Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

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

Safar 28, 1448 AH Vol: XIX No. 358 Wednesday August 12, 2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

Limited group pushing Baloch people into futile war: CM Bugti

Says disrupting trade and damaging trucks belonging to traders would also affect livelihoods of ordinary people

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has announced that a world-class calligraphy exhibition titled "Bayan-ul-Marsous" will be held in Quetta next May. He said renowned calligraphers and artists from the Islamic world, Turkey and other countries will participate in the exhibition, while the Government of Balochistan will sponsor the global event. He expressed these views while addressing the opening ceremony of the "Rasool-e-Rehmat" calligraphy exhibition here on Tuesday. The Chief Minister said that holding such an event on August 14 and during the month of August is itself a message for the whole of Pakistan that Balochistan has the capability and determination to organize programs of international standards. He said that he had already requested calligrapher Wasif Shahid to organize a major world-class calligraphy exhibition in May next year, for which the Government of Balochistan would extend full cooperation. He added that Serena Hotels would again be selected to host the event because Serena had taken the first step in this regard. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that prominent artists from the Islamic world, Turkey and other countries would be invited to the international calligraphy exhibition so that a message could be conveyed to the world from Quetta that the people of Quetta love the fine arts, are peace-loving, and have a deep attachment, particularly to Islamic calligraphy. He directed the relevant authorities to begin preparations immediately for the international calligraphy exhibition and to turn it into a major two- or three-day global event so that artists from around the world could come to Quetta and showcase their work. The Chief Minister said that the theme of the exhibition to be held next May would be "Bayan-ul-Marsous", and it would be held on May 9 and 10, as these are the days when Pakistan achieved a major success. He said that various events had also been organized in Balochistan last year, while this year calligraphy would also be included in the events being held under the title of "Marka-e-Haq." Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that Pakistan's respect and stature at the international level were increasing, and the recent defense cooperation between the Islamic world, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan also reflected this changing situation.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing the opening ceremony of the "Rasool-e-Rehmat" (PBUH) calligraphy exhibition.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on the matters of the Federal Board of Revenue

US-Iran close to 'some sort of arrangement': Khawaja Asif

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi arrives in Tehran for talks amid mediation efforts

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told Bloomberg News in an interview published on Tuesday that the US and Iran are close to "some sort of an arrangement," according to Iran International English.

"Things are shaping up again in favour of a peace arrangement or a deal. The signals in the last two three days are that we are close to some sort of an arrangement," he added.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi arrived in Tehran on Tuesday for talks with Iranian officials amid mediation efforts to end the ongoing conflict between Iran and the US, according to PRESS TV. Earlier, Iran's official news agency IRNA said Naqvi departed Islamabad for the Iranian capital for talks on bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest. Historic talks between the US and Iran, with Pakistan as the central mediator, took place in Islamabad in early April, intending to achieve a peace agreement between the two countries that were warring with each other before a temporary two-week truce. On June 18, PM Shehbaz signed the 'Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding' as a mediator, formalising the major diplomatic breakthrough between the US and Iran. The US and Israel launched the war on Iran on February 28, assassinating former supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and military leaders on the first day. The Iranian foreign minister, speaking at a televised news conference on Iranian state television, said that the US "begged" Iran to negotiate, media reported on Tuesday.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and United States renew landmark Fullbright-HEC partnership to advance higher education and human capital development.

Balochistan to mobilize local resources for sustainable development: Nosherwani

QUETTA (ANN): Provincial Finance Minister Balochistan Mir Shoaib Nosherwani has said that the provincial government is taking comprehensive measures with full commitment for the economic development of Balochistan, financial discipline, and public welfare. Public relief, development projects, and the fair distribution of resources have been given top priority in the budget so that backward areas can also be included in the race for development.

He said this while talking to various delegations. He said that the government wants projects involving schools, hospitals, roads, and other basic facilities not to suffer delays. All relevant departments have been directed to ensure the transparent use of funds.

The Finance Minister made it clear that a strict stance has been adopted against financial irregularities, unnecessary expenditures, and the wastage of funds. Every rupee in the treasury is a trust of the people. Action will be taken without discrimination against those involved in corruption.

Mir Shoaib Nosherwani said that local resources are being utilized to make Balochistan financially stable.

New policies are being prepared to improve the tax system within the province, regulate revenue generated from mineral resources, and promote private investment. "We want the province to rely as little as possible on the federation and generate its own sources of revenue so that development can take place with self-reliance."

The Finance Minister also spoke about the problems faced by government employees and said that the government has made a substantial increase in salaries and pensions in the current budget, while a separate fund is also being established to ensure timely payments to retired employees.

The Finance Minister said that the government is aware of the problems faced by the people and that employment, education, health, drinking water, agriculture, and infrastructure development have been prioritized in the budget. "Our goal is not merely development on paper but improvement at the grassroots level that every citizen can feel."

Qatar says Iran-Oman Hormuz talks reached 'advanced stage,' urges reopening

DOHA, (Monitoring Desk): Qatar said Tuesday that negotiations between Iran and Oman on arrangements for the Strait of Hormuz have reached "an advanced stage," expressing hope the strategic waterway will reopen "as soon as possible."

Speaking at a press conference, Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said the talks were at a "critical juncture" and stressed that Doha supports all efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions in the region.

"As mediators, we want the Strait of Hormuz reopened as soon as possible," Ansari said.

He said Qatar was closely following the negotiations and remained supportive of diplomatic efforts to reach an agreement.

Iran and Oman have been negotiating legal and technical arrangements for navigation through the strait after maritime traffic was disrupted following the military conflict between Iran and the US. Tehran has said implementation of any reopening is linked to resolving disputes over what it describes as US violations of the June memorandum of understanding.

President approves appointment, confirmation of several high court additional judges

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday approved the appointment of additional judges and the confirmation of several existing additional judges in various high courts across the country.

According to a President House statement, the president approved the appointment of additional judges to the Lahore High Court, Sindh High Court, Peshawar High Court, Islamabad High Court, and Balochistan High Court.

He also approved the confirmation of additional judges of the Sindh High Court and the Lahore High Court as permanent judges.

In another decision, the president approved bringing the salaries, allowances, and pensions of Supreme Court judges at par with those of the judges of the Federal Constitutional Court.

He also approved amendments to the 1997 Order concerning the leave, pension, and privileges of High Court judges.

In a separate decision, President Zardari approved the appointment of Haroon Akhtar as the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production.

Five terrorists neutralised in Balochistan's Panjgur: ISPR

President, PM commend security forces for eliminating terrorists in Panjgur

RAWALPINDI/ISLAMABAD, (Agencies): Security forces killed five terrorists belonging to Fitna Al Hindustan during a high-tempo intelligence-based operation in Balochistan's Panjgur district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday.

According to the military's media wing, the operation was conducted on August 10 as part of the ongoing counterterrorism campaign aimed at eliminating Indian-sponsored proxies and restoring lasting peace in the region.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, lauded the security forces for eliminating five terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan in Panjgur, Balochistan.

President Zardari reiterated that operations against terrorist elements operating with foreign backing would continue till their complete elimination.

Citizens demand security, functional CCTV cameras at Quetta parks

QUETTA (ANN): The presence of vagrants and unruly young men outside and inside most of the parks established in the provincial capital, Quetta, has become a serious source of concern for citizens, particularly those visiting with their families.

