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# QUETTA VOICE

## Balochistan Chief Minister Vows Strict Meritocracy in Healthcare, Rejects Political Pressure

**QASEEM SHAH:**

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti reaffirmed his government's commitment to transparency, stating that political pressure will never compromise meritocracy in the province's public sector, particularly in healthcare.

He made these remarks during a meeting with a high-level delegation led by Dr. Abdul Bari Khan, President of the Indus Hospital & Health Network (IHHN), and Planning Commission Member Shabana Haider.

Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Health Secretary Majeed-ur-Rehman Panizai were also present.

The discussions focused on joint healthcare initiatives, expanding quality medical services across Balochistan, and operationalizing IHHN-backed medical facilities in Beker, Dera Bugti.

Addressing the delegation, Chief Minister Bugti emphasized that providing accessible, top-tier medical care to underprivileged communities remains the provincial administration's primary duty.

He noted that upgrading healthcare requires more than modern machinery and facilities—it demands skilled, competent human resources.

"We will operate strictly on merit," Bugti stated.

"I am prepared to face political pressure, but there will be zero compromise on meritocracy."

He added that the Chief



Photo of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti Vows Strict Meritocracy in Healthcare, Rejects Political Pressure.

Minister's Secretariat maintains a strict policy against official favors or political intervention in appointments, ensuring

complete operational transparency. The Chief Minister also welcomed public-private partnerships, noting that

collaborating with organizations like the Indus Hospital Network is key to extending specialized healthcare to remote

and underserved rural districts.

The delegation reviewed various proposals on staff training, facility management, and future collaborative frameworks aimed at strengthening the provincial healthcare system.

## Pashtun Jirga Concludes in Quetta as Mahmood Khan Achakzai Calls for Unity, Peace and Constitutional Order

**WEB DESK:**

QUETTA: The three-day Pashtun Qaumi Jirga concluded in Quetta with prominent leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai urging unity among Pashtuns, adherence to the Constitution, and sustainable protection for political and economic rights across local communities.

Addressing the gathering, Mahmood Khan Achakzai stated that the political and socio-economic challenges facing Balochistan and Pashtun-majority areas cannot be solved by a single group or individual, emphasizing collective action and public consultation.

He framed the Pashtun Qaumi Jirga as an inclusive representative assembly dedicated to the future, well-being, and rights of the Pashtun people.

Achakzai emphasized national equality, stating that Pakistan belongs to all its constituent groups under equal standing.

He reiterated that peaceful dialogue and democratic processes remain the only sustainable paths to long-term stability and progress.

Rejecting negative stereotypes, the leader characterized the Pashtun community as peaceful, hospitable, and law-abiding.

He advocated for peace-building measures to secure



File Photo: Pashtun Jirga Concludes in Quetta as Mahmood Khan Achakzai Calls for Unity

regional territories.

Addressing civic concerns in Balochistan, Achakzai expressed concern over extortion, kidnappings, and local violence, stressing that civil governance and public trust must be reinforced to safeguard citizens.

He highlighted that broader stability depends on constitutional supremacy, parliamentary sovereignty, judicial independence, and respect for the democratic franchise.

Recognizing public man-

dates, he noted, remains critical for economic confidence and governance.

Highlighting natural Pashtun resources and mineral wealth—including coal, copper, gold, and lithium—Achakzai urged that local populations benefit primarily from these assets through transparent, consensus-based arrangements.

"Our land is rich in mineral potential, yet our youth feel compelled to seek opportunities abroad," he said, calling for

greater alignment between regional assets and local economic growth.

On regional policy and Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, Achakzai linked stability in Afghanistan directly to peace in neighboring areas.

He encouraged constructive Pakistan-Afghanistan relations based on mutual respect, while urging measures to streamline legal trade, family visits, and cross-border commercial ties between the two nations.

## Rs352.8m Allocated for Additional Classrooms in Quetta, Pishin Schools



**EDUCATION DESK:**

The Balochistan Education Department has allocated Rs352.8 million for the construction of additional classrooms at 10 schools in Quetta and Pishin, with Rs125.8 million released under the second, third and fourth phases of the project.

Education Secretary Lal Jan Jaffer distributed cheques to 10 Parent-Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMCs) during a ceremony held in Quetta on Wednesday.

Jaffer reviewed the construction progress of each school and stressed the need to maintain transparency, quality and timely completion of the additional-room construction project.

