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15 terrorists killed in security operations in Balochistan's Mastung district

QUETTA, (Monitoring Desk): Security forces killed 15 terrorists in two separate major operations in Balochistan's Mastung district as part of the ongoing Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-3 against Fitna al-Hindustan, state media outlet Radio Pakistan reported on Saturday.

Fitna al-Hindustan is the term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Balochistan Liberation Army and other groups in the province.

In the first operation, security forces eliminated five terrorists and destroyed several of their hideouts, while a large quantity of weapons and ammunition was also recovered during the operation, Radio Pakistan reported.

In a second operation in Mastung, security forces killed another 10 terrorists. Weapons and ammunition were recovered from them, while several hideouts belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan were also destroyed, state media noted.

The report said the areas of Killi Pasand Khan, Musa Khan, Khorasani and Kaftari were completely cleared of terrorists during the operations.

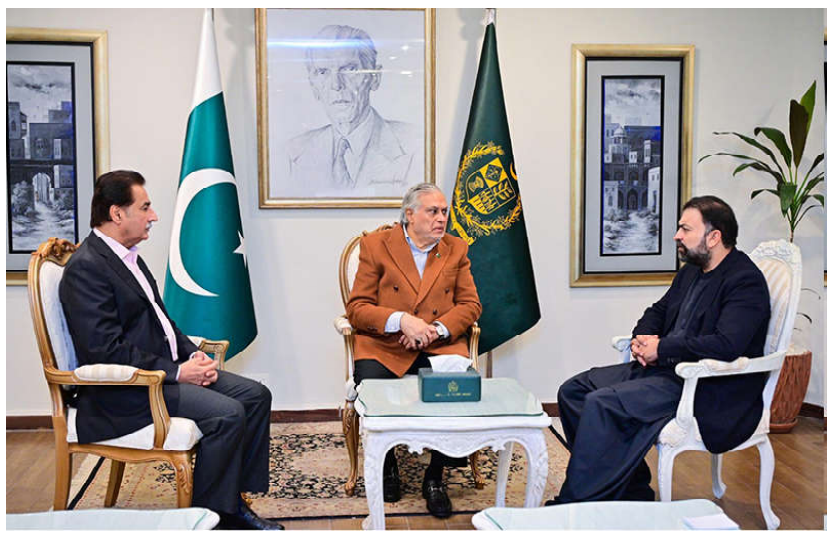
Radio Pakistan further stated that security forces remained committed to eliminating terrorism from Balochistan, with operations set to continue until the last terrorist was eliminated.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operations against terrorists, while praising their professionalism, courage and operational capabilities.

He further said the "sacrifices and unwavering commitment" of security forces to completely eliminate terrorism were commendable. The premier underlined that the entire nation stood "shoulder to shoulder" with its brave security forces in the fight against terrorism.

PM Shehbaz further stressed that the nefarious designs of anti-state elements would never be allowed to succeed.

The prime minister reiterated that efforts to eliminate terrorism would continue across the country, including Balochistan, until the last terrorist was eliminated from Pakistan. Separately, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also praised security forces for the operations. In a statement posted on X, Naqvi commended the security forces' "resolve and professionalism for sending 15 Khawarij to hell".



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti meeting the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman addresses lawyers at Peshawar high court bar association ceremony.

Climate change 'threat' to civilization: Musadik Malik

NEW DELHI, (Monitoring Desk): Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik on Saturday termed the climate change a major threat to civilisation and historical heritage.

"Climate change has become a major threat to our civilisation and historical heritage," Malik said while addressing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Civilisational Dialogue Forum in India's New Delhi.

The minister arrived in the Indian capital on Friday to attend the forum, marking the first trip to India by a Pakistani federal minister since May 2023, when then foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari visited Goa for a meeting of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers.

During his address, he said that Pakistan was the custodian of three important periods of civilisation, reflecting the country's diverse historical and cultural influences.

Referring to Delhi's Old Fort, the climate minister described it as a complete historical account in itself, saying Mughal emperor Humayun, who came from Central Asia, laid its foundations.

He also highlighted the historical significance of the fort, noting that Humayun and his rival Sher Shah Suri, despite having been adversaries, had both become part of its history.

Discussing Pakistan's historical connections with other regions, Malik said that the country's historical links extended northwards to Bukhara and Samarkand, while its cultural connections reached westwards to Persia and Arabia.

Prior to his address, Malik held separate meetings with officials from Iran and Tajikistan on the sidelines of the SCO forum.

Federal, Provincial leadership reaffirms commitment to lasting peace, development in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, (VoM Report): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti met Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, emphasizing stronger federal-provincial coordination to accelerate Balochistan's development and ensure lasting peace.

According to an official statement, the meeting, held at the Foreign Office in Islamabad, focused on ongoing development projects, provincial needs, improved public services and welfare initiatives.

The participants also reviewed Balochistan's law and order situation and stressed coordinated efforts to strengthen security, protect citizens and maintain stability.

The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to closer federal-provincial cooperation for timely implementation of development initiatives, improved public facilities and sustainable peace across Balochistan.

PM Shehbaz criticizes PTI's 13-year rule in KP, directs to prioritize public welfare initiatives

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif called upon the provincial leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to urgently prioritize short-term, public welfare-oriented initiatives, asserting that local residents have suffered years of developmental neglect.

Addressing a gathering of the PML-N KP chapter, the prime minister criticized the past PTI-led administration's governance record, saying that despite tall claims of revolutionary reforms in the education and health sectors, citizens continued to yearn for basic facilities.

He regretted that PTI's political focus was diverted toward protests and sit-ins rather than addressing the socio-economic needs of the province.

"How many development projects were completed? Were public funds spent judiciously, and what steps were taken against corruption?" the prime minister questioned, raising concerns over transparency and the execution of past provincial policies.

Turning to national security, the prime minister paid rich tribute to the immense sacrifices rendered by the residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, law enforcement agencies, and the armed forces in eradicating terrorism during the 2017–2018 period.

He noted that the country lost approximately 80,000 precious lives, with economic losses mounting between $150 billion and $200 billion in the long fight against terrorism.

He specifically recalled the tragic attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar as an unforgettable manifestation of barbarism, while also acknowledging the sacrifices borne by political figures and security personnel. Reflecting on past political and economic milestones, the prime minister criticized the 2014 PTI's sit-ins, noting that they coincided with and delayed the historic visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

PM Shehbaz strongly condemns Houthi's attack on King Abdullah Financial District in Riyadh

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, strongly condemned the Houthi attack on the King Abdullah Financial District in Riyadh and said that such acts of reckless aggression, targeting civilian infrastructure and economic facilities, are totally unacceptable and threaten regional peace and stability. "Pakistan stands in unwavering solidarity with our brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its people. We fully support the Kingdom's right to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to protect its citizens and residents," the prime minister said in a post on X handle. He also reiterated that they would continue to support all efforts for lasting peace and stability in the region.



