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Pakistan, China sign \$440m pharmaceutical agreements

Security of Chinese nationals remains govt's top priority, assures PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday hailed the signing of nine agreements worth around US\$ 440 million between Pakistani and Chinese private enterprises in the pharmaceutical sector, describing the development as a major step towards strengthening bilateral economic cooperation and advancing the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0).

Addressing the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical Business-to-Business Conference here, the prime minister expressed confidence that the agreements would turn into practical projects, saying they would boost investment in pharmaceutical manufacturing, vaccines, research and development, and help Pakistan emerge as a regional centre for the production and export of life-saving medicines.

"I think this will ultimately result in manufacturing life saving medicines, vaccines, research and development and become a center of excellence for exporting our wonderful products to neighboring countries," he said.

He said China had consistently stood by Pakistan during difficult times and had already invested more than US\$ 30 billion under first phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), calling the new partnerships another milestone in expanding economic cooperation.

The prime minister congratulated Pakistani and Chinese entrepreneurs on the agreements and praised the efforts of Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, Pakistan's Ambassador to China

Khalil Hashmi, Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, government institutions and business leaders for making the conference a success.

The prime minister also highlighted Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace, saying Islamabad had played an important mediating role during the recent regional crisis with the support of friendly countries, particularly China.

He appreciated the contributions of President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and other Chinese leaders, while also acknowledged the efforts of Field Marshal, Syed Asim Munir, and Deputy Prime Minister, Ishaq Dar in diplomatic engagements.

Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to Chinese investors, he said the security

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses the signing and exchange of agreements between Chinese and Pakistani Pharmaceutical Companies at the Pak China Pharmaceutical B2B Conference.

Bugti, Sindh CM agree on joint measures to address Naseerabad water crisis

GoB committed to protecting the interests of farmers and landowners and will continue close coordination with the Sindh Government to resolve irrigation issues

QUETTA (APP): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti held a telephonic conversation with Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah to discuss the water situation in Naseerabad Division and inter-provincial irrigation issues.

Earlier, PML-N Parliamentary Leader in the Balochistan Assembly, Mir Saleem Khan Khosa, met CM Bugti in Quetta and briefed him on the severe water shortage in Naseerabad canals and the difficulties faced by farmers due to reduced irrigation supplies.

According to Adviser to the Chief Minister on Media and Political Affairs Shahid Rind, CM Bugti

immediately contacted CM Sindh to deliberate on the matter. Both leaders agreed on joint cooperation and coordinated measures to resolve water issues, ensure fair distribution, and improve the current situation.

Shahid Rind further said that both Chief Ministers directed their respective provincial irrigation ministers to urgently reach Sukkur and hold a meeting with relevant officials to review the water situation and work on practical solutions. All assembly members from Naseerabad Division will also participate in the Sukkur meeting, where proposals for addressing water shortages and long-term solutions will be discussed.

He added that the Balochistan government is committed to protecting the interests of farmers and landowners and will continue close coordination with the Sindh Government to resolve irrigation issues through consultation and mutual understanding.

The spokesperson reaffirmed that the provincial government remained committed to protecting the interests of farmers and safeguarding Balochistan's constitutional and legal water rights. He said close coordination between the governments of Balochistan and Sindh would continue to achieve a sustainable and mutually agreed solution to the ongoing water crisis.

Pak condemns grave atrocities in Sudan's Darfur region

NEW YORK (INP): Pakistan has strongly condemned the grave atrocities committed by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan's Darfur region, including ethnically motivated killings and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Speaking during the UN Security Council briefing on the International Criminal Court's report on Darfur, Counselor and Political Coordinator Gul Qaiser Sarwani expressed deep concern over the worsening humanitarian and security situation in Darfur.

ECP to undertake electoral law reforms ahead of next general polls

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to undertake electoral law reforms ahead of the next general elections and has constituted a reforms committee to prepare recommendations, sources said on Friday. According to sources, the committee will formulate comprehensive proposals aimed at making Pakistan's electoral system more effective, transparent and modern.

The committee will review the Elections Act, 2017, the Election Rules, 2017, and, where necessary, propose constitutional amendments to improve the electoral framework.

Sources said the reforms committee will comprise senior officials of the Election Commission.



QUETTA: Inspector General Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir addressing the introductory meeting of newly appointed DSPs.

'OGRA to determine prices of petroleum products daily'

Daily fuel pricing to bring transparency: Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Friday said the government had decided to introduce a daily petroleum pricing mechanism under which the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) will determine and publish fuel prices every day in line with international market trends to enhance transparency.

Addressing a press conference alongside Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Malik said, "The Cabinet and the prime minister have decided that OGRA will be given the responsibility of determining fuel prices daily based on international market trends."

"OGRA has been directed to publish not only the international benchmark prices but also every component that contributes to the final price consumers pay at petrol stations, enabling the public to understand why these price adjustments are necessary clearly," he said.

Malik said the decision to shift daily fuel price determination to the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) would remove the government from routine pricing decisions and place responsibility with the independent regulator, whose role is to balance the interests of consumers, the government and the oil industry.

He said the new daily pricing mechanism would be based on the seven-day average of Platts international benchmark prices, ensuring that increases and

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Bilawal slams govt for punishing whole of AJK for actions of protesters

MIRPUR (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday criticised both the federal government and the protesters over the recent unrest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), lashing out at the former for punishing AJK for the actions of the latter.

Bilawal formally launched his party's election campaign for the AJK elections from Dadyal, some 200 Kilometres away from the capital city of AJK, describing the upcoming polls as "the most significant in AJK's history."

Addressing a PPP rally, Bilawal criticised both sides over the worsening situation in AJK.

The PPP chairman said Kashmir had been facing a difficult test for the past month while the en-

tire world watched, but it was the people of the region who were bearing the consequences.

"Everyone has the right to protest, but protesting in such a way that food supplies cannot reach Kashmir, fuel cannot reach Kashmir and medicines cannot reach Kashmir does not harm the government. It does not harm the state of Azad Kashmir. The burden, the suffering and the hardship are being borne only by the people of Kashmir," Bilawal said.

He added that the protesters were making the people of Kashmir pay the price for the government's mistakes.

The PPP chairman also criticised the

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QUETTA: PML-N Parliamentary Leader Mir Saleem Khan Khosa meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti about irrigation water issue in Nasirabad Division.

24 terrorists killed in Bannu IBOs: ISPR

President, PM pay tribute to security forces for killing 24 terrorists in Bannu

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan security forces conducted intelligence-based operations in Bannu and surrounding areas, killing 24 khawarij over the past 24 hours, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a press release said.

The military's media wing stated that terrorists belonged to the banned militant group referred to as Fitna al Khawarij and were involved in multiple terrorist activities.

A large quantity of weapons and ammunition was recovered from the militants during the operations, ISPR said.

The statement added that security forces remain

committed to bringing all those responsible for terrorism to justice and will continue operations against militants and their facilitators.

ISPR said efforts to eliminate terrorism, including threats allegedly supported from outside the country, will continue until the complete eradication of the menace.

On the other hand, Pakistan security forces killed three more terrorists in the ongoing "Operation Shaban" in Balochistan.

According to security sources, the joint operation "Shaban" by the Pakistan

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QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Provincial Ameer Maulana Abdul Wasay, holds Press conference at JUI-F central office in Quetta.

JUI-F urges armed forces not to be drawn into political debate

QUETTA (ANN): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Balochistan chief and Senator Maulana Abdul Wasay has defended party President Maulana Fazlur Rehman over the controversy surrounding his recent speech, alleging that political opponents had misrepresented his remarks and calling for an apology to the senior religious leader.

Addressing a joint press conference at the party's provincial secretariat alongside Senator Kamran Murtaza, Abdul Wasay said the JUI-F fully supported its president's position and rejected what he described as an organized campaign aimed at portraying Fazlur Rehman as "anti-state."

He alleged that the

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had reacted most strongly to the speech and levelled a number of political allegations concerning the ruling party's role in national affairs and civil-military relations. These allegations were presented by the speaker and could not be independently verified.

The senator said the JUI-F had always expressed respect for Pakistan's armed forces and paid tribute to the sacrifices of the country's martyrs, describing them as a source of national pride. He urged that the name of the armed forces should not be used for political purposes and maintained that branding Fazlur Rehman a traitor

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Govt hikes petrol price by Rs5.44, diesel by Rs31.05/litre

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government on Friday announced a fresh increase in petroleum prices, raising petrol by Rs5.44 per litre and high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs31.05 per litre.

The fresh hike has raised petrol price from Rs310.71 to Rs314.15 per litre, and diesel from Rs323.30 to Rs354.35 per litre.

The Petroleum Division issued a notification stating that the new fuel prices will take effect on July 18 and remain applicable until July 20.

The revised fuel prices were announced after the federal government enforced a daily review mechanism for the petroleum products rates.

The move to daily price reviews follows the government's earlier decision to conduct weekly petroleum price adjustments after tensions escalated following the US-Israeli conflict with Iran on February 28.

In the previous weekly review, the government increased the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs13.18 and Rs13.80 per litre, respectively.

Four killed, 9 injured in Quetta-Karachi highway collision

Independent Report

KHUZZAR: At least four people, including two women, lost their lives while nine others, among them women and children, sustained injuries in a head-on collision between two passenger vehicles on the Quetta-Karachi National Highway near Badrang in the Wadh area of Khuzdar district on Friday.

According to police, the accident occurred when the two vehicles collided head-on. Preliminary findings indicate that over-speeding and alleged driver negligence may have contributed to the fatal crash.

Rescue personnel, with the assistance of local residents, reached the scene soon after the incident and shifted the injured to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in Wadh, where they received emergency medical treatment.

Officials said several of the injured were in critical condition and were later referred to Khuzdar Teaching Hospital for advanced medical care.

Police have initiated an investigation to ascertain the exact circumstances surrounding the accident. Authorities said initial assessments point to excessive speed and possible negligence on the part of the driver as the likely causes of the collision.

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Pakistan launches new platform to channel diaspora brainpower into Pakistan's growth

NEW YORK (APP): In a strategic move to harness the potential of the Pakistani diaspora, the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) and the Pakistan Mission to the UN, launched the PIVOT programme that would connect overseas youth to the country's development.

"We are not merely launching a programme—We are renewing a relationship—between Pakistan and a generation of Pakistanis whose lives span countries, cultures and possibilities, but whose hearts remain connected to home," the Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan, said at the launching ceremony in New York on Thursday.

The initiative's theme was 'From Connection to Contribution,' with Rana

Mashood highlighting that it brings together Pakistan's global youth community "in a spirit of dialogue, connection and shared purpose."

Thursday's event was attended by young Pakistani professionals, entrepreneurs, researchers, students and community leaders from across the United States, who expressed strong interest in supporting Pakistan's youth through mentorship, collaboration and knowledge exchange under the PIVOT platform. Describing overseas Pakistanis as a "living bridge between Pakistan and the future," Rana Mashood said they possess a unique understanding of both Pakistan's aspirations and the world's institutions, technologies and opportunities.

He emphasized that

PIVOT was created to connect the immense talent of young Pakistanis at home with the knowledge, networks and experience of the diaspora.

"PIVOT is not about charity; it is about partnership. It is not about looking back with nostalgia, but looking forward with purpose," he said, adding that the initiative would help transform goodwill into lasting national impact by encouraging overseas Pakistanis to mentor students, create internships, share expertise and support youth-led innovation. The Chairman underscored the Government's commitment to youth empowerment under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif through initiatives in education, employment, engagement and environment.



Islamabad: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani attending a reception Hosted by Chief of Jazz World Zaheer Mehdi attended by Parliamentarians and Distinguished personalities from various sectors.

24 terrorists killed..

Continued from page 1

Army, Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan, and police against terrorists is continuing, security sources said.

Effective operations against terrorists are underway in the area, with security forces targeting them through both aerial and ground-based actions.

Sources said that as a result of successful operations, terrorist groups have suffered significant losses. During recent actions, confirmed reports indicate that four more militants have been killed. With the latest casualties, the total number of terrorists killed during Operation Shaban has reached 88, according to security sources. Sources added that since July 5, a total of 126 terrorists have been killed in Operation Shaban and other intelligence-based operations.

Security officials said that Operation Shaban will continue in Balochistan un-

til the last terrorist is eliminated.

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid tribute to the security forces and law enforcement agencies for killing 24 Indian-backed Fitna al Khawarij terrorists during a successful intelligence-based operation in Bannu and nearby areas.

In separate statements, the president and the prime minister said the security forces' timely and effective action against the elements responsible for attacks on police personnel and innocent civilians, particularly in Bannu, was commendable. "The operations against Fitna al Khawarij and their facilitators working under Indian patronage will be taken to their logical conclusion," the president said, adding that the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the security forces and law enforcement agencies.

JUI-F urges..

Continued from page 1

was unjust and detrimental to national cohesion.