Incidents of harassment of women and girls are increasing day by day, while the silence of the relevant administration has become a question mark.

Citizens say that due to the indecent behavior and misbehavior of groups of young men entering the parks in the evening, respectable families have stopped visiting these places.

Some families say that when they come to the parks for recreation, young men start staring at them at the entrance itself and make inappropriate remarks, causing women to feel unsafe.

Negligent officials, irregularities to face swift legal action, warns PM Shehbaz

Orders three-year comprehensive third-party audit of customs-bonded warehouses

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed relevant authorities to conduct a comprehensive third-party audit of customs bonded warehouses covering the last three years, warning that negligent officials and irregularities will face swift legal action.

The prime minister, chairing a review meeting on the matters of the Federal Board of Revenue, said that there was no room for any irregularity in customs bonded warehouses and directed that strict legal action be taken against any officials found involved in irregularities or illegal activities.

During the briefing on the matters regarding customs bonded warehouses and inland revenue enforcement, it was informed that cargo related to petroleum products in customs warehouses is linked with the Web-Based One Customs (We-BOC) system. It was highlighted that bonded trade accounts for 16.5% of the country's total imports and that as per the prime minister's instructions, a countrywide physical stock verification of customs-bonded warehouses will be carried out.

The authorities concerned told the participants that comprehensive measures were being taken to ensure the proper licensing and security of customs-bonded warehouses. It was told that valuation testing will be conducted, and information technology systems will be reviewed, as all necessary steps were already being taken to eliminate irregularities in the system.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar, Ahad Khan Cheema, Musadik Malik, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Ali Pervaiz Malik, and Shaza Fatima.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari confers Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) to Commander of the National Strategic Command General Syed Amir Raza

Topic of foreign fighters long-standing concern for int'l community: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS, (APP): At the United Nations Security Council Arria-formula meeting on Ukraine, Pakistan Monday called on all parties to strictly adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law, and to bring the Russo-Ukrainian conflict through diplomatic means. "We urge all parties to abide by their respective obligations in this regard," Pakistani delegate Kamran Taj told the 15-member Council meeting, held under the format named after Diego Arria, a former Venezuelan Ambassador to the UN. Arria-Formula meetings are informal that enable Security Council members to have a frank and private exchange of views on relevant subjects.

The meeting — organized by Latvia, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom — focused on prisoners of war, civilian detainees, and foreign fighters.

In his remarks, Taj, a counsellor at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, specifically highlighted the protections guaranteed to Prisoners of War (PoWs) under international law and condemned any mistreatment. "We view the regular exchange of PoWs, between the parties, facilitated by UAE, Qatar and Turkiye, as a step in the right direction," he said.

The Pakistani delegate also expressed concern over the involvement of foreign fighters and called for an end to the practice.

"The topic of foreign fighters has been a long-standing concern for the international community," Taj said, noting this phenomenon has seen a sharp rise. Pakistan, he said, has all along underpinned by its "unwavering" conviction in the primacy of dialogue and diplomacy for the peaceful settlement. "We will continue to support all diplomatic efforts to this end." In this regard, the Pakistani delegate called for bringing a swift end to this conflict and for a just and lasting settlement, consistent with the UN Charter, international law, and relevant multilateral agreements.



Damage and destruction are seen following an earthquake that struck Pereira, Colombia

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Wednesday August 12, 2026

A clear indictment

Yet again, the UN Security Council's monitoring report on Afghanistan has painted a grim picture of the presence of transnational terrorist groups on Afghan territory. The report, a regular feature, reiterates that Afghanistan remains a staging ground for some of the most lethal terrorist outfits in the world. Pakistan, which has been a victim of the TTP, based in Afghanistan, has known this painful reality for years.

The report notes that over 20 international and regional terrorist organisations currently call Afghanistan home. These include IS-K, Al Qaeda, the TTP and ETIM, among others.

With the exception of IS-K, these groups have good relations with the Afghan Taliban. Importantly, the report says that the Taliban's claims that no militant groups are based on their soil are "not credible".

For Pakistan, the TTP — largely due to the permissive environment it enjoys under Afghan Taliban rule — poses a major security challenge. The UN document says that the terrorist group has conducted over 600 attacks against this country in the current year.

Moreover, TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud is believed to spend time in Kabul, while other anti-Pakistan terrorists, such as Gul Bahadur, are also based in Afghanistan.

The report highlights links between the TTP and Al Qaeda, as well as ETIM. Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan, said to be a front for TTP and Al Qaeda fighters, is amongst the other terrorist groups active next door. Meanwhile, another matter of grave concern is the presence of madressahs run by IS-K near the Pakistani border.

The details mentioned in the UN report shatter any illusion that Taliban-run Afghanistan poses no threat to its neighbours. On the contrary, just as it used to be before the US-led invasion, Afghanistan has become a safe haven for extremely dangerous and violent militant outfits that threaten the region and the world.

And while the report says that there are differences within the upper echelons of the Taliban leadership on how to deal with the TTP, Kabul's rulers are unlikely to take action against the group, as the regime may actually "lack the ability to do so".

This should be a matter of great concern for the international community, particularly Afghanistan's neighbours. Nearly all states bordering Afghanistan have experienced terrorist attacks carried out by groups based on Afghan soil, with Pakistan the hardest hit.

The way forward does not seem to be clear-cut. More conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan will not solve the problem in the long run. Talks with the Kabul regime have also failed to provide meaningful outcomes.

In such a situation, perhaps the least bad option is to reach out to the relatively 'moderate' elements within the Taliban set-up, and press upon them the need to stop terrorists from threatening Afghanistan's neighbours.

Building research capacity

Faisal Bari

Literature on teacher impact shows that good teaching provides a significant delta on student learning, compared to average or poor teaching. Simply put, teachers matter and good teaching is important for ensuring better learning outcomes.

However, recruiting, motivating, and keeping good teachers gainfully and efficiently employed is not easy. In Pakistan, a couple of decades back, teacher recruitment was seen as having too much discretion with not enough reliance on rules. Allegations of corruption and nepotism in teacher recruitment were common. Many of these charges were based on facts. Two decades ago, reforms were introduced to move to more rules-based (merit-based) recruitment. This has definitely reduced the allegations, and litigation on recruitment issues has also decreased. But has it improved teacher and/or teaching quality? Has it improved student learning? And what unintended consequences has it led to? These are important follow-ups for completing the loop for feedback and continuous improvement. 'Merit'-based recruitment might reduce corruption, but does it allow us to differentiate between good and bad teachers? If not, the reform might be of limited value. Many places worldwide have significant requirements for specific courses, diplomas and even degrees before a person can become a teacher. When we moved towards merit-based recruitment, provincial governments removed the requirements for education degrees before joining as a teacher. This has increased the pool of candidates for teaching (a physics graduate can come into teaching directly) but many of these applicants did not choose to be teachers and have no understanding of what teaching is: you can be good at physics but teach it badly. How has this impacted learning outcomes?

Some jurisdictions even have teacher licensing. Teacher licensing has often been talked about in Pakistan but it was only recently that Sindh introduced it. But will licensing improve teaching and learning? We have 1.5 million or so teachers in Pakistan and still suffer a shortage. Will licensing help? Is it only for government schools or also private schools? Will teachers be required to have licences in low-fee private schools, where sometimes they teach Matriculation- or Intermediate-level students? Who will pay for the cost?

