Daily

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## ‘Significant progress’ as Islamabad, Tehran discuss Hormuz reopening, ‘expedited’ end to Iran-US conflict

RAWALPINDI/ISLAMABAD, (News Desk): Pakistan and Iran held discussions on reopening the Strait of Hormuz and bringing an “expedited termination” of the US-Iran conflict in the Middle East, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday.

The discussions took place during Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir’s day-long visit to Iran, where he met the country’s top leadership, the military’s media wing said in a statement.

The army chief landed in Tehran on Sunday for a visit, which the military’s media wing said was part of Pakistan’s diplomatic efforts to help break the deadlock in the conflict.

During the visit, Field Marshal Munir called on Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian, Iranian supreme leader’s representative on the Supreme National Security Council Mohsen Rezaei, Parliament Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni.

“Comprehensive discussions focused on measures to prevent further escalation, reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and expedited termination of the conflict,” the ISPR said.

The two sides also exchanged views on regional peace and the ways to arrive at a negotiated settlement to the disputes, it added. CDF Munir’s visit comes amid renewed tension in the region after Washington announced an expanded round of sanctions, which US officials said were designed to cut off Tehran’s economic lifeline and put the world on notice to cease doing business with the country.

Later, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who accompanied the army chief during the visit, said Pakistan had made significant progress in its efforts to help end the US-Iran conflict. In a post on X, Naqvi said that they had a “very positive and productive meeting” with the Iranian president during the visit.

The discussion focused on the US-Iran conflict, Middle East tensions, and the way forward, as well as the steps needed by both sides to restore the Islamabad MoU for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict, he added.

“The Iranian President candidly shared his Government’s perspective and concerns, and we had a very constructive exchange on the issues involved,” Naqvi said.



TEHRAN: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir (left) speaks during a meeting with Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian



ISLAMABAD: A high-level Saudi business delegation, led by His Highness Prince Mansour bin Mohammad Al Saud, Chairman of the Saudi-Pak Joint Business Council, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

## Pakistan keen to elevate economic relationship with KSA into mutually beneficial strategic economic partnership: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): A high-level Saudi business delegation, led by His Highness Prince Mansour bin Mohammad Al Saud, Chairman of the Saudi-Pak Joint Business Council, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House today.

During the warm and cordial meeting the Prime Minister conveyed his respectful regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and to Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman.

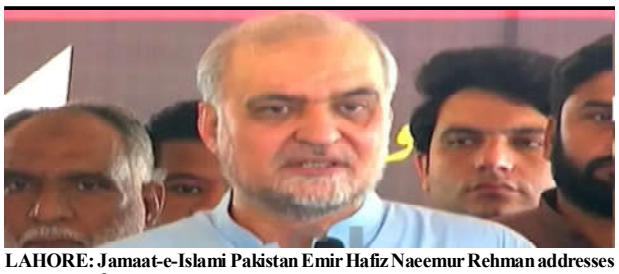
While recalling the longstanding brotherly ties between Pakistan and the Kingdom, the Prime Minister discussed avenues for expanding economic cooperation and investment between the two brotherly countries.

Welcoming the Saudi delegation, the Prime Minister said that in line with the vision of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Pakistan was keen to elevate its economic relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia into a mutually beneficial strategic economic partnership. In this regard, he recalled Prince Mansour’s earlier visits to Pakistan and expressed the hope that the current visit would build on those discussions and culminate in the signing of MoUs and agreements across multiple sectors.

The Saudi side conveyed interest in investment opportunities in agriculture, ports, highways, and airport outsourcing, real estate sector as well as in the energy, power distribution, and information technology sectors.

The Prime Minister welcomed Saudi interest in investments in these priority areas and conveyed that this was the most opportune time for joint collaboration between the two countries, both in G2G as well as B2B cooperation.

Prince Mansour thanked the Prime Minister for the warm reception.



LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman addresses a press conference

## US chargé d’affaires praises CDF Munir’s diplomatic role for regional peace, stability

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday met with US Ambassador Natalie Baker in Islamabad, where both sides discussed regional developments, peace and stability, and ways to strengthen Pakistan-US cooperation in key sectors. The meeting also focused on police training programs and joint efforts against organized crime, drug trafficking, and human smuggling. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on the overall situation in the region and matters related to peace and stability. They reviewed the state of Pakistan-US bilateral relations and discussed opportunities to enhance cooperation across different fields. Both sides talked about expanding exchange programs and professional training opportunities for police officers to improve cooperation and capacity building. The minister and the US ambassador also agreed on the need to strengthen joint efforts against organized crime, narcotics trafficking, and human smuggling. They emphasized the importance of coordinated action and information sharing to address these cross-border challenges. Ambassador Natalie Baker appreciated the diplomatic role played by Pakistan’s Field Marshal in promoting peace and stability in the region. She acknowledged the significance of continued engagement and dialogue in supporting regional security and cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with US Ambassador Natalie Baker

## PTI seeks alliance with Fazlur Rehman, urges political unity

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan has reiterated his desire for JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to become part of an alliance with the party, calling for political forces to unite to strengthen Parliament, the judiciary and the Election Commission.

Speaking to the media after a parliamentary party meeting, Barrister Gohar said the joint opposition alliance was currently limited to the National Assembly floor and cooperation on legislation.

He said PPP representatives had also met with them, stressing that communication and dialogue among political parties should continue.

Barrister Gohar said PTI founder Imran Khan had delegated full authority regarding opposition movements and political matters to Asad Qaiser and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas.

He added that political workers had been instructed not to chant slogans against anyone and to maintain civility and respect during political discussions.

## Hafiz Naeem warns of shutdown, Islamabad march if petroleum levy not abolished

LAHORE, (Monitoring Desk): Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on Tuesday once again warned of a nationwide shutdown, road blockades and a march on Islamabad if the government failed to withdraw the petroleum levy.

Addressing a press conference at the JI sit-in outside the Punjab chief minister’s House in Lahore, Rehman said the protests had entered their 10th day and were gaining momentum across the country. “The people’s patience has run out,” he said, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the petroleum levy and what he described as unjustified taxes. He said the ongoing sit-ins would continue until the government provided meaningful relief to the public. Rehman said the JI would announce the date for a nationwide strike on 13th Rabi-ul-Awwal, while protests would continue during Eid Miladun Nabi celebrations. He said the party had mobilised people across all four provinces and would expand the campaign if its demands were ignored.

## Govt taking serious measures for development of Balochistan: Khosa

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Communications and Works Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa to review progress on ongoing federal projects in the province. Secretary Communications and Works Babar Khan, Chief Engineer Federal Projects Dr. Sajjad Baloch, project directors of various projects, and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

During the meeting, Chief Engineer Federal Projects Dr. Sajjad Baloch gave a detailed briefing on the progress of all ongoing federal development projects in the province, the timelines set for their completion, financial and technical difficulties being faced, and other relevant matters. On the occasion, Secretary Communications and Works Babar Khan said that the ongoing federal projects in the province are of great importance. Their completion will significantly improve the province’s infrastructure and give new momentum to the development process.

## Supremacy of merit foundation of strong, transparent, capable Balochistan: Shahid Rind

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Balochistan for Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind has said that the Government of Balochistan has taken practical measures to ensure transparency, merit, and equal opportunities in government jobs. He said that the recruitment of 19 officers in the Balochistan Revenue Authority was carried out purely on merit, and no recommendation or pressure of any kind was accepted during the process. In a statement, Shahid Rind said that Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti had made it clear from the very first day that government jobs would not be sold and that young people would receive their rightful opportunities solely on the basis of merit. Under the same policy, transparent and merit-based recruitment has also been carried out for 4,500 positions in the Education Department and 111 positions in the Finance Department. He said that the recent appointment of 19 officers to the Balochistan Revenue Authority is also a continuation of this merit-based policy. The fact that not a single candidate from the Chief Minister of Balochistan’s home district was successful in these recruitments is clear evidence that there was no political or administrative interference in the recruitment process.

