Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

www.voiceofmillionsqta.com Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah Quetta

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 30, 1448 AH Vol: XX No. 90 Wednesday November 11, 2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

Chashma-5 lasting symbol of Pak-China friendship; shared aspirations for peace, prosperity: PM Shehbaz

Says "Pakistan will not wait for anyone, but will build its own future through its hard work and untiring efforts"

MIANWALI, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for building an economically dominant, energy-independent and environmentally resilient Pakistan, declaring that the country will harness its resources, technology and human capital to secure a prosperous future.

Addressing the dome placement ceremony of the Chashma-5 Nuclear Power Plant (C-5) here, the prime minister described the milestone as a reflection of Pakistan's determination to shape its own future through hard work, technological advancement and strategic partnerships.

Prime Minister Shehbaz, while emphasising the importance of energy security, said Chashma-5 represented much more than steel and concrete—rather, it was a promise of clean, reliable, and affordable electricity that would strengthen the national economy and improve people's lives.

He said that nuclear power would reduce Pakistan's dependence on imported fuels and international price fluctuations while ensuring a stable electricity supply for industries, hospitals, educational institutions and households. "Pakistan will not wait for anyone, but will build its own future through its hard work and untiring efforts," the prime minister recalled, referring to his commitment at the project's groundbreaking ceremony in July 2023.

He noted with satisfaction that the dome had been installed less than three and a half years after the groundbreaking, ahead of schedule, and expressed confidence that the project would also be commissioned earlier than planned. The prime minister stressed that Pakistan, as a climate-vulnerable country, had a particular responsibility to pursue energy solutions that simultaneously advance economic development and protect the environment.

Highlighting the strategic importance of national security for economic progress, he said no country could build a prosperous future without first safeguarding its present.



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (centre), Chief of the Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and others at the dome placement ceremony of the Chashma-5 (C-5) Nuclear Power Plant in Mianwali



QUETTA: Former chief minister and MPA Dr Abdul Malik Baloch expressing his views during the assembly session.

Pakistan endorses Global Green Freight Corridors Initiative to cut transport emissions

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has endorsed the Global Green Freight Corridors Initiative at COP31, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to decarbonizing global supply chains and building climate-resilient logistics infrastructure.

Speaking at the high-level ministerial roundtable on the Global Green Freight Corridors Initiative during COP31, Co-hosted by Türkiye's Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Abdulkadir Uraloglu, alongside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), said a press release. The roundtable brought together global leaders to address sustainable transit solutions. In his keynote address, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan highlighted that while international freight transport serves as the lifeblood of global commerce, it remains one of the fastest-growing sources of transport-related greenhouse gas emissions.

Emphasizing that economic growth and environmental stewardship are mutually reinforcing goals, the Minister noted that the launch of the Global Green Freight Corridors Initiative demonstrates that sustainable logistics is the only viable path forward.

He stressed that as the global community converges around the vital imperatives of COP31, the primary focus must firmly shift toward turning international climate pledges into tangible, cross-border outcomes.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir chairing a high-level meeting to assess the province's law and order situation.

IG vows to prevent crime, safeguard citizens; reinforce rule of law in Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Inspector General of Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir has directed police formations across the province to intensify efforts against criminal elements, reinforce security measures and improve public engagement, warning that negligence in protecting citizens and their property would not be tolerated.

He issued the directives while chairing a high-level meeting at the Central Police Office in Quetta to assess the province's law and order situation, security challenges, crime prevention efforts and overall police performance. Deputy Inspectors General of all police ranges, Regional Police Officers and District Police Officers participated in the meeting through video link and briefed the inspector general on security conditions and operational measures in their respective jurisdictions.

Muhammad Tahir stressed that maintaining peace, protecting the lives and property of citizens and enforcing the rule of law were among the primary responsibilities of the police force. He called for a coordinated approach to security and instructed officers to take firm action against criminal elements without discrimination.

He also ordered an increase in police patrols, particularly around public places and sensitive locations, and called for continuous assessment of the security environment so that potential threats and emergencies could be addressed through advance planning.

The IG placed particular emphasis on strengthening public-friendly policing. He directed officers to treat citizens visiting police stations respectfully and ensure that genuine complaints were dealt with promptly and on merit.

He further instructed police authorities to organize regular Khuli Kachehri sessions at police stations, providing citizens with a direct forum to raise grievances and seek timely redress.

Muhammad Tahir said public trust was essential to effective policing and stressed that officers must perform their duties with professionalism, integrity and accountability.

PM Shehbaz in Turkiye to attend COP31 summit

ANTALYA, (Monitoring Desk): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Antalya, Turkiye, on Tuesday to attend the Leaders' Summit of the 31st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Upon arrival, the premier was received by Turkiye's Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Gokhan Yazgi, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Turkiye Amna Baloch, and senior Turkish officials. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Senator Sherry Rehman and PM's Adviser, Tariq Fatemi, are also accompanying the premier. The prime minister, during his November 10-12 visit, is scheduled to address the Leaders' Summit on November 11 and call on the global community to take practical measures to combat climate change. According to the FO, PM Shehbaz will highlight Pakistan's steps towards rapid solarisation and expansion of its renewable energy capacity.

IHC orders jail meeting of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi with lawyers in £190m case

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed jail authorities to arrange a one-hour meeting between PTI founder and Bushra Bibi and their lawyers, Barrister Salman Safdar and Sardar Latif Khosa, in the £190 million case.

The court directed the lawyers to begin arguments on the appeals at the next hearing after the meeting.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar and Justice Muhammad Asif heard the appeals against the convictions.

During the hearing, Barrister Salman Safdar informed the court that he had met founder after seven months and Bushra Bibi after 11 months. He said Bushra Bibi had asked him where he had been for the past 11 months, adding that regular meetings between lawyers and their clients in jail were necessary. The counsel also raised concerns about the health of both prisoners. He said Khan's eyesight had improved, but his blood pressure remained uncontrolled. According to the counsel, Imran Khan had expressed concern that uncontrolled blood pressure could lead to a brain haemorrhage.

Regarding Bushra Bibi, Salman Safdar said her eyesight was in a very poor condition and that she had undergone emergency surgery six months ago.

Chief Secretary directs to accelerate public welfare projects across Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan has directed provincial departments to accelerate work on strategic development schemes while ensuring that quality, transparency and prescribed deadlines are not compromised. He issued the instructions while presiding over a meeting convened to assess the progress of ongoing and pending strategic projects across the province. Administrative secretaries and officials of the departments concerned participated in the meeting and briefed the chief secretary on the status of individual schemes and issues hindering their timely completion.

Officials informed the meeting that 14 out of 34 strategic projects had so far been completed, while work on the remaining 20 was continuing at different stages. Shakeel Qadir Khan said the projects were designed to address public needs, enhance civic facilities and improve the overall quality of life. He noted that timely completion of the schemes would also contribute to economic activity, generate employment opportunities and strengthen public service delivery. The chief secretary cautioned that avoidable delays not only postpone the benefits intended for citizens but also undermine the efficient utilization of public funds. He instructed departmental secretaries and project officers to maintain regular oversight, identify delays at an early stage and take immediate corrective measures.