Once a teacher has been recruited, is she a teacher forever? Does she need any education, training or upgradation? Is there a role for continuous professional development and how is it to be structured? Punjab has some 450,000 teachers. How do you design effective professional development systems for such large numbers? Do we design devolved systems or centralised ones? How do we ensure quality and some level of uniformity across the system? We have had continuing professional development systems in place, but the general feeling is that they don't seem to work and haven't had the intended impact and definitely not the one needed. Once deployed, how do we keep teachers motivated to teach effectively for the entire length of their careers — 30-35 years? What are effective career paths for teachers? If a teacher is a good Grade 1 teacher today, how do we ensure that she will be a good, motivated and effective Grade 1 teacher in 10, 20 or 30 years from now? What should happen to her financial returns and other 'incentives' so that she is able to have a rewarding career in Grade 1?

We do not have research on most of these important questions. Which means we do not have effective feedback loops on policies. Policies keep coming and getting implemented. But what consequences do they have? How can we improve if we don't have effective feedback loops that research consequences and impact?

What is heartening is that there is an increasing realisation — in government and academia and among development partners and research institutions — of the need to have these feedback loops and to do relevant policy research on important questions. Most education departments already have specific implementation and planning units to structure some of this work. Development partners have historically funded and encouraged some research, but this has recently become more structured and is being given due importance. Academic research output has also been steadily increasing in education in Pakistan. The most recent and current impetus has come from a very innovative research support programme funded by FCDO and called the Data and Research in Education-Research Consortium. DARE-RC has funded some 35 studies in the education sector, five to six of them on teacher issues. These studies are in collaboration with education departments. The programme is of medium term (it just closed the fourth round of call for proposals).

The results of the studies will allow us to bring out relevant issues more clearly, and some of them will start answering some of the questions raised above. By focusing on local researchers, the programme is also developing the capacity for research in education in Pakistan and a community of practice in the area. The hope is that other programmes, following this one and funded by government and partners, will continue to build on this approach, so that we not only have answers to the questions but also the local capacity to do such work. We will always have more questions and we need communities and people who are able to answer them so that we can keep improving outcomes in education.

Pakistan must have around 1.5-2m teachers today. With millions of children still out of school, and with most in-school children getting a poor quality of education across the country, we need more teachers — more motivated and committed teachers — and a lot more teacher training to ensure better content knowledge as well as a sound understanding of optimal pedagogical strategies. We also need much better policies for management and regulation of teaching, and effective feedback loops to ensure things keep improving. In this context, DARE-RC offers an interesting model for developing the capacity needed for such work. I hope education departments will not only look at the outcomes of the research studies being done under DARE-RC, but also at how the research capacity being built can be strengthened and deepened beyond the programme. This is important if we are to ensure our policies improve over time.

In decline

S. Akbar Zaidi

Pakistan is in decline — in serious, considerable and sharp decline — as manifested by its economic, social and human development indicators. This decline is both relative to other comparable developing countries which have now steadily and increasingly outpaced Pakistan as indicated by multiple indicators, and by what Pakistan's own indicators used to be. In other words, the economy and related and ancillary sectors, especially in human and social development, are worse now than what they were some years or decades ago. To make matters worse, Pakistan's recent political economy reorganisation, centralisation and consolidation will ensure that these indicators deteriorate further.

The simplest and most basic indicator which encompasses economic growth, the real GDP growth rate, has been falling consistently over the last four decades and it is improbable that this long-term decline in GDP will be significantly reversed. From highs of near and above six per cent per year, this secular decline has led to a growth rate of barely 3pc. In fact, just in the last six years, GDP growth has been negative in two of those years, minus 1.3pc in 2019-20 and again minus 0.2pc as recently as 2022-23.

It is worth adding that on average, the population in Pakistan has been growing by 2.6pc annually over the last decade, and hence in real terms Pakistanis are worse off. Importantly, in just 25 years, Pakistan will become the third most populous country. At least on one count, there is huge progress and our population multiplies; over the last many years, our population growth rate has been much higher than economic growth.

Beyond these very basic numbers and economic growth rate and population trends, things are even more worrying. When one considers human development, the quality of Pakistan's 250 million population has been falling markedly. In terms of the UN's Human Development Index, Pakistan has gradually fallen in position. In 2020-21, Pakistan was ranked 161, in 2023-24 it fell to 164th and in the latest index it has fallen to 168th place, clearly a very considerable and sharp decline.

Crucially, when it comes to women, unconditionally at the core of any development, social, economic or population strategy, things have deteriorated even further. The Global Gender Gap Report 2025 shows that Pakistan is ranked the lowest — 148th out of 148 countries — and has fallen three positions since 2024. Pakistan is ranked in the lower-middle income countries with 16 countries much poorer than Pakistan, yet its ranking is even lower than these countries and is the lowest of all 148 countries in terms of gender ranking. Female labour participation remains very low and access to finance is a major issue. By delaying putting women at the centre of every policy and strategy, Pakistan's slide will be accentuated.

Every government official parrots the ambition of being ready for the revolution that has taken place in communication and information technology; they cite ideas related to AI which most have not even been able to grasp fully. Yet, Pakistan's secondary enrolment rate today is at the level where South Korea's was in 1972, while Pakistan's tertiary enrolment rate today is where South Korea's was in 1979. These are astonishing numbers, which show that in terms of human capital, so critical for the information and technological age, Pakistan is half a century behind South Korea. With even basic literacy, reading and numeracy skills lacking, we are decades behind other countries and this distance will increase over the next few years.

The prime minister has just declared that Pakistan's economy 'is out of the woods' and the crisis is over. This, at a time when data shows that unemployment in Pakistan today is 7.1pc, the highest in 21 years, with 5.9m people unemployed of which 4.6m are illiterate. Moreover, those who remind us of a 'demographic dividend' from having a young population, need to be told that the hi---ghest unemployment is amongst those aged 15-29 years, with 3.5m young men and women entering the job market every year. Moreover, research has shown that even for those who work, the real wage of workers in Pakistan has fallen by almost 20pc in the last three years. With the overall investment-GDP ratio the lowest since 1973, at a mere 13pc, and declining further, any hope of reviving the economy seem completely absent. Clearly, the PM is looking at a different field of woods.

Relative to our peers and neighbouring countries, Pakistan is being further left behind. At the recently concluded DawnMedia Conference on Population, economist after economist showed data which emphasised the dismal state of Pakistan's economy compared to others. Dr Hanid Mukhtar presented figures showing that in 1990, the per capita income of Pakistan was twice that of Bangladesh and 56pc higher than that of India. In 2024, Bangladesh's per capita income is 53pc higher, and that of India is 71pc higher than that of Pakistan. Moreover, he showed how the growth of Pakistan's per capita GDP has been lower than that of Bangladesh by 3.5pc per annum, and 3.2pc vis-à-vis India. These significant gaps will grow further, and any attempt to catch up will be outpaced by all other countries around us and in the region. Pakistan is on a losing streak, compared to its own past and compared to other countries which were once less developed than Pakistan.

Given these trends, all of which are downward — and there are a multitude of other datasets amplifying them — signifying relative and absolute deterioration, many economists feel that things have never been this bad. We have all used terms like 'critical juncture' or 'crises' at numerous points in the past, but perhaps in a highly globalised and competitive world, things may never have been where they currently are. Stabilisation has morphed into stagnation. Given the focus of those running Pakistan's political economy and making decisions, there is no confidence in either their ability or vision to reverse these trends.