## Unconditional loyalty to state should be hallmark of every govt officer: CM Bugti

***Says provincial govt is taking comprehensive measures to make Balochistan economically stable and self-reliant***

QUETTA, (VoM Report): The process of appointing 19 officers on merit to the Balochistan Revenue Authority through the Higher Education Commission has been completed. Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti distributed appointment letters among the newly selected officers and congratulated them, directing them to perform their duties with hard work, dedication, honesty, and unconditional loyalty to the state. Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the Balochistan Revenue Authority has the potential to play a key role in the province’s economic future. A major portion of the province’s resources is consumed by non-development expenditures, leaving limited resources available for the welfare of ordinary Balochistanis.

He said the Balochistan Revenue Authority is expected to increase the province’s revenue and generate sufficient resources to at least reduce the burden of non-development expenditures. Resources saved through a reduction in non-development expenditures could then be spent on public welfare, education, health, basic facilities, and other development priorities. The Chief Minister said that from the very first day he assumed office, he had promised the people of Balochistan that government jobs would not be sold and that merit would be given the highest priority in recruitment under all circumstances. More than 14,500 teachers were recruited on merit in the Education Department, and the recent appointment of officers to the Balochistan Revenue Authority is a practical continuation of the same policy. He said the level of merit in the Balochistan Revenue Authority recruitment could be judged from the fact that not even a single candidate from his own district, Dera Bugti, was successful.



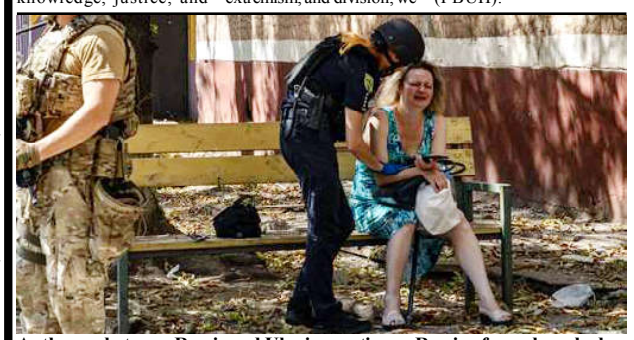
QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing the newly selected officers of Balochistan Revenue Authority.

## CM Bugti urges public to follow teachings of Holy Prophet (PBUH)

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has congratulated the entire nation, particularly the people of Balochistan, on the blessed occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH), saying that the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH) is a great blessing from Allah Almighty for all of humanity.

The Seerah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a perfect example for us of love, brotherhood, tolerance, justice, equality, harmony, and service to humanity.

In his message, the Chief Minister of Balochistan said that Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) reminds us to follow the teachings of the great personality who brought humanity out of the darkness of ignorance, oppression, and injustice and gave it the light of knowledge, justice, and brotherhood. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) placed special emphasis on protecting the rights of vulnerable sections of society, orphans, the needy, women, and those in need. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said the blessed life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a complete code of conduct for us. He established justice and fairness, honesty, trustworthiness, equality, and mutual respect as the foundations of society. The challenges we face today can also be confronted by making these golden principles part of our individual and collective lives. The Chief Minister said Pakistan is an Islamic democratic state, and our national identity is linked to Islam’s teachings of peace, security, brotherhood, and love for humanity. On the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH), we should pledge that instead of hatred, prejudice, extremism, and division, we will promote unity, tolerance, and mutual respect in our society. He said Balochistan is a beautiful blend of different peoples, tribes, languages, and cultures. All citizens living here are equal in our eyes. The teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) teach us equality among human beings, brotherhood, and fulfillment of rights. Promoting peace, brotherhood, and interfaith and inter-sectarian harmony in the province is our collective responsibility. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said the Government of Balochistan is taking measures for the welfare of the people, maintenance of law and order, education, health, and economic development. Prioritizing the needs of vulnerable and deprived sections while fulfilling state responsibilities is also among the fundamental teachings of the Seerah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).



As the war between Russia and Ukraine continues, Russian forces launched an attack on the Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk.

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# Wheat worries

It is once again that time of year when wheat producers, particularly smallholder farmers, worry about recovering their costs, fearing that they will not receive a fair price for the crop that feeds a nation facing significant hunger. The wheat harvest has rarely provided relief to farmers. Besides being disrupted by a combination of policy gaps, administrative lethargy and adverse weather, what has added to their worries this year is the reduced availability of threshers, caused by disruptions in manufacturing due to power outages and restrictive business hours at the peak of the harvesting season. The concern, raised by the PTI Kissan Wing spokesman, is a symptom of policy failure when timing is critical for farmers. The shortage of threshers is not an insignificant issue as it risks substantial damage to the crop due to grain shattering, while exposure to untimely rains can degrade quality and cause losses to growers. Such avoidable losses are hard to ignore when we are already grappling with rising food insecurity.

Equally troubling is the policy incoherence surrounding wheat pricing and procurement. The belated announcement of the official price at Rs3,500 per maund has failed to reassure farmers, many of whom have reportedly sold their produce to middlemen at distress prices, particularly in south Punjab. With input costs having risen sharply from fertiliser to diesel, the demand for an even higher support price underscores concerns over potential losses at current market rates. This year's harvest is further overshadowed by weather-related shocks. Recent rain and hailstorms have already caused visible damage in parts of south and central Punjab, raising concerns about output. Climate change is a persistent risk, yet the official response remains reactive instead of proactive.

The absence of a clear procurement mechanism and policy ambiguity are also not helping prop up farmers' prices, although the Punjab government has identified 11 private companies for procuring strategic reserves of 3m to 3.5m tonnes at the official support price. Agriculture, the backbone of Pakistan's economy, continues to be a victim of ad hocism that would be unacceptable in any other critical sector. If the authorities fail to respond to farmers' concerns relating to harvesting equipment and a fair price for their crop, it could adversely affect the economy, which is already buffeted by rising energy prices thanks to the Middle East crisis.

# It's far from over

**Arifa Noor**

The action-packed weekend, which came early to Islamabad, also ended quickly.

By Sunday afternoon, the US-Iran talks had taken place and the two parties flew back without much to show publicly for the intense, hours-long negotiations. The press reaction varied — while many international headlines announced a failure of the talks, others were less pessimistic. Perhaps the headline, like beauty, lay in the eye of the beholder and her expectations.

Those who expected a major breakthrough within a day of talks have been disappointed, while those who saw the talks as the beginning of a long, drawn-out process were and are hopeful that the ceasefire might continue as well as the negotiations, for neither side has denied the possibility of the latter. Indeed, for most of Sunday there were statements from leaders worldwide urging a continuation of the talks.

At the same time, there was little clarity on what the sticking points may have been, though there were hints aplenty. For instance, before leaving Islamabad, Vice-President J.D. Vance highlighted the nuclear issue only, adding that he had left the Iranians with an offer.

"We will see if they accept it," he said. Intriguingly enough, President Donald Trump in his social media posts focused on the Strait of Hormuz, and even announced a blockade on top of the blockade being imposed by the Iranians themselves. His post led to conjecture that for the Americans, the strait is perhaps one of the sticking points.

