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CM Bugti highlights reforms, rejects misleading narrative on Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, said that the situation in Balochistan can neither be described as entirely ideal nor is the picture presented by certain quarters outside the province accurate. The reality lies somewhere between these two extremes, while the negative perception and one-sided narrative are harming not only the province but also the State of Pakistan and government initiatives.

He expressed these views while speaking on a private television program.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the national media usually remembers Balochistan only when an unfortunate incident occurs, whereas the province's positive developments, development projects, and reforms do not receive adequate attention. He said that several welfare programs for youth are underway, services at government hospitals have improved significantly, all government schools in the province have become functional, and nearly 17,000 teachers have been recruited with complete transparency and on merit. However, unfortunately, these achievements do not receive the recognition in the national media that they deserve.

The Chief Minister said that Balochistan needs to be understood in the context of its geographical realities. He stated that in the past, some divisions and districts were so vast that effective administrative oversight was not possible. Keeping this need in view, new divisions and districts are being established to improve the state's access to the people, strengthen the administrative structure, and provide government services at the doorstep of residents in remote areas. He said that the objective of creating smaller administrative units is to improve governance, ensure prompt resolution of public issues, and bring underdeveloped areas into the national development mainstream. He clarified that this step is being taken to ensure public service, administrative convenience, and the effective presence of state institutions. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that major world powers and the international community stand with the State of Pakistan, not with terrorist organizations. He said that anti-Pakistan terrorist elements are receiving facilitation and patronage from Afghan territory, despite commitments made to the international community that Afghan soil would not be used against any other country. He alleged that the facilitators, financiers, and trainers behind various terrorist groups are all linked to the same Indian intelligence network, "RAW," and said that it is the source behind all of them.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review progress regarding Privatization programme.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail chairs the 13th senate meeting of University of Balochistan.

Agricultural development vital for Pakistan's economic growth, food security: PM

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, directed the completion of all stages of privatization initiative within the prescribed timelines, stressing close coordination among ministries and institutions to achieve the government's targets. Chairing a meeting to review progress on the privatization of state-owned enterprises, the prime minister said all milestones under the privatization programme must be implemented according to set schedule.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant to PM Haroon Akhtar and other senior government officials, PM Official Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister directed relevant authorities to ensure the privatization of the Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL) in a manner which safeguards the bank's core mandate of supporting Pakistan's agricultural sector.

He also emphasized that the bank should continue focusing on agricultural credit and financial services to small and medium-sized farmers after privatization, saying improved access to finance is essential for increasing farm productivity per acre.

He said agricultural development is critical to Pakistan's economic growth and food security.

Officials of the Ministry of Privatization briefed the meeting on progress under the government's privatization agenda.



QUETTA: Secretary Information Imran Khan and Director Public Relations Balochistan Saeed Shahwani called on Provincial Ministers Mir Shoaib Nosherwani and Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi.

PAC to ensure transparent, effective, lawful use of public resources

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A meeting of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was held today in the Committee Room of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly under the chairmanship of PAC Chairman Asghar Ali Tareen.

The meeting was attended by committee members Zamrak Khan Achakzai, Mir Muhammad Khan Lehri, Rehmat Saleh Baloch, Zabid Ali Reki, Local Government Department Secretary Abdul Rauf Baloch, Balochistan Assembly Special Secretary (PAC) Siraj Lehri, Additional Secretary of the Law Department Saeed Iqbal, Washuk District Council Chairman Elahi Bakhsh Reki, and others.

The meeting was convened in light of a report submitted by Provincial Assembly member (PB-31) and PAC member Zabid Ali Reki regarding the development budget of the Washuk District Council for the fiscal year 2025–26.

The committee was informed that, according to the report, the approval and processing of the district council's development budget amounting to Rs71.500 million was carried out without taking the chairman and thirteen elected members of the district council into confidence. The report also pointed out discrepancies between the budget approved by the district council and the budget uploaded on the Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (BPPRA) portal. During the meeting, all required original and certified records relating to the Washuk District Council's 2025–26 development budget were presented before the committee. The committee conducted a detailed review of the approved development budget, budget estimates, meeting agendas, minutes, resolutions, scheme-wise fund allocations, administrative and technical approvals, PC-I documents, tender records, documents uploaded on the BPPRA portal, work orders, relevant files, correspondence, and other related documents.

Addressing the meeting, PAC Chairman Asghar Ali Tareen said that the committee would fulfill its constitutional and legal responsibilities to ensure the transparent, effective, and lawful use of public resources. He said they wanted the proceedings and the meeting to serve as a model for the future in promoting accountability, transparency, and good governance.

Naqvi's new administrative units remarks 'make no sense': Rana

ISLAMABAD (ANN): Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah said that Mohsin Naqvi's statement regarding the creation of new administrative units or provinces was difficult to understand. Speaking to a private television channel, Rana Sanaullah said Mohsin Naqvi had made a strange statement. "I listened to his speech, but I could not understand what he was trying to say. It seems the issue was significant, and he wanted to say something in a limited way but failed to do so. Once he said it, one statement did not match the other. I simply could not understand what he was saying or why he was saying it." Rana Sanaullah said that when a person makes a statement, it reflects his personal opinion, and it is Mohsin Naqvi's responsibility to clarify what he meant by his remarks.

CM Bugti reviews preparations for Independence Day celebrations

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A high-level meeting chaired by Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti was held to review preparations for the Independence Day celebrations. Balochistan Corps Commander Lieutenant General Rahat Naseem Ahmed Khan attended the meeting as a special participant.

The meeting reviewed in detail the comprehensive strategy and arrangements for celebrating Independence Day across the province with national spirit, discipline, and enthusiasm. It was decided that Independence Day celebrations would be held in a befitting manner at all divisional and district headquarters across Balochistan. The events will include national flag-hoisting ceremonies, patriotic songs, cultural, educational, and public programs to further promote patriotism and national unity, particularly among the younger generation.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti directed all commissioners, deputy commissioners, and relevant departments to finalize all arrangements in a timely manner to ensure the celebrations are organized, dignified, and memorable, with public participation in every district. He said that all programs, including flag-hoisting ceremonies, patriotic songs, cultural, and educational activities, should reflect a strong national spirit.

BHC cancels law licenses issued under invalid Bar Council rules

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A majority bench of the Balochistan High Court, comprising Chief Justice Justice Muhammad Kamran Khan Malakhail, Justice Shaukat Ali Rakhshani, and Justice Muhammad Aamir Nawaz Rana, announced its reserved judgment in Constitutional Petition (C.P. No. 471 of 2026), declaring the controversial amendments made to the Balochistan Bar Council Rules to be inconsistent with the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, and the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973, and consequently striking them down.

The Court held that the amendments made to the Balochistan Bar Council Rules do not conform to the requirements of the law and the Constitution and are therefore set aside to that extent.

The Court further held that all judges on the bench unanimously agreed that the interviews conducted by the committee constituted under the said amendments were not in accordance with the provisions of the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973.

Balochistan launches major skills development drive to produce future IT professionals

QUETTA, (VoM Report): To equip the youth of Balochistan with modern technical skills and provide them with sustainable employment opportunities, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has launched a landmark initiative under the Chief Minister Youth Employment Program.

