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Pakistan committed to dialogue; diplomacy for peaceful resolution of disputes: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Monday, stressed the importance of collective efforts to address threats to regional security amid underlining Pakistan's commitment to dialogue and diplomacy for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The prime minister made these remarks during a joint call on paid at him here by the Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegations of Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), visiting Islamabad to participate in the 30th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

Warmly welcoming the visiting dignitaries, the prime minister thanked them for their participation in the 30th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) meeting and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to the objectives of ECO and reiterated his government's resolve to promote regional cooperation, connectivity and economic integration within the ECO member states.

The prime minister appreciated the successful conclusion of the 30th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting and welcomed the adoption of the Islamabad Communiqué and the Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation 2026–2035, describing them as important steps towards strengthening the Organization and advancing shared regional priorities. Highlighting Pakistan's Chairmanship of ECO for 2026–2027 under the theme "Reviving Regionalism for a Resilient ECO," the prime minister emphasized the need to translate the Organization's collective vision into concrete, result-oriented initiatives that deliver tangible benefits to the people of the region.

The prime minister called for enhanced cooperation in trade and investment, transport and transit connectivity, energy, information and communication technology, and sustainable development. He stressed the importance of effective implementation of existing ECO agreements and strengthening institutional mechanisms to accelerate regional economic integration.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegations of ECO member states, participating in the 30th meeting of ECO Council of Ministers



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar addressing the 30th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers.

Development must deliver visible benefits to people of entire Balochistan: CM Bugti

CM Bugti pledges better schools and quality education for every child

NORTH DERA BUGTI, (VoM Report): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti visited the under-construction project of Model Secondary School Mir Ghulam Qadir Bugti in North Dera Bugti and reviewed the ongoing measures for improving educational facilities in the area. Speaking to local residents and government officials on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that since day one, the provincial government's clear agenda has been public service, fulfillment of promises, promotion of merit, and ensuring quality in development projects. He said the government is focusing on initiatives whose results are visible to the public and that bring real improvements to their lives. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that during the tenure of the present government, government officers and the civil bureaucracy have played a significant role in the development of Balochistan by fulfilling their responsibilities. He said that effective performance of the government machinery and coordinated cooperation among institutions are making it possible to achieve public service and development goals. The Chief Minister paid tribute to the services of law enforcement agencies for maintaining peace and stability in Balochistan, saying that their sacrifices over the past 78 years are unforgettable. Officers and personnel of the Pakistan Army, FC, Balochistan Police, and other law enforcement agencies have rendered exceptional services in establishing peace, protecting the public, and maintaining the writ of the state in the province.



ISLAMABAD: Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi addressing the 30th meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers.

Pakistan committed to promote economic development, regional linkages: Tarar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar emphasised the need for stronger regional trade, economic cooperation and connectivity through the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), highlighting Pakistan's improving relations with Central Asian states.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the 30th meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers, he said Pakistan had a positive role to play in promoting economic development, trade and regional linkages through multilateral platforms. He said Pakistan's relations with Central Asian countries had improved considerably over the past few years, adding that the ECO provided an important forum for strengthening regional cooperation.

Atta Tarar said the participation of foreign ministers from ECO member countries in the Islamabad meeting reflected the importance of multilateral engagement and provided an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest.

He said Pakistan had been hosting a series of high-level international engagements, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Heads of Government meeting last year, followed by visits by presidents and ministers from different countries.

The minister said Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar had hosted a dinner for visiting foreign ministers, while the Council's deliberations would continue throughout the day. The visiting dignitaries were also scheduled to meet the prime minister. Referring to the expected Islamabad Declaration, Atta Tarar said it would not be appropriate to comment on its contents before the conclusion of the Council of Ministers' meeting.

He said Pakistan's diplomatic engagement and role in regional affairs had received international recognition, adding that multilateral forums where Pakistan assumed leadership responsibilities could further strengthen its diplomatic standing. The minister also referred to Pakistan's role in facilitating mediation efforts between Iran and the United States, saying the country's contribution had been acknowledged internationally. Highlighting the cultural dimension of the ECO gathering, Atta Tarar said the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had arranged cultural activities for local and international journalists.

Islam teaches compassion, justice, respect for human dignity: President

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari called upon all Pakistanis to help build a society where every person can live with dignity, practise their faith without fear and express a different opinion without facing hatred or violence.

In a message on the occasion of International Day for Tolerance (16 November 2026), he said, "Our strength as a nation lies in our ability to live together with respect, united by our shared citizenship and our hopes for Pakistan." "Islam teaches compassion, justice and respect for human dignity. These values also find clear expression in the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In his historic address of 11 August 1947, he declared: We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State," he added. He said, "Article 25(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan gives this principle an unequivocal guarantee: All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law. These words must guide the conduct of every public institution and be reflected in the daily experience of every citizen." He said, "Pakistan belongs equally to all its people.

Iran has no inherent disputes with regional states: Araghchi

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi on Monday called for stronger regional cooperation in trade, transport and energy, describing the three sectors as strategic pillars for enhancing economic resilience, connectivity and collective security among member states of the ECO.

"In the current global and regional context, trade, transport and energy should constitute the three strategic pillars of ECO cooperation," Sayyed Abbas Araghchi said while addressing the 30th meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers. He emphasized that strengthening connectivity, facilitating intra-regional trade and enhancing energy cooperation would reinforce collective resilience, reduce external vulnerabilities and promote a more integrated and self-reliant region. The Iranian foreign minister welcomed the establishment of the Technical Negotiation Committee to reform the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), urging existing parties to actively pursue negotiations.

Mir Zahoor Buledi reaffirms commitment to constitution, democratic reforms in Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Provincial Minister Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi has clarified his statement regarding the tribal system made in the Balochistan Assembly, saying that his remarks were not intended to insult tribal traditions but to highlight exploitative practices and social injustices.

Provincial Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi said that the purpose of his remarks regarding the tribal system in the Balochistan Assembly was never to disrespect tribal traditions, tribal elders, or any particular individual, but rather to point out certain exploitative practices, injustices, and social evils existing within the tribal and Sardari system. He clarified that the portrayal by certain media circles of his references to public deprivation and historical and political personalities as a justification for rebellion does not accurately reflect his actual position and speech.