A third point that had nearly caused a crisis even before the talks began was the issue of a ceasefire in Lebanon, so it's possible this will remain an issue.

All of this is, of course, based on the caveat that very little information has been provided officially about the negotiations and that this is what is called a 'developing story' in hack language.

However, regardless of what happened in the rooms of Serena, none of the factors pushing Iran and the US for an end to the talks have changed. Trump still has to contend with the spectre of rising oil prices and their impact on his fractured support base and the impending midterm elections. And Iran too, despite its extraordinary performance in the conflict, has to deal with sanctions, a weak economy and an angry population. It may have survived an attack by the combined might of the US and Israel but it needs to focus on reconstruction and further protests cannot be ruled out.

The latter is more than just a possibility, especially as the Iranian economy will be weaker in the aftermath of the war. Rationality dictates that both sides continue with the ceasefire but the desire to win concessions in the negotiations can prove to be a draw for Iran and the US, which can lend a new lease of life to the conflict. However, the fighting has thrown light on the limits of US power — for a superpower went to war and was willing to engage in talks in a matter of weeks without having achieved any of its aims (regardless of however amorphous the stated aims were).

In recent history, one can debate what the US achieved in Afghanistan or Iraq, but at least in the immediate aftermath of its invasions in both countries, it was able to announce victory. There has been nothing comparable in Iran, which is what has led many to conclude, or point to Iran as the victor. While it is too soon to predict what will come next, as the situation is far too fluid, it can safely be said that the region is now going to face considerable instability and a reset of sorts. The Israeli campaign does not seem to be flagging, which will leave its impact on the countries around it. And while this is a part of the Middle East, which has always dealt with conflict and instability, it may be spreading across the region. A little further afield, the Gulf also faces change. The luxurious havens of the Gulf face an uncertain future — whether or not the US resumes fighting, these states face the possibility of a militarily resurgent Iran.

The Iran conflict and the possible security threat is making their differences public too. Consider the alignment of the UAE with Israel along with its public opposition to Iran. Some of the other Gulf states are also so aligned. And despite Saudi Arabia's uncomfortable relationship with Iran, one can safely say it supported the talks in Islamabad.

This runs contrary to some of the reporting in the Western press that Riyadh wanted Washington to take the conflict with Iran to a logical conclusion (ie, defeat it decisively).

How this will play out in the coming days is unclear. But especially for those aligned with Tel Aviv, the threat from Iran will continue to be a major factor, whether the fighting resumes or not.

Indeed, there might just be a new push for new security alliances and agreements, for Washington was not really able to protect the Gulf from the Iranian onslaught. Consider that Riyadh signed a deal with Islamabad after the 2025 conflict between the US-Israel alliance and Iran, and earlier this year, the UAE and India finalised a defence partnership. Just days ago, it was reported that Pakistan deployed troops and hardware in Saudi Arabia. Will there be similar announcements from other Gulf states?

Two other matters also need to be watched closely. One is the economic impact of this conflict and the overall health of the Gulf economies in the days to come. The third will be the mood of the people in the region. The Arab street has been quiet so far (with an exception or two) but this might not be the case for long.

Indeed, in the absence of a political resolution or a military victory, this region will continue to be on edge.

# Back to an abyss?

**Dr Niaz Murtaza**

They came, they talked, they went away without a deal. The impasse on even the two most burning issues — a longer ceasefire and opening the Strait of Hormuz — is truly bad news for all. The impasse may still break. But even uncertainty is bad for the global economy, moving back from one abyss only to inch towards another. US obduracy, as always, was the key cause. A lesser one was the large agenda, with both foes coming with big teams to discuss all issues in one go. An initial focus on these two burning issues, among others, and a plan for future talks may have been more apt. Given especially the many past failures, lower-ranking officials on both sides and the mediators perhaps misread how much they must shrink gaps via prior backchannel talks before inviting big guns like J.D. Vance.

Will President Donald Trump resume war, as he keeps threatening? Despite rising global multipolarity, there is yet no global check on the US when it comes to its endless, senseless wars. But its internal multipolarity — the mismatch between its war aims and political and economic constraints at home are reflected in falling market indices and Trump's ratings — may stop even an impulsive Trump stung by his failure to defeat Iran despite weeks of inhuman bombing. But it's naive to think that vicious 'USraeli' hawks will give up their evil designs forever. They may wait to let the global economy recover and find a way to blunt the two aces Iran used in the war to trump Trump — closing Hormuz and hitting US regional allies hard — before attacking it. But open war may not happen for a while despite failed talks.

That leaves the issue of reopening the strait. Trump, in a typical early morning impulsive rant, says he will impose a naval blockade on Iran until it opens it. But that is like us sealing Islamabad totally when agitators threaten to do so partially. It may yet dawn on him that this illegal step will hit his home constraints hard. China, the EU and regional states may now scramble to get Iran to open the strait via carrot and stick. So, as I said earlier, realpolitik rather than talks may shape future events.

If these two issues get resolved thus, the pressure on Iran and the US to have talks on deeper issues may even fall. Some naively hope they may just have a rethink and resume talks. But serious results may only accrue if their incentive structures change. Talks on key issues failed mainly due to mistrust as their sequential resolution over time involves many stages where one foe takes a step alone before the other reciprocates. Rich states like Europe, China, Russia, Japan and the Gulf countries can help resolve mistrust by using carrots and sticks to give guarantees at each stage requiring a leap of faith by one enemy alone. Game-theory security experts can help map mutually acceptable guarantees for each such step which has an action-reaction time gap.

International relations gurus say that only states with clout can strategically shape mediation while states with only trust, good ties and access can just relay messages. This is why rich states must enter the fray as mediators as the role of Pakistan, Egypt and Turkiye in relaying messages faithfully is insufficient in this huge crisis.

We must also review our role and constraints, given our own problems that may arise if talks fail again and we get more deeply sucked into Gulf politics or if our rulers lose their domestic focus due to a prolonged mediation role. Oman, Qatar, Turkiye and Switzerland have all facilitated talks between the two earlier. So, it's wrong to think we are the best or the only state able to play the limited role of re--laying messages given the recently struck personal ties between our senior state officials and Trump. But personal ties can't substitute for state clo--ut. A globally critical role for us may also harm our human rights, democracy and civilian sway situation and cement our habit of chasing geostrategic rents instead of adopting sound economic progress as under some past regimes.

Finally, Iran has won global applause for bravely staring down two vicious, evil states. Its resolve remains unbent, but the human, leadership, economic and military cost was still high and it will take time for it to recoup its losses. It survived the onslaught largely due to the strong support ordinary Iranians gave the state. Its rulers know its foes will work overtime to blunt its two aces and that they will continue to need unflinching public support.

Giving all Iranians their democratic rights will bolster their own ability to deal with future intrigues by not letting foes exploit internal fissures.

# Pak existential energy challenge

**By Yousuf Nazar**

Amid endless commentary and analysis fixated on battles over which Pakistan has little or no control, one strategic imperative towers above the rest: energy security.

Diversified and affordable sources of energy, both local and imported, represent a core national interest and an existential challenge for Pakistan. This must become a central pillar whenever we debate foreign policy or national defence. The path forward is clear: unleash targeted fiscal incentives for solar power now, net-metering adjustments notwithstanding. The payoff will be billions in reduced fuel imports, genuine energy independence and a stronger hand in global affairs.

