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Militants would not be allowed to re-establish footholds in any part of Balochistan: CM Bugti

QUETTA (APP): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has reaffirmed the provincial government's resolve to eliminate terrorism, declaring that no safe haven will remain for militants seeking to undermine peace and stability in the province.

In a statement, the chief minister said the state would utilise its full strength and an effective counterterrorism strategy to eradicate the menace of terrorism and ensure lasting security across Balochistan.

Sarfraz Bugti described the killing of eight militants belonging to "Fitna al-Hindustan" during a security forces operation in the Kolpur area as a significant achievement in the ongoing fight against terrorism. He said the success demonstrated the determination of security institutions to confront threats to public safety and national security. The chief minister stressed that any attempt to spread unrest, intimidate citizens, or disrupt normal life on national highways in Balochistan would be firmly thwarted. He noted that ongoing intelligence-based operations in Kolpur, Kardgap, Noshki and other areas, along with enhanced security measures on the Quetta-Taftan National Highway, reflect the state's commitment to protecting citizens and ensuring uninterrupted movement of people and goods.

Paying tribute to security personnel who lost their lives in recent terrorist attacks, Bugti expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of Major Omar Minhas Nasir and Havaldar Muhammad Adnan Khan. He said the two soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of the country and the protection of its citizens. "Their sacrifices will remain a shining chapter in our national history, and the entire nation will remember these brave sons with respect and gratitude," he said, while extending condolences to the bereaved families and praying for their strength and patience. The chief minister also highlighted the changing nature of terrorist tactics, noting that militant groups are increasingly employing modern technologies, including drones and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), in pursuit of their objectives. However, he maintained that the use of advanced technology would not weaken the state's resolve.



LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at his Model Town residence.



NORTH DERA BUGTI: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti offering Fateha on the sad demise of his aunt and mother of Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti.

24 terrorists killed in Balochistan, KP IBOs

RAWALPINDI, (Agencies): A Pakistan Army major among four personnel were martyred and 24 terrorists belonging to "Fitna al-Hindustan" and "Fitna al-Khawarij" (FAH) were killed in separate intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

In Balochistan, the armed forces, since November 13, have been conducting multiple IBOs around Kolpur, Kardagap and Nushki, including area domination and patrolling of the Quetta-Taftan National Highway (N-40) to keep it secure for local traffic and sustain operations.

According to the military's media wing, "On night 13/14 November, in the area of Kolpur, the security forces successfully neutralised eight Indian-sponsored terrorists, including a suicide bomber and recovered a large cache of weapons and ammunition."

The India-backed terrorists targeted military vehicles on patrol using armed quadcopters on November 14, resulting in the martyrdom of Major Omer Minhas Nasir, a resident of Chakwal District, and Havildar Muhammad Adnan Khan, a resident of Kotli Sattian.

"This cowardly act has not shaken the resolve of the security forces.

The military's media wing said that the "Fitna al-Hindustan", backed by India and other hostile intelligence agencies, is actively trying to use drones and other technical means, including IEDs, to target innocent civilians and security forces, so as to undermine the efforts of the government and security forces to maintain peace and normalcy in the area. "India continues to give FAH full financial support and supply it with the latest gadgetry.



METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES: Top leaders of ASEAN countries including Vietnamese Le Minh Hung, Philippine President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos and Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong pose for a group photo with other guests, at a meeting as part of the 49th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits

Pakistan strongly condemns continued Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, Egypt, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Jordan, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Palestine, Algeria, Mauritania, Sudan, Libya, Djibouti, Somalia, Lebanon and Oman condemned in the strongest terms the Israeli airstrike on the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, which caused casualties among patients and medical personnel, in violation of international humanitarian law, which affords special protection to medical facilities and healthcare workers.

In a statement, they also condemned continued Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians, including strikes on tents and other sites sheltering displaced persons. These attacks undermine the ceasefire and efforts to restore security and stability in Gaza and are inconsistent with President Trump's Comprehensive Plan. The ministers expressed grave concern that continued Israeli restrictions on humanitarian aid, shelter materials including tents, caravans and mobile homes, as well as medical supplies are deepening Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe as winter approaches. Inadequate shelter and deteriorating water, sanitation and healthcare services put civilian lives at grave risk, particularly those of children and infants, who could once again die from exposure to freezing temperatures. The ministers called on Israel to heed appeals from the international community and the Board of Peace, for increased aid and to fulfil immediately and in full its obligations under the Sharm El-Sheikh Agreement, President Trump's Comprehensive Plan and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 (2025). Israel must uphold the ceasefire, protect civilians and medical facilities, and ensure the safe, sustained and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid in sufficient quantities, including shelter and early recovery supplies and equipment to restore essential infrastructure. It must also allow United Nations agencies and humanitarian organisations to carry out their mandates without obstruction.

These first-phase commitments were due to take effect upon signature. Israel must implement them without further delay or additional conditions, including political and security conditions.

Pak, Kuwait vows to enhance economic cooperation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan and Kuwait have agreed to further expand economic cooperation and strengthen bilateral partnership.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah.

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and discussed matters of mutual interest, including trade, investment, energy projects and people-to-people contacts.

Meanwhile, Pakistan State Oil and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation agreed to further expand their five-decade-long partnership in the energy sector.

Under the agreement, the two sides will explore new opportunities for fuel supplies, refining and investment to support the development of Pakistan's energy sector.

Afridi's detention challenged in FCC

ISLAMABAD (INP): National Assembly Opposition Leader Mehmood Khan Achakzai and Senate Opposition Leader Raja Nasir Abbas on Saturday jointly filed a petition before the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC), seeking the immediate release of the dysfunctional Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Sohail Afridi and eight other parliamentarians.

The PTI-backed chief minister and other lawmakers had been taken into preventive custody hours before the federal government imposed governor's rule and emergency in KP on October 11. In their petition, the opposition leaders argued that keeping elected representatives in custody amounts to rendering the public mandate ineffective. "Targeting them on the basis of political affiliation violates Articles 4, 14, 17 and 25 of the Constitution," read the petition. The plea also demands that the government disclose their "legal status and place of detention". It argues that extraordinary powers under Articles 232, 234 and 245 do not override fundamental rights. The imposition of governor's rule, it says, does not end fundamental rights, and government actions remain subject to judicial review by the FCC.

Governor for effective measures to curb terrorism, subversive activities

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stressed the need for coordinated efforts by the government, security institutions and the public to counter terrorism and prevent hostile activities in the province. Condemning the recent militant attacks in the Kurdgap and Kolpur areas, the governor said terrorism was not simply an act of violence but an ideology designed to spread fear and intimidate communities. He expressed profound grief over the martyrdom of Major Umar Nasir Minhas and Havildar Muhammad Adnan Khan, paying tribute to the two soldiers for sacrificing their lives in the line of duty while protecting the country and its citizens. Mandokhail called upon law-enforcement agencies to adopt effective and practical measures to curb terrorism and other subversive activities. He maintained that security operations could achieve lasting results only when they were complemented by meaningful cooperation from the public. The governor said the sacrifices rendered by security personnel would not be allowed to go in vain, emphasizing that combating terrorism was a shared responsibility requiring unity and collective resolve.