Under the program, 1,000 talented and capable young people from across the province will receive practical training and formal employment opportunities at some of Pakistan's leading software houses.

This flagship program is being implemented under the supervision of the Balochistan Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (B-TEVTA) in collaboration with Q-Tech. Applications for the program were received through an online portal to ensure transparency, and the implementation process has now entered its next phase.

To ensure transparency and merit, shortlisting tests and interviews for thousands of students from all districts of Balochistan have been underway for the past three days.

The large participation of young people from remote districts reflects the growing interest in the technical sector across the province.

'Federal govt's countdown begins,' warns Bilawal after 'rigged' AJK elections

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said the federal government's "countdown has begun" after his party secured fewer seats in the ongoing "rigged" elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) government at the Centre is backed by several parties, with the PPP remaining its principal ally. However, during the AJK elections, Bilawal's party repeatedly alleged that the polls were rigged. The PML-N has secured a simple majority to form the government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir after winning 23 of the 45 seats, according to Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah.

"To my friends in the PML-N, can you hear that sound?" The countdown for the federal government has begun," the PPP chairman said in a video message. Announcing a public gathering in Bagh district, Bilawal urged supporters in Poonch to prepare for the rally on August 10, saying: "Poonch, I am coming. Get ready."

Describing the polls as "neither free nor fair", Bilawal alleged they were "rigged elections", "bullet elections", "murderous elections" and "bloody elections".

Despite the outcome, he congratulated party workers, saying the PPP had secured victory in nine electoral seats. "You have won nine seats for the Pakistan Peoples Party despite all this," he said.

Bilawal also vowed to reclaim what he described as seats "stolen" in Mirpur and Muzaffarabad, adding that the PPP would continue its struggle.

"The Pakistan Peoples Party does not lose courage. We do not retreat, and we do not leave the field," he said.

His warning came moments after senior PPP leader and Sindh minister, Sharjeel Inam Memon, also issued a similar warning.



QUETTA: Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani distributing the keys of buses for students of fifteen colleges of Balochistan

Demands peace in Balochistan

Political workers, journalists, ordinary citizens no longer safe in Balochistan, claims Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman

Says if terrorism can be controlled by a single Station House Officer (SHO), then where is that SHO?

QUETTA (ANN): Jamaat-e-Islami Balochistan chief and Member of the Provincial Assembly, Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch, said that if terrorism can be controlled by a single Station House Officer (SHO), then where is that SHO? He said terrorists are still roaming freely on the streets, and according to the government itself, the current system has failed.

He said political workers, journalists, and ordinary citizens are no longer safe in Balochistan. Several journalists have lost their lives while performing their professional duties, yet they still have not been provided adequate protection.



He said Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai should first play a role in securing the release of Imran Khan before taking other political initiatives. He also announced that protest sit-ins would be held at 21 different locations across Balochistan on August 7.

He made these remarks while addressing a press conference at the party's provincial secretariat.

He said Pakistan was founded on the Kalima Tayyiba, but unfortunately Balochistan has been treated as a colony rather than a province. He claimed that those sitting in Islamabad do not regard the people of Balochistan as equal Pakistanis and view the province's resources as spoils.

Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch strongly criticized the current system, saying that no part of Balochistan remains safe due to corruption. He said those who violated the Constitution are now lecturing others on constitutional provisions, while the ground realities are entirely different.

Referring to Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's statement, he said that if terrorism can be controlled by one SHO, then where is that SHO? Terrorists are still moving freely, and by its own admission, the government has acknowledged that the current system has failed. He further said that Rs100 billion had been allocated for maintaining law and order, but those resources were not being properly utilized. He questioned why Balochistan's tribal chiefs and nawabs remained silent on the situation, claiming that while the British had created tribal chiefs in the past, today the establishment has done so. Expressing concerns over administrative divisions, he said political parties should be taken into confidence, but the bureaucracy does not listen to elected representatives. Regarding Mahmood Khan Achakzai's proposed Pashtun Jirga, he said Achakzai should first work for the release of Imran Khan before pursuing other political initiatives. Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch demanded peace in Balochistan, supremacy of the Constitution, protection of people's fundamental rights, and full security for political workers, journalists, and citizens.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

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Balochistan attractive destination for global investment

In a major step toward transforming Balochistan into a hub of economic growth, stability, and opportunity, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti held a highly productive meeting with a high-level delegation of the Asian Development Bank led by Country Director Xiaoqin (Emma) Fan. The meeting reflected growing international confidence in the leadership and development vision of the Government of Balochistan.

At the heart of the discussions was the provincial government's ambitious ten-year comprehensive development plan, a roadmap designed to bring sustainable progress, economic prosperity, and institutional reforms across critical sectors including water resources, agriculture, minerals and mining, education, healthcare, information technology, skills development, and employment generation.

The engagement between the Government of Balochistan and the ADB signals a new chapter of international cooperation and long-term investment in the province. The ADB delegation expressed strong interest in expanding financial and technical support for transformative projects, particularly the strategically important Kachhi Canal and other initiatives aimed at improving water management and agricultural productivity. Such projects are expected to revolutionize farming, strengthen food security, and uplift rural communities across Balochistan.

Chief Minister Bugti's vision for Balochistan is rooted in inclusive development and people-centered governance. Despite resource limitations inherited from years of underdevelopment, the provincial government has demonstrated remarkable commitment to reform, transparency, and merit-based administration. Under CM Bugti's leadership, governance reforms are being accelerated to ensure that development reaches ordinary citizens and creates long-term socioeconomic benefits.

The Chief Minister emphasized that the government is pursuing phased reforms under a carefully designed ten-year strategy that prioritizes sustainable growth, institutional strength, and economic modernization. His clear message to international partners was that Balochistan is no longer viewed through the lens of challenges alone, but as a province full of untapped potential, investment opportunities, and strategic importance.

Equally significant is the government's focus on education and human capital development. In a landmark achievement, the provincial administration has successfully reopened 3,200 previously closed schools while establishing 2,100 new community-based schools. This unprecedented educational expansion reflects the government's determination to empower the youth through access to quality education, modern learning facilities, and skills development programs that prepare them for future economic opportunities.

The meeting also highlighted collaborative efforts in healthcare, information technology, vocational training, and youth employment, sectors that are essential for building a modern and self-reliant Balochistan. Through partnerships with international development institutions, the provincial government aims to equip young people with market-driven skills, create jobs, and stimulate entrepreneurship throughout the province.

Chief Minister Bugti also reassured investors and development partners that the government is fully committed to ensuring peace, stability, and security for all development initiatives. His assurance reflects the improving law-and-order environment in Balochistan and the administration's growing capacity to protect mega projects and facilitate investment activities.

The participation of senior officials, including Provincial Minister for Development and Planning Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Development Zahid Saleem, and Additional Secretary Chief Minister Secretariat Muhammad Fareedun further demonstrated the seriousness and institutional coordination behind the province's development agenda.

The meeting stands as a strong endorsement of the Government of Balochistan's forward-looking policies and reinforces the growing trust of international financial institutions in the province's future. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, Balochistan appears firmly on the path toward peace, prosperity, and sustainable development.

