced congestion • Smoother traffic flow • Better urban infrastructure • Quality is our standard. Development is our mission. Public service is our commitment.



Norwegian FM praises Pakistan's role in regional peace in meeting with CDF Munir

NEWS DESK: Norway's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide on Thursday appreciated the "professional role" played by Pakistan in promoting regional peace and stability during a meeting with Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi, the military's media wing said.

The meeting came during Eide's two-day official visit to Pakistan, which marked the first visit by a Norwegian foreign minister to the country in a decade.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), a high-level Norwegian delegation led by Eide called on Field Marshal Munir, with the two sides discussing "matters of mutual interest, regional security and bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Norway".

Eide appreciated the "professional role" played by the Pakistan Armed Forces in promoting regional peace and stability.

CDF Munir highlighted Pakistan's "perspective on global peace and regional stability", underscoring the importance of "cooperation and collaborative efforts" to address common security challenges, ISPR said.

The two sides also discussed regional security and bilateral relations.

tions, with both sides "reiterating their resolve to further strengthen bilateral ties" and "expand engagements in defence and security domains".

FM Dar, Norwegian counterpart hold press briefing.

Earlier, Eide commended Pakistan's "im-

portant and constructive role" during the recent Iran-Syria conflict, including the leadership and contributions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and CDF Munir, during delegation-level talks in Islamabad, the Foreign Office (FO) said.

Eide and Dar led the talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), where the two sides reviewed the "whole gamut of bilateral cooperation" and discussed trade, investment, climate change, maritime affairs and education, according to the FO.

The two sides also

cordial state of Pakistan-Norway relations" and agreed to "further deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest". The two sides also recognised the "important role of the Pakistani diaspora in Norway" and agreed to strengthen people-to-people ties between the two countries. Speaking at a joint press briefing with Dar in Islamabad after their talks, Eide said Pakistan had taken on a "massive task" by offering Islamabad not only as the venue but also as the facilitator of negotiations.

"I know how hard it is," Eide said, referring

to peace mediation and facilitation. "I know what a tough task you're taking on when you offered Islamabad, not only as the venue, but also as the facilitator of these talks."

"What you personally, but also your prime minister, the field mar-

shal, that you have been doing is really a service to the world, and hence also to us," he said.

Eide said he wanted to "reiterate again strong support for the very important role that Pakistan has taken" since the conflict began on February 28.

"Norway was one of the Western countries that were clearest and earliest in stating that this war is in a violation of international rules," he said. Eide said Norway, as a "large shipping nation", shared Pakistan's interest in keeping sea lanes open and protecting freedom of navigation.

NEWS DESK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Chief Minister Sohail Afridi was denied permission to enter Adiala Jail on Thursday to meet Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, as police blocked the route leading to the prison and diverted traffic.

Afridi, accompanied by several PTI leaders and lawmakers, reached the Medicine Factory checkpoint on Adiala Road but was stopped from proceeding towards the jail. Police later removed the barriers and restored traffic on the road.

The chief minister was accompanied by Mena Khan, Shafi Jan, Akmal Shah, Abdul Salam Afridi and Shahid Khattak.

The visit came as the scheduled time for meetings with Imran at the jail expired. Afridi and the other PTI leaders were not allowed to meet him.

At the checkpoint, Afridi questioned the SIO Saddar Berooni about the situation and asked what message had been conveyed to the authorities.

He also questioned a man in civilian clothes about his rank and identity. When the man said he was a journalist, Afridi declined to respond to a question about whether a meeting was likely to take place, saying he would wait until the scheduled meeting time ended.

Afridi also criticised the treatment of Imran and PTI since 2022, say-

ing the country was being pushed towards destruction because of "stubbornness and ego".

"The system has been destroyed, and those who brought this system are responsible for taking it towards destruction," he said.

He also criticised other political parties,

said that continuously emerging "alarming reports" about the health of party founder were causing nationwide anxiety and restlessness, as it urged the government to allow access to him.

The party's statement came in the wake of a report by journalist Wajid Saeed Khan about Imran's alleged

death in custody, according to sources. The report ignited intense criticism by the party's followers and supporters amid ongoing concerns about Imran's health and lack of access to him.

In late January, Imran was first taken to the hospital for a minor eye procedure. Five days later, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said that doctors at PIMS had examined his eyes and, after obtaining his written consent, carried out a minor medical procedure that lasted around 20 minutes.

On Tuesday, PTI



"We have said that we will bring two million people to Islamabad on September 27. We will bring even more," he said.

He said the authorities should facilitate a meeting with Imran before September 28 if they wanted to improve the situation.

