QUETTA VOICE

Rs.10.00 Vol.VII:No:355
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First Digital,Print Daily of Balochistan

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Monday 09, November, 2026

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Pakistan Customs Foils Drug Smuggling Bid from...



Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The Growing Need...

Balochistan's 150-Bed Cardiac Hospital Nears Completion, Inauguration Expected Next Month, CM Balochistan

Qaseem Shah

Quetta : Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti has announced that the province's new 150-bed cardiac hospital under the Balochistan Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (BICVD) is nearing completion and is expected to be inaugurated next month.

The development is being viewed as a major step towards improving cardiac healthcare, heart disease diagnosis and specialised cardiac treatment in Balochistan, particularly for patients who currently face difficulties accessing advanced cardiovascular services.

A high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti reviewed the progress of the BICVD cardiac hospital in Quetta, including construction work, medical facilities, administrative arrangements and preparations for making the hospital fully operational.Officials briefed the meeting that the hospital has entered its final stages of completion. The meeting also reviewed arrangements for strengthening the administrative and medical structure of the institution.



Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti has announced 150-BedCardiac Hospital Nears Completion

The appointment of Dr Jalal Khan as head of the Balochistan Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases was also approved, while the meeting discussed measures to ensure that the newly established cardiac facility becomes functional in accordance with modern medical requirements.

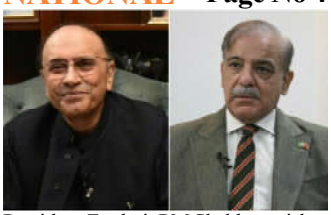
The provincial government said the expansion of cardiac treatment facilities in Balochistan would help improve access to diagnosis and treatment for patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases.

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Polling under way for NA-77, PP-203 by-elections in Punjab

NATIONAL Page No 4



President Zardari, PM Shehbaz wish

Tragic Gas Leak inside Duki Coal Mine Claims One Life, Leaves Two Injured

Hussain Zarkoon:

DUKI — A fatal gas leak inside a coal mine in the Ulta area of Duki district resulted in the death of one miner, while two others were left injured on Saturday.

Local sources confirmed that toxic gas accumulated rapidly within the mine shaft, asphyxiating the workers on duty. Emergency rescue efforts pulled three men from the pit, but one succumbed to the toxic fumes shortly after.

The deceased has been identified as Faiz Muhammad Khan, son of Saltanat Khan, a resident of Swat Ghashin belonging to the Swati Syed tribe. The two injured miners, identified as Muhammad Tariq (son of Syed Jamshed) and Samiullah (son of Waroki), also belong to the Swati Syed community. Both surviving miners were rushed to a nearby medical facility for urgent treatment.

A Pattern of Neglect: Hazardous Conditions in Balochistan Coal MinesThis fatal incident is far from an isolated event. Hazardous and substandard working conditions inside the coal mines of Balochistan have claimed thousands of precious human lives over the decades, turning the region's mines into dangerous death traps for poor laborers.



Tragic Gas Leak inside Duki Coal Mine Claims One Life, Leaves Two Injured

Pakistan Customs Foils Drug Smuggling Bid from Balochistan to Karachi, Seizes 51kg Hashish

NEWS DESK:

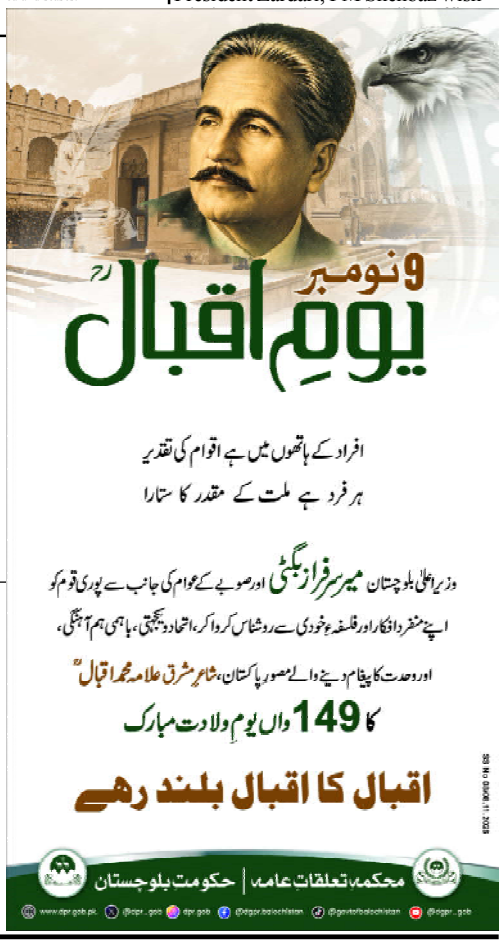
Quetta : Pakistan Customs has foiled an attempt to smuggle 51 kilograms of hashish (charas) from Balochistan to Karachi, seizing narcotics and a truck worth an estimated Rs239.5 million, officials said.