He conveyed his condolences to the families of the martyred personnel and assured them of the nation's support and solidarity in their hour of grief.

Mandokhail also prayed for the departed souls and asked Almighty Allah to grant patience and strength to the bereaved families.

High-Level defence talks reinforce Pak-Uzbekistan strategic partnership

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, during his official visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan, held high-level meetings with Lieutenant General Botir Qudrathodjayev Bahromovich, Defence Minister, and Major General Burkhanov Akhmad Jamolovich, Deputy Defence Minister and Commander of Air Defence and Air Force of Uzbekistan.

During the meeting with the Defence Minister of Uzbekistan, the discussions focused on regional security, existing defence ties and prospects for institutional collaboration, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). The Uzbek Defence Minister lauded the professionalism, operational prowess and combat capabilities of the Pakistan Air Force.

President Zardari, PM Shehbaz vows to accelerate country's development process

LAHORE (Agencies): President Asif Ali Zardari visited the residence of Prime Minister(PM) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Model Town,where the prime minister warmly received him.

During the meeting, the two leaders held detailed discussions on the overall political, economic and security situation in the country. The PM briefed the president on his recent visit to Türkiye and participation in the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31). The meeting also discussed cooperation between coalition partners, continuation of the consultation process and progress on public welfare initiatives. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working together for economic stability and accelerating the pace of development in the country.

National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq,former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf,Senator Saleem Mandviwalla,Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar,Adviser to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah and Member of the National Assembly Mian Hamza Shehbaz Sharif were also present at the meeting. The prime minister also briefed the president on his recent visit to Turkiye and his participation in the 31st Conference of the Parties. The two leaders discussed cooperation between coalition partners, continuity of consultations and progress on public welfare initiatives. They reaffirmed their commitment to working together to strengthen economic stability and accelerate the country's development process. National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, Prime Minister's Adviser Rana Sanaullah and MNA Hamza Shehbaz were also present at the meeting.

The proposal for a referendum has found support within sections of the PML-N.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing an inter-ministerial meeting to review preparations for the upcoming Pakistan-Turkmenistan Joint Intergovernmental Commission (JIC) session, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Every politician has own way of thinking, perspective: Ayaz

LAHORE (INP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the draft of the 28th Constitutional Amendment had not yet reached his office, and that his constitutional role would begin only after the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs sent him the draft.

Speaking in detail to the media in Lahore, he discussed various political matters, the constitutional amendment and the government's performance.

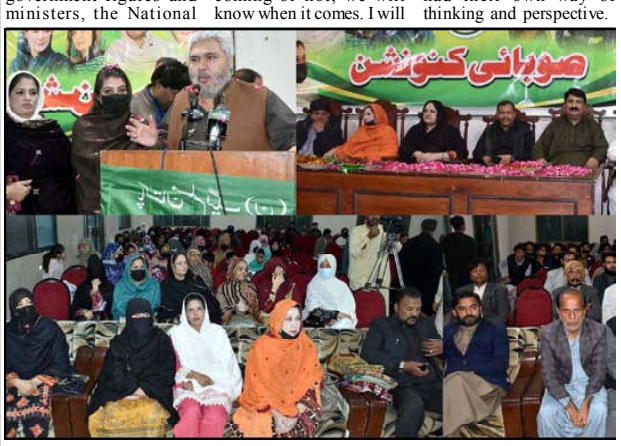
In response to a question about the draft, Sadiq said he would not form a prior opinion on whether the amendment was good or bad until its draft was formally presented and he knew its contents.

Speaking about the responsibilities of government figures and ministers, the National Assembly speaker said everyone in the government was fulfilling their respective constitutional and administrative responsibilities. Each minister was running their ministry and had a role of their own, he said. His role in the process was of a specific nature, and he would perform his duties in accordance with the rules and procedures only after receiving the draft from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

Asked about Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Sadiq said Naqvi worked hard and actively on any government assignment given to him. "I don't ask whether an amendment is coming or not; we will know when it comes. I will not call the amendment good or bad. My job is to facilitate, and my work will begin when the government says the 28th Amendment is coming," he said.

On Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain's remarks and political allegations, Sadiq said such accusations were routinely made in politics. Continuing his point, he said no one objected if a doctor's son became a doctor, yet politicians were always taunted over dynastic politics.

Commenting on statements by Mohsin Naqvi and other political leaders, as well as the idea of a "system reset," the National Assembly speaker said everyone in politics had their own way of thinking and perspective.



QUETTA: Provincial General Secretary PML-N Jamal Shah Kakar addressing the Provincial Convention of PML-N organized Maryam Liaqat.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Monday November 16, 2026

Mere promises

What is a UNSC resolution worth if it is never implemented? Pakistan and China felt compelled to convene an informal meeting of the UN Security Council earlier this week to discuss implementation of the body's own resolutions. The session was aimed at discussing how the Council "can ensure the full, effective and non-selective implementation of its resolutions". As Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN pointed out, UNSC resolutions are legally binding under the UN Charter. Other experts noted that the implementation of resolutions "lies at the heart of the Council's credibility, authority and effectiveness". They suggested that resolutions be accompanied by "realistic mandates, clear implementation pathways, sustained reporting, adequate resources, political will and follow-up mechanisms" to ensure they are acted upon. Pakistan also proposed some practical measures, including an annual review of progress on passed resolutions, clearer implementation pathways, and stronger follow-up. As our ambassador pointed out, "selective or prolonged non-implementation weakens the Council's authority, prolongs unresolved disputes and deepens human suffering". India-occupied Kashmir and occupied Palestine are both cases in point.

However, helpful as these suggestions are, the deeper problem is one that no procedural fix can address. The Security Council does not fail to implement its resolutions because of administrative difficulties; it fails repeatedly because its permanent members have diverging views on a number of issues, and the veto power allows any one of them to shield a favoured party from the consequences of disregarding the body's resolutions. In other words, the UNSC's dysfunction arises from politics rather than technical limitations. Of course, this does not detract from the effort by Pakistan and China to push a constructive, multilateral approach to addressing the dysfunction.

At a time when powerful states increasingly seem to be abandoning it, they have signalled that the rules-based order, for all its shortcomings, is still worth defending. However, perhaps expectations should be tempered with the realisation that the gap between resolutions and realities can only be plugged when the powerful close it.

No number of annual reviews and follow-ups will generate the great-power consensus needed to enforce UNSC resolutions. Where that consensus is absent, as has been the case in occupied Kashmir and Palestine, no amount of follow-up can get results. Closing that gap calls for a harder, more patient diplomacy aimed at the powers that hold the resolutions hostage.