A 42-year-old Palestinian man, identified as Masoud Salim Abdo, is killed after being shot by Israeli soldiers in the village of Dura al-Qar'a, near Ramallah, West Bank, Palestine



LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi meets Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Emir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman at Mansoorah.

Rapid pace of technological advancement creating challenges in policymaking: Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has proposed the establishment of a National Cyber Security and Social Media Awareness Council to strengthen institutional coordination, promote digital literacy and enhance public awareness about misinformation and emerging cyber threats.

The minister proposed this while addressing the inaugural ceremony of Cyber Security Awareness Week 2026, organised by the PTA under the theme "Building a Safe, Secure and Resilient Cyberspace".

He attended the ceremony as the chief guest.

The event was attended by PTA Chairman Major General (Retd) Hafeez ur Rehman, UNDP Resident Representative Dr Samuel Rizk, UNDP representative Babar Yaqoob Fateh Muhammad and PEMRA Chairperson Ambreen Jan.

Atta Tarar proposed that the council bring together federal ministries and divisions, provincial governments, regulatory authorities and other relevant institutions to develop a coordinated national response to cyber security challenges and promote responsible use of digital platforms.

Urging the stakeholders to include the proposal in the event's concluding declaration, he suggested holding consultations within one to two weeks to move the initiative forward, with the PTA steering the process. He assured the participants that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting would fully facilitate its establishment.

He said the proposed council would help coordinate awareness initiatives throughout the year, ensuring sustained public engagement on digital safety rather than limiting efforts to occasional campaigns.

Highlighting the changing media landscape, the minister said Pakistan had witnessed a transformation from traditional media, including print, radio and television, to an increasingly expanding digital environment.

However, the rapid pace of technological advancement had outstripped the development of regulatory frameworks, creating challenges in policymaking, regulation and implementation.

Secure data sharing vital for smarter planning, informed policymaking: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has called for strengthening data-sharing mechanisms among government institutions to promote evidence-based policymaking, improve coordination and ensure effective utilization of official statistics.

Chairing a meeting at the National Centre for Cyber Connectivity (N3C) at the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) headquarters, he stressed the need for a secure and coordinated mechanism for sharing data between PBS, federal ministries, divisions and public sector organizations.

The minister said the PBS had recently conducted three major censuses, including the 7th Population and Housing Census 2023, Agricultural Census 2024 and Economic Census 2023, besides various surveys.

He added that the bureau also had a state-of-the-art Tier-III-compliant data centre to securely host data in accordance with international standards.

He stressed regular engagement with federal and provincial stakeholders to strengthen collaboration and facilitate evidence-based policy planning, assuring that the PBS would extend full support through digital solutions and secure data integration.

"Secure data sharing is necessary for smarter planning and informed policymaking," he said, emphasizing that information exchange must comply with the relevant legal and policy frameworks.

Secretary Planning Dr Muhammad Tahir Noor said effective utilization of PBS data was essential for informed policymaking and achieving the objective of leaving no one behind. He stressed the need for efficient data sharing with line ministries, provincial governments and other stakeholders.

PBS Member (Support Services) Muhammad Sarwar Gondal briefed the participants on the datasets available with the bureau and their potential applications in evidence-based policymaking, development planning, monitoring and decision-making. He also demonstrated various dashboards developed by PBS to facilitate government departments in accessing statistical insights. He said the PBS, as the national statistical organization, followed the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics to ensure reliable and timely data collection, compilation and dissemination while safeguarding the confidentiality of individual and institutional information.

World cannot afford prolonged conflict in Middle East: Dar

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has expressed hope for an early agreement between the United States and Iran, warning that the world cannot afford a prolonged conflict in the Middle East.

"I'm a born optimist. I think I would certainly expect that sooner or later, I hope it's sooner, that we will achieve that objective. Because, you see, the world cannot afford [it]. See the energy supply chain disruptions. See the price hikes. See the people suffering. And even in our country, people are suffering," the DPM said in an interview with Euronews broadcast by PTV News. Despite subsequent violations of the June 18 accord, DPM Dar said Islamabad had not abandoned the peace process and continued to urge both Washington and Tehran to honour their commitments.

In response to a question, he reiterated Pakistan's commitment to an independent, multilateral foreign policy and outlined Islamabad's role in mediating direct talks between the United States and Iran.

Pakistan's role in US-Iran mediation

The deputy premier said dialogue and diplomacy remained the only viable means of resolving major international conflicts, rejecting unilateralism and bloc politics. He added that Pakistan had championed peaceful dispute resolution and respect for state sovereignty during its 2025-26 tenure on the UN Security Council.

Recalling the outbreak of hostilities on February 28, he said Pakistan was the first country to condemn the Israeli strike. He said he had contacted Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi immediately afterwards, urging restraint and advising Tehran against targeting Gulf and other Middle Eastern states. Iran later launched strikes on US bases in the region, he added.

He said Pakistan's diplomatic efforts culminated in Islamabad hosting the first direct, face-to-face negotiations between Washington and Tehran in 47 years on April 10 and 11.

The 21-hour session brought the two sides close to an agreement before one delegation paused the talks for consultations with its leadership. Continued Pakistani mediation eventually led to the June 18 'Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding', he said, adding that the framework was signed remotely by US President Donald Trump, who was attending the G7 summit in Europe, and the Iranian president.



Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik speaking at first Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Civilisational Dialogue Forum.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Monday November 23, 2026

Proxy warfare

Much has been written in recent years about proxy wars. At its core, a proxy war is when one state – or a group of states – goes after its rival indirectly. Instead of fighting itself, it backs another actor that does the actual fighting. That support can come in many forms: money, weapons, training, intelligence, logistics or political backing. The proxy is often a non-state armed group, a militia or a rebel movement. What makes it a proxy war is that the main power tries to influence or fight its rival without going to war directly.

Iran extended proxy warfare further than most by building and backing a growing network of armed partners across the region to confront its rivals indirectly. Hezbollah is probably the clearest example: it grew into both a powerful military force in Lebanon and a political player, all the while acting as a key piece of Iran's regional strategy. Iran has done the same with armed groups in Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

Afghanistan, of course, was also supported by the U.S. during its war with the Soviet Union. Proxy warfare subsequently entered a new phase as Iran effectively supported and strengthened various groups in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.