The action was carried out by Customs Enforcement at the Digital Enforcement Station Khurkhera on the RCD Highway. Officials intercepted a truck allegedly being used to transport narcotics concealed in secret compartments.

According to Pakistan Customs, the smugglers had allegedly hidden the 51kg hashish beneath a consignment of carrots in an attempt to evade detection. The truck driver was arrested at the scene and the vehicle was taken into custody.



Preliminary investigations revealed that the narcotics were allegedly being transported from Gulistan, Balochistan, to Karachi.



QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The Growing Need for Real Connections in Balochistan

By Ali Hamza Khan:

Social media has become a central part of modern life, particularly for young people. From checking notifications after waking up to scrolling through TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat before going to sleep, digital platforms increasingly shape how young people communicate, study, form relationships and perceive themselves.

Although social media offers opportunities for learning, networking and entertainment, its excessive use can also raise concerns about mental health, loneliness, anxiety and declining self-esteem. Behind the attractive photographs, trending videos and carefully edited lifestyles lies an important question: are young people becoming more connected digitally while growing more isolated in their real lives?

For the youth of Balochistan, this question deserves particular attention as digital platforms become an increasingly important source of communication, entertainment and social acceptance.

Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The Loneliness Paradox

Social media promised to bring people closer together by removing geographical barriers. Today, a student in Quetta can communicate instantly with someone in Canada, exchange ideas and develop friendships across cultures. These platforms have made information and communication more accessible than ever before.

However, online connectivity does not always provide the emotional support that people need.

Young people may have hundreds or thousands of followers but still struggle to find someone who will listen when they experience academic failure, family difficulties, heartbreak or emotional distress. An online audience does not necessarily translate into a dependable support network.

Face-to-face communication offers forms of connection that digital interaction may not fully reproduce, including body language, personal presence, empathy and the reassurance of being genuinely heard.

This does not mean online friendships are meaningless. Rather, it highlights the importance of balancing digital relationships with meaningful interaction in everyday life.

Social Media Comparison and Low Self-Esteem

One of the major concerns surrounding social media and youth mental health is the pressure to compare personal lives with the carefully selected experiences of others.

Instagram feeds and short-form videos often showcase expensive clothes, successful careers, university achievements, holidays in Ziarat and apparently perfect lifestyles. The financial difficulties, disappointments and personal struggles behind these images are much less visible.

When young people in Balochistan compare their everyday circumstances with these idealised portrayals, they may begin to feel unsuccessful, unattractive or left behind.

This comparison can contribute to low self-esteem and the fear of missing out, commonly known as FOMO. Young users may feel that other people are enjoying better lives, achieving greater success and building stronger relationships.

The pressure to appear attractive, wealthy, popular or constantly happy can make social media emotionally exhausting. Some users begin to judge their worth by the number of likes, comments and shares their posts receive. A post that attracts little attention may lead to disappointment, embarrassment or self-doubt.

When external approval becomes the main measure of personal value, confidence can become dependent on the reactions of strangers rather than individual abilities, character and achievements.

Young people need to understand that social media displays selected moments, not the complete reality of someone's life.



Social Media Addiction, Sleep and Concentration

Excessive social media use can become a difficult habit to control. Features such as endless scrolling, personalised recommendations, frequent notifications and unpredictable feedback encourage users to return to their screens repeatedly.

Likes, comments and other forms of digital recognition can activate the brain's reward system, reinforcing the desire to check notifications and seek further engagement. For some users, this pattern can interfere with everyday responsibilities.

Students are particularly vulnerable when social media begins to affect their sleep, academic concentration and family relationships.

Using a phone late at night can delay bedtime and disrupt healthy sleep routines. Frequent interruptions from notifications can make it harder to concentrate on lectures, assignments and examination preparation.

A student who repeatedly switches between studying and social media may struggle to maintain focus, while excessive screen time can reduce opportunities for physical activity and in-person interaction.

The impact extends beyond academic performance. Families may spend time together in the same room while remaining absorbed in separate digital conversations. As a result, opportunities for meaningful discussion and emotional support can diminish.

Healthy digital habits are therefore essential to maintaining a balance between technology, education, rest and personal relationships.

Why Young People in Balochistan Seek Belonging Online

At the heart of social media use lies a basic human need: belonging.

Every young person wants to feel accepted, respected and valued. Young people also need opportunities to express themselves, explore their interests and develop a sense of identity.

In many communities across Balochistan, opportunities for organised recreational activities, youth clubs, cultural programmes and accessible mental health services may be limited. Some young people also find it difficult to discuss emotional challenges openly with parents, teachers or other adults.

