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Pakistan's Climate Vulnerability: A Governance Dilemma

Chinese Minister of International Department Calls on COAS & CDF Field Marshal Asim Munir

NEWS DESK:

H.E. Mr Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (IDCPC), called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, evolving regional and international security dynamics and bilateral relations. They expressed their shared resolve to further strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between Pakistan and China.

COAS & CDF highlighted the historic and time-tested bonds between the two countries and emphasised the importance of sustained high-level engagement, stronger institutional linkages and expanded cooperation across areas of mutual interest.



Chinese Minister of International Department Calls on COAS & CDF Field Marshal Asim Munir

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's contributions to regional peace and stability and expressed confidence in further advancing the longstanding strategic partnership between Pakistan and China.

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Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) asks its workers to 'be prepared'

NATIONAL Page No 4

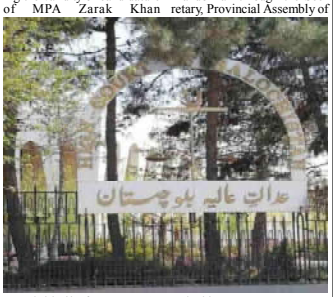


Pakistan outperforms Vietnam in rice exports

Election Petition Against MPA Zarak KhanMandokhail Admitted for Hearing

QUETTA:

The election petition challenging the validity of candidature of MPA Zarak Khan Mandokhail from PB-42 Quetta-V has been admitted for regular hearing.



The Tribunal today, on 02.11.2026, admitted the petition filed by Shukur Ullah against the returned candidate Zarak Khan Mandokhail.

Admitting the petition, the Tribunal issued notice to respondent Zarak Khan Mandokhail through the Secretary, Provincial Assembly of Balochistan.

Notices were also issued to the learned Advocate General, Balochistan and the learned Additional Attorney General, Pakistan for next date of hearing.

Senate Body Flags Rs 44 Billion Cost Escalation in Balochistan Dams, Population Impact

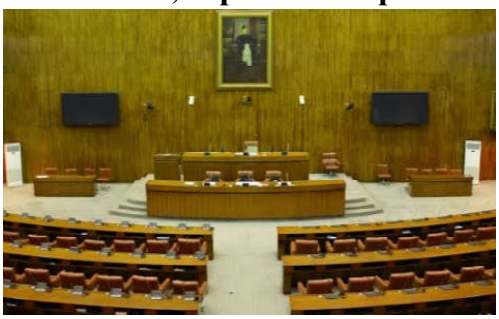
ByOur Correspondent:

Expressing serious reservations over the Panjgur and Gish Kaur Storage Dam projects, the Senate Sub-Committee on Less Developed Areas has warned that blocking main rivers could displace entire populations and cause massive wastage of national wealth due to cost overruns.

Convener Senator Jan Muhammad Buledi, who chaired the meeting at Old PIPS Hall, Parliament Lodges, Islamabad, said the cost of Panjgur Dam has jumped from Rs 18 billion to Rs 23 billion, while Gish Kaur Dam cost has skyrocketed from Rs 11 billion to Rs 44 billion.

Buledi said Panjgur Dam could affect the entire population of Panjgur district by blocking its main river and damaging traditional Karez system, while Gish Kaur Dam does not justify its cost against its benefits. He directed authorities to conduct a fresh review of both projects and submit comprehensive reports from SUPARCO and WAPDA in the next meeting.

The strong remarks came during a detailed briefing on the Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan Package. The Planning Commission informed the committee that it is working on 138 projects – 131 ongoing and 7 new – with an approved cost of Rs 1984.3 billion. Rs 193 billion has been allocated for Balochistan in the current financial year. The Ministry of Water Resources said 18 water sector projects have been approved – 13 executed by the Balochistan government and 5 by WAPDA. Their total cost is Rs 369.3 billion with Rs 16.9 billion allocated this year. 51 water projects have been completed in Balochistan since 2010. Officials said Mangi Dam is 80% complete and its water will be used for drinking purposes.



Senate Body Flags Rs 44 Billion Cost Escalation in Balochistan Dams

13 under-construction dams were also reviewed, including Garuk, Awaran, Panjgur, Winder, Shahranik and Gish Kaur dams. The Irrigation Department said law and order issues are delaying completion and extensions will be needed.On road infrastructure, NHA officials said out of 54 road projects, 36 are being executed by the Balochistan government and 52% of total funds have been allocated for the province. The Prime Minister has directed to complete Karachi to Chaman Highway on priority.