Pakistan's energy imports run at approximately $16-18 billion annually. With total liquid foreign-exchange reserves standing at $21.70 billion as of March 13, 2026 (SBP-held: $16.35 billion; commercial banks: $5.35 billion), this single line item equals roughly three-quarters of our entire FX cushion. A $10 jump in Brent crude alone adds $1.8–2.0 billion to the annual burden. With Middle East tensions pushing prices towards $100+, our monthly oil-import bill could surge to $600 million. We are one geopolitical shock away from a reserves crisis. In response to this escalating oil crisis, the government has acted swiftly, announcing emergency austerity measures. These include a four-day workweek for government employees, two-week school closures or shifts to online learning, widespread directives for work-from-home arrangements, a 50 per cent cut in fuel allowances for official vehicles (with 60 per cent of the government fleet temporarily grounded, exempting ambulances and public buses), cabinet members forgoing salaries and allowances for two months, a 25 per cent pay cut for lawmakers, a 20 per cent reduction in non-salary departmental expenditures, and an outright ban on the purchase of vehicles, air-conditioners, furniture and other non-essential items until June 2026. Public appeals urge citizens to embrace further conservation in daily life. These steps are prudent and necessary. Yet they highlight the deeper structural vulnerability: short-term belt-tightening can mitigate symptoms, but it cannot eliminate our chronic dependence on imported energy.

Diplomacy must also deliver tangible benefits. Pakistan should actively seek a permanent waiver from the US sanctions to import oil and gas from Iran. This would convert existing unofficial daily flows of 31,000 to 38,000 barrels of petroleum products—mostly diesel—through well-established smuggling routes into fully legal, scaled-up official channels that could reach 100,000 barrels per day within a year, including new crude supply deals. The upside in the gas sector is even more transformative: Iran holds some of the world's largest reserves, and the pipeline infrastructure on the Iranian side stands ready for rapid extension into Pakistan. Such a move would diversify supply sources, reduce exposure to volatile global markets and turn high-level diplomacy into concrete economic relief.

A remarkable, citizen-driven solar revolution has already delivered a cumulative shield of $12 billion since 2020 and is on track to save another $6.3 billion in FY2026 alone. By early 2026, the country has imported 45–51.5 GW of panels, with 32–34 GW installed. Solar now supplies up to 25 per cent of daytime grid electricity in major cities, cutting oil-and-gas imports by nearly 40 per cent between 2022 and 2024. Lifetime savings from current capacity could exceed $100–180 billion.

Recent policy shifts—a 10 per cent GST on panels in the FY2025–26 budget and the February 2026 transition from net metering to net billing—have introduced uncertainty and slowed momentum. These steps, taken amid broader revenue-mobilisation efforts, address legitimate concerns over utility revenues and daytime grid oversupply. But they must not become a pretext to throttle the boom. Full duty-free imports of solar panels and accelerated depreciation allowances for limited companies are not giveaways; they are high-return strategic investments. They will multiply forex savings, stabilise the economy and unlock the next phase: batteries and electric vehicles. Electricity tariffs remain punishing at around 13.5 US cents/kWh—more than double those in India or the US—driving record off-grid adoption. Without bolder action, the fuel-import bill could climb toward $18–20 billion this year. Restoring duty-free status would slash upfront system costs by 10-18 per cent (or more for complete installations), compressing already attractive 2-4-year paybacks to under two years for households, SMEs and farmers. Accelerated depreciation would let companies rapidly write off solar assets against taxable income, turbocharging corporate and industrial uptake, which accounts for 26–30 per cent of national demand. These sectors are already pivoting to captive solar to hedge against tariffs and outages.

Pre-tax exemptions fueled the 17 GW surge in imports in 2024. Reversing recent duties would reignite that momentum, generate thousands of jobs, reduce 17-20 per cent transmission losses, and ease the Rs2.5-2.8 trillion annual capacity-payment burden on idle thermal plants. Net billing is a reasonable grid adjustment, but taxing solar to protect utility revenues risks accelerating deeper off-grid migration and larger macroeconomic losses. With electricity demand growing 3-4 per cent annually toward 126–128 TWh this year, suppressing adoption would only deepen our vulnerability to volatile imports. Fiscal tools worked spectacularly before; they will work again, delivering structural forex savings that dwarf any short-term revenue dip—even as the government pursues wider austerity.

Solar's daytime strength becomes a liability at night, unless paired with storage. Battery imports reached 1.25 GWh in 2024 and are projected to hit 8.75 GWh by 2030. The New Energy Vehicle Policy 2025–2030 targets 30 per cent EV sales by 2030 (scaling to 90 per cent by 2040 and 100 per cent by 2060), potentially cutting petroleum use by 15-20 per cent and saving up to $2 billion annually by 2030. Local production, such as the BYD plant in Karachi, set to start mid-2026, offers a ready platform—yet both batteries and EVs need policy oxygen to scale.

To accelerate battery adoption, policymakers should zero-rate GST and customs duties on lithium-ion and sodium-ion systems, treating them identically to solar panels. They should extend accelerated depreciation and introduce investment tax credits of 30-40 per cent in the first year for residential, commercial and industrial battery energy storage systems. Hybrid solar-plus-storage solutions should also be mandated for new industrial incentives and agricultural tubewells, building on the solar-tubewell boom that has already trimmed agricultural demand.

For EVs and charging infrastructure, the government should layer capital subsidies or low-interest loans on top of the existing 45 per cent discount on electricity tariffs for certified charging stations, with priority for solar-integrated setups. Every new or renovated petrol station operated by PSO and private players must install at least four to six fast chargers powered by on-site solar-plus-storage, with a national target of 3,000–6,000 stations by 2030 achieved through public-private partnerships and CPEC funding. Sales tax and registration fees for EVs—especially the two- and three-wheelers that dominate our roads—should be waived, while operational rebates tied to verified renewable charging are introduced. National charging protocols must be standardised, real-time availability apps integrated, and highway corridors prioritised with stations spaced every 105 kilometres. Local manufacturing through technology transfer and mandatory battery recycling will keep costs down and create green jobs. These measures reinforce one another: solar-generated, battery-stored power cuts EV operating costs by 30–40 per cent versus petrol, displacing millions of tonnes of oil equivalent while decarbonising transport—the largest petroleum consumer, accounting for 80 per cent of total use.

This is not merely an energy or economic discussion. It is about national resilience. Solar-plus-batteries-plus-EVs would insulate us from geopolitical shocks, shrink the Rs2.4 trillion circular debt, build export-competitive industries, and cut emissions without waiting for a flawless grid. Renewables could reach 10–15 per cent by 2029 and 58 per cent by 2030, unlocking $100-120 billion in lifetime savings. Grid upgrades and efficiency gains must complement, not constrain, this transition.

The government already holds the levers. It must restore duty-free status, enact stronger corporate tax incentives and fast-track battery and EV enablers through targeted subsidies, mandates and public-private execution. Pakistan's solar revolution has already proven the model: bottom-up, market-driven and spectacularly effective. Now is the time to supercharge it from the top with strategic urgency, even as austerity measures buy us breathing room and bolder diplomacy secures diversified supply lines. Energy security cannot be an afterthought in our foreign or defence conversations. Delay, and we mortgage our future to foreign oil suppliers while reserves bleed. Act decisively—duty-free panels, accelerated depreciation, battery and EV incentives, mandated solar-powered charging and a permanent sanctions waiver for Iranian imports—and we secure diversified, affordable energy for generations. The data are unequivocal. The challenge is existential. Our strategic interests demand nothing less.

# Xi Jinping puts forward four-point proposal on Middle East peace, stability

BEIJING (APP): Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday put forward a four-point proposal on promoting peace and stability in the Middle East when meeting with Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), in Beijing.

Xi called for adherence to the principle of peaceful coexistence. It is imperative to promote the building of a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security architecture for the Middle East and the Gulf region, he noted.

He urged adherence to the principle of national sovereignty. He said the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of countries in the Middle East and the Gulf region should be fully respected, and the safety of personnel, facilities and institutions of all countries should be effectively safeguarded, CGTN reported.

On adherence to the principle of international rule of law, Xi said the authority of international law should be upheld to prevent the world from falling back into the law of the jungle.

He said development and security should be coordinated. All parties should work together to create a favorable environment for the development of countries in the Middle East and the Gulf region.

China is willing to share the opportunities of Chinese modernization with Gulf countries, fostering a solid foundation for regional development and security, Xi added.

Strengthening China-UAE ties Noting the UAE is a comprehensive strategic partner of China, Xi said China has always attached great importance to developing relations with the UAE. With joint efforts from both sides, China-UAE relations have maintained healthy and stable development, political mutual trust has been continuously deepened, pragmatic cooperation has steadily progressed and cultural exchanges have been rich and diverse, Xi said, adding that consolidating and enhancing China-Arab relations is a firm consensus between both sides and meets the expectations of the peoples of the two countries.



Rescuers assisted by heavy machinery work at the site of an Israeli strike carried out on Wednesday, in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in a meeting with counterpart Wang Yi in the Chinese capital.

# Iran warns Gulf could be targeted as Strait of Hormuz tensions escalate

TEHRAN (INP): Iran has warned of possible retaliation against ports across the Gulf if its own facilities come under attack, following a decision by Donald Trump to impose a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz after inconclusive talks in Islamabad.Commander of Iran's Quds Force, Esmail Qaani, issued a warning to the United States and Israel, saying both would ultimately leave the region empty-handed. He emphasized that the "axis of resistance" remains active and well-prepared across the region.

Qaani pointed to past conflicts, saying the United States and its allies had previously withdrawn without success from Yemen, Bab el-Mandeb, and the Red Sea, and would face a similar outcome again.

He reiterated that Iran is ready to respond decisively to any aggression, warning that military movements toward the Strait of Hormuz would be met with force. He also declared that Gulf ports would either remain accessible to all or to none, describing U.S. restrictions on shipping in international waters as "piracy."

Iranian Navy Commander Shahram Irani dismissed threats from Trump as "ridiculous," adding that U.S. military movements are under close surveillance.

Meanwhile, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ismail Baghaei criticized the blockade, calling it an act of economic retaliation against the global community and questioning the viability of waging war by targeting international trade.

Reports indicate that US forces have begun enforcing a blockade around Iranian ports, with officials warning that vessels violating restrictions could be intercepted or seized. Analysts caution that the situation could significantly heighten regional tensions and disrupt global markets.

Separately, Iranian Defence Ministry spokesperson Reza Talaei-Nik warned that foreign attempts to control the strait would deepen the crisis and threaten global energy security.

At the same time, NATO allies such as United Kingdom and France have indicated they will not participate in the blockade, instead calling for the reopening of the crucial waterway, through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes.

# China sacks vice foreign minister Sun Weidong without explanation

**Monitoring Desk**

BEIJING: China has abruptly removed senior diplomat Sun Weidong from his post as vice foreign minister, a move that has raised questions across political and diplomatic circles.

According to a brief statement issued by Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of China, the dismissal was approved by the country's top state authority. However, no reasons or timeline for the decision were disclosed, adding to the uncertainty surrounding the development.

Information available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China shows that Sun's last public engagement took place on March 13, when he met with the ambassadors of Brunei and Malaysia. Just two days earlier, he had also held talks with Pakistan's envoy in Beijing on bilateral cooperation.

Analysts note that sudden removals of senior officials in China are often linked to internal accountability mechanisms or shifts in policy direction. However, the lack of official clarification in this case has fuelled speculation and made the situation more complex.

The development comes amid China's ongoing anti-corruption drive, which intensified last year. Official reports indicated that more than one million cases were investigated, with approximately 938,000 individuals receiving various punishments.

The sweeping campaign has targeted officials at multiple levels, including dozens of high-ranking authorities as well as thousands of bureaucrats at provincial, district, and local tiers—reflecting Beijing's strict stance on corruption within the state apparatus.

# US-sanctioned tankers pass Strait of Hormuz despite US blockade, data shows

**Monitoring Desk**

TEHRAN: A third Iran-linked tanker was entering the Gulf via the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, on the first full day of the US blockade on vessels calling at Iranian ports, shipping data showed.

US President Donald Trump announced the blockade on Sunday after weekend peace talks in Islamabad between the US and Iran failed to reach a deal.

As the three vessels transiting the strait were not heading to Iranian ports, they are not covered by the ?blockade.

Panama-flagged Peace Gulf, a medium-range tanker, is heading to Hamriyah port in the United Arab Emirates, LSEG data showed.

The vessel typically moves Iranian naphtha, a petrochemical feedstock, to other non-Iranian Middle Eastern ports for export to Asia, Kpler data showed.

Prior to this, two US-sanctioned tankers passed through the narrow waterway.

Handy tanker Murlikishan is heading to Iraq to load fuel oil on April 16, Kpler data showed. The vessel, formerly known as MKA, has transported Russian and Iranian oil.

Another sanctioned tanker, Rich Starry, would be the first to ?make it through the strait and to exit the Gulf since the blockade began, data from LSEG and Kpler showed.

The tanker and its owner, Shanghai Xuanrun Shipping Co Ltd, were sanctioned by the United States for dealing with Iran. The company could not be immediately reached ?for comment.

Rich Starry is a medium-range tanker that is carrying about 250,000 barrels of methanol, according to the data. It loaded the cargo at its last port of call, the UAE's ?Hamriyah, the data showed.

# Italy's Meloni suspends defence cooperation deal with Israel

**Monitoring Desk**

ROME: Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said on Tuesday her government had suspended a defence cooperation deal with Israel, reflecting frayed ties between previously close allies as the conflicts in the Middle East continue.

Meloni's right-wing government been one of Israel's closest friends in Europe, but in recent weeks it has criticised its attacks on Lebanon, which have ?killed hundreds and injured thousands.

Israel also fired warning shots last week at Italian troops serving in Lebanon under a U.N. mandate, causing damage to a vehicle.

"When there are things we don't agree with, we act accordingly," Meloni told reporters on the sidelines of a wine fair in Verona, northern Italy.

"In light of the current situation, the government has to suspend the automatic renewal ?of the defence agreement with Israel," she added.

Meloni's announcement marked another diplomatic realignment for her right-wing government, coming a day after she criticised another close ally, U.S. President Donald ?Trump, for his attacks on Pope Leo.

A source close to the matter, who requested anonymity, said Meloni took the decision on Monday with her foreign and defence ministers, Antonio Tajani and Guido Crosetto, as well as Deputy Prime Minister Matteo ?Salvini.

"We have no security agreement ?with Italy. We have a memorandum of anding from many years ago that has never contained any substantive content.

# Italy suspends defence cooper deal with Israel

**Monitoring Desk**

ROME: Italy's government has decided to suspend the automatic renewal of a defence cooperation deal with Israel, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said on Tuesday, citing the conflicts in the Middle East.

Meloni's right-wing government has been one of Israel's closest allies in Europe, but in recent weeks it has criticised Israeli attacks on Lebanon. Those affected have included Italian troops serving there under a UN mandate.

"In light of the current situation, the government has decided to suspend the automatic renewal of the defence agreement with Israel," Meloni was quoted as saying in Verona, nothern Italy, by Italian news agencies.

A defence ministry source said one of the consequences is that Italy will no longer cooperate with Israel on military training.

Meloni took the decision on Monday with her foreign and defence ministers, Antonio Tajani and Guido Crosetto, as well as Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A spokesperson for Israel's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Reuters.

# N.Korea tests cruise, anti-ship missiles from naval destroyer

**Monitoring Desk**

SEOUL: North Korea conducted another test of strategic cruise missiles and anti-warship missiles on Sunday as part of operational efficiency trials of its destroyer Choe Hyon, state media KCNA said on Tuesday.

Leader Kim Jong Un observed the test alongside senior defence officials and naval commanders, the report said. Two strategic cruise missiles and three anti-warship missiles were fired to check the warship's integrated weapons command system, train crews in missile-launch procedures and verify the accuracy and anti-jamming performance of upgraded navigation systems, KCNA said. The cruise missiles flew for about 7,869 to 7,920 seconds, and the anti-warship missiles for about 1,960 to 1,973 seconds over waters off the country's western coast, striking their targets with what the report described as ultra-precision accuracy.

KCNA said Kim was briefed the same day on weapons system plans for two additional destroyers under construction, indicating preparations for the third and fourth vessels of the Choe Hyon class.

Kim said strengthening what he called the country's nuclear war deterrent remained a top priority.

# Counting continues in Peru election, runoff with Fujimori likely

**Monitoring Desk**

LIMA: Peru's presidential race remained wide open on Monday, with roughly half the ballots still uncounted after a second day of extended voting, leaving conservative Keiko Fujimori in the lead.

# Israeli fire kills six in Gaza, including two children, medics say

**Monitoring Desk**

CAIRO: Israeli fire killed at least six , including two children, in separate incidents across the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, local health officials ?said, in the latest violence to undermine a U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement.

Four people, including a three-year-old boy, Yahya Al?Malahi, were killed in a strike that targeted a police vehicle in Gaza City, the Hamas-run Interior Ministry said. A police officer was the dead, while ?nine bystanders were wounded, some critically, it said.

In the north of the enclave, near Jabalia, Israeli fire killed a 14-year-old ?child, Ahmed Halawa, health authorities and his family said.

Israel's military did not immediately provide comment on either incident.

In northern Gaza, Israel's military said it killed a man ?who had ?approached the armistice line with Hamas, describing ?him as an armed militant.

Health confirmed a man had been killed in the area, without providing details.

The ceasefire that began last October halted two years of full-blown war but left Israeli troops in control of a depopulated zone that makes up well over half of Gaza, with Hamas in power in the remaining, narrow coastal .

Israel has escalated its attacks on Hamas-led police ?and security forces since October, killing dozens, ?the group's officials in Gaza ?have told Reuters.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of male and female dormitories at Bogazici University, in Istanbul, Turkey.

# Former NATO chief accuses UK's Starmer of inadequately funding defence

**Monitoring Desk**

LONDON: A former NATO chief and grandee of Keir Starmer's Labour Party criticised the British prime minister on Tuesday for failing to adequately fund defence, the country's national security in peril.

George Robertson, who served in the 1990s as UK defence before leading NATO, told the Financial Times there was a gap between Starmer's rhetoric and action on defence, and Starmer ?was "not willing to make the necessary investment". Asked about Robertson's comments, Starmer's spokesperson told reporters Downing Street "completely" rejected the characterisation.

"It's vital to make the right decisions. The prime minister is determined to ensure the defence investment plan is fit for the threats that we face," the spokesperson said.

Robertson, who helped draft a Strategic Defence Review commissioned by when Labour returned to power in ?2024, planned to say later on Tuesday in a lecture that Britain had become vulnerable to external threats, according to excerpts published by the FT and BBC.

In his ?lecture, to be delivered in Salisbury, southern England, Robertson was expected to call out finance minister Rachel Reeves for devoting "only 40 words" to defence in a budget speech last autumn and not mentioning it at all in an ?update ?last month, the FT said.

Starmer has blamed underinvestment in the military on 14 years of rule by the rival Conservative Party, and has promised the largest sustained rise in defence spending since the Cold War, to reach 3% of national output in the next parliament. The government has yet to a 10-year defence investment plan initially due before the ?end of last year, aimed at meeting the ambitions set ?out in the 2024 review co-written by Robertson.

# Brazil's Lula calls for former spy head return after US detention

**Monitoring Desk**

BRASILIA: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula Silva on called on former intelligence chief ?Alexandre Ramagem, who was detained by ICE in the United States the previous day, to ?return to Brazil to serve a coup-plotting prison ?sentence.

"I believe Ramagem will come back to Brazil, ?he has ?to ?come back to his sentence," Lula said in an interview with a local outlet.

The U.S. agency reported on its website Monday that ?Ramagem was ?in its ?custody, without providing , after he ?fled Brazil ?in September following his conviction for plotting a ?coup ex-President Jair Bolsonaro.

# Erdogan tells Hungary's Magyar he believes bilateral ties will progress

**Monitoring Desk**

ANKARA: Turkish President Erdogan Hungarian election ?winner Peter Magyar in a phone call on ?that he believed Turkey-Hungary ties ?would progress further as ?he ?congratulated ?him on victory, the Turkish presidency said. In a statement, the presidency said also ?told ?Magyar ?he wanted deepen the ?strategic ?partnership between the NATO ?allies.

# School shooting in Turkey leaves 16 wounded, governor says

**Monitoring Desk**

ANKARA: A teenager opened fire at a high school ?in Turkey's southeastern province of Sanliurfa on Tuesday, wounding at least 16 people, including students and teachers, before killing himself, Governor Hasan Sildak ?said.

The assailant, a 19-year-old former student, ?used a shotgun in the attack in ?the Siverek district. The wounded were taken ?to hospital, with five later transferred to facilities ?in Sanliurfa city centre for further treatment, Sildak said.

He later told broadcaster NTV that the attacker opened ?fire indiscriminately, starting in the school yard ?before entering the building. The shooter killed himself as police attempted to apprehend him, Sildak added.

## Officials say

# Russian drone attack on Ukrainian port damages Panama-flagged vessel

**Monitoring Desk**

ODESA: Russian drones attacked Ukraine's Izmail port in the southern Odesa region overnight, damaging a civilian Panama-flagged vessel, Ukrainian officials said on Tuesday.

Several strikes were recorded across the port area, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Kuleba said, adding that separate infrastructure elements and equipment were also damaged.

"The enemy is once again deliberately striking critical infrastructure and logistics in the Odesa region," Kuleba said on the Telegram messaging app.

One of the strikes caused a fire, which was quickly extinguished, he said. Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority said the port continued to operate.

Regional Governor Oleh Kiper said that a berth and a barge were damaged at the port, while a building housing a workshop was destroyed by the strikes. Two passenger buses and seven cars were also destroyed, he added.

Six private buildings also came under attack, with their roofs damaged. An ambulance was also damaged, Kiper said, adding that no one was hurt in the attack.

Ukraine's air force said Russia had launched four missiles and 129 drones at the country since Monday evening. The air defence units downed or neutralised one missile and 114 drones, it added.

Russia has repeatedly targeted Ukraine's maritime export routes during the four-year-old war.

# US hosts Lebanese and Israeli envoys as Israel presses war on Hezbollah

**Monitoring Desk**

WASHINGTON/JERUSALEM/BEIRUT: Israeli and Lebanese envoys met in Washington on Tuesday as Israel pressed its war on Hezbollah, a diplomatic milestone overshadowed by conflicting agendas with Israel ruling out discussion of a ceasefire and demanding Beirut disarm the group.

The meeting comes at a critical in the crisis in the Middle East, a week into a fragile ceasefire between the United States, Israel and Iran. Iran says Israel's campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon must be included in any agreement to end the wider war, complicating talks mediated by Pakistan aimed at averting further economic fallout. The conflict has snared global energy supply and spiked oil prices, piling pressure on U.S. President Donald ?Trump to find an off-ramp. In a sign Washington wants to see progress in the talks, Trump's top diplomat and National Security Advisor Marco Rubio appeared at the start of the meeting alongside the Israeli ambassador to the U.S., Yechiel Leiter, and his Lebanese counterpart, Nada Hamadeh Moawad. State Department Counselor Michael Needham, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz, and U.S. ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa, a personal friend of Trump, were also participating.

It marks a rare encounter between representatives of governments that have remained technically in a state of war since Israel was established in 1948.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun in a statement on X as the meeting started that ?he hoped it would "mark the beginning of ending the suffering of the Lebanese people in general, and the southerners in particular." The Lebanese government led by Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has called for negotiations with Israel despite objections from Hezbollah,.


**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Executive Engineer, Urban Planning & Development Department ,Zhob Division invites the sealed tenders based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2026, Government of Balochistan, amended up-to-date from interested Contractors / Firm for the following execution of works:

| S.# | Name of Works. | E/Cost |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | CONSTRUCTION OF B/T ROAD KILLI TALHA DISTRICT QILLA SAIFULLAH (PSDP No.5518 (Z2026.2410) **TSE-2627081176543** | 15,000,000/- |
| 2 | DRAINAGE OF FLOOD PROTECTION AT KILLI GHABBARGAI, DISTRICT KILLA SAIFULLAH (PSDP No.5514(Z2026.2406) **TSE-2627081176573** | 20,000,000/- |

The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules, 2014 amended up to date. **BASIC ELIGIBITY:** The firm/contractor must have valid registration with the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), duly renewed and valid up to the date. Firms (Single Entity) having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in the Category C-6 or above and the relevant Specialized code. The firm must register in Balochistan Revenue Authority and presence in active tax payer list (ATL) Valid Registration with Income Tax & Presence in Active Tax Payer List in FBR (ATL) Turnover at least of last three years. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee of 3 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Other Mandatory conditions and Detail Criteria mentioned in the Bidding Documents. **METHOD OF PROCUREMENT:** Single Stage-Two Envelope Procedure. **ISSUANCE:** The firms/contractors can also download the bidding documents from the BPPRA website at www.bppra.org.pk. The tender processing fee of Rs. 2000/- & 2500/- each tender fee must be deposited in the government treasury under the head of account C-03870 through the Green Challan Form at the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP). **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 10 September,2026 till 09:00 AM. **Tender opening**: All tenders will be opened on same day at 10:00 AM in the office of the Director (Works) Urban Planning & Development Department Zarghoon Road Quetta. **Address:** Office of the Director (Work) Urban Planning & Dev: Department Zarghoon Road Quetta. Bid Validity Period: Ninety (90) Days. Email: engrmajeeb001@gmail.com

**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**
**Urban Planning & Dev: Department**
**Zhob Division**

**DPRQ/PRQ No.1017/25-08-2026**

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# Protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel, infrastructure must be respected: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS, (APP): As spiraling drone and missile attacks on civilians in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war continue, Pakistan reiterated its call in the UN Security Council for an "immediate and complete" cessation of hostilities, reverting to diplomacy and resumption of dialogue to bring peace and stability to the region.

"We deplore the escalation– the scale and intensity of attacks carried out by the parties on multiple fronts, upending lives and livelihoods in the affected regions," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said in a debate on the worsening situation in Ukraine.

"Reports of attacks targeting critical infrastructure related to energy and food supply are also deeply concerning. Such attacks further exacerbate the already fragile global food and energy security, affecting people far beyond the conflict zone," he told the 15-member Council.

The conflict began when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, arguing it was a "special military operation" for Ukraine's "demilitarization", protecting Russian-speaking people from "genocide," and preventing NATO expansion. Monday's meeting was requested by the Security Council's five European members — Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia and the United Kingdom.

Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen of Denmark, which holds the Council's presidency for the month of August, presided. In his remarks, Ambassador Asim Ahmad pointed out that the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and civilian infrastructure was a fundamental obligation under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and must be respected by all parties. "Violation of IHL risk further escalation, worsen human suffering, and, diminishes the prospects for lasting peace." He reminded Council's members of Pakistan repeated calls for holding earnest and meaningful dialogue to bring durable peace and stability to the region. "This entails eschewing the quest for a military solution," the Pakistani delegate pointed out, saying the only viable path to lasting peace remains a mutually acceptable peaceful settlement, consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, corresponding to the legitimate security interests of all sides, and the relevant multilateral agreements.

Earlier, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo said that the civilian toll continues to rise as the war goes on. July saw more civilians killed in Ukraine than in any month since May 2022, while child casualties reached their highest monthly level since April 2022. Russian forces, she said, have intensified large-scale strikes against Ukrainian cities and civilian infrastructure, including recent attacks on Kyiv.




**QUETTA: A specially decorated gate installed by the Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) at Liaquat Bazaar to facilitate the processions and events marking Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH).**



**ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq speaks to the media**

## President Zardari congratulates Kazakhstan leadership, people on successful Kurultai elections

***Reiterates Pakistan's desire to further strengthen close and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan***

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday congratulated President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the people of Kazakhstan on the successful conduct and completion of the elections to the Kurultai. In a statement, the president commended the people of Kazakhstan for their participation in the democratic process and expressed his best wishes for the newly elected Kurultai.

President Zardari reiterated Pakistan's desire to further strengthen the close and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan.

## WPC seeks institutional action on violence against women, gender inequality

ISLAMABAD, (APP): A delegation of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), led by Secretary Dr Shahida Rehmani, visited the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) in Islamabad to review women's rights initiatives, push for stronger implementation of laws at the grassroots level and seek institutional action on violence against women, climate related vulnerabilities and gender inequality. Interim NCSW Chairperson Noureen Bano Lehri briefed the delegation on the commission's ongoing initiatives and priorities, including its Strategic Plan 2026–2029, National Gender Parity Dashboard, bilingual awareness material on women's rights and the longstanding issue of pending appointments to the commission.

Dr Rehmani stressed that legislation and policies would have little impact unless they translated into tangible relief and protection for women, particularly those living in underserved and vulnerable communities.

She also strongly condemned the recent murder of Hina Javed, an employee of the National Information Technology Board deputed to the National Assembly Secretariat, allegedly by her husband and a domestic worker at her in laws' residence.

The WPC secretary said the caucus is committed to pursuing justice for Ms Javed and called for a free, fair, transparent and impartial investigation.

She said the WPC is taking the NCSW on board to ensure that all relevant institutional mechanisms were engaged and those found responsible were brought to justice and punished in accordance with the law.

## AI accelerating transformation of strategic communications

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) held a two-day Strategic Communications Workshop on 24–25 August 2026, designed to bridge theory and practice in the field of strategic communication.

The workshop featured trainers including Aamir Ghauri, Ms Amber Shamsi, Usama Bakhtiar, Talha Ahad, Awais Abbasi and Ehtasham Abbas, said a press release issued on Tuesday.

The workshop was organized by IPRI's Advocacy and Communication Team and brought together policymakers, researchers, communication professionals, academics and media practitioners to build their skills for navigating the evolving information landscape.

The programme combined discussions with practical exercises, reflecting IPRI's commitment to translating policy research into learning and practice.

The workshop opened with remarks by Lt Gen (R) Majid Ehsan, President of IPRI, who stated, "Strategic communication can no longer be understood simply as the articulation of policy or the management of public perception. It increasingly sits at the intersection of information, perception, behaviour and national power." He emphasized that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is accelerating the transformation of strategic communications.

The Director of Advocacy and Communications, Siddique Humayun, highlighted the need to balance technical skills with deeper wisdom. Drawing on Iain McGilchrist's The Master and His Emissary, he argued that effective strategic communication must recover holistic understanding alongside rigorous technique.

He stated, "Strategic Communications is long-term. It is target-audience-driven. It is relentlessly impact-focused. It requires the deliberate alignment of words, images, symbols, actions and, sometimes, most importantly, silence, to advance defined objectives across any stratum of life."

The workshop pursued four key objectives. First, it aimed to develop participants' understanding of strategic communication as an instrument of national security, diplomacy, governance and public policy. Second, it examined trends shaping the information environment, including artificial intelligence, disinformation, digital influence, cognitive warfare and evolving media ecosystems. Third, it sought to strengthen participants' capabilities in designing communication strategies, responding to information crises and countering disinformation. Finally, it applied tools of government communication, public diplomacy, media engagement, digital campaigns and behavioural insights to engage and influence audiences.

On the first day, the opening session addressed information as an instrument of national power, examining strategic narratives, perception management and the role of communication in foreign and security policy, with contributions from Mr Aamir Ghauri, Ms Amber Shamsi and Mr Siddique Humayun.



**ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif (second from right) greets Federal Minister for National Health Services Mustafa Kamal (left) during a National Assembly session**

## Regulatory reforms, int'l accreditation requires active state involvement: Mustafa Kamal

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday apprised the Senate that Pakistan is moving towards opening more than 100 additional international markets for its medicines as the country prepares to secure World Health Organization (WHO) Maturity Level-3 accreditation.

Responding to a Calling Attention Notice moved by Senator Zeeshan Khanzada, the minister said Pakistan, currently accredited at WHO Maturity Level-2, was exporting pharmaceutical products to 52 countries, while achieving Level-3 would further expand access for Pakistani medicines to global markets.

He said the regulatory assessment process was progressing, with another assessment scheduled for October. He said 11 companies were investing in Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and pharmaceutical raw materials in Pakistan, a development aimed at strengthening domestic manufacturing and reducing dependence on imported inputs.

Kamal said such investment and export growth did not happen without government facilitation, arguing that regulatory reforms and international accreditation required active state involvement.



**QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti giving appointment letters to newly appointed officers of Balochistan Revenue Authority.**

## NA unanimously passes resolution for Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The National Assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution calling on the federal and provincial governments to celebrate the blessed occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) through national programmes at the highest level.

The resolution, moved by Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, called for the illumination and decoration of highways and roads to mark the occasion.

It urged all government institutions, including educational and business institutions and media houses, to fully participate in the celebrations.

The resolution called for promoting peace, tolerance and brotherhood in accordance with the teachings of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa Ahmad Mujtaba, Khatim-un-Nabiyeen (PBUH).



**ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik chairs the kick-off meeting for the feasibility study on establishing Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in Pakistan, with international energy consultancy M/s Wood Mackenzie.**

## PTI politicising Imran Khan's health, claims Rana Sana

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Senator Rana Sanaullah Khan on Tuesday told the Senate that the Supreme Court would decide on September 16 whether, and to what extent, its August 18 order concerning the PTI founder's medical examination had been complied with, assuring that the government would implement any further direction issued by the apex court. Responding to points raised by Senator Ali Zafar and the Leader of the Opposition, Rana Sanaullah said neither the government nor the opposition should assume the role of a court and pronounce its own verdict on compliance with the judicial order.

He said the government, state institutions and courts were all bound by the Constitution and law, which also provided mechanisms for review and legal remedies where implementation of a judicial order was disputed. Referring to the Supreme Court's August 18 order, Rana Sanaullah said the government had made a sincere effort to implement it. The purpose of taking the PTI founder to a hospital, he said, was to have him medically examined. He said the original plan was changed because the administration had security concerns over the situation that could develop at the intended facility. The PTI founder was instead taken to a government health facility where, according to him, he underwent a complete examination by qualified and professional doctors. "On September 16, the court will decide where the order was complied with, to what extent it was complied with and whether there was any deficiency," he said.

## Seerah of Holy Prophet (PBUH) carries eternal message of peace, love: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday extended greetings to the nation and Muslim Ummah on the auspicious occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH).

In his message, the federal minister said the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal was a blessed day commemorating the birth of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH) and served as a reminder to follow his teachings and noble example, said a press release.

He said that the blessed life and Seerah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) carries an eternal message of peace, love, brotherhood, justice, equality and tolerance for humanity. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave humanity a practical lesson in justice, equality, patience and brotherhood and by following these principles, the foundation of a peaceful and exemplary society can be laid.

The minister said that we must shape our individual and collective lives in accordance with the golden principles of the Seerah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He said that only by following the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) can peace, tolerance, unity and mutual love be promoted in society.

## Nawabzada Jamal Raisani urges Balochistan's youth to avoid divisive, hateful narratives

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF) and MNA Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar hosted an interactive Parliament Exposure Session for participants of the Dustoor Civic Labs at Parliament House on Monday.

The session was organised by the Young Parliamentarians Forum in collaboration with Edlytica to provide young participants with an opportunity to interact with parliamentarians and learn about Parliament, the Constitution and democratic governance.

Students from Bahria University Islamabad, the Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences), Peshawar, and Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, attended the session. They interacted with Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar and General Secretary YPF Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani, MNA. The session was moderated by Special Secretary (Special Initiatives), National Assembly Secretariat, Syed Shamoon Hashmi.

The participants received a briefing on the Constitution of Pakistan, including the composition of Parliament under Article 50, the right to education under Article 25-A and constitutional provisions concerning the promotion of the social and economic well-being of the people under Article 37(e).

They were also briefed on the roles and functions of the Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF), Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR) and Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

TNawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani welcomed the participants and spoke about his interactions with students and young people across Pakistan. He encouraged students to pursue their education, develop their careers and contribute to the country's development. Speaking about the youth of Balochistan, he urged them to avoid narratives based on hatred and division and cautioned against linguistic propaganda and extreme nationalism. He noted that Balochistan is home to diverse communities. He also encouraged young people to use social media responsibly and promote knowledge, constructive dialogue and social cohesion.

## Lawmakers expresses grief over alleged sexual assault; killing of five-year-old girl

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) MNA Babar Nawaz Khan and Parliamentary Secretary for National Food Security and Research Shaista Khan on Tuesday raised the case of five-year-old Ayat Noor in the National Assembly.

Speaking in the house, both lawmakers expressed grief over the alleged sexual assault and killing of the five-year-old girl, who had been missing for 15 days.

Shaista Khan said no statement had been issued by KP CM Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi on the issue. She said the child's body was found on Monday (August 24), adding that the incident had once again left them deeply saddened and tearful.

Shaista Khan said she had hoped that the KP government would take notice of the case, but no statement had been issued by the chief minister.



**Ukrainians and Poles living in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, participated in a demonstration held to mark Ukrainian Independence Day.**

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