When meaningful support is difficult to find at home, in universities or within local communities, online platforms can become an alternative source of companionship and acceptance.

Digital communities can offer genuine benefits. They allow young people to share creative work, learn new skills, discuss common interests and connect with others who understand their experiences.

However, not every online community promotes healthy relationships. Some expose young users to cyberbullying, hateful content, unrealistic beauty standards and harmful social pressures.

Addressing this challenge requires more than asking young people to spend less time on their phones. It also requires creating supportive environments where they can find friendship, recognition and purpose in real life.

How to Improve Digital Well-Being Among Young People

Reducing the harmful effects of social media does not require abandoning technology altogether. Digital platforms can support education, professional development, social awareness and creative expression when used responsibly.

The priority should be to promote digital well-being and help young people develop healthier relationships with technology.

What Young People Can DoYoung users can begin by setting realistic screen-time limits, switching off unnecessary notifications and avoiding excessive phone use before bedtime. They should also review the accounts they follow and prioritise content that supports learning, creativity and personal growth.

Taking regular breaks from social media can provide more time for studying, exercise, reading and spending time with friends and family.

Joining a sports team, participating in a literary society, learning a practical skill or meeting friends without constantly checking a phone can help strengthen real-world relationships.

Young people should also remember that their personal worth cannot be accurately measured through followers, likes or online popularity.

The Role of Parents and Teachers

Parents and teachers have an important role in protecting youth mental health. However, criticism, punishment and comparisons with other children may discourage young people from discussing their difficulties.

Instead, adults should encourage open conversations, listen without immediately passing judgement and take emotional distress seriously.

Changes in behaviour, persistent withdrawal or signs of anxiety should prompt a supportive conversation rather than automatic criticism. Where emotional difficulties persist, professional mental health support may be appropriate.

Schools and colleges should also help students understand responsible social media use, online privacy, cyberbullying and the importance of seeking help when they feel overwhelmed.

Creating an environment in which young people can talk openly about loneliness and emotional distress is an important step towards reducing stigma around mental health.

What Universities in Balochistan Should Do.Universities, including the University of Balochistan, can play a constructive role in promoting student mental health and digital awareness.

Educational institutions should work towards providing accessible and confidential counselling services, organising regular awareness sessions on digital well-being and offering guidance on managing online pressure.

Universities can also strengthen campus life by expanding opportunities for sports, debates, literary activities, cultural events, student societies and community service.

These activities can help students develop friendships, discover their interests and feel connected to a wider community.

For students who struggle with isolation, a supportive campus environment can provide opportunities to build confidence and relationships beyond the digital world.

The Responsibility of Society and Policymakers

Promoting youth mental health is not solely the responsibility of individuals and their families. Educational institutions, community organisations, technology companies and policymakers also have a role to play.

Digital platforms should take concerns such as cyberbullying, harmful content and excessive engagement seriously. Communities and public institutions should also invest in recreational facilities, youth development programmes and accessible mental health support.In Balochistan, where young people represent an important source of future social and economic progress, investing in their well-being is an investment in the province itself.

Conclusion: Real Relationships Matter More Than Online Likes

The youth of Balochistan possess talent, creativity and the ability to contribute meaningfully to society. Their value does not depend on their appearance in filtered photographs, the number of followers they attract or the popularity of their online posts.

Social media can be a useful tool, but it should not become the principal measure of happiness, success or self-worth.

Young people need genuine friendships, emotional support, opportunities to develop their abilities and environments in which they can express themselves without fear of rejection. These needs cannot always be fulfilled through a screen.

Families, universities and communities must work together to ensure that digital connectivity complements rather than replaces human relationships.

The real measure of connection is not how many people follow us online, but whether we have someone who listens when we are struggling, supports us during difficult moments and accepts us for who we are.

Young people should be encouraged to use technology wisely, protect their mental health and build meaningful relationships in their everyday lives.

The goal is not to disconnect from the digital world, but to reconnect with ourselves and the people around us.

Balochistan: Qila Saifullah Hailstorm Destroys 7M Fruit Trees, 18,000 Farmers Hit

Atta Kakar:

A devastating hailstorm accompanied by powerful winds has caused widespread destruction across Qila Saifullah district in Balochistan, damaging more than 7 million fruit trees and affecting nearly 18,000 farmers and landowners.

The storm struck on April 18, severely impacting one of the province's most important horticultural regions and leaving thousands of rural families facing major economic uncertainty.

The disaster caused extensive damage to orchards, agricultural land, and seasonal crops, particularly apple,

apricot, and grape farms that form the backbone of the local economy.

Farmers say years of hard work and investment were wiped out within minutes as hail and strong winds tore through villages and farming areas across the district.