But as the world moves toward what some describe as a World War III, proxy warfare has begun to change form. Ukraine, in a sense, is fighting Russia as a willing proxy of the Western states. The U.S. and its Western allies stand firmly behind this proxy, and Ukraine receives it consciously to defend its country against an aggressor, as Russia attacked in the first place.

The irony is that Iran, which had long fought Israel and the U.S. through its own network of proxies and used Hezbollah and other forces to keep the Syrian regime continuing, now finds itself serving as a proxy for the Eastern camp. This striking change shows how proxy warfare has expanded in scale, to the point where a former proxy boss, like Iran, is now dragged into the proxy roles of larger powers.

The U.S. is not entering a direct war of its own with Russia. Washington and Moscow are not fighting each other directly. Yet the U.S. and its allies are engaged in a broader confrontation with Russia in Ukraine.

Likewise, Russia is not fighting the U.S. directly. But as Iran confronts the U.S. and Israel, Russia stand behind Tehran as powerful partner. North Korea might also be part of this chain of alliances.

This is one way of reading the growing proximity of a World War III.

Whereas smaller militant groups once represented the proxies of great powers, today countries with substantial military and geopolitical weight, such as Ukraine and Iran, increasingly take that role.

While the entire West stands behind the Ukrainian front, the East stands behind Iran.

Looking at this course, we can say that before a major global war, proxy warfare itself has moved up a class.

Listening before legislating

AYESHA IRSHAD MIAN

Every World Mental Health Day arrives with a theme, a hashtag, and a flurry of panels. This year's call to centre the voices of people with lived experience deserves more than a single day. It requires an honest accounting of whose voices have shaped our mental health agenda, and whose have been absent from it.

In clinical practice, one learns that people rarely describe their distress in the language of diagnosis. Recent events shape, and at times fortify, age-old dogmas. A young woman laments that recent allegations of sexual assault on a university campus have reinforced the view for her parents that places of learning are not safe for girls and that she must rethink her dreams.

A teenage boy says he has not cried since he was nine, because he learned early what crying would cost him. A man in his 40s says he cannot tell his family he has stopped sleeping, because the word 'depression' would be heard as weakness, or worse, as madness. None of them is describing a disorder alone. Each is describing a world, and a mind adapting to it.

Mental health does not reside only within individuals. It is shaped by homes, classrooms, workplaces, streets, and the narratives a society sustains about who may be safe, who may be vulnerable, and who may speak. Pakistan ranks near the bottom of global gender parity indices; millions of girls remain out of school. When women fear pursuing an education, or when their aspirations are quietly renegotiated, the consequences extend well beyond the economic.

They appear as hopelessness, chronic anxiety, and a constriction of possibility. Boys raised to equate emotion with weakness and dominance with worth bear a different burden: silence, aggression turned inward or outward, and little vocabulary for distress. Patriarchy shapes the psychological lives of every gender.

Stigma compounds this. Mental illness is still widely seen as a moral failing, a spiritual affliction, a source of family shame. Public awareness of what depression, anxiety, psychosis, or trauma actually involves — and that they are treatable — is limited. People wait for years before seeking care, often turning first to faith healers, informal practitioners, or no one at all. Many of us carry a sense of heaviness at how slowly some things change. It is worth naming that feeling rather than suppressing it. Despair can be worked through collectively.

On this World Mental Health Day and beyond, people with lived experience must be heard. Against this backdrop, the launch of the national mental health policy on Oct 1 was a necessary step. A policy places mental health on the public agenda, gives advocates a reference point, and offers the system a direction. The political will behind it must be acknowledged. A launch, however, is a moment, whereas implementation is the work of a decade. Pakistan has over 250 million people.

By most estimates, it has roughly 500 psychiatrists and a comparable number of psychologists, with no licensing body to regulate the practice of psychology, and, therefore, no uniform standard of training, scope, or accountability. The scarcity is sharper still in specialist areas. There are fewer than 10 child and adolescent psychiatrists in the country, and child psychologists are almost non-existent. Mental health has been under-resourced for decades.

This is not a criticism of any individual or institution. It is the arithmetic of a neglected field, with far-reaching consequences. Where specialists are scarce, implementation tends to fall on others: dedicated NGOs, short-course trainees, and well-intentioned professionals who have not had the opportunity to work with many patients over many years, often without regular supervision.

Nuanced, effective mental healthcare rests on the clinical judgement to distinguish grief from depression, trauma from defiance, and a cry for help from a pattern of behaviour that signals something more. That judgement is built through years of practice, mentorship, error corrected under guidance, and slow accumulation of patients' stories. Without it, even well-designed programmes can overlook those most in need.

The need for distinction is greater still given the context. Pakistan contends with floods and heatwaves, economic precarity, displacement, gender-based violence, and the effects of regional conflict — among the principal determinants of mental health.

Implementation in such conditions requires people who understand both the science and the street.

As we welcome the policy, and look forward to its implementation, some principles deserve consideration.

Implementation is best guided by practitioners with long front-line clinical and research experience in the country, supported by public health and systems expertise. Second, a rigorous, costed strategic plan is essential. The design must specify which services will be delivered in which districts, by whom, under whose supervision, and measured against what indicators. Aspiration must be translated into sequence and budget. Third, this must be directed by a coalition of experts. Psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health researchers, paediatricians, educators, social workers, legal experts, and people with lived experience should work at one table rather than in silos. Fourth, funding must match the stated priority.

Whether through government allocation or philanthropy, sustained investment in training, supervision, public awareness, and a licensing framework for psychologists is what converts intention into infrastructure. Expanding the specialist pipeline, from child and adolescent services to adult care, would be transformative.

International expertise is valuable, and Pakistan will continue to benefit from shared learning.

Yet the durability of any approach depends on its fit with local realities: the district hospital, the crowded clinic, the family weighing in insistent on joint management and care, the need for task shifting, etc. Those who practise here, and who remain once project cycles end, understand that terrain best. If this year's theme is to be taken seriously, clinicians and communities on the ground belong at the centre of this work and at the helm of it, not at its margins.

Above all, people with lived experience must be heard. The woman who wants to study, the boy who wants permission to feel, and the adult who has suffered silently for years are telling us what they need: safety, dignity, and to be believed. No policy will succeed if it is written about them rather than with them.

On this World Mental Health Day, we might resolve to build a system as thoughtful as the people it is meant to serve. The policy is a promise. Keeping it will require patience, expertise, and humility.