Balochistan has strong tradition of positive, responsible journalism: Shahid Rind

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind and Vice Chairman of the Balochistan Board of Investment Bilal Khan Kakar said that Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti's vision is to transform the province into a hub of national and international investment, and all stakeholders are being taken along in this process. They said the media has a highly important role in highlighting Balochistan's issues, opportunities, and positive image.

They expressed these views while addressing a networking luncheon hosted in honour of journalists and social media influencers from Quetta in connection with the Balochistan Investment and Trade Expo (BITE 2026).

On the occasion, BBoIT Chief Executive Officer Abdul Manan, President of the Balochistan Union of Journalists Manzoor Ahmed, Press Secretary to the Chief Minister Sheikh Abdul Razzaq, and senior journalists were also present.

Special Assistant on Information Shahid Rind said that Balochistan has a strong tradition of positive and responsible journalism, and the media's cooperation is extremely important for promoting investment in the province.

Pakistan ready to work with ECO for sustained progress in region: DPM Dar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Monday stressed the need to forge stronger regional cooperation across the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) through practical initiatives that strengthen economic linkages and deliver lasting benefits to its people, amid geopolitical uncertainty, economic pressures, and rapid technological change.

The deputy prime minister, in his welcome address at the 30th meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) here, said that the closer cooperation among businesses and communities across the region could open new markets, lower trading costs, attract investment, and create new opportunities for employment and enterprise.

He said that stronger connectivity was essential to facilitate trade, greater investment was key to create economic opportunities, and cooperation in resilience and human development would help sustain these gains.

Welcoming the delegates on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan, the deputy prime minister thanked the senior officials, the preparatory committee, the ECO Secretariat, and ECO Secretary-General Dr. Asad Majeed Khan for their contributions.

The deputy prime minister earlier welcomed the participating delegates at the venue before proceeding to the formal proceedings of the summit and a group photograph.

He also appreciated Kazakhstan for its chairmanship in 2025, noting its focus on regional transport connectivity and sustainable development.

Highlighting that Pakistan was honored to serve as ECO Chair for 2026-2027 under the theme "Reviving Regionalism for a Resilient ECO," Senator Dar said that reviving regionalism did not require reinventing the wheel, but rather building upon laid foundations and making regional cooperation responsive to the people's needs.



NORTH DERA BUGTI: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti visits the under-construction project of Model Secondary School Mir Ghulam Qadir Bugti in North Dera Bugti and reviews the ongoing measures for improving educational facilities in the area.

Merit, transparency must be ensured in all government affairs: Governor

Says public confidence is strengthened only when government institutions provide justice to every citizen without discrimination

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has said that under the Constitution of Pakistan, justice is a fundamental right of the people and the government's foremost responsibility. He said that delay in justice is, in fact, equivalent to injustice because delayed justice often deprives a petitioner of his legitimate right and defeats the very purpose of the delivery of justice. Therefore, it is essential to ensure the timely, transparent, and impartial provision of justice to every citizen and not allow any deserving person to be deprived of his lawful rights.

He expressed these views while talking to Provincial Ombudsman Saadatullah Khan Bazai during a meeting at Governor House Quetta. Principal Secretary Abdul Nasir Dautani was also present on the occasion.

The Governor of Balochistan directed the Provincial Ombudsman to formally begin visits to all relevant government departments and institutions so that their overall performance, administrative affairs, and the facilities being provided to the public could be reviewed and necessary reforms and improvement measures could be introduced.

He said that an active and effective Ombudsman's institution could play a key role not only in addressing public complaints but also in promoting accountability, transparency, and good governance in government institutions.

Governor Mandokhail specifically directed that all pending complaints and cases should be resolved on a priority basis so that citizens seeking justice do not have to face unnecessary delays and difficulties by repeatedly visiting government offices.

He said the true success of every public service institution lies in ensuring that an ordinary citizen receives respect, convenience, and justice at its doorstep.

He also directed that punctuality in office timings be ensured in all regional offices of the Provincial Ombudsman, that they be made more active, effective, and public-friendly, and that a detailed monthly performance report of every office be submitted regularly to the Personal Office.



QUETTA: A delegation of journalists called on Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Tuesday November 17, 2026

Balochistan's future lies in education

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has presented a clear and forward-looking vision for the province, emphasizing that lasting peace and prosperity can only be achieved through education, democratic engagement and national unity rather than violence and extremism.

Addressing the convocation of the University of Management and Technology (UMT) in Lahore, the Chief Minister reaffirmed that the loyalty of the people of Balochistan to Pakistan is unconditional and stressed that the province's genuine challenges should be addressed through constructive dialogue and development instead of misleading narratives and separatist propaganda.

The Chief Minister rightly pointed out that Balochistan is confronting three major challenges: the spread of narratives that attempt to justify violence, the threat posed by armed terrorist groups, and the growing influence of misinformation targeting young people through social media. His assessment reflects the realities faced by the province, where terrorists have repeatedly attacked innocent citizens and damaged critical infrastructure, undermining development and public welfare.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti made it clear that political differences and socio-economic grievances can never justify violence. Instead, he advocated education, dialogue, democratic values and constitutional political processes as the only sustainable solutions to the province's issues. His message reinforces the government's commitment to resolving problems through peaceful and democratic means while safeguarding the lives and rights of the people.

Equally significant was his emphasis on responsible public discourse. He urged analysts, observers and opinion-makers to present facts objectively and avoid narratives that indirectly legitimize terrorism or create confusion about the province's realities. Such a balanced approach is essential to counter misinformation and strengthen national cohesion.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the growing challenge of digital misinformation, particularly among young people. His call for youth to critically examine information through research and facts underscores the importance of developing informed, responsible and resilient citizens capable of resisting extremist propaganda.

Recognizing the transformative role of educational institutions, Mir Sarfraz Bugti praised UMT for extending higher education opportunities to students from Balochistan. He welcomed the university's scholarship initiative as a valuable investment in the province's future and appreciated the Punjab government's allocation of Rs1 billion annually to promote education in Balochistan, describing it as a shining example of inter-provincial harmony and national solidarity.

The Balochistan government's own commitment to expanding educational access further demonstrates its determination to empower the province's youth. By striving to provide scholarships to more than 80 percent of students, the provincial government aims to ensure that financial hardship does not prevent talented young people from pursuing higher education. This policy reflects a long-term vision of investing in human capital, equipping youth with modern skills and creating equal opportunities for progress.

The Chief Minister's belief that education is the strongest safeguard against extremism and violence carries profound significance. By encouraging young people to pursue knowledge, innovation and constructive participation in society, the government is laying the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and progressive Balochistan.