Islamabad Talks 2.0

ANEELA SHAHZAD

The Islamabad Talks 1.0, seemingly unavailing, actually redefined a lot of things.

What was happening behind stage was in fact more defining than what was happening at the stage. Saudi Arabia declaring the arrival of military support from Pakistan; Aramco finalising a $10 billion oil refinery in Gwadar while partnering with PSO, OGDCL, PPL & GHPL; and Pakistan sending its first export container to Uzbekistan via Iran, were all unprecedented shockers.

One should understand that all this did not happen per chance. Rather, this points to increasingly deepening strategic alliance between Pakistan, the Arabs and the Persians. Seems like these players were already measuring their moves for integrating in an emerging Global South environment, just waiting for the right time to play the right moves.

One should understand that in the lapse of the first round of these talks, Pakistan has become the security provider for Saudi Arabia; and this service will soon be sought by other Gulf states.

Also, that Pakistan cannot solely provide this service without China's participation, with whom it shares technology, reconnaissance, intelligence and strategic allegiance.

So, to complete the security architecture, the Peninsula will soon be getting rid of US fighter jets, defence mechanisms, satellite coverage and intelligence penetration, all in one go – replacing them with everything Pakistani and Chinese.

Moreover, having the Saudi refinery closer to finalisation was exactly the push needed for Gwadar and CPEC. With this move, not only will international shipping be refueling from Gwadar, Pakistani consumers will also be getting a 20 per cent cut in oil prices. Topping that, Pakistan's opening of the Pak-Iran-Uzbekistan route means the opening of the long-awaited markets of Central Asia to the world via Pakistan and Iran.

The Saudi oil to the refinery in Gwadar, probably via an undersea pipeline, will also permanently shatter the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor dream and smash the relevance of the I2U2.

One should remember that CPEC is not a lone project, rather, the BRI connects similar corridors via Afghanistan and Iran, and connecting them all internally was always the goal of BRI. This is a future we are looking forward to for the region.

So, were the Islamabad Talks about US-Iran peace, or were they about signaling to the US and Allies that the order of the world has changed. Already in this war, Spain and Italy have categorically disallowed the US the use of their bases in the Mediterranean.

And now Britian, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Greece have refused to join a US-led blockade of Iranian ports. They simply do not want to participate militarily in the Strait of Hormuz conflict.

Already President Pedro of Spain and Prime Minister Meloni of Italy have joined the South Africa suit in the ICC alleging Israel of genocide in Gaza.

Already Chinese diplomacy is on turbo-charge, with Pedro in China for new economic and strategic ties.

And then we have Taiwanese Opposition Leader Cheng Li-wun standing in China, expressing a desire for a "peaceful" resolution to the long-running dispute over the island's future, and saying, "We can't allow the Taiwan Strait to become a Strait of Hormuz."

The fear that the failure of Islamabad Talks would reignite a much fiercer war, with widespread destruction throughout the region, has dissipated with Trump's half-baked blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

The US could not open the Strait despite all its bombing campaigns in straight 39 days; and now when it's clear that the US practically has no allies to stand behind it, the armadas at the mouth of Hormuz are like sitting ducks that will be targeted by Iranian missiles as soon as the ceasefire ends.

How many more billions will be lost then, with the US wasting a billion dollar a day, each day of the war.

But even before the talks first started in Islamabad, Trump had received a light, perhaps from the Divine, when he posted on Truth Social: 'World's Most Powerful Reset', President DJT. He knew more than anyone else that the war had been lost, and with that the US prestige and influence.

Now, Trump has hinted that Islamabad Talks 2.0 may resume in a couple of days, after which he has also given the good news of 'permanently' opening the Strait because President Xi Jinping has agreed not to give weapons to Iran.

The irony is that Hormuz was open for everyone; the US war on Iran caused its closure; then the US called all its friends to help open it and no one came; then the US boasted to close it for Iran; and now the US will re-open it because Trump is happy that China won't give Iran the weapons it was already saying it did not give.

So, what is Islamabad Talks 2.0 for?

Maybe it will be as irrelevant as the US has become. Perhaps it is clear to major powers that if left alone, the US will not be able to row for a long time in the Gulf of Oman or the Arabian Sea.

China and Russia may keep a promise of not providing weapons to Iran, but only if they aren't required anymore, and that the US has left the Arabian Ocean to its natural hires.

What was initiated by the King and his valiant stooges as 'regime change' exercise and a 'God's plan' has ended up in hastening the downfall of an already crumbling empire.

If the US was thinking that boost and pomp and vainglory were the magic beans that make an empire, it was wrong; they only rot the roots of whatever is standing.

Or, does the idea of Islamabad Talks 2.0 remind us of the Yalta Conference where the Big Three – Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt – met to decide who gets what from the spoils of war.

And in all this, does Israel, who started with the greedy idea of 'Greater Israel', want to run away with at least South Lebanon?

Or will Iran draw a red line on that too?

But then, there is always the possibility that the King will receive another 'commandment', and decide to go on with a ground operation after all!

Though it would be extremely unlikely, counter-productive and counter-intuitive; in fact, a suicide mission for the tens of thousands of troops being deployed – but you never know! Your know not, how many ritualistic sacrifices are to be made for the Kingdom of Zion to be established.`

You don't know the esoteric levels.

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Pakistan's mediatory role, an act of self-preservation

SYED MOHAMMAD ALI

In recent weeks, Islamabad has moved to the centre of efforts to de-escalate the US-Iran war, relaying messages, hosting talks and presenting itself as a credible venue for negotiations just as the region edged toward wider catastrophe.

Pakistan's role has been reinforced by the current government close ties with President Trump, and by support from other vital partners such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and China, all of which have helped elevate Islamabad's profile as a go-between.

Pakistan is one of the few countries that currently maintains meaningful lines of communication with all the key players at once. It has a working relationship with Tehran, deep strategic ties to Riyadh, a direct channel to powerbrokers in Washington, and close coordination with Beijing, which has also openly backed Pakistan's mediation efforts.

Pakistan's ongoing mediation in the Middle East has certainly bolstered its diplomatic profile. However, describing Pakistan's proactive engagement in the Gulf as diplomatic opportunism is inaccurate. Islamabad is not merely seeking prestige abroad; it is trying to prevent instability from crossing its own border as well.

Pakistan shares a long frontier with Iran, and its southwestern province of Balochistan is already under intense strain from militancy, weak governance and cross-border insecurity. Pakistani policymakers know that a prolonged war, or worse, state fragmentation in Iran, would cause major turmoil beyond its own borders.

Long-term instability in Iran could easily ricochet into Pakistan's own fragile domestic security landscape, intensifying pressure in restive Balochistan. Mediation is thus not a luxury for Pakistan, but also a form of strategic self-protection.

The economic imperatives are just as urgent. Pakistan remains heavily exposed to Gulf energy flows. According to recent analysis, Qatar and the UAE account for 99 per cent of Pakistan's LNG imports, and Islamabad has already had to implement emergency gas-management measures as the regional conflict disrupted supply chains.

The country is still operating under severe macroeconomic constraints, with limited fiscal space, heavy debt-service pressures and longstanding dependence on imported energy. IMF and World Bank assessments have repeatedly underscored these structural vulnerabilities, warning that Pakistan remains exposed to external shocks.