The writer is a consultant child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist and founder & CEO at Synapse Pakistan Neuroscience Institute.
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Before she becomes a bride, let her be a girl

MEHAK ANWAR

On the International Day of the Girl, we are reminded of a simple but often overlooked truth: girls' rights cannot be separated from their right to childhood. This year's theme, "End Child Marriage. Invest in Girls' Rights", asks us to look beyond the progress we celebrate and confront the gaps that still shape millions of girls' lives. It ends with leaving school, being married too young or becoming a mother before the age of 18. We often tell girls they can become whatever they aspire to be, but what about those who are never given the space to aspire at all? Before we ask what a girl can become, we must first ask whether she has been given the freedom to imagine what she could be.

According to UNICEF, around 650 million girls globally are living with the consequences of being married before the age of 18, while Pakistan is home to an estimated 19 million child brides. Child marriage remains one of the most painful manifestations of inequality. In parts of rural and tribal Pakistan, marriage is still treated as the expected destination for a girl as though she is simply born to become someone's wife. Poverty, limited access to education, concerns about girls' safety, social pressure and the belief that investing in a son's future matters more than investing in a daughter's can all push families towards early marriage.

It is a question of rights. When a girl is married before she is ready, society does not change her marital status; it changes the course of her childhood. Her right to education, health, protection, participation and economic opportunity becomes harder to exercise when adulthood is imposed on her.

Education is often one of the first rights a girl is asked to give up. When a household struggles financially, families may compromise on a daughter's education before a son. A girl learns early that her dreams can be treated as an expense while her brother's future is seen as an investment. Social pressures can then push her into early marriage, cutting short her education and limiting opportunities to earn an income.

Child marriage can therefore close several doors at once, making it harder for her to escape the very poverty once given as the reason for marrying her off.

However, it can expose serious health risks for adolescent mothers due to early pregnancy. UNICEF-PK data shows that 18.3% of women aged 20–24 were married before turning 18, while 3.6% were married before 15. WHO reports that girls under 16 face four times the risk of maternal death compared with women over 20. Child marriage is therefore not only a social and educational issue, but also a public health concern affecting girls and the next generation.

These consequences also connect to the wider gender gap. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2026, Pakistan ranks 143rd out of 145 economies, with 59.5% of its overall gender gap closed. While Pakistan climbed five places from 148th in 2025, it remains among the world's three lowest-ranked countries. Notably, educational parity has reached 91.7%, while economic participation remains at only 36.4%. The contrast is clear: getting girls into education is one part of closing the gender gap, ensuring that education translates into economic independence and decision-making power remains a much larger challenge.

Investing in girls' rights means ensuring access to healthcare, safeguarding their rights and giving them the opportunities to earn, participate and make their own decisions. When we invest in a girl, we are not simply preparing her for a better future, we are giving her the tools to build one on her own terms.

Ending child marriage begins with changing what we have learned to accept as normal for girls. A girl should not have to prove that her education is worth investing in, or that her dreams deserve the same space as her brother's. The goal is not simply to delay marriage, but to give every girl the time, freedom and choice to decide who she wants to become.

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Securing every medicine

DR ZEESHAN KHAN

Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector is entering an important phase in its journey towards greater transparency, accountability and patient safety. The implementation of a pharmaceutical Track and Trace system, including 2-D Data Matrix barcodes and serialisation, is more than a technological upgrade. In my view, it represents a fundamental shift in how medicines can be identified, monitored and traced from the manufacturing floor to the patient.

I recently attended PPMA North training conducted in collaboration with the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) on the Online Pharmaceutical Track and Trace System. The discussions demonstrated that successful implementation requires much more than installing a barcode printer on a packaging line.

It demands coordination among Quality Assurance, Production, Engineering, IT, Regulatory Affairs, Warehousing and Distribution. The challenge is as much organisational as it is technical.

At the heart of the system is serialisation, which assigns a unique identity to individual saleable packs. Traditionally, medicines have been identified through product names, batch numbers and expiry dates. With serialisation, two packs from the same batch can carry different serial numbers. The GTIN identifies the product, while the serial number identifies the individual pack. Together with batch and expiry information, these elements create a more detailed digital identity.

The GS1 Data Matrix, a compact two-dimensional barcode, can carry this information. However, barcode implementation must be treated as a controlled manufacturing process, not merely a printing activity. A serialised packaging line may combine printers, cameras, verification software and automatic rejection mechanisms to ensure that each code is accurate, readable and associated with the correct product and batch. Packs failing verification must be rejected and accounted for.

This creates new responsibilities for Quality Assurance. In a batch of 100,000 packs, several hundred codes might be rejected. The manufacturer must reconcile the codes generated, printed, rejected, reworked, destroyed and ultimately accepted. Electronic records must correspond with physical production records. The system must explain discrepancies rather than simply record them. Data integrity is therefore essential. User access, record changes and system activities require controls, including audit trails and principles associated with 21 CFR Part 11 where applicable.

The objective is not another complicated database but a reliable system in which information is accurate, attributable, secure and retrievable. Aggregation adds another dimension: individual serialised packs can be linked to cartons and cartons to pallets. These relationships could help companies trace products during distribution and recalls without relying entirely on manual records. EPCIS, or Electronic Product Code Information Services, extends identification into event-based traceability, recording what happened to a product, when, where and during which business process.

Yet technology alone cannot guarantee success. The industry needs trained personnel, validated computerised systems, reliable infrastructure, effective SOPs and strong change control. Packaging equipment requires qualification and maintenance; deviations require investigation and recurrent problems effective corrective and preventive action. Regulatory Affairs must maintain accurate product information, Production must execute serialisation correctly, and IT must ensure security, backups and system availability. Warehouses and distributors also have responsibilities beyond the manufacturing site.

For QA, reconciliation may be the greatest challenge. Every physical movement should have an appropriate electronic counterpart, and important electronic events must be explainable through controlled records. There is also a wider public-health imperative. Counterfeit and falsified medicines can harm patients, while stronger traceability gives regulators and legitimate manufacturers tools to investigate suspicious products and strengthen oversight of the supply chain.

This matters when medicines are recalled.

Implementation must nevertheless remain practical and proportionate. Smaller manufacturers face substantial costs for printers, cameras, software, servers, integration and training. Clear regulatory guidance, standardised technical requirements and adequate implementation support are essential. Success should be measured not by the number of barcodes printed, but by how reliably medicines can be connected to their verified identities and movements through the legitimate supply chain.

Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry has an opportunity to turn serialisation from a regulatory obligation into a genuine quality-management tool. The humble 2-D barcode can become a digital link between manufacturer, regulator, distributor, pharmacist and patient.

The future of pharmaceutical quality depends not only on what medicine is made, but on whether its origin, batch, individual identity and movements can be trusted.

That is the real promise of Track and Trace: a more transparent, accountable healthcare system.