Local growers have described the situation as catastrophic, warning that many families may struggle to survive financially without immediate government assistance.

Agriculture remains the primary source of income for a large portion of Qila Saifullah's

population, and the destruction of fruit orchards is expected to have long-term economic consequences for the region.

Residents and farming communities have expressed frustration over delays in relief and compensation efforts.



Many affected farmers claim that official assessment and rehabilitation measures have been slow despite the scale of destruction.

Calls are growing for the provincial and federal governments to announce emergency compensation packages, interest-free agricultural loans, and recovery support for affected communities.

Farmers and local representatives are also demanding restoration of damaged irrigation systems and the introduction of crop insurance mechanisms to help rural communities recover from climate-related disasters.

They argue that without urgent intervention, the crisis could deepen poverty and unemployment across the district.

The Qila Saifullah hailstorm has once again highlighted the vulnerability of Balochistan's agriculture sector to extreme weather events. Experts warn that climate-related disasters, including hailstorms, droughts, and flash floods, are becoming increasingly frequent in the province, placing additional pressure on farmers already struggling with limited infrastructure and rising production costs.

Analysts say stronger disaster management systems, climate-resilient agricultural policies,

and faster emergency response mechanisms are essential to protect rural livelihoods and ensure long-term stability in Balochistan's farming sector.

Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail Visits Former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain to Inquire About His Health



LAHORE, November 8: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail visited the residence of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) President and former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain in Lahore on Saturday to inquire about his health and well-being.

During the visit, Governor Mandokhail expressed his sincere wishes for Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain's speedy and complete recovery and prayed for his good health.

On the occasion, the Balochistan governor described Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain as a senior political leader of the country, emphasizing the importance of his health and well-being.

Governor Mandokhail also offered prayers for his early recovery and expressed his best wishes for his continued health and wellness.

No Recovery Decision Made in PAC Meeting, Balochistan Communications and Works Department Clarifies

QUETTA: The Communications and Works (C&W) Department, Government of Balochistan, has clarified that no decision regarding any financial recovery was made during the recent meeting of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), terming reports circulating on social media in this regard misleading and factually incorrect.

In an official clarification, the department stated that the proceedings of the PAC meeting were being presented out of context, creating a misleading impression about decisions allegedly taken regarding financial recoveries.

According to the statement, a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee was held on November 6, 2026, under the chairmanship of PAC Chairman Asghar Tareen to review audit paragraphs relating to the department for the financial year 2022-23.

Only four audit paragraphs were taken up for discussion during the meeting, while the remaining agenda was deferred until the next meeting scheduled for November 30, 2026.

Regarding an audit paragraph concerning the non-development budget, the department explained that the Finance Department had released Rs12.11 billion under various heads during the financial year 2022-23, out of which Rs2.83 billion remained unutilized. The department attributed the savings to vacant positions, resulting in lower salary expenditures, as well as savings under other recurring expenditure heads. The committee expressed satisfaction with the department's explanation and settled the relevant audit paragraph.

Regarding another audit paragraph involving the unutilized development budget of Rs269 million, the department informed the committee that the amount represented approximately 0.85 percent of the total Rs31.53 billion released by the Finance Department.

The department also presented reasons for the non-utilization of the funds. After reviewing the explanation, the committee expressed satisfaction and settled this audit paragraph as well. The third matter related to alleged excess payments amounting to Rs90.341 million across various building divisions, covered under Audit Paragraph No. 4.2.1 involving 25 districts. However, the department clarified that only the cases concerning Sherani and Lasbela districts were discussed during the November 6 meeting. Regarding development projects in Sherani district, an expenditure of Rs151,000 on the cutting and clearing of wild plants and bushes was questioned.

The department informed the committee that relevant photographic evidence would be provided to the audit team.

In the case involving the Executive Engineer (XEN), Buildings Division Lasbela, the department sought additional time to submit a detailed response.

The committee was informed that the concerned executive engineer had retired and that the relevant record was being compiled to prepare a comprehensive reply.

The C&W Department categorically clarified that no other audit paragraphs, apart from the four taken up during the meeting, were discussed. It therefore rejected social media reports suggesting that recovery decisions had been made, emphasizing that such claims should not be presented as decisions of the Public Accounts Committee.

PAC Chairman Asghar Tareen directed the department to submit detailed responses to the pending audit paragraphs at the next meeting on November 30, 2026.

He also directed that meetings of the Departmental Accounts Committee (DAC) be convened under the chairmanship of the Secretary Communications and Works for the years in which DAC meetings had not yet been held.

The Communications and Works Department urged media organizations and social media users to verify information before publishing reports about official meetings and ensure that proceedings are presented accurately and in their proper context. The department reiterated that no recovery decision was taken during the November 6 PAC meeting and termed contrary reports misleading.