Hand to page

Muna Khan

The fear I keep hearing about AI isn't the one that makes headlines. It isn't about robots taking jobs or machines making humans obsolete. It's quieter than that. It's the worry that dependency might make us forget how to think for ourselves.

Some doctors say even young adults may not be spared 'brain atrophy' so forgetting is normal. But what I'm increasingly witnessing isn't the forgetfulness of age. It's something more voluntary. A willingness to hand over the thinking.

Don't get me wrong. I am on team AI. It's no different to assistant tools like Cliff Notes in the late 1980s when we needed help understanding the AP literature heavyweights. You still had to read Joseph Conrad but Cliff Notes could help you understand him better. Now you could probably get AI to write like Joseph Conrad. We're blaming AI for generating writing but not looking at the person making it do the generating. There's always been, and will be, shortcuts to everything in life. Sometimes I think we are mad at the wrong thing.

But let's be precise about who benefits from our dependency. Big Tech is already telling us how we should look — the same stick thin, filled lip, cat-eyed faces that scroll past us on every platform, until we forget what an ordinary human face looks like. In 2019, Jia Tolentino called it the cyborgian look — a single beauty ideal engineered not by culture but by algorithms optimised for engagement. I wrote about it for this paper when I noticed rows of women with big lips and 'snatched' jawlines at a dermatologist's office in Karachi in 2018.

We are morphing into versions of each other, and we have barely noticed.

Now Big Tech is coming for our voices too. The same companies profiting from our insecurity about our faces are also profiting from our diminishing capacity to think and write without their tools. Almost perfect AI-generated sentences, frictionless and indistinguishable, are becoming the norm. The result, if we are not careful, will be a literature of

sameness. Content that sounds like everything else because it was made the same way. That is not a coincidence. It is a business model.

I have a simple suggestion that I'm now teaching: Write with your hand. Keep a notebook to record your thoughts, your grocery list, the phone number of someone you met. Stop using your phone for this. Think of it as a small act of resistance.

The forgotten art is not writing itself. It is observation. To look up from a screen and notice the room you are sitting in. To register the specific detail — the light, the object, the thing that makes you stop. Ten people in a room will never write the same thing about it. That irreducible difference is your voice. AI cannot replicate it because AI was not there. You were.

Which raises a question nobody in our education system is asking: are we teaching young people to observe at all? We are already teaching children through rote. Our syllabi are hardly designed to encourage independent thinking, let alone critical thinking. If students with access to AI can submit generated essays without consequence, if the skill of noticing is never tested or rewarded, we don't just produce incurious adults. We produce people who have nothing original to say.

And a society builds on itself through its people's stories. If we don't teach our children to notice their lives, we deny them the very material from which those stories are made. That is not AI's fa--ult. It is ours. And as always, those wi--thout access to these tools will fall further behind — the disparity betw-een those who can af--fo--rd to think origin-a-l-ly and those still catching up will only widen.

Unintended consequences

Quatrina Hosain

The illegal and ill-advised US and Israeli war in Iran has apparently led to a major rethink in Arab capitals as they examine the post-ceasefire scenario. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian gave the first public hint of a new, embryonic security architecture emerging for West Asia and the Middle East during his recent state visit to Pakistan.

Calling for a 'united front' of Muslim nations, he elaborated on extending a "hand of friendship" and a new regional security structure. His statement follows a series of diplomatic moves and countermoves after the war in Iran left a security vacuum in the region, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

The political and military dynamic in the region is moving at its own pace, separate from the sporadic and fractious negotiations between the US and Iran, taking shape in the form of quiet discussions between regional players. A regional security architecture comprising Pakistan, Iran, Turkiye, the GCC, and Egypt, perhaps later extending to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Jordan and others, would be a historic paradigm shift in the geopolitical landscape. The thaw in relations between Iran and the Gulf Arab states comes after decades of mutual hostility, but it is clear that Saudi Arabia has paved the way for the warming ties. Iran repeatedly struck US bases across the region, wholly or partially destroying major facilities, as well as damaging civilian infrastructure, but maintained it was responding to military attacks launched from US bases in the GCC countries.

The US has not revealed the extent of the damage to radars, communications hubs, aircraft and other key facilities, but it was soon evident that US forces, that had established a foothold in the region after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, were now acting as lightning rods drawing Iranian drone and missile fire, instead of being a security shield. And the US supplied Israel with substantial air defence missiles, perhaps leading to resentment from the GCC that they were left partially unprotected.

Political concerns are also heightened and have led to the establishment of the R4 (Regional 4) in the early days of the war, comprising Pakistan, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The group has already met four times, indicating urgency and commitment. Pakistan has been the epicentre of the regional push for a ceasefire between Iran and the US and appears to have assumed a quiet role in reshaping the post-war regional order. In addition to extensive diplomatic outreach, there were also two unique visits by military leaders to Pakistan just days before the formal signing of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding.

On June 9, Gen Rodolphe Haykal, Commander of Lebanon's Armed Forces met Field Marshal Asim Munir, followed two days later by Gen Metin Tokel, Commander of Turkiye's Land Forces. Field Marshal Munir also visited Iran at least twice during the war, meeting the political leadership and the Iranian military high command.

But it has been growing anger at Israel's continuing savagery in Gaza and the West Bank, the invasion of Lebanon, its threats to other countries, and the relentless pushing of its ideological imperative of establishing Greater Israel that has forced the Gulf States, Turkiye and other nations in the Middle East to accept that Israel is actively undermining regional stability. It is clear the US can no longer contain or control Israel. And President Donald Trump's bizarre atte-m-pt to link peace negotiations with Arab countries sig-ning the Abraham Accords likely tip-ped the balance.

Dams on Chenab - a target?

Ahmer Bilal Soofi

India is fast-tracking at least four major hydro projects on the upper stretches of the Chenab, including Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar, Ratle and the massive Sawalkote project. Tenders have been issued. Several private consultants and contracting companies have entered the process, such as Afcon Infrastructure, Bharat Heavy Electricals, Andritz Hydro, Patel Engineering and others.

A legal question often asked by our think tanks is: can Pakistan carry out a strike against any dam, pondage or water tunnel that India says it will construct on the Chenab? The question is raised in the context of the very specific protection accorded to dams, dykes and similar sites during armed conflict under Article 56 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The reply is simple: such a structure, though civilian property, loses its protection rights when it is itself being used as a tool to achieve the military objective of subjugating a lower riparian. In this case, civilian infrastructure under construction, like a dam, is no longer protected because it is being built for military purposes.

India's openly owned narrative will help Pakistan argue successfully that the dams on the Chenab are being made with stated belligerent intent. For instance, India's own minister for water resources, C.R. Patil, recently said "It is certain, not a single drop of water will go [to Pakistan] in the coming years". This statement reflects the Indian government's policy position. Neither recalled nor corrected by India's foreign ministry or the Prime Minister's Office, these remarks leave no doubt about India's belligerent intent and hostile action, accompanied by its position that Operation Sindoor is not over.