The writer is a pharmacist, LUMS alum, and a financial literacy expert. He tweets at: @DrZeeshanKhanA1

Trump takes Clinton lawsuit to Supreme Court after $1 mln sanctions

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump asked the U.S. Supreme Court on Friday to revive his dismissed lawsuit accusing his 2016 Democratic rival Hillary Clinton, former FBI Director James Comey and others of conspiring to undermine his campaign by linking it to Russia.

Trump filed the appeal after a federal judge dismissed the lawsuit and ordered him and one of his lawyers to pay nearly $1 million in sanctions for bringing what the court described as a "frivolous" case. A federal appeals court later upheld both the dismissal and the sanctions.

Trump filed the lawsuit in 2022, after leaving office following his 2020 election defeat. The lengthy complaint, filed in federal court in Florida, named Clinton, Comey, former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele, the Democratic National Committee and numerous other defendants. Trump, who has repeatedly pursued legal action against political opponents, alleged that Clinton and her allies conspired before the 2016 election to discredit him by promoting what he called a "false narrative" that his campaign had colluded with Russia.

The lawsuit included claims of racketeering and conspiracy to commit injurious falsehood, among other allegations. Trump defeated Clinton in the 2016 election despite losing the national popular vote. He served his first term as president from 2017 to 2021.

U.S. government officials have accused Russia of interfering in the 2016 election. An investigation led by former FBI Director Robert Mueller documented extensive contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian operatives who sought to influence the election in Trump's favor. Trump has dismissed allegations of Russian interference as a "hoax."

Since losing to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020, Trump has repeatedly made false claims of widespread voting fraud in that election. He regained the presidency by defeating Democrat Kamala Harris in 2024 and has continued to make those claims. U.S. District Judge Donald Middlebrooks dismissed Trump's lawsuit against Clinton, citing numerous deficiencies, including that Trump had waited too long to bring some of his claims. The judge likened the lawsuit to a "two-hundred-page political manifesto outlining his grievances against those that have opposed him." Middlebrooks later ordered Trump and his lead attorney in the case, Alina Habba, to pay nearly $1 million in fees and costs. He imposed the sanctions for bringing a lawsuit that he said was intended "to dishonestly advance a political narrative." The judge also criticized Trump and his lawyers for a "continuing pattern of misuse of the courts."



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a joint press conference with Ukrainian President Volodimir Zelenskiy (left) at the Dolmabahçe Working Office.



A demonstration was held in Trappes, a town west of Paris, the capital of France, to commemorate the victims of the racist attack and to protest against racism. Former French Minister for Ecological Transition, Segolene Royal, also participated in the demonstration.

Trump says US may join Saudi strikes against Houthis in Yemen

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump said Saturday that Washington may join Saudi strikes against the Houthis in Yemen following an attack on an airport in Riyadh.

Asked by reporters whether he had decided to take part in the strikes, Trump said: "We may. We're going to look at it. We just found out about the recent attack. We will make a decision. We move very quickly." His remarks came after King Khalid International Airport in the Saudi capital temporarily suspended operations Saturday following an attack that left several people injured, according to the country's civil aviation authority. The General Authority of Civil Aviation said in a statement that the airport was attacked Saturday afternoon, adding that authorities were still determining the number of people injured. The US and UK embassies in Saudi Arabia also urged their citizens Saturday to avoid the airport following attacks.

Magnitude 7.6 earthquake rocks Panama, tremors reach Colombia

PANAMA CITY, (Agencies): A magnitude 7.6 earthquake jolted Panama on Friday morning, forcing evacuations as buildings swayed in the capital and tremors spread across the border into neighboring Colombia.

The quake was centered about 10 kilometers (6 miles) southwest of the remote community of Pitaloza Arriba, in the central province of Herrera, the U.S. Geological Survey said. It struck at a depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles).

Visibly shaken residents of Panama City gathered outside as they waited for news of the quake's impact on Friday.

"We felt it very strongly. It knocked things over in the kitchen, but we're very scared," Rosendo Domínguez, 60, who is from Herrera province, where the earthquake struck, told The Associated Press by phone. "Everyone is outside, scared."

Aftershocks continued to shake the streets on Friday shortly after the quake. The National Weather Service issued a tsunami warning Friday for the coasts of Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino called for calm on Friday, writing on X: "What happened should not be used to cause alarm or disorder."

Omar Smith of the National Civil Protection Service said on the Telemetro Reporta news channel that damage was concentrated in the central provinces of Veraguas, Herrera and Los Santos. He said there were no reports of damage in the capital, which is known for its hundreds of skyscrapers.

Video aired by local news outlets showed a Catholic cathedral collapsing and part of a hotel's facade falling onto a car in the city of Penonomé, in the central province of Coclé. No casualties were immediately reported.

Panama lies along the "Ring of Fire," a 40,000-kilometer (25,000-mile) arc of volcanoes and fault lines around the Pacific Basin, where most of the world's earthquakes occur.

Panama's Civil Protection said it was investigating possible damage in regions near the epicenter.

US sanctions on ICC spark global backlash, EU calls for action

BRUSSELS, (Agencies): The U.S. faced mounting international criticism Friday over its sweeping sanctions against the International Criminal Court (ICC), as European governments, Canada and Japan rallied behind the tribunal and warned that Washington's move threatened international justice and judicial independence.

In a joint statement, the foreign ministers of Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the U.K., alongside their counterparts from Canada and Japan, expressed strong opposition to the sanctions, warning of serious consequences for the court's operations and personnel. "We, the undersigned States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), reaffirm our continued and unwavering support for the independence, impartiality, and integrity of the ICC," the ministers said.

They cautioned that the restrictions, if implemented, would significantly affect the tribunal's work, its employees and their families, while welcoming preparations aimed at maintaining its operations.

The eight countries pledged to maintain dialogue with nations outside the Rome Statute, the treaty establishing the ICC, ahead of the Assembly of States Parties in December.

"We will continue to work together to support the Court's vital work, uphold the rules-based international system, and advance accountability," they said.

The ICC itself denounced the measures as an attempt to obstruct justice and intimidate those cooperating with the tribunal.

The sanctions represent "an assault on the rule of law and on the very foundations of the international legal order," the court said, warning that they undermine the principle that no individual is above the law.

The tribunal vowed to continue its work despite the restrictions but urged its member states to defend its independence.

"The Court, for its part, will not be deterred," it said, adding that its future also depended on the governments that established it.

The European Commission similarly criticized Washington's decision and pledged to consider measures to protect the tribunal and European businesses affected by the sanctions.