Islamabad the ugly

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

It is a truism that Pakistan is an extremely class-divided society. From the proverbial village to the metropolitan city, the brutal reality of an anti-poor system stares us in the face, assuming we choose to open our eyes and look.

In late November, the Capital Develop-ment Authority (CDA) initiated a mass eviction in a sprawling katchi abadi sandwiched between the Bari Imam shrine and the President's House. The abadi, known as Muslim Colony, has existed for at least five decades, and by conservative estimates was home to 20,000 working people, making it arguably the largest informal settlement in Islamabad.

Muslim Colony's first-generation residents literally built Islamabad with their own hands, including the grand buildings on Constitution Avenue that overlooked their shanties. Over the years, a significant number of Muslim Colony residents became the drivers, gardeners, cooks and cleaners that sustain the ruling classes' offices and homes.

As construction workers and service providers, katchi abadi dwellers are never 'security risks' — in fact it is their labour which explains the palatial lifestyles of Islamabad and Rawalpindi elites. But when push came to shove, the CDA and what seemed like most of Islamabad's police force forcibly dispossessed Muslim Colony residents of their homes. Anyone who dared peacefully resist faced violent arrest and harassment.

And the courts? The evictees were principally protected by at least two stay orders, one issued by the Supreme Court in 2015 after another mass eviction of a katchi abadi in sector I-11 of the capital, and another more recent one issued by the Islamabad High Court after Muslim Colony residents approached it.

The eviction crews, led by highly educated CDA officers, treated the court orders as mere pieces of paper worth less than the cost of their printing. Perhaps we should not be surprised at the contempt of the bureaucratic apparatuses of the state for even the little relief provided by the superior courts to the working poor in this country — after all, ex-military dictator Gen Pervez Musharraf once boasted that the Constitution is merely a piece of paper that can be ripped up and tossed into the proverbial dustbin.

Katchi abadis and their violent dispossession expose one of the most long-standing myths in Pakistan. They say 'Islamabad the beautiful' is the most liveable city in Pakistan, a planned metropolis of world-class standard. To begin with, the CDA and successive militarised hybrid regimes that back it have turned Islamabad into a concrete jungle, allowing all sorts of commercial activities in the Margalla hills while fronting relentless construction of big thoroughfares and plazas to serve the suburban rich. All this has made the city even less liveable for the mass of its working people alongside students who in-migrate to acquire an education.

Renting a home, let alone buying one, is virtually impossible for a working-class household in Islamabad. The city's real estate was already more expensive than Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar or Quetta even before post-2000 heralded a great new land grab by property speculators and real estate developers. Apparently, all of this was and continues to be facilitated by the CDA, which has wilfully made a mockery of the 1960 Master Plan, occasionally making changes in zoning by-laws to provide post-facto cover to all sorts of profit-making abominations.

Meanwhile, katchi abadis have continued to proliferate because the working masses do, after all, need shelter. There are now approximately 50 settlements in Islamabad with a total population of more than 500,000. Another one of the my--ths that has been peddled by the CDA and others of its ilk — who want the labour of working people but refuse to acknowledge their basic needs — is that katchi abadi dwellers are free riders and land grabbers who are essentially har-ming the public good. This, quite simply, is a lie.

Katchi abadis come into being through fully-functioning informal housing markets in which cash exchanges hands between the users of land (katchi abadi residents), the administrators of land (government functionaries) and informal middlemen. The government functionaries are at the apex of this arrangement because they pocket a 'monthly rent' while always retaining the power to arbitrarily pull the plug and bulldoze the settlement.

This is what happened in Muslim Colony as it has happened in many other katchi abadis. And given the complete impunity of those who perpetrate so-called 'anti-encroachment operations', they will not stop. But working people will not be swallowed up by the ground either. It is they who make Islamabad what it is. Without them, it is but an ugly reflection of the larger class war waged by this country's rapacious and shameless elite.

Reading nature

Amin Valliani

A family lost its buffalo during the floods earlier this year when the major rivers were overflowing. The buffalo was the family's sole economic asset. At this moment of sadness, someone came to sympathise with the family, but the head of the household said it would have been better had he died instead, as then the family would mourn for a few days but life would then go on. However, the loss of the buffalo, he said, made his family not only mourn but also starve.

There are thousands of such stories, de--scribing the plight of affected people who have been left penniless due to the disaster. Many families, already living hand-to-mouth, are now destitute and traumatised.

Pakistan is a resource-rich country, but around 40 per cent of its population lives below the poverty line. Every year we experience floods, storms, droughts, earthquakes and other calamities which increase poverty levels. The government is unable to control these calamities and cannot deal with their aftermath. Natural calamities occur due to inherent natural processes and forces.

External factors, such as climate change, intensify these events. While the underlying forces are natural, human activities can influence the frequency and severity of these occurrences, blurring the lines between natural hazards and human-induced disasters.

We must remember that Islam is the religion of 'nature', it emphasises understanding nature. The Holy Quran also says that "Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope …" (2:286). Such types of catastrophes remind us of Islam's teaching that Allah tests His creation to make them resilient and create fortitude in their hearts and minds. Our life is made up of problems, they occur every day and it is nature's way of testing and imparting lessons to human beings till one learns the meaning, and discovers the purpose, of life.

Normally, we receive advance signals and warnings, informing the community of impending disaster. It is necessary that advance preparations are made to deal with such situations. The challenge before Pakistan is not only to respond to disasters after they occur, but more importantly, to strengthen preparedness and resilience before they strike.

It is said that Pakistan's contribution to climate change is negligible, but it is included in the list of the most affected countries of the world. Some circles have urged the government to make a global appeal for aid, but normally, the international community offers only sympathy on such occasions. For example, we have seen that in January 2023, Pakistan organised a conference in Geneva with the UN's help, aimed at securing international support for its post-flood recovery and financial commitments for climate resilience after the devastating 2022 floods. Different states and institutions made commitments, but the majority of the pledges failed to materialise. Pakistan needs to rely on no one, and seek solutions on a self-help basis without recourse to others. The finance minister also declared that Pakistan would not seek international aid after the 2025 floods. This is a good decision which enhances the nation's self-respect.

Moreover, Pakistan needs to benefit from the experiences of those who have created the capability for climate resilience. There are countries which have solved the problems posed by natural calamities by developing solutions of their own, such as rain-harvesting systems, collecting rainwater during rainy days and subsequently using it in months of water scarcity.

Here the example of Singapore would be helpful. Singapore has largely solved its problem of wa--ter scarcity. It currently imports wa--t-er from neigh-bouring Malaysia but has also adopted the Four National Taps Strategy and has planned to become fully self-sufficient by 2061 when its agreement with Malaysia ends.

It has developed a comprehensive network of drains, canals, and rivers, collects rainwater and channels it into 17 reservoirs across the country. This system also manages storm water to prevent flooding. Singapore collects and treats its used water to a high standard, producing safe and high-quality reclaimed water known as 'NEWater'.

Singapore also removes salt from seawater through advanced desalination plants to produce fresh water. This technology has seen significant advancements and contributes a substantial portion of the country's water supply. Singapore has heavily invest--ed in developing and advancing water technologies, particularly in desalination and water reclamation.

This diversified and technological approach has made Singapore a global leader in water management and a model for other nations facing water scarcity challenges. It could help to learn from such examples.