According to its version, holding the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance is one of several belligerent actions it can take during this ongoing self-declared war. Thus, an armed conflict situation continues between Pakistan and India.

India is not holding back its belligerent actions and is continuing to wagewar through multiple means on Pakistan, including through its proxies launched from Afghanistan. This was the backdrop to the water minister's statement, which is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to divert water and prevent it from flowing to the lower riparian.

It is an outright threat to Pakistan that forceful means will be employed to deny Pakistanis their right to agriculture and subsistence. That's how measures to prevent the construction of dams or diversion tunnels by India are justified under the well-known right of anticipatory self-defence. Pakistan will thus be justified if it chooses to act within the parameters of international law, or jus ad bellum, to take all necessary measures to stop, delay or fully prevent any such construction.

However, let's also see whether under jus in bello the dam can enjoy traditional protection during an armed conflict launched and continued by India. Article 56(1) of Additional Protocol I states that "works or installations containing dangerous forces, namely dams, dykes and nuclear electrical generating stations, shall not be made the object of attack, even where these objects are military objectives, if such attacks cause the release of dangerous forces and consequent severe losses among the civilian population".

A careful reading shows that while the protection is in general terms, there is an exception where the protected dam itself is likely to function or is actually functioning to achieve the enemy's military objective. That is exactly the case for Pakistan.

This is further clarified in the same article where Para 56(2) intimates us that the special protection "shall cease (a) for a dam or dyke only if it is used for other than its normal functions in regular, significant and direct support of military operations and if such attack is the only feasible way to terminate support".

Article 52 of Additional Protocol 1 likely underpinned the position of Pakistan's defence minister when he stated that the construction of a dam would be considered an act of war and that Pakistan would respond. Its description of military objectives would certainly include any hydro project "which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralisation, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage".

As mentioned, India links the dam's construction to the military objective of punishing Pakistan. Had it planned to build any dam pursuant to the IWT, then Pakistan could not have objected to its purpose. Ironically, by holding the treaty in abeyance, India itself has withdrawn the traditional protection accorded to dams and dykes in the law of war since it has declared that its construction is linked to achieving a military objective against Pakistan. In preventing the construction of these controversial dams and other hydro projects, Pakistan seeks a military advantage that would reduce and degrade the capacity of the Indian army and Indian government to break the will of the people of Pakistan.

Climate budget

Aisha Khan

As Pakistan navigates intense climate vulnerability, the federal budget for FY26-27 allocates Rs2.478 billion to the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). While this allocation signals a policy acknowledgement of environmental threats, an objective examination reveals a disconnect between financial inputs and tangible outcomes. By analysing funding lines (afforestation, capacity building and urban strategies) against realities on the ground, we can evaluate whether these public funds serve genuine ecological preservation or merely fuel profit loops.

The centrepiece of the ministry's portfolio is the 'Upscaling Green Pakistan Prog-r-amme', consuming Rs2.335bn (over 94 per cent of the budget). On paper, massive tree plantation drives are laudable. However, evaluating this expenditure requires looking beyond the number of saplings planted to assess the broader ecosystem.

Pakistan suffers from one of the highest rates of deforestation in Asia, driven by timber mafias, unregulated urban sprawl and agricultural conversion. While the government spends billions planting fragile saplings, mature forests which possess superior carbon sequestration capacities, established root systems for flood mitigation and rich biodiversity are cut down at alarming rates. A sapling takes decades to replicate the ecological services of a single mature tree. By failing to halt deforestation, the state is effectively emptying a sinking boat with a thimble.

Without strict survival-rate audits, afforestation drives risk becoming cyclical commercial operations where dead saplings are repeatedly replaced using public funds, benefiting commercial interest groups while yielding negligible long-term ecological returns.

The remaining budget lines follow a similar pattern of administrative expenditure outstripping concrete outcomes. The 'Green Skills for Sustainable Development' initiative, allocated Rs51.6 million, aims to train youth for eco-friendly jobs. However, without a structural shift in Pakistan's economy to create green industries, training programmes remain isolated workshops. The output becomes a certified but underemployed cohort, turning the allocation into a public relations metric rather than an economic transformation tool. Similarly, Rs50m is earmarked for the 'Formulation of the National Urban Strategy and Guidelines' to prevent urban flooding. Pakistan already possesses an abundance of policy documents, frameworks and strategy papers. Funding yet another guideline document while municipalities lack basic financial resources to upgrade drainage systems, stop wetland encroachment or enforce building codes is an analytical failure.

Given the country's repeated exposure to floods, droughts, heatwaves, and glacial hazards, the budget remains small compared to the scale of climate risks. For strengthening coping capacity, it will be important that future budgets place greater emphasis on adaptation and resilience alongside mitigation and tree-planting initiatives.

A review of the climate change ministry's PSDP allocations over the past five years shows that despite growing climate risks and stronger international commitments, federal development spending on climate action has generally declined in real terms.

Inflation in Pakistan has remained elevated during much of the period from 2022 to 2026. Even if the ministry's budget had remained constant, its purchasing power would have declined. Instead, the nomi-nal PSDP allocation itself has fallen from Rs9.6bn in FY 2022-23 to Rs2.48bn in FY 2026-27. In real terms, therefore, federal climate development spe--nding appears to have contracted sig-nificantly.

The federal ministry's allocation rem-ains an important signal of national priorities, and a declining PSDP trend suggests that climate governance is increasingly expected to rely on external finance and cross-sectoral spending rather than a growing dedicated federal climate budget.

From the perspective of climate governance, the budget is heavily weighted towards an ecosystem with comparatively limited resources dedicated to adaptation planning, climate resilience infrastructure, early warning systems and climate risk management.

For a country with growing risks, transparency is essential to determine whether its climate budget is genuinely mitigating a national emergency, or simply operating as a subsidised mechanism for elite enrichment. True climate resilience is not built on unverified metrics but proven by an outcome-based financial model. This will require us to shift to independent public audits, open-data monitoring and decentralised accountability.

UN reports 1,004 verified cases of sexual violence in Ukraine war

GENEVA, (Agencies): Russian forces committed widespread sexual violence against civilians and prisoners of war in Ukraine, including gang rape and electric shocks to the genitals, while Ukrainian authorities were also responsible for a smaller number of violations, the U.N. human rights office said.

The report documented 1,004 verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence between Feb. 24, 2022, when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and July 31, 2026. The U.N. said the cases included rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, genital mutilation, forced nudity, beatings and electric shocks to the genitals.

Of the verified cases, 89% were attributed to Russian authorities, including members of the armed forces, prison service and security agencies. The remaining 11% were attributed to Ukrainian authorities, including members of the armed forces, prison service and security service.