When the Hormuz disruption drives up import costs, Pakistan does not absorb the hit easily.

It transmits quickly into inflation, balance-of-payments stress and social pressure at home. And the damage goes well beyond oil and gas. Pakistan is one of the world's largest tea-consuming countries, and disruptions linked to the Middle East conflict have already hit tea exports through Mombasa, with millions of kilograms reportedly stranded, freight costs rising, and shipments to Pakistan and other markets rerouted at much higher expense.

The broader agricultural sector is also under increased stress. UN agencies have pointed out how the Gulf is also central to fertiliser production.

Pakistan's own emergency response has already included curbs on LNG supply to the fertiliser sector.

Even where local urea production offers a temporary cushion, Pakistan remains exposed through imported fertilisers and DAP shortfalls. This means the costs of war in the Middle East can reappear in Pakistan's wheat fields, in farm input prices, and ultimately in food inflation for ordinary households.

Thus, Pakistan's diplomacy should be read for what it is: not just an attempt to punch above its weight, but an effort to keep a regional fire from burning into its own economy and security order.

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A strategic Pakistan in a dangerous world

NASIM ZEHRA

The last 72 hours have acquired unusual significance. Against the backdrop of US-Israel aggression targeting Iran, Pakistan's efforts to end the war and help the two sides work towards an agreement have reached a critical stage. Through constant telephonic interaction with Washington's principals, alongside the Tehran visit, Pakistan's COAS-CDF Field Marshal Asim Munir has led the process, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the foreign minister have worked the political and diplomatic channels to build trust and understanding. The prime minister is on a three-nation visit to Saudi Arabia and Turkiye to keep key friends in the region informed and engaged.

Taken together, these moves suggest that Pakistan is no longer merely responding to developments in West Asia. Both principals acknowledge, publicly and privately, Pakistan's extraordinary role as an active participant in peacemaking, not merely a facilitator.

This matters because the central issue today is not simply that multilateralism is under strain. That is already evident.

The more consequential question is whether, in a world marked by war, selective legality, strategic distrust and overlapping regional crises, there remain states with both the incentive and the capacity to slow disorder, defend minimum rules and reopen diplomatic space. Middle powers cannot restore an older order in any full sense. They can, however, help repair parts of a damaged one. They can stabilise, convene, mediate and build coalitions at a moment when several major powers are themselves contributing to fragmentation rather than containing it. What is unfolding globally is the erosion of the rules and assumptions that underwrote the post-1945 order. The UN Charter remains clear on the prohibition of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of states. Yet the international system increasingly displays selective legality, normalised exceptionalism and weakening institutional credibility whenever major strategic interests are involved. Sovereignty, however compromised, formally remains intact, but confidence in the principles embedded in the seventeenth-century Peace of Westphalia is steadily evaporating. Instability reigns.

We have witnessed a US-Israel-triggered war turn rapidly into a wider international crisis, disrupting the global economy and altering the strategic calculations of states far beyond the immediate theatre of conflict. It is precisely in this context that middle powers acquire renewed importance. They can initiate processes, reopen channels, restore some measure of restraint, widen diplomatic space and create platforms for coordination when stronger actors are locked into coercive logic.

Middle powers do not necessarily bring vast material resources into conflict zones, but they can create the critical political space within which engagement becomes possible. In recent weeks, Pakistan has clearly demonstrated that it belongs in this category of consequential middle powers. It possesses demographic weight, military credibility, nuclear deterrent status and geographic centrality linking South Asia with West Asia and China.

It also has political relationships that extend across the Muslim world and into major-power settings. Pakistan's relevance to West Asia is demonstrably strategic. Instability in West Asia affects Pakistan through energy vulnerability, shipping insecurity, financial exposure, regional military pressures and domestic political consequences. Pakistan's diplomacy in recent weeks has therefore been substantive. It has involved sustained engagement with both regional and extra-regional actors. This also explains why Islamabad has increasingly sought not merely to respond to crisis, but to shape the environment within which crisis management occurs.

One important recent development in this regard has received too little attention. On April 14, senior officials from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Egypt met in Islamabad in what was effectively the first serious follow-up to the March 29 meeting of the four foreign ministers. That earlier contact had already begun to be described, informally, as an emerging West Asia Quad. The significance of the April 14 meeting lay in the fact that the effort was not being allowed to remain confined to immediate war diplomacy alone. The purpose appears broader: to explore whether a small group of influential regional states can gradually work towards a more cooperative political understanding on key regional questions. This is not, at least at this stage, a formal alliance or rigid structure. It is better understood as a flexible consultative mechanism.

Pakistan's diplomatic flexibility is one of its strengths. In a region marked by fragmentation, intra-regional rivalries, and persistent external pressures this is an asset. It allows room for confidence-building, issue-based coordination and gradual institutional buy-in, as was evident in the April 14 meeting. There was, significantly, also interest in the possibility of widening the circle over time.

The importance of this lies in the strategic direction it signals. Pakistan appears to be moving, however modestly and incrementally, towards institution-building rather than relying only on crisis-response diplomacy. And in a fractured regional environment, even a flexible consultative mechanism among four key Muslim-majority states can serve as a stabilising force – not through rigid alignment, but through sustained consultation, political signalling and the gradual formation of common ground. Pakistan's diplomacy with China fits into this wider pattern. The Five-Point Initiative of China and Pakistan for Restoring Peace and Stability in the Gulf and Middle East Region, issued in Beijing on March 31, 2026, was the clearest formal expression of this effort. The initiative called for an immediate ceasefire and an end to hostilities; dialogue and negotiations grounded in sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence and security; protection of civilians and civilian facilities, including peaceful nuclear facilities; joint efforts to preserve regional peace, including the security of shipping lanes and energy supplies; and adherence to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law. Analytically, this was not merely a statement of sympathy. It was a middle-power framework for order repair. It linked de-escalation, legality, civilian protection, maritime security and diplomacy within one compact agenda. It also showed Pakistan acting as part of a wider, networked strategy, supported by China and reinforced by broader Muslim-country coordination. Pakistan's role has acquired even greater visibility through its mediation between Washington and Tehran. Whatever the eventual outcome of those talks, this diplomatic fact itself remains significant. Pakistan was operating as mediator, venue provider and political channel at a time of acute regional fracture. That is classic middle-power behaviour. That is why Pakistan's recent, heightened engagement in West Asia carries value and purpose beyond the immediate crisis. Pakistan's role as a middle power has been surfacing with greater clarity since May 2025. In its strategic, military and diplomatic response to Indian aggression, and now to US-Israel aggression against Iran, Pakistan has demonstrated how middle powers can influence outcomes in complex environments. By engaging the US while defending Iran's threatened sovereignty, it has connected regional crises to wider strategic stakes and reminded a fractured system that force is not the only language available to states. Pakistan has demonstrated that middle powers cannot eliminate coercion from international politics, nor can they fundamentally overturn the asymmetries of global power. But they can influence outcomes through proactive, trusted engagement in conflict zones. They can keep open the possibility of accommodation and reconciliatory politics even when formal international structures are weakened or paralysed. That is the deeper significance of Pakistan's present moment. The old order is weakened, and that very weakening is creating both the logic and the space for new forms of inter-state behaviour. Middle powers will shape that space, as Pakistan is now doing in West Asia. Pakistan has factored in the military realities on the ground, the catastrophic potential of an extended war and the urgent necessity of political restraint. In doing so, it has shown that even amid fracture, states with strategic credibility, diplomatic stamina and political trust can still help pull the system back from the brink. That is no small achievement. In a world increasingly driven by force, Pakistan's West Asia moment is a reminder that diplomacy, when backed by seriousness and strategic weight, can still matter profoundly.