Abdul Wasey also said a meeting of the JUI Lawyers Forum had reviewed arrangements for the upcoming All Pakistan Lawyers Convention in Islamabad. He alleged that efforts had been made to hinder the party's Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Madaris movement and reaffirmed that the JUI-F would continue raising public issues through constitutional and democratic means.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Kamran Murtaza said the lawyers' convention would feature a comprehensive presentation of Maulana Fazlur Rahman's speech to enable legal experts to examine it in its proper context.

Pakistan..

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The minister also announced that a Gilgit-Baltistan Scouts checkpoint was being established at the Khunjerab Pass to further strengthen security along the strategically important border crossing.

Minister of State Talal Chaudhry said Pakistan and China would work together to effectively curb illegal immigration and other cross-border crimes through enhanced bilateral cooperation.

Chinese delegation commended Pakistan's efforts to prevent illegal border crossings and smuggling, describing the country's measures as effective and encouraging.

Director General Qi Jingyang said China and Pakistan were strategic partners and that Beijing remained committed to strengthening cooperation with Islamabad. He added that China would continue supporting the capacity-building of Pakistani institutions in areas related to immigration and border security.

During the meeting, the Chinese delegation delivered an invitation from China's Minister of Public Security to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to participate in the upcoming Public Security Forum.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate, Syed Aal Khan Nasir addresses AI Race Group KSA Business & Investment Opportunities Forum at a local hotel.

Pakistan win seven medals, best Under16 team title at Asian Ju-jitsu Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan concluded a historic campaign at the Asian Ju-jitsu Championship 2026 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, winning seven medals and securing the Best Under16 Team of Asia title.

Pakistan's final tally stood at two gold medals, three silver medals and two bronze medals, along with the Best Under16 Team of Asia title.

According to information received here, on the final day of competition, Ebad ur Rehman won a

bronze medal in the Under18 Fighting System (85kg) event after defeating his Indian opponent. In the Under21 Men's Duo Show System, Umer Yaseen and Ebad ur Rehman claimed silver medals, taking Pakistan's overall tally to seven.

The medal and closing ceremony was attended by guests of honour including Secretary General of the South Asian Ju-jitsu Regional Association and Pakistan Ju-jitsu Federation Tariq Ali, and Trade and

Investment Counsellor at the Embassy of Pakistan in Kazakhstan Rizwana Qazi.

Chairman of the Pakistan Ju-jitsu Federation congratulated the athletes, coaches and officials, saying the achievement was the result of years of dedication, strategic planning and collective commitment.

Tariq Ali, Secretary General of the Pakistan Ju-jitsu Federation and team leader, said the performance demonstrated the growing strength of Pakistan's Ju-jitsu programme and

Govt must stop extorting public in the name of petroleum levy: Hafiz

Independent Report
LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Emir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has strongly criticised the government's decision to increase petroleum prices, saying it has effectively decided to pick the public's pockets every day.

Reacting to the move in a post on X, Rehman said the introduction of daily increases in petrol prices amounts to a policy of daily exploitation of the people. He questioned why the co-

alition government continues to raise petroleum prices instead of abolishing the Rs120 per litre taxes imposed on petrol, which, he said, have no connection with the actual price of the fuel.

The JI chief further questioned why the government continues to collect extortion in the name of the petroleum levy. He said the government's economic failures are being passed on to the public through inflation and additional taxes.



Highways employees union CBA stages protest rally in Larkana for key demands.

Bilawal slams govt..

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government's response to the protests, saying it was punishing all Kashmiris instead of only those involved in the demonstrations.

"The protesters may be good or bad, they may even be wrong, but the government is not punishing only the protesters. It is punishing all Kashmiris, and it has been doing so for the past 30 days," he said.

Bilawal described the upcoming AJK elections as the most significant in the region's history given the prevailing situation, saying the people had never witnessed such circumstances

before.

"This is a test for the state of Azad Kashmir, this is a test for the state of Pakistan, this is a test for all political parties and politicians because it is the responsibility of politicians to represent you, to become your voice and to carry that voice to Muzaffarabad, to Islamabad and to the entire world," he said.

Bilawal said politicians, whether from Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir or elsewhere in the country, had failed to perform their responsibilities effectively by acting as a bridge between the people of Kashmir and the federal government.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER.		
The Office of the Municipal Committee Sanjavi invites Sealed percentage tender on CSR 2023 Rates from interested Government Contractors / Firms for the following works under fund Grant-In-Aid for the year 2025-26 Govt. of Balochistan.		
S.NO	NAME OF SCHEME	E/COST
1	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF HOME SOLAR SYSTEM FOR DESERVING PEOPLE FOR WARD No. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE SANJAVI (TSE-2627071127713)	39318000
2	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF HOME SOLAR SYSTEM FOR DESERVING PEOPLE FOR WARD No. 9, MINORITY, LADY & LABOUR MEMBERS, CONSTRUCTION OF DRAIN OF STONE MASONRY, PCC DRAINS & SOLARIZATION OF CCTV CAMERAS FOR MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE SANJAVI AREA (TSE-2627071127733)	31010000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn-over of at least equal to Estimated Cost in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-5 and above (Up to 65 million) in Relevant Category And Specialized Code is EE11(i) (Solar Energy). Call Deposit Receipt Original Green Challan Rs. 2000/- paid in NBP Original PRRA Challan in deposited NBP. Fresh Power of Attorney (for representative only) An affidavit should be made on Rs. 100 stamp paper, stating that all the information given by the contractor is correct, and it should be attested by a Notary Public. Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure. Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 03 August, 2026 till 10:00 AM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 11:00 AM on EPPS System Address: Chief Officer Municipal Committee Sanjavi Phone no: 03362213072 Email: mohammadajfar2222@gmail.com

DAB/AB No.62/17-2026
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CHIEF OFFICER
Municipal Committee Sanjavi.

Pakistan, Japan host startup and innovation event to boost AI, Web3 cooperation

TOKYO (APP): The Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo, in collaboration with the Asia Web3 Alliance Japan (AWAJ), organized a Pakistan-Japan startup and innovation event to promote cooperation in artificial intelligence (AI), Web3, digital technologies and entrepreneurship. The event brought together representatives from government, industry, technology companies, investors and the startup ecosystem of both countries. Delivering the keynote address, Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan, Abdul Hameed highlighted the growing importance of technology and innovation in Pakistan-Japan economic relations.

He emphasized Pakistan's expanding digital economy, skilled technology workforce and entrepreneurial potential, and

called for stronger partnerships between institutions, companies, investors and startup communities of the two countries.

The keynote presentation, "Creating the Digital Future: Startup Co-Creation in the AI & Web3 Era," was delivered by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Digital Affairs, Japan, Hideto Kawasaki. He outlined Japan's vision for digital transformation, including policy developments relating to AI, Web3, trusted cross-border data flows and digital innovation. Highlighting the complementary strengths of Japan's technology and innovation ecosystem and Pakistan's growing digital talent, he encouraged closer collaboration between startups, technology companies and innovation institutions in both countries.



TOKYO: His Excellency Abdul Hameed the Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan with Parliamentary Vice Minister for Digital Affairs of Japan, at Embassy of Pakistan Tokyo.

Pakistan, China sign..

Continued from page 1

ity of Chinese nationals working in Pakistan remained the government's highest priority and assured them of comprehensive protection.

Earlier, PM Shehbaz Sharif witnessed the signing of agreements worth US\$ 440 million between the two sides in the pharmaceutical sector.

Health Minister, Syed Mustafa Kamal said the conference was held on the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, adding that weeks of intensive meetings had paved the way for the business-to-business engagements. He said Pakistan's ambassador in Beijing had also played an important role in facilitating the initiative.

Mustafa Kamal said Pakistan and China had enormous untapped potential for trade and investment in healthcare and other sectors. He said the government was taking measures to improve public access to quality healthcare and

thanked Chinese companies for their participation and confidence in Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector.

Chinese Ambassador, Jiang Zaidong said Pakistan's large and growing population had created significant demand for healthcare, making the country's pharmaceutical sector an attractive destination for investment and cooperation. He said the embassy had worked as a bridge between enterprises of both countries to promote business partnerships.

The ambassador welcomed Pakistan's improving economic indicators under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership and appreciated Islamabad's constructive role in recent regional developments.

He expressed hope that Pakistan would continue providing a stable and secure environment for Chinese enterprises and noted the prime minister's special focus on facilitating Chinese investment.

'OGRA to determine..

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decreases in global oil prices were reflected automatically in domestic prices.

"When prices rise internationally, they will be adjusted accordingly, and when they fall, the relief will be passed on immediately. There will be no need to ask anyone, as the adjustment will be made automatically on a daily basis," he said.

Malik described the move as another step towards deregulation, arguing that sectors in which the government's role had been reduced had generally delivered better outcomes for consumers. The petroleum minister said the regional situation, which the country's leadership had worked hard to stabilise through a ceasefire and efforts towards a permanent cessation of hostilities, had once again deteriorated despite those efforts. "I must say with regret that the situation in the region, which our leadership had tried to improve through an effective approach—first by securing a ceasefire and then by working towards permanent peace—appears to be worsening once again," he said.

Malik credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for making "immense efforts" to re-

store peace but noted that renewed tensions had once again driven up international oil prices.

He said diesel prices in the international market had witnessed a significant increase over the past few days. "If I give an example, the Platts benchmark for diesel has risen from around \$110 per barrel to nearly \$140 per barrel. Similarly, the Platts benchmark for petrol, which was around \$89 per barrel, has climbed to nearly \$100 per barrel," he said. The petroleum minister said the increase in benchmark prices had resulted in higher energy costs across international markets. Referring to the government's response, Malik thanked the public for showing patience during the difficult period.

"I am grateful to the people of Pakistan who have endured these hardships with great patience alongside the government. Undoubtedly, every household has been affected," he said. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had utilised approximately Rs130 billion in federal government resources to provide relief to the public. With the support of President Asif Ali Zardari and all provincial chief ministers, the government had also continued a targeted subsidy programme that had expanded from the initial Rs130 billion to several hundred billion rupees.



All Pakistan clerks association members hold protest in Peshawar for key demands.

Women entrepreneurship program phase-I completed

Dr. Rubaba pledges expanded economic opportunities

Independent Report

QUETTA: Adviser to the Chief Minister on Women Development Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi on Friday underscored the importance of women's economic empowerment in achieving sustainable social and economic progress, announcing that the provincial government would further expand entrepreneurship and skills development initiatives to create greater employment and business opportunities for women across Balochistan.

She made these remarks while addressing the closing ceremony of the first phase of the Balochistan Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme, during which 500 women who successfully completed the training programme were

awarded certificates, tablets and toolkits.

The initiative brought together participants from all districts of Balochistan and provided comprehensive training in entrepreneurship, digital literacy, business planning, marketing strategies and modern enterprise management to help women establish and expand sustainable businesses.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Buledi described the programme as the province's first comprehensive entrepreneurship initiative for women, saying it was designed to equip participants with the knowledge and practical skills required to compete effectively in both national and international markets.

She said the government remained committed

to creating an enabling environment where women could achieve financial independence, strengthen their entrepreneurial capabilities and make a greater contribution to the province's economic development.

Congratulating the graduates, the adviser praised their dedication and perseverance, expressing confidence that the skills acquired during the programme would help them build successful businesses and inspire more women to pursue entrepreneurship. She reaffirmed that the provincial government would continue introducing initiatives aimed at enhancing women's professional capacities, promoting self-reliance and expanding their participation in economic activities across Balochistan.



NASEERABAD: Commissioner Nasirabad Salah ud Din Noorzai presenting appointment to female teacher.

Constitutional supremacy key to resolving Balochistan's challenges, says National Party

QUETTA (ANN): National Party Central Secretary General Mir Kabeer Ahmed Muhammad Shahi has said that Balochistan's longstanding challenges can only be addressed through constitutional supremacy, democratic engagement and a strengthened political process, stressing that sustainable peace is impossible without safeguarding the fundamental rights of all citizens.

Addressing a public gathering in Hazara Town, Shahi said residents continued to face difficulties in accessing essential public services, including passport and NADRA facilities, healthcare, education and employment opportunities. He also expressed concern over the condition of government schools and hospitals, saying improvements in basic public ser-

VICES were urgently needed.

He further alleged that the arrests of political workers and enforced disappearances were inconsistent with constitutional principles, maintaining that anyone accused of wrongdoing should be dealt with strictly in accordance with the law. These allegations could not be independently verified.

Shahi said Balochistan belonged equally to the Baloch, Pashtun, Hazara and all other communities living in the province, adding that unity among all nationalities was essential for lasting peace, stability and development. He urged people to support democratic institutions, constitutional governance, an empowered parliament and an independent judiciary.

Speaking on the occasion, National Party



NASEERABAD: Deputy Commissioner Vrinder Lal talking to representatives of NGOs during his visit to Divisional Hospital.