Congratulating the graduating students, Mir Sarfraz Bugti reminded them that graduation marks the beginning of a new journey of responsibility and service. He encouraged them to pursue excellence, uphold integrity and utilize their education for the betterment of Pakistan.

The Chief Minister's address delivered a message of hope, resilience and national unity.

It reaffirmed that the future of Balochistan lies in empowering its youth, defeating terrorism through education and opportunity, and strengthening the bonds that unite all provinces under one national vision.

With continued investment in education, development and democratic values, Balochistan is well-positioned to move toward lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity.

ME's geopolitical conundrum

IMRAN MALIK

The kaleidoscope of Middle Eastern (ME) geopolitics continues to throw up fascinating, intriguing patterns, colours and combinations. The geopolitical spectrum is getting increasingly off-kilter and chaotic. All efforts to somehow stabilise and bring it to an even keel are failing. Crucially, what started off as the US-Israel Combine's ostensibly short, decisive war against Iran has instead morphed into a prolonged, unwinnable one. The theatre of war has expanded uncontrollably from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. It is a virtual double envelopment of the Arabian Peninsula and all Arab states therein. The Gulf War has now degenerated into a multi-front, regional conflagration with no plausible closure, mutually acceptable or otherwise, in sight. All focus and attention have now shifted to the Yemen Front, as the US apparently takes an operational and logistics pause, pending its own midterm and Israel's elections. These elections have further complicated an already very complex regional geopolitical environment. If PM Netanyahu loses, his legal woes may even send him to jail. US midterm elections will define President Trump's legacy in US history, too. The further conduct of the Gulf War will thus be determined by how both incumbents fare in the elections. Period. Could sanity yet prevail? The US-Israel Combine set out to precipitate a regime change in Iran. Could these elections ominously turn the tables and reverse fortunes?

However, the hostilities of the Gulf War and the myriad existential threats to regional regimes/governments are causing a massive flux in the ME's geopolitical environment. The US-led West's credibility stands brutally exposed and irrevocably scarred due to its duplicitous, self-serving, stridently pro-Israel policies during this Gulf War. A crucial wake-up call may have been registered by the regional states. A subtle but very meaningful struggle has since ensued. The US-led West is scrambling to retain its control over the destinies and wealth of the Gulf Arab states, which, in turn, have started looking for ways and means to wriggle out of its domineering, suffocating, exploitative chokehold. They now seek alternative security and defence arrangements, independent of their erstwhile benefactors. The ME's geopolitical architecture is thus in the throes of a basic paradigm shift, a realignment, though chaotic and haphazard at present.

However, simultaneously, a number of other geopolitical and geostrategic developments are afoot in the ME. Its reaction, as a whole, to the emerging geopolitical environment is perplexing. It does not seem to have a very well-crafted, well-considered collective policy/approach to deal with this overwhelming, steadily evolving regional geopolitical conundrum. There appears to be no method to its reaction to this war and its evolving consequences. The region, the GCC and even the individual states do not seem to have configured a well-defined end state to pursue or the compatible ways and means to get there. They have not thus far demonstrated any unambiguous strategic vision, foresight, clarity or direction either that meets their national and security interests decisively. They seem to be moving haphazardly to create reliable, trustworthy, largely self-reliant security and defence configurations that not only secure them and their regimes but also their national interests, independent of their ostensible benefactors of yore!

The KSA appears to be the focus of many countries. The Makkah Defence Alliance (MDA), created during this Gulf War, was perhaps designed to act as a potential net stabiliser and security provider in the region. It seeks to usher in collective security, defence and deterrence, deterring war and preserving peace in the region! However, it needs to move fast to not only lay down its policy and decision-making protocols, terms and conditions, create the required strategic organisation, infrastructure, articulation of command, marshal forces and formulate strategies, operational strategies, etc., but above all, give the MDA the strategic reach, clout and deterrence power it is planned to exude/exercise. Egypt is also considering sending forces to help defend the KSA, while the UK is sending a squadron of fighter jets, perhaps the Eurofighter Typhoon, to only help defend the airspace of the KSA against a foe that has no Air Force! It is most likely to perform the same (non)role that the many US bases have performed in the Gulf War!

Furthermore, President Macron of France is on a visit to the region and has visited Qatar, Bahrain, the UAE and KSA, ostensibly to show French support for the region/Kingdoms. Is Europe, in connivance with the US, already hedging against a probable egress of the latter from the region, post this gross military failure in Iran? Do they fear China making a strong ingress into such a potential strategic vacuum? The KSA, however, must show absolute strategic clarity in how it intends to secure and defend itself now and in the future. A plethora of players will only breed chaos and confusion at the strategic level and do more harm than good! To add to this influx of "supporters", Qatar has announced a Global Security Forum, essentially with regional states but without losing contact with the US, UK and France! Furthermore, a Badr Memorandum of Understanding has also been signed between Qatar, Pakistan, Turkiye and Indonesia that is primarily intended to improve their mutual defence capabilities, capacities and competencies. Mediation efforts continue unabated. Pakistan and Qatar continue to seek ways to end the Gulf War. Iran has offered to mediate between the KSA and the Houthis to bring this conflict to a mutually acceptable closure. To top it all, President Trump has come out with an incredulous and outrageous "piece of advice" for the KSA. He wants it to take Israel's help in fighting off the Houthis!

All these efforts combine together to make for a very chaotic, confused and uncertain geopolitical environment in the ME with untold, ominous ramifications!

President Trump ought to have considered the geopolitical, geostrategic, and geoeconomic implications of his rather outrageous advice to the KSA. The ramifications of such an unusual development are numerous and could severely vitiate and polarise the geopolitics of the ME!

One, despite the setbacks suffered in the Gulf War and its deleterious effects on US foreign policy, President Trump remains fixated upon getting the KSA (and other Arab-Muslim states) to sign the Abraham Accords. This "sagacious advice" reflects a very deep geopolitical manoeuvre by the US-Israel Combine, designed primarily to secure numerous combined interests in one fell swoop. The KSA must be wary of giving Israel an ingress into the country and must remain cognisant of the famous fable of the Arab and his Camel, in particular in the context of Greater Israel!

Two, a Muslim versus Muslim clash, with Israel in some background, will be unacceptable to the Arab-Muslim World at large. Period. It is a lose-lose proposition.