Balochistan Govt Announces Action Against Three Journalists Over Alleged Fake News Against CM House

News Desk:

Media Adviser to the Balochistan Government, Shahid Rind, held a press conference at the Quetta Press Club regarding news reports against the CM House.

Addressing the press conference, Shahid Rind said that the spread of fake news has become a major challenge for us.

He said that fake news is being spread on WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media platforms, adding that the spread of fake news through WhatsApp is also a big challenge for us.



Photo of Media Adviser to the Balochistan Government, Shahid Rind

The Special Assistant to the Chief Minister said that the government has the right to take legal action against fake news. There is law in the country and the law will take its own course against those who violate it.

Shahid Rind announced that action has been initiated against three journalists of Balochistan for allegedly broadcasting false news.

He said that action has been initiated against Agha Obaid, Sana Achakzai and Maqbool Jafar, and cases have been registered against all three through the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA).

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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 of23.52°Cand rainfall levels 31 percent above the historical average. This highlights the urgency of collective international action.

For Pakistan, however, 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 reflects not only environmental stress but also persistent governance failures.

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in global weather patterns and temperatures, primarily driven by human activities. According to United Nations findings, 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.

A report by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics places Pakistan among the most water-risk-prone nations.

Water scarcity places immense pressure on agriculture, industry, and households, undermining economic stability and food security.

Despite contributing minimally to global emissions, Pakistan bears a disproportionate share of climate-related losses. The Global Climate Risk Index ranks Pakistan among the most vulnerable countries to climate change.

The 2022 floods alone caused an estimated economic loss of $40 billion and claimed at least 1,700 lives. More recently, monsoon floods in 2025 resulted in over 1,000 deaths.

Given these realities, climate adaptation is no longer an academic debate but a strategic necessity.

Mitigation remains essential to limit future warming through reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower is critical.

Equally important is adaptation. Since climate impacts are already unavoidable, societies must strengthen resilience. Investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, improved urban planning, and effective water management is vital.

Global cooperation remains the third pillar of climate response. Climate change transcends borders and requires collective responsibility. Developed nations must honor climate finance commitments and support vulnerable countries in adaptation efforts.For Pakistan, effective climate governance is central to resilience. Addressing financing constraints, strengthening legislation, improving federal–provincial coordination, and prioritizing adaptation over rhetoric are critical steps.Climate change presents urgent challenges that demand immediate action. Without decisive reforms in climate governance and a strategic shift toward adaptation, Pakistan will continue to pay an unjust price for a crisis it did little to create.

The author can be reached at: dinziaud19@gmail.com.

MDCAT Registrations Decline, has the MBBS Dream Lost Its Shine in Pakistan?

Syed Muhammad Yaseen

For decades, becoming a doctor in Pakistan has been viewed as one of the most prestigious and desirable career choices. Thousands of students and families have traditionally spent years preparing for the MDCAT, often treating admission to an MBBS programme as the ultimate measure of academic success.

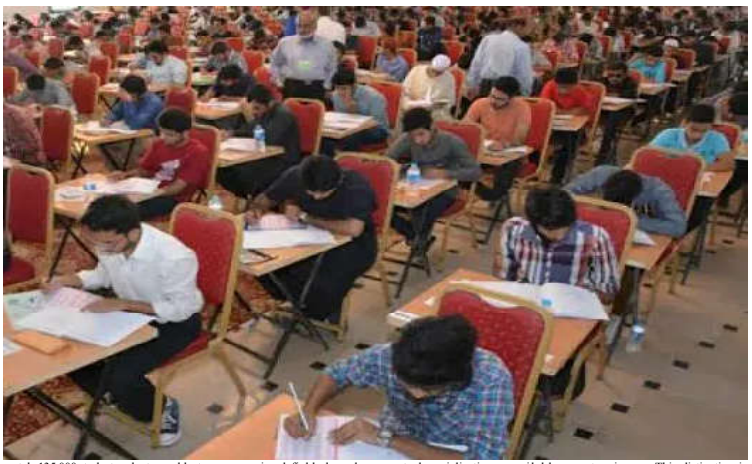
The MDCAT picture appears to be changing.

Official figures indicate a noticeable contraction in the MDCAT candidate and registration pool. In 2022, 204,253 candidates appeared in the MDCAT, followed by 180,534 in 2023. In 2024, PM&DC reported 167,772 registrations, while the number fell to 140,071 registrations in 2025.