University of Turbat Faculty Member Dr. Muhammad Tariq Durra Earns PhD from University of Georgia, USA

TURBAT: Dr. Muhammad Tariq Durra, a faculty member at the University of Turbat, has successfully completed his PhD in Education from the University of Georgia, United States.

According to a statement issued by the University of Turbat spokesperson, Dr. Tariq successfully defended his doctoral research dissertation at the University of Georgia on November 7, 2026. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Gul Hasan, Pro Vice Chancellor Dr. Kamal Ahmed, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences Dr. Muhammad Tahir Hakim, Chairperson of the Department of Education Ruqayya Mirwani, and the entire university community congratulated Dr. Tariq on this remarkable academic achievement.

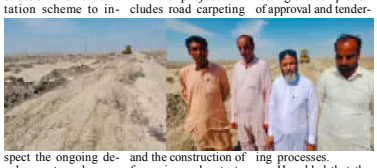
In his congratulatory message, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Gul Hasan described the achievement as a matter of pride for the University of Turbat, saying it reflected Dr. Muhammad Tariq's hard work, dedication, and academic insight.

He further highlighted the growing number of PhD-qualified faculty members at the University of Turbat, describing this development as an important step towards promoting quality research and strengthening the university's academic standards.

The university administration expressed its best wishes for Dr. Tariq's continued academic and professional success.

Gwadar MPA Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman Inspects Ankara Dam Road Rehabilitation Project Worth Rs98.9 Million

GWADAR: Member of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman Baloch visited the project site of the Ankara Dam Road construction and rehabilitation scheme to inspect the ongoing development work.



The Ankara Dam Road had remained in poor condition for a long time, causing serious transportation difficulties for residents of surrounding areas.

Following the special efforts of Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman Baloch, the project was included in the Balochistan Sustainable Development Initiative (BSDI), paving the way for the commencement of construction work.

According to project details, the rehabilitation scheme covers approximately 5.7 kilometres of road with a width of 12 feet and has an estimated cost of Rs98,996,689 (approximately Rs98.99 million).

The project includes road carpeting and the construction of four pipe culverts to improve drainage and ensure better road connectivity.

Speaking during his visit, Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman Baloch said practical measures were being taken to fulfil promises made to the public and provide essential infrastructure facilities.

He described the rehabilitation of Ankara Dam Road as part of these ongoing development efforts.

He further stated that efforts would continue to connect all rural areas of Gwadar district through an improved road network.

The MPA also said that construction work on roads in various areas of Ormara tehsil had commenced following the completion of approval and tendering processes.

He added that the rehabilitation of the important road, which was damaged by recent rainfall, would provide relief to residents of Dotga, Ormara, and adjoining areas by improving travel conditions and ensuring safer transportation.

The completion of both road development projects is expected to improve connectivity across rural and coastal areas of Gwadar district while supporting public mobility, economic activities, and commercial growth.

Balochistan Adviser Naseemur Rehman Khan Malakhail Calls for Following Allama Iqbal's Philosophy on 149th Birth Anniversary

QUETTA: Provincial Adviser for Environment and Climate Change Naseemur Rehman Khan Malakhail, in his message on the occasion of Allama Muhammad Iqbal's birth anniversary on November 9, congratulated the entire nation on the 149th birth anniversary of the great philosopher, thinker of Islam, and Poet of the East.

He said that November 9 is not merely a day commemorating the birth of a great personality but also an occasion for intellectual awakening and the revival of the spirit of selfhood (Khudi).

The provincial adviser stated that through his visionary thoughts and extraordinary poetry, Allama Iqbal awakened the Muslim Ummah from intellectual slumber. His philosophy of Khudi, he added, teaches human dignity, self-respect, and continuous struggle.

He said that Allama Iqbal laid the intellectual foundation of the Two-Nation Theory and envisioned a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent, a dream that was ultimately realized under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Naseemur Rehman Khan Malakhail emphasized that following Allama Iqbal's philosophy has become more important than ever to address the challenges facing Pakistan today.

He noted that Iqbal described young people as "Shaheens" (eagles), expecting them to demonstrate high aspirations, self-respect, and positive thinking.

He urged the younger generation to embody the qualities of Iqbal's Shaheen and actively contribute to the country's progress, national unity, and stability.

On the occasion of Iqbal Day, the provincial adviser reaffirmed the commitment to eliminating prejudice, sectarianism, and hopelessness while promoting Allama Iqbal's principles of unity, discipline, and selfhood.

He said that spreading Iqbal's message and putting his teachings into practice would help transform Pakistan into a strong, dignified, and peaceful state.