Nearly 6,000 displaced in one day by clashes in Sudan's West Darfur

Most households crossed border into Chad, while others sought refuge in locations within El Geneina locality, capital of West Darfur, says IOM

KHARTOUM, (Monitoring Desk): Nearly 6,000 people were displaced from seven villages in Sudan's West Darfur state in a single day amid clashes between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said Tuesday.

The UN agency said in a statement that 5,975 people fled the villages of Lakisa, Rofeid, Shibeit Ardu, Um Ghadara, Hajar Sangeid, Salamtar and Abu Suruj in Sirba locality because of "deteriorating security conditions."

Most households crossed the border into Chad, while others sought refuge in locations within El Geneina locality, the capital of West Darfur, it added.

The situation remains tense, the agency said, noting that it continues to monitor developments closely.

On Tuesday, the IOM reported that 5,135 people had been displaced from 10 villages in Sirba a day earlier because of escalating security tensions.

Darfur Governor Minni Arko Minnawi said the Sudanese army had repelled a large-scale attack by the RSF on Bir Saliba.

Bir Saliba lies north of El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur, and is considered strategically important because of its location along routes leading to the city. The area has repeatedly witnessed fighting between the RSF and the army and its allied forces.

Fighting between the Sudanese army and the RSF has continued since April 15, 2023, following disputes over integrating the paramilitary force into the regular military. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions.

As of the end of June 2026, the IOM had recorded about 8.69 million internally displaced people in Sudan, along with more than 4.64 million people, who had returned to areas inside the country or from abroad.



WASHINGTON: U.S. President Donald Trump looks on before signing an executive order calling for more research and flexibility on vaccines, in the Oval Office of the White House

16 Bangladeshis killed in Saudi sofa factory fire

DHAKA, (Monitoring Desk): At least 16 Bangladeshi migrant workers were killed when a fire broke out at a sofa factory in the Saudi capital Riyadh, said the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, citing the fire service department there.

Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ariful Haque Chowdhury expressed shock and sorrow over the deaths.

Ten of the victims were from Bangladesh's northern Naogaon district, while the rest were from the northern and western Natore and Rajshahi districts, according to the ministry.

"Such untimely and tragic deaths of expatriates working in distant Saudi Arabia in search of livelihood are very heartbreaking. Their contribution to the country's economy is immense," Chowdhury said in the statement.

He said the Bangladesh Embassy in Saudi Arabia is maintaining round-the-clock contact with the accident site and local authorities.

The concerned officials have been instructed to expedite the repatriation of the deceased expatriates' remains and ensure all necessary government assistance and compensation for their families.

TENDER NOTICE

The Deputy Conservator of Forest Main recreational National Park invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. **TSE-2627081147971 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. T/Fee 1000/-**

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Security Equipment , Ammunition , Protective Clothing & related items (**Total Item(s) Count: 5**)	2%

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** 1 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 4,000,000 in Previous 1 Years Turn over of at least 4,500,000 PKR in 1 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan JV is not permissible Submission of the required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as ineligible and non-responsive Submission of the required Bidding document Fee **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of **Bank Gurantee** of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed **1,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication of NIT to **27 August, 2026** during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by **27 August, 2026** till **09:45 AM** . **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at **10:45 AM Address:** Project Director UGPP Wildlife Woodcock Nursery Samungli Road Quetta
Phone no: 0819201291 Email: pdwildlifebalochistan@gmail.com

The Deputy Conservator of Forest/DPD Main Recreational National Parks Quetta

DPRQ/PRQNo.771/11-8-2026

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

Ebola spreading at unprecedented speed in Congo, top virologist warns

GENEVA, (Agencies): The Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo is spreading at a speed never before observed in the country, according to renowned Congolese virologist Jean-Jacques Muyembe.

The outbreak, officially recognized by Congolese authorities on May 15, had caused 1,916 deaths among 4,209 confirmed cases as of Aug. 7, French daily Le Monde reported Tuesday.

The death toll is approaching that of the 2018 Ebola epidemic, which lasted 22 months and claimed 2,287 lives, making it the deadliest outbreak recorded to date in Congo.

Irish farmers warn of fodder pressure after prolonged dry spell

LONDON, (Agencies): The Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) has called for the National Fodder and Food Security Committee (NFFSC) to meet urgently to assess animal feed supplies following prolonged hot and dry weather. The IFA said the lack of rainfall in parts of the country could force farmers to use winter fodder stocks earlier than expected. IFA President Francie Gorman agreed with the Department of Agriculture that there was currently no nationwide fodder shortage but said some areas were already experiencing difficulties.

"We've had very little rain in some parts of the country for probably up to two months and there is an issue in certain parts of the country," he told RTE's Morning Ireland.

He said drystock farms were facing rising costs, while tillage farmers had endured a difficult harvest.



GRAZ, AUSTRIA: People are seen during daily life at Hauptplatz, the historic main square in Graz



In Syria, the death sentences handed down by the court against ousted leader Bashar al-Assad, his brother Maher al-Assad, and his cousin Atif Najib were met with great enthusiasm and joy in the capital, Damascus. Syrians gathered around the courthouse in Damascus to celebrate the death sentences announced for Bashar al-Assad and former regime officials.

US says it has revoked more than 175,000 visas under Trump

Trump administration would continue identifying foreign nationals who it believes threaten US safety, says State Department

WASHINGTON, (Monitoring Desk): The US State Department said Monday that it has revoked more than 175,000 visas from foreign nationals under President Donald Trump, citing criminal activity, visa violations, fraud, calls for violence and other threats to national security. Most of the visa revocations stemmed from law-enforcement encounters involving criminal activity, according to a fact sheet released by the department. Assault, driving under the influence, theft and drug offenses were among the leading reasons for the cancellations. Other cases involved reckless driving, sexual assault, child abuse, fraud and embezzlement.

"The revocations come as a result of the State Department's continuous vetting operations, which ensure that visa recipients abide by the terms of their visa and do not endanger Americans," it said. The department said the Trump administration would continue identifying and investigating foreign nationals who it believes threaten US safety or national security. "A US visa is a privilege, not a right," the State Department said, adding that it would continue using available authorities to revoke visas from people who abuse that privilege.

UN mechanism finds pattern of Myanmar military attacks, torture, sexual violence

Annual report says aerial attacks on civilian sites escalated around elections, continued afterward

GENEVA, (Monitoring Desk): A UN investigative mechanism on Tuesday said its investigations found "a pattern of deliberate aerial attacks on civilians, arbitrary detention, torture and sexual violence" committed by the Myanmar military.

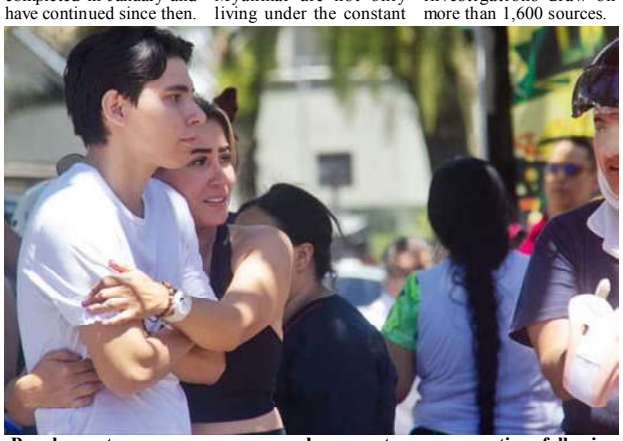
The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar said in its annual report that military attacks intensified in the run-up to elections completed in January and have continued since then.