These figures require an important qualification. The 2022 and 2023 figures refer to candidates who appeared in the examination, whereas the 2024 and 2025 figures refer to registrations. Therefore, they should not be treated as a perfectly comparable year-by-year series.

The clearest recent comparison is between 2024 and 2025. Registrations declined by 27,701, or approximately 16.5 percent.

The early picture for 2026 also deserves attention, but with caution. According to a National Assembly briefing on July 10, approximately 135,000 students had registered for MDCAT 2026 at that point.



However, registration was restarted for some days as it got delayed till 20 September. It should therefore not be presented as a confirmed 2026 decline.

The more interesting question is not simply whether MDCAT numbers are falling. It is why?

One obvious factor is the rising cost of medical education. For students unable to secure public-sector seats, private medical colleges can represent a major financial commitment. Families are increasingly evaluating medicine not only through the lens of prestige, but also through affordability, career progression and financial return.

At the same time, students today have far more career options. Technology, artificial intelligence, software development, business, finance and other professional fields have become increasingly attractive.

It would be premature, however, to claim that these sectors are directly responsible for the MDCAT decline without comprehensive national research.

Another concern is the uncertainty surrounding the medical education pathway itself. Students face a long journey from MDCAT preparation to MBBS, house job, postgraduate training and eventual specialization. Limited postgraduate opportunities, demanding working conditions and uncertainty about career progression can influence how families assess the profession.

The emergence of vacant seats in some private medical colleges is particularly significant. Reports of unfilled MBBS seats in provinces such as Sindh and Punjab suggest that the traditional situation—where demand overwhelmingly exceeded available seats—is changing in parts of the private sector.

But vacant seats should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that students no longer want to become doctors.

High tuition fees, admission rules, students declining offers and other factors can also contribute. In fact, a court record from Sindh highlighted the role of expensive private-college fees in difficulties filling certain seats.

This distinction is important because the solution should not simply be to lower admission standards whenever seats remain vacant.

Pakistan certainly needs doctors. Large parts of the country continue to face healthcare shortages, particularly outside major urban centres. But increasing the number of medical graduates alone cannot solve these problems.

The country needs a medical education system that offers quality training, adequate clinical exposure, affordable education, transparent admissions and a credible postgraduate career pathway.

Policymakers should therefore investigate the reasons behind the changing MDCAT trend through a nationwide study of applicants and eligible students. How many reject private medical seats because of fees? How many choose foreign universities? How many switch to other professions? How many are discouraged by postgraduate uncertainty?

Until these questions are properly answered, conclusions about a "collapse" of medical education demand would be premature.

The falling MDCAT numbers should instead be viewed as a warning signal. Pakistan may not be losing interest in medicine; rather, students may be becoming more selective about the price they are willing to pay for a medical career.

The answer is not to force more students into MBBS.

It is to make medicine a profession that students choose because it offers quality education, professional dignity, financial sustainability and a clear future.

Pakistan does not simply need more doctors. It needs a medical education system that future doctors can believe in.

Pakistan's Emerging Role in Global Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution Highlighted at Provincial Conference in Quetta



QUETTA: A provincial conference titled "Pakistan's Emerging Role in Global Mediation, Strategic Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution, and Promotion of Economic Activities in the Post-Maarka-e-Haq Era" was held at Governor House Quetta, bringing together prominent political leaders, diplomats, academics, religious scholars, and development experts.

The conference focused on Pakistan's evolving role in global diplomacy, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, regional stability, and the promotion of economic cooperation. Speakers presented insightful research papers highlighting Pakistan's growing diplomatic engagement and its potential to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution and regional economic development.

The event was organized by the International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA) with financial support from the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (CoE-CVE), Balochistan.

Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, attended the conference as the chief guest.

Prominent guests of honour included PPAF Chief Executive Officer Nadir Gul Barech; IRCRA President Muhammad Israr Madani; former senator and federal minister Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, who also serves as IRCRA's Senior Adviser on Regional Security and Stability; Adviser to the Chief Minister Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi; Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar, Dr. Amir Raza; Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) Chief Executive Officer Dr. Tahir Rashid; CoE-CVE Chief Coordination Officer Dost Muhammad Barech; CPD Chief Executive Officer Dr. Nasrullah Barech; Father Simon Bahir of Quetta Methodist Church; and Sikh religious leader Sardar Jaspeer Singh.

During the conference, distinguished speakers shared their perspectives on Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives, interfaith harmony, regional security, peaceful conflict resolution, and opportunities to strengthen peacebuilding and economic cooperation.