Three, the US-Israel Combine perhaps feels that were the KSA to sign up for the Abraham Accords, it would encourage other Arab-Muslim states to do likewise, too.

Four, such a development would split the Muslim World even further and create conditions for malign forces to continue dividing and ruling them, exploiting regional, sectarian and other fissures.

Five, the duplicitousness of the US-led West and the US-Israel Combine's astounding failure in the Gulf War against Iran have already made the Gulf Arab states aware of the multifarious limits to the US-led West's and Israel's powers. They are now extremely wary of signing the Abraham Accords. Iran may have broken many myths and pretensions to superpowerdom, for good!

Six, what sort of a compelling quid pro quo can the US-led West or even the US-Israel Combine actually offer any Arab-Muslim state for it to disregard all its national aspirations and interests and join the Abraham Accords? What incomparable benefits have those who have already joined it gained? Seven, was the MDA created to essentially obviate such a critical development: the submission of the entire region to the Abraham Accords and, by implication, to Israel's hegemony? It must be expanded to include Iran, all Gulf Arab states, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, even UAE. Eight, the KSA is least likely to let its eminent and exceptional position as the de facto leader of the Arab-Muslim World be compromised for any reason.

Nine, regardless, the basic chasm between the Gulf Arab states and Iran would persist, and conditions would prevail for a debilitating Shia-Sunni divide and its exploitation by well-known malign, hostile forces. It must be forestalled by the Arab-Muslim World.

Ten, Israel would be the biggest beneficiary were the KSA to sign the Abraham Accords. It could possibly become the undisputed leader, hegemon, net security provider, net stabiliser, and the centre of all power in the region. It would have an unmatched sphere of influence as well as a critical strategic reach. It would continue to be maintained as the strongest military-nuclear-missile force in the ME and could start determining the geopolitical, geostrategic and even geoeconomic imperatives of the region. The hold of the US-Israel Combine on the ME would thus be complete, total and decisive!

Eleven, the strategic and geopolitical environment for the creation of an ostensible Greater Israel would thus be facilitated, much to the detriment of the vital national interests of all Arab-Muslim states.

Twelve, the US-Israel Combine would thus get a controlling oversight of the oil and gas supply chains that go through the Suez Canal-Red Sea-Bab el Mandab complex, assuming that Iran retains control of the Hormuz Straits.

It could have a controlling oversight of most regional and global economies!

On the diplomatic front, Pakistan (and Qatar) must continue to mediate between Iran and the US and seek to bring them to the negotiating table without further resort to war-fighting. Pakistan (in coordination with Iran) must also take the initiative and seek to mediate between the Houthis and KSA. It is well placed to do so. Crucially, Pakistan must endeavour to expand the MDA into a regional forum including all GCC countries, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and UAE. A united front like this will forestall all malign intrusions and influences from the West into the ME and engender peace between them. Eventually, this expanded MDA must get the direct support of and involve China and Russia to give it extra-regional dimensions. At some stage, the expanded MDA could become a partner of the SCO and acquire global dimensions as well.

Most crucially, this expanded MDA must bring all countries in this forum onto a common platform. They must unite to have a joint strategic vision for the region as a whole. It must have a well-defined policy, an achievable end state, and practical ways and means to get there. They must seek collective defence, security and deterrence at the regional level, with recourse to the article "an attack on one member state will be considered an attack on all".

Such a forum will deter all sorts of malign intrusions and influences in the region and forestall hegemony by some and all forms of aggression, coercion and exploitation by known hostile forces. This is an ideal opportunity for the region to not only secure its future but that of its coming generations too. It is up to the Arab-Muslim World now to show strategic vision and foresight and move to unite, pool resources, overcome its weaknesses, exploit and enhance its inherent strengths to become the formidable power it was always meant to be.

The prospects, options, and opportunities are limitless. United, this region will prosper and rise; divided, it will continue to be exploited, raped and ravaged ruthlessly!

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The crucible of soldiering

SALEEM QAMAR BUTT

"It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organiser, who has given us freedom to demonstrate."
–Father Denis Edward O'Brien, USMC

There exists a profound, almost unbridgeable chasm between those who discuss war from the comfort of civilian life and those who must wage it. The hardships and perils endured in the crucible of hardcore soldiering—the raw, unvarnished existence of the fighting arms—cannot be fully captured in literature, nor can they be adequately imagined by those who have never worn the uniform. As the ancient Greek historian Thucydides famously observed: *"The society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools."*

To stand on the sharp end of the spear is an experience defined by hardship, where sweat and blood spilt in relentless training culminate either in the supreme sacrifice of life—*'Shahadat'*—or in the lifelong physical and psychological scars borne by the survivors, the *'Ghazi'*. Throughout history, nations have recognised that the true shield of a sovereign state rests upon its frontline warriors. Whether it is the revered ethos of the Pakistani Armed Forces, who view themselves as guardians forged in fire, or the legendary fighting arms of martial traditions across the world, the combat soldier occupies a sacred position. They are the individuals entrusted with carrying the lethal responsibility of state power on their shoulders.

For over two decades, since 2002, the Pakistan Army has been locked in an unrelenting, multi-front war to blunt the scourge of terrorism. The fighting arms have endured an unprecedented operational tempo, spending years—and in many cases, decades—deployed continuously in hostile, high-altitude and treacherous combat zones. Alongside them, the supporting arms and services have shared in this demanding burden, ensuring that the frontline remains steadfast. Yet, the cost of such prolonged engagement extends far beyond the immediate threat of enemy fire. The constant state of hypervigilance wrecks the nervous system over time, creating an invisible burden. Extended separations from families mean missing important social milestones, both sad and happy, and the daily joys of loved ones, causing psychological strain. Upon returning home, soldiers often feel like strangers in a world that moves on without realising the price paid for its tranquillity. Sadly, the social toll and the crucible of modern combat remain unnoticed.

As the Latin proverb reminds us: *Si vis pacem, para bellum* ("If you want peace, prepare for war"). But peace is never free; it is continuously purchased with the youth, vitality and health of those who serve.

What hurts a veteran most deeply is not the physical rigour of service nor the scars left by battle. The deepest wound is inflicted when the society for whose safety those sacrifices were made remains indifferent, or worse, when sacred duty is exploited for transient gain. In many robust democracies and military traditions, the frontline soldier is afforded elevated societal reverence—not out of blind militarism, but out of a sober acknowledgement that civilised life exists only because brave men and women stand ready to confront violence on their behalf.