The report, covering July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, detailed attacks on homes, schools, medical facilities, religious buildings and camps for internally displaced people, causing deaths, injuries and destruction. It said the military's increasing use of paramotors and drones had made attacks harder for civilians to detect and reduced their ability to flee or seek shelter.

"Communities across Myanmar are not only living under the constant threat of violence but are also coping with the profound and lasting impact of what they have endured," said Nicholas Koumjian, head of the mechanism. "This underscores the urgent need to hold those responsible to account."

Investigators also collected evidence of arbitrary detention, torture and sexual violence in military-run facilities.

The mechanism said its investigations draw on more than 1,600 sources.



People react as emergency personnel carry out rescue operations following a powerful magnitude 7.4 earthquake in Pereira, Colombia

Temporary protection in EU covers 4.4 million people fleeing Ukraine

BRUSSELS, (Monitoring Desk): The number of individuals fleeing Ukraine and holding temporary protection in the EU reached 4.41 million by the end of June, while Germany hosted the highest number of these beneficiaries. The number of people from Ukraine under temporary protection increased by 24,380, or 0.6%, compared to the end of May 2026, Eurostat announced on Tuesday. Germany hosted the highest number of beneficiaries with 1.28 million people, accounting for 29.2% of the EU total.

Poland and Czechia followed Germany by sheltering 961,170 and 390,810 individuals, representing 21.8% and 8.9% of the total, respectively. The number of individuals under temporary protection increased in 24 of the 27 EU member states during this period. Italy recorded the largest absolute increase with 4,115 new beneficiaries, followed by Czechia with 3,835 and Germany with 2,960.

Conversely, Poland, Belgium, and Ireland registered decreases of 6,335, 35, and 15 people, respectively.

Palestinian president restores parliament to 132 seats, reverses expansion

RAMALLAH, Palestine (Agencies): Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Tuesday issued a decree restoring the number of seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council (parliament) to 132, reversing a law enacted in June that expanded the legislature to 200 members.

The Palestinian Central Elections Commission said it received the new decree, which repeals the previous amendment while reinstating parts of the original election law alongside several new changes based on the commission's recommendations. The new decree retains several provisions introduced in June, including lowering the minimum age for parliamentary candidates from 28 to 23, requiring women to comprise at least 33% of candidates on electoral lists and maintaining a 1% electoral threshold. It also preserves a requirement that electoral lists commit to the umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people, its political and national program, and relevant international legitimacy resolutions.

The amendments give electoral lists three days to complete or correct their nomination applications before the Elections Commission issues a decision, while also clarifying procedures for announcing preliminary and final election results and filing appeals.

The decree also bars candidates from simultaneously running for president and parliament. It authorizes the Elections Commission to establish procedures for illiterate voters and people with disabilities and regulates voting and vote-counting procedures in the Gaza Strip, including the verification and transfer of results between the commission's headquarters and regional offices.



NEW YORK: Protesters demonstrated in front of The New York Times building. The demonstrators demanded justice for Palestinian journalists killed by Israel in Gaza.

Seoul to upgrade K2 tanks, anti-ship missiles to counter evolving threats

SEOUL, (Monitoring Desk): South Korea will upgrade its K2 main battle tanks and Haeseong-II long-range anti-ship missiles as part of efforts to strengthen military capabilities against evolving threats, local media reported Tuesday.

The Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) approved a 3.43 trillion won ($2.43 billion) project to modernize the K2 tank with an active protection system designed to intercept anti-tank missiles and drones, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The tanks will also receive systems to jam drones and improvised explosive devices, as well as remote-controlled weapon stations allowing crews to aim and fire from inside the armored vehicles.

The K2 modernization program will run from 2028 to 2046, with upgraded tanks expected to enter service in 2033.

ٹینڈر نوٹس

گورنمنٹ ریڈ سندھی کیٹل فارم حب کیلئے (1) سفید بھوسہ (2) کیٹل کمس فیڈ برائے سال 2026-2027 کیلئے مورخہ 31-08-2026 کو دن 01:00 بجے تک وصول کیے جائیں گے اور اسی دن 02:00 بجے تک کھولے جائیں گے۔ دفتر زیرو تھلی، بمقام ریڈ سندھی کیٹل فارم حب کھولے جائیں گے۔

(TSE-2627081149651,Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure)

مقدار خورک درج ذیل ہے

نمبر شمار	نام جنس	مطلوبہ مقدار
1۔	سفید بھوسہ قمر شر	153000 کلوگرام
2۔	کمس فیڈ	126000 کلوگرام

شرائط:۔ (1) سفید بھوسہ، کمس فیڈ ریڈ سندھی کیٹل فارم حب تک پہنچائے گا۔ کرایہ نوالائی، ادائی بذمہ ٹھیکیدار ہوگی۔ (2) ہر جنس کیلئے علیحدہ ٹینڈر دینا ہوں گے۔ (3) ریٹ کے مطابق ٹھیکیدار کو ضلع حب کے تمام ٹیکس ادا کرنے ہوں گے اور GST کا Active ہونا لازمی ہے۔ (4) ہر ٹینڈر کے ہمراہ پے آرڈر شناختی کارڈ کی کاپی منسلک کرنا ہوگی۔ (5) ٹینڈر کے ہمراہ 90,00,000/= کا 2% کال ڈیپازٹ منسلک کرنا ہوگا جو سپرنٹنڈنٹ ریڈ سندھی کیٹل فارم حب کے نام سے بنے گا۔ (6) ٹینڈر وصول کرنے کی آخری تاریخ 31-08-2026 ہے اور ٹینڈر اسی روز کھولے جائیں گے۔ (7) بھوسہ اور کمس فیڈ کے نرخ، فی کلوگرام کے حساب سے دیئے ہوں گے۔ 1 کلو فیڈ کا نمونہ لیبارٹری کیلئے ٹینڈر والے دن ساتھ لانا لازمی ہے۔ (8) راشن کی مطلوبہ مقدار میں کمی بیشی ہو سکتی ہے۔ (9) سپلائی کے دوران غیر معیاری راشن مسترد کیا جائے گا۔ (10) راشن سپلائی نہ کرنے کی صورت میں کال ڈیپازٹ بحق سرکار ضبط کر لی جائیگی۔ (11) ٹینڈر فیس مبلغ 1000/= روپے ناقابل واپسی ہوگی جو ٹیکنیکل بینک آف پاکستان میں ڈائریکٹر جنرل فارم لائیو اسٹاک اینڈ ڈیری ڈیولپمنٹ ڈیپارٹمنٹ بلوچستان ہیڈ آفس اکاؤنٹ نمبر C-03223 میں جمع کرائی ہوگی۔ (12) ٹینڈر کمیٹی بغیر کوئی وجہ بتائے ٹینڈر کو مسترد کرنے کا حق محفوظ رکھتی ہے۔ (13) ٹینڈر دینے والے فرم کا BPPRA میں رجسٹرڈ ہونا لازمی ہے۔

سپرنٹنڈنٹ ریڈ سندھی کیٹل فارم حب

DPRQ/PRQ No777/11-08-2026

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

Russia claims EU plans funding restrictions on sports bodies allowing Russian athletes to compete

Foreign intelligence agency says bloc seeks to prevent Russia's return to international sport after Olympic Committee eases restrictions

MOSCOW, (Agencies): Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) on Tuesday claimed the European Union plans to restrict funding for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and other sports organizations that allow Russian athletes to compete, state-run Tass news agency reported.