GoB expands social welfare initiatives

QUETTA (APP): Director General Social Welfare Balochistan, Mir Saifullah Khan Khetran, on Friday reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to the welfare, social protection, and empowerment of marginalized communities. He stated that special persons, women, orphaned children, senior citizens, and other vulnerable groups would be provided equal opportunities and improved social services to ensure they live dignified lives. Talking to APP, Mir Saifullah Khetran explained that comprehensive reforms were being introduced to modernize the Social Welfare Department, enhance institutional capacity, and deliver effective services to the public. He emphasized that all welfare schemes were being advanced transparently and on merit, ensuring that genuine beneficiaries received government facilities in a timely manner. The DG highlighted that in recent years, thousands of special persons have been provided with wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, special motorbikes (tricycles), and other assistive devices. He noted that the distribution process was ongoing, with the aim of enabling persons with disabilities to become

confident, independent, and active members of society. Khetran shared that last year, hundreds of deserving and skilled individuals received livelihood kits and vocational tools. These included sewing machines, washing machines, handcraft equipment, plumbing and electrician toolkits, mobile phone repair kits, and other professional materials. He explained that these initiatives were designed to provide respectable employment opportunities, reduce poverty, and help young people achieve self-reliance.

On the issue of drug rehabilitation, the Director General stated that the department had played an effective role in treating and rehabilitating drug addicts. Through rehabilitation centers, numerous individuals had successfully undergone medical treatment, psychological counseling, and social reintegration. He noted that these efforts had contributed significantly to making Quetta a safer and healthier city, free from drug addiction.

Mir Saifullah Khetran concluded that the Social Welfare Department would continue to expand its welfare projects in line with the policies of the Balochistan government.

Balochistan President Aslam Baloch alleged that successive governments had failed to resolve the longstanding civic issues facing Hazara Town. He said shortages of clean drinking water, quality education, healthcare facilities and employment opportunities continued to affect residents' daily lives.

He warned that if the area's water shortage remained unresolved by August, the National Party would launch a protest campaign in collaboration with local residents.

Central Committee member Dr Ramzan Hazara said the people of Hazara Town and Alamdar Road had long been deprived of essential civic amenities, adding that the party would continue advocating for improved access to water, gas, electricity, NADRA and passport services.

At the conclusion of the public meeting, several residents of Ali Town announced that they were joining the National Party.

PDMA issues monsoon alert, rain warning, windstorms in several districts

QUETTA (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan has issued a weather alert warning of rain, windstorms, and thundershowers in several districts of the province between July 19 and July 23.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Islamabad, and the Regional Meteorological Center (RMC) Quetta, monsoon currents from the Arabian Sea are continuously penetrating the upper parts of the country and are expected to strengthen over the weekend. A western disturbance is also likely to approach the upper regions on Monday, intensifying weather activity.

The advisory said that isolated rain, windstorms, and thundershowers, with heavy falls at certain places, are expected in the districts of Zhob, Sherani, Kohlu, Sibi, Naseerabad, Jhal Magsi, Jaffarabad, Duki, Harnai, Loralai, Barkhan, Musakhail, Khuzdar, Dera Bugti, and surrounding areas.

Strong windstorms and thundershowers may damage weak structures such as electricity poles, billboards, and solar panels. Heavy rainfall could generate flash floods in hill torrents, while lightning strikes may occur at isolated locations. The prevailing hot and humid conditions are likely to subside during the forecast period.



KHUZDAR: Commissioner Kalat Division Dr. Tufail Baloch, Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar Abdul Razaq Sasoli and SSP Khuzdar Dostain Dashti in a group photo with participants on the eve of inauguration ceremony of Shaheed Usman Ashiq Library.

Access to knowledge defines developed societies: Tufail Baloch

Independent Report

KHUZDAR: Commissioner Kalat Division Dr Tufail Baloch on Friday said that access to knowledge is a defining feature of developed societies, expressing confidence that the newly established Shaheed Usman Ashiq Library in Khuzdar would play a transformative role in promoting education, research and academic excellence among the region's youth.

The commissioner inaugurated the state-of-the-art library at the District Police Complex (DPC) premises along the National Highway in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Sasoli, SSP Dostain Dashti and other district officials.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Dr

Tufail Baloch described the facility as far more than a public library, calling it the beginning of a new era for education in Khuzdar. He said the institution would provide students with access to modern learning resources and create an environment conducive to research, innovation and intellectual growth.

The library has been established by transforming a building that had remained unused since 1994 into a modern educational facility. Developed with the support of Bolan Mining Enterprises (BME) under the Balochistan Sustainable Development Initiative (BSDI), the project has also been equipped with a solar energy system to ensure uninterrupted study during power outages.

The facility includes

separate reading halls for male and female students, a digital learning section, dedicated research rooms, a conference hall, modern computer systems, high-speed internet connectivity and access to online academic resources. It also offers study materials for competitive examinations, including CSS, PMS, NTS and other professional recruitment tests.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Sasoli said providing quality educational facilities for young people remained a key priority of the district administration, adding that the library would significantly enhance learning opportunities and contribute to raising educational standards across the district.



LORALAI: Commissioner Loralai Division Wali Muhammad Bareach presides over the meeting of Divisional Education Progress.

Negligence by teachers will not be tolerated, warns commissioner Wali

Independent Report

LORALAI: Commissioner Loralai Division Wali Muhammad Bareach on Friday reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to improving the quality of education, warning that negligence in teaching responsibilities, absenteeism and poor professional performance by teachers would not be tolerated. He made these remarks while chairing a divisional review meeting to assess the performance of the Education Department and evaluate progress in the education sector across Loralai Division.

The meeting was at-

tended by District Education Officers from Loralai, Dukki and Musakhel, District Education Officer (Female) Fauzia Durrani, representatives of UNICEF and other education officials. Participants reviewed key indicators of educational performance, including enrolment campaigns, teachers' attendance, students' academic progress, the availability of basic facilities in schools and the major challenges confronting the education sector. The meeting also considered proposals aimed at improving learning outcomes, reducing student dropout rates and strengthening school infrastructure.

Addressing the participants, Commissioner Bareach directed education authorities to further strengthen monitoring through regular field inspections and continuous supervision of government schools. He instructed officials to address shortages of teachers and essential facilities on a priority basis to ensure uninterrupted educational activities. Emphasizing the importance of increasing school enrolment, he called for a more effective campaign to bring out-of-school children back into classrooms, with particular focus on encouraging girls' education.



USTA MUHAMMAD: Deputy Director Divisional Information Department Naseerabad meeting with Principal Boys Degree College Ubaidullah Zehri.

Modern medical technology essential for quality healthcare, DC Barkhan

Independent Report

BARKHAN: Deputy Commissioner Saeed ur Rehman Kakar on Friday said the adoption of modern medical technology was vital for improving the quality of healthcare services, reaffirming the district administration's commitment to providing timely, accurate and reliable diagnostic facilities to the public.

He expressed these views while inaugurating a GeneXpert diagnostic machine at the Basic Health Unit (BHU) Rakhni under

the public welfare vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by District Health Officer Dr Mujeer ur Rehman Bugti, PPHI District Manager Ghulam Rasool Khetran, doctors, paramedical staff and other officials.

Following the inauguration, the deputy commissioner inspected the laboratory and received a detailed briefing on the machine's technical features and diagnostic capabilities.



SURAB: Deputy Commissioner Sahibzada Najeebullah presides over the meeting of District Health Committee.

Secretary C&W stresses timely completion of strategic projects

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Communications and Works (C&W) Balochistan, Babar Khan, has emphasized that the department plays a pivotal role in the province's development and prosperity.

He warned that any negligence or delay in performance could stall the wheel of progress, which is unacceptable under any circumstances. Chairing a review meeting on the progress of ongoing strategic projects, the Secretary noted that the province's infrastructure improvement and sustainable development depend on the effective performance of the C&W Department.

The meeting was attended via Zoom by chief engineers from all six zones, superintending engineers, and district executive engineers.

During the session, engineers from various districts presented detailed

briefings on the progress of strategic projects in their respective areas. They also highlighted the financial and technical challenges faced during implementation.

Babar Khan instructed that no slowdown in the completion of critical projects would be tolerated. He stressed that time is short and challenges are many, therefore all engineers must ensure timely completion as the department's top priority. He directed that all technical issues hindering progress should be resolved immediately.

The Secretary issued strict instructions to executive engineers (buildings) to ensure completion of projects within the stipulated timeframe, warning that failure to do so would result in stern action against responsible officials. He further emphasized that there must be no compromise on the quality of work.



PANJGUR: Deputy Commissioner Panjgur Jehanzaib Baloch being briefed about law and order situation during his visit to city.

Naseerabad revives non functional schools with appointment of new teachers

Independent Report

NASEERABAD: Commissioner Naseerabad Division Salahuddin Noorzai on Friday described the revival of non-functional schools as a significant milestone in expanding access to education and reducing illiteracy in Balochistan, urging newly appointed teachers to perform their responsibilities with dedication and professionalism. The commissioner made these remarks while distributing appointment orders to 11 newly recruited male and female teachers under the third phase of the school activation programme aimed at restoring closed educational institutions across the division. The appointment ceremony was held in line with the vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and the directives of Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir

Khan to strengthen the public education system and bring non-operational schools back into service. Deputy Commissioner Varendar Lal, SSP Asad Nasir, Divisional Director Schools Abdul Wase Kakar and District Education Officer Hafeezullah Khoso also attended the event and distributed appointment orders among the successful candidates. Addressing the newly appointed teachers, Noorzai said educators play a vital role in shaping the future of the nation and must uphold the highest standards of integrity, commitment and professionalism while imparting quality education to students.

He said the divisional administration would closely monitor the performance of newly appointed teachers to ensure schools remain fully functional.



QUETTA: Tribal Leader Shakoor Marri addressing a Press Conference at Quetta Press Club.

Tareen reviews research projects at Wayaro centre, lauds progress in high-value crop cultivation

Independent Report

BELA: Director General Agriculture Research Balochistan Juma Khan Tareen on Friday visited the Agricultural Research Centre, Wayaro, to review ongoing research initiatives and reaffirm the provincial government's commitment to advancing agricultural research and promoting modern farming practices across Balochistan.

During the visit, the DG inspected the newly constructed building and various sections of the research facility. He was accompanied by Deputy Director Agricultural Research Farm Wayaro Abdul Ghafoor Ronja, Deputy Director Syed Rehan Fareed, Director Agriculture Pervez Ahmed, Director PRC Sindh and other senior officials.

The officials briefed him on a range of research projects being carried out at the centre, highlighting the successful cultivation of dragon fruit, custard apple,

moringa, perennial grass, a new mango variety introduced from Florida, United States, and olive plantations grown alongside wheat and kharif.

Expressing satisfaction over the progress achieved at the research centre, Tareen commended the dedication of the officers and staff, saying their efforts reflected the growing potential of agricultural research in the province.

He said the Government of Balochistan and the Agriculture Department were actively promoting modern research and innovative farming technologies to improve agricultural productivity and diversify crop cultivation. He added that the introduction of high-value crops and advanced agricultural practices would contribute to strengthening the agriculture sector, enhancing farmers' incomes and supporting sustainable rural development.



Barren reforms

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's assertion that agriculture and livestock hold the key to Pakistan's quick economic revival is spot-on. The sector contributes almost a quarter of GDP, employs well over a third of the labour force and remains the largest source of livelihoods. Livestock alone accounts for more than 60pc of agriculture's value addition, while Pakistan ranks among the world's largest milk producers, and possesses considerable untapped potential in both milk and meat exports. Few sectors offer comparable opportunities to generate growth, reduce poverty, improve food security and earn foreign exchange simultaneously. But the PM's declaration that the economy can be revived within a year through agriculture highlights the gap between ambition and policy execution. The agricultural crisis has never been about the absence of potential. It is the consequence of decades of policy neglect and inconsistency, institutional decay and distorted incentives. While successive governments have acknowledged the sector's importance, budgetary allocations, research spending, extension services, water management, market reforms and investment priorities have not reflected that recognition. The current year's federal and provincial budgets are no exception. Despite repeated references to economic transformation, agriculture barely figures in official priorities. This contradiction is becoming increasingly costly. Pakistan now imports billions of dollars' worth of food and raw materials for its textile and clothing industry, and its food exports have weakened over time. This is eroding precious foreign exchange at a time when the economy remains dependent on external financing. Rising production costs, unpredictable pricing, market manipulation, inadequate storage and weak value chains continue to undermine farmers' incomes. Farmers are expected to increase production while bearing risks that neither markets nor public policy adequately mitigate.