The clash between sacred sacrifice and political opportunism is a current reality that needs to be addressed. When political actors, including those with a history of anti-military rhetoric or disdain for defence institutions, pay mere lip service to the ultimate sacrifices of soldiers, it trivialises the sacred concept of *Shahadat*.

To treat the blood of martyrs as currency for political mileage is an affront to every soldier who ever stood a post in the freezing mountains or scorched deserts.

A nation that forgets or disrespects its defenders risks eroding its own foundational strength. To preserve the dignity of the military institution and honor those who serve, therefore, a shift in collective mindset is required.

For that, public acknowledgment of soldiers must move beyond superficial speeches to tangible support for veterans and their families. There is a need for insulation from politics, i.e., the sacrosanct nature of national defense and martyrdom must remain entirely above political scoring and partisan exploitation.

To restore honour to the guardians, through a well-orchestrated societal awareness strategy, civilians must be educated on the true, unglamorized realities of frontline combat so that empathy replaces apathy.

The presence and deployment of Armed Forces soldiers for traffic police duties and for protection and protocol-related duties involving police and paramilitary forces on roads and streets need to be done away with. Let's stay focused on the external threats along the international borders. The fighting soldier asks for neither luxury nor unearned praise. They ask only that their sacrifices be recognised with sincerity, that their families be cared for, and that the cause for which their comrades gave their lives is treated with the reverence it rightfully commands.

As Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War*, "The moral law is that which causes the people to be in complete accord with their leaders, so that they will follow them regardless of their lives."

That moral trust is fragile.

It is sustained only when those who risk everything know that their country honours their service not just in words, but in deed and truth. Pakistan Zindabad, PAK Army Paindabad!

The writer is a retired senior army officer with experience in international relations, military diplomacy and analysis of geo-political and strategic security issues.

US could strike Iran's remaining nuclear sites in '10 minutes': Trump

US president says Washington is in no hurry to reach agreement with Tehran, refuses to rule out renewed military action amid Qatari-mediated negotiations

WASHINGTON DC, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump said that Washington could strike Iran's remaining suspected nuclear facilities in "10 minutes," signaling the possibility of further military action despite ongoing diplomatic negotiations.
Speaking to reporters at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, Trump claimed that US military operations had severely weakened Iran's armed forces and nuclear infrastructure, leaving only a few sites to be targeted.
"We still have to take care of, I would say, one or two sites, but we can do that in 10 minutes. So, we have that plan," Trump said.
"You probably could look at Pickaxe Mountain, you have to take care of that. We can do that all very quickly," he added, referring to a suspected Iranian nuclear facility.
Trump made the remarks when asked whether there was a timeline for ongoing Qatari-mediated negotiations between Washington and Tehran.
He said the US was not in a hurry to reach an agreement, claiming that American military operations had destroyed much of Iran's navy, air force, air defenses, military equipment and nuclear infrastructure.
Asked whether Washington could resume military operations against Iran as soon as this week, Trump declined to provide a direct answer.
"Why would you ask such a stupid question?" he said, before adding: "I can't tell you."
- Trump says Iran will 'never have a nuclear weapon'
Trump reiterated Washington's opposition to Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. "Iran will never have a nuclear weapon. They want to make a deal; we'll find out about that," he said.
Asked about the progress of negotiations, Trump expressed skepticism about Tehran's reliability despite describing the talks as progressing.
"They're going fine, but they're not very reliable. I will tell you, they make a deal and then they back out. They want to make a deal. We'll see if they make a deal," he said.His remarks came after Iranian negotiators met Qatari mediators in Doha on Saturday, following talks in Tehran on Friday aimed at finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict.



King Charles III of England met with students at The Harris in Preston.



MADRID, SPAIN: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (L) meets Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez (R) at the prime minister's official residence, Moncloa, during his visit to Madrid for official engagements.

Qatar condemns attack on LNG tanker in Gulf, warns of threat to global energy supplies

DOHA, (Agencies): Qatar on Monday strongly condemned an attack on the liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker Al Mayeda while it was sailing in the Gulf, warning that the incident threatened maritime navigation and global energy supplies.
In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said the vessel belonged to Qatar Gas Transport Company, known as Nakilat.
The ministry described the attack as "a dangerous act that threatens the safety of maritime navigation and the security of global energy supplies." Qatar "reserves the right to take all necessary measures under international law and the UN Charter to protect its property, safeguard its interests and ensure the safety of its vessels and crews," it said.The ministry added that the relevant authorities had begun investigations to establish the circumstances of the incident and identify those responsible.

Iran boosting military capabilities to respond 'without geographical limits': Ketabchi

TEHRAN, (Agencies): Iran is rapidly strengthening its armed forces' combat capabilities to enable them to respond "without geographical limits," Defense Minister Mehrdad Akhlaghi Ketabchi said Monday.
Speaking to reporters, Akhlaghi said Iran was moving "resolutely" to enhance its armed forces' smart combat capabilities under directives from Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.
"We are rapidly increasing our armed forces' combat capabilities to be able to respond without geographical limits," he said.
Iran "will not be caught off guard, nor will we be stopped, and any type of attack will receive an appropriate, decisive and effective response," he added.
Akhlaghi stressed that Iran "would not be surprised by threats, halted by pressure or dependent on the will of others in pursuing scientific and technological progress."
His remarks come as Qatar and Pakistan continue mediation efforts to revive negotiations between Washington and Tehran, amid reports of progress in indirect talks in Doha. The efforts seek understandings on Iran's nuclear program, sanctions relief and the security of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.
Tensions in the Middle East have remained high since the US and Israel launched attacks against Iran on Feb. 28, triggering Iranian retaliation across the region.
Despite subsequent diplomatic efforts and a memorandum signed by Washington and Tehran in June, tensions have persisted over security arrangements and navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Saudi-led coalition launches operation to 'neutralize' Houthi military resources in Yemen