The gathering underscored the importance of strategic diplomacy, inclusive dialogue, religious harmony, and regional partnerships in addressing emerging challenges and promoting sustainable peace and economic development.

Provincial Ombudsman Holds Open Court in Loralai to Address Public Grievances

LORALAI: The Provincial Ombudsman of Balochistan organized an open court at the District Council Hall in Loralai to hear public complaints and address issues related to various government departments.



The open court was chaired by Abdul Ghaffar Mian Khel, Regional Director of the Provincial Ombudsman Balochistan. Assistant Commissioner Loralai Ahmed Zaib Kakar, DSB Karim Mandokhail, and officers and heads of various government departments also attended the session.

A large number of representatives from political parties, the traders' association, social activists, tribal leaders, local elders, citizens, and journalists participated in the event.

During the session, residents directly presented their complaints and concerns to the Regional Director and relevant government officials.

The major issues raised by citizens included the shortage of clean drinking water, electricity load-shedding, inadequate healthcare facilities, closure of government schools, lack of basic facilities in educational institutions, shortages of medicines at Basic Health Centres (BHQs/BHUs), poor road infrastructure, sanitation problems, inadequate drainage systems, and other public service issues.

Participants expressed concern that the lack of basic facilities in several areas was causing serious hardships for residents.

They also pointed out that delays in resolving complaints against government departments were further aggravating public difficulties.

Addressing the gathering, Regional Director Abdul Ghaffar Mian Khel said government officers and employees were public servants and must perform their duties with a spirit of service rather than treating themselves as rulers over the people.

He emphasized that resolving public grievances at people's doorsteps was a fundamental responsibility of the government and its institutions.

He directed officials of the concerned departments to ensure that complaints received during the open court were not confined to paperwork but were addressed through practical measures to provide timely relief to citizens.

He made it clear that negligence and unnecessary delays in resolving public complaints would not be tolerated.

The Regional Director further explained that the institution of the Provincial Ombudsman had been established to provide effective redressal to citizens against negligence, inefficiency, and unnecessary delays by government departments.

WEXNET 2026 Business Exhibition Concludes Successfully in Quetta, Showcasing Women Entrepreneurs and Local Products



QUETTA: The two-day business exhibition, WEXNET, organized by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) in collaboration with the Government of Balochistan, Quetta District Administration, and the Balochistan Board of Investment, concluded successfully in Quetta.

The exhibition witnessed enthusiastic participation from women entrepreneurs, industrialists, skilled women, and representatives of various sectors from across Pakistan.

More than 100 stalls were established at the exhibition, showcasing women-led businesses, handicrafts, locally produced goods, traditional skills, commercial products, and items from various industries.

The event provided women entrepreneurs with valuable opportunities to showcase their business potential, promote their products, establish commercial connections, and explore new business opportunities.

Representatives of the federal and provincial governments, officials from relevant departments, business leaders, and other distinguished guests attended the exhibition. Visitors expressed keen interest in the displayed products and appreciated the creativity, hard work, and entrepreneurial skills of participating women.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini conducted a detailed visit to the exhibition and inspected all the stalls. He interacted with women entrepreneurs and exhibitors, learning about their products, business activities, and challenges.

Appreciating the efforts and entrepreneurial spirit of women, the deputy commissioner said providing women with greater opportunities to participate in economic activities was essential.

He noted that exhibitions of this nature enable women to demonstrate their capabilities, expand their businesses, and play an effective role in strengthening the national economy.

The deputy commissioner also reviewed different sections of the exhibition and inspected administrative arrangements and facilities provided to participants.

Throughout the event, the Quetta District Administration ensured continuous monitoring and effective administrative arrangements. Security, traffic management, logistical support, and other essential arrangements were carried out in coordination with the district administration to provide a safe and conducive environment for participants, guests, and exhibitors.

The exhibition proceeded smoothly and concluded successfully due to continuous administrative supervision, coordination among relevant institutions, and an integrated management strategy.

The successful conclusion of WEXNET marks an important step towards women's economic empowerment, promoting women-led enterprises, highlighting locally manufactured products, and strengthening business and trade linkages at the national level.

Balochistan Celebrates Centenary of Renowned Balochi Poet and Scholar Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi in Quetta

QUETTA: The Directorate of Culture, Government of Balochistan, organized a prestigious literary ceremony at the Nasri Naseem Khan Cultural Complex, Spini Road, Quetta, to commemorate the 100th birth anniversary (Centenary Celebration) of renowned Balochi poet, writer, and scholar Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi.