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'Violation on one front violation on all fronts,' Araghchi on Lebanon ceasefire

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that the ceasefire between Tehran and Washington is "unequivocally a ceasefire on all fronts, including in Lebanon".

"Its violation on one front is a violation of the ceasefire on all fronts. The US and Israel are responsible for the consequences of any violation," he wrote on X.

The top diplomat's comments come after Netanyahu announced that he had ordered his military to strike Beirut's southern suburbs.

Iranian parliament speaker and lead negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf had called out the US on Monday for breaching its ceasefire with Iran, including by continuing its blockade of Iranian ports and failing to restrain its ally Israel from escalating attacks in Lebanon.

"The naval blockade and escalation of war crimes in Lebanon by the genocidal Zionist regime are clear evidence of US noncompliance with the ceasefire," Ghalibaf wrote in a post on X. "Every choice has a price, and the bill comes due. It will all fall into place," he added.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Monday that Iran and Oman are the only two countries that have a right to "exercise sovereignty" in the Strait of Hormuz.

In comments carried by Iran's IRIB broadcaster, Gharibabadi said Iran has implemented a new process for "controlling traffic and navigation" in the waterway but arrangements are coordinated with Oman.

He said Iran has urged Oman to "not give in to" threats from the US after Trump threatened to "blow up" the country if it does not "behave just like everybody else" with respect to the strait.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei has said on Thursday that any deal with the US to end the war must include guarantees for a ceasefire in Lebanon, where Israel has expanded its attacks and invasion despite a truce in mid-April, according to Al Jazeera.

Speaking at a news conference, Baghaei said: "We insist that a ceasefire in Lebanon is an essential condition for any deal aimed at ending the war."

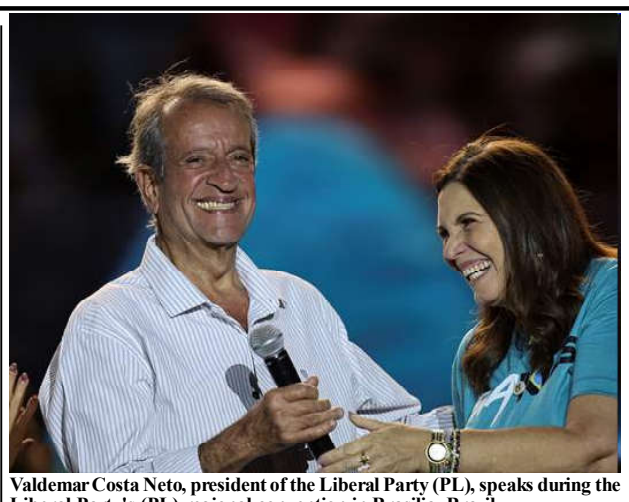
Baghaei also said Iran is not currently engaging in talks with the US on the details of its nuclear programme, according to Al Jazeera.

"We know when it is necessary to act on nuclear matters," Baghaei said. "No negotiations have taken place on the details of the nuclear file. At this stage, our priority is ending the war."

Baghaei also accused the US of having violated the ceasefire, "including this morning". He said, "Iran will take whatever measures we deem necessary to defend Iran's national security."



A giant anti-U.S. billboard is displayed at Enghelab (Revolution) Square in Tehran, Iran



Valdemar Costa Neto, president of the Liberal Party (PL), speaks during the Liberal Party's (PL) regional convention in Brasilia, Brazil

Indian PM Modi meets Myanmar military gov't leader in New Delhi

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: India says it will continue engaging with Myanmar after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Min Aung Hlaing, the leader of the country's military government, in New Delhi.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters on Monday that India's policy is "not intended to be a commentary on the internal political arrangements" in Myanmar and that New Delhi believes engagement is the best way forward.

Western nations have sought to isolate Myanmar's military rulers since they overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a 2021 coup that triggered a crackdown on opponents and a brutal civil war.

The conflict began when the country's army leader, Min Aung Hlaing, ousted the government and detained civilian leaders, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. Some critics and human rights groups have said Min Aung Hlaing's visit to India risks lending legitimacy to the military-backed government.

"We have always proceeded on the principle that sustained dialogue is what is important," Misri said, adding that isolating Myanmar would be counterproductive.

"History has shown that disengagement doesn't give us any results that are better than engagement."

The visit is Min Aung Hlaing's first to India since he was sworn in as president in April following an election that critics say was designed to cement his hold on power. His last visit to India was in 2019, when he served as Myanmar's military chief.

He arrived in India on Saturday, first in the eastern state of Bihar, with a visit to the Buddhist pilgrimage site of Bodh Gaya, where believers say that the Buddha attained enlightenment.

India shares a 1,643-kilometre (1,020-mile) border with Myanmar and a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal.

Philippine president, Rubio discuss 'peace, security' in South China Sea

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr and United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio early Monday discussed "peace and security" in the disputed South China Sea.

In a phone call, Marcos and Rubio discussed a range of bilateral economic and security priorities, including "efforts to advance peace and security in the South China Sea." The disputed waters of minerals-rich South China Sea have seen the Philippines and China regularly engage in verbal clashes due to overlapping maritime claims.

Philippines is one of the oldest military allies of the US in the wider Asia-Pacific region with a mutual defense agreement.

According to the office of Marcos, the two sides discussed "critical regional and economic priorities, as well as bilateral trade matters."

Rubio also reaffirmed US "commitment to developing the Luzon Economic Corridor and exploring ways to address the energy challenges in the region," said the State Department.

The Luzon Economic Corridor is a trilateral initiative of the US, Japan, and the Philippines, according to details shared by the US Embassy in Manila. It also engages their partners, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, South Korea, Sweden, and the United Kingdom — to "catalyse mutual economic growth, create jobs, strengthen connectivity, and improve transport and logistics, energy, and digital infrastructure."

Separately, Chinese Coast Guard Monday conducted "law-enforcement patrol" in waters east of Taiwan in "response to Japan and the Philippines' unilateral announcement of maritime delimitation talks in the area," state-run Xinhua News reported.

In a joint statement last week following talks between Philippines President Marcos and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in Tokyo, the two countries agreed to begin formal negotiations on delimiting the maritime boundaries of their exclusive economic zones and continental shelves.



In Karbala, Iraq, the "Arba'een" events, commemorating the 40th day since the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, and his 72 companions, are continuing.

Israel urges south Beirut residents to leave as strikes intensify

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: The Israeli military has called on residents of the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital Beirut to flee.

In a message in Arabic on X, a military spokesman said that people should leave their homes for their own safety.

If the Hezbollah militia continues its attacks on Israeli cities and towns, the Israeli army will respond with attacks on targets in Beirut's southern suburbs, the message said.