"The EU stands ready to take any necessary measures to enable the Court to carry out its work," the commission said, referring to investigations and prosecutions involving war crimes and crimes against humanity. Dutch Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen described the sanctions as deeply regrettable but emphasized that a six-month period before their implementation would allow time for negotiations.

"We will stand firm in defence of the Court," he said, adding that service providers could continue working with the tribunal during the transition period.

Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot called for more decisive European action, urging the EU to activate its Blocking Statute to shield the court from the effects of U.S. sanctions.

"Europe must act," Prevot said, announcing plans to raise the issue with EU foreign ministers and at the upcoming European Council meeting. German Justice Minister Stefanie Hubig also condemned the decision, highlighting Washington's historic role in establishing international criminal accountability following World War II.



The G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting was held in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (left) and Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan (left) also attended the meeting.



Rahmi Temel, a crew member of the 'Tugberk Imamoglu' ship, which sank after colliding with the 'Alsu' ship off the coast of Silivri, was laid to rest in Izmir. Temel, a retired petty officer, was mourned by his wife Semra Temel and daughters Merve Temel (center) and Asli Temel Büyük (left).

Yemeni army says over 1,150 Houthi fighters killed in 1,900 strikes

SANAA, (Agencies): The Yemeni army claimed Saturday that it killed more than 1,150 Houthi fighters in over 1,900 strikes across several fronts in the past 24 hours.

Staff Col. Majid Abdullah al-Nuzaili, spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces, said on US social media company X that the military carried out the strikes under Operation Dawn of Yemen across the eastern, western and southwestern fronts.

He said the strikes targeted weapons and ammunition depots, fortifications, military camps and positions, strategic high ground, reinforcements, assembly areas, artillery positions, transport and supply vehicles, and "high-value" military targets deep inside Houthi-held territory. Citing preliminary battlefield assessments, Nuzaili claimed the operations "neutralized more than 1,150 militants," referring to Houthi fighters. He said the strikes also destroyed or disabled more than 180 combat, transport and supply vehicles and other military assets. The operations reduced the Houthis' ability to maneuver, provide support and sustain combat operations, he claimed.

Indonesia's wildfires endanger orangutans, scorch forests

JAKARTA, (Agencies): Wildfires raging across parts of Indonesia's Borneo island are threatening endangered orangutans, forcing rescuers to evacuate animals found injured, stranded or struggling to survive amid thick smoke and scorched forests.

Among dozens of orangutans rescued from fires across Sumatra and Borneo in recent months was a female Bornean orangutan known as Novita. Rescuers found her clinging to a nearly leafless tree as dense smoke engulfed the charred landscape of the Katune forest in Central Kalimantan province, said Jamartin Sihite, chairman of the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation.

"The palms of her hands and the soles of her feet suffered burns that were likely sustained when Novita crossed a burned area while trying to reach a tree," Sihite told The Associated Press in an interview. He said Novita, estimated to be 3 to 4 years old, was tranquilized, given oxygen and intravenous fluids, and taken to the rehabilitation center in Nyaru Menteng.

Once her burns have healed, Novita will be evaluated to determine whether she can climb and survive in her natural environment, Sihite said.

"We have previously released orangutans missing several fingers, and they were still able to survive in the forest, so we remain hopeful that Novita can eventually return to the wild." Forest and land fires in Indonesia have worsened this year as El Niño intensifies a prolonged dry season, affecting not only the Indonesian part of Borneo but also some regions of Sumatra.

Russian strikes kill 8 in Ukraine as Trump's diesel deal backfires

KYIV, (Agencies): Russian strikes killed at least eight people, including three children, in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region on Saturday, as President Donald Trump's announcement of a deal to import Russian diesel fuel drew sharp criticism from Kyiv over concerns that the shipments would help finance Moscow's war.

At least 16 people were wounded when Russian aerial bombs struck residential buildings in the southeastern region, Ivan Fedorov, co-chair of the regional defense council, said. The attack came amid an intensifying Russian bombardment that has killed more than 55 people across Ukraine over the past four days, according to Ukrainian officials. The two countries remain largely deadlocked along the front line more than 4.5 years after Russia launched its full-scale invasion, while their forces continue to wage a long-range aerial war. The latest casualties underscored the mounting pressure on Ukraine as it struggles to defend its territory against increasingly deadly Russian attacks. They also came a day after Trump announced an agreement with Russian President Vladimir Putin to supply diesel to the United States and global markets, marking a significant shift in Washington's approach to Moscow.

Vance refuses to back Trump's Iran strikes despite president's demand for public endorsement

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): US Vice President JD Vance declined to say whether he would have authorised strikes on Iran to prevent the country from developing a nuclear weapon, sidestepping President Donald Trump's calls for him to say the attacks were necessary and that he would carry them out again.

Speaking at a White House press conference alongside Trump, Vance said the decision to attack Iran in February was Trump's call, "and my job is to support the president of the United States."

The answer underscored the delicate balancing act the vice president and his party face as the Iran conflict creates domestic political challenges.

In a blunt midterm election postmortem, Vance blamed the war for Republicans' historic losses and called for the US to exit the conflict. Many viewed his statement, posted on social media, as a break with Trump as the vice president considers a 2028 White House bid.

"The reason we lost is the war," Vance wrote. "The president himself said so last night. If you'd like to argue it was worth it, that losing the Senate for the next 6 years was worth it, then do so. Argue it was a worthwhile cost to pay." Trump on Friday said he was not unhappy with Vance's conclusion, but said it lacked a crucial element: an acknowledgement that the strikes were necessary and that Vance would make the same decision. "People that work for me, they have a right to their opinion," Trump said. "But I say, I know the Iranians, and, frankly, they're crazy." When asked later in the press conference if the war was worth Republicans' steep congressional losses, Vance did not explicitly endorse the operation. "What I've said is the goal of keeping Iran from getting a nuclear weapon is absolutely what we need to be doing," Vance said. "It's the biggest state sponsor of terrorism. If they had a nuclear weapon, they would use it as leverage, or, God forbid, they would attack and kill thousands, hundreds of thousands, potentially, of innocent people.



First Lady of Uzbekistan Ziroat Mirziyoyeva watch fashion show featuring outfits designed by the Vocational Training Institutes after the 1st High Honorary Board Meeting of the Family and Women Council of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) at Cankaya Mansion in Ankara

Indian authorities detains 'Cockroach' leaders amid voter list protests

NEW DELHI, (Agencies): Indian authorities mounted a sweeping security crackdown across New Delhi, detaining thousands of protesters as the country's youth-led "Cockroach" movement sought to escalate a nationwide campaign against a contentious revision of voter lists.