SANAA, (Agencies): The Saudi-led coalition said Sunday that it had carried out a military operation to "neutralize vital resources" used by the Houthi group to support its war effort and strengthen its military capabilities, particularly ballistic missiles and drones.
Coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki said in a statement on Monday that the operation took place Sunday morning following continued Houthi attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure in Yemen and Saudi Arabia.
The coalition's joint forces command had monitored the Houthis' "continued use of vital resources to support their war effort and bolster their military capabilities, especially ballistic missiles and drones," he said.
Al-Maliki said the continued attacks posed a direct threat to civilian lives and the safety of civilian infrastructure.
The operation sought to "neutralize" resources used by the group to carry out repeated attacks and threaten the security of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, as well as shipping lanes in the southern Red Sea, he added.
The statement did not identify the targeted locations or specify the nature of the resources it said had been neutralized.
It also provided no details on casualties or material damage.
There was no immediate comment from the Houthis.
Since Oct. 5, Yemeni government forces have launched Operation "Dawn of Yemen" to restore state institutions from Houthi control and retake the capital, Sanaa.
Military escalation between government forces and the Houthis resumed in July, killing and wounding thousands and displacing more than a quarter of a million people, according to UN reports.
The escalation ended a period of relative calm that had prevailed in Yemen since April 2022, while the humanitarian crisis has worsened amid continued fighting and displacement.
Yemen has been at war since the Houthis seized Sanaa and several provinces in September 2014, prompting a Saudi-led coalition to intervene in March 2015 in support of the internationally recognized government.



Prime Minister of Montenegro Milojko Spajic (2nd R), Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama (2nd L), North Macedonian Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski (R), and European Commissioner for Economy and Productivity Valdis Dombrovskis (3rd L) attend the EU Enlargement Forum, attended by leaders from numerous EU member states and candidate countries in Brussels, Belgium



Prince William and Princess Catherine of Wales visit Ballard Estate in Mumbai, India

Putin has never refused talks with Ukraine's Zelenskyy, would answer his call: Kremlin

MOSCOW, (Agencies): Russian President Vladimir Putin has never refused talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and would answer his call, Kremlin foreign policy aide Yury Ushakov said in an interview published Monday. Speaking to a Vesti journalist, Ushakov said the Russian leader remained open to direct communication with his Ukrainian counterpart.
"I think he will answer, of course. Putin has not once refused talks," Ushakov said.
He also said Zelenskyy was welcome to travel to Moscow for talks with Putin.
"He is sending signals through various sources. He wants to talk, and if he wants to talk so much, let him come," Ushakov said.
- Kremlin proposes trilateral talks with US, Ukraine
Addressing negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict in Ukraine, Ushakov said the initial rounds should involve Russia, Ukraine and the US.

UN chief warns of escalation in Western Sahara after peacekeeping mandate ends

UNITED NATIONS, (Agencies): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned of potential military escalation across Western Sahara on Sunday following the termination of the global body's 35-year-old peacekeeping mission in the disputed territory. "The Secretary-General remains concerned about the security situation throughout the Territory and the risk of escalation of hostilities," spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said, urging all parties to exercise "maximum restraint and to refrain from actions that could further increase tensions or undermine regional stability." The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) formally ceased operations after the UN Security Council failed to extend its mandate beyond Oct. 31. A reduced team under the UN Department of Operational Support began a liquidation phase to repatriate equipment belonging to troop-contributing countries and oversee the disposal of UN-owned assets. Self-determination, diplomatic mediation
Guterres stressed that the departure of peacekeepers does not diminish or eliminate the "inalienable right to self-determination" of the people of Western Sahara. He also paid tribute to Special Representative Alexander Ivanko and honored 20 personnel who lost their lives during the mission, which was established in 1991 to monitor a ceasefire between Morocco and the pro-independence Polisario Front.
While peacekeeping operations have ended, political negotiations will continue under the auspices of the UN chief's personal envoy, Staffan de Mistura.

Zelenskyy claims Russia lost record 54,400 troops killed or wounded in October

KYIV, (Agencies): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday claimed that Russia lost 54,400 troops killed or seriously wounded in October, calling it the highest monthly figure since the start of the war.
On US social media company X, Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces had recaptured 96.2 square kilometers (37.1 square miles) of territory in October, 10.4 square kilometers more than Russian forces had captured during the same period.
He also said Russian forces suffered 2,250 casualties on Oct. 21, setting a "record" for daily losses.
"Russia is suffering losses. We are holding our positions, liberating territory, and making every day of the war as costly as possible for the aggressor," he said.
"To stop these insane losses, all Russia needs to do is choose a ceasefire and diplomacy."
Russia has not commented on Zelenskyy's statement, and independent verification of the claims remains difficult due to the ongoing war.

Trump says US doesn't need Iran deal, directs Vance to focus on corruption

WASHINGTON, (Monitoring Desk): President Donald Trump said that the U.S. does not need a deal with Iran and directed Vice President JD Vance, who has played a role in efforts to resolve the war, to focus "his complete and total attention" on alleged crime and corruption in Democratic-run cities and states.
Trump's directive came a day after the Wall Street Journal reported that Vance was considering face-to-face peace talks with a hard-line Iranian security official and a week after the vice president blamed the costly war with Iran for Republicans' midterm elections drubbing.
"We don't need a deal with Iran. Those days have long since passed. We've got their money, Hundreds of Billions of Dollars, and we've got their Strait!" Trump wrote on social media, referring to the Strait of Hormuz.
Trump had suggested in recent weeks that Iran would be more willing to strike a deal in the eight-month conflict after the U.S. elections, but his administration this week signaled it believes its blockade and economic sanctions against Iran are working, meaning neither a military escalation nor diplomacy is needed. The U.S. military is imposing a blockade on Iranian ports, while attempting to secure safe passage for international shipping through the vital Strait of Hormuz. Iran's military said four oil tankers were hit by explosions after they ignored Iranian warnings. Vance, long seen as skeptical of the war the U.S. and Israel launched on Iran in February, led talks with Iranian officials in Pakistan in April that produced a June memorandum of understanding that paused the war but broke down within weeks. Iranian state media said late last month Tehran had received a letter from Vance seeking renewed talks with Washington. Trump said he had not directed his vice president to make the outreach. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, after talks with U.S. allies in Paris, that Iran's demands for a potential deal were "absurd," citing its demand for reparations for the war, and said Trump would not sign a bad deal.



People attend the funeral ceremony for 110 recently recovered remains of soldiers killed during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, in Tehran, Iran



Prince Harry attends the Ukrainian national team selection trials for the 2027 Invictus Games in Lviv, Ukraine

Insecurity displaces 1,150 people in Sudan's North Darfur in 3 days

KHARTOUM, (Agencies): Some 1,150 people fled four villages in Sudan's western North Darfur state over three days due to worsening insecurity, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said Monday.
In a statement, the UN agency said its field teams estimated that an additional 1,150 people were displaced from the villages of Muzbat, Oreri, Tari and Umm Haraz in Um Baru locality between Oct. 29 and 31.
Some affected families moved to other locations within the locality, while others crossed the border into Chad, it said. The security situation remains highly tense and volatile, the agency added. On Monday, the IOM reported that 895 people had been displaced from three villages in Um Baru on Oct. 24. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese army have been fighting since April 2023 following a dispute over integrating the paramilitary group into the military. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced 13 million.