Afridi also criticised the treatment of Imran and PTI since 2022, say-

ing the country was being pushed towards destruction because of "stubbornness and ego".

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death in custody, according to sources. The report ignited intense criticism by the party's followers and supporters amid ongoing concerns about Imran's health and lack of access to him.

Body of missing Pakistani climber Sohail Sakhi recovered on Broad Peak

NEWS DESK: The body of Pakistani climber Sohail Sakhi, who was among the 10-person expedition that went missing after the deadly Broad Peak avalanche, was recovered and shifted to the mountain's base camp, the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) said on Thursday.

The avalanche struck on July 30, cutting off contact with the 10-member international expedition led by world-renowned British-Nepali mountaineer Nirmal Purja on Broad Peak, one of the world's highest mountains. Purja's company later confirmed

was suspended last week due to a risk of fresh avalanches.

On Thursday, ACP member Naila Kiani said that Sakhi's body had been found. According to Nuala, a team of local volunteers from Shigar, searching the area on their own initiative, found the remains, which were subsequently confirmed as those of Sakhi.

She said the volunteers — Muhammad Nadeem, Muhammad Bashir and Abuzar — first spotted the body and alerted others in the area. They, along with other volunteers,

Skardu by Pakistan Army helicopters, weather permitting.

He said the bodies of two remaining climbers have not yet been recovered. Shigi said rescue efforts for the remaining climbers would resume once weather conditions improved and the area was deemed safe.

He said the local volunteers — Nirmal Purja, along with six elite Nepali guides were also part of the expedition. Purja, who served with

Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas before joining the Special Boat Squadron of the Royal Marines, had broken multiple climbing records since becoming a full-time mountaineer and tour guide.



there were no survivors. The bodies of seven climbers were found. However, the search for Sakhi, American climber Sarah Mallory Geis, and Nepalese climber Nawang Thindu Sherpa

brought the body down from Camp 1 to the base camp. ACP General Secretary Ayaz Shigri told Dawn that the body had been shifted to the Broad Peak Base Camp and would be airlifted to

Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas before joining the Special Boat Squadron of the Royal Marines, had broken multiple climbing records since becoming a full-time mountaineer and tour guide.

Gun battle between terrorists, police in Upper Dir enters second day

NEWS DESK: A gun battle between terrorists and police in the mountainous Barikot Duband area of Upper Dir district continued on Thursday, with police and terrorists remaining engaged in an operation that began Wednesday night. Officials said both sides were entrenched in their positions and heavy weapons were being used during the exchange of fire. No confirmed reports of casualties had been received till the filing of this report. Unverified reports suggested that terrorists had briefly taken some local residents hostage before releasing them. Several security forces also carried out limited shelling from helicopters on suspected terrorist hideouts in the area, though no casual-

ties were reported. Meanwhile, residents from various parts of Upper Dir, including Wari, Nihag, Dara, Shahgah, Lar Jan and Ushirai Dara, rallied in support of the police following announcements made through local mosques. Armed volunteers moved towards the affected area as part of a local lashkar.

According to eyewitnesses, the armed volunteers later gathered outside the Deputy Commissioner's Office and briefly blocked the Dir-Chitral Road, demanding the immediate release of people allegedly held by militants. Protesters accused the administration of failing to maintain law and order and warned that residents would take up arms to defend them-

selves if authorities were unable to ensure peace. The road was later reopened to traffic. Addressing gatherings in Wari and Dir, former provincial assembly members Sahibzada Sanaulah and Malik Behram Khan urged residents to remain peaceful and united. They said the public stood shoulder to shoulder with the police and would not allow the security situation in the district to deteriorate. Local elders pledged not to provide shelter to terrorists or other anti-state elements and vowed full cooperation with law enforcement agencies against suspicious activities. They said maintaining peace in the district was a shared responsibility of the public and security institutions.

He said that recent events showed that the JAAC was not a peaceful group, but a violent one intent on challeng-

Dar orders intensified diplomatic engagement for release of Pakistani sailors held hostage by Somali pirates

NEWS DESK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar directed "stakeholders" on Thursday to maintain close and regular coordination and intensify diplomatic engagement with national and international partners to facilitate the release of 10 Pakistani sailors who have been held hostage by Somali pirates since April. The sailors were among the crew of the MT Honour 25, a Palau-flagged oil tanker that was hijacked by armed pirates off the coast of Puntland, Somalia, on April 21. Besides the 10 Pakistani crew members, the hostages also include seven Indonesians, including the captain, as well as an Indian and a Sri Lankan. During more than three months of their captivity, there has been no progress either in negotiations or the payment of ransom, said to be around \$3 million, for their re-

covery. Meanwhile, the Foreign Office (FO) has been saying that efforts continue for their release and return.