The dispute has fueled anger at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government and election authorities. Police intercepted demonstrators before they could reach Jantar Mantar, the designated protest site in the heart of the capital.

Officers chased away some protesters and detained many others, with several dragged away and bundled into police vehicles before being taken to temporary detention centers. Several leaders of the "Cockroach" movement were also detained before reaching the venue, severely disrupting the planned demonstration before it could begin. The security operation extended well beyond the protest site, with police setting up checkpoints on roads leading into the capital.



In Italy, a 24-hour strike was called by labor unions to protest the high cost of living, the resources allocated to armaments, and wars, while tens of thousands of people held protest marches in many cities.

Pakistan wants to bring Muslim world together on common platform, says Defence Minister

SIALKOT, (APP): Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif highlighted Pakistan's international diplomatic standing, military achievements, national security challenges and the importance of educating younger generations.

Speaking at the University of Central Punjab convention here, he said Pakistan had achieved a significant position on the international diplomatic stage following its military success against India, adding that Pakistan had defeated an enemy five times larger and described the outcome as a historic achievement.

Khawaja Asif said that India's military personnel, senior military officials, media outlets and leadership had acknowledged the outcome, adding that the Indian leadership had made no counter-claim.

The defence minister described the development as a major honour for Pakistan, marking a significant moment in the country's history and strengthening its position on the international diplomatic stage.

He also paid tribute to the armed forces of Pakistan for their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, saying that their commitment and sacrifices had played a vital role in safeguarding the country's independence and security.

He paid tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces for their years-long fight against terrorism, highlighting the immense sacrifices made by military personnel in defending the country's sovereignty and independence.

"For years, our armed forces have been fighting terrorism and sacrificing their lives to protect Pakistan. They have watered the soil of this country with their blood to safeguard its freedom," he added.

Khawaja Asif referred to remarks by the US president, who reportedly mentioned on 11 occasions how many Indian aircraft Pakistan had shot down during the conflict.

He stated that Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir were continuing to strengthen the country's position globally, adding that the prayers and support of the people had also played an important role in the country's achievements.

He emphasized the need for unity among the approximately 2.5 billion Muslims worldwide, saying Pakistan wanted to help bring the Muslim world together on a common platform.

The defence minister said Pakistan had demonstrated the importance of self-reliance in national defence.

Khawaja Asif called for comprehensive reforms in Pakistan's education curriculum, saying the younger generation has limited knowledge of the country's political, constitutional and historical journey due to shortcomings in the education system.

Khawaja Asid said the younger generation had little understanding of Pakistan's political life during the 1950s and the country's constitutional development.



BANGKOK: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani meets President of the Senate of Thailand H.E. Mongkol Surasajja



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, lays the foundation stone of an auditorium at the University of Narowal

APHC urges global community to support right of Kashmiris, Palestinians to freedom

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Former Information Secretary of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has expressed concern over Indian policies in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), drawing parallels with Israeli practices in occupied Palestine. In a statement issued here, he said that India's domicile and settlement policies in IIOJK were raising concerns about attempts to change the demographic composition of the territory. He said the policies resembled what he described as Israel's settlement practices in Palestine, while growing defence and security cooperation between India and Israel had raised concerns over the possible transfer of military technologies and practices. The APHC leader said that the people of Kashmir and Palestine had faced decades of dispossession and repression.

Our children are future of country: PM Shehbaz

LAHORE, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has directed the authorities to accelerate construction of Daanish Schools across the country, ensuring round-the-clock work for their timely completion, while stressing that no compromise on their quality standards would be acceptable.

He was chairing a review meeting to assess progress on the construction of Daanish Schools nationwide.

"Our children are the future of the country, and Daanish Schools represent an investment in a bright future," the prime minister said, adding that admission to these institutions would be granted strictly on merit to children belonging to the poorest and most deserving families.

He directed the relevant authorities to adopt modern artificial intelligence (AI) and information technology (IT)-based methods for the education and training of students to equip them with contemporary knowledge and skills. The prime minister also ordered third-party validation to assess the quality of infrastructure, facilities and services being provided at Daanish Schools.

Directing the Ministry of Communications, he called for establishing an efficient road network to ensure easy access to Daanish Schools in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

He further directed the authorities to present a strategy for establishing Daanish Schools in the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly FATA) at the earliest.

Pakistan pushes for location-specific disaster alerts to save lives

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik called for shifting Pakistan's disaster management approach from reactive response to prevention, stressing the need to harness space technology, satellite imagery, radar and hyperspectral data, artificial intelligence and advanced predictive modelling to identify risks before they turn into disasters.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the five-day UN/Pakistan International Conference on "Leveraging Space Technology for Early Warning for All (EW4All), Climate Action and Disaster Risk Assessment," hosted by the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), the minister emphasized that scientific data must be translated into practical and timely interventions to prevent loss of life and property.

Drawing an analogy with cardiology, Dr. Musadik Malik said that just as early diagnosis and timely treatment could prevent a patient from requiring surgery, scientific monitoring and accurate forecasting should help prevent disasters and minimize their impact.

He highlighted Pakistan's growing space capabilities and stressed that a warning without a specific address was effectively a warning addressed to no one. He called for moving beyond broad regional forecasts towards precise, location-specific alerts that could reach individual households and vulnerable communities.

The minister called for annual satellite-based reports on floodplains and encroachments, stronger coordination among institutions and across borders, accurate mapping of disaster-prone areas and greater engagement of young innovators through collaborative research, hackathons and innovation initiatives.

He emphasized that science must serve humanity and that rescue operations should be the last resort rather than the first response, with the protection of vulnerable people remaining the ultimate purpose of technology.

The five-day conference concluded in Islamabad, bringing together around 250 participants from across Pakistan, including representatives of federal and provincial ministries, academia and relevant national institutions, alongside delegates and representatives from 22 countries.

The broad participation reflected strong national and international engagement and a shared commitment to strengthening space-based early warning systems, climate action and disaster risk reduction.

The closing ceremony was also attended by Chairman SUPARCO and President of the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology (ISNET), Muhammad Yousaf Khan; Lorant Czaran, Director, Space Applications, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA); the Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination; the Secretary, Rehabilitation Department, Government of Sindh; and representatives of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), ISNET, Kazakhstan Gharysh Sapary and other international organizations.



Federal Minister for Communication Abdul Aleem khan presided high level meeting at NHA regional Headquarters

Hostile forces wants to plunge Pakistan into chaos, insecurity: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Coordinator of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said Islam is a religion of knowledge, peace and humanity, and that banning girls' education is contrary to Islamic Shariah.