This is the first such evacuation call for this area since a ceasefire came into effect in mid-April.

Israel had already announced new attacks on Hezbollah targets in the Dahiyeh suburbs, prompting many residents to flee the area from the morning. The suburbs are an important Hezbollah stronghold as well as being a densely populated residential area. Many buildings in the area have already been destroyed in the current conflict.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said earlier on Monday he intends to continue talks with the Israeli government despite the escalating tensions between Israel and the Shiite militia Hezbollah.

Israeli and Lebanese representatives are set to meet on Tuesday in Washington for direct talks to end the fighting. However, Hezbollah is not a party to the talks, and the conditions for an effective ceasefire are not promising.

Israel has expanded its ongoing offensive in the south and is advancing further north, while Hezbollah has stepped up its attacks on northern Israel.

Former Syrian general under al-Assad faces torture trial in Vienna

Monitoring Desk

SYRIAN: Two senior security officials from the former Syrian government of ousted ruler Bashar al-Assad are on trial in Austria, accused of torture, grievous bodily harm and sexual assault, the prosecution at Vienna's regional court said on Monday.

The defendants allegedly mistreated detainees themselves and gave orders for others to do so, the prosecutor said.

The former intelligence general is the highest-ranking representative of the former Syrian government to have been arrested in Europe, according to human rights organization the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR). The Berlin-based ECCHR and other organizations including Amnesty International are supporting the prosecution in the case, the prosecutor said.

WHO chief to meet Congo president, as group warns Ebola likely spread

KINSHASA: The head of the World Health Organization was due to meet with Democratic Republic of Congo's president on Monday to discuss the country's Ebola outbreak, which an aid agency warned was likely much than official figures reflect.

Mobile Internet shutdowns

Putin orders PM and FSB security service to ensure key services

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered the prime minister and director of the Federal Security Service (FSB) ensure access to key medical, information and payment services during periods when mobile internet service is limited.

Russia has this year sometimes shut down mobile internet services and cracked down on foreign messenger , forcing millions to turn to VPNs as part of what Putin's opponents say is an attempt to shore up domestic control after four years of war.

In a list of orders published on Sunday by the Kremlin, Putin ordered the and the FSB to "ensure the uninterrupted operation of the most important services" during periods of "limited operation of the Internet".

The order said that Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and FSB Director Alexander were to report back by July 1 on their progress. Putin has cast disruption to Internet and communications as a painful, but sometimes essential security measure needed to to prevent terrorist and Ukrainian drone attacks. But he has said that should be allowed access to vital online services during such periods.

UK wins court case over collapsed Rwanda asylum deal

Monitoring Desk

GRAVELINES: The UK will not have to pay Rwanda millions of pounds over the collapsed asylum agreement that was cancelled by Keir Starmer shortly after he took office, an international court has ruled. The Rwandan government had sought to sue the UK for more than £100m, saying it had breached the terms of the deal.

Signed by the previous Conservative government, it was meant to see the UK pay Rwanda to host asylum seekers who had arrived illegally in the UK. Lawyers representing the UK during the three-day hearing in the Netherlands.



In the first round of the Women's Singles at the WTA 1000 National Bank Open tennis tournament in Toronto, Canada, Ukrainian player Oleksandra Oliynykova (pictured) faced Czech player Karolina Pliskova.

Nepal PM seeks UK, China role against India's interference in its areas

KATHMANDU (INP): Nepalese Prime Minister Balendra Shah's call for Britain and China to intervene in the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura dispute exposes growing resentment, as observers noticed, against India's habit of dictating terms to its smaller neighbors.

Addressing Nepal's Parliament, Shah admitted both Kathmandu and New Delhi had "encroached" on each other's territory and urged third-party mediation.

"We have had talks with Britain, not only with India and China. Britain should also show concern," he said, linking the row to the 1816 Sugauli Treaty signed under British India.

India's Ministry of External Affairs has not responded to Shah's remarks or to Nepal's invitation to London. The dispute flared in 2020 after New Delhi inaugurated a road through Lipulekh Pass for the Kailash Mansarovar yatra, prompting Nepal to release a revised map incorporating Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura and later enshrine it in its constitution.

Analysts said the episode reflects a pattern: India routinely intervenes in the internal and foreign policy matters of Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives under the garb of "regional stability", while rejecting multilateral mechanisms when its own actions are questioned.

US and Iran trade strikes, Kuwait comes under fire as diplomacy drags on

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: The United States and Iran said they had both carried out strikes on military targets, and each accused the other of acting aggressively as omatic efforts to end the three-month US-Israeli war on Iran drag on.

The US military said it had, over the weekend, struck Iranian air defences, a ground control station and two drones that were threatening ships after "aggressive Iranian actions", including shooting down a US drone over international waters.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Monday it had targeted an air base used by the US in response to an attack on southern Iran.

It did not identify the base, but Kuwait activated air defences on Monday and denounced Iranian missile and drone attacks, which it said were undermining efforts to reduce tensions in the region.

Oil prices, which have risen sharply since the start of the war, gained more than 3% on Monday after ' the strikes. Tensions were also fuelled by Israel ordering troops to move further into Lebanon against Tehran-backed Hezbollah.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer Roads CWPP&H Department District Kalat invites sealed bids from eligible bidders who can prove their eligibility and qualification as mention in the bidding documents for the works mentioned below. The estimated cost and other information of works are as under: percentage tender based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2026, Government of Baluchistan amended up-to-date from interested contractors /firms for the work listed below under BPPRA Rules.& Tender complete details please visit http://www.bppra.gob.pk .

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Bid Security @ %	Tender Fee A/C # C02716	Bid submission / Tender opening Date
1	KILLI KHAIL CONSTRUCTION OF BT ROAD OF 365 METER DISTRICT KALAT. TSE-2627071143343	7000000/-	2%	1000	17/08/2026
2	CONSTRUCTION OF B/T ROAD KOHING DISTRICT KALAT. TSE-2627071144913	29850746/-	2%	1000	17/08/2026
3	CONSTRUCTION OF BT ROAD OF KILLI MUGHALZAI II DISTRICT KALAT. TSE-2627071145023	29850746/-	2%	1000	17/08/2026
4	CONSTRUCTION OF B/T ROAD KILLI GHANI ABAD KHALIQABAD, DISTRICT KALAT. TSE-2627081147833	34825871/-	2%	1000	17/08/2026
5	CONSTRUCTION OF BT ROAD N25 TO MUGHALZAI CHOWK VIA GRID STATION DISTRICT KALAT. TSE-2627071145143	59701493/-	2%	1000	17/08/2026

DEADLINE OF SUBMISSION: Technical and financial proposals from intending contractors/firms sealed in two separates envelopes clearly marked with Work title& type of proposal must be delivered by hand or through registered mail to the address mentioned below on before procurement committee in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who choose to attend. The Second sealed envelope containing "financial bids"of technically responsive /qualified bidders will be opened on the same date. **Bids Validity: Ninety days Place:** The place of issuance, submission, inquiries and opening will be - **The office of the Executive Engineer Roads CWPP&H Department District Kalat & Submission Time deadline 10:00 A.m Date 17 August 2026 & Opening Time deadline 11:00 A.m Date 17 August 2026.**

Executive Engineer-Roads
CWPP&H Department
Kalat

DPRQ/PRQ No.556/03-08-2026

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Nigeria's Obi to run for president again after opposition split

Monitoring Desk

LAGOS: Nigerian politician Peter Obi said he would run for president again in January after winning his party's nomination, setting up another contest incumbent Bola Tinubu and a divided opposition.