TENDER NOTICE

Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required The Executive Engineer, Urban Planning & Development Department, Quetta Division Quetta invites the sealed tenders based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2026, Government of Balochistan, amended up-to-date from the interested Contractors / Firm for the following works:

S.#	Name of Works.	E/Cost
1.	PROVISION OF DOMESTIC SOLAR ENERGY SOLUTIONS IN TEHSIL BARSHORE, TOBA KAKAR CLUSTER-I (BARSHORE), AND POTI NASRAN TSE-262711220143	133,600,000/-

The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules, 2014 amended up to date.i. BASIC ELIGIBILITY: The Firm/ Contractors must have valid registration with Pakistan Engineering also renewed upto date in relevant Category. ii. Firms (Single Entity) having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in the Category C-4 or above (upto Rs. 200 million) in relevant category and Specialized Code EE04 (Low Voltage Installation) and EE05 (High Voltage Installation). iii. The firm must register in Balochistan Revenue Authority and presence in active tax payer list (ATL) iv. Valid Registration with Income Tax &Presence in Active Tax Payer List in FBR (ATL) v. Turnover of at least Rs. 93,520,000/- in 1 subsequent previous year showing financial capacity of the firm. vi. The bidder must have completed 2 assignments of similar nature of work in the last 5 years. Each project must have at least 80% similar work and cost at least 50% of the estimated cost. Tubewell electrification etc. and subcontracted works are not accepted. vii. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. viii.Affidavit confirming no conflict, no current blacklisting/debarment, major litigation, non-performance in last 5 years, or failure to sign contract. Any prior blacklisting/debarment and restoration must be disclosed with details and proof. ix. C D R and Green Challan must mention the Tender TSE (TSE-262711220143) on both documents. x. The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee of 3 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. xi. Other Mandatory conditions and Detail Criteria mentioned in the Bidding Documents. METHOD OF PROCUREMENT: Single Stage-Two Envelope Procedure. ISSUANCE: The firms/contractors can also download the bidding documents from the BPPRA website at www.bppra.org.pk. The required tender processing of Rs. 2,500/- above must be deposited in the government treasury under the head of account C-03870 through the Green Challan Form at the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP). Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 23 November, 2026 till 09:00 AM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 10:00 AM on EPPS System. Address Place of Bids opening: Office of the Executive Engineer Urban Planning & Development Department New Zarghoon Road Quetta Bid Validity Period: Ninety (90) Days.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Urban Planning &Dev: Department Quetta Division Quetta

DPRO/PRO No.3351/06-11-2026



Polling under way for NA-77, PP-203 by-elections in Punjab



NEWS DESK: Polling is currently under way in two Punjab constituencies — NA-77 and PP-203 — where by-elections are being held today, DawnNewsTV has reported.

NA-77 fell vacant following the death of five-time MNA Chaudhry Mehmood Bashir Virk on September 11 after a prolonged illness. His son, Rashid Basheer Virk, is among the candidates contesting the by-election.

Rashid and 17 other candidates have filed nomination papers to contest the constituency, but opposition parties, including the PTI, PPP and Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), have not opted for the by-election.

On Saturday, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) also took notice of an alleged violation of the Code of Conduct by Information Minister Attaullah Tarar during by-election campaigning in NA-77.

According to the ECP, the minister visited the constituency by helicopter and addressed a campaign event for Rashid.

This violates a provision in the Code of Conduct, which bars public office holders, including federal ministers, from participating in campaign activities.

The commission has sought a report from the district monitoring officer and the district returning officer to inquire into the matter. It has also directed the minister to appear before the commission in person.

The ECP also said that the result of the constituency could be withheld until a final decision is made on the matter.

Meanwhile, the by-poll in PP-203 is being held following the death of PML-N MPA Chaudhry Muhammad Hanif Jutt. This is the second time that the by-election is being held in the constituency after the 2024 general elections.

The seat was initially won by independent candidate Rai Murtaza Iqbal, backed by the PTI, with 55,874 votes against Jutt, who polled 35,163 votes.

However, Iqbal, along with four other PTI-backed parliamentarians, was disqualified and denotified by the ECP following their conviction by an anti-terrorism court in Faisalabad on July 31.

Subsequently, the ECP scheduled a by-election for Nov 23, 2025, which was won by Jutt with 46,820 votes. His closest rival, independent candidate Falik Sher, secured 10,975 votes.

Jutt died of cardiac arrest on Sept 17, 2026, necessitating another by-election in the constituency.

Around 1,370 polling personnel, including 574 women and 796 men, have been deputed at 185 polling stations for the by-election in PP-203.

District Police Officer Usman Tipu said 1,100 personnel had been deployed to ensure security during the by-election.

A total of 185 polling stations have been established in the constituency, including 11 in Category A, 37 in Category B and 137 in Category C.