OIC chief praises Pakistan's peace efforts in Middle East

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed on Monday commended Pakistan's diplomatic leadership and sustained efforts to promote peace and de-escalation in the Middle East, stressing the need for stronger regional cooperation to address shared economic and security challenges.

Addressing the 30th meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Council of Ministers here, he appreciated Pakistan's commitment to dialogue, responsive diplomacy and regional cooperation at a time when the region urgently needed peace and stability.

He also expressed gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for hosting the important meeting and extending warm hospitality.

Highlighting the prevailing geopolitical and economic uncertainties, the OIC Secretary General said conflicts, disruptions in global supply chains, climate change and rapid technological transformations had made regional cooperation strategically necessary.

He identified four priority areas for strengthening cooperation, including trade and investment, economic diversification and technological development, food and energy security, and investment in human capital.

He stressed the need to remove trade barriers, facilitate customs procedures, harmonise standards and improve regional connectivity through road, rail, maritime and air transport corridors.

He noted that intra-OIC trade remained below its desired potential, reaching 19.57 percent at the end of 2025 against the collective target of 25 percent.

He also called for greater investment in innovation, research, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, renewable energy and industrial capacity, highlighting the role of OIC institutions, particularly the Islamic Development Bank Group in mobilising resources and promoting technology transfer.

Emphasising food and energy security, he urged member countries to strengthen cooperation in agricultural productivity, water management, food processing and renewable energy. He also highlighted the economic potential of the global Halal industry, calling for joint efforts to improve Halal production, certification, standards and trade. On human capital development, he said quality education, vocational training, entrepreneurship and digital skills were essential to transforming the region's young population into a productive asset. He also underscored the importance of greater participation of women and young people in economic activities. The OIC Secretary General further called for stronger coordination among regional organisations, including the OIC, ECO and CICA, saying they should complement the global multilateral system, particularly the United Nations, through effective cooperation and collective action.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar addresses a press briefing on Monday after a ministerial meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO)



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegations of ECO member states, participating in the 30th meeting of ECO Council of Ministers

CASA-1000 very vital initiative for all stakeholders: Muhriddin

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin on Monday expressed hope that next year would be a very important time for the completion of the CASA-1000 power project, enabling Tajikistan to export electricity to Pakistan soon. The Tajik foreign minister, talking to the media on the sidelines of the 30th Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), termed CASA-1000 a very significant initiative for all stakeholders.

He stated that Tajikistan had already completed a great deal of work on its part of the project and expressed hope that, with the support of other partners, the Afghanistan section would also be implemented.

Muhriddin noted that Tajikistan was keenly interested in exporting electricity to Pakistan. Acknowledging that the project has unfortunately taken a considerable amount of time due to the situation in Afghanistan.

Pak-China friendship represents shared national consensus: Gilani

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani emphasized the importance of strengthening parliamentary cooperation, institutional exchanges and mutual learning between Pakistan and China.

While addressing the inauguration of the Pakistan-China Research Center for Party and State Governance he said that China's experience in governance, institutional development, long-term planning and economic transformation offers valuable insights for strengthening Pakistan's legislative and policy institutions. Gilani also accepted the honorary chairmanship of the research center which will contribute towards strengthening multidimensional cooperation through research and development.

The Chairman Senate warmly welcomed Leo Hye-shing, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, and his distinguished delegation to Pakistan. He congratulated the Pakistan-China Economic and Cultural Council (PCECC) on establishing the Research Center and expressed gratitude for being invited to serve as its Honorary Chairman, a responsibility he accepted with humility and commitment.

Referring to the photo exhibition showcasing the history of Pakistan-China relations, Gilani said the photographs reflected much more than diplomatic milestones, depicting an enduring friendship rooted in mutual respect, trust and people-to-people connections.

Parliament foremost democratic forum for dialogue, debate; peaceful resolution of differences: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has called for renewed national efforts to promote tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and understanding, describing these values as essential to peace, national unity, democratic stability and social cohesion.

In his message on the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance, the Speaker said that tolerance and mutual respect are not merely social virtues but fundamental values essential for building a peaceful, progressive and resilient society.

He said that differences of opinion are a natural feature of a pluralistic society, but they must be addressed through patience, dialogue, reason and mutual understanding rather than confrontation and hostility.

Ayaz Sadiq said that Pakistan's strength lies in its rich religious, cultural, linguistic and social diversity. He emphasized that respect for the beliefs, identities, traditions and viewpoints of others is vital to strengthening national harmony and fostering a shared sense of citizenship. The Speaker stressed that intolerance, prejudice, hatred and extremism pose serious challenges to social cohesion and national unity. He called for collective efforts to promote an environment in which diversity is respected, differences are acknowledged and every citizen is able to live with dignity, security and equal rights. "Tolerance means creating space for difference without allowing difference to become a source of division, hatred or conflict," the Speaker said. He emphasized that the promotion of tolerance must begin with individual conduct and extend to families, communities, educational institutions, the media and public institutions. Ayaz Sadiq underscored the particularly important role of young people, educational institutions and the media in nurturing a culture of dialogue and responsible public discourse.

He said that the younger generation must be equipped with the ability to listen, understand differing perspectives, engage constructively and resolve disagreements peacefully. NA Speaker said that the media has a vital responsibility in promoting informed and responsible discourse and in strengthening understanding among different sections of society. Educational institutions, he added, can play a transformative role in cultivating respect for diversity, critical thinking, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

The Speaker reaffirmed that Parliament is the foremost democratic forum for dialogue, debate and the peaceful resolution of differences. He said that disagreement is an essential element of democracy and should be viewed as a means of strengthening democratic discourse rather than as a cause for confrontation. "Political differences are a natural part of democratic life; however, dialogue, consultation and parliamentary engagement must remain the preferred means of resolving differences, while the national interest must always remain paramount," Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said.