"The European Union is prepared to do anything to prevent Russia's return to international sport," the SVR said in a statement. The agency said European officials were "extremely concerned" about the IOC's decision to lift sanctions against the Russian Olympic Committee and Russian athletes, particularly over the prospect of Russian athletes competing at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics under their national flag and anthem.

"In Brussels and the capitals of EU states, there are complaints that this move by the IOC effectively negates the West's long-standing efforts to 'isolate' our country from global sport," the statement said.

The IOC provisionally lifted the Russian Olympic Committee's (ROC) suspension on July 7, saying its Executive Board had determined that the committee no longer included regional sports organizations in territories under the jurisdiction of Ukraine's National Olympic Committee.

Ukraine, in response, said that it had filed an appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sport challenging the IOC's decision to provisionally lift the ROC's suspension.

Ukraine's National Olympic Committee said the IOC acted prematurely and without properly verifying whether the violations that led to the ROC's suspension in 2023 had been resolved.

The IOC recommended that Belarusian and Russian athletes be barred from international competitions in late February 2022, days after the start of the Russia-Ukraine war.

It recommended in March 2023 that athletes from both countries enter international competitions as Individual Neutral Athletes, while stating that those "who actively support the war cannot compete."

On May 7, the IOC Executive Board said it no longer recommended restrictions on Belarusian athletes or teams in events governed by international federations and organizers, lifting its previous participation conditions.

President Zardari vows to make Pakistan beacon of peace, progress, stability, mutual respect

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has called for renewing the commitment to making Pakistan a country where justice, equality, tolerance and service to humanity are the defining features.

"We must ensure that our future generations inherit a Pakistan that stands as a beacon of peace, progress, stability and mutual respect," the president said in a message on National Minorities Day.

On the occasion of National Minorities Day, the president conveyed warm greetings to all Pakistanis, especially their ethnic and religious minorities, on the historic day.

He said the religious minorities in Pakistan had contributed prominently in conflicts, wars, health, education and other domains of life and continued doing so even today along with other compatriots.

"The entire nation is proud of their national services, patriotism and significant contribution to the country's holistic progress and development," he added.

The president said the day reminded them that the foundation of a strong, peaceful and stable state rested not only on economic growth but also on justice, equality, mutual respect and the protection of human dignity.

"Pakistan's true strength lies in its people who, setting their religious, cultural and traditional differences aside, stand united under one national flag. I firmly believe in the equality of every citizen, regardless of religion or faith, before the state," President Secretariat Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the president as saying.

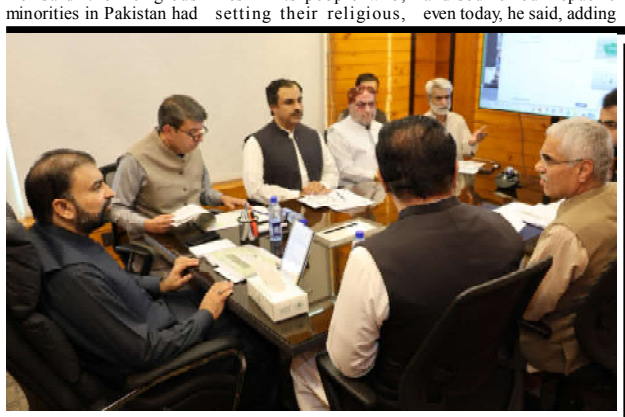
Seventy-nine years ago on this day, he said, the Founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had explained his future vision of Pakistan while addressing the first constituent assembly of Pakistan.

His words provided them guidance about the heart and soul of our republic even today, he said, adding the constituent assembly created the first national consensus constitution almost a quarter of a century later in 1973, effectively incorporating all major guidelines of the great Quaid, brilliantly narrated in this speech delivered 79 years ago on this day, barely three days before our formal Declaration of Independence.

The president quoted Quaid's words: "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Production Muhammad Raza Hayat Harraj called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chairs a meeting regarding Sui Master Plan.

PM Shehbaz grieved over deaths in tragic Colombia earthquake

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday expressed deep grief over the tragic loss of lives and widespread devastation caused by a powerful earthquake in Colombia.

The prime minister, in a statement on his X timeline, conveyed heartfelt condolences to Colombian President Abelardo De La Espriella, the people of Colombia, and the bereaved families who lost their loved ones on behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured and all those affected by this tragedy. Pakistan stands in solidarity with the people of Colombia in this difficult hour," Prime Minister Shehbaz said.

The powerful 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck western Colombia near the municipality of San José del Palmar in Chocó department, causing widespread destruction.

The calamity resulted in at least 111 deaths, dozens of injuries, and the collapse of over 60 buildings across several major cities.

Protection of minorities firmly rooted in teachings of Islam: DPM Dar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): As the country commemorates National Minorities Day on Tuesday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar reaffirmed the Government of Pakistan's unwavering commitment to ensure that every citizen enjoys equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law.

The deputy prime minister, in a message on the Day, reiterated the commitment to upholding the vision of Founding Father Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for a Pakistan in which the rights, dignity, and freedoms of all citizens are fully protected. He said that the protection of minorities is firmly rooted in the teachings of Islam, which enjoin the nation to uphold justice, dignity, equality, and respect for all communities.

The Constitution of Pakistan likewise guarantees the political, economic, and social rights of minorities and provides for their equal citizenship, he added.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar said that as a State Party to core international human rights treaties, Pakistan remains committed to safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of all its citizens, without discrimination on the basis of religion, race, or creed. He said that Pakistan deeply values the invaluable contributions of its minority communities to our national life and to the country's social, economic, cultural and political development. Their contributions have enriched our shared heritage and strengthened the fabric of our society, he added.

Trump demands Iran to pay compensation as hopes fade for Hormuz deal

WASHINGTON, (Monitoring Desk): U.S. President Donald Trump escalated a standoff with Iran on Monday by demanding compensation from Tehran for deaths and destruction linked to decades of conflict, after Iranian officials said the Strait of Hormuz would remain closed until Washington meets a series of conditions. The competing demands could further complicate efforts to reach an agreement to reopen the strategic waterway, which has been effectively blocked since the war began and has contributed to higher energy prices. Trump said Iran's demand for compensation for damage caused by U.S. and Israeli attacks had only recently emerged. He responded by saying Tehran should also pay for Americans and others killed or wounded in conflicts and attacks that Washington has linked to Iran or Iranian-backed groups.

"We're going to ask for money for the damage they've done over a 50-year period," Trump told reporters at the White House.

In a Truth Social post, Trump said he had instructed his representatives to include compensation in any future negotiations with Tehran.

"Iran should be responsible for the damages and death caused to the people of Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Gaza!" Trump wrote.

Trump also called for compensation for families of Iranian protesters killed during the government's crackdown. He cited a figure of about 52,000 deaths, although rights groups have reported substantially lower figures.

He also said Iran should compensate families of 17 U.S. sailors killed in the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen. The attack was carried out by al-Qaida and has not been attributed to Iran.