The U.N. said the findings were based on confidential interviews with hundreds of victims and survivors, as well as court documents, official records and other evidence. It stressed that the figures do not represent a comprehensive account of sexual violence in the conflict, which remains significantly underreported.

Russia's permanent diplomatic mission in Geneva declined to comment on the report.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said it welcomed the report, saying it demonstrated the scale of human rights violations perpetrated by Russia while also highlighting measures taken by Ukrainian authorities to prevent sexual violence and provide compensation to victims.

The statement did not directly address the report's findings of abuses allegedly committed by Ukrainian forces.

The report said Russia's refusal to grant the U.N. Human Rights Office access to occupied Ukrainian territory, prisoners of war and civilian detainees meant the figures likely underestimate the true scale of the violations.

In occupied areas of Ukraine and within Russia, Russian authorities carried out sexual violence against Ukrainian prisoners of war and detained civilians at various stages of captivity, including during capture, transfer, interrogation and detention, the report said.

The violations included gang rape, rape, genital mutilation and electric shocks to men's genitals using a Soviet-era field telephone known as a "tapik." The findings were based on interviews with victims of sexual violence committed by both sides.

Most victims in detention were men, particularly prisoners of war and detainees, although women and children were also affected, mainly in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine.

"Sexual violence in conflict is often misunderstood to be mainly affecting women and girls, whereas in the Ukraine war context, the majority of survivors are men," Danielle Bell, head of the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, said.



A farewell ceremony was held in the Saftawi area north of Gaza City for the remains of 70 Palestinians recovered from the rubble of buildings destroyed in Israeli attacks in the northern Gaza Strip.



In Strasbourg, France, protesters gathered for a demonstration organized as part of the fifth phase of the social movement.

President, DPM extend condolences to China and Nepal over flood losses

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday extended their deepest condolences to the leadership and people of China and Nepal over the tragic loss of lives and destruction due to flash floods and landslides that struck their border region.

In a condolence message on the official X wall of the President of Pakistan, the president said the immense loss of precious lives and the many still missing were a tragedy of profound magnitude. "Pakistan shares the grief of its Chinese and Nepali brothers and sisters during this hour of sorrow," he said. He saluted the bravery and dedication of search and rescue teams operating under extreme conditions and said Pakistan stands ready to extend every possible support to assist the relief efforts. The president said his thoughts and prayers are with all those who have lost loved ones, and he prayed for the safe return of the missing.

Trump imposes new sanctions designed to pressure Russia over war in Ukraine

WASHINGTON, (Monitoring Desk): US President Donald Trump signed a bill authorising new sanctions designed to pressure Russia over its war in Ukraine, after Congress gave its approval after months of delay.

Washington is pushing to revive a mediated path towards ending the conflict as Moscow intensifies attacks against Ukraine, even though much of its attention — and munitions — are focused on the ongoing war against Iran.

The legislation, which US lawmakers approved this week, takes aim at Russia's energy and defense sectors, alongside President Vladimir Putin and other senior officials.

It also targets Moscow's so-called shadow fleet of tankers used to evade Western sanctions, and allows Trump the authority to impose tariffs of up to 100 percent on major buyers of Russian oil and gas.

That could potentially cover China and India, and further efforts to cut off revenue financing Moscow's war. The Republican-led House of Representatives passed the package by a 262-159 vote on Wednesday.

The bill would also target companies and foreign actors supporting Russia's military, and extend sanctions involving Iran.

But the broad powers to impose tariffs sparked an unusual split among Democrats, who largely support Ukraine but have resisted handing Trump wider authority over trade.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky earlier hailed the legislation as "symbolic" and thanked US lawmakers.

US warns of Mideast escalation after Houthis strike Saudi capital

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): The U.S. has warned that hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Iran-backed Houthis could "escalate rapidly" after a Saturday missile targeted Riyadh for the first time since Yemen's civil war resumed.

President Donald Trump cut short a weekend at Camp David, a secluded presidential complex in rural Maryland, to return unexpectedly to the White House on Saturday.

The White House gave no explanation for the early return, which came as the conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis crossed a new threshold. The Houthis control a large part of Yemen and are fighting government forces backed by a coalition led by Riyadh.

Loud explosions rang out twice Saturday in the Saudi capital, where a fuel tank bearing the logo of oil giant Aramco was on fire near the airport, according to Agence France-Presse (AFP). "This military conflict has the potential to escalate rapidly," the U.S. State Department warned, adding American citizens outside the Middle East should "seriously reconsider travel to and through the region." The Houthis' lightning offensive seizing large areas of Yemeni territory in recent weeks has left hundreds killed and, according to the U.N., displaced over 110,000 people.

These clashes and the subsequent hostilities with the kingdom have already disrupted Saudi Arabia's exports – the world's leading supplier of crude oil – as well as maritime traffic.

The Riyadh-led coalition confirmed Saturday evening in a post on X that a ballistic missile launched by the Houthis toward the capital was "successfully intercepted and destroyed." The coalition added that the pro-Iranian fighters had tried to target "civilians and civilian infrastructure" in several cities in the west of the kingdom, including the port of Yanbu on the Red Sea, an important export hub for Saudi oil. It said these attacks were "thwarted by the kingdom's air defenses."

Saudi Arabia has responded with scores of airstrikes on Houthi-held areas but failed to stop the advance. The Houthis said they had responded to recent Saudi attacks by carrying out "two successful military operations using a large number of ballistic and cruise missiles and drones," Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said in a statement on Telegram. "The first targeted sensitive sites in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, and the second targeted Aramco facilities in Yanbu."

Hours after the early morning alert, residents told AFP anonymously that they heard what sounded like a round of explosions echoing through parts of the Saudi capital.

This is the first time since Yemen's civil war resumed that strikes have threatened the Saudi capital, piling further pressure on a global economy already rocked by seven months of war between the U.S. and Iran.

Riyadh residents received a message just before 3 a.m. urging them to stay indoors and warning, "The area is under a hostile aerial threat."



The Anatolian Fire dance troupe performed at the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, hosted by Türkiye in Antalya.

11 killed in explosion at army site in Syria

SYRIA, (Agencies): Eleven soldiers have been killed in an explosion at an army site in Syria's eastern province of Deir Az Zor, according to the Ministry of Defence. Syria's military held a funeral procession for the soldiers, a day after they were killed in the blast, the ministry said. The explosion struck a weapons cache within a Syrian Arab Army position in the town of Ayyash, in western Deir Az Zor, the official SANA news agency reported, citing the defence ministry. Nine other soldiers were wounded, according to a statement from the provincial government.

The cause of the blast has not been determined, and an investigation is under way, the statement added.