NORTH DERA BUGTI: People from different walks of life offering fateha for the departed soul of aunt of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti

Overseas Pakistanis valuable national asset; vital pillar of country's economy: Syedaal

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar, while meeting delegations of overseas Pakistanis from the United States and Japan, tribal elders, lawyers, intellectuals, representatives of social organizations and people from various walks of life, underscored the vital role of overseas Pakistanis in Pakistan's economic development and national progress. The meeting discussed issues faced by overseas Pakistanis, their welfare and protection, as well as the country's economic and political stability, national security and the prevailing regional and international situation.

The Deputy Chairman Senate said that overseas Pakistanis are a valuable national asset and an important pillar of the country's economy. Through their hard work, expertise and substantial remittances, they are making a significant contribution to Pakistan's economic stability, development and prosperity. He said the government is fully aware of the challenges faced by Pakistanis living abroad and is taking several important initiatives to address their concerns, safeguard their rights and provide better facilities. Efforts are also underway to encourage overseas Pakistanis to contribute further to national development and investment.

Syedaal Khan Nasar emphasized that economic stability, political harmony and a secure environment are essential for Pakistan's sustainable development. He stressed the need for all political parties and national institutions to work together in the larger national interest and adopt a collective approach to overcome the country's challenges. He further said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan is moving towards greater economic stability, political strength, improved national security and enhanced international standing.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Musadik Malik having meeting with Unicef wash and CEE team

All human beings deserve respect, equality, peaceful coexistence

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The National Paigham-e-Aman Committee has said that all religions of the world teach peace, love, brotherhood, respect for humanity, patience and tolerance, therefore, embracing these universal teachings and making them part of practical life is an urgent need of the time.

The committee, in its message on the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance, said despite religious, racial, linguistic and cultural differences, all human beings deserve respect, equality and peaceful coexistence.Instead of turning differences of opinion into hostility, peace and harmony in society should be promoted through dialogue, mutual respect and tolerance, said a press release.

Expressing concern over intolerance, religious prejudice, hate speech, extremism, Islamophobia, religious discrimination and attitudes driven by hatred against minorities, the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee said such tendencies not only contradict human values and fundamental rights but also pose serious challenges to global peace, social stability and interfaith harmony.

The committee emphasized that there should be no room for hatred, prejudice or discriminatory treatment against Islam or any other religion or belief. It said the religious sentiments and rights of followers of all faiths must be respected.

The message stated that the true meaning of tolerance is not merely to tolerate differences but also to respect the beliefs, cultures, traditions and human dignity of others.

Religious leaders, scholars, intellectuals, educational institutions, the media and civil society should play their effective role in promoting peace, love, harmony, tolerance and respect for humanity among the younger generation.



The 31st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31), hosted by Turkiye for the first time, continues at the COP31 venue in Antalya, where participating countries showcase their traditional cultures at their pavilions

Pakistan explores carbon markets to finance clean-air transition

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan is exploring carbon-market mechanisms to mobilise financing for air pollution control, with a conference presentation identifying potential for generating 984,050 carbon credits and 35.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent over 10 years across transport, agriculture and other sectors.

The proposed approach could open new financing avenues for cleaner transport, agricultural practices and industrial improvements, while linking Pakistan's air quality agenda with international climate finance mechanisms.

The potential was outlined during the two-day Pakistan National Clean Air Conference, where participants discussed opportunities to attract investment through carbon markets and strengthen the financial foundations of the country's clean-air transition.

Dr Waqas Ahmed Khan of the World Bank said Pakistan needed to develop a pipeline of investable projects capable of generating carbon credits and attracting financing.

The conference presentation estimated a potential value of $5.9 million to $8.85 million, while emphasising the need for credible baselines, measurement, reporting and verification systems, safeguards and federal-provincial approvals to ensure the integrity of carbon credits.

It also highlighted the importance of engaging prospective buyers at an early stage to establish market demand and develop appropriate financing arrangements. Explaining the international carbon-market framework, Muhammad Abid of GIZ distinguished between compliance markets, where credits are used under legally binding emissions-reduction frameworks, and voluntary markets, where organisations purchase credits on a voluntary basis.

He also discussed Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, which allows countries to transfer internationally recognised emissions reductions through cooperative arrangements, subject to accounting rules designed to prevent double counting.

The discussions placed carbon finance within a broader proposed framework for mobilising resources from public budgets, fiscal transfers, climate and green finance, development partners and private investment.



QUETTA: Director General Public Relations Balochistan Askar Khan chairs a meeting regarding key performance indicators (KPIs).

D-8 Secretary General calls for stronger climate cooperation at COP31 Antalya summit

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8), Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, has called for accelerated climate cooperation, accessible climate finance, technology transfer and stronger South-South partnerships to help developing countries address the growing challenges of climate change.

He expressed these views while participating in the Antalya Leaders' Summit, held on November 11-12 under Türkiye's Presidency of the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), said a press release.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood visited Antalya from November 10 to 13 at the invitation of Türkiye's Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and COP31 President Murat Kurum.

The Secretary-General was accompanied by Ambassador Mustafa Özcan, Director-I, and Muhammad Bilal Khan, Executive Assistant, D-8 Secretariat. He attended the opening ceremony and high-level segment of the Leaders' Summit, inaugurated by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of the Republic of Türkiye.

Unplanned urbanization contributing to expansion of informal settlements

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Programme Manager (DPM) UN-Habitat Pakistan Hamid Mumtaz Khan has said that Pakistan needs affordable, adequate and climate-resilient housing solutions to address its growing housing deficit, rapid urbanization and recurring natural disasters.

In an interview with APP, he said that rapid and often unplanned urbanization was contributing to the expansion of informal settlements and slums, while recurring disasters had further intensified the country's housing challenges, with millions of houses affected since the 2005 earthquake.

Addressing the growing housing crisis required a comprehensive approach that focused not only on increasing housing supply but also on ensuring affordability, adequate basic services and the resilience of existing and future homes, he added.

Khan emphasized the need for affordable and incremental housing solutions, access to serviced land, appropriate financing mechanisms and the upgrading of existing informal settlements through meaningful community participation.

He said adequate housing must provide access to safe drinking water, sanitation, essential services and a secure living environment, particularly for low-income communities.

Highlighting the importance of disaster-resilient construction, he said resilience should be incorporated into housing planning, design and construction to protect communities against earthquakes, floods and the growing impacts of climate change.

He stressed that new housing developments should comply with appropriate building standards, while vulnerable existing structures could be strengthened through cost-effective retrofitting.

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