Mr Sharif's emphasis on technology, AI, disease control and value addition must be lauded. Yet technology cannot compensate for dysfunctional policy. Farmers will not invest simply because AI is introduced into agriculture if fertilisers remain expensive, energy costs continue to rise, water becomes increasingly scarce and markets fail to offer remunerative prices. With industry struggling and exports stagnating, agriculture remains one of the few sectors capable of driving inclusive growth. But this demands actual reforms. It requires strengthening research, developing indigenous vaccines, improving traceability systems, correcting market distortions, expanding rural credit, investing in climate resilience, enhancing irrigation efficiency and creating incentives for private investment across agricultural value chains. Every government promises to transform agriculture; few are willing to undertake the reforms needed to achieve that aim. Declarations that agriculture can revive the economy will remain aspirational so long as the authorities continue to avoid policy reforms.

Faisal Bari

A Student who recently graduated with a degree in English literature visited me a few weeks back for a discussion on the career paths and choices that were open to her. She enjoyed her undergraduate experience a lot as she loved reading and studying literature, but was now unsure whether she possessed the skills to be 'market ready'. She did not want to go on to graduate studies in literature. She wanted to write but to keep it on the side. She wanted to discuss the possibility of taking up a job in the development and corporate sector with her knowledge base. The student was articulate, and clearly had very sound analytical and reflective thinking skills. Her communication skills were excellent, and her writing ability, evident from what she mentioned in her resumé, were quite good as well. She had taken the time to reflect deeply on what she had read and learned during her four-year undergraduate experience, and this was reflected in her

personality.

I told her that although she didn't possess some of the 'job-ready' skills that employers might desire, any discerning company would be able to see her potential and strengths, and this would make her a good candidate. Infact, within a few weeks, she received a decent job offer and joined the 'young professional' cadre of a company.

Come graduation time and a lot of young people start applying to the job market. As an academic, I get a lot of students visiting me during the April-August window to discuss their future plans and current options. A sluggish economy and changing job scenario around the world have set the context for discussions and many students want to know whether they can land decent opportunities, or what they should do, beyond graduation, to be able to get good jobs or admission to a Master's programme.

The subject studied at the undergraduate level does matter. It is not possible to enter the engineering field if one

has studied humanities or social sciences. But subject-specific jobs make up only a small part of the employment market.

It is mostly possible for people to study a subject not directly related to the industry where they are able to secure a job. Most jobs in the corporate sector are accessible even if one has studied social sciences. Of course, a degree in management can give the new graduate a head start and enable him or her to signal an interest in specific areas, but it does not exclude others from consideration.

More than specialisation at the undergraduate level, it is the quality of learning that determines how ready a candidate is for the job market. What does quality of learning mean? Here are some factors that matter. Language skills are needed in almost any job in any sector. It is an advantage to have invested in the ability to speak, read and write well in two or three languages. The ability to communicate well — orally and in written form — is very important for most jobs. A candidate's

strength is judged through samples of their written work and performance in interviews.

Analytical and critical thinking is essential for competitive candidates. Most jobs require the use of judgement, which is based on critical and analytical thinking. Good articulation and the ability to think deeply about ideas and — crucially — navigate novel situations, make the individual a strong candidate for most jobs now and in the future. Sadly, thinking skills are not as common as one might imagine. Far too many undergraduate programmes rely on rote learning.

They do not teach students to reflect critically. Students end up not developing the ability needed to be able to think deeply and carefully. However, those who have the ability, possess an advantage. AI has made deep inroads into job markets. In this situation, well-developed skills and abilities become even more important. Tasks requiring human judgement, as opposed to routine tasks, will give an edge to those whose

powers of discernment have been honed by critical and analytical thinking. Some level of comfort with data and numbers is needed in most jobs. Rigorous undergraduate programmes tend to have strong core requirements that allow students sufficient exposure to areas other than their subject of study. If used well, irrespective of one's major in the social sciences or humanities, a decent understanding of the basics of mathematics and statistics can be developed.

Undergraduates should definitely be very comfortable with the use of computers and have the confidence that they can learn new software and skills on their own too. Well-structured undergraduate programmes can contribute significantly in this respect. One need not be an expert in programming or a particular software or even in the use of AI, as of now, but familiarity with computers and their usage for writing and data analysis is becoming increasingly necessary.

Too many students

worry about whether they are choosing the right subject to study at the undergraduate level or whether their choice, four years ago, was a good one.

Yes, for some jobs and sectors, the choice of subject is necessary, but for many jobs even more than the subject studied it is other abilities and skills that matter.

Language and communication skills will always be important, as will be skills related to data analysis and the use of computers. At the end, it is strong critical thinking and analytical skills, well-developed argumentative skills, and being a reflective self-learner that are most crucial. If students can develop these skills during their undergraduate years, they will find promising prospects in any job market. But, given the emphasis on imparting specific skills through rote learning and unthinking repetition in most undergraduate programmes across the country, developing sound analytical skills and the ability to think deeply about specific problems is not an easy task.

Strategic sanity

Khurram Abbas

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has published its Yearbook 2026. SIPRI assesses that India has now operationally deployed 12 out of 190 nuclear warheads on a single nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine conducting deterrence patrols. This is a major strategic shift: for decades, New Delhi had stored its warheads and delivery systems separately, a deliberate posture designed to prevent accidental use. This shift in nuclear posture will have far-reaching implications for strategic stability in South Asia.

While Pakistan's Foreign Office has shown no surprise over the development, strategic thinkers in Islamabad have focused on certain issues. First, the shift in India's nuclear posture has raised concerns about New Delhi's declared no-first use policy. Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh publicly cast doubts on India's long-standing nuclear NFU policy during an August 2019 visit to Pokhran. This aligns with the BJP's 2014 election manifesto that promised to "study in detail India's nuclear doctrine, and revise and update it, to make it relevant to challenges of current times". Hence, India's actions suggest a profound shift from NFU to 'strategic ambiguity' in New Delhi's nuclear policy.

Second, while the number of deployed nuclear warheads may vary, India's strategic posture shows aggressive intent. Since 2016, ties between India and Pakistan have been viewed largely through the lens of crisis escalation and political tensions. In the absence of structural dialogue, this altered strategic posture of New Delhi has understandably set off alarm bells in Islamabad.

Third, the development has compressed the crisis response window. Already, South Asia is witnessing accelerated crisis response due to AI-enabled command systems. New Delhi's sea-based nuclear deterrence, with operational nuclear warheads can further increase the risk of miscalculation, accidental escalation and perhaps forced pre-

emption in a nuclearised environment. Moreover, the primary challenge of deploying nuclear weapons at sea relates to the problem of command and control. Delegating authority to a submarine commander at sea could lead to the risk of unauthorised or accidental use.

Similarly, India's strategic thinkers are largely referring to their country's sea-based nuclear posture to deter Chinese threats. However, this argument stands in contrast to the current geopolitical environment and trajectory of Sino-India ties. Sino-India ties have improved significantly since the Modi-Xi Kazan summit in 2024. The two sides have signed a landmark border patrol agreement and improved bilateral trade of over \$150 billion in 2026. On the contrary, India-Pakistan relations are going through the worst phase of their history in view of the absence of direct trade, a downgraded diplomatic presence in each other's capitals, frequent armed hostilities and people to people disengagement. Islamabad believes that New Delhi is using China to please the West in the context of the US-China competition at the global level. Moreover, India has not publicly announced a bifurcated or separate deterrence posture or command-and-control framework for China and Pakistan. In fact, Islamabad believes that the operational deployment of New Delhi's nuclear warheads is meant to circumvent Pakistan's full spectrum deterrence. New Delhi, through these measures, is primarily challenging Pakistan's traditional deterrence policy.

Although Islamabad does not want to get drawn into another arms race, the altered strategic realities will likely compel it to take several precautionary diplomatic and security measures, which may risk another arms surge in the region. Moreover, one of the more worrisome factors is that New Delhi's sea-based nuclear capability coupled with operational nuclear warheads might incentivise Indian policymakers to engage in more frequent low-

level crises or coercive diplomacy at the conventional level because of New Delhi's confidence in 'assured second-strike' capability.

From Pakistan's perspective, the international community has not taken serious note of this shift in India's strategic posture. This is why, if the situation worsens and the pressure increases, Islamabad may see no option but to deploy nuclear warheads across its entire vector to deter India's aggressive strategic posture. Similarly, the operational asymmetry will become more visible in the naval domain between Islamabad and New Delhi. Keeping in view the huge cost of naval nuclearisation, Islamabad will likely broaden and deepen its naval cooperation with like-minded friendly countries to fill the operational asymmetrical gap. Moreover, emerging technologies and semi-autonomous weapons systems have further given Islamabad options to improve its naval capabilities.

In this hostile environment, the best, most practical option for both sides remains the resumption of dialogue and ensuring stringent implementation of nuclear-related CBMs to minimise concerns related to the misinterpretation of intentions. Renewed dialogue between India and Pakistan on nuclear-related CBMs can help clarify intentions and reduce the chance of accidental or inadvertent escalation. The last round of dialogue related to conventional and nuclear-related CBMs between India and Pakistan was held in 2012. While there is significant appetite in Islamabad to engage with New Delhi for meaningful dialogue on all outstanding issues and ensure smooth implementation of nuclear-related CBMs, the BJP-led NDA government's policy of no structural dialogue with Pakistan remains a major stumbling block. From 2016 to 2026, two main trends can summarise Pakistan-India ties. First, the two sides have been witnessing an era of eroding bilateralism, where already settled issues such as the Indus Waters Treaty have become victims of political tensions and right-wing populism.

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

Gilgit-Baltistan has emerged as Pakistan's climate ground zero. For decades, the country's climate emergency was narrated from its floodplains: Sindh's submerged villages, Punjab's swollen tributaries, the 2010 and 2022 disasters. These were the consequences of a deeper story. The origin has abruptly moved upstream. GB is no longer the water tower that occasionally leaks. It is where the Indus system's first disasters now begin, not where they arrive.

Heatwaves once confined to Sindh's cities and Punjab's plains now reach the Upper Indus Basin (UIB). In June 2026 alone, the Met Office issued its second Glof (glacial lake outburst flood) alert of the month, warning that sustained high temperatures across GB and KP were accelerating glacier and snowfield melt to the point that existing lakes were expanding and new ones forming in real time.

This follows a pattern of near-annual escalation: in August 2025, a Glof from the Shishper glacier tore through Hassanabad Nullah in Hunza, severing the Karakoram Highway, in the highest-volume event since 2018. Each year now sets its own benchmark.

Underneath the visible flooding sits a less visible mechanism. Central Karakoram's glaciers are not simply shrinking the way the Himalayan glaciers to their east; some have been stable or even advancing since 1990 — a documented anomaly. But stability at the surface has not meant stability underneath. Meltwater cuts channels through the ice itself, moving downward by gravity, forming englacial tunnels that destabilise glaciers from within even where their outward mass looks intact.

That is why river discharge from central Karakoram basins rose through 1985-2010 even as the glaciers appeared, by satellite, to hold steady. The lakes are the visible symptom; the tunnels are the mechanism; community displacement is the result. Pakistan currently counts 3,044 glacial lakes, with some 36 formally classified as hazardous and likely to

affect over 7.1 million people.

Precipitation is changing structurally, in step with temperatures. Snow consolidates into firn, and firn into ice, a process called firnification, but now there's less time for the process: more runs off as meltwater first, so the basin draws down its snowpack faster than it replenishes. High-altitude western UIB stations like Shendure, Yasin, Ziarat, Rattu, Chilas and Shigar, show a statistically significant rise in monsoon precipitation at elevation.

Climate models project the monsoon extending north and northwest into the UIB, with a rising share of the basin's precipitation falling as rain rather than snow. The monsoon, once a lowland event arriving after the high-altitude melt season had run its course, is beginning to overlap it. Rain on an already melting snowpack accelerates run-off.

The consequence is a flood regime that no longer respects Pakistan's disaster-response calendar or its fourth national flood protection plan (2018-2028). Glofs and monsoon floods, once sequential risks with distinct seasons and targets, are becoming concurrent and compounding, a different planning problem entirely.

Debris and mudslides change the underlying ecology in ways ordinary flooding does not: a riverine flood leaves silt, while a flow carrying boulders and glacial till causes irreversible loss and damage to the ecosystem. Buner and Lower Dir showed this in August 2025, when flash floods carried boulders flattening neighbourhoods and leaving survivors standing on rubble that used to be farmland.

There is 'non-economic loss and damage', the central pillar of the global loss and damage discourse. It shows up in the erosion of proud local heritage of grafting glaciers. GB is home to more than 50 languages and dialects, including Domaaki and Wakhi, classified by Unesco as critically endangered, and Burushaski, a language spoken nowhere else on earth. These survive orally, in valleys now being depopulated by

flood damage and outmigration, so every displaced household moves further from the people who still speak the language at home.

The same is true of the region's archaeological record: more than 50,000 petroglyphs, some dating to 5,000 BC, line the Karakoram Highway corridor between Hunza and Shatial, carved by the traders and pilgrims who passed through GB on the Silk Route. The 2022 floods destroyed a significant share of the inscribed rock surfaces at the Thalpan site near Chilas. What remains is not protected by any Unesco listing. It is protected by distance and isolation, both of which are now being removed.