Obi was declared winner of the Democratic Congress primary on Sunday, less than a month after quitting an alliance that had tried to set up a single opposition challenger.

The acceptance from Obi - who came third in the last election after galvanizing young voters - hit hopes among some opposition backers that he might return to the coalition. It prepares the ground for a re-run of 2023's three-way contest that is likely to whether public anger over rising living costs and insecurity can translate into votes against Tinubu, or whether the anti-government vote will once again be split.

"We must address insecurity with resolve and urgency, for no nation can thrive while its citizens live in trepidation," Obi said in a statement late on Sunday.

Nigeria is grappling with overlapping security crises that stretch far beyond the jihadist insurgency in the northeast, where Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province waged a conflict for more than 15 years.

In the northwest, heavily armed gangs known locally as bandits carry out mass kidnappings for ransom and raids on villages and schools, while north-central states have also seen recurring violence linked to disputes over land and grazing routes.

Voters will also be focused on Tinubu's economic reforms, including the removal of fuel and subsidies and ending currency controls.

Thailand ends visa-free entry for India

NEW DELHI (INP): Thailand has ended visa-free entry for India, which has dealt a serious blow to the tourism diplomacy of the Modi-led Indian government.

Indian tourists are causing a stir around the world due to their rudeness and worst social awareness and as a result, Thailand has imposed strict visa rules on Indian tourists, which is tantamount to a serious blow to Modi's diplomacy on another front.

According to the Indian journal "Economic Times", Thailand has ended visa-free entry for India and implemented a new immigration policy, under which India has also been put on the visa-on-arrival list.

According to the report, Indian tourists will now not be able to enter Thailand without a visa under the temporary visa exemption scheme introduced in 2024. The Thai government has

Chinese navy says

Chinese and US militaries met in Hawaii, stressed communication

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China and the United States held "candid and constructive" on air and maritime safety and discussed measures to improve military maritime security, the Chinese navy said in a statement on Monday.

The two militaries had a working group meeting of the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement in Hawaii from May 28 to 29 and agreed that improved communication could reduce miscalculation and enhance professionalism, the statement said. "China firmly opposes any action to undermine China's and security under the pretext of freedom of navigation and erflight, (and) opposes any infringement, provocation and close-in reconnaissance and harassment targeting China," the statement added.

Country in need of comprehensive reforms rather than despair: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday launched the national song "Tu Shaheen Hai" under the URAAN Pakistan vision, urging the country's youth to embrace Allama Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of Khudi (selfhood) and become agents of national transformation through knowledge, innovation, character and hope.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the song, organised to commemorate the birth anniversaries of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and national poet Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the minister said true development was measured not by skyscrapers, roads or vehicles but by the quality of a nation's human resources. He said Pakistan had historically neglected investments in health, education and population welfare, resulting in poor social indicators compared with many countries.

Under the URAAN Pakistan vision, he said, these sectors had been elevated to the forefront of the national development agenda through institutional reforms, including the National Population Council and coordinated action under the National Economic Council. Ahsan said Independence Day should not merely be celebrated as a historical event but should inspire the nation to strive for excellence in knowledge, character and national dignity.

He described Allama Iqbal as the thinker who provided Pakistan with a complete philosophy of life, teaching that nations were built on character, vision and self-belief rather than geography or natural resources.

Referring to Iqbal's concept of Shaheen, the minister said the national song sought to reconnect the younger generation with the ideals of courage, self-confidence, freedom, perseverance and continuous progress.

He urged young Pakistanis to become problem-solvers instead of critics and to contribute positively through innovation, skills and hard work. Rejecting the perception that Pakistan's system had collapsed, Ahsan said the country was in need of comprehensive reforms rather than despair.

He stressed that stronger local governments, administrative reforms and a modern civil service were essential for making governance more inclusive and responsive.

The minister said Pakistan had demonstrated remarkable resilience by overcoming economic challenges, inflationary pressures, political instability and the aftermath of the 2022 floods. He noted that inflation and interest rates had declined, investor confidence had improved, the stock market had strengthened and the country's digital economy was expanding, attributing the recovery to difficult decisions taken under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.



FAISALABAD: A veiled woman crosses a waterlogged road after heavy monsoon rain, as poor drainage caused flooding in parts of the city.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on promotion of Private Equity to boost investments.

Modi regime responsible for IIOJK terrorism; Kulgam attack a staged drama: Farooq Abdullah

ISLAMABAD, (APP): In a scathing critique of the Indian government, former puppet Chief Minister of Indian-Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) Farooq Abdullah held the Modi regime directly responsible for the ongoing terrorism and security failures in the region following the killing of innocent laborers in Kulgam. In an interview reported by Indian media, Abdullah rejected attempts by Indian media and officials to link the Kulgam incident to Pakistan, delivering a major blow to the Modi administration's security narrative.

Questioning the Indian government's claims of normalcy, Abdullah asked, "If terrorism has ended, who killed these laborers? And if the entire border is strictly controlled, where are these killers coming from?"

He highlighted the suspicious timing of such events.

Promotion of private investment 'essential for country's economic development': PM

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, directed the relevant authorities to finalize, at the earliest, a roadmap for establishing a Private Equity Fund, aimed at promoting investment in Pakistan and supporting small and medium-sized businesses.

Chairing a meeting on promoting private investment and sustainable economic growth, the prime minister also called for a comprehensive roadmap to develop the country's public equity market and private equity funds to ensure greater availability of investment capital and facilitate foreign investment. He stressed promoting private investment, saying 'it is essential for the country's economic development.'

He also opined that private equity funds could serve as an effective catalyst for investment, business expansion and job creation.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant to the PM Haroon Akhtar and senior officials of relevant institutions attended the meeting, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister identified minerals, agriculture, livestock, energy, information technology and other sectors as having significant potential to become key drivers of Pakistan's economic growth.

He further observed that the public equity market could provide an important avenue for investment in these sectors.

Noting that investment by the banking sector remained limited, the prime minister stressed the need to promote alternative sources of financing and investment.

He said the government was prioritizing measures to strengthen Pakistan's economy on sustainable foundations by promoting private-sector-led investment, industrial development and exports.

Ex-Afghan army Lt. Gen. Sami Sadat announces armed campaign against Taliban after talks failed

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Former Afghan National Army Lieutenant General Sami Sadat has announced the launch of coordinated armed operations against the Taliban regime under the banner of the Afghanistan United Front (AUF).

Reappearing in military uniform beneath the tricolor flag of the former Afghan Republic nearly five years after its fall, General Sadat addressed supporters on behalf of the AUF, stating that military operations were officially authorized to begin a phased nationwide campaign aimed at restoring constitutional order in Afghanistan, according to the media reports.

According to Sadat, the initial phase of the military campaign will target Taliban fighters, military installations, and senior leadership, before expanding into subsequent operational phases across the country.