Officials briefed the secretary that the next instalment is released only after the quality of construction is inspected and the completed work is verified. Technical staff of the PTSMU and implementation partners are

monitoring the projects to ensure compliance with social and technical standards.

The education secretary appreciated the PPMU team for maintaining transparency and construction quality. He also praised Project Director Najeebullah Tareen for his efforts to ensure progress on the school infrastructure project.

PTSMC chairpersons and head teachers expressed satisfaction with the initiative and presented issues and recommendations related to their respective schools.

The education secretary discussed the concerns with PTSMC representatives and later held a detailed meeting with Project Director Najeebullah Tareen to review the overall progress of the project.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of a commemorative shield to the education secretary, followed by a group photograph with the project director, PTSMU regional coordinators and engineers.

# QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

## Soil Erosion in Bolan, Balochistan: When the Land We Depend On Begins to Disappear

By Ayesha Tanveer:

In the valleys of Bolan, the land tells a story that is easy to miss if we only look at the surface. The mountains stand tall, the valleys stretch across the landscape, and farmers continue to work the soil as their families have done for generations. But beneath this familiar picture, something is changing. Little by little, the soil that supports agriculture and rural life is being washed away by sudden floods, carried off by strong winds and weakened by years of pressure on the land. Soil erosion may not happen overnight, and it rarely makes headlines. Yet for the people who depend on the land, its effects are real. A field that once produced a reasonable harvest may gradually become less productive. A farmer who once relied on rain and traditional methods may find that the same approach no longer works. For communities in Bolan, soil erosion is becoming more than an environmental concern—it is increasingly a threat to agriculture, livelihoods and the future of rural life.

A Fragile Land Under Pressure  
Balochistan is Pakistan's largest province by area, covering nearly 44 percent of the country's land. Yet only a small portion of this vast region is suitable for cultivation. In places like Bolan, farming has always depended on a delicate relationship between soil, rainfall, water availability and traditional knowledge.

That relationship is now under growing pressure. Bolan lies in an arid to semi-arid region where rainfall is limited and unpredictable. Farmers can experience long dry periods followed by sudden and intense rainfall. Instead of slowly soaking into the ground, heavy rain can rush through valleys and fields, creating flash floods that carry away the most valuable layer

of soil. This is one of the greatest problems with soil erosion: the soil that disappears first is often the soil that agriculture needs the most.

The topsoil contains organic matter and nutrients essential for healthy crops. Once it is washed away, rebuilding it can take years, sometimes decades. When Rain Becomes a Threat Rain is essential for life and agriculture, but in Bolan, the way rain arrives can sometimes be as important as how much rain falls.

After months of dryness, the soil may become hard and vulnerable. When intense rainfall suddenly arrives, water can move rapidly across the surface instead of being absorbed into the ground. In the mountainous terrain of Bolan, steep slopes make this runoff even faster. The result can be devastating. Water cuts through fields, carries soil downhill and deposits sediment in streams and irrigation channels. What begins as erosion on a hillside can eventually contribute to blocked waterways, increased flood risks and damage to agricultural land.

This creates a difficult cycle: dry conditions weaken the land, intense rainfall removes the soil, and the loss of soil makes the land even more vulnerable the next time heavy rain arrives. Human Activities Are Making the Problem Worse

Nature is not the only factor behind the changing landscape. Human activities have also played an important role.

Vegetation is one of the land's natural defenses against erosion. Trees, shrubs and grasses help hold soil together through their roots and reduce the speed at which rainwater flows across the ground. When vegetation is removed, the soil



is left exposed.

In many areas, trees and shrubs are cut for fuelwood and construction. Over time, the loss of vegetation leaves hill-sides and open land more vulnerable to wind and water.

Livestock grazing is another important part of life in Bolan, but too much grazing can place enormous pressure on fragile rangelands. Goats, sheep and cattle depend on these lands for food, while local families depend on livestock for income and survival. The problem arises when grazing becomes excessive and vegetation does not have enough time to recover.

Without sufficient grass and shrub cover, the soil is exposed. Repeated movement of animals can also compact the ground, making it harder for rainwater to enter the soil. More water then flows across the surface, taking soil with it. Farming Practices and the Loss of Fertility

Farmers in Bolan are working under difficult circumstances. Water is scarce, rainfall is uncertain and access to modern agricultural resources can be limited. Many farming practices have developed out of necessity rather than choice.

However, some traditional and intensive practices can unintentionally contribute to soil degradation. Repeated deep ploughing can disturb soil structure, while limited crop rotation and a lack of organic matter can gradually weaken the soil.