GB is not the first place in the Himalayan region to witness this kind of disaster, and need not build its response method from scratch. On June 15, 2021, a glacial lake called Pemdán in Nepal breached in the Melamchi-Indrawati watershed north of Kathmandu. The breach destabilised a landslide dam downstream; the combined debris flow, over 10 metres deep in places, displaced hundreds of people and severed the water supply serving much of Kathmandu.

Research at ICIMOD has argued that no single hazard model would have caught it: reconstructing the event required integrating satellite data, hydrodynamic modelling, and machine learning to trace how the outburst, the dam failure and the rainfall interacted.

In GB's case, a compound hazard is two risks overlapping in time — monsoon rainfall coinciding with the melt season. A cascading hazard triggers the next in sequence: a heatwave leading to Glof and then debris flow, which causes displacement, outward migration, eroded livelihoods and a shortened tourism season central to GB's cash economy. Melamchi was both at once, and so is GB now.

Response is becoming maladaptive: 250 engineering structures and 284 early warning systems installed across GB and KP since 2017, built against a threat that arrived in one form at a time.

Governor joins CM's jirga, backs KP govt stance against erstwhile FATA, PATA taxes

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday reaffirmed his support for the provincial government on all matters relating to the province's rights and interests, saying political consensus on provincial issues would be built before taking up the matters with the federal government.

Addressing a grand jirga convened by the provincial government at the Chief Minister's House against the federal government's tax imposition in the erstwhile FATA

and PATA, the Governor said all political stakeholders must remain united to safeguard the constitutional, financial and economic rights of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The jirga was attended by Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi, leaders of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Awami National Party (ANP), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), Pakistan Muslim League (PML), Jamaat-e-Islami, and representatives of the business community.

Governor Kundi wel-

comed the holding of the all-parties gathering on the tax issue and thanked the provincial government for bringing together political parties on a common platform. He said politics should not overshadow the province's larger interests, adding that unity and a joint strategy were essential for securing KP's legitimate rights. Referring to previous instances of political consensus on issues such as CNG and wheat, the Governor said the government and opposition were once again on the same page to protect the province's con-

stitutional, financial and economic interests.

He said representatives of all political parties had adopted a unanimous stance on provincial issues and would present a strong case before the federation. Governor Kundi also said the federal government's commitment to provide Rs100 billion annually for the development of the erstwhile FATA had yet to be fulfilled. He further demanded that traders from the merged tribal districts be provided the same facilities and business incentives as those available to traders.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a grand jirga convened by the provincial government at the Chief Minister's House against the federal government's tax imposition in the erstwhile FATA and PATA.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan in a group photo with delegation of lawyers led by President of the Mianwali Bar Association, Amir Aslam Khan at the Governor House.

CM reviews SHS project, directs expediting distribution to 275,000 poor households

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah directed the Energy Department to further accelerate the distribution and installation of Solar Home System (SHS) kits across the province, reaffirming his government's commitment to providing clean, affordable and sustainable energy to low-income households.

Presiding over a review meeting at the CM House on Friday on the progress of the Rs18.206 billion Solar Home System Project, the chief minister said that the initiative, launched on the directives of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman, aims to provide free solar-powered electricity solutions to 275,000

deserving households across Sindh, including both off-grid and protected on-grid consumers.

The meeting was attended by Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Agha Wasif, Secretary Energy Shuhab Ansari, Project Director Dadlo Zuhri and other senior officials.

The chief minister was given a detailed briefing on project implementation, beneficiary selection, district-wise distribution, installation progress and the expected socio-economic benefits of the programme. The Energy Department is implementing the "Solar Home System for Poor Families (Off-

Grid/On-Grid)" project through the Annual Development Programme (ADP) at a total cost of Rs18.206 billion. Under the project, each beneficiary household receives a complete Solar Home System package comprising a 180-watt solar panel, central control unit (CCU) with a 30Ah Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePO4) battery, charge controller and mobile charging facility, a 25-watt DC pedestal fan and three 5-watt LED lights.

The project will benefit 275,000 households, including 132,000 families in off-grid areas and 143,000 protected electricity consumers in on-grid areas across all districts.

KP CM abolishes all taxes imposed in merged districts, Malakand Division

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi on Friday announced the abolition of all provincial taxes imposed in the merged districts (erstwhile FATA) and Malakand Division.

The announcement was made during a consultative meeting on the taxation issue held at the Chief Minister's House. The meeting, chaired by the chief minister, was attended by political leaders, representatives of the business community and members of civil society.

The move comes amid growing opposition to the implementation of taxes in the merged districts and the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA), where traders and residents have expressed concerns over their potential economic impact.

Speaking on the issue, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Minister Shafi Jan said the federal government's decision to impose taxes had created serious concern among the people and business community in the merged districts and Malakand Division.

He said the federal government had failed to provide the merged districts with funds promised under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award.

"Although the merged districts have been administratively integrated into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, their financial integration remains incomplete," the minister said.

Shafi Jan added that the province had not received its rightful share under the NFC Award, affecting development projects and public welfare initiatives in the region.

He urged the federal government to take immediate measures to address the longstanding grievances of the people in the merged districts, noting that communities affected by years of terrorism continue to face significant economic and social challenges.

The chief minister's announcement follows similar concerns raised by Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, who on Thursday opposed the newly imposed taxes in the erstwhile FATA and PATA, saying he stood with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa against what he described as "unjust taxes."

The governor had called on the provincial government to withdraw taxes falling within its jurisdiction and urged both the federal and provincial governments to adopt a coordinated strategy to protect the interests of traders and residents of the affected areas.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting at the CM House to review the progress of the Solar Home System Project.

Aleem condemns attack on Sardar Tanveer Ilyas's election convoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour Faisal Khan Tarakai on Friday said the provincial government was taking practical steps to expand educational opportunities for the children of registered workers through scholarships and professional training programmes.

He said the Labour Department was sending five students, children of registered workers, to some of the world's leading universities for higher education under the Labour Department Scholarship Programme. One of the selected students belongs to Nowshera district.

The minister said the initiative reflected the government's commitment to investing in human capital and ensuring that talented students from working-class families had access to quality education at internationally recognized institutions. He said the provincial government was also focusing on preparing the children of workers for leadership roles in the public sector.

Labour dept expands education opportunities for workers' children

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour Faisal Khan Tarakai on Friday said the provincial government was taking practical steps to expand educational opportunities for the children of registered workers through scholarships and professional training programmes.

He said the Labour Department was sending five students, children of registered workers, to some of the world's leading universities for higher education under the Labour Department Scholarship Programme. One of the selected students belongs to Nowshera district.

The minister said the initiative reflected the government's commitment to investing in human capital and ensuring that talented students from working-class families had access to quality education at internationally recognized institutions. He said the provincial government was also focusing on preparing the children of workers for leadership roles in the public sector.

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'Apni Chhat, Mahfuz Chhat' project launched in the name of Kahna martyred children

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has named the "Apni Chhat, Mahfuz Chhat" project after the martyred children of Kahna tragedy and launched the digital portal of the project.

On this occasion, she also announced a significant reduction in loan installments to provide safe housing to the citizens.

The Chief Minister directed that the monthly installment of interest-free loan of Rs 500,000 under the scheme should be fixed at around Rs 4,700 instead of Rs 14,000, while the monthly installment of citizens getting a loan of up to Rs 1 million has been fixed

at Rs 9,300.

Under this scheme, citizens will be able to get interest-free loans to secure weak roofs of their houses, build an additional room or build a second floor.

The loan of Rs 500,000 will be repaid in monthly installments of around Rs 4,700 over a period of nine years.

Provincial Minister for Housing Bilal Yasin and Secretary Housing Noorul Amin Mengal gave a briefing regarding the project, while the Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of the entire team in preparing the project.

Speaking at the ceremony, Maryam Nawaz

said that a house is not just a structure of bricks and stones but a symbol of security, peace and family safety. She said that children feel safe with their mother in their home and a safe home provides confidence and satisfaction to every person.

Describing the Kahna tragedy as a very heartbreaking incident, the Chief Minister said that 14 innocent children lost their lives due to the collapse of the roof during construction, the pain of which she still feels today. She said that after this tragedy, she could not sleep the whole night and felt the grief of the affected mother closely.



Mayor Karachi, Murtaza Wahab inaugurates new emergency station of Sindh integrated emergency and health services 1122 at Orangi Town, Karachi.

Lawyers played key role in strengthening democracy, restoring the judiciary

Independent Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the lawyers have played a key role in strengthening the democracy and restoring the judiciary. Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has proven his capabilities in a very short time.

He expressed these views while talking to the President of the Mianwali Bar Association, Amir Aslam Khan, and the lawyers of PLF Pakpattan at the Governor House Lahore. The President of PLF Lahore Division, Mian Shahid Abbas, was also present in the meeting.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that a peaceful society can be created only by ensuring the provision of justice to the people without discrimination.

He said that the exemplary struggle of lawyers for the stability of democracy and the independence of the judiciary in the country is part of history.

The Punjab Governor said that the lawyers community and the PPP share a close bond, which they value.

He also appreciated the unwavering dedication of the PLF lawyers and said that the services of PLF lawyers in the promotion of the independence of the judiciary and democratic values are commendable.

He said that the doors of the Governor House are always open for the lawyers and will support them in every difficulty. Governor of Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan further said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto has exposed the ugly face of India at the global level.



Fire breaks out in Karachi's 4K Nazimabad area due to short circuit, engulfing ambulance in flames.

Punjab introducing transformative reforms in education, healthcare, transport: Minister Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari on Friday said the provincial government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, was introducing historic and transformative reforms in the education, healthcare and public transport sectors to ensure that the benefits of development reached every city and every segment of society across Punjab.

She said the Punjab government was investing in the future of the youth by providing laptops, scholarships and electric bikes to students. She added that the Nawaz Sharif School of Eminence project

would usher in a new era of academic excellence by promoting quality education and providing talented students with world-class learning opportunities.

Azma Bokhari said significant progress had also been made in the healthcare sector, adding that the Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital in Lahore and the Cardiology Hospital in Sardogha had been completed. She said patients at government hospitals across Punjab were receiving free medicines and essential diagnostic tests at no cost, ensuring access to quality healthcare for all citizens. The minister said the Punjab government was expanding the network of

green electric buses from district headquarters to tehsil level to provide modern, safe and environmentally friendly public transport. She added that the air-conditioned electric buses had become a major source of comfort and convenience for commuters during the ongoing summer heat.

Azma Bokhari said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif had ensured that government resources and public services reached every corner of Punjab. She said that unlike the past, when people had to visit multiple government offices for assistance, the government was now delivering services at citizens' doorsteps.



LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique chairs 40th meeting of Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority (PHOTA).

PHOTA approves transplant licences for three hospitals, plans paperless system

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority (PHOTA) on Friday approved renal transplantation licences for Multan Institute of Kidney Diseases and Saleem Memorial Hospital Lahore, while Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute and Research Center (PKLI&RC), Lahore, was granted permission to perform pancreas transplantation for the next three years.

The approvals were granted during the 40th meeting of the PHOTA Monitoring Authority chaired by Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique. The meeting endorsed the recommendations of the Executive

Committee after inspections of the respective hospitals.

Director General PHOTA Prof. Dr. Muhammad Aamir Zaman Khan presented various agenda items for approval. The meeting approved the minutes of the 39th Monitoring Authority meeting and reviewed the implementation report of its decisions. Members also approved the revised budget estimates for the financial year 2025-26 and the budget estimates for 2026-27.

The meeting also considered several proposals to transform PHOTA into a paperless organization and approved the purchase of premises for the authority's head office.

KP Health Minister announces 1,000-bed mega hospital for Kohat

KOHAT (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Minister for Health Mian Khalique Rahman has announced that the provincial government is taking concrete steps to modernize the healthcare sector in the Kohat Division, including the establishment of a 1,000-bed mega hospital.

Presiding over a divisional health review meeting at the Commissioner's Office, the Health Minister stated that the site for the proposed mega hospital would be finalized soon in consultation with elected public representatives. The facility is expected to serve as a milestone in providing modern medical services to residents of the Kohat Division and neighboring districts.

Furthermore, the minister announced the official approval for the installation of an MRI machine, a CT scan machine, and a cardiac catheterization (Cath) lab at the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital, Kohat.

The meeting was attended by KP Minister for Information Shafi Jan, DEDAC Chairman and Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Dawood Shah Afridi, Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Mohtasim Billah Shah, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Muhammad Nawaz Wazir, along with district health officers, medical superintendents.

PM directs for expediting implementation of ease of doing business Act 2025

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the relevant authorities that the implementation of the government's policy initiatives and the Ease of Doing Business Act, 2025 be expedited.

Chairing a review meeting regarding ease of doing business, the prime minister instructed that third-party validation by international organizations be ensured to assess the effectiveness and implementation of the ease of doing business measures.