This was the second blast at a Syrian military site in less than two weeks. Videos of the funeral ceremony broadcast on state broadcaster Al Ikhbiriya showed mourners gathered outside the National Hospital in Deir Az Zor city on Saturday, where the bodies, wrapped in Syrian flags, were carried in the funeral procession. Al Ikhbiriya said the soldiers were killed while transporting heavy ammunition at the site.

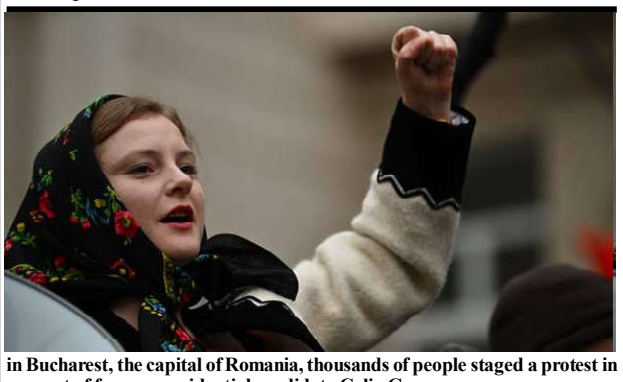
The blast follows a September 9 explosion at a temporary weapons and war-remnants depot in Sarmada, in the northwestern province of Idlib, which the Syrian Defence Ministry said killed 14 soldiers and wounded more than 10 people, including some civilians. The ministry said at the time it took responsibility for that incident and that the depot had been used to collect weapons and munitions left over from Syria's civil war in advance of their transfer



A march was held in Milan, Italy, to protest economic hardship and show support for Palestine. While numerous demonstrations against economic difficulties have taken place across Italy in previous weeks, the protests in Milan led to violent clashes, looting, and widespread damage to streets and shops. Participants carried Palestinian flags and banners.

Araghchi hits back at France over human rights criticism

TEHRAN, (Agencies): Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi hit back at recent statements by his French counterpart Jean-Noël Barrot where Barrot accused Iran of human rights violations, criticising Paris for its silence over the killing of Iranian schoolchildren by the United States. Addressing Barrot in a post on X, Araghchi said, "1.5mn Algerians were slaughtered by France in their War of Independence. Less than 1/10 of them have been recorded by Paris, which refuses any apology for its colonial crimes." "Stop your crocodile tears @jnbarrot. Your silence when the US massacred our schoolkids said it all," he added. The Minab school strike killed 168 people, including 120 students and 26 teachers. More than 110 people were wounded. Investigations indicate three precision-strike Tomahawk missiles hit the school. The school was struck three separate times, according to Press TV. South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun on Friday reiterated Seoul's willingness to contribute "substantively" to efforts to restore freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz in a meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the State Department.



in Bucharest, the capital of Romania, thousands of people staged a protest in support of former presidential candidate Calin Georgescu

Huckabee urges 'severe consequences' over West Bank violence

RAMALLAH, (Agencies): The U.S. ambassador to Israel said there was no plan to forcibly remove Palestinians from Gaza, seeking to draw a distinction between voluntary departure and proposals by Israeli far-right ministers to relocate the territory's roughly 2 million residents.

Ambassador Mike Huckabee made the comments during a visit to Palestinian-American families in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where he also called on Israel to protect Palestinian residents from settler violence.

"I can tell you categorically there is no plan of the Israelis to displace people out of Gaza against their will," Huckabee told reporters.

His remarks came after two senior Israeli ministers publicly discussed plans that would involve Palestinians leaving Gaza.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir said Thursday that he wanted to see about 250,000 Palestinians leave Gaza during the first year, followed by the departure of the rest of the population over the next six years. Defense Minister Israel Katz said a day earlier that Israel was prepared to facilitate the departure of Palestinians from Gaza by sea and land, but was waiting for the United States as discussions continued over where those Palestinians could go. Katz also claimed, without providing evidence, that about 80% of Gaza's residents wanted to leave but were being prevented from doing so by Hamas. Huckabee said the administration of President Donald Trump supports Palestinians having the option to leave Gaza if they choose, but rejected any suggestion that they should be forced out. "There is an open-mindedness if people wish to leave, that they should have the right to leave," Huckabee said, describing it as a "disgrace" to "incarcerate" Palestinians inside Gaza. "Nobody is suggesting there would be forced displacement," he added.

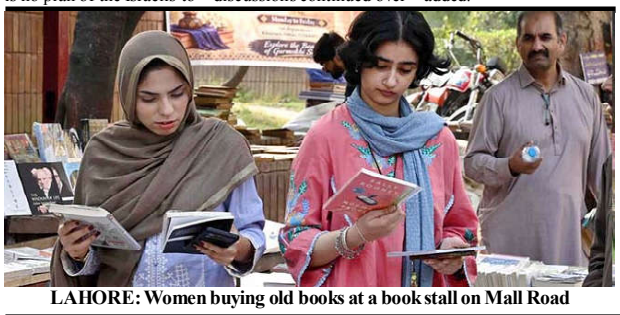
Iraq calls coalition mission exit a 'sovereign milestone'

BAGHDAD, (Agencies): Iraq said that the September 30 end of the military mission of the US-led international coalition against ISIS (Daesh) will pave the way for bilateral relations with coalition member states based on respect for Iraqi sovereignty and mutual interests. Government spokesman Haider al-Aboudi told the Iraqi News Agency (INA) that the date represented a "sovereign milestone" for the Iraqi state based on official understandings and commitments. He said it would pave the way for Iraq's relations with coalition countries to transition to bilateral ties based on respect for Iraqi sovereignty and mutual interests. Al-Aboudi said Iraq had constitutional, political and diplomatic tools, as well as the ability to manage security through its institutions and armed forces. "The government is proceeding with completing the termination of the coalition's military mission according to the agreed timelines and mechanisms, and there will be no change to this course outside the will of the Iraqi state," he said.

Killings of nine women reignite anger over gender-based violence in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, (Agencies): South Africans gathered for memorial runs and protests this week after the killings of nine women near Johannesburg reignited anger and fear over violence that many say mirrors the dangers women face every day. Police have found the bodies of nine in Ekurhuleni, east of Johannesburg, over the past two months and are investigating whether the killings are linked.

Most of the victims were in their 20s and 30s. Some were found stripped of their clothes and showed signs of sexual assault. A memorial run in Johannesburg honoured one of the victims, Elizabeth Moselakgomo, who disappeared after going for a run and was found dead days later.



LAHORE: Women buying old books at a book stall on Mall Road

Yemen war escalates as Houthis report 26 Saudi attacks in 24 hours

SANAA, (Agencies): Yemen's Houthi rebels have said Saudi Arabia carried out 26 attacks against areas under the group's control in the past 24 hours, as the two sides continue trading fire amid an escalating war in Yemen, according to the AFP news agency.

On Friday, the group claimed Saudi attacks on Houthi-held territory had reached 300 over the past week alone, hitting positions across the areas it controls, AFP reported.

