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Kyrgyz President Japarov terms Pakistan as trusted, important partner of Kyrgyzstan

BISHKEK, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, said Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic have agreed to work toward raising bilateral trade from roughly $16 million to $200 million within the next two years, describing the current trade volume as far short of what the two countries' friendship warrants. The prime minister flanked by Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov addressed a joint press stakeout following a ceremony in which the two countries signed a series of agreements across trade, health, science, defence education and other sectors. Speaking in the Kyrgyz capital against the backdrop of the Tien Shan mountains, the prime minister thanked President Japarov and the Kyrgyz government and people for the hospitality extended to him and his delegation. He conveyed Pakistan's greetings to the people of Kyrgyzstan on their independence day, and congratulated the country on hosting the World Nomad Games, noting he had attended the opening ceremony two nights earlier. He said the two sides had agreed their economic partnership must move into a more practical, results-oriented phase, with a comprehensive plan to gradually raise bilateral trade, improve trade mechanisms, promote joint investment, strengthen industrial cooperation and expand business-to-business contacts. Noting that current bilateral trade stands at only around $16 million, the prime minister said this "is not a patch on our friendship, our brotherhood and our very strong relations." He went further than the day's memorandum of understanding on trade, proposing that it be converted into a full bilateral agreement, and said he hoped President Japarov would agree to do so following the ceremony. He called the $200 million target within two years an achievable goal, and urged closer engagement between Pakistani and Kyrgyz business and financial institutions.

The prime minister also congratulated Kyrgyzstan on its election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2027–28 term and on its successful chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2025–26.



BISHKEK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the President of Kyrgyzstan H.E. Sadyr Nurgozhoevich Japarov exchange a joint declaration after delegation level talks in Yntymak-Ordo.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti expressing his views during a meeting with National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

No compromise on merit

CM Bugti vows to modernize Balochistan's healthcare system in line with contemporary requirements

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti met a delegation led by President Indus Hospital and Health Network Dr. Abdul Bari Khan and Member Planning Commission Ms. Shabana Haider. The meeting discussed in detail matters relating to the Indus Hospital and Health Network's projects in Bakhteer, Dera Bugti, provision of medical facilities, various collaborative projects in the health sector, and the provision of quality healthcare facilities to the people of Balochistan. Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Health Secretary Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Panezai were also present on the occasion.

During the meeting, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the Government of Balochistan considers reforms in the health sector and the provision of quality healthcare facilities among its top priorities. Providing better and quality healthcare facilities to the poor and deserving people of the province is a fundamental responsibility of the government, for which all available resources are being utilized.

The Chief Minister said that medical centres and modern equipment alone are not sufficient for improving the health sector; trained and capable human resources are also of fundamental importance.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, meeting with Chairman NAB, Lieutenant General (Retired) Nazir Ahmed, at the Ministry of Finance today to discuss NAB's initiatives and contribution towards the national exchequer.

Iran hits US sites in Gulf after American strikes kill 4 at wedding

TEHRAN, (Monitoring Desk): Iran launched retaliatory attacks on U.S. sites across the Middle East Wednesday, escalating tensions after a broad American bombardment and the deaths of four people at an Iranian wedding.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced attacks on U.S. bases in Jordan, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain and northern Iraq autonomous region, in the six-month conflict's heaviest exchange in weeks.

U.S. President Donald Trump had warned earlier of "much harder and higher" attacks if Iran retaliated to the U.S. strikes, which Iran's military and state media said killed 18 people.

The renewed attacks deepen the impasse in the war, where Iran maintains a stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz oil export route with the U.S. pressing a counterblockade of Iranian ports.

In the latest strikes, the Iranian Red Crescent said Tuesday that four people including a child were killed and more than 50 people were wounded by a U.S. attack while attending a wedding in Iran's south.

A video shared by an Iranian government account showed extensive debris and damage at what it said was the wedding site in Sirik following a U.S. strike, with people heard screaming in the background.

Iran's top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf lashed out at the United States, calling it "Satan." "If a power acts like Satan, picks targets like Satan, and kills like Satan, it's Satan. Shields a junior Satan that does the same? It's THE Great Satan," he posted on X. The U.S. military did not address the wedding strike directly.

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) spokesman Tim Hawkins said "the U.S. military never targets civilians, unlike the IRGC," referring to Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

'Large and powerful'

The latest round of fighting began when Washington hit Iranian targets Sunday, the first known strikes in several weeks.

Tehran's forces then targeted U.S. troops in Jordan and the United Arab Emirates and projectiles struck two oil tankers in unclaimed attacks.

Trump said Sunday's "large and powerful" strikes were "in retaliation for the Iranians' failed attempt at adding sea mines to the Strait" and "the Iranians shooting eight missiles, all successfully knocked down, at our Military Base in Jordan."

Judicial reforms could not achieve objectives without consultation: CJP

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi on Wednesday held a consultative meeting at the Supreme Court Branch Registry Karachi to review judicial sector development projects and reform initiatives being undertaken in the city. Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput and representatives of the legal fraternity attended the meeting. The consultation focused on measures to strengthen judicial infrastructure and improve court facilities in Sindh. Various options concerning the proposed initiatives were discussed with representatives of the Bar to obtain their views and incorporate their input into the planning and implementation process.

Chief Justice, Yahya Afridi emphasized that judicial reforms and development projects could not achieve their objectives without meaningful consultation.

Ayaz meets BA Speaker, offers condolences on demise of his son

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visited the chamber of the Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai, at the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan and expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathies over the demise of his young son. Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Member National Assembly Haji Jamal Shah Kakar and Members of the Balochistan Assembly were also present during the visit, said a news release.

Ayaz Sadiq expressed his heartfelt condolences to Captain (Retd.) Abdul Khaliq and the bereaved family, saying that the loss of a young son is an immense and irreparable loss for parents and an extremely painful tragedy.

He said that he fully shares the grief and sorrow of Captain (Retd.) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai and his family during this difficult hour.

Ayaz Sadiq offered Fateha for the departed soul and prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of the deceased and grant the bereaved family strength, patience and fortitude to bear this irreparable loss.

Youth should use technology for development of Balochistan: Home Minister

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langau has said that the youth of Balochistan are the future of our people. The present era is an era of education, knowledge, technology and skills; therefore, young people should devote their full attention to education. Education is the power that can take a person from backwardness towards development. In his issued message, Balochistan Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langau said that the future of a nation does not change through slogans alone. The future of nations changes through education, books, pens, hard work, good character and continuous effort. Today, we should compete with other nations not through weapons but through the pen. Our youth should become doctors, engineers, teachers, scientists, lawyers, officers, researchers and technology experts. Young people should work hard and achieve high positions in every field of life.

Legal action against absent employees to increase transparency in govt services: Chief Secretary

QUETTA, (VoM Report): An important meeting of the Secretaries Committee was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan. All administrative secretaries, as well as divisional commissioners, participated in the meeting through video link.

The meeting reviewed matters relating to administrative performance at the provincial level, development projects, ensuring the attendance of officers and staff in offices, vacant posts and the provision of public services. The matter of condemnation of official vehicles of all departments was also considered during the meeting. On this occasion, the current condition of official vehicles, identification of unusable vehicles and the process of condemning or auctioning them in accordance with rules and regulations were reviewed in order to ensure the effective and transparent use of government resources.

The meeting also considered details of vacant posts in various departments, employees awaiting promotion and matters relating to initial recruitment. It was emphasized in the meeting that matters concerning vacant posts, promotions and recruitments should be dealt with according to rules and regulations, merit and the principles of transparency.

Progress of entire Pakistan linked with Balochistan's development: Ayaz

CM Bugti says difference of opinion is the basic beauty of democracy

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visited the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Quetta on Wednesday, where he met Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, members of the provincial cabinet, and members of the government and opposition. Matters of mutual interest, the development of Balochistan, public issues, and the promotion of democratic and parliamentary traditions in the province were discussed on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti welcomed Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's arrival in Quetta and said that his visit to Balochistan was a source of pleasure and honour for them. He said that Balochistan is everyone's home and that democratic traditions, mutual respect and political tolerance exist between the government and opposition in the province. The Chief Minister said that although the government and opposition in the Balochistan Assembly certainly criticize each other, strong traditions of moral values, civility, and mutual respect exist. Difference of opinion is the basic beauty of democracy, and it is the democratic right of the opposition to criticize the government. However, keeping political differences within the bounds of mutual respect is part of Balochistan's positive political tradition.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that government and opposition members sitting together is a manifestation of Balochistan's positive political culture and democratic maturity. He said that mutual respect among political leaders and sitting together for dialogue sends a positive message about Balochistan to guests arriving from outside the province and from abroad.



QUETTA: MNA Jamal Shah Kakar meets Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Pakistan pledges constant peace efforts 'despite latest US-Iran escalation'

Makkah defence pact aims to 'end prospects of war in region'

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan on Wednesday welcomed the "clear and authoritative pronouncements" by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in its ruling, affirming that it retained all diplomatic and non-diplomatic options to protect its water rights under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), and urging New Delhi to return to full compliance.

Addressing his weekly press briefing, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said that the court's unanimous award constituted an important reaffirmation of the sanctity of the Indus Waters Treaty and the rule of international law.

He said that PCA's ruling vindicated Pakistan's consistent position that differences concerning the Indus waters must be addressed strictly within the framework of the Treaty and in accordance with international law. He said that the proceedings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration were conducted strictly under the dispute settlement framework of the Indus Waters Treaty.

"India's rejection of the award by the Permanent Court of Arbitration raises concerns that extend well beyond the present dispute. India cannot treat international law as a matter of convenience—invoking it when useful and discarding it when inconvenient," he said.



QUETTA: Education Secretary Lal Jan Jaffar distributing certificates among chairpersons and head teachers of PTMCs.

Safe motherhood requires availability of skilled birth attendants: Dr Rubaba

QUETTA, (APP): Adviser for Women Development Department, Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi said that sustainable development in Balochistan is not possible without improving the health of women, mothers and children, stressing that maternal and child healthcare must remain at the centre of the province's primary healthcare strategy.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Essential Package of Health Services (EPHS) Balochistan, Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi said the initiative represented an important step towards strengthening the primary healthcare system and ensuring that essential medical services were available closer to communities, particularly in remote and underserved areas. Dr Rubaba, who is herself a medical doctor, said that geographical challenges and limited access to healthcare facilities in far-flung areas often create additional risks for pregnant women. She emphasized the need to ensure regular antenatal care (ANC), including blood pressure monitoring and hemoglobin assessment.

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Recognition of state of Palestine vital to isolate Israel's policies

The anticipated decisions of France and the United Kingdom to recognize the state of Palestine mark a significant diplomatic shift, reinforcing the international consensus that a two-state solution is the only viable path to lasting peace in the Middle East, with global implications. While recognition alone will not alter the realities of occupation, it carries profound legal and political weight – affirming Palestine's right of self-determination and sending a clear message to Israel: the denial of Palestinian statehood is unsustainable and in violation of international law and the prevailing global consensus.

This move aligns with a broader trend in Europe, where frustration over Israel's continued settlement expansion and rejection of meaningful negotiations led several nations to reconsider their positions. The symbolic and legal implications of recognition cannot be overstated: it reinforces Palestine's standing in international law and challenges Israel's occupation, which has been declared by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to be "illegal" in two advisory opinions, in 2004 and in 2024.

Under international law, recognition of a state is a political act that acknowledges an entity's statehood based on Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States criteria: a permanent population, defined territory, government, and capacity to enter relations with other states. While Palestine's territorial fragmentation under occupation complicates full state functionality, 148 UN member states have already recognized it, affirming its legitimacy as a sovereign state.

Admittedly, recognition does not end the Israeli occupation or settle matters related to border demarcation between Israel and Palestine, but it strengthens the latter's standing in international forums and legal disputes. It also signals to Israel that its current policies – settlement expansion, annexation threats, and the refusal to engage in good-faith negotiations – are incompatible with global norms and may lead to sanctions.

The ICJ and the UN General Assembly have repeatedly affirmed the principle of Palestinian self-determination and called for compliance with international law regarding the occupation. The ICJ is currently deliberating two significant cases: South Africa v. Israel, which examines the scope of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including accusations under the 1951 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and an advisory opinion on Israel's legal obligations toward UN agencies, including the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), operating in the region. Recognition of Palestine by additional Western and European states would reinforce these legal precedents, further isolating Israel's policies under international law.

The case of Kosovo offers a compelling parallel. Despite Serbia's vehement opposition, recognition by a majority of UN members allowed Kosovo to consolidate its de facto statehood, participate in international institutions, and establish legal precedents that Serbia can no longer overturn. While Kosovo's independence remains contested – given that Russia and China, two permanent UN Security Council members, continue to object – its recognition has normalized its sovereignty in practice.

Similarly, widespread recognition of Palestine would solidify its claim to statehood, making its exclusion from meaningful negotiations increasingly untenable for Israel. Like Kosovo, Palestine may not achieve full UN membership under the UN Charter owing to US exercise of its veto power in the UN Security Council, but diplomatic recognition by influential states would grant Palestine greater leverage in future talks.

France and the UK are joined by other states such as Portugal, Malta, San Marino, and Finland, joining Spain, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia, and Belgium, all of which have already taken steps toward recognition. Even traditionally cautious nations, such as Canada and Australia, have hinted at reconsidering their positions. This momentum reflects frustration with Israel's opposition to a two-state solution and aligns with broader efforts to revive diplomatic efforts. The EU's gradual shift toward recognition underscores that the status quo – perpetual occupation, settlement expansion, and the absence of a political horizon for Palestinians – is unsustainable.

Recognition should not be seen as hostility toward Israel but rather as a reaffirmation of international law. The Oslo Accords were meant to be transitional, yet three decades later, Israel continues to undermine Palestinian self-determination through military control, settlement entrenchment, and the fragmentation of Palestinian territory. By recognizing Palestine, European states underscore that Israel cannot indefinitely dictate terms without consequence.

A two-state solution remains the only framework endorsed by the UN, the EU, and major global powers. Recognition does not replace negotiations but reinforces their urgency. If Israel continues to reject Palestinian statehood, it risks further diplomatic isolation and the erosion of its own legitimacy as a democratic state. Therefore, recognition sends a powerful message: Palestinian statehood is not a concession but a right. As with Kosovo, international consensus can shape realities on the ground. For peace to prevail, Israel must accept that denial is no longer an option.

The expected recognition of Palestine by France, the UK, and other Western states marks a turning point in the conflict's diplomatic landscape. While it will not immediately end the occupation or resolve all disputes, it reasserts the principle that Palestinian self-determination is non-negotiable. Israel now faces a choice: adapt to the changing international consensus or face growing isolation and the real possibility of sanctions. The two-state solution, though challenged, remains the only viable path to peace. Recognition is not the end of the process – but it is an essential step toward a just and lasting peace under the UN Charter.

Sandy Eldorado

F.S. Aijazuddin

Never throw away a diary. It is like burying your past prematurely. In 1980, I worked in Dubai for a while and then for the next nine years in the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. Both sheikhdoms were emerging from the chrysalis of their sandy past to become modern Eldorados.

C. Davidson's recent book From Sheikhs to Sultanism (2021) encouraged me to re-read my early diaries. Davidson focuses on the rise of two modern Arab rulers — Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman al-Saud (MBS) and the UAE's President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ). MBZ (born in 1961) is older than MBS by 24 years. MBS defers to MBZ as his 'wise uncle'. The enormous disparity in their wealth, however, makes MBS far more important.

Both rulers govern through layered control — using what Davidson defines as 'patrimonialism' (governance dominated by the ruler, his family and friends) and 'neo-patrimonialism' (in which modern-looking institutions and rules are the veneer for patrimonialism). The ADNOC I joined in May 1980 fell into the second category.

From ADNOC's inception in 1971, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan had been keen that it should be run on professional lines. He did not trust the Western oil giants. He was suspicious of Egyptians and other Arabs. He turned instead to Algeria, where, after the peremptory departure of the colonising French, young Algerian executives in its national oil company Sonatrach stepped into the vacuum.

The man sent by Sonatrach to head ADNOC was a 31-year-old Sorbonne-trained economist, Dr Mahmoud Hamra Krouha. An FT profile described him as "a slightly-built man, neatly dressed in western suits, with an easy smile and an Indira Gandhi-style streak of white in his hair". A formidable linguist, he was fluent in Arabic (including the local Bedu dialect), French and English. He took with him about a dozen Algerians (not all properly qualified) to help him run ADNOC.

I had the privilege of working with Dr Krouha for seven years, between 1980 and 1987. Over my long professional career, I have encountered many chief executives, each a giant in his own field. None — except for our Syed Babar Ali — could compare with Krouha for vision, dynamism, and competence.

Dr Krouha exercised an unshared grip over ADNOC's 10 directorates — exploration & production (E&P), hydrocarbon processing, marketing, etc — and its 18 subsidiaries and affiliates. He knew everything about them and expected his staff to be as well informed. Every paper requiring his approval went up to his Spartan 12th-floor office in ADNOC's headquarters. (Its replacement is a 65-floor skyscraper, costing $316 million.)

He chaired the board meetings of each of ADNOC's subsidiaries, usually in the afternoons (ADNOC closed at 2:30pm.) All too often, underprepared CEOs would find themselves outgunned by him. On one occasion, I witnessed him take on Dr Mana bin Said Al-Otaiba, then UAE's minister of petroleum and mineral resources. A new general manager had to be appointed in a company of which Dr Otaiba was the chairman. British Petroleum proposed a candidate. Dr Otaiba welcomed him. Dr Krouha objected: "It is ADNOC's right as the majority shareholder to nominate the GM." BP and other foreign shareholders had to agree. The minister left the room, but returned. Dr Krouha had made his point.

Inevitably, as young watanis or locals returned from their training abroad, they eyed the top posts in ADNOC. In January 1981, ADNOC's board instructed Dr Krouha to appoint Abu Dhabians as deputy directors. The first ha---ppened to be Su--h-ail Al-Mazrui. I know the exact date — Jan 25 — from my diary. I was in the room of the Algerian director (E&P) when Suhail was ushered in. I wrote in my diary: "He is a young mild-looking engineer who has recently returned from the US." His salary I noted was in Grade 12, mine Grade 15.

I suspected that he had been chosen by Sheikh Zayed to take over from Dr Krouha. That took another six years. In 1987, during a routine majlis, Dr Krouha attended on Sheikh Zayed. Zayed asked Sheikh Tahnoun (his son-in-law and chairman, ADNOC): "Is he still here?" Before Dr Krouha could return to his office in ADNOC, it had been sealed and he was escorted to his villa. A BP representative commented afterwards, "We were there before, and we are here now. How long did he think he would last?"

Suhail Al-Mazrui took ad hoc charge of ADNOC. With the sustained patronage of MBZ, in time he rose to become minister of energy & infrastructure.

Davidson's detailed book mentions ADNOC only three times, Dr Krouha not once. Broken by the death of a son, Krouha died in Paris in 1997, unsung, but not forgotten.

Two things to beware

Khurram Husain

Here are two things to beware: billionaires in politics and government officials who publicly praise the 'resilience' of the people. These two may seem unrelated but they share a devastating quality: they mask the failure of governance and distort the public's understanding of power, responsibility and survival.

Let's begin with the billionaires.

In recent months, Rahul Gandhi's sharpened attacks on Narendra Modi have reignited a debate that India's ruling class would prefer to bury. At the centre of his criticism is not ideology, not even electoral promises, but a relationship. The relationship between Prime Minister Modi and Gautam Adani.

Gandhi has been unflinching in what he calls a "symbiotic" arrangement between political power and corporate interest. In speech after speech, he has laid out how Adani's businesses ballooned after Modi came to power, often expanding into sectors — airports, defence, energy — where government clearances and public assets were key to growth. Gandhi's central point is blunt: Modi governs for Adani, not for India.

Adani's rise was greased by access — access to land, licences, loans and, above all, impunity. This is not business. It is cronyism par excellence, and a cautionary tale for the rest of us. It shows billionaires in politics are usually there for themselves only. They use their wealth to buy themselves a country, and use the country to increase their wealth.

In Pakistan, we've had our own versions of this playbook. One example would be Jehangir Tareen, who bankrolled Imran Khan's rise, shuttled independents into the PTI camp, and carried the party through its early years in power. And what did he get in return? Sugar — and a lot of it. Subsidies flowed, prices were manipulated, and regulatory oversight vanished. When the sugar inquiry report finally came out, it laid bare the scale of profiteering. Tareen's political investment paid off handsomely till he was caught with his hand in the jar and, mercifully for the rest of us, was turfed out of the game that he thought he had bought.

Then there's Elon Musk in America. Though not a politician in the formal sense, Musk now wields political power in all but name. From manipulating markets with tweets to controlling public infrastructure — satellite internet in war zones, electric vehicles on government subsidies — Musk has blurred the line between private ambition and public consequence. His public behaviour, particularly since acquiring Twitter (now X), reveals not a disrupter of elites but a billionaire deeply committed to reshaping the rules in his favour. He demands tax breaks, moves factories when displeased, and openly flirts with political candidates who will leave him alone. His influence is not democratic. It is imperial.

Whether it's Adani, Tareen, or Musk, the pattern holds: billionaires do not enter or shape politics out of civic duty. They do it to protect and expand their empires. They present their wealth as a marker of success. 'My wealth is evidence of my success. Give me control of the state, and I will operate it successfully too,' they say.

But it's a lie. In truth, they ask for control only to increase their wealth and nothing more.

Now to the second thing to beware: the myth of the 'resilient' Pakistani.

You've heard it before — usually from a government official at a conference, a donor event or a television interview. 'The people of Pakistan are incredibly resilient.' It sounds flattering. It sounds noble. But it's neither. It's a euphemism for abandonment.

We are not resilient because we choose to be. We are resilient because we have to be.

Because when inflation ravages the monthly wage, life must go on. Because resilience is what it takes when the roads are flooded after the slightest rain, crime is rampant, public service non-existent, property rights hard to come by and justice elusive, and education a luxury. Let's be clear. This is not resilience. It is endurance. It is a forced adaptation to failure.

And when officials celebrate this they are not saluting the people. They are excusing themselves. Every time they praise our 'strength' they are also admitting their own weakness. Their inability to provide the basics of governance becomes, in their narrative, proof of our heroism.

But there is no dignity in being told you are brave for surviving conditions that should not exist in the first place.

The woman who walks five kilometres for clean water does not want to be called strong. She wants water. The child studying by candlelight is not doing it for the applause.

And here's the real danger: once 'resilience' becomes the official line, it lets the state off the hook. It becomes a substitute for service delivery. 'Look how resilient they are,' they say — so why fix anything?

Let's retire this fiction. Let's stop romanticising suffering. The people of this country do not want to be resilient. They want to be safe, fed, housed and heard. And if there is any role for government in this country, it is to build a society where nobody needs to be resilient just to survive. So beware the billionaire who seeks to 'serve'. He's likely here to collect. And beware the official who praises your 'resilience'.

They are telling you not that you are strong — but that they are absent. Because in both cases, the real message is the same: 'you're on your own, kid.'

Peace and justice

Mohammad Ali Babakhel

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity by 2030. Achieving these ideals is difficult in a world that is increasingly divided, with some regions enjoying sustained levels of peace and security while others are confronted with endless cycles of violence. Violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on global peace, affecting economic growth. Addressing this requires a global approach and cooperation.

SDG 16 — 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions' — focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring access to justice, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. For developing societies with strong colonial pasts, the implementation of SDG 16 is complex. Its primary aim is to reduce all forms of violence by working with governments and communities to find solutions to conflict.

It includes 12 targets and 23 indicators. Its priority areas include strengthening police and judicial systems, community-based violence prevention programmes, reintegration of former combatants, ensuring access to justice through legal aid programmes and simplification of court procedures, human rights training for police and judiciary, fighting corruption through transparency in public finance, anti-corruption commissions, whistleblower protection laws, and building effective institutions with transparent governance structures, citizen participation in decision-making and digital governance. To protect human rights, national human rights commissions are to be formed, and human rights protection laws and monitoring mechanisms for rights violations are to be established. A few countries have introduced innovations to achieve the targets set in SDG 16. Rwanda introduced community courts (Gacaca) for post-genocide justice. They were designed to address the massive scale of crimes committed during the Rwandan genocide by involving local communities in the judicial process. Argentina opened 90 access-to-justice centres. Latvia planned the promotion of dialogue and civic education through accessible spaces like libraries and museums. Georgia initiated juvenile justice reforms that have lowered child incarceration and recidivism rates. South Korea and Sierra Leone established legal aid corporations and justice centres that have provided assistance in millions of cases, expanding equitable legal access. Australia introduced interdepartmental governance mechanisms for improved coordination, and Nigeria introduced a youth alliance to incorporate the participation of youth in civic engagement. In Pakistan, point 20 of the National Action Plan lists a commitment to revamp and reform the criminal justice system. Point 12 of the revised NAP 2021 includes it as one of its priorities. Pakistan has also drafted two internal security policies: NISP I 2014, NISP II 2018 and the National PVE Policy 2024. These federal initiatives need to be translated into action plans by all provinces, irrespective of political inclinations, as they are meant to improve institutional capacity and ensure order, security and peace. Pakistan's security rankings warrant more coordinated efforts among all federal and provincial agencies. In the Global Terrorism Index 2025, Pakistan has been ranked the second most impacted country by terrorism. In the Rule of Law index, it has been ranked 129th, and in the Human Development Index at 168. Translating global commitments into tangible action re--quires locally tail-o-red strategies. When evaluating the legal system, countries need to consider the cost, complexity, discri-mination and distance from rural communities. In rural areas, community-based justice solutions should be funded, and barriers to justice for vulnerable groups addressed. By improving transparency through digital tools, fostering partnerships between governments and civil society, strengthening legal aid and anti-corruption bodies, empowering women and youth in governance and peacebuilding, and encouraging robust data collection systems, the hurdles may be overcome. Implementation strategies include policy reform to align national laws with international human rights standards, capacity building of bureaucracy, data collection, encouraging civil society and youth engagement in governance, and fostering international cooperation. The SDGs and peace are interconnected. A developing state should interpret SDG 16's targets more flexibly. It must be understood that investing in the criminal justice system is not a non-developmental activity, but an investment in sustainable development and peace.

No room for complacency

Ishrat Husain

Recent external developments have been quite favourable for Pakistan — some of them unexpected. Pakistan's emerging importance after the May skirmishes with India, President Donald Trump's soft pronouncements coupled with a warm welcome to the top leadership, the souring of US-India ties, a reasonably good deal on reciprocal tariffs, the upgrading of credit ratings, prospective investment in 'massive' oil reserves and minerals, etc, have led to euphoria.

However, this exuberance should be tempered by the experience of past relationships with major powers, which have been transactional and not permanent. High-wire acts carry risks. We should not allow the feel-good factor to intoxicate us. Our policymakers should not project life as being easy going forward, as if they were no longer obligated to carry out the onerous task of building a strong economy through stabilisation and deep reform. In short, there is no room for complacency as we are far from overcoming our domestic vulnerabilities, which are accentuated by adverse external conditions.

De-globalisation, inward-looking industrial policies, onshoring and nearshoring of supply chains, disruptive and exorbitant tariffs hindering international trade and openness, the likely slowing down of the US economy, climate change risks and AI penetration have made it difficult for emerging economies to repeat the exceptional progress made in 1990-2015. Domestically, the drivers of competitiveness — industrial and agricultural productivity through diffused innovation, a less skilled workforce, dysfunctional governance institutions, political instability, an inequitable and distortive taxation structure, over-regulation, the deep intrusion of state agencies in the market, an outdated model of energy pricing and the SOEs' continuing losses — are stumbling blocks to generating jobs, expanding exports, reducing poverty and attracting investment.

Digitisation, financial inclusion and the absorption of emerging technologies are still in their infancy and yet to permeate transaction structures. The debt burden has not yet reverted to the legal benchmark of 60 per cent of GDP, and the rollover risk of short-term deposits by friendly countries remains high. Foreign exchange reser-ves are inadequate for the growing needs of a buo-yant economy and as a buffer for unanticipated future shocks. Continuity and consistency of economic policies are yet to be tested when faced with politically unpopular decisions that end the privileges of rent-seeking classes, including those defying formalisation and documentation.

Many reforms resulting in stabilisation, deregulation of wheat prices and non-essential drugs, the Pakistan Single Window, automation and data integration of FBR taxes with third-party databases, the phasing out of regulatory and additional duties and reduction in rates and slabs, right-sizing of the federal government, privatisation of PIA and the Discos, civil service reform, and introducing a competitive market for the energy sector have been initiated. They should be brought to a successful culmination. Other planned reforms such as targeted subsidies and training of women through BISP, the repair of provincial finances by raising outcome-based investment in social sectors, developing employable skills for youth, the efficient use of irrigation water and drought- and heat-resistant seeds, boosting industries providing intermediate inputs such as steel, petrochemicals, active pharmaceutical ingredients, electronics and export facilitation have yet to see the light of day.

Delivery of basic public services has suffered since directly elected, fully empowered and well-resourced local governments were dissolved. Stiff resistance by MNAs and MPAs, who fear losing their clout, has prevented the completion of devolution. There's no realisation that dissatisfaction with the government of the day will dwindle once local communities take charge of their own affairs, and mobilise and allocate resources for what they see as priority needs in their areas. Surveys show that citizens with complaints have easier access to local councillors who can address their grievances than they do to their MPAs and MNAs. The Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad metropolitan corporations will no longer be dependent upon the provincial or federal governments, who can then allocate more resources to backward districts.

Iran threatens attacks on regional energy infrastructure after Trump's threat over Hormuz

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: An Iranian military source warned on Wednesday that Tehran would strike regional infrastructure, including energy facilities, if Washington targeted bridges and power plants in Iran, following US President Donald Trump's threat to attack infrastructure over commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump threatened earlier today that the US would bomb an Iranian bridge or power plant every time Tehran attacked a commercial vessel in the strategic waterway.

Speaking to the semi-official Tasnim News Agency, the source said Iran has a "steel determination" to exercise its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz and "would never allow the waterway to become a source of threats" against the country again.

The source added that shipping through the strait would remain safe provided vessels coordinated with Iran and complied with arrangements established by Tehran.

Otherwise, the source said, Iran would continue exercising what it described as its firm resolve to control the strategic waterway as part of ensuring its long-term security.

"If the US targeted any Iranian bridge or power plant, Tehran would respond by striking regional infrastructure, including energy facilities in which Washington has interests," he warned.

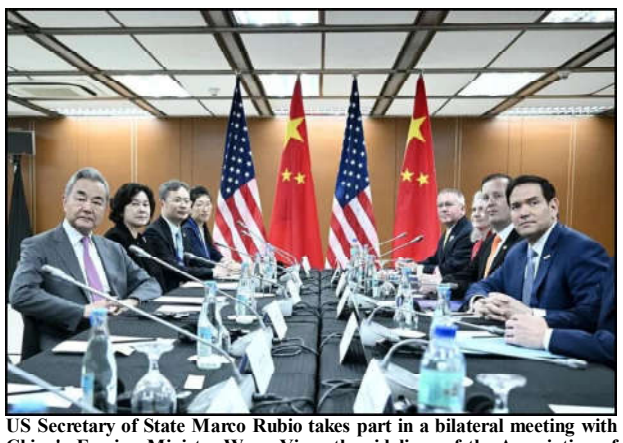
The source also said the US should have become fully aware over the past 10 days that Iran is capable of striking any target it chooses, adding that any "gamble" by Trump "would once again end in failure".

The warning comes as US and Iranian forces continued exchanging strikes despite a Pakistan-brokered framework agreement signed in June to end the war that began in February and pave the way for a lasting peace agreement.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday warned that the United States would retaliate with strikes on Iranian infrastructure if the Islamic Republic attacked any vessel transiting the Strait of Hormuz. In a post on his Truth Social platform, he said any attack by Iran on a ship in the strategic waterway — whether carried out with "a missile, rocket, drone, or any other device or weapon" — would trigger a US military response.



U.S. FBI director Kash Patel, left, meets Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manat at his offices in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio takes part in a bilateral meeting with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Pasay, Metro Manila

Desperate search for survivors after flash floods 'like an earthquake' kill 23 people

Monitoring Desk

KABUL: Rescue crews were digging through mud and rubble for the second day in search of survivors after flash floods tore through a remote province in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least 23 people and leaving over 100 missing.

The floods struck Nuristan province on Monday, collapsing an undetermined number of buildings and injuring 80 people, the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority said. Parun, the provincial capital, was among the worst-affected areas and officials said they expected the death toll to rise as rescue reached cut-off villages.

Nuristan is one of Afghanistan's most isolated provinces, a sparsely populated stretch of steep valleys and forests along the Pakistan border where roads are poor and settlements cling to mountainsides. Its harsh terrain is slowing the arrival of help from the national capital Kabul, leaving residents to join the search alongside emergency teams.

Scores of people gathered in Parun on Tuesday to look for the missing, some using wooden poles and their bare hands, an AFP journalist at the scene reported.

Farid Gul Zaheer, a 34-year-old pharmacist who was hurt while trying to escape up the mountainside, said he had never witnessed such a dangerous flood. "It felt like there was an earthquake, and I heard children and people screaming," he told AFP.

Severe weather was forecast to persist for a few days, with heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, winds carrying dust and sand.

Lebanon's PM visits shattered border village as deal with Israel begins

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: Lebanon's prime minister visited Wednesday a battered southern village as the implementation of a Washington-brokered Lebanese-Israeli agreement began, following months of war between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah.

The latest conflict started March 2, when the Lebanese militant group fired rockets toward Israel after the U.S.-Israeli February attacks that set off the Iran war.

In response, Israel launched an aerial campaign and ground invasion in Lebanon, killing more than 4,000 people and displacing 1.2 million others.

The two sides, technically in a state of war nearly 80 years after Israel's establishment, started rare direct talks championed by Washington.

They reached an agreement by late June, setting a plan for the deployment of Lebanese military forces in areas in southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah had a military presence and influence, and the withdrawal of Israeli forces, while disarming the militant group.

Hezbollah has refused the talks and disarmament calls.

Nawaf Salam's visit to Zawtar Al Gharbieh came a day after President Joseph Aoun's landmark White House meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, who made a surprise announcement, allowing American carriers to resume direct flights to Lebanon for the first time in 40-plus years.

Salam, alongside Lebanon's defense minister and senior military officials, pitched a Lebanese flag near a destroyed building in the town, vowing the government will start rebuilding destroyed homes and infrastructure.

"We have insisted since the beginning that our goal is the complete Israeli withdrawal from all our territory," Salam said.



Smoke rises from a Wildberries warehouse on fire after an attack in Krasnodar, Russia.

Nearly 1,000 people have died from Ebola in DR Congo

Monitoring Desk

CANGO: Nearly 1,000 people have died from Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the country's health ministry says.

DRC's National Institute of Public Health said on Wednesday that 999 deaths have been confirmed since the outbreak of the Bundibugyo strain of the virus began in May.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), two people have also died from the virus in neighbouring Uganda.

DRC's Health Ministry said that as of Monday, 2,473 cases had been recorded in the latest outbreak. At least 737 patients are currently in isolation and hospitals, it added.

The DRC outbreak was declared on May 15 after several deaths were recorded in the northeastern province of Ituri, where cases remain concentrated. Several cases linked to the DRC's outbreak were then reported in Uganda.

This outbreak has killed more people at a quicker rate than any Ebola outbreak on record, including the 2013-2016 outbreak that is considered the worst on record with over 11,000 deaths out of at least 28,000 cases. That outbreak took about eight months to reach 1,000 deaths.

Last week, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that the current outbreak had over the past month "expanded faster than any previous outbreak" of the virus.

Iranian official denies 2 French diplomats mistreated

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI/PARIS: An Iranian foreign ministry official denied on Wednesday that two French diplomats were mistreated by Iranian security personnel who detained them for several in Tehran.

Paris swiftly dismissed the Iranian official's comments, which were reported by state media, and has warned that there will be consequences over the incident.

The French foreign ministry summoned the Iranian charge d'affaires on Tuesday over the incident, in which it said two French embassy staff had been detained and physically intimidated by Iranian security services. Paris said the diplomats had their phones taken, were forbidden to contact the embassy and were verbally intimidated in a breach of diplomatic conventions.

Ukrainian drones hit Russian online giant retailer Wildberries for 2nd time

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukrainian drones have hit warehouses of Russia's biggest online retailer again, killing one person and injuring another 14, local officials say.

They say logistics hubs run by Wildberries in two south-west cities in the Krasnodar and Stavropol regions were struck overnight, triggering the evacuation of employees.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the hubs were "involved in providing the Russian army with drone components, navigation equipment and other gear".

Ukraine hit the retailer's warehouses in central Russia four days ago, killing eight people, according to Russian officials. Wildberries - often described as Russia's Amazon - employs some 48,000 people.

Workers were evacuated after the attacks on logistics centres in Krasnodar and Nevinnomyssk, Wildberries founder and Russia's wealthiest woman Tatyana Kim said earlier on Wednesday.

"There are no words to describe all the feelings and emotions caused by the attacks on ordinary people, on our employees, on us, who are simply doing our jobs," she wrote on Telegram. "But these situations demonstrate the most important thing: we must continue to do what we do for the benefit of people."

In Krasnodar, 10 people were injured in an attack on a warehouse complex, with three in a serious condition, the region's Governor Veniamin Kondratyev said.

FBI chief hold talks in Cambodia

Monitoring Desk

PHNOM PENH: FBI Director Kash Patel held talks with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Wednesday on joint efforts to combat international online scam operations that cheat victims out of billions of dollars each year.

A report issued Tuesday by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime estimated that scams caused estimated losses in the Asia-Pacific region alone of as much as $114 billion in 2025. It warned that even as authorities conduct raids on industrial-sized scam centers mostly located in border regions of Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, criminals have responded by shifting to other parts of the world or operating on a smaller scale. Patel arrived in Cambodia from neighboring Thailand.

Indian opposition disrupts parliament to support student protesters and pressure Modi

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Indian opposition lawmakers disrupted parliament on Wednesday in support of student protesters, echoing their calls for the education minister to resign over exam leaks and ratcheting up pressure on Prime Minister Modi after days of unrest.

The protests, which started last month over the leak of medical school entrance exam papers that affected 2 million students, grew this week when tens of thousands of young protesters took to the streets of New Delhi on Monday, with police using tear gas and batons to push them back.

Protests have since spread around the country to Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Goa, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram, Jammu and Ahmedabad, heightening the biggest youth challenge to Modi since he came to power in 2014.

Opposition lawmakers led by Rahul Gandhi gathered outside the parliament building in New Delhi on Wednesday, many dressed in black and waving placards calling on Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to quit.

Later, they disrupted proceedings by shouting and interrupting the speaker, forcing repeated suspensions of the lower and upper house.

Gandhi told press conference that students want Pradhan to quit, those who beat them during protests in Delhi to be held accountable, and Modi to apologise to them.

"We are fully backing them. This is not negotiable under any circumstance," he said.

Zelensky tasks new army chief with stepping up offensive operations

Monitoring Desk

UKRAINE: The new commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, Mykhailo Drapatyi, said President Volodymyr Zelensky has given him "clear tasks" for his new role, including continuing and intensifying offensive operations across all fronts.

Earlier on Wednesday, the outgoing commander-in-chief, Oleksandr Syrskyi, said that he was handing over an army that knows how to fight on the offensive, in a farewell message after his dismissal the previous day. Zelensky dismissed Syrskyi on Tuesday evening after days of protests, replacing him with Drapatyi.

The protests broke out after Zelensky removed the popular politician Mykhailo Fedorov - seen as responsible for recent Ukrainian successes in drone warfare - from his role as defence minister last week. In a post on Facebook on Wednesday, Drapatyi said that his priorities included potential operations deep inside Russian territory and the technological modernization of Ukraine's armed forces.

Drapatyj, who is 17 years younger than the outgoing chief, is expected to bring more modern approaches to warfare and military leadership.



Ukraine's President Zelenskiy poses for a picture with newly appointed armed forces Commander-in-Chief Drapatyi in Kyiv.

Mysterious white foam draws crowds on Nigerian highway

Monitoring Desk

NIGERIA: An urgent investigation has been launched by Nigeria's environmental agency after a strange white foamy substance appeared on a major highway, sparking a public spectacle and raising safety concerns.

The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Nesrea) has warned people to keep their distance from the unidentified substance along the busy Kaduna-Abuja Expressway, linking the main city in the north to the federal capital.

US concludes 11th wave of strikes against Iran as war cost crosses $37 billion

WASHINGTON (INP): The US Central Command (CENTCOM) said it has successfully completed the 11th consecutive evening of strikes against Iran.

CENTCOM assets targeted Iranian military operations centers, maritime capabilities, aircraft hangars, drone storage facilities, and military logistics infrastructure to further degrade Iran's ability to threaten commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. Over the past three months, Iran has attacked more than 30 commercial vessels transiting the international waterway vital for regional and global trade. The unwarranted attacks have endangered hundreds of innocent mariners and undermined freedom of navigation. Despite Iranian aggression, the Strait of Hormuz remains open for commercial vessel transit. Since early May, CENTCOM forces have helped facilitate the transit of approximately 900 commercial vessels and 450 million barrels of crude oil.

On the other hand, the cost of the United States' military campaign involving Iran has climbed to $37.5 billion, according to U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who briefed lawmakers on Tuesday while seeking additional funding for ongoing operations.

Speaking before the Senate appropriations committee, Hegseth said the total includes projected expenses through September 30. The Trump administration has also requested approximately $87 billion in additional funding from Congress to support the next phase of military operations and defense requirements.

The funding request comes as lawmakers debate continued military.

German army sends combat engineers to help fortify Poland's border

Monitoring Desk

GERMANY: German army combat engineers are helping Poland fortify its border with Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, the Bundeswehr said on Wednesday, adding that the troops from a reinforced armoured engineer platoon had already arrived in early July.

The soldiers are working alongside the Polish army to dig anti-tank ditches, erect tank barriers and build field fortifications and fighting positions.

"The aim of this initiative is to delay an invasion by those forces in the event of a military conflict, thereby increasing the responsiveness of Polish troops and NATO," the Bundeswehr, as Germany's armed forces are formally known, said in a statement.



Supporters of India's Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) hold placards, two days after thousands of protesters marched towards parliament demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over examination paper leaks, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

TENDER NOTICE

Assistant Conservator of Wildlife (ACW) Hazarganji Chiltan National Park, UGPP (Wildlife Component) Quetta invites sealed tenders from interested firms/contractors, based on the Composite Schedule of Rates (CSR), Government of Balochistan, for the execution of the following works: **BID SECURITY 2%**

S.NO	NAME OF WORK	E/COST
1.	Fencing of key protected areas at Hazarhganji Chiltan National Park Quetta (**TSE-2627091183923**)	5,000,000

The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with ***Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules, 2014*** (amended till date) **BASIC ELIGIBITY:** The firms/contractors must be registered with the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), holding a valid registration renewed up to the date of bid submission in Category C-6 or above, along with the relevant specialized code. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn in the last 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Valid Registration with Income Tax & BRA with active tax payer list (ATLS) The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Other Mandatory conditions and Detailed Marking Criteria mentioned in the Bidding Documents.**METHOD OF PROCUREMENT:** Single Stage-Two Envelope procedure. **ISSUANCE:** The Firms can obtain the bidding Documents from the office of the Assistant Conservator of Wildlife (ACW) Hazarganji Chiltan National Park, UGPP (Wildlife Component) Quetta upon payment (nonrefundable) bidding document fee Rs.1500/-mentioned above tender must be deposited in government treasury under head **C-03370** through Green Challan Form in National Bank of Pakistan(NBP),.(The NIT & Bidding Document can also be downloaded from www.bppra.org.pk, in this regard, the interested bidders must submit Green Challan Form deposited in government treasury one day prior to the bid opening in the office of undersigned. **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 2% specified in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents**: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gob.pk. **Issuance of tender Documents**: Complete Bidding Documents can be viewed at www.bppra.gob.pk. **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 17 September, 2026 till 10:00 AM. **Tender opening**: All tenders will be opened on same day at 11:00 AM in the office of the Deputy Conservator of Forest Quetta City Joint Road Quetta **Place of issuance and submission will be: - Address:** office of the Deputy Conservator of Forest Quetta City Joint Road Quetta Bid Validity Period: Ninety (90) Days.

DPRQ/PRQ No.1182/2-9-2026

Assistant Conservator
Wildlife (ACW) Hazarganji Chiltan National Park
UGPP (Wildlife Component) Quetta

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Kashmir close to heart of PPP leadership:

Acting President Gilani reaffirms PPP's longstanding commitment to Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Wednesday, held meetings at Aiwan-e-Sadr with political figures and representatives of the business community and discussed matters of national, regional and international importance, including the security situation and flash floods.
Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, accompanied by PPP Parliamentary Leader in the KP Assembly Ahmad Karim Kundi, called on the acting president and apprised him of matters relating to peace and stability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.
Security issues, flood situation in various parts of the province and the ongoing efforts for relief and rehabilitation also came under discussion as well as the overall political situation in the country.
In another meeting, former federal and provincial minister Syed Samsam Bukhari called on Gilani and discussed matters relating to his constituency. Former president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan also called on the acting president and discussed the political situation in AJ&K following the recent elections, as well as matters relating to the development and welfare of the people of the region.
He recalled the landmark development initiatives undertaken in AJ&K during the tenure of Gilani as Prime Minister of Pakistan, including the establishment of three medical colleges in Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot and Mirpur in which students from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir were also given a quota. He mentioned that, as a result of steps taken during that period, more than 16,000 students from various provinces and regions of Pakistan are currently studying in various universities of AJ&K. Sardar Yaqub also recalled a bridge over the River Jhelum, constructed during his tenure and named Bab-e-Yousuf. The bridge significantly improved connectivity between AJ&K and Islamabad and reduced the distance by 125 km, he said.
The acting president said that Kashmir had always remained close to the heart of the Pakistan Peoples Party leadership and reaffirmed the party's longstanding commitment to the Kashmir cause.
During a meeting with former federal minister for foreign affairs Syed Jalil Abbas Jilani, matters relating to the regional and international situation came under discussion.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, accompanied by PPP Parliamentary Leader in the KP Assembly Ahmad Karim Kundi, called on the Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani



BISHKEK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses a ceremony of exchange of MoUs in various sectors between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, in Yntymak-Ordo (Palace of Unity).

Govt taking steps to move forward by taking all sections of Balochistan together: CM

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that effective steps are being taken to move forward by taking all sections of the province together. He said this while talking to elders and prominent personalities of the Bugti tribe called on him here at the Chief Minister's Secretariat. Later, Pakistan People's Party leaders led by senior leader of the Pakistan People's Party and Focal Person to the Chief Minister Syed Iqbal Shah also met with the Balochistan Chief Minister. Provincial Ministers were also present in the meeting.
During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, the overall situation of the province and political and tribal matters were discussed. Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the development, peace and stability of Balochistan and welfare of the people are the top priorities of the government.

Gwadar capable to become connectivity hub between Pakistan and Central Asian states

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh called on Tuesday Pakistan to embrace the "Shanghai Spirit" of mutual trust, dialogue, economic cooperation and peaceful resolution of disputes to improve the quality of life of its people and strengthen its role in the region. The minister was speaking as chief guest at a seminar titled "SCO at 25: The Shanghai Spirit and A New Journey with Islamabad", jointly organised by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, and China Media Group (CMG). The seminar brought together diplomats, policymakers, academics, media representatives and regional experts to discuss the 25-year journey of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), its evolving role in regional affairs and Pakistan's responsibilities as it assumes the organisation's chairmanship. In his welcome remarks, IRS President Ambassador, Jauhar Saleem highlighted the evolution of the SCO and explained the principles underpinning the Shanghai Spirit, including mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation and peaceful settlement of differences.
He also underlined the significance of Pakistan assuming the SCO