He said that fully uti-

lizing Pakistan's vast potential for both domestic and foreign investment remained one of the government's top priorities.

He also directed that a comprehensive report on the implementation of ease of doing business policy measures be prepared and submitted at the earliest.

The prime minister appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the Board of Investment, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Industries and Production,

and all other relevant institutions for their work on legislation and policymaking to facilitate business.

The meeting was briefed on the progress made in implementing the reforms and on the future course of action.

Participants were informed that work had been completed on 558 reforms aimed at reducing regulatory requirements, paperwork, and approval procedures for businesses. Of these, 71 policy measures have already been implemented, while implementation of 272 measures is progress-

ing rapidly. The reforms are being introduced across various sectors in seven phases.

It was stated that these measures are expected to generate estimated savings of Rs468.7 billion for the business community by reducing compliance costs associated with regulatory requirements.

The meeting was further informed that eliminating unnecessary and complex paperwork and regulations would help boost exports, attract greater foreign direct investment, and create new employment opportunities.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Ease of Doing Business.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairs a meeting of the Capital Market Development Council (CMDC) at the Finance Division.

Leghari reviews measures to strengthen data governance in power sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari on Friday directed that meetings of the Data Governance Council be held on a regular basis to review progress on key initiatives and maintain implementation momentum.

Chairing the inaugural meeting of the Pakistan's first-ever Public Sector Data Governance Council, the minister reviewed measures to strengthen data governance and improve data management across the power sector.

During the meeting, the minister was briefed on the proposed institutional structure of the Council. He directed that the appointment of the Executive Director be completed at the earliest so that the Council can begin functioning at full capacity.

He further instructed the formation of an Executive Working Committee to

support the implementation of the Council's decisions and monitor progress on ongoing work.

The minister said reliable and integrated data was indispensable for effective decision-making in the power sector, adding that the Data Governance Council will help to establish uniform data standards and improve data management practices across the sector, contributing to greater transparency and accountability.

He added that better use of data will improve the performance of the power sector, support more efficient use of resources, and strengthen planning and decision-making.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting digital governance and data-driven decision-making, saying these efforts will help build a more efficient and better-managed power sector.

Commerce Minister calls for stronger Pakistan-Egypt trade investment partnership

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Friday called for transforming Pakistan-Egypt relations into a stronger economic partnership based on trade, investment, joint production, technology cooperation and regional value chains.

He was addressing a reception held in Islamabad to celebrate the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt, where he attended as chief guest, said a release issued here on Friday.

The event was attended by ambassadors, high commissioners, senior government officials, members of the diplomatic corps and other distinguished guests.

Congratulations from the Government and people of Egypt on their National Day, Jam Kamal Khan said. Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Egypt, which remained a key partner in the Arab and Muslim world.

He appreciated Egypt's support in the health sector, its construc-

tive role in promoting regional peace and its cooperation in facilitating Pakistan's humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

The Minister said Pakistan and Egypt should move beyond conventional trade and view each other as long-term strategic investment partners.

He noted that Egypt offered a strong manufacturing and distribution base for African, Arab and Mediterranean markets, while Pakistan provided a major production and investment platform linked to South Asia.

"Together, Pakistan and Egypt can develop joint value chains, create employment opportunities, strengthen industrial capacity and expand exports," he said.

Jam Kamal Khan welcomed Egyptian investment in Pakistan's power, real estate, financial services and telecommunications sectors, adding that Pakistani companies were also increasingly exploring business and investment opportunities in Egypt.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi inaugurated the restored Bulleh Shah Passenger Train at Lahore Railway Station. After remaining suspended for nearly 15 years, the daily service resumed on July 17, 2026, reconnecting Lahore, Kasur, and Pakpattan to improve regional connectivity across Punjab.

Haroon Akhtar invites Chinese companies for joint innovation, manufacturing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan on Friday invited Chinese companies to not only invest in Pakistan but also innovate, manufacture and grow together.

Addressing the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Business-to-Business (B2B) Investment Conference, Haroon Akhtar said Pakistan envisioned a new era of cooperation with China where both countries would jointly advance science, strengthen healthcare, create opportunities and improve the lives of millions of people.

He said every great nation was transformed by leaders who refused to accept the limits of the present and possessed the courage to shape the future by turning vision into action and ambition into national progress.

Paying tribute to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the SAPM said Pakistan was fortunate to have visionary leadership that consistently encouraged institutions to think bigger, move faster and compete globally.

He said the prime min-

ister had made it clear that Pakistan could not achieve sustainable prosperity by following outdated models and must instead embrace innovation, strengthen its industrial base, invest in science and technology, and build partnerships capable of unlocking the country's full potential.

Haroon Akhtar said Pakistan was determined not merely to participate in the industries of the future but to help shape them. He added that the prime minister's recent visit to China had opened a new chapter in Pakistan-China economic cooperation by creating fresh opportunities for investment, technology transfer and industrial collaboration.

He said the prime minister's emphasis on implementation reflected true leadership, adding that success should be measured not by the agreements signed but by the transformation delivered.

Highlighting China's remarkable development, Haroon Akhtar described the country's transformation as one of the defining development stories of modern times, driven by visionary leadership, long-term planning and relentless innovation in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology,



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain meets with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Pakistan, Alexandra Berg von Linde, to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in agriculture, food security, livestock, research, innovation, and sustainable development.

First RoRo vessel carrying over 2,000 EVs berths at Karachi Port, Junaid Anwar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Friday announced the arrival of M.V. Grande Shanghai, carrying more than 2,000 electric vehicles (EVs) in Pakistan's first-ever Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) shipment.

In a statement, the minister said the 220-metre RoRo vessel had successfully berthed at the Karachi Gateway Terminal Multipurpose Limited (KGTML) terminal of Karachi Port Trust (KPT),

describing the development as a significant milestone for Pakistan's maritime and logistics sectors.

He said the vessel's arrival followed his approval of RoRo shipments of electric vehicles during a meeting of a committee on maritime issues held last month.

The minister said the successful handling of the vessel reflected the growing capability of port infrastructure to accommodate specialised cargo operations in line with international standards.

Short-term inflation rises by 1.40pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI)-based weekly inflation increased by 1.40 percent during the week ended on July 16, 2026, for the combined consumption group, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to PBS data, the SPI for the week under review rose to 357.61 points from 352.66 points recorded in the previous week. On a year-on-year basis, the SPI increased by 13.09 percent.

The weekly SPI, with base year 2015=100, covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group (up

to Rs 17,732) increased by 1.11 percent to 346.78 points from 342.98 points.

Likewise, the SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 1.18 percent, 1.17 percent, 1.28 percent and 1.58 percent, respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 27 items (52.94 percent) increased, four items (7.84 percent) decreased, while 20 items (39.22 percent) remained unchanged.

On a week-on-week basis, the prices of tomatoes witnessed the sharpest increase of 22.79 percent, followed by chicken 14.66 percent.

Finance minister calls for accelerated implementation of capital market reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chaired a meeting of the Capital Market Development Council (CMDC) to review progress on capital market reforms, with particular focus on accelerating the development of Pakistan's corporate debt market and strengthening capital markets as an important source of long-term financing for the private sector.

According to press release issued by finance ministry, the meeting reviewed the current state of Pakistan's capital markets, with particular focus on accelerating the development of the corporate debt market and broadening access to diversified financing sources.

The finance minister observed that while the equity market has demonstrated encouraging progress, the corporate debt market continues to remain underdeveloped relative to the financing needs of the economy.

Further efforts are required to deepen the debt capital market, reduce reliance on bank financing, promote diversified market-based financing, and create

a more balanced and resilient financial ecosystem capable of meeting the evolving financing needs of the private sector, particularly, the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

The participants discussed the scope and terms of reference (TORs) of a detailed external study on the development of Pakistan's local currency-linked bond market, which is underway.

The study will encompass key reform priorities across sovereign financing, non-bank financial institutions, primary dealer arrangements, secondary market development, market infrastructure, development of hedging and derivatives markets, and the broader capital market ecosystem.

The finance minister emphasized that the study should provide practical, evidence-based recommendations supported by international benchmarking to guide future reforms.

The meeting also took stock of findings from the awareness and experience surveys and stakeholder consultations undertaken by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) to assess the challenges faced by the top-

100 listed companies in accessing the corporate debt market in Pakistan.

Appreciating the initiatives already undertaken, the minister highlighted the need to expand engagement beyond the largest listed companies to include a broader segment of medium-sized enterprises and other growth-oriented businesses that could benefit from capital market financing.

Aurangzeb underscored the need for dedicated institutional capacity to accelerate debt market reforms and advised the SECP and the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) to establish dedicated Debt Desks at the senior management level with clearly defined mandates, measurable performance indicators, and responsibility for driving implementation and reporting progress.

He also emphasized the need to foster a more competitive and efficient capital market ecosystem by encouraging greater institutional capacity and competition among market intermediaries and market infrastructure providers, with a view to improving market efficiency, enhancing service quality, and reducing transaction costs for both issuers and investors.

Hanif announces ambitious expansion, modernisation plan for Pakistan Railways

LAHORE (INP): Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi on Friday announced an ambitious expansion and modernisation plan for Pakistan Railways after inaugurating the restored Bulleh Shah Passenger Train, saying several new train services, station upgrades and infrastructure projects would be launched to improve rail travel across the country.

Addressing a media briefing after the inauguration ceremony, the minister said the Bulleh Shah Passenger Train had been restored after remaining suspended for 15 years despite strong public demand.

He said Pakistan Railways was steadily moving towards progress and more train services would be restored as resources became available.

He announced that the Ravi Express would be relaunched later this month, while preparations were also underway to start a Lahore-Wagah train service. Hanif Abbasi said Pakistan Railways would induct 64 new passenger coaches instead of the previously planned 32, while 43 GEU locomotives would be overhauled and dedicated to freight operations. He expressed confidence that the department's performance would improve by at least 32 per cent.

The minister said Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif had allocated Rs2 billion for the upgradation of Lahore Railway Station, while the Punjab government would also finance the Shadara-Raiwind railway project.



SARGODHA: Farmers manually transplant rice seedlings in paddy fields during the sowing season.

Current Account Balance records \$139 million deficit in FY26: SBP

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan's External Current Account Balance recorded a deficit of US\$ 139 million during the fiscal year 2025-26 compared to a surplus of \$1,838 million in the previous fiscal year 2024-25.

Current Account Balance (CAB) recorded a deficit of \$649 million in 2026 compared to a surplus of \$500 million in May 2026, and a surplus of \$220 million in June 2025, the State Bank of Pakistan Friday reported in the monthly summary of Balance of Payments.

The cumulative balance in trade of goods during July-June FY26 re-

corded a deficit of \$33,623 million, according to the provisional figures released by the central bank, as compared to \$26,803 million deficit in FY24-25.

The balance on Trade in goods during June 2026 has recorded a deficit of \$3,552 million as compared to a deficit of \$3,283 million in May 2026 and \$2,429 million in June 2025, the data depicted.

Balance on trade in services during July-June FY26 has recorded a deficit of \$1,891 million as compared to \$2,836 million deficit of July-June FY25, the data shown, however in June 2026 services'.

US says it destroyed IRGC surveillance tower at Chabahar port

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on X that US forces destroyed a surveillance tower at Iran's Shahid Kalantari Port in Chabahar on July 16, describing it as part of a maritime surveillance network used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) along Iran's Gulf of Oman coastline.

According to CENTCOM, the surveillance network had been used for decades by the IRGC to monitor commercial vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz. The US military claimed the strike would degrade the IRGC's ability to coordinate attacks on civilian merchant ships.

CENTCOM further said the operation was intended to protect freedom of navigation in

regional waters, while maintaining what it described as the ongoing US naval blockade against Iran. Separately, the US military has denied Iran's claims of killing US soldiers in Syria, according to a CENTCOM post on X.

Iran said it had killed US troops stationed at a base in al-Tanf on the Syria-Jordan border. Syria said there's been no Iranian attacks on the US base which US forces left in February.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force Commander Seyed Majid Mousavi said on Friday that the Iranian attacks will continue "until calm returns to the southern coastline and the Strait of Hormuz", Al Jazeera reported.

"In the system of calculations, the entire

territory of Iran — from Tehran to the south — is one and the same. Effective and targeted strikes from across Iran against the enemy will continue until calm returns to the southern coastline and the Strait of Hormuz," he said in a statement carried by Iranian state TV.

Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organisation said all major roads across the country remain open and traffic has resumed on sections damaged in overnight US strikes, according to Press TV. In a statement on X, the organisation said road maintenance teams restored traffic on affected routes, including several bridges in southern Iran, within 12 hours of the attacks.

It added that temporary bypasses had been constructed around damaged sections.



Boris Nadezhdin, an anti-war Russian politician, appears in court in Dolgoprudny, Moscow region, Russia.