In areas where farmers struggle to find enough fodder for livestock, crop residues may be removed from fields instead of being left to protect the soil. As a result, fields can remain exposed for long periods.

The consequences become visible over time. As fertile topsoil disappears, the soil loses nutrients and organic matter. Crops may grow less vigorously, and harvests may decline. For a small farmer, this is not simply a number on a production chart. A smaller harvest can mean less food for the family, less income and greater difficulty

paying for seeds, fertilizer and other agricultural expenses.

The Hidden Cost of Declining Soil Fertility

Healthy soil does more than provide nutrients to crops. It also acts like a natural reservoir, holding water and making it available to plants during dry periods. When erosion removes organic matter and damages soil structure, the land becomes less capable of retaining moisture. In a dry region like Bolan, this can be particularly damaging.

Farmers may then turn increasingly to chemical fertilizers to compensate for declining fertility.

Fertilizers can help crops in the short term, but they cannot replace the lost structure and organic matter of healthy soil. They can also increase production costs for farmers who are already financially vulnerable.

This can create a difficult cycle: Soil erosion reduces fertility? crop yields decline? farmers spend more on inputs? production costs increase? household in-

come falls? poverty and economic pressure grow.

Breaking this cycle requires restoring the health of the soil itself rather than relying only on short-term solutions.

The Problem Does Not Stop at the Farm

The effects of erosion do not remain within the boundaries of agricultural fields. When soil is washed away, it often ends up in rivers, streams and irrigation channels. Over time, this sediment can reduce water storage capacity and interfere with irrigation systems.

Sedimentation can also increase flood risks during heavy rainfall. At the same time, the loss of vegetation can damage natural habitats and reduce biodiversity.

If degradation continues for years without intervention, productive land may gradually become severely degraded and increasingly difficult to cultivate. For Balochistan, where cultivable land is already limited, losing even more agricultural land could have serious consequences.

Water management offers another important opportunity. Small check dams, rainwater harvesting systems and im-

proved irrigation methods can slow down runoff, capture water and reduce soil loss. These measures can be particularly valuable in areas where every drop of water matters.

But no solution will work without the involvement of the people who live on the land. Farmers, livestock owners and local communities must be part of the decision-making process. They understand their environment, its challenges and its changing conditions. Government institutions, agricultural experts and development organizations can support them with technical knowledge, training and resources, but long-term success will depend on local participation.

Over time, environmental degradation can therefore contribute to social change and migration.

This is why soil erosion should not be treated as an isolated environmental issue. It is connected to poverty, food security, employment, migration and the long-term stability of rural communities.

There Is Still Time to Act There are practical steps that can make a difference. Farmers can adopt conservation agriculture techniques such as reduced tillage, crop rotation and retaining crop residues. Adding organic matter to the soil can improve its structure and help it retain moisture.

Restoring vegetation is equally important. Planting native trees, shrubs and grasses can help stabilize slopes and protect the land from erosion.

Grazing also needs to be managed carefully. Controlled grazing systems can give damaged rangelands time to recover while still allowing communities to maintain their livestock.

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## Pakistan's Climate Vulnerability: A Governance Dilemma

Zia Ud Din:

Pakistan contributes less than one percent to global carbon emissions, yet it consistently ranks among the countries most exposed to climate-induced disasters. This imbalance is not merely an environmental concern, it reflects governance dilemma rooted in a weak institutional coordination and limited adaptation planning.

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of the modern era, adversely affecting societies at multiple levels.

Rising temperatures, droughts, irregular weather patterns, sea-level rise, melting glaciers, floods, and water insecurity demonstrate its far-reaching global consequences. Since these impacts transcend national borders, climate change is inherently a global challenge.

Along with other developing nations, Pakistan remains highly vulnerable. In 2024, Pakistan recorded its ninth warmest year in the last 64 years, with an average temperature of 23.52°C and rainfall levels 21 percent above the historical average. This highlights the urgency of collective international action. For Pakistan, how-



ever, climate vulnerability is compounded by governance constraints. Fragmented institutional coordination, weak policy implementation,

and limited emphasis on adaptation have reduced the state's capacity to respond effectively. Consequently, the climate crisis in Pakistan re-

fects not only environmental stress but also persistent governance failures. Climate change refers to long-term shifts in global weather pat-

terns and temperatures, primarily driven by human activities. According to United Nations find-

ings, excessive greenhouse gas emissions have intensified heat retention in the atmosphere. Gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide have

thickened the atmospheric blanket, largely due to deforestation, fossil fuel consumption, and rapid industrialization.