Washington has separately blamed Iran-backed groups for the deaths of hundreds of Americans, including 241 U.S. military personnel killed in the 1983 bombing of a Marine barracks in Beirut and at least 603 U.S. troops killed in Iraq between 2003 and 2011.

Iran's conditions

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said Tehran would not reopen the Strait of Hormuz until Washington ends its blockade of Iranian ports, lifts economic sanctions and releases frozen Iranian assets.

Tehran is also demanding compensation for damage caused by the U.S.-Israeli bombardment.

"It is up to the U.S. side to stop and make amends for its illegal and destructive actions," Baghaei said. The Strait of Hormuz has become the central issue in the standoff. Before the war, roughly one-fifth of the world's traded oil and a significant share of global liquefied natural gas passed through the narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman.

The disruption has pushed energy prices higher and raised inflation concerns, increasing pressure on Trump ahead of November's midterm elections. Oil prices settled about 5% higher Monday as Trump's demands reduced hopes for a deal to restore shipping.

Iran said talks with Oman over new shipping arrangements were progressing.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar presents Member of the European Parliament Mr. Ondrej Dostál with a pictorial book showcasing Pakistan's cultural heritage.

UN peacekeepers log hundreds of Israeli strikes, tank fire near bases in major Southern Lebanon flare-up

UNITED NATIONS, (APP): Israeli forces fired 455 projectiles into south Lebanon and breached Lebanese airspace 97 times between Friday and Sunday, the UN's peacekeeping mission in the country reported Monday – among the heaviest fire seen in months.

UNIFIL, the Mission, said Saturday alone accounted for 229 of those projectiles, the highest single-day total since 21 June, alongside an air strike in Al Mansuri on Sunday morning. Most of the airspace violations came from drones, though helicopters and fighter jets were also involved, UN Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Aziz Haq told reporters at UN Headquarters in New York.

Peacekeepers also tracked two Israeli boats moving north through Lebanese waters before turning back south on Friday. Around the same time, two Israeli Merkava tanks fired three rounds eastward that landed roughly 200 metres from a UN position, while some 30 rounds of small-arms fire were also directed toward the same area.

The activity marks a sharp escalation from the previous weekend, when 113 projectiles – then the highest daily count since 21 June – had been recorded.

Peacekeepers have also discovered unguarded weapons, unexploded ordnances (UXOs) and (IEDs) in their area of operations, Farhan Haq said.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Khawaja attending the launch of Small Business Growth Academy in partnership with Meta.

MoITT, Meta, launches Small Business Growth Academy in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), in partnership with Meta, launched the Small Business Growth Academy in Pakistan, a landmark initiative aimed at accelerating the digital transformation of small and medium-sized businesses and enabling entrepreneurs to harness digital and AI-enabled technologies for growth, innovation and access to domestic and international markets.

The initiative is aligned with the Government's vision of building an inclusive, digitally empowered economy in which businesses—particularly small enterprises and women-led ventures—can leverage technology to enhance productivity, expand their customer base and compete more effectively in the global digital marketplace.

The Small Business Growth Academy will provide practical, market-oriented training on Meta's digital platforms and AI-enabled tools. The programme will be delivered in collaboration with Meta, implemented by AtomCamp, and supported by Ignite National Technology Fund.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs Muhammad Humair karim and Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Akamatsu Shuichi sign Record of Discussion and Exchange of Notes for the JDS Scholarship Program.

Law must protect all citizens equally, says First Lady Asifa Bhutto

ISLAMABAD, (APP): First Lady Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday, appreciating the contributions of the minority communities in education, healthcare, law, public service, business, the armed forces, arts, sports and many other fields, said that their achievements were an important part of Pakistan's story of progress and development.

The first lady, in her message on National Minorities Day annually observed on August 11, extended her warm greetings to all minority communities across Pakistan, and said that Pakistan's progress was strengthened by the contributions of citizens from all faiths.

She said that the Day was an opportunity to recognise their valuable contributions to the country and to reaffirm the principle that every citizen was an equal member of the national community.

"Equality must be reflected in the rights and opportunities available to every citizen. The law must protect all citizens equally and every Pakistani should be able to participate fully in the social, economic and civic life of the country without discrimination on the basis of religion," the first lady remarked.

Highlighting the important role of Pakistani women and youth in building a more inclusive and prosperous Pakistan, she called for ensuring equal opportunities to young people from minority communities to pursue education, develop their skills and contribute to the country's future.

Similarly, she said that minority women must also have equal opportunities to participate in education, employment and public life and to realise their potential.

Asifa Bhutto emphasised that all institutions and segments of society had a responsibility to uphold the said principles and ensure that every citizen was treated fairly and given the opportunity to contribute to the progress of Pakistan.

National Housing Policy 2026 to address country's housing deficit

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada termed the new approved National Housing Policy 2026 a significant achievement and a historic milestone for the Ministry, particularly as Pakistan had been without an updated national housing policy for almost a quarter of a century.

Federal Minister and the Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Works, congratulated the Policy & Planning Wing of the Ministry for its dedicated efforts in preparing the policy document. They appreciated the team's extensive work and emphasized that efforts had been made to take all major stakeholders on board during the policy formulation process.

Federal Cabinet in its last meeting has approved the National Housing Policy 2026, marking a major milestone for Pakistan's housing and urban development sector. The approval comes after nearly 25 years, as the country's previous National Housing Policy was approved in 2001.



QUETTA: Provincial Advisor for Sports and Youth Affairs Meena Majeed Baloch giving trophy to the winner team of Jashn-e-Azadi Football Tournament

'This regime does not want educated people'; Afghan fathers grieve daughters' lost education

KABUL, (Monitoring Desk): Father after father spoke to media in Afghanistan about the education ban that stops their daughters going beyond primary school choked up in despair. The pain and anguish it is causing behind closed doors is clear from interviews media conducted across the country, with even deeply religious fathers questioning the ruling. The Taliban authorities justify the ban - the only one of its kind in the world - on their interpretation of Islamic law. But "you will never find in the Quran that education is only for men," said one devout father, while another - who praised the Taliban government for restoring security and reducing corruption - said he couldn't "find any proper justification for this".

Climate change directly affecting population; putting extra pressure on country's health system: Bharath

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Minister of State for Health Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath on Tuesday called for integrating weather and disaster alerts issued by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) with advance preparedness measures in the health sector.

While addressing a conference on National Health Emergency Preparedness and Response, he said that upon issuance of an alert, health teams, medicines, essential medical equipment and other necessary resources should be made available in the affected districts without delay.

He stressed that climate change had become a permanent reality in Pakistan, directly affecting the population and putting additional pressure on the health system.

"Looking at climate trends over the past several decades, it is clear that climate change has become a permanent reality in Pakistan," he said, adding that the country was increasingly experiencing extreme weather events, including severe monsoons, abnormal rainfall, cloudbursts, floods and other climate-related disasters.

Dr. Bharath noted that a large number of people were displaced or forced to migrate every year due to climate-related disasters. Such situations significantly increased the risk of malaria, dengue, cholera, diarrhoea and other infectious and epidemic diseases, while children, elderly people and other vulnerable groups faced additional health challenges.

The minister said the country could no longer afford to respond only after an emergency occurred and stressed the need to develop a comprehensive and sustainable system for preparedness, response and recovery. He reiterated close coordination among the Ministry of Health, provincial health departments, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), international development and aid agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to formulate clear and practical Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

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