Iranians suffer new uncertainty and anxiety as US steps up attacks

Monitoring Desk
A new wave of US attacks on Iran has plunged Iranians back into deep uncertainty and anxiety after a period of relative calm while a shaky ceasefire held.

Iranians contacted by Reuters via an encrypted messaging app said economic problems were mounting and they were consumed by worries over what will happen next.

Sharing a photograph of her weekly grocery shopping, Somayeh, 40, a photographer in , said the pre-war prices had almost doubled. "The most important thing overall in the middle of the war is the economy. Every day our situation is worse and more difficult," she said.

"The thing that's the most stressful is the back and forth: one day it's war, the next it's peace. We don't know what's actually going to happen. We can't even make plans for two

days in the future."

Like everyone else interviewed by Reuters, she spoke on condition of partial anonymity, declining to let her full name be used and citing fears of government reprisals.

Amir, a 30-year-old software engineer in Sanandaj in the western Kurdistan province, said he had married shortly before the war began with US-Israeli attacks on February 28.

He had been worrying about how to provide for his family and struggling to find work since Iran's leaders cut internet connectivity during protests against the authorities in January.

"Within a month or so when the internet was reconnected, the war began. The internet was cut off again, businesses were again severely impacted, there was a lot of trouble in my industry," said Amir.

Zelensky reports deaths and injuries in Russian drone, missile strikes

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Several people have been killed and injured in Russian drone and missile strikes across Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday.

"In Odesa, two people were killed as a result of Russia's overnight missile strike on a residential building," Zelensky posted on the social media platform X. Five others were injured.

Two people were also killed and five more injured in an airstrike on the Zaporizhzhya region in the south, he said.

In total, Russia deployed more than 130

drones and eight missiles overnight, Zelensky said.

Russia used 15 glide bombs on the Sumy region in the north-east, leaving one person injured. Residential buildings and other civilian infrastructure were damaged, he said.

Meanwhile, the head of Ukraine's drone forces, Robert Brovdi, reported strikes on a further 12 Russian ships in the Black Sea. Nine cargo vessels, a tanker, a gas transport ship and a tugboat were hit, he said. The total number of ships attacked since July 6 has risen to 159 - in the Black Sea and the connected Sea of Azov.

Russia fines anti war politician as he suffers medical episode

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A Russian court fined anti-war politician Boris Nadezhdin \$13 on Friday for displaying "extremist symbols", delivering the verdict moments after paramedics performed a cardiogram on him in court for extreme high blood pressure.

Nadezhdin—one of the few politicians in Russia openly criticising President Vladimir Putin and Moscow's Ukraine offensive—had tried to sign up for running in tightly controlled parliamentary elections in September.

The 63-year-old faced the charges over a 2023 post he made linking to a video featuring the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who is designated an "extremist" in Russia.

Navalny died in prison in 2024 but any mention of him in Russia is still deemed dangerous.

Danish police officer and 2 others shot

Monitoring Desk
COPENHAGEN: A Danish police officer and two other people were shot Friday, including the suspected perpetrator, authorities said.

The shooting occurred in Nørresundby, in the North Jutland region in northern Denmark.

The injuries were serious, Søren Pejtersen, a spokesperson for the North Jutland police, said in a statement posted to Facebook.

Police received a report of a fire in an industrial area of Nørresundby at 1:39 p.m. (11:39 GMT) and rushed to the scene, Danish broadcaster DR reported.



Police respond near the scene of a shooting in Nørresundby, in the North Jutland region in northern Denmark.



Rescue workers search for survivors at the site of a landslide along Wujiang river in Pengshui Miao and Tujia Autonomous County, Chongqing, China.

Uganda school bus crash kills 20 children, 1 adult

Monitoring Desk
UGANDA: schoolchildren have been killed after the bus carrying them crashed on the way back from an educational field trip in eastern Uganda, authorities said.

Uganda suspended school outings on Friday after the crash, which also killed one adult on Thursday night.

Three other adults and more than a dozen children were also injured, officials said.

The bus belonging to the King David Junior School was returning to the capital, Kampala, after a trip to Sipi Falls when the accident occurred, the Uganda Police Force said on X. The crash took place near Chekwatit village in Kapchorwa district, police added.

Preliminary

investigations suggested the driver lost control, and the bus veered off the road and turned after hitting a large stone, police said.

Ugandan Minister of Local Government Balaam Banugahara Ateenyisaid on X that more than 28 children were being treated in hospitals, nine of them in critical condition.

Officials have not yet released the names or ages of the children killed. The adult who died is believed to be the school's founder and head.

Residents arrived before official rescue teams and began carrying victims away from the wreckage, according to footage released by the Uganda Red Cross Society. Some survivors were brought to hospitals in pick-up trucks. The village where police said the crash

occurred is near the Uganda-Kenya border, some 300km (186 miles) from Kampala.

The government announced a suspension of "all school trips and excursions, effective immediately and until further notice".

Uganda experiences frequent deadly crashes. Its roads are among the most dangerous in a region with the world's worst safety record. Crashes are often linked to speeding, poorly maintained vehicles and bad road conditions.

Earlier this month alone, 14 people were killed when a bus and truck collided in a remote area of northern Uganda.

In October, 46 people were killed when several vehicles, including two buses, collided on the Kapala-Gulu highway.

Iran says it hit U.S. command center in Syria as Hormuz fight escalates

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran early Friday said it struck a U.S. special operations command center in southeastern Syria, escalating the war over the Strait of Hormuz, as the United States attacked bridges and other urban infrastructure in Iran.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps described the strike in a statement as a "surprise attack" conducted in retaliation for the seven soldiers killed early Wednesday in a U.S. attack on Bampur, near Iranshahr in southeastern Iran. The elite military unit claimed to have destroyed a U.S. radar system and several special-operations helicopters. It claimed to have killed "a large number" of Americans.

State-run media reported Iran also attacked U.S. bases and assets in

Kuwait and Bahrain in retaliation for the U.S. attacks hours earlier. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting claimed the United States destroyed five bridges around Bandar Abbas near the Strait of Hormuz.

U.S. Central Command said it had completed a "major wave" of attacks on Iran at 9:40 p.m. EDT Thursday. It said it hit dozens of Iranian military targets, including coastal surveillance and air defense sites, military logistics infrastructure and maritime capabilities.

Though CENTCOM made no mention of civilian infrastructure, President Donald Trump on Tuesday warned that the U.S. military would be ramping up its attacks through the week and would include civilian targets, but explicitly stating.



Red Cross workers wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) walk in a formation as they disinfect the house of an unidentified man who died of Ebola.

As life expectancy rises, talks start on a UN treaty to protect older persons

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: A United Nations meeting this week heard calls for an end to ageism and better protection against what campaigners say are hidden abuses as negotiations began on a treaty to strengthen the rights of older persons.

The week of talks in Geneva which ended on Friday were initiated and by Argentina in efforts to combat exclusion, discrimination and neglect as life expectancy rises. The U.N. projects that the number of people over 65 will double in the next 50 years to become a fifth of the world's population.

"Our objective is not just to address the needs of the present, but also to prepare a system that can meet the needs of the future," said Carlos Mario

Foradori, Argentina's ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva. "This goal is to build an instrument that strengthens the dignity, protection, and the rights of millions of persons globally."

Brazil, Slovenia, the Philippines and Gambia are the proposed treaty's other main backers, and Chile and South Africa were among countries that voiced support in the week-long talks.

Negotiators are set to meet again in Geneva in October and it is not clear how long negotiations might last. It can take years for such treaties to be agreed on.

Although there are already human rights treaties that have non-discrimination clauses based on race and gender, none exist for age.

UN sanctions armed groups' leaders in eastern Congo

Monitoring Desk
KINSHASA: The United Nations Security Council has imposed sanctions on leaders of groups operating in eastern Congo including Rwandan-backed AFD/M23 rebels and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), which fights alongside the Congolese army.

The conflict in eastern Congo is rooted in the fallout from neighbouring Rwanda's 1994 genocide.

Fighting in eastern Congo last year when the AFD/M23 rebel group, which the United Nations and Western governments say is backed by Rwanda, seized large swathes of eastern Congo.

Rwanda denies backing the rebels.

The U.N. Security Council said on Thursday,

Trump accuses China of 2020 election interference, contradicting US intel

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump declassified documents on Thursday that he asserted showed Chinese interference in US elections, reviving his long-running attacks on election security despite a US intelligence assessment that found no evidence Beijing affected the 2020 vote that he lost.

The 25-minute prime-time address underscored Trump's effort to make election security a central political issue ahead of November's midterm elections, when his fellow Republicans will be defending their slender congressional majorities.

Trump's remarks to again press Republicans in Congress to pass legislation imposing new voter identification and citizenship requirements, despite longstanding findings that voter fraud in US elections is rare. The bill has stalled in the Senate amid fierce Democratic

opposition.

Trump said the declassified material would reveal "shocking vulnerabilities in our election infrastructure". But many appeared to show the opposite, or were not related to the US election infrastructure at all.

The speech came at a challenging political moment for Trump and Republicans, with his approval rating weighed down by the unpopular Iran war and high energy prices. Trump briefly mentioned the war at the outset, saying the US was "winning big," while listing a series of domestic accomplishments, including tax cuts and his immigration crackdown, before turning to election security.

The president said he was declassifying sensitive information that showed China had illicitly acquired 220 million US voter files, including names, addresses, and other data.



Ugandan Red Cross shows injured children being brought in a pick-up truck to hospital after a school bus crashed in the Kapchorwa District in eastern Uganda.

Landslide kills eight in Chongqing, 34 still missing

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Eight people were killed and 34 others are still missing after a landslide in a county in southwestern Chinese city of Chongqing on Friday, local government officials told a press conference.

In a late Friday directive, President Xi Jinping ordered search and rescue operations to be carried out for the missing and called for an investigation into the cause of the landslide.

Preliminary verification indicated that a Pengshui county community worker spotted scattered falling rocks around 8 a.m. local time (0000 GMT) issued an emergency warning. Authorities ordered

an evacuation of more than 60 residents, but the landslide occurred during the evacuation at 9:08 a.m.

The landslide has caused multiple residential buildings downhill to collapse, prompting the evacuation of more than 1,000 residents from nearby areas. As of Friday afternoon, 10 people had been injured, including two who were seriously injured and two in condition, local government told the press briefing.

Aerial footage from CCTV showed rock and debris falling on a cluster of riverside residential buildings, while people could be seen fleeing with a thick plume of dust billowing behind them.

China says US will restore Hong Kong's special trade status

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: The United States is set to restore Hong Kong's special trading status, revoked in a 2020 order by U.S. President Donald Trump in response to 's imposition of a national security law in the financial hub, China said on .

The year-long executive order, implemented on July 14, 2020 during Trump's first term, has been extended each year. China's commerce ministry said Washington had confirmed it would not extend it after the renewal date passed this week. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Hong Kong had benefited from a special

economic and trade status with the United States that was separate from U.S. dealings with China. This status was based on the principle that Hong Kong remained a separate customs territory and maintained a high degree of autonomy after its 1997 handover from Britain to China.

The reported decision to let the order lapse would mark a significant reversal and comes after recent trade talks between Washington and Beijing that also produced tariff reductions. It could restore Hong Kong's preferential treatment on export controls and other trade measures that have been aligned with those applied to mainland China since 2020.

Transport of dead bodies within Congo risks further Ebola spread, UN agency warns

Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: The transport of Ebola victims' bodies between different areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo, often for funerals in their home communities, risks further spreading the virus, the U.N. migration agency said on Friday.

More than 2,000 Ebola cases and 700 have been recorded in Congo and neighbouring Uganda as of July 14, and around two-thirds of the deaths occurred outside clinics or hospitals, the International Organization for Migration said, making it harder to control burials.

The often fatal viral

disease spreads through direct contact with bodily fluids from infected people or animals, and causes symptoms that can include high fever, vomiting and internal and external bleeding. This particular epidemic is caused by the Bundibugyo strain of the virus.

Ebola remains highly infectious death, making funeral practices a critical component of outbreak control. "If we don't really manage the dead bodies well, if we don't engage the community ... then it means there will be more spread within the community," said Andrew Mbala from IOM.

Ulema, Mashaikh announce support for gov efforts on peace, national security

ISLAMABAD (APP): A meeting of Ulema and Mashaikh, chaired by Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Friday announced support for the state's positive steps aimed at promoting peace, religious harmony, social stability and national security in the country.

Addressing the meeting, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said Pakistan gained immense respect after the "Marka-e-Haq" and that the efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Hafiz Syed Asim Munir for establishing peace were appreciated around the world.

He said India's false propaganda was defeated.

The minister said the Pakistani armed forces were presenting testimonies in defence of the country and that the gathering of Ulema was held to acknowledge their sacrifices.