One of the most visible consequences of climate change is rising global temperatures.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service reported that average global temperatures in 2024 exceeded pre-industrial levels by 1.52°C. This warming has intensified heatwaves, prolonged droughts, and increased wildfire risks. Rising temperatures have also disrupted weather systems, leading to irregular rainfall, intense storms, and stronger hurricanes.

Another major consequence is sea-level rise. Oceans absorb nearly 90 percent of excess heat caused by greenhouse gas emissions, leading to thermal expansion. Simultaneously, melting glaciers and ice sheets contribute to rising sea levels.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, global sea levels have risen by approximately 21 to 25 centimeters since 1880, threatening coastal livelihoods and infrastructure. Climate change has also intensified water scarcity, a growing global concern. Pakistan is already a water-stressed country, and climate variability has further exacerbated this challenge.

## Chief Secretary Balochistan Reviews Administrative Performance, Vacancies and Public Service Delivery

QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakil Qadir Khan chaired an important meeting of the Secretaries Committee to review administrative performance, development projects, staff attendance, vacant posts and public service delivery across the province.

All administrative secretaries and divisional commissioners participated in the meeting through video link.

The meeting reviewed various matters related to provincial administrative performance, progress on development projects, ensuring the attendance of officers and staff in government offices, vacant positions and the effective provision of public services.

The issue of condemnation of government vehicles belonging to different departments

was also discussed.

Officials reviewed the current condition of government vehicles, identified vehicles that were no longer serviceable and examined procedures for their condemnation or auction in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.

The meeting also considered details of vacant positions in various departments, employees awaiting promotion and matters relating to initial recruitment.

It was emphasized that vacancies, promotions and recruitment should be processed strictly in accordance with rules, merit and principles of transparency so that departmental performance is not affected.

Chief Secretary Shakil Qadir Khan directed the concerned authorities to ensure implementation of decisions taken during the meeting within the stipulated timeframe.

He instructed all secretaries to ensure the timely and regular attendance of employees in their respective departments so that public facilities and services could be delivered efficiently and without unnecessary delays.

The Chief Secretary stressed that an effective attendance system, responsible supervision and legal action against absentee employees would help improve transparency in government services and strengthen public confidence.

Right to Information and Departmental Websites Chief Secretary Shakil Qadir Khan directed all secretaries to immediately appoint a Principal Information Officer (PIO) in their respective departments under the Right to Information Act.

He said citizens have the right to access public information and the appointment of designated information officers would help ensure

timely disposal of information requests while strengthening transparency, accountability and public trust in government affairs.

He also directed all secretaries to make their respective departmental websites fully functional and regularly updated so that important information could reach the public in a timely manner.

He said regularly publishing the latest news, announcements and details of public services on departmental websites would enhance transparency and make it easier for citizens to access necessary information.

During the meeting, UNDP representatives gave the Deputy Commissioner a detailed briefing on the ongoing project, its

implementation status and related activities.

The UNDP representatives appreciated the cooperation extended by the Quetta District Administration.

He further said the administration would maintain close coordination and cooperation with relevant institutions to facilitate the successful implementation of development initiatives and ensure that the benefits reach the public.

## DC Sohbatpur Reviews Educational Affairs, Suspends Absent Teacher and Launches Tree Plantation Drive

SOHBATPUR: Deputy Commissioner Sohbatpur Fareeda Tarin, accompanied by the District Education Officer, visited Government Boys High School Adam Pur and Government Girls High School Daud Khiazi to review educational affairs, teaching activities and school facilities.

She also formally inaugurated a tree plantation campaign at Government Boys High School Adam Pur.

During the visits, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the school's educational environment, teaching activities, attendance of teachers, students' academic performance, cleanliness and other administrative matters. School administrations and teachers responded positively, highlighting the Deputy Commissioner's ongoing educational activities as well as issues and challenges faced by the institutions.

Fareeda Tarin in-

spected different sections of the schools and reviewed teachers' attendance and the teaching process. During the visit to Government Girls High School Daud Khiazi, one teacher was found absent. The teacher was suspended pending an inquiry and was strictly warned to avoid unauthorized absence in the future.

The Deputy Commissioner also directed the concerned authorities

to undertake necessary measures to ensure the timely and regular attendance of employees in their respective departments so that public facilities and services could be delivered efficiently and without unnecessary delays.