A comprehensive traffic management plan has also been devised, with more than 65 personnel assigned duties.

Siblings acquitted in blasphemy case after 20 years



NEWS DESK: The Supreme Court on Saturday acquitted two brothers in a blasphemy case under Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), setting aside their death sentences earlier upheld by the Lahore High Court (LHC) over a decade ago.

A three-judge SC bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi and comprising Justices Shakeel Ahmad and Ishtiaq Ibrahim, took up criminal appeals against the Sept 17, 2015 decision of the LHC.

The brothers, Liaqat Ali and Umar Draz, have spent around 20 years behind bars. They were convicted by a sessions judge in Jhang on March 27, 2006. The trial court sentenced both brothers to death and imposed a fine of Rs500,000 each, with five years' rigorous imprisonment in default. The high court dismissed their appeals and upheld the convictions.

The main SC judgement was authored by Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim. Justice Shakeel Ahmad concurred with the order but also annexed an additional note.According to the complaint, Umar Draz had begun making explicit blasphemous statements, leading to a marital dispute between him and his wife that culminated in divorce on March 13, 2006. Draz explicitly affirmed in writing his conversion from Islam in the divorce papers.

During the return of his former wife's dowry articles, a written document auth-ored by co-appellant Liaqat Ali was recovered. It also contained blasphemous assertions.On March 18, 2006, when the complainant and witnesses confronted the brothers over the alleged blasphemous material, both appellants acknowledged and verified the contents of the documents and unequivocally declared their willingness to reiterate their assertions before any forum.

Before the SC, their counsel confined his submissions to the plea of mental unsoundness, arguing that the appellants lacked the requisite mens rea (guilty mind) at the time of the alleged offence.

The SC examined three psychiatric assessments. An initial three-member medical board at DHQ Hospital, Faisalabad, found both appellants mentally sound in 2007. However, an eight-member Board of Certification diagnosed them with "bipolar affective disorder with psychotic symptoms" in 2023.A nine-member Board of Certification in September 2025 concluded that both brothers were suffering from "bipolar disorder current episode manic". It described the condition as a chronic illness that was most likely permanent in acute cases, with absent insight and an inability to understand their acts at the time.

Woman alleges harassment by ex-husband on court premises

NEWS DESK:A British Pakistani woman pursuing maintenance litigation against her former husband for their three daughters has alleged harassment and intimidation by him on the court's premises.

In her application submitted to the Islampura police, the complainant, Laleen, alleged that she had visited the sessions court for a hearing against her ex-husband, a businessman.

She had obtained a Khula (judicial divorce) from him seven years earlier and a guardian court had decided the matter of the daughters' custody in her favour, which attained finality.

The woman alleged that upon exiting the courtroom, she was confronted by her former husband alongside unidentified individuals.

She claimed the men harassed her, hurled verbal abuse and continued issuing threats even in the judge's chamber.

LHC dismisses plea challenging guardian court's decision on maintenance allowance for three daughters

According to the complaint filed on Oct 23, the former husband repeatedly demanded custody of their daughters, issued death threats, and physically shoved her.

The complainant further alleged that the suspects prevented her from dialling the police helpline (15) or immediately reaching the police station, subjecting her to severe mental distress before she managed to escape.

Despite providing video evidence, she alleged, the police were reluctant to register a case.

However, the inquiry officer concerned at Islampura Police Station told Dawn that the matter had been investigated but no cognisable offence was made out.

Laleen has appealed to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, urging her to intervene and ensure justice.

"I have been cleared in numerous malicious cases," she said.

"Given CM Maryam Nawaz's work for women and children, I request her support in the matter," the woman stated.

She also seeks removal of her youngest daughter's name from the Exit Control List.

A family court had awarded each daughter Rs100,000 per month in maintenance from January 2017, along with educational expenses and a 10pc annual increase.

The father had challenged the decree, arguing that the maintenance amount was excessive and beyond his means.

However, the Lahore High Court (LHC) upheld the decision, dismissing his appeal and ruling that a father cannot evade his financial obligations by concealing his assets and income.

The court noted that the educational expenses reflected the standard of living the children had enjoyed before the marital dispute and that a father could not reduce that standard merely because the children were now residing with their mother.

It held that the maintenance must correspond to the children's needs, social background, educational requirements and the father's financial standing.



However, the children have yet to receive maintenance, since the execution proceedings are still pending.

President Zardari, PM Shehbaz wish Hindu community on Diwali, reaffirm commitment to minority rights

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday extended greetings to the Hindu community in Pakistan and worldwide on the occasion of Diwali, reaffirming their commitment to minority rights.