He noted that military operations would be integrated with political, diplomatic, and public mobilization efforts for the liberation of Afghanistan.

General Sadat stated that nearly five years of appeals by the Afghan people and civil society had been ignored by the international community.

He asserted that negotiations with the Taliban had failed, leaving armed resistance as the only remaining path to restore a free and constitutional Afghanistan.

He said that the Taliban regime has been subjecting Afghans of repression, fear, and systematic human rights abuses, while transforming the country into a sanctuary for Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and other terrorist organizations.

Besides, he said that that Afghanistan's natural resources were being exploited to finance and strengthen these terrorist networks.

Sadat called on former Afghan National Security and Defense Forces personnel, political leaders, and Afghans both inside and outside the country to unite under the Republic's tricolor flag and join the AUF in a national struggle for Afghanistan's future.

He clarified that the AUF does not seek the deployment of foreign troops or foreign military bases, but is requesting political and material support from the international community.

He pledged that Afghan forces would themselves fight the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, TTP, and other terrorist organizations while strictly adhering to international humanitarian law and protecting civilians.

Sadat said that the Afghanistan United Front considers itself the legitimate continuation of the former Afghan National Army.

He emphasized that the Front's ultimate goal is to restore an independent, constitutional Afghanistan in accordance with the 2004 Constitution, international humanitarian law, and the will of the Afghan people expressed through a Loya Jirga.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, addresses the launch ceremony of a national anthem commemorating Pakistan's 79th Independence Day and the 150th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Former Prime Minister of Pakistan and senior Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Raja Pervaiz Ashraf exchanging views in a meeting at the chairman senate's residence

Law fraternity pays tribute to Justice Musarrat Hilali on retirement

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Members of the legal fraternity paid glowing tribute to Supreme Court Judge, Justice Musarrat Hilali on her retirement, acknowledging her distinguished judicial service, professional integrity and valuable contribution to the administration of justice.

The tribute was paid at a farewell reception hosted by the Supreme Court Bar Association in the Bar Room of the Supreme Court Branch Registry, Karachi.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi attended the ceremony along with Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput, said a press release issued here.

The office-bearers and members of the Supreme Court Bar Association warmly welcomed the judges and praised Justice Musarrat Hilali's services to the judiciary, while extending their best wishes for her health, happiness and a fulfilling post-retirement life.

Bakht Kakar vows to ensure provision of basic healthcare facilities to citizens at doorstep

QUETTA (ANN): Provincial Minister for Health, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, has said that, in line with the vision of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the Health Department is actively working to ensure the provision of quality and basic healthcare facilities to citizens at their doorstep. He said that the timely delivery of quality, courteous, and efficient medical services to the public must be ensured under all circumstances so that residents of remote areas can also benefit from the best healthcare facilities.

He expressed these views while talking to various delegations.

He said that regular monitoring of all government healthcare centers across Balochistan will continue to further improve the standard of public health services.

He added that, due to effective supervision by the Health Department, continuous field monitoring, and administrative efforts, practical measures are being implemented rapidly across the province to improve the performance of government health facilities, increase the accountability of medical staff, and provide quality healthcare services to the public.

These efforts reflect the Health Department's commitment to better governance and public service.

Transport sector hit by alarming vehicle fire incidents in Balochistan: Awan

KARACHI (ANN): Goods transporters have announced an indefinite nationwide strike starting August 8.

Speaking at a press conference at the Karachi Press Club, Malik Shehzad Awan said transport associations from across Pakistan had unanimously decided to continue the strike until their demands are accepted. He also demanded the resignation of Petroleum Minister Pervez Ali Malik.

He said that the charter of demands had already been submitted to the federal and provincial governments, and if the demands were not accepted, the strike would continue. The transporters' key demands include replacing the daily pricing mechanism for petroleum products with a monthly pricing system and reversing recent price increases. They also demanded that the recent increase in toll taxes be withdrawn immediately and restored to the level of June 30, 2024. Malik Shehzad Awan said the 7 percent withholding tax on the goods transport sector should be abolished and reduced to 2 percent, similar to oil tankers. He also demanded strict enforcement of axle load laws and complete prevention of overloading.

He further called for the abolition of Customs SRO 1619/2024, issuance of HTV licenses to drivers after passing tests, and provision of parking facilities for transport vehicles near Karachi Port and Port Qasim. He said incidents of transport vehicles being set on fire in Balochistan were alarming and called for immediate measures to improve the law and order situation. He also rejected the law banning vehicles more than 20 years old and the law prescribing compensation (Diyat) of Rs9.7 million in road accident cases, demanding their immediate withdrawal.

He also called for an end to alleged extortion in the name of third-party insurance during vehicle registration in Sindh. Meanwhile, the Mini Mazda Association also announced its support for the goods transporters' strike. Pakistan Mini Mazda Association President Tanveer Ahmed Jatt said they fully support the nationwide wheel-jam strike beginning on August 8.



HUB: Commissioner Lasbela Division Saira Atta chairs an itroductory and review meeting.

BISP chief warns against smear campaign; announces new digital payment system

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Monday warned that spreading false allegations against the programme for political point-scoring is a criminal offence under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA).

The chairperson also announced that beneficiaries would soon be able to receive payments through a new digital wallet system, and directed officials to ensure the immediate resolution of public complaints received during a live E-Katcheri at BISP Headquarters.

During the E-Katcheri, 37 callers from across the country shared their complaints and concerns over the telephone.

The chairperson instructed the relevant officers to accord top priority to all complaints, resolve them without delay and submit an immediate compliance report.

WHO launches 1st public-private health council

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and leading business figures, has launched the country's first WHO Public-Private Council to strengthen the health system. The council was formed to mobilize private sector support, and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Council was formally inaugurated by WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Hanan Balkhy, Federal Secretary for National Health Services Muhammad Aslam Ghauri, WHO Representative in Pakistan Dr Luo Dapeng, Council Chair Aziz Memon, and 20 founding members representing Pakistan's business community and academia.



Pilgrims gather at the shrines of Hazrat Imam Hussein and his brother Hazrat Abbas during the Arbaeen commemorations in Karbala, Iraq

Transparent use of govt resources should be ensured: Saira Atta

HUB, (VoM Report): Lasbela Division Commissioner Ms. Saira Atta chaired an introductory and review meeting in Hub district to assess the performance of various departments and discuss the challenges they face. Commissioner Saira Atta visited Hub district, where she chaired the meeting at the LIEDA Conference Hall. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Hub Captain (Retd.) Juma Dad Khan Mandokhail, SP Hub Mirza Bilal Hussain, additional deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners, and heads of all government departments in the district.

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner Hub Captain (Retd.) Juma Dad Khan Mandokhail briefed the commissioner on the district's administrative structure, development projects, education, health, local government services, revenue, industry, water supply, infrastructure, and other key sectors. He also informed her about ongoing development projects, government initiatives, and various public welfare programs.

On the occasion, SP Hub Mirza Bilal Hussain gave a detailed briefing on the overall law and order situation in the district, crime prevention, police performance, security of sensitive installations, traffic management, and measures taken to protect the lives and property of the public.

Later, heads of various departments presented detailed briefings on the performance of their respective institutions.

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