He added that the Ulema had always re-

mained at the forefront in protecting the ideological borders of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The meeting resolved to continue full cooperation with the Government of Pakistan in every positive initiative and reaffirmed commitment to the supremacy of the Constitution and the stability of state institutions. The participants appreciated the efforts of the Pakistani armed forces for peace, stability and national unity and expressed their unwavering support.

The Ulema and Mashaikh also expressed complete solidarity with the government and security forces against terrorism, extremism and destructive activities. They paid tribute to the sacrifices of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies and security forces for maintaining peace and stability in Pakistan.

According to the declaration, the entire Pakistani nation is indebted to the great sacrifices of the martyrs and ghazis.

It stated that terrorism, extremism, sectarianism and violence have no place in Islam, describing Islam as a religion of peace, moderation, tolerance and respect for human life.

The declaration said every act that harms the peace of the state, society and the people is condemnable. The scholars appealed to religious leaders of all schools of thought to promote national unity and religious harmony, saying the national narrative against terrorism would be highlighted through sermons, lessons and religious gatherings. The declaration also stressed the need for joint academic, religious and social efforts to protect the younger generation from extremist ideologies, hateful content and misleading propaganda. The meeting was attended by Dr. Sajjad Qamar, Qari Mehboob-ur-Rehman, Maulana Zulfikar, Maulana Abdul Qadir Sikandri, Maulana Ayub Ansari, Maulana Iqbal Abbasi, Maulana Dr. Munir Ahmed.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of students from foreign universities, working as interns under the "Uraan Overseas Pakistan Summer Scholars Programme" called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM urges URAAN Program participants to contribute to Pak development, prosperity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday urged participants of the URAAN Overseas Pakistan Summer Scholars Program to utilize their education, research, and global experience for the country's development and prosperity.

The prime minister met with the scholars here. The participants are currently undergoing a six-week internship under the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Ini-

tatives to research issues facing Pakistan.

The prime minister welcomed the Pakistani students studying in leading universities of the world to avail internships in the country, and underlined that the youth plays a key role in national development as they are bringing laurels to the country all over the world.

The prime minister briefed the scholars on the government's reform agenda and responded to their questions. "In the

past, when the country was on the verge of default, economic stability was achieved through emergency economic reforms.

The comprehensive reforms include digitization of the FBR and increasing revenue, ease of doing business, increasing productivity, development of the agricultural sector, empowerment of youth, promotion of renewable energy and sustainable economic development reforms," he said.

Danyal calls out 'selective lectures' for Pak on minority rights

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Danyal Chaudhry on Friday called out "selective lectures" directed at Pakistan regarding minority rights during its GSP+ assessment.

"Pakistan's GSP+ assessment has once again become a platform for selective lectures on minority rights," the parliamentary secretary stated in a post on X, highlighting religious tolerance and inter-faith harmony in the country.

"Pakistan with a 97% Muslim population has got 2,189 churches (1 per 1,206 Christians), 732 temples (1 per 5,669 Hindus) and 58

gurdwaras (1 per 159 Sikhs)," he said, contrasting this with the UK, which, he noted, has one mosque for every 2,249 Muslims.

In Pakistan, neither the state nor society discriminated against religious minorities, he added.

The parliamentary secretary emphasized that special measures were undertaken by federal and provincial governments for the celebration of minority religious occasions, alongside the maintenance and protection of their holy places. He also questioned the tolerance levels of other nations, pointing to France, where a hijab ban was imposed in 2004, a face veil ban in 2011.

AJK former PM Sardar Tanveer Ilyas's convoy comes under attack

RAWALAKOT (INP): Former prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Tanveer Ilyas's convoy came under attack on Friday. According to his spokesman Raja Qamar Zaman, unknown attackers opened fire and threw stones at the convoy. Security guard Muhammad Asif was hit by bullets and died from his injuries. Raja Qamar Zaman said Sardar Tanveer Ilyas was heading from Islamabad to Rawalakot on a two-day visit for an election campaign. The convoy of the Istikhkam Pakistan Party was attacked near Rawalakot by miscreants from banned Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC).



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Sardar Muhammad Yousuf presides over the high level meeting of Religious scholars and Ulema.

Implementing modern policing key for provision of relief to citizens: IGP

QUETTA (APP): Inspector General (IG) of Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir on Friday said that immediate relief could be provided to the common citizens by implementing modern policing.

He said that the atmosphere of security among the public should be further improved by strengthening the positive image of the police.

He expressed these views while addressing the introductory meeting of the newly appointed Deputy Superintendent of Police directly from the Balochistan Public Service Commission at the Central Police Office.

The IG Police said that it is the responsibility of the supervisory officers to improve the performance of the subordinate staff.

He directed that if the officers play their commanding role more effectively, then justice would be provided to a common citizen in a timely manner and their complaints would also be redressed.

IG Police Balochistan said that according to the guidelines of smart and community policing, all available resources should be utilized to provide quality services to the citizens and eliminate crimes so that the public's trust in the police is further strengthened.

NCCIA summons PkMAP Leader Kabir in anti-state propaganda inquiry

QUETTA (UNA): The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has issued a notice summoning Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) leader Kabir Afghan in connection with an inquiry concerning alleged anti-state propaganda. According to an official notice issued by the Cyber Crime Reporting Centre Quetta, Inquiry No. 541/2026 is being conducted to examine allegations relating to anti-state propaganda. The notice directs Kabir Afghan, a resident of Pashtoonabad, Quetta, to appear in person before the Cyber Crime Reporting Centre on July 17, 2026, at 11:30am to record his statement. The notice states that the proceedings will take place at the NCCIA Cyber Crime Reporting Centre situated on Mecongi Road.

Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, and Justice Shakeel Ahmed, accepted the civil appeal (No. 939/2018) filed by the Commissioner Inland Revenue. The court set aside the decisions of the Sindh High Court and the Appellate Tribunal Inland Revenue (ATIR), effectively restoring the original order of the tax department. The judgment was reserved on July 7, 2026.

The court declared that the input tax adjustment claim on cement and steel filed by Bawany Sugar Mills for the period of July to December 2013 was in violation of the law and relevant SROs.

Governor Balochistan says: Pakistan will continue to raise Kashmir issue at international forums

Kashmiri community enjoys respect in Balochistan, reiterates commitment to its social and educational welfare

Independent Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's continued support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, stating that the country would persist in highlighting their right to self-determination at every responsible international forum.

He expressed these views while meeting a delegation of political workers from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and prominent members of the Kashmiri community residing in Quetta. The delegation was led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

(PML-N) central leader and Prime Minister's Youth Programme focalperson for Balochistan, Chaudhry Naem Karim.

Speaking on the occasion, the governor said the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir were regarded as brothers and sisters, adding that the Kashmiri community enjoyed respect and goodwill among the people of Balochistan.

He said the provincial government was taking practical measures to support the social and educational welfare of the Kashmiri community and remained committed to addressing issues affecting their well-being.



ISLAMABAD: On directions of Prime Minister, Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal presided 3rd meeting of Emergency Response Committee at NDMA HQs.

12th meeting of SCO Member States' Border Services Heads held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The twelfth meeting of the Heads of Border Services of the Competent Authorities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States was held here on Friday under the chairmanship of Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by the heads and representatives of the border services of the competent authorities of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the

Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), a Ministry of Foreign Affairs news release said.

The meeting was held in a constructive and cordial atmosphere, where the participants exchanged information and assessments regarding the situation along the international borders of the SCO Member States, as well as trends and forecasts relating to its development.

Ex-Afghan army chief says: Taliban utilizing Indian funds for cross-border terrorism against Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Afghan Army Chief Lieutenant General Sami Sadat has validated Pakistan's long-standing stance on cross-border terrorism, revealing that the Taliban use Indian financial backing to sponsor militant operations against Pakistan.

In a media interview, General Sadat addressed the specific financial nexus driving this instability, stating, "And it is also true that the Taliban have very close

relations with India, the money they take here, and then they give that money to TTP and give it to Balochistan to carry out operations in Pakistan". The former commander asserted that the Taliban facilitate militant organizations while leveraging financial assistance for strategic objectives. General Sadat said that the current Afghan authorities provide operational support to anti-Pakistan militant groups.

Farooq Sattar says "Shocked and saddened" by recent statement made by JUI-F chief regarding martyrs

KARACHI (INP): Senior Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leader Farooq Sattar on Friday said he was "shocked and saddened" by a recent statement made by JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman regarding the country's martyrs.

Speaking on a private news channel he said he had not expected such remarks from the veteran politician. "I was shocked and deeply saddened by Maulana Fazlur Rahman's statement. I did not expect such a statement from him," Sattar said, adding that he had urged the JUI-F chief

to review and correct his remarks.

He said personal, party or group interests could never take precedence over the national interest.

"Previously, Maulana Fazlur Rahman used to advise us. Today, we find ourselves advising him," he remarked.

Sattar noted that MQM-P last held its organisational elections in 2021, and the party is now approaching the five-year deadline as the Election Act requires political parties to hold internal elections every four to five years.

CM Bugti hails women's entrepreneurship program for boosting economic empowerment

Greets 500 women on completing Balochistan Women Entrepreneurship Development Program

QUETTA (APP): Chief Minister (CM) Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, congratulated 500 women on completing the first phase of the Balochistan Women Entrepreneurship Development Program, calling it a landmark initiative for the economic empowerment of women in the province.

In a message shared on social media, CM Bugti said that empowering women economically was among the government's top priorities. He highlighted that under this program, women from various districts received comprehensive training in modern business skills, marketing, business planning, and digital tools, enabling them to pursue self-employment and contribute meaningfully to the provincial and national economy.

Sarfraz Bugti, emphasized that such training

would not only help women achieve self-sufficiency but also strengthen their role in driving sustainable development. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to expanding the scope of similar initiatives to create more opportunities for women in skills development, entrepreneurship, and employment.

The Chief Minister, extended congratulations to Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, Advisor to the Women Development Department, and to all the institutions and teams involved in organizing the program. He praised their efforts as commendable steps toward the empowerment of women.

Sarfraz Bugti, expressed hope that these initiatives would play a vital role in promoting economic independence, business growth, and lasting prosperity for women across Balochistan.



Anjuman-e-Tajran Balochistan Central President Abdul Rahim Kakar leads market inspection amid Ziarat sit-in committee's shutdown strike in Quetta.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia enjoy strong brotherly ties built on faith, mutual trust: Syedaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman of the Senate, Syedaal Khan Nasir, has said that the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are built on a solid foundation of faith, mutual trust, and shared progress.

Addressing the Saudi Company Formation and Business Expansion Summit 2026, organized by Al Raee Group in Islamabad, he said Saudi Vision 2030 has opened new avenues for global investment and private sector growth, offering immense opportunities for the Pakistani business community. Congratulating Al Raee Group and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on organizing the timely summit, the Deputy Chairman Senate described the event as a significant initiative to strengthen economic connectivity and add a new dimension to bilateral trade

and investment.

He assured participants that the Senate of Pakistan and the government would continue to extend all possible support to initiatives that promote economic growth, employment, and technology transfer. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman of Al Raee Group Bilal M. Zubair welcomed the distinguished guests and highlighted Saudi Arabia's business-friendly policies. He said that under Saudi Vision 2030, the Kingdom offers 100% foreign ownership, simplified banking procedures, and has removed the minimum capital requirement for various business activities, creating an ideal corporate environment. He explained that any Pakistani private limited company or partnership firm that has been operating for at least one year can seamlessly expand into the rapidly growing.

GoB proposes increase in compensation package for police martyrs

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has decided to enhance the financial assistance package for the families of police martyrs by proposing an increase in compensation and cash payments in lieu of residential plots or land.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has sought a summary for formal approval. According to Balochistan Chief Minister's Adviser on Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind, the proposed revision recommends increasing compensation for the families of police martyrs in BPS-1 to BPS-16, including constables, head constables, assistant sub-inspectors, sub-inspectors and inspectors, from Rs100 million to Rs125 million (from Rs1 crore to Rs1.25 crore). The proposal also recommends raising the cash payment in lieu of plots or land for BPS-1 to BPS-8 personnel from Rs1.1 million to Rs2.5 million.

Shahid Rind said Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti believes that police personnel who sacrificed their lives in the fight against terrorism are national heroes, and ensuring the welfare and financial security of their families remains one of the government's highest priorities.

Historic Kohla Phatak chowk in Quetta renamed 'Shuhada-e-Ziarat Chowk'

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has renamed Quetta's historic Kohla Phatak Chowk as "Shuhada-e-Ziarat Chowk" to honor police personnel who embraced martyrdom while fighting terrorists in Ziarat.

Chief Minister's Adviser on Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind said the Metropolitan Corporation Quetta has issued the official notification, and the decision has taken immediate effect.

He said the martyrs made supreme sacrifices to protect peace, public safety and stability in Balochistan. Shahid Rind added that under the leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the provincial government is taking practical steps to preserve the legacy of the martyrs and ensure that future generations remember their courage and dedication.