In a statement posted on X today, it said Dar chaired a high-level meeting to review Pakistan's "intensified efforts" for the safe release of the sailors.

"The DPM-FM directed all relevant stakeholders to maintain close and regular

coordination and intensify diplomatic engagement with national and international partners, including the Somali authorities and relevant international organisations, to facilitate the safe release of our citizens," the FO stated. The FO said the government remained "fully seized" of the situation and that Dar expressed hope that sustained and coordinated engagement would lead to a positive

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Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) police claim JAAC 'abducted' 8 highway police personnel on election duty

NEWS DESK: Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) police said on Thursday that eight highway police personnel on election duty had been "abducted" by the pro-seceded Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC).

Addressing a television press conference, police spokesperson Khawar Ali Shaikat alleged that the JAAC attacked security forces deputed on election duty in the region.

"Eight highway police officials on election duty were abducted," he said as state media shared a collage of the officials' pictures.

"The personnel are in the custody of JAAC and have been subjected to brutal abuse," he said. He said that the "miscreants also threatened the families of the personnel that they would be martyred if their demands were not met".

He said that recent events showed that the JAAC was not a peaceful group, but a violent one intent on challeng-

ing the state's writ and weakening institutions. "I want to make it clear that the state was not and is not weak. The state has always shown restraint," he said, adding that they had nothing to do with the pro-seceded group. He appealed to the public to disassociate themselves

from the JAAC and not get involved in acts where the state's writ was challenged.

He appealed to parents to keep an eye on their children, saying: "They play with the future of young people and instigate them against state through misleading propaganda and provocative statements."

At the end of his press conference, he called on the JAAC to free the abducted personnel.

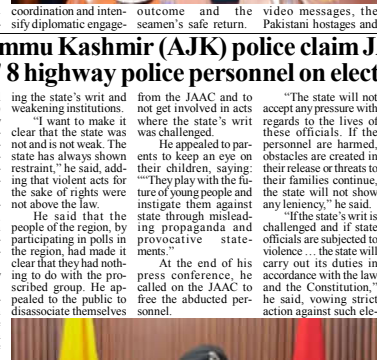
"The state will not accept any pressure with regards to the lives of these officials. If the personnel are harmed, obstacles are created in their release or threats to their families continue, the state will not show any leniency," he said.

"If the state's writ is challenged and if state officials are subjected to violence... the state will carry out its duties in accordance with the law and the Constitution," he said, vowing strict action against such elements.

"Any group that challenges the state's writ will be dealt with accordingly," he said.

The JAAC, which has been demanding the abolition of 12 seats in the local legislature reserved for refugees from India-occupied Kashmir, has been holding protests in the region for several weeks now.

Clashes took place between protesters and law enforcement personnel in Rawalakot and Mirpur on July 26, election day, reportedly resulted in several casualties. Amid the tensions, elections are being held across the region in phases. The government has accused militant elements of "pursuing a foreign agenda and backed by Indian funding" of fomenting the unrest.



He said that recent events showed that the JAAC was not a peaceful group, but a violent one intent on challeng-

coordination and intensify diplomatic engagement with national and international partners, including the Somali authorities and relevant international organisations, to facilitate the safe release of our citizens," the FO stated. The FO said the government remained "fully seized" of the situation and that Dar expressed hope that sustained and coordinated engagement would lead to a positive

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DAILY QUETTA VOICE

14th
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**EMPOWERING GRASSROOTS • STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE
BRINGING DEVELOPMENT CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE**

**FROM GRASSROOTS TO PROSPERITY LOCAL GOVERNMENT
• LOCAL SOLUTIONS • LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**



Mir Sarfaraz Bugti
Chief Minister of Balochistan

"Strong local governments are the foundation of effective public service delivery. Empowering grassroots institutions means empowering our people and ensuring that development reaches every community."

"Our priority is to make local government institutions more responsive to citizens, strengthen grievance redressal and ensure that development funds reach the grassroots where they can create the greatest impact."



Mir Hamza Zehri
Minister of Local Government, Balochistan



The Local Government Department, Government of Balochistan is strengthening grassroots governance by empowering local institutions to respond to citizens' needs, resolve grievances and deliver development where it matters most.



RECORD SUPPORT FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

A record allocation of funds at the grassroots level is enabling local governments to address community needs, improve municipal services and accelerate development across towns, cities and rural areas.

STRONGER LOCAL GOVERNMENT. FASTER GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL. BETTER SERVICES.