Yemen's government, backed by Saudi Arabia, said on Friday its forces had killed 30 Houthi rebels and wounded more than 60 in clashes in the al-Waziiyah district of Taiz province, one of several fronts where combat has picked up this week.The exchange has come on the heels of a widening escalation of fighting in Yemen between the government's military and the Houthi fighters.

Tens of thousands marched through Sanaa on Friday in a show of support for the Iran-backed Houthis and against Saudi Arabia, as the rebels press gains that have brought large stretches of Yemen's Red Sea coast, including the strategic Bab al-Mandeb Strait, under their control.

Earlier this week, the intensifying attacks between the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebels killed at least five people, including three children, according to reports from both sides.

Saudi Arabia said one person was killed in the Taif governorate after a Houthi drone was intercepted, while Houthi-linked media reported deaths from Saudi attacks in Taiz and the town of Abs.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) condemned the Houthis' continuing attacks on Saudi Arabia, saying they had caused civilian casualties, including women and children.

Former rulers once again dreaming of returning to power: Muqam

SWABI (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Engineer Amir Muqam here Saturday said that the sole agenda of his party in the province is to establish peace, ensure public prosperity and accelerate development.

He maintained that the time has come for accountability of elements involved in alleged financial irregularities during the previous 13 years of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) rule. Addressing a large public gathering at Aman Chowk here, he said the people of Swabi had demonstrated remarkable affection and confidence by turning out in large numbers despite the short notice, which was a matter of pride for him.

He said the massive public participation was a clear expression of people's reaction against the previous 13-year PTI government. Amir Muqam said the government's priority in KP was to restore peace, promote public welfare and ensure provincial development.

He added that provincial resources would now be spent on the people, while public welfare and development projects would be translated into practical initiatives.

Paying tribute to the police and law enforcement agencies, he particularly remembered the sacrifices of police personnel martyred in Swabi and Kohat. He also appreciated the leadership of Swabi DPO and KP Inspector General of Police for their efforts and initiatives to maintain peace. The federal minister alleged that the PTI government had disappointed the people over the utilisation of public resources and execution of development projects during its 13-year rule, causing huge losses to the national exchequer. He said the time had come to ensure accountability and that those responsible would have to answer for alleged financial irregularities during the period. Addressing PTI supporters criticising the end of the provincial government on social media, he invited them to visit Swabi and witness the public reaction against the former government. He said the participation of thousands of people in the large gathering demonstrated public support for the change in the provincial government.

Amir Muqam claimed that the former chief minister remained occupied with sit-ins and protest activities instead of paying the required attention to public issues and provincial development.

He said former rulers were once again dreaming of returning to power but would first have to account for their poor performance and ill financial affairs during their tenure. Appreciating the patriotic spirit of the participants, he said the people of Swabi had demonstrated exceptional affection and enthusiasm. He recalled that their forefathers had struggled for Kashmir and rendered great sacrifices despite limited resources.



PAF Chief Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu meets Uzbekistan Defence Minister Lieutenant General Botir Qudrathodjayev Bahromovich during his official visit.



NAROWAL: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Professor Ahsan Iqbal addressing a ceremony of the District Bar Association in Narowal.

Pakistan to participate in SCO Civilisational Dialogue in New Delhi

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Government of Pakistan has decided to take part in the SCO Civilisational Dialogue to be held in New Delhi from 20 to 22 November 2026. Whereas the government has nominated Dr Musadik Masood Malik, Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, to represent Pakistan at the SCO Civilisational Dialogue. The event will bring together representatives from SCO member states to exchange views on issues related to civilisational dialogue and cultural understanding.

The Government of Pakistan remains committed to promoting dialogue among civilisations and fostering people-to-people contacts within the SCO framework in a spirit of mutual respect.

President, PM vows to thwart every nefarious design of terrorists

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari, commended the security forces for eliminating 16 Khawarij during a successful security operation in North Waziristan. The president said the nation saluted its brave sons and that the sacrifices of Havaldar Asmat Ali and Naik Aftab Ali, who embraced martyrdom in North Waziristan, would always be remembered.

He reiterated that successful operations under 'Azm-e-Istehkam' against terrorists, backed by foreign sponsorship, will continue with full force till the elimination of last terrorist, the President's Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. The Indian-sponsored network of 'Fitna al-Hindustan' terrorists was handed an exemplary defeat in North Waziristan, he added.

The president also offered condolences and expressed solidarity with the bereaved families of the brave security personnel who embraced martyrdom.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to the security forces for successfully conducting intelligence-based operations against the Indian-sponsored terrorists outfit 'Fitna al-Hindustan' in Kolpur, Kardagap and Nushki areas of Balochistan. As a result of these effective operations, eight terrorists, including a suicide bomber, were killed while a huge cache of arms and ammunition was also recovered. The prime minister paid glowing tribute to the brave sons of the soil, Major Omar Minhas Nasir and Havildar Muhammad Adnan Khan, who embraced martyrdom.

Volatility in waterways drives up energy prices; heightens risk of global food insecurity: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Warning of severe economic fallout for vulnerable nations, Pakistan has called on the UN Security Council to end all military provocations in the Gulf and safeguard commercial navigation through the region's vital waterways.

"Disruption of commercial shipping and attacks on merchant vessels both in Bab-Al-Mandab and the Strait of Hormuz have underscored that crises at sea have grave implications for the continent and countries," Ambassador Syed Haider Shah, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member Council. Bahrain convened the Council meeting to discuss escalating tensions in the Gulf region and growing threats to maritime security. The Pakistani envoy warned that volatility in these waterways has driven up energy prices and heightened the risk of global food insecurity, disproportionately hurting developing economies. He stressed that commercial shipping must be protected and humanitarian supplies allowed to reach those in need. "The Council must unite to demand an end to all military provocations and unlawful attacks, protect civilians and commercial shipping, and advance peaceful solutions," the Pakistani envoy stressed.

In this regard, Ambassador Haider Shah called for addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict and instability in the region to promote lasting peace and security. "Ways must be found for building a regional framework of common security, peaceful co-existence and mutual prosperity and development." The Pakistani envoy advocated dialogue and diplomacy for the way forward, noting Islamabad's own diplomatic endeavours reflect the country's conviction that lasting stability requires respect for sovereignty, civilian protection and negotiated solutions.