The ceremony was presided over by Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch and featured special literary sessions under the theme "Dialogue and Poetry Gathering."

The event was attended by Director of Culture Dr. Dawood Tareen, the Director General of Khana-e-Farhang Iran, Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Madam Kulsoom Nawaz, along with prominent literary figures, poets, researchers, scholars, and a large number of literature enthusiasts from across Balochistan.

Addressing the gathering, speakers paid rich tribute to Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi for his invaluable contributions to the Balochi language, lexicography, literature, and intellectual heritage.

They highlighted his outstanding role in promoting and preserving the Balochi language, emphasizing that his literary contributions remain an important part of Balochistan's cultural and intellectual identity.

The speakers stressed that preserving his literary legacy and introducing his remarkable work to younger generations was a collective responsibility.

They also underscored the importance of literary gatherings, intellectual dialogue, and poetry sessions in promoting Balochi literature, cultural awareness, and linguistic heritage.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, guests and participants highly appreciated the Directorate of Culture, Government of Balochistan, for organizing the successful literary event and paying tribute to one of the most influential figures in Balochi literary history.

The centenary celebration served as an important occasion to recognize Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi's enduring legacy and renew efforts to preserve and promote the Balochi language and literature.

Clerical Staff Play Vital Role in Improving Public Service Delivery: Balochistan Adviser Naseem-ur-Rehman Malakhail



QUETTA: Provincial Adviser for Environment and Climate Change, Naseem-ur-Rehman Khan Malakhail, has said that clerical staff play a fundamental role in ensuring the effective functioning of government institutions and improving public service delivery.

He said clerks are an integral part of the government system, making valuable contributions to office administration, record management, and the smooth handling of official and administrative affairs.

He expressed these views while addressing an oath-taking ceremony organized by the All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA), Balochistan, where he attended as the chief guest.

The ceremony was attended by Secretary Environment Noor Ahmed Perkani, Director General Environment Zahoor Ahmed Baloch, provincial office-bearers of the All Pakistan Clerks Association, members of the newly elected Environment Unit cabinet, and other government officers and employees.

Congratulating the newly elected office-bearers, Malakhail said the real strength of any organization lies in unity, discipline, and collective efforts.

He expressed hope that the newly elected cabinet would play a constructive and positive role in promoting employees' welfare, resolving their legitimate grievances, and protecting their rights.

The provincial adviser said government employees were the backbone of the public service delivery system. Recognizing their professional abilities, hard work, and sense of responsibility, while providing them with a conducive working environment, was essential.

He also urged government employees to perform their duties with honesty, dedication, commitment, and a strong sense of responsibility to ensure better services for the public.

Malakhail further stated that the Government of Balochistan was taking various measures to improve public institutions, introduce administrative reforms, and enhance the quality of public services. He emphasized that the cooperation of government employees was crucial to achieving these objectives.

He expressed confidence that the new leadership of the All Pakistan Clerks Association would effectively highlight employees' issues at relevant forums while contributing to institutional improvement and strengthening the spirit of public service.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Provincial Adviser for Environment and Climate Change Naseem-ur-Rehman Khan Malakhail administered the oath of office to the newly elected office-bearers.

On the occasion, the newly elected president presented a charter of demands outlining various issues and concerns of the employees.

Taking notice of the demands, the provincial adviser issued on-the-spot directives to the relevant authorities to initiate immediate action on some of the requests. He also assured the association that the remaining demands would be addressed through the relevant forums.

Deputy Commissioner Reviews First-Day Performance of Ongoing Polio Campaign in Sibi, Directs Same-Day Coverage of Zero-Dose Children

SIBI: An evening review meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Sibi, Major (Retd.) Ilyas Kabzai, to assess the first-day performance of the ongoing anti-polio vaccination campaign in the district.

The meeting was attended by officials from the Health Department, World Health Organization (WHO), ISD, Aga Khan University (AKU), monitoring teams, Union Council Medical Officers (UCMOs), and area in-charges. During the meeting, all UCMOs presented detailed briefings on the progress of the polio campaign in their respective union councils.

The participants reviewed household targets, non-available (NA) cases, refusals, missed children, zero-dose children, team performance, and vaccination coverage.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Major (Retd.) Ilyas Kabzai directed the concerned officials to ensure that all zero-dose children were covered on the same day without exception.

He instructed vaccinators to remain present in their assigned areas and conduct door-to-door visits to ensure that every eligible child was reached and vaccinated.