By strengthening local institutions, Balochistan is moving towards a more responsive, accountable and people-centred system of governance.





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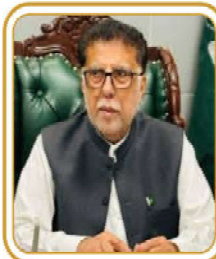
**WATERING THE FUTURE OF BALOCHISTAN TURNING ARID LAND
INTO PRODUCTIVE FARMLAND WATER • AGRICULTURE • PROSPERITY**

WINDER DAM PROJECT IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT Government of Balochistan



Mir Sarfaraz Bugti
Chief Minister of Balochistan

"Water is the foundation of prosperity. Winder Dam is a strategic investment in Balochistan's water security, agriculture and a brighter future for its people."



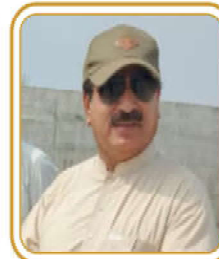
Mir Sadiq Umrani
Irrigation Minister of Balochistan

"Winder Dam will open new opportunities for agriculture and livelihoods by bringing water to areas with enormous untapped agricultural potential."



Sohail Ur Rehman
Secretary Irrigation of Balochistan

"Sustainable water management is essential for Balochistan's development. Winder Dam reflects our commitment to strengthening water security and supporting productive agriculture."



Nasir Majeed
Project Director of Winder Dam

"Winder Dam is more than a water project—it is a pathway towards productive land, stronger livelihoods and a more prosperous future for the people of Balochistan."



A PROJECT FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

On this Independence Day, we celebrate a vision of a self-reliant, prosperous and developed Balochistan. The Winder Dam Project is a landmark investment in the province's future—designed to harness precious water resources, expand agricultural potential and bring new life to arid lands.



- Water Security
- Agricultural Development
- Increased Cultivation
- Livelihood Opportunities
- Sustainable Growth

Winder Dam will help transform water-scarce areas into productive agricultural land, supporting farmers, strengthening the local economy and creating opportunities for future generations.





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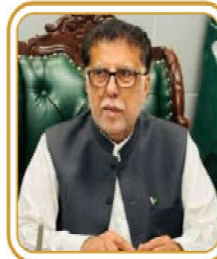
SECURING BALOCHISTAN'S WATER FUTURE 100 DAMS • ONE VISION • WATER SECURITY

100 DAM PROJECT IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT Government of Balochistan



Mir Sarfaraz Bugti
Chief Minister of Balochistan

"Water security is fundamental to Balochistan's future. We are investing in infrastructure that can conserve water, strengthen agriculture and create sustainable opportunities for our people."



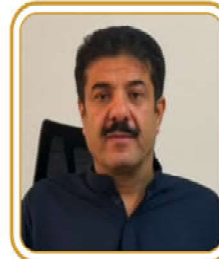
Mir Sadiq Umrani
Irrigation Minister of Balochistan

"The 100 Dams Programme is designed to conserve precious rainwater, improve groundwater recharge and provide a sustainable water base for agriculture across Balochistan."



Sohail Ur Rehman
Secretary Irrigation of Balochistan

"Our focus is on scientifically planned and environmentally responsible water infrastructure that delivers maximum benefit to communities while protecting natural resources."



Ibrahim Mengal
Project Director of 100 Dam

"Through the 100 Dams Programme, we are turning seasonal runoff into a long-term resource—supporting groundwater recharge, agriculture and greater resilience for communities across the province."



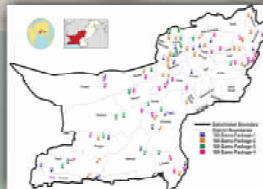
With an average annual rainfall of only 6–7 inches, Balochistan faces severe water scarcity and heavy dependence on groundwater. Over-extraction, prolonged drought and limited perennial water resources are causing groundwater levels to decline by around 3.1 metres (10 feet) annually in several districts. At the same time, seasonal runoff from mountainous areas often causes flooding and infrastructure damage instead of being stored for agriculture and groundwater recharge.



THE 100 DAMS PROGRAMME

The Balochistan Irrigation Department, through its Project Management Unit (PMU), is developing 100 dams to capture rainwater, recharge groundwater, support agriculture and strengthen water security across the province.

- ▲ Feasibility: 2007–08
- ▲ Implementation: 2009
- ▲ Programme Duration: 20 Years
- ▲ Implementation: 5 Phases



SMART & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Projects are selected on the basis of balanced provincial development, suitable geology and topography, groundwater recharge potential, cultivable command areas and minimum environmental impact, with emphasis on zero resettlement and protection of forest reserves.