BHC overturns acquittal, sentences ex-MPA Abdul Majeed Achakzai to 10 years

QUETTA, (VoM Report): The Balochistan High Court has overturned the earlier acquittal of former provincial lawmaker Abdul Majeed Achakzai in the case concerning the death of traffic Sub-Inspector Haji Attaullah and sentenced him to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment, according to a report on the court's decision. A two-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Amir Nawaz Rana and Justice Abdul Qayyum Lehri allowed the state appeal and set aside the acquittal handed down by a Quetta model court on September 4, 2020. According to the reported judgment, Achakzai was convicted under Section 320 of the Pakistan Penal Code, which relates to a death resulting from rash or negligent driving and carries a sentence of up to 10 years along with diyat, or compensation payable to the legal heirs of the deceased.

Balochistan Assembly focuses on governance reforms and public service delivery

Lawmakers demand end to prolonged gas load-shedding before winter and consultation on new districts in Balochistan

QUETTA, (ANN): The Balochistan Assembly on Tuesday took up a range of contentious issues, including the formation of new districts and divisions, the proposed relocation of the Pishin Division headquarters, persistent gas shortages and soaring utility bills, with lawmakers calling for wider consultation and prompt remedial measures.

During the proceedings, MPA Zmarak Khan Achakzai welcomed the establishment of new administrative units and appreciated Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti for the initiative. However, he questioned the decision to shift the Pishin Division headquarters from Saranan, saying elected representatives should have been consulted before such a move. He also drew attention to the pending notification for granting district status to Khanozai, despite an earlier understanding in this regard. He stressed that administrative restructuring should take into account the interests and aspirations of the province's various communities. MPAs Asghar Tareen and Zabid Reki also called for consultation with elected representatives when determining administrative boundaries and headquarters. Former chief minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch, meanwhile, raised questions over the financial viability of establishing additional districts, observing that issuing a notification alone would not be sufficient to make a new administrative unit operational. Taking note of the concerns, the Assembly speaker directed that a report be submitted regarding the relocation of the Pishin Division headquarters. The Senior Member Board of Revenue will also be called before the House next week to respond to lawmakers' reservations.



QUETTA: Former provincial minister Sardar Muhammad Saleh Bhutani called on Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Unresolved disputes, unilateral actions threatens regional stability: DPM Dar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday called for a stronger role for diplomacy, dialogue and multilateral cooperation in addressing growing global tensions, saying Pakistan will safeguard its sovereignty and national interests while continuing to work for regional peace and economic prosperity.

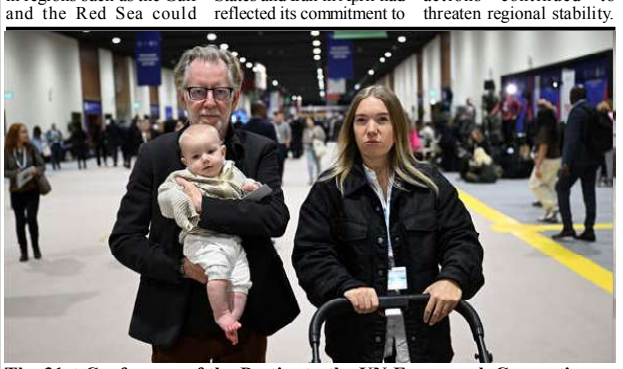
Addressing the Margalla Dialogue 2026 on the theme "Global Order in Transition: Navigating Strategic Uncertainty", Ishaq Dar said the changing international landscape was marked by intensifying great-power rivalries, prolonged conflicts, weakening arms control arrangements and growing links between geopolitics and economic competition.

He warned that instability in regions such as the Gulf and the Red Sea could disrupt global trade, energy supplies and economies, while rapid advances in artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities and other emerging technologies were creating new security challenges. Citing Palestine and the situation in Gaza as examples of the consequences of impunity, the deputy prime minister said Pakistan remained committed to the principles of the UN Charter and the need to keep diplomatic channels open. He added that Pakistan's regional diplomacy followed the same conviction. The DPM/FM highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives at the United Nations, particularly its 2025–26 membership of the Security Council.

As regards the Middle East, Ishaq Dar said Pakistan's facilitation of the Islamabad Talks between the United States and Iran in April had reflected its commitment to resolving conflicts through dialogue. He described the subsequent Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding as an important foundation for further negotiations.

He also acknowledged close coordination with China, particularly the joint Five-Point Initiative for Restoring Peace and Stability in the Gulf and Middle East Region issued on March 31, 2026, in Beijing. The deputy prime minister said Pakistan was maintaining diplomatic engagement with regional partners, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt through the R-4 framework, as well as European partners, to sustain negotiations and prevent further escalation.

On South Asia, Ishaq Dar warned that unresolved disputes, military asymmetries and unilateral actions continued to threaten regional stability.



The 31st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31) continues at the Antalya COP31 Venue in Antalya, Turkiye

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Wednesday November 11, 2026

Pakistan's significant role in US-Iran mediation process

On June 15, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced via the social media platform X that a peace deal between the US and Iran had been reached, following over two months of mediation by his country. Sharif expressed gratitude to Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye for their significant contributions, stating that the official signing ceremony would take place on June 19 in Switzerland. Following this announcement, a memorandum of understanding was signed electronically by US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance on the US side, and by Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on the Iranian side. The reported agreement is characterized as a framework peace deal aimed at ending the 2026 Israel/US-Iran war and transitioning the current ceasefire into a broader diplomatic process. Although the text of the agreement has not yet been published, key reported elements include immediate cessation of military operations, reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to international shipping, and a 60-day negotiation period to address unresolved issues, particularly Iran's nuclear program, alongside discussions on sanctions relief and access to frozen Iranian assets during follow-up negotiations. This agreement follows two significant developments. First, Israel conducted military strikes on Iranian targets in western and central Iran around a week ago, marking the first such actions since April. Explosions were reported in Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, and other cities in response to Iranian missile launches that were highly performative. Second, Trump warned that Iran would "pay the price" for what he described as slow progress in negotiations to end the conflict, indicating that the US could resume strikes against Iranian infrastructure.

Although the agreement does not necessarily mean that the root causes that prompted the war have fully disappeared, a few observations are worth mentioning and analyzing.

First, a lot of narrative spinning is occurring publicly at the moment. While the main parties are trying to sell the agreement as a victory, there are factions within the broader regional camps (such as hardliners in both Iran and Israel) that oppose it. Critics in Iran have labeled the agreement a "humiliating capitulation," arguing that it involves unjustified concessions. Hardline opponents have publicly criticized the negotiating team, with Iranian MP Mahmoud Nabavian stating that the latest draft is "more damaging" than previous versions. Similarly, Israeli officials emphasized that Israel was not directly involved in negotiating the US–Iran deal and does not necessarily consider itself bound by its provisions. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz declared that Israel would not withdraw from territory seized in Lebanon and would continue to act against threats from Hezbollah and Iran if necessary. Second, the timing of the agreement suggests that Iran was running out of options. As the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) focused on messaging and performative measures, the gap between their narrative and reality widened, with Iran's ability to endure further pressure significantly diminishing. Trump's counter-blockade against Iran's restriction of the Strait of Hormuz imposed significant economic costs on Iran, leading to the decision to sign the agreement. It is estimated that the blockade could have cost Iran over $24 billion in just two months — almost equal to Iran's reported total reserves of foreign currency — leaving the regime with little choice but to agree to the terms or face economic collapse.

Third, despite the negative reactions from hardliners in both Iran and Israel, the agreement highlights Trump's genuine interest in reaching a resolution with Iran, especially following last year's swift 12-day war between Israel and Iran. However, radical elements in Israel seem intent on using procrastination, escalation, or military actions to sabotage meaningful attempts to achieve peace. Given that there is reportedly a 60-day negotiation period following the signing of the agreement, it is likely that these factions will continue to work against a comprehensive resolution. Fourth, while Pakistan played a significant role in the mediation process, Qatar's involvement was also crucial, as acknowledged by American, Pakistani, Saudi, and Turkish officials. Notably, neither the Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman nor the ministry itself reported any independent measures taken by Qatar, apart from endorsing Pakistan's mediation efforts. In fact, a Qatari spokesman denied any independent role in the mediation at this stage. Qatar's involvement appears to have been executed at the request of the United States and had several dimensions.

Primarily, Qatar facilitated technical issues between the US and Iran, such as enabling the transfer of Iranian funds without direct US involvement, thereby avoiding the perception of it being a US initiative or taxpayer-funded. Additionally, Qatar played a role in establishing a communication channel between the United Arab Emirates and Iran, which emerged later in the mediation process. Finally, Qatar aligned itself with Saudi Arabia's position, providing support for the Pakistani initiative. Fifth, two awkward positions regarding the agreement can be highlighted. Firstly, the Europeans have been largely inactive in resolving the crisis yet somehow managed to host the official signing ceremony between the Americans and Iranians. Instead of crediting Pakistan, Switzerland offered to host the ceremony, which can be seen as an act of opportunism. Secondly, Oman, historically a favored mediator between the US and Iran, has been notably absent from this current arrangement. Oman's position during this war was not popular in the Gulf Cooperation Council and beyond. According to a senior US administration official, Oman was removed from its mediation role in negotiations with Iran after the US concluded that Muscat had acted "very duplicitously" during the talks. Finally, we must approach the prospects of the agreement with caution. It is essential to recognize that this is not a comprehensive peace agreement but rather a transitional framework. The future of the agreement will largely depend on the outcomes of negotiations in the next 60 days. Given that several factions within Iran and Israel are opposed to the agreement, we should not dismiss the possibility of sabotage, particularly from Israel.

While Atlas stands

Aqdas Afzal

This is a story about a government that collects more money every year and yet can't build anything that works. Govern-ment schools are abandoned for private alternatives, while people only visit government hospitals when they have no choice. Meanwhile, the salaried class pays taxes with mathematical precision, while big land--lords, traders and property dealers con--tribute almost nothing. This is Pakis-t-a--n's story, where the salaried class has be--come the nation's Atlas, bearing the entire fiscal burden on its shoulders, while the elites walk free beneath it.

Will this budget finally say something honest? Consider what has happened to Pakistan's economy over the last two decades. Remittances, which stood at around $6 billion in 2007, have risen to over $38bn in FY25. This steep rise enabled Pakistan to reduce poverty on paper without transforming the structure of its economy. It did not build competitive industries. It did not develop an export base. For a while, this arrangement worked.

Then came the rupture. Inflation peaked at nearly 38 per cent in May 2023. Food prices rose 30-40pc. The rupee fell from 160 to above 280. Real incomes collapsed for the bottom half of the population. Pakistan today is not simply a poor country; it's an economically fragile country with millions hovering just above subsistence, one life shock away from falling back. This is the economy the budget must address.

Sadly, the government seems only focused on stabilisation and IMF compliance. We are told that the IMF programme is on track. Pakistan's external position is stable. Reserves rebuilding has exceeded projections. The current account is balanced and inflation has retreated from its peak. And yet the IMF's own documents acknowledge that poverty remains elevated and growth subdued. The Middle East conflict adds fresh risks in the shape of upward pressure on inflation and a weaker balance-of-payments. The fact is that stabilisation is not the same as recovery. A country's economy can stabilise, even as its middle class quietly disappears.

In FY2024-25, the salaried class paid Rs606bn in taxes, a 55pc increase in a single year. FBR collection rose from Rs4.7 trillion in FY21 to Rsl 1.7tr in FY25. Still, the tax-to-GDP ratio barely moved. More money is being collected from the same people. The tax base has not broadened. The burden has only deepened.

A salaried worker cannot hide income. Employers deduct taxes before the salary is credited. Each year, tax authorities return to the same well, not because it is the most productive well, but because it is the easiest one to find. The Rs600,000 annual tax-free threshold has become a symbol of this failure. Fifty thousand rupees a month in most urban centres in Pakistan is not prosperity. It is barely subsistence. When a salary increase is granted merely to keep pace with 30pc inflation, the tax system treats it as additional income. Taxing it is not a revenue policy. It is penalising people for remaining in the formal economy.

Meanwhile, the agricultural income of large landowners enjoys near-total protection. Speculative real-estate gains move largely outside the documented net. Informal wholesale and retail sectors operate in comfortable obscurity.

The im--balance is not incidental. It is structural.

Budget FY2026-27 has a narrow window to begin correction. Six things must happen.

First, the tax-free threshold must be raised substantially and indexed to inflation going forward — automatic ind-e-xing, not ann-ual po--litical discretion. Seco--nd, the tax base must be genuinely broadened to include agricultu-ral income, real-estate gains and the informal economy. Third, energy circular debt, now Rs5tr across the power, petroleum and gas sectors, must be subjected to an in--de--pend-ent audit as the current arran-gem-ent is fiscally uns-ustainable and po--litically protec-ted. Fourth, the fiscal de--ficit must be bro-ught to zero over three years through Rs3-4tr reductions in current expenditure, cabinet ratio-nalisation, pensio--ns reform and PSDP cleansing. Fifth, commercial bank lending to the government must be repriced away from Kibor-plus commercial rates.

Three crises, one silence

DR RAKHSHINDA PERVEEN

Suicide

May 18, 2026. The Federal Shariat Court restored Section 325 of the Pakistan Penal Code. No protests. No emergency session. No coalition demanding reversal. A law that criminalises surviving a suicide attempt came back with less noise than a routine budget notification and that quietness tells you everything about whose lives this country considers worth protecting.

Section 325 was never Islamic in origin. It was lifted from British colonial legislation in 1860, inherited at Partition, and never examined because the people it harms have never been a constituency worth fighting for – those in psychiatric crisis, women with nowhere to go, transgender persons surviving without documents or shelter, men undone by debt. The court said decriminalisation was against the Quran and Sunnah. Classical Islamic jurisprudence says otherwise: legal responsibility requires sound intellect, severe mental illness suspends accountability, and preservation of life is a foundational obligation of the law. None of that was apparently the point.

The law does not fall on everyone the same way. Women facing domestic violence and/or workplace harassment and torture, transgender people with no institutional safety net, men without social capital or legal recourse – all they meet this law at their most exposed. For a woman already running from her home, surviving now carries a criminal charge. That is not protection. That is the state deciding her crisis is her fault.

Femicide

We are not short of coverage. Femicide appears on Instagram, in television segments that run the story for two days and move on, in donor reports that circulate at hotel conferences and then get filed. What it almost never appears in is a parliamentary debate where someone actually has to answer for the numbers, or a meeting of lawyers and judges asking why conviction rates are so low that most perpetrators walk free, or a civil society campaign that does not shut down the moment the donor money runs out. Femicide in Pakistan is not hidden. It is managed. Women and girls are disproportionately its victims. The attention spikes when a case is upsetting enough to hold an audience and evaporates when it is not. The institutional response in between is silence the kind that gets called normalcy.

Filicide

This is where the failure is most complete and most invisible because we have not even built the language for it. A parent kills a child. Our vocabulary gives us qatl, gives us saffak in a headline, gives us a moral verdict applied almost exclusively to mothers, and stops there. The word filicide, as used in psychiatry and law, demands a different set of questions: what broke down, and when, and who was supposed to notice and did not?

Pakistan has no postpartum mental health screening system. The Thinking Healthy Programme – developed and clinically tested here, endorsed by the World Health Organization as part of its global mental health programme, proven to achieve remission in three out of four women with perinatal depression – is not systematically implemented in the country that produced it. Women in postpartum psychosis, women ground down by domestic violence and economic dependence, women with no shelter bed and no helpline that answers they become the headline. Saffak. The headline does not ask what came before. Neither does the planning commission. Neither does the funded project that will close regardless of what the data is still showing.

We built a programme the world adopted and did not use it ourselves. That is not an oversight. That is a decision about whose suffering counts.

I have worked on these three issues for over thirty years. Most of that work has been done outside funded projects, outside donor priority lists, outside the rooms where decisions get made. I am not saying this for sympathy. I am saying it because the pattern matters. All three crises share the same mechanism of neglect. Attention arrives when there is a project behind it. The project has a three-to-five year life. When it ends, data collection stops, coalitions disperse, recommendations sit in reports no ministry requested. The problem continues on its own schedule. So here is what needs to happen, and none of it requires a new idea. Lawmakers need to stand on the floor of the National Assembly and name femicide as a legislative emergency not in a press release, on the floor, with conviction data demanded from the relevant ministries. Benches and Bars need to publicly examine why perpetrators of gender-based violence routinely avoid punishment. Section 325 needs to be repealed and replaced with mandatory psychiatric evaluation and care for anyone who survives a crisis, regardless of gender. Postpartum mental health screening needs to be mandated through the lady health worker network that already reaches rural communities. A national database on femicide, filicide and suicide - disaggregated by sex, gender identity, relationship to the perpetrator and province - must exist, be publicly accessible, and be updated annually.

These are not proposals. They are the minimum. The question is not whether anyone in a position of power knows they are needed. The question is whether anyone in that position will act when there is no grant cycle, no donor delegation, no conference deadline making it temporarily convenient to care.

The writer is a published author and can be reached at dr.r.perveen@gmail.com

Regulation and deregulation

ISHRAT HUSAIN

Time has shown that the ideological debate between regulation and deregulation is largely misplaced. Governments and regulators have different roles under varying market structures and circumstances. In some areas, they regulate more actively; in others, they oversee operation of market forces. Evidence and outcomes, not ideology, should determine the state's role. In Pakistan, the formal sector is often overregulated and burdened by procedures and discretionary powers that discourage innovation, investment and technological adoption. Regulatory enforcement is weak. Quacks, unsafe buildings, counterfeit drugs, etc, escape oversight.

Excessive regulation in the formal sector and lax enforcement elsewhere encourages informality. Hence, thousands of enterprises prefer to remain outside the documented economy. Had they not had to face needless constraints, many could have grown into medium-sized firms, increasing output, employment, tax revenues and efficiency, while reducing the informal economy.

Why is regulation required? In a mixed public-private economy, regulation is essential to ensure fair competition and protect consumers.

Until the early 2000s, the same ministry made policies, owned enterprises and regulated the sector in which those enterprises operated. Recognising the inherent conflict of interest, the government initiated reforms to separate the functions. Ministries were assigned responsibility for policy formulation, SOEs for commercial operations and independent regulators for oversight and consumer protection.

The logic was simple. A private firm can't compete fairly with an SOE if the regulating ministry also owns one of the competitors. The ministry can alter policies, provide subsidies, absorb losses, grant tax concessions or create barriers that disadvantage private firms. Hence independent regulators were set up to create a level playing field and encourage competition. Have the aims of reform been achieved 25 years later?

Take the energy sector. Though it has specialised regulators, we still face high energy tariffs, unaffordable electricity, poor service delivery and a circular debt running into trillions. One reason is that ministries and bureaucracies never fully accepted the transfer of authority to regulators and SOEs; conflicts between ministries and regulators weakened regulatory autonomy. The regulators' governance structures, too, have been problematic.

Appointments to bodies such as ene-rgy sector regulators Nepra and Ogra have often been influenced by considerations of loyalty and post-retirement accommodation, instead of exper-tise. Many positions are occupied by retired bur-e-aucrats, instead of specialists in economics, fin-a-n--ce, engineering, law or energy markets. Ro--l-es and responsibilities are blurred. Regulators make po--licy and regulatory decisions while exercising ope--rational oversight over management, thus weaa--kening accountability and creating confusion. Experience of over two decades suggests that Nepra and Ogra need significant restructuring.

Removing direct price determination from their mandates is the first step. The SBP provides a model. It regulates the banking system and enforces prudential standards but doesn't directly determine banking services prices. Similarly, petroleum and gas prices should gradually be deregulated and determined through market competition. Ogra should evolve into a modern supply-chain regulator, ensuring efficient utilisation of refineries, storage facilities, pipelines, terminals, etc. It should facilitate investment across the value chain, support development of strategic reserves and promote digitalisation of the fuel supply ecosystem. Ogra needs strong legal powers to act against hoarding, cartelisation, collusion, market manipulation and non-compliant OMCs, which requires a clearer demarcation of responsibilities between Ogra and the CCP.

The Directorate General Petroleum Concessions' regulatory functions should also be separated. Contract administration and compliance with concession agreements may remain with the concessionaire authority, while regulatory oversight should be transferred to Ogra. The Department of Explosives should also be integrated into Ogra. Power sector reform must begin with dismantling the single-buyer model and implementing the CTBCM, allowing multiple buyers and sellers to participate in electricity markets. The government would continue to own the transmission network and recover wheeling charges, while suppliers compete for customers.

At an appropriate stage, Pakistan should gradually replace the uniform national tariff with targeted subsidies for remote, disadvantaged reg-ions. Such a system would improve efficiency, re--duce leakages and manipulation, lower end-user prices, encourage higher consumption and reduce capacity charges.

Privatising Discos should not merely replace public monopolies with private monopolies. The underlying assets, including surplus land, should remain publicly owned and be leased to competitively selected operators. This would promote competition and safeguard public assets.

Under this framework, Nepra's role would shift from price setting to market surveillance, consumer protection, prevention of anti-competitive behaviour, enforcement of grid neutrality and promotion of transparent governance. It would focus on reliability, loss reduction, digitisation and service quality rather than tariff determination. The National Grid Company must also expedite investment in transmission infrastructure, especially removing bottlenecks between southern generation centres and northern demand hubs. Governance structures needed corresponding changes. Provincial representation should continue, but board members must focus on oversight, policy, transparency, audit, accountability and approval of plans and budgets. Once they become members, they can't take directives implicitly or explicitly from the centre or provincial government to preserve neutrality and objective decision-making. Operational management should report to a professional CEO rather than directly to board members. Board composition should be broadened to include independent experts in energy, law, economics, finance, technology and information systems. Finally, recruitment and promotion within the regulators must be merit-based. Professional staff should be selected through open competition, while advancement should depend on performance. Continuous training and exposure to international regulatory best practices should be an integral part of capacity building.

Pakistan's real challenge is not to choose between regulation and deregulation, but to regulate intelligently, promote competition and enforce rules impartially. Strong, independent and professionally managed regulators are essential for attracting investment, protecting consumers and ensuring affordable, reliable energy supplies. Only then can regulation become an instrument of economic efficiency, instead of remaining an obstacle to growth.

Pak-Russia relations entering new phase of pragmatic cooperation: Leghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Tuesday said that Pakistan-Russia relations had witnessed a highly positive and pragmatic trajectory over the past two decades, transforming the two countries into trusted partners amid a rapidly evolving global order.

Delivering a keynote address at a webinar titled "Pakistan-Russia Bilateral Relationship at the Cusp of Shifting Global Order," the minister said the residual distrust from the Soviet era had faded, elevating the partnership from an "unfriendly country" to a "trusted friend" across sectors including trade, energy, defense, and technology, said a press release release.

He said this diplomatic momentum is driven by high-level leadership, underscored by four recent meetings between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

As Co-Chairman of the Russia-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), the Minister emphasized regular engagements with his counterpart, Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilev, describing the IGC as the foundation of their multi-faceted ties. Bilateral cooperation has expanded through structured frameworks, including consultations on security, strategic stability, and counter-terrorism, alongside mutual alignment at the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to advocate for an inclusive, multipolar international order. A key focus of the address was regional connectivity, with Pakistan signaling its intent to join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The minister welcomed the statement by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk regarding connecting the INSTC with Pakistan's Gwadar Port, which would bridge a crucial link in China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Awais leghari also highlighted that Russian leadership has praised Pakistan's recent diplomatic role in mitigating conflicts between Iran and the United States, further validating President Putin's acknowledgement of Pakistan as a genuine global stakeholder. To unlock the substantial potential for bilateral trade and address structural hurdles like payment mechanisms, both nations have agreed to sign the Program of Economic Cooperation between the Russian Federation and Pakistan for the Period until 2030. Furthermore, the recent signing of the long-pending Russia-Pakistan Readmission Agreement in Bishkek will ease visa regimes, facilitating business travel and people-to-people exchanges.



Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, and his wife Meghan Markle have arrived in Brussels, Belgium, to attend the opening of the 'Lost Screen Memorial' exhibition at the European Parliament.

Governor, SAPM discuss industrial development in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday held a meeting with Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan to discuss industrial development, investment promotion and economic growth in the province.

Pakistan Peoples Party Central Secretary Information Nadeem Afzal Chan and Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Farzand Ali Wazir were also present during the meeting.

The two sides exchanged views on ongoing and proposed industrial projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), promotion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), creation of employment opportunities and modernization of local industries.

Governor Kundi said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa possessed immense investment potential due to its rich natural resources, mineral reserves, agricultural output and strategic geographical location. He emphasized the need to accelerate industrial development projects, strengthen special economic zones and improve business facilitation measures to create new employment opportunities for the youth. He stressed that the early establishment of an industrial zone near the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route in Dera Ismail Khan was essential and would benefit the entire region.



In Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, the Newar community held a parade as part of the Nhu Daya Bhintuna celebrations to welcome Nepal Sambat 1147, the new year according to the local calendar.

CDNS exceeds Islamic finance target, mobilizes Rs60 billion in 'Shariah-Compliant Investments'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Islamic finance sector continues its impressive growth trajectory as the Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has mobilized Rs60 billion through Islamic investment products during the first eleven months of fiscal year 2025-26 (July 1, 2025, to June 8, 2026), surpassing its annual target of Rs55 billion ahead of schedule.

According to official sources, the achievement reflects growing public confidence in Shariah-compliant financial instruments and underscores the expanding role of Islamic finance in Pakistan's economic landscape.

Officials attributed the strong performance to an increasing preference among investors for interest-free financial products that comply with Islamic principles while offering secure and competitive returns. The rising popularity of Shariah-compliant savings schemes.

Irish Envoy visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Ireland Ambassador to Pakistan Mary O'Neill, on Tuesday visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) and met the local business community and discussed the ways to increase bilateral trade. SCCI President Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Senior Vice President Mohammad Murad Arshad and Vice President Salman Sheikh welcomed the distinguished guest.Briefing the Ambassador, the SCCI President said that trade between the two countries had reached 700 million euros. He proposed setting up direct business-to-business (B2B) links, exchanging trade delegations, and signing an agreement with an Irish chamber to help Sialkot export more sports goods, surgical instruments, textiles, and leather products. Ambassador Mary O'Neill, praised Sialkot's famous self-help industry. She highlighted that many traditional Irish sports items (like hurling balls.

FBR establishes PRAL's front desk at LTO Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has established and operationalized a PRAL's Front Desk at the Large Taxpayers Office (LTO), Karachi on June 5, 2026 headed by the dedicated Chief (Inland Revenue Operations).

The desk set up in line with the directives of the Prime Minister and in response to requests from the business community of Karachi, said a news release.

The office, supported by a specialized team from Pakistan Revenue Automation Ltd. (PRAL) and equipped with the requisite IT infrastructure, will serve as a dedicated facilitation Centre for the Karachi-based business community, providing on-site technical assistance and ensuring the timely resolution of issues relating to IRIS, e-filing, registration, online tax payments, Sales Tax returns, refunds, and other digital tax services.



Palestinian who died as a result of Israeli army fire in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip despite the ceasefire, was laid to rest after a funeral ceremony held at Nasser Hospital in the city. Berike's relatives, who attended the ceremony, were filled with grief.

Govt to support NTUF-KOICA partnership to strengthen textile innovation, research: Rana

FAISALABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister (PM) for Trade Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan said on Tuesday the government was committed to supporting international academic and technological partnerships.

He also emphasized the importance of strengthening collaboration between the National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to boost innovation, research and capacity-building in Pakistan's textile sector. The PM's Coordinator expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation from National Textile University Faisalabad led by its Vice Chancellor/Rector Prof Dr. Rashid Masood.

The delegation also included NTUF Registrar Salman Saif, Project Coordinator Dr. Qamar Khan and representatives of Korea International Cooperation Agency. The meeting reviewed the ongoing cooperation between NTUF and KOICA and discussed future avenues for collaboration aimed at enhancing educational excellence, technological advancement and industrial competitiveness.

During the briefing, the NTUF delegation apprised Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan of the current status of projects being implemented with KOICA's support and highlighted progress made in various academic and technical initiatives.

The participants also exchanged views on strategies to further strengthen institutional cooperation and maximize the benefits of international partnerships.

Adviser says:

Govt focusing on agriculture, exports to strengthen economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Finance Minister Khurram Shehzad on Tuesday said the government is prioritizing the promotion of agriculture and enhancement of exports to further strengthen the national economy.

Speaking to a private television channel, he said the farming community is being provided with loan facilities to support agricultural growth and improve productivity.

He said financial assistance is being extended to small and medium-scale farmers under the "Zarkhizi" programme.

Responding to a question, he said the manufacturing sector is also playing a significant role in supporting economic growth and strengthening the country's financial outlook.

Commenting on the federal budget, he said extensive consultations were held with all relevant institutions and stakeholders before its preparation to ensure a comprehensive and balanced fiscal plan.

Gold prices increase by Rs 2,830 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The prices of gold registered an increase in the local market on Tuesday, with 24 karat gold per tola gaining Rs 2,830 to settle at Rs 455,063 compared to Rs 452,233 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 2,547 to Rs 389,534 from Rs 386,987, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs 2,306 to Rs 357,225 against Rs 354,919.



The 'She Moves' initiative, established in Syria to support the participation of women and girls in various sports, offers women the opportunity for professional training.

CM reviews wheat situation, decides to procure 1m tonnes from PASSCO

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday approved the procurement of one million metric tonnes of wheat from Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) to help stabilize wheat and flour prices across the province. Chairing a special video-link meeting to review the wheat and flour situation, the chief minister approved the purchase plan under which wheat would be obtained from PASSCO and supplied to flour mills at Rs 3,300 per maund to ensure the availability of affordable flour and bread for consumers. The meeting also reviewed concerns regarding reports of restrictions on the supply of wheat from Punjab to other provinces, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. A detailed report presented during the meeting stated that claims about restrictions on wheat movement from Punjab to any province were not supported by facts. Officials further informed the participants that no complaint had been received regarding the suspension of wheat supplies to Sindh. During the briefing, officials said the process of wheat stock declaration was continuing across the province and comprehensive data collection was underway to assess and meet Punjab's food requirements. They added that grain size of the current wheat crop was comparatively smaller than usual. The meeting decided that after fulfilling its own food requirements, Punjab would continue to discharge its responsibility of supplying wheat to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz directed the relevant authorities to maintain close monitoring of the wheat situation and ensure effective.

Rain, Wind, and Thunderstorms Expected in Upper and Central Parts of the Country

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast rain, strong winds and thunderstorms in Islamabad, the Potohar region, upper Punjab, Kashmir, upper and central Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan on Wednesday, with isolated heavy rainfall expected in some areas.

The Met Office said hot and humid weather would continue in most other parts of the country. Heavy rainfall from Tuesday nightcould cause urban flooding in low-lying areas of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mardan, Swabi, Peshawar, Nowshera, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot and Lahore. Flash flooding and landslides are also possible in vulnerable areas of Kashmir, Murree, Galiyat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad-Rawalpindi.

Rain and thunderstorms are expected across several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, while isolated heavy rainfall is forecast in parts of the Potohar region and northeastern Punjab. Similar conditions are expected in Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Sindh and most parts of Balochistan are likely to remain hot and humid, although partly cloudy conditions may develop in some areas.

PM directs to accelerate privatisation process of power DISCOs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to accelerate the privatisation process of electricity distribution companies (DISCOs), reiterating that offloading loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) was a priority for the government.

Chairing a high-level review meeting here, the prime minister instructed officials to ensure complete transparency throughout the privatisation process and establish a robust regulatory framework immediately following the transition of the DISCOs to the private sector. During the briefing on the progress regarding the privatisation of DISCOs, it was told that in the first phase, Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO), and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) would be privatised as the Expression of Interest (EOI) for the purpose had already been published in national and international newspapers.

It was told that the Cabinet Committee on Privatization had approved the transaction structure regarding the privatisation of the said three DISCOs.

The international roadshows are being organized starting this month to attract investors from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and China. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar, Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, and Sardar Awais Leghari, Adviser to the Prime Minister Muhammad Ali, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, and relevant senior government officials.



United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks during an exclusive interview as part of the 31st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31), hosted by Turkiye for the first time, in Antalya

CPEC can accelerate blue economy growth: PCJCCI

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Commercial Ambassador Adeel Munawar said on Tuesday that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can accelerate blue economy growth and regional economic transformation.

Sharing his views in a think-tank session here at PCJCCI Secretariat, he added that maritime stability and regional peace are fundamental prerequisites for the growth of the blue economy. He emphasized, the CPEC as the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), possesses all the characteristics necessary to drive regional economic transformation and sustainable development.

Adeel Munawar remarked that the future of global prosperity lies in cooperation and peace rather than confrontation. He noted that Pakistan is actively advancing initiatives related to the blue economy to enhance livelihoods, create new economic opportunities, and ensure the sustainable management of marine resources while preserving the health of coastal and marine ecosystems.

He highlighted that Pakistan offers the shortest and most efficient trade route for China and the Central Asian Republics through Gwadar Port, strengthening regional connectivity and trade integration.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-26271112217 83 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The EXECUTIVE ENGINEERII PROVINCIAL B&R HARNAI invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee 1500 PKR and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED TEHSILDAR HOUSE	25,000,000

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 17,500,000 PKR Amount in3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Registration with Pakistan Engineering council (PEC) C-6 and above (Upto 25 million)In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE11(i) (General engineering Works only). • Bidder Must Provide Credit Line Certificate from A Scheduled Bank estimating 100% of Contract Price. • Bidder Must Provide Fresh Rs100/- Affidavit of Blacklisting (In favor of XEN (Buildings) CWPP&H District Harnai also mention TSE No & Work name.. • Undertaking on Rs100 judicial stamp paper that the firm has never been involved in litigation with any Government / Semi Government Organization (In Favor of XEN (BUILDINGS) CWPP&H District Harnai also mention Work Name & TSE No • BPPRA Generated E-Challan (in case not provided the firm should be considered non-Eligible) • Audit Report Previous Last Three Years • Good performance satisfactory certificate from my Department **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Gurantee,Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,500 PKR **Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication of NIT to 24 November, 2026during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 24 November, 2026till 11:00 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: EXECUTIVE ENGINEERII PROVINCIAL B&R HARNAI Phone no: 3327704516 Email: engrnooruddin04@gmail.com

Executive Engineer-Buildings CW PP&H Department District Harnai

DPRQ/PRQ No.2381/10-11-2026

www.dpr.gob.pk @dpr_gob dpr.gob @dgpr.balochistan



Israeli army take security measures following Israelis attack Palestinian farmers harvesting olives on their land in the town of Aqraba, south of Nablus, West Bank, Palestine

Gilani reaffirms Senate's commitment to honouring contributions of distinguished parliamentarians

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani paid a tribute on Tuesday to the late Senator Irfan-ul-Haq Siddiqui, describing him as a distinguished intellectual, accomplished journalist, renowned writer and respected parliamentarian whose contributions to education, literature, journalism and parliamentary democracy would long be remembered.

Addressing a condolence reference, the Chairman Senate said that Irfan Siddiqui's passing had left a profound void in Pakistan's intellectual and parliamentary circles.

The Chairman observed that Senator Siddiqui possessed a rare combination of intellectual depth, literary excellence and political wisdom. His writings reflected profound knowledge, historical insight and a thoughtful understanding of national affairs. Through his books and columns, he enriched public discourse and left behind an enduring intellectual legacy.

Recalling his parliamentary contributions, Chairman Senate said that Senator Siddiqui brought exceptional insight and maturity to the proceedings of the House.

As Chairman of the Senate Standing Committees on Federal Education and Professional Training and Foreign Affairs, he contributed meaningfully to parliamentary oversight and policy deliberations. His experience as an educator and his understanding of national and international affairs were reflected in his parliamentary work.

The Chairman particularly acknowledged Senator Siddiqui's role as Parliamentary Leader, observing that his measured arguments, dignified conduct and respect for differing opinions earned him admiration across the political spectrum. He believed in dialogue rather than confrontation and demonstrated that political differences need never diminish mutual respect.

Recalling his personal association with the late Senator, Chairman Senate said that despite belonging to different political backgrounds, their relationship remained marked by mutual respect, cordiality and a shared commitment to democratic values. He also recalled his visit to Senator Siddiqui's residence to offer condolences to the bereaved family, observing that his absence continued to be deeply felt in the House.

"The true strength of Parliament lies not merely in the laws it passes, but in the wisdom of its deliberations, the dignity of its discourse and the respect its members demonstrate for differing opinions. Senator Irfan Siddiqui exemplified these values," the Chairman remarked.

He emphasized that parliamentary democracy flourishes when knowledge guides debate, reason prevails over rhetoric and political differences are addressed with tolerance and mutual respect. Senator Siddiqui's parliamentary journey, he said, offered an enduring example of these democratic traditions.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani attends the first death anniversary of late Senator Irfan Siddiqui, renowned intellectual, poet, writer and columnist, at Parliament House



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola expressing her views on point of order during the assembly session.

President Zardari condoles deaths in Turkiye steel plant explosion

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday expressed deep grief over the tragic loss of precious lives in the explosion and fire at a steel plant in Yzmir, Türkiye. "My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Our thoughts and prayers are with them in this difficult time.

We wish a swift and complete recovery to all those injured," the president said in a statement.

He extended sympathies to President Recep Tayyip Erdoðan and the people of Türkiye, reaffirming Pakistan's solidarity with its brotherly country in this hour of grief. According to the Turkish Anadolu news agency, at least 16 people were killed and 13 others injured, including two seriously, in an explosion at a steel plant in western Türkiye.

Mustafa rejects Rs10 billion corruption claims in vaccine procurement

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for National Health Services Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday said that no public funds had been lost in the disputed vaccine procurement process.

Addressing a press conference, the minister clarified that Rs183.055 million had been deposited in a National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) account and that the company concerned had not received any payment so far.

Kamal said, "I want to present the facts before the nation amid reports and allegations circulating over the past week regarding the vaccine procurement issue involving the Ministry of National Health Services."

He said the matter originated when the Border Health Services (BHS) approached the ministry regarding arrangements for people travelling abroad for Umrah. Following directions from the Prime Minister's Office, the ministry was formally approached to take necessary action. Mustafa Kamal said the ministry had constituted a procurement committee on May 9, along with a grievance committee headed by the Director General of Health, to address complaints from concerned parties.

However, he alleged that BHS officials subsequently formed their own committees, including procurement and objection committees, bypassing the mechanism established by the ministry. He said the matter later reached the court, following which the Prime Minister constituted an inquiry committee.

Climate justice requires fair international cooperation: Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik has called for international scientific cooperation to study glaciers and mountain ecosystems, warning that melting ice and the growing risk of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) are threatening vulnerable communities and their livelihoods.

Speaking at the UN Climate Change Pavilion at COP31, the minister said the first impact of climate change was often felt in mountainous regions, making collaborative research on glaciers and associated environmental risks essential.

He said more than 13,500 glaciers had been identified in Pakistan, while the increasing threat of glacial lake outburst floods required coordinated scientific research and international cooperation.

"Pakistan contributes less than one per cent to global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it remains among the countries most severely affected by climate change," he said.

He warned that glacier melt was putting thousands of people, their homes and sources of livelihood at risk, adding that climate change was not merely an environmental challenge but a question of human survival.

The minister called for equitable distribution of climate finance, saying developing countries facing severe climate impacts needed timely financial assistance. He observed that climate financing remained concentrated among major emitting countries, despite the vulnerability of countries contributing little to global emissions.

He said scientific research in mountainous regions could also help improve understanding of climate risks in plains and polar regions, stressing the need to move beyond international declarations towards practical cooperation.

Highlighting Pakistan's proposed initiatives to promote research and innovation, Musadik Malik outlined plans for a Green Virtual University to connect Pakistani students, researchers and faculty members with leading international universities and scientists. Under the proposed initiative, Pakistani students would have opportunities to participate in joint research, faculty exchanges and student exchange programmes and work with internationally recognised researchers without necessarily having to study abroad.

He said Pakistan had already signed an agreement with Italy in this regard, while cooperation with the United Kingdom was being pursued through a Green Compact. Discussions had also been held with Iceland and countries associated with the Arctic Circle.

The minister said the initiative would help Pakistani graduates gain access to international scientific expertise and contribute to research on climate change and sustainable development.

He also stressed the need to encourage young people to turn innovative ideas into commercially viable green businesses rather than relying exclusively on government employment or conventional grant-based funding.

Referring to the potential of students from universities including LUMS and Government College University, he said Pakistan's young graduates could develop innovative enterprises if provided with financial and institutional support.

He proposed a framework to facilitate green entrepreneurship, enabling young people to develop commercially sustainable solutions in areas such as clean drinking water, renewable energy and environmental protection.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail offering fateha for the departed soul of mother of Iranian Consul General Muhammad Karimi Todashki.

Pakistan's economic sovereignty depends on strengthening value addition: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday called for a strong national branding strategy to shift Pakistan from low-value commodity exports towards high-value, differentiated products and build globally recognized Pakistani brands.

Addressing a high-level stakeholder roundtable on "National Branding, Pakistan's Rising Soft Power and Brand-Led Exports," organized by the National Center for Brand Development (NCBD), the minister said Pakistan's long-term economic sovereignty depended on strengthening value addition, branding and international market access.

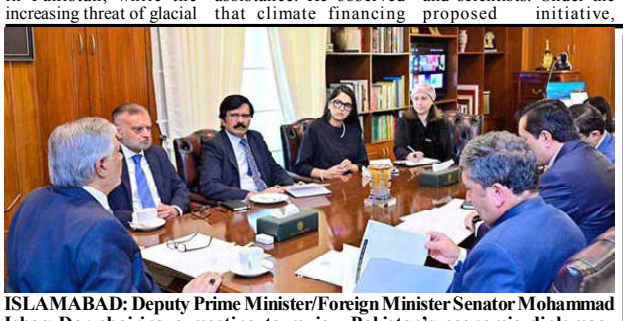
The emphasis on value-added, branded exports is also consistent with the government's broader export-led growth agenda under URAAN Pakistan.

Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the widening export gap between Pakistan and regional economies, noting that while Pakistan's exports had remained around US$ 40 billion since 1990, Vietnam's exports had surged to approximately US$ 475 billion. He said Pakistan had the capacity to produce world-class products, including high-end textiles, surgical instruments, sports goods and FIFA World Cup footballs, but often lost significant value as these products were marketed under foreign brands.

"Our industry produces world-class products; we must ensure that these products carry the name and identity of Pakistan in global markets," he said.

The minister said Pakistan must move beyond being a manufacturer for global brands and develop internationally recognized Pakistani brands.

He said the NCBD would help local industries transition from domestic markets to direct global exports and establish a strong and unified "Made in Pakistan" identity.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing a meeting to review Pakistan's economic diplomacy roadmap, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Young people reliable beneficiaries of institutional financing: Mashhood

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Tuesday announced a more than threefold increase in the maximum financing limit under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme (PMYBALS), raising it from Rs 7.5 million to Rs 25 million to enable young entrepreneurs to expand their businesses, establish larger enterprises and create employment opportunities across the country. Addressing a press conference, he said the newly introduced Tier-4 of the scheme had been approved by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and ratified by the Federal Cabinet, marking a significant expansion of financing opportunities for young business owners.

Under the new tier, eligible entrepreneurs would be able to obtain loans exceeding Rs7.5 million and up to Rs 25 million at an eight per cent markup for a maximum period of eight years.

Rana Mashhood said the enhanced financing facility would help successful youth led businesses graduate into small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly in agro processing, cold chains, mechanised farming, solar energy, manufacturing and export-oriented industries.

He said the scheme is open to young Pakistanis aged 21 to 45, while individuals aged 18 and above could also apply for financing in information technology (IT) and e-commerce.

Both new ventures and existing businesses in the commercial and agricultural sectors would be eligible, with Islamic financing options also available.

The chairman said the government had also reduced the banks' profit margin on Tier-3 and Tier-4 loans from KIBOR plus three per cent to KIBOR plus 2.4 per cent, without changing the markup rates payable by borrowers, which would remain seven per cent and 8 per cent, respectively.

Govt assures consumer protection during DISCOs privatisation process

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Division Ahad Cheema chaired a meeting on Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs).

The meeting reviewed development programs for DISCOs and discussed the Economic Affairs Division's (EAD) efforts to arrange funding for installing smart meters on transformers across all DISCOs.

Participants noted that positive progress had been made so far in arranging funding for the smart metering system, which is intended to help curb electricity theft and overbilling, said a release issued here on Tuesday.

The meeting discussed the continuation of the smart metering project after privatisation. Ahad Cheema said the government would put in place arrangements to ensure that private investors carry the project forward. Smart meters on transformers can help curb electricity theft, improve billing accuracy and protect consumers from overbilling, while safeguarding the interests of consumers, investors and the government. Negotiations with multilateral partners for development programmes would continue until privatisation is completed. If a DISCO is privatised while negotiations or programme preparations are under way, the relevant financing and development programmes would be transferred to the private investor as part of the handover, subject to agreed arrangements. Ahad Cheema further emphasised that any new project undertaken by a private investor within a DISCO must be processed through competitive bidding and receive approval from the NEPRA, as applicable.

He stressed that the purpose of privatisation was not to shift costs or undue pressure onto consumers. The government would facilitate the process while safeguarding consumers' interests and ensuring that investors meet their financial and contractual obligations.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal confers degrees upon successful graduates during the 33rd Convocation of the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Lahore

VAAP launched to protect crypto investors

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Virtual Asset Alliance of Pakistan (VAAP) has been launched to protect investors in cryptocurrency and digital assets, raise cyber-security awareness, and represent Pakistan's industry globally.

The Alliance has been formed in collaboration with Asia Web3 Alliance Japan. Speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club Islamabad, Alliance representative Syed Ehtesham Hamdani, along with industry leaders Mubashir Irfan, Muhammad Ismail, Zain-ul-Abideen, Hamza Kiani, and Shafiq-ul-Hassan, said the platform aims to protect investors from fraud, cyber-attacks, and fake exchanges, and to provide a joint platform for individuals and companies associated with digital assets.

He said the lack of authentic data on the number of crypto investors and investment volume in Pakistan is a major issue, which needs to be addressed through awareness and data compilation. He clarified that the Alliance is not an alternative to any government or regulatory body, but will act as a bridge between the public and relevant authorities. It will provide guidance on filing complaints, legal assistance, and protection of digital accounts. The speakers said the Alliance will also create business opportunities for youth in blockchain.

NA panel directs to protect rights of media workers

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday expressed serious concern over delays in payment of salaries to media workers and increasing layoffs by media organisations, directing the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to submit a comprehensive plan to address the issue within 15 days.

The committee, chaired by MNA Pullain Baloch at Parliament House, observed that withholding salaries and terminating employees without prior notice or fulfilment of contractual obligations were serious issues affecting the livelihoods and welfare of media professionals.

The committee asked the ministry to develop a clear strategy to ensure payment of outstanding salaries and protect the rights of media workers. The secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting informed the committee that the government was regularly releasing payments against outstanding dues to media organisations, but expressed concern that these organisations were not fulfilling their obligations towards employees. He said the ministry had sought details of unpaid salaries from the representative organisation of media workers in compliance with the committee's earlier directions, but the required information had not yet been provided.

The committee directed the ministry to engage with media organisations and representative bodies of journalists and other media workers, obtain details of pending salaries and present a concrete plan of action within the stipulated 15-day period. The committee also discussed the reported assault on the chairman of the Press Council of Pakistan.



SOHBATPUR: Deputy Commissioner Fareeda Tareen inaugurates free eye camp at DHQ Hospital.

Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah printed at Shah Printing Press, Quetta and Published from Al-Syed Building M.A. Jinnah Road Quetta Ph. 2843190 E.mail: dailyvomqta@gmail.com.