The deputy commissioner said the complete eradication of polio was a shared national responsibility and that there was no room for negligence or carelessness in fulfilling this important duty.

He directed all concerned officers and monitoring teams to continuously supervise vaccination teams in the field, ensure data accuracy, and review campaign progress on a daily basis. He emphasized that effective monitoring and timely corrective measures were essential to achieving the prescribed targets and ensuring a high-quality and successful vaccination campaign. The deputy commissioner also urged officials from the Health Department, WHO, ISD, AKU.



Balochistan Chief Secretary Directs Deputy Commissioners to Accelerate Development Projects and Improve Public Service Delivery



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan has said that the provincial government is continuously working within available resources to promote public welfare, ensure the provision of basic facilities, and improve the overall living standards of people across the province.

He emphasized that government officers must consider resolving public issues their personal responsibility, perform their duties with transparency and accountability, and ensure that the benefits of government initiatives reach people at the district level.

He said development, the availability of essential commodities at affordable prices, and the timely resolution of public complaints were among the provincial government's top priorities.

He expressed these views while addressing a conference of Deputy Commissioners, where participants held a detailed review of development projects, monitoring of food prices, repatriation of illegally residing foreign nationals, organization of open courts, and sanitation conditions in local councils, along with other public welfare matters.

During the briefing, the meeting was informed that the Monitoring and Evaluation Section had inspected 2,632 out of a total of 2,935 development projects across the province. Approximately 90 percent of the inspected projects had been completed.

The meeting was also informed that a total of 4,063 projects had been approved under all three phases of the Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI), of which 2,181 projects were at various stages of completion.

Directing the concerned authorities to accelerate ongoing development work, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan stressed that all projects must be completed within their stipulated timelines and in accordance with prescribed quality standards.

He said the timely completion of development schemes was essential for improving public facilities and supporting the province's economic and social development.

Regarding public grievance redressal, the meeting.

Kabul warned of 'unbearable punishment' as clashes persist along border

NEWS DESK: Pakistani and Afghan border forces exchanged fire at several points along their border on Sunday, as the military warned that the Afghan Taliban would not be able to withstand the "punishment" Islamabad could inflict if Kabul failed to rein in terrorists.

The fresh clashes temporarily shut down the busy Torkham border crossing over a disputed check post and killed one civilian in mortar shelling near the Angoor Adda crossing.

The situation unfolded as Washington validated Pakistan's concerns regarding cross-border terrorist attacks originating from Afghanistan and signalled openness to playing a productive role in easing tensions.

The situation at the Torkham cro-ssing stabilised after a nearly five-hour closure caused by an hou-rlong exchange of light-arms fire.

It reopened only after border officials from both countries agreed through intermediaries to halt all construction near the border. However, tensions remained high in the Angoor Adda area of Lower South Waziristan.

According to the deputy commissioner of Lower South Wazir-istan, Taliban fighters continued to



target Pakistani border checkpoints with unprovoked firing.

Pakistani security forces responded immediately and effectively, targeting "multiple Afghan border posts, mortar positions, and defensive checkpoints", the official wrote on X, adding that no reports of any casualties have emerged from the border areas on the Pakistani side.Border clashes

According to locals, gunfire erupted at Torkham on Sunday when Afghan authorities once again started construction on a disputed check post.Authorities at Torkham said the Afghan side began work on the controversial Zangali check post, situated within a 100-metre radius of the Afghan side of the border, despite Pakistan's strong objections.

The firing continued for nearly an hour with no casualties on the Pakistani side. The two nations had previously agreed to refrain from building security structures within a 100-metre radius of the border.

The intense firing caused the immediate closure of the border and panic among returning Afghans and local residents.During the standoff, resident Siraj Khan told Dawn that he saw about 20 vehicles carrying unregistered Afghan families hastily returning from the border at Zero Point amid the crossfire.The repatriation of unregistered Afghans was suspended, and government offices were closed.

Meanwhile, tensions escalated in the Angoor Adda area after two mortar shells were reportedly fired from the Afghan side.

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) asks its workers to 'be prepared'

NEWS DESK: The Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Balochistan chapter has directed party workers across the province to prepare for any political developments and complete organisational and protest preparations in line with the directives of party chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

The directives were issued at a meeting of the party's provincial executive committee and parliamentary members, chaired by provincial chief Senator Maulana Abdul Wasey on Sunday.

The meeting endorsed Maulana Fazlur Rehman's stance and the decisions of the party's central executive council, urging workers to remain ready to respond to any call from the leadership. It also decided to immediately activate party organisations at the provincial, district, tehsil and union council levels.