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## Babar Khan Directs C&W Department to Accelerate Strategic Infrastructure Projects in Balochistan

QUETTA: Secretary Communications and Works (C&W) Babar Khan has emphasized that the department has a crucial role in the development and prosperity of Balochistan, warning that any negligence or delay in its performance could hinder the province's overall development process.

He expressed these views while chairing a review meeting on progress regarding ongoing strategic projects in the province, particularly the Fortification of Police Stations initiative.

The meeting was attended online via Zoom by chief engineers from all six zones, AG Development Ahmed Sultan, superintending engineers and district executive engineers.

During the meeting, engineers from various

districts provided detailed briefings on progress on the 83 Fortification of Police Stations projects being implemented in their respective areas.

They also highlighted financial and technical challenges affecting the projects.

Secretary C&W Babar Khan directed officials to ensure that there was no delay in the completion of projects of strategic importance. He said the available time was limited while challenges were considerable, making the timely

completion of projects a top priority for the department.

He further directed officials to resolve all technical issues affecting the projects immediately so that implementation could continue without disruption.

The Secretary also issued show-cause notices to Executive Engineers (Buildings) a strict timeline for completing the projects and warned that failure

to meet the deadlines would result in strict action against the officials concerned.

Babar Khan also made it clear that no compromise would be made on the quality of construction work and directed officials to ensure that prescribed standards were maintained throughout project implementation.

He instructed chief engineers and superintending engineers to personally visit project sites regularly and submit progress reports every two weeks.

relevant Escrow Accounts and resources should be utilized effectively to provide citizens with a clean, healthy and hygienic environment.

The meeting also emphasized the need to use modern technology, timely monitoring, effective waste transportation and transparent sanitation practices to improve Quetta's waste management system.

The concerned officials assured the meeting that all necessary measures would be taken to complete the agreed actions within the stipulated timeframe and ensure effective progress on the project.

He directed the performance of SAFA Quetta and sanitation services being provided under the project would be reviewed

regularly, while available resources should be utilized effectively to provide citizens with a clean, healthy and hygienic environment.

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## DC Quetta Meets UNDP Representatives to Review Ongoing Development Project

QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini held a meeting with representatives of the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) to discuss an ongoing project and its related activities.

Officials associated with the project also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, UNDP representatives gave the Deputy Commissioner a detailed briefing on the ongoing project, its

implementation status and related activities.

The UNDP representatives appreciated the cooperation extended by the Quetta District Administration.

He further said the administration would maintain close coordination and cooperation with relevant institutions to facilitate the successful implementation of development initiatives and ensure that the benefits reach the public.

Commissioner Lasbela Reviews Development Projects and Public Services in Awaran

HUB: Commissioner Lasbela Division Saira Atta chaired an important meeting at the Leda Conference Hall to review progress on development projects and public service delivery

in Awaran district.

Deputy Commissioner Awaran Aqeel Karim gave the Commissioner a detailed briefing on the overall situation concerning law and order, Balochistan Sustainable Development Initiative (BSDI) projects, health, education, local government and road infrastructure in the district.

During the briefing, the Commissioner was informed that electricity supply in Awaran is currently being maintained through generators, while work on the Mashkay-Awaran national grid link remains pending. Work has also started on the installation of a pole connector in Gishkaur. The meeting was informed that 51 percent of schools in Awaran are without electricity.

Regarding road infrastructure, officials said work on the Hoshab-Awaran section was continuing under the supervision of the National Highway Authority.

The reports must also identify technical issues and obstacles so that timely corrective measures can be taken and project execution remains uninterrupted.

The Secretary said the effective performance of the Communications and Works Department was essential for improving infrastructure and ensuring sustainable development across Balochistan, stressing that negligence or sluggishness in the implementation of development projects would not be tolerated.

Later, Fazal ur Rehman Khabdani visited Government Degree College Duki, where he inspected the attendance of teaching and non-teaching staff.

He also reviewed the overall condition of the college and its internal cleanliness arrangements, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a clean and conducive environment in educational institutions.

The Deputy Commissioner also visited the District Education Officer Duki's office, where he reviewed staff attendance, office discipline and cleanliness.

He directed employees to prioritize responsibility, punctuality and a strong spirit of public service while carrying out official duties.

As part of the inspection drive, the Deputy Commissioner made a surprise visit to Government Boys High School Duki. He visited various classrooms, observed educational activities, interacted with students and checked

the attendance of teaching and non-teaching staff.

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