Addressing students at Iqra Pioneer College in Daska, he said while girls were being deprived of education in Afghanistan, terrorist elements associated with Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan in Pakistan were targeting innocent girls.

He described the attack on a girls' college in Nushki as an act against humanity and a grave assault on the future of Balochistan's daughters. He said anti-Islam and anti-Pakistan terrorist groups sought to mislead the younger generation by invoking the Quran, Sunnah and Islamic Shariah. Their terrorist ideologies and actions, he stressed, had no connection with Islam. He said these groups, acting as instruments of hostile forces, wanted to plunge Pakistan into the chaos and insecurity experienced by Libya, Iraq, Yemen and Somalia. However, he expressed confidence that, by the grace of Allah, the sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces and national unity, these conspiracies would fail. "We have defeated terrorism before and will defeat it again," he said. Ashrafi said the guiding principles of the Pakistan Army were faith, piety and jihad in the way of Allah. He said the country's brave officers and soldiers prayed to Allah for martyrdom even during their late-night prayers. He added that anti-Pakistan forces were attempting to create divisions between the nation and the armed forces through social media, rumours and negative propaganda, but these conspiracies would never succeed. He said Pakistan had earned exceptional respect and standing in the Muslim world.



FAISALABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister Senator Rana Sanaullah Khan presents trophies and prizes to position holders during a buffalo milk competition

Pakistan urges Taliban regime to end repression of women, curb terrorism from Afghan soil

UNITED NATIONS, (Agencies): Pakistan urged Afghan Taliban authorities to "take decisive action" against terrorist groups operating from Afghan territory, questioning the Taliban's "complicity and support" for groups including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and reaffirming its right to self-defence.

The Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations, in a press release, noted that Counsellor Muhammad Jawad Ajmal, addressing the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, underscored that "terrorism remained at the heart of Afghanistan's challenges." He expressed concern over the presence and activities of terrorist groups, along with their affiliates operating from Afghan territory. Highlighting the nexus between the Afghan Taliban regime and these groups, Ajmal noted "the role of external actors supporting proxy elements targeting Pakistan and other neighbouring countries."

The Taliban's continued failure to publicly denounce these groups raised serious concern about their complicity and support, he said. Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have strained due to recurring cross-border terrorism and security concerns. Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Afghan Taliban administration to prevent terrorist organisations, particularly the TTP, from using its territory to launch attacks inside Pakistan.

The release noted that Ajmal highlighted the civilian cost of the complicity, saying that more than 4,700 innocent Pakistanis had lost their lives over the past three years alone in terrorist attacks emanating from Afghan territory.

Bharath stresses coordination to strengthen immunization

Says better integration between the Polio Eradication Programme and the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) is essential for building a robust and sustainable vaccination system

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Minister of State for Health Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath has emphasized stronger federal and provincial coordination and closer integration of polio and routine immunization programmes to improve vaccination coverage and reach unvaccinated children across Pakistan.

Addressing an event on strengthening the country's immunization system, the minister highlighted that Pakistan had reported nine polio cases in 2026, while 81.3 per cent of children were fully immunized, according to the latest survey.



He stressed the need to leverage the extensive field network of the polio programme and adopt joint strategies to reach zero-dose children, underserved communities, urban slums and mobile populations.

The minister said better integration between the Polio Eradication Programme and the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) was essential for building a robust and sustainable vaccination system.

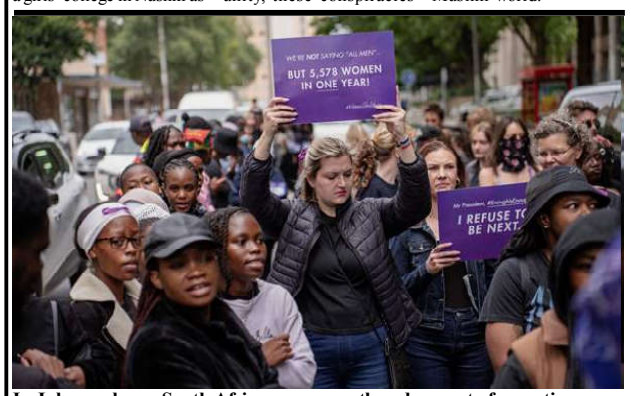
National EOC Coordinator and Joint Secretary Immunization Muhammad Anwar ul Haq, Director General of the Federal Directorate of Immunization Dr. Musa Khan, Balochistan EOC Coordinator Inam ul Haq and members of the national core team also attended the event.

Balochistan govt's development vision turning Gwadar into modern coastal city

QUETTA, (APP): Under the development vision of Balochistan government and overseen by the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), significant initiatives have been undertaken over the past two decades to advance the construction, development, modern urban planning, and provision of essential amenities in Gwadar.

According to official source, these projects encompass the construction and rehabilitation of roads, water supply systems, sewerage and drainage networks, sports grounds, parks, government buildings, coastal protection infrastructure, fisheries facilities, the restoration of historical heritage, tree plantation drives, and the installation of street lighting.

The development vision included the construction and growth of approximately 253 kilometers of roads, the construction and rehabilitation of 23 kilometers of roads and streets, the laying of 300 kilometers of water distribution lines, and the installation of 150 kilometers of main water transmission lines. The official mentioned that the infrastructure also features four large underground water storage tanks with a reported total capacity of 10 million gallons.



In Johannesburg, South Africa, women gathered as part of an action organized by the 'Women For Change' movement to demonstrate against gender-based violence and femicide.

ECP targets 175,000 women in voter registration drive

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will launch a pilot project in Kasur district of Punjab and Qambar Shahdadkot district of Sindh from December 2026 to February 2027 to facilitate the registration of 174,845 women as voters and help reduce the gender gap in electoral rolls through improved access to identity cards and voter registration services. According to ECP, the initiative aims to identify eligible women who do not possess Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) or are not registered as voters, persuade them to complete the process and facilitate their registration through door-to-door outreach and mobile registration facilities.

Under the initiative, the Commission will facilitate the registration of 115,689 women in Kasur and 59,156 in Qambar Shahdadkot.

The project will initially prioritize statistical blocks with a higher gender gap in voter registration, based on available data. The required data will be collected in November 2026, followed by registration activities from December 2026 to February 2027. Local social workers and enumerators will conduct door-to-door visits to prepare statistical block wise lists of eligible women and raise awareness about the importance of obtaining CNICs and registering as voters. To improve access, the ECP will coordinate with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to deploy Mobile Registration Vans (MRVs) to women's doorsteps. Registration facilities will also be provided at centres established in government buildings. The education and health sectors, civil society organizations, community representatives and other relevant stakeholders will support the commission in mobilizing communities, raising awareness and facilitating women's registration.

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