Expressing serious concern over the political, economic and law and order situation in Balochistan, the meeting said business activity had come to a standstill, unemployment was rising and incidents of targeted killings and violence had become increasingly common. It also noted that national highways had become unsafe for commuters.



Expresses concern over worsening security, unemployment, business conditions

The participants accused the provincial government of failing to ensure public safety, employment opportunities and basic facilities, saying its administrative control appeared to be weakening.

The meeting demanded that the government immediately introduce a bill in the Balochistan Assembly on the registration, administration and legal affairs of religious seminaries.

It also called for the draft Mines and Minerals legislation to be presented in the assembly for review, urging the government to honour its commitments.

Addressing the meeting, Maulana Abdul Wasey said the JUI-F and its chief remained committed to public rights, constitutional supremacy, democratic values and religious identity, while other political parties were largely pursuing personal interests and political expediency.

He warned against attempts to drag Pakistan into conflicts at the behest of foreign powers, particularly the United States and Israel, saying such moves were against the interests of the country and its people.Provincial General Secretary Agha Mahmood Shah said the party's visits to different districts would strengthen its organisational structure and expand public outreach.

The meeting reaffirmed its commitment to continuing a constitutional.

LHC seeks report from Punjab Home Department on extended detention of Imran's sisters

NEWS DESK: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday sought reports from the Punjab Home Department on pleas challenging the extension of the detention of PTI founder Imran Khan's sisters and seeking medical treatment for one of them, Noreen Niazi.

Justice Abher Gul Khan directed the Home Department to submit the reports by 2pm as he heard pleas filed by Noreen's daughter, Sakeena, and Shahrez Khan, the son of Imran's second sister Aleema Khan.

Aleema and Noreen, along with their sister Uzma Khan, were detained under the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, 1960 in September, as the PTI geared up for a protest march to Islamabad. Their detentions have come amid reports of several PTI leaders and workers being taken into custody ahead of the march planned to demand Imran's release from prison.

Among them, Aleema was detained on Sept 20 for 30 days and Noreen and Uzma the next day for the same period.

Their detention was challenged in the court after the 30-day period lapsed last month, following which the Punjab government informed the court that their detention periods had been extended for another 30 days.

At the hearing today, petitioner's counsel Rana Mudassar Umar contended that Aleema, Noreen and Uzma's detentions had been extended "unlawfully".

He noted that after



the completion of the initial 30-day detention period, the Lahore deputy commissioner had issued a notification for its extension.

He claimed that the detained women had also not been allowed to meet their family members or lawyers.

The counsel asked the court to declare the fresh detention notifications "illegal".

PTI Secretary General Advocate Salman Akram Raja informed the court that Aleema's driver had also been detained.

He requested the court to show leniency towards the driver, saying his family was deeply distressed.

Justice Khan then sought reports from the Punjab Home Department and said he would examine the matter after going through the reports.

Among the three detainees, Noreen had been shifted to the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) following her deteriorating health, on the recommendation of the doctors of the Kot Lakhpat Jail, where she has been detained.Later, adviser to the prime minister on political affairs, Rana Sanaullah, had informed the Senate that Noreen was fine after being provided medical treatment in Lahore.

On Friday, the Lahore High Court directed Noreen's lawyer to file a separate application seeking medical treatment and family meetings for his client.

Lahore's air quality index crosses 530 as pollution reaches hazardous levels

NEWS DESK: Air pollution in Lahore reached hazardous levels on Monday, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossing 530 and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentrations climbing to 343 micrograms per cubic metre. Several other cities in Punjab also recorded extremely high pollution levels, according to air quality monitoring platform IQAir.

At 8am, IQAir recorded an AQI of 535 in Lahore, placing the city in the hazardous category. PM2.5 concentration, referring to tiny particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, stood at 343µg/m³.

Air quality had already deteriorated sharply in the early morning, with hourly readings also entering the hazardous range.

The deterioration was not confined to the provincial capital. IQAir's live ranking of Pakistani cities on Monday morning placed five Punjab cities among the country's six most polluted urban centres.

Gujranwala topped the ranking with an AQI of 606, followed by Lahore at 509, Faisalabad and Multan at 310 each, and Sialkot at 260. Peshawar ranked sixth with an AQI of 216.

The readings varied across monitoring updates, with Gujranwala subsequently recording 675 and Lahore 535 in separate hourly updates, highlighting the rapidly changing pollution situation.

The worsening air quality comes amid a sharp increase in agricultural fire detections across Punjab.

According to an



analysis published by environmental monitoring website HamariHawa, Nasa satellites detected 13,241 fire spots in Pakistani Punjab between Oct 1 and 29, compared with 3,158 in Indian Punjab — 4.2 times as many.

Around 92 per cent of the detected fires in Pakistani Punjab were located on farmland and were likely associated with crop-residue burning. The analysis found that 6,655 fire spots, around half of the monthly total, were detected during the last seven days of October. Oct 29 recorded the highest number of detections, at 1,327.

Okara recorded the highest number of fire spots at 2,144, followed by Gujranwala with 1,011 and Nankana Sahib with 1,003. The findings point to extensive agricultural burning in the rice-growing belt surrounding Lahore. Smoke from these fires, along with emissions from vehicles, industries and other sources, adds to the regional pollution burden. Weather conditions, including weak winds and atmospheric inversions, can further trap pollutants close to the ground.

Weather factor

Meanwhile, a new analysis by the Pakistan Air Quality Initiative (PAQI) has questioned the extent of improvement in Lahore's air quality during October, despite government claims that the city experienced its cleanest October in five years.

Pakistan outperforms Vietnam in rice exports

NEWS DESK: Demonstrating remarkable resilience in the face of escalating geopolitical conflict and global shipping turmoil, Pakistan's premium Basmati rice exports have absorbed the shock waves of the US-Iran conflict and broader Gulf region disruptions, keeping the country firmly on track in its continuous push to secure the number three spot in global rice trade.

Despite surging ocean freight rates, skyrocketing marine insurance premiums and logistical bottlenecks, global demand for aromatic Basmati sustained the disruption shock. Total worldwide trade of Basmati rice held firm at 6.9 million tonnes – matching 2025 levels – as buyers in key markets prioritised securing Pakistan and India's signature premium grain over non-aromatic varieties.

In a landmark performance during September 2026, Pakistan outperformed Vietnam, traditionally the world's third-largest rice exporter. Official trade figures from Vietnam's foreign trade agency confirm that Pakistan shipped 420,000 tonnes of rice during the month, comfortably outstripping Vietnam's total of 337,000 tonnes.



Pakistan also established a clear lead in value realisation. Its exporters fetched an average unit price of $621 per tonne in September 2026, compared to Vietnam's $563 per tonne. The price premium highlights strong international demand for Pakistan's mixed export basket of high-value aromatic Basmati and non-basmati varieties, competing directly with Southeast Asian competitors like Thailand and Vietnam, which export 'Hom Mali' and non-basmati rice.

Basmati exports absorb shock waves of the US-Iran conflict, sea route disruptions

Hamid Malik, a rice industry expert, notes that market dynamics have been shifting since December 2025, when Pakistan surpassed Vietnam's monthly export volume for the first time this millennium.

The sector's strong showing comes after a turbulent 2025, during which free-market exporters, including Thailand, Vietnam, and Pakistan, suffered substantial volume losses due to adverse climatic and market conditions while India maintained its dominant position.

Unlike state-supported regimes, the rice supply chain in Pakistan operates purely on free-market principles with no minimum support price (MSP) for paddy purchase, state-funded marine insurance or freight subsidies.

Police set up eight pickets for PAF base security in Rawalpindi

NEWS DESK: Eight special police pickets have been set up at various locations to ensure the security of the PAF base.A separate police picket with 40 officers has also been set up at Azad Patan to guarantee the safety of important establishments and prevent any untoward incidents.According to police sources, the special police picket at Azad Patan has been established with the deployment of 40 police personnel, headed by a superintendent of police (SP), who will be responsible for briefing the personnel and ensuring their presence at the picket.



The police have been deployed at Azad Patan in two shifts. A police reserve team equipped with anti-riot equipment has been placed on standby at the Kahuta police station.

The eight police pickets were established on Saturday until further orders. They have been set up at Khokhar Road, Chaklala Stand, Chhtari Chowk, Shaheen Chowk, TNT Chowk, TM Chowk, GPO Chowk and Hali Road.As part of the security plan for the eight pickets, police mobile squads from Chaklala, Sadiqabad and Waris Khan police stations will patrol around Nur Khan PAF Base, while the Muhafiz Squad and Dolphin Force have been assigned patrol duties around the base.At the TM Chowk police picket, the RA Bazaar police, Muhafiz Squad and Dolphin Force will patrol within the limits of the R.A. Bazaar police station.