Diwali is a Hindu festival involving lighting candles, worship, celebrations and prayers. It is celebrated to mark the day when Hindu deity Lord Rama returned home after his 14-year exile. It is a five-day festival and during this time, houses are cleaned and windows are opened to welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

PM Shehbaz calls for interfaith harmony

In his message on the occasion, PM Shehbaz said, "The festival of lights conveys a profound message of promoting peaceful coexistence in human relations and social life.

"The enduring belief in a bright, prosperous and hopeful future is one of the most cherished attributes of Diwali."

He described the Hindu community as "a valued and integral part of our national fabric".

"The diverse cultural and religious traditions within our society constitute a valuable social asset. Pakistan takes immense pride in its religious and cultural diversity," he added.

The premier reiterated the government's commitment to protecting the religious and civil rights of minorities, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan.

"The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the protection of the religious and civil rights of minorities. The government remains firmly committed to safeguarding the rights, dignity and religious freedoms of all citizens, irrespective of religion, faith, colour or ethnicity. Promoting religious harmony, mutual unity and respect is our shared responsibility," he said.



The premier added: "A society that embraces diverse cultures and traditions and upholds the principles of peaceful coexistence is one that ensures equal educational and economic opportunities for all its citizens."

He called on the nation to foster interfaith harmony, strengthen bonds of fraternity and brotherhood and work together towards a future founded on peace, tolerance and mutual understanding.

'Pakistan belongs equally to all its citizens'

In his message, President Zardari said, "The festival of lights celebrates the symbolism of triumph of good over evil, light over darkness and hope over despair. Its message of compassion and renewal reminds us that each of us can bring light into the lives of others through kindness, understanding, compassion and care."

He added that Pakistan's Hindu community is "an integral part of our national life", highlighting its contributions to education, healthcare, business, public service, social welfare, arts and culture.

Governor invites Chinese investors to explore KP's potential

NEWS DESK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said the province was rich in natural resources and mineral reserves, offering investment opportunities in the minerals sector and other fields.

"Hold consultations with our relevant advisers and officials on potential investment projects in the province and develop viable proposals for further consideration," the governor told members of a Chinese delegation during a meeting at Governor House here.

The meeting, attended by a delegation of Chinese investors, focused on investment opportunities in the province,

particularly in the minerals sector, as well as the potential for investment in its economic zones, according to a statement issued by the governor's office.



The governor told the Chinese investors that they could benefit from the investment potential of the economic zones established across the province.

Assures them of all possible facilities, support

He said that all possible facilities and support would be extended to investors, enabling them to put their money in the province with confidence.

Mr Kundi also advised investors to hold consultations with his relevant advisers and officials from departments on potential investment projects and develop viable proposals for further consideration.

Meanwhile, the governor addressed the inaugural ceremony of the two-day 16th conference of the Pakistan Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons here.

He said the province faced enormous challenges, including terrorism, displacement and prolonged instability,

which had placed additional pressure on the healthcare system and other essential public services, according to another statement issued by the governor's office.

Sindh CM declares Tharparkar drought-hit, orders relief measures

NEWS DESK: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday declared Tharparkar a drought-affected district after reviewing the situation and the severe crop losses.

He directed the relevant departments to begin relief work immediately and to ensure that drinking water and essential supplies were available to the affected population.

Presiding over a meeting at the CM House, Mr Shah was briefed on drought-like conditions in all seven talukas of the district.

The meeting was attended, among others, by MNA Dr Mahesh Malani; MPAs Dost Muhammad Rahimon, Qasim Soomro, Faqeer Sher Muhammad Bilalani and Arbab Lutfullah; Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah; Senior Member of the Board of Revenue Khalid Hyder Shah; and Mirpurkhas Commissio-ner Shahmir Bhutto.

According to a press statement issued by the CM House, the briefing revealed that all seven talukas were facing drought-like conditions, with 85 to 90 per cent of cultivated crops either destroyed or rendered unproductive. The agriculture extension department put crop losses at around 90 per cent, while field reports from assistant commissioners and mukhtiarkars confirmed that only 10 to 15 per cent of crops had survived.



The chief minister expressed serious concern over the effect of inadequate and poorly distributed rainfall on agriculture, livestock and livelihoods in the district.

He said the situation demanded immediate government intervention, particularly to protect livestock, a major source of income for the people of the desert district.

He directed the chief secretary to ensure that all non-functional reverse osmosis (RO) plants were repaired and restored on a priority basis. The authorities were also told to identify faults in existing water supply sources and make them fully functional so that local communities had uninterrupted access to drinking water.

Mr Shah further asked the chief secretary to assess the feasibility of laying a dedicated water supply line from Naukot to Mithi to provide the people of Mithi with a sustainable and reliable supply. All technical and administrative requirements should be examined urgently, he said, so that a long-term solution to the area's water shortage could be developed.