"All attacks must stop; communication channels should remain open; and regional initiatives and the (UN) Secretary-General's good offices must receive sustained international support," Ambassador Haider Shah said. Pakistan, he added, remains committed to continuing its own resolute efforts towards that end. He reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of all attacks against Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations and expressed strong solidarity with Saudi Arabia. Ambassador Shah specifically denounced Houthi militia strikes against Saudi airports, energy facilities, and civilian infrastructure, reaffirming Pakistan's support for the Kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Opening the debate, Khaled Khiari, UN Assistant Secretary-General, Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, reiterated the Secretary-General's strong warnings that continued tensions in and around the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab pose grave risks to regional stability and the global economy. Outlining the present situation, in which many commercial vessels and their crews have been stranded inside the Persian Gulf for months and restrictions on maritime navigation add further uncertainty, he pointed out that the volume of maritime shipments remains below the pre-conflict levels



Federal Minister for Investment Board Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh pose for photograph awards with faculty members and students during the 89th Annual Convocation of FAST National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences at its Chiniot-Faisalabad Campus

Pakistan launches first bilateral judicial exchange programme with China

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), Justice Yahya Khan Afridi, on Sunday briefed the first batch of 25 top-performing judicial officers selected from across the country for a bilateral judicial exchange and training programme in China, aimed at recognising professional excellence and strengthening the capacity of the district judiciary.

The pre-departure briefing was held to acknowledge the dedication, professionalism and outstanding performance of judicial officers, particularly those serving in underserved, remote and conflict-affected areas under challenging circumstances, said a press release.

The judicial officers have been nominated in consultation with the respective High Courts. The delegation represents Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, and also includes officers serving at the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Federal Judicial Academy.

During the interaction, the Chief Justice appreciated the professionalism and resilience of the selected officers and described them as ambassadors of Pakistan's judiciary.

He urged them to uphold the dignity and values of the judicial institution while gaining insights into China's judicial practices, technological advancements and case management systems.

He emphasised that exposure to international judicial systems would broaden their professional perspectives and introduce them to innovative approaches in adjudication, court administration and institutional efficiency.

He encouraged the participants to translate their learning into practical improvements in the administration and delivery of justice in their respective jurisdictions.

The delegation will participate in the "Seminar for Judges from Pakistan", organised by the National Judges College of China from November 18 to December 1, 2026.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkmenistan, Dr. Faryal Leghari, calling on the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Pakistan saveS $12 billion in LNG, gas imports through adoption of rooftop solar

ISLAMABAD/ANTALYA (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik has called for a shift in international climate financing towards direct support for households adopting renewable energy, saying Pakistan's rooftop solar expansion demonstrates how ordinary people are driving the energy transition in response to economic pressures.

Addressing a ministerial panel titled "From Pledge to Plans: Electrifying the Transition" at the Global Renewables Hub during the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Antalya, Türkiye, the minister urged international partners to facilitate access to battery storage technologies and support decentralised renewable energy systems.

He said Pakistan's solar transition was increasingly being driven by households making independent investments in rooftop solar installations, often without financial assistance from the government or international institutions.

Illustrating the scale of this transformation, Dr Malik recounted the story of a villager, Karamat Ali, who sold 12 buffaloes and cows to purchase rooftop solar panels.

He described livestock as a poor family's financial security, providing milk, income and savings for emergencies and important household needs, including children's marriages.

The villager, he said, decided to invest in solar energy because he considered it a more reliable and economically viable option than depending on grid electricity and unpredictable fuel prices.

The minister said the example reflected a broader trend, with hundreds of thousands of households making similar choices to secure affordable electricity and sustain their livelihoods.

Mustafa Kamal terms Karachi as "Pakistan's revenue engine"

KARACHI (INP): Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal said that the creation of new, smaller provinces wasn't anyone's wish but "Pakistan's need," adding that the creation of new provinces had "become indispensable to save and run the state."

The remarks came a day after Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that Parliament and the provincial assemblies could not be "bypassed or negated" on the question of making new provinces through a referendum to determine the public will. Chaudhry made the remarks in the wake of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's renewed call for a referendum on the creation of new provinces, saying the people should have the final say on the matter, while making it clear that no such initiative would move forward without the consent of all allied parties in the ruling coalition.

Speaking at the inauguration of a regional office of the Allied Health Professionals Council in Karachi, Kamal noted that Punjab was a bigger province than 180 countries of the world, Sindh was bigger than 175 countries, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) bigger than 162 and Balochistan bigger than 185. "In a divisible pool, 57.5% of the money gets parked with the provinces," the minister added, saying that this year, Rs8.84 trillion had been received by the four provinces "but the money is not reaching down to the village level." The biggest problem, Kamal said, was that the provinces had not devolved downwards.

The minister further argued that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "cannot pull Pakistan out of this economic quagmire, Karachi can," stating that the city was "Pakistan's revenue engine" but that not even 10% of its potential had yet been tapped. "When a family grows, a new room has to be built; that does not break up the home," Kamal stated. Earlier this month, Kamal had reiterated his support for the creation of new provinces



KHAN YOUNIS, GAZA STRIP, PALESTINE: Palestinian doctors were injured in an Israeli attack on Nasser Hospital, leaving medical personnel who had been treating patients in need of medical care themselves.

US religious freedom commission lists Sharjeel as prisoner of conscience

WASHINGTON (INP): The prolonged detention of Indian Muslim activist and scholar Sharjeel Imam has come under renewed international scrutiny after the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) included him in its Religious Prisoners of Conscience Database, identifying him as a person detained for his religious freedom advocacy.

The US federal commission has cited Imam's participation in protests against India's Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in December 2019 and January 2020, describing his activities as peaceful advocacy for religious freedom.

In a post on X, USCIRF shared Imam's profile in the database, categorising his detention as persecution linked to his religious identity and advocacy for religious freedom. The commission has also highlighted the cases of other detained activists, including Umar Khalid.

Imam was arrested by Delhi Police on January 28, 2020, and has since remained in pre-trial detention under India's draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in connection with the February 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case.

Indian authorities accuse him of delivering speeches that allegedly incited communal violence during the anti-CAA protests and of being involved in a larger conspiracy behind the Delhi riots.



Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan, meets a delegation of Turkmenistan led by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov

Pakistan stronghold of Muslim world: Maulana Abdul Khabir

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Speakers at a Paigham-e-Pakistan Peace Conference paid tribute to Prime Ministe r(PM) Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defense Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their role in promoting peace and safeguarding national security.

The conference focused on the protection of the Two Holy Mosques (Haramain Sharifain), religious harmony, respect for humanity, the role of mosques and religious seminaries, youth engagement and promotion of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative. The event also highlighted Pakistan's role in promoting global peace, what the speakers described as the country's success in the "Battle for Truth", proposed mutual defense cooperation among Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye for the protection of the Two Holy Mosques and efforts to strengthen national unity, interfaith harmony and counter extremist ideologies. The conference was chaired by Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad ,Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, Imam and Khateeb of Badshahi Mosque, Lahore and Ambassador of Peace. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bahawalpur, Syed Hassan Raza, Additional Deputy Commissioner (DC) (Municipal Services) Dr. Ayesha Khan, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Saddar Hamza Ehtesham and Assistant Commissioner(AC) Bahawalpur City Iqra Mubeen were also present.

Addressing the participants, Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad said Pakistan was a stronghold of the Muslim world and the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistan Armed Forces for the country's security and defense. He stressed that national unity was essential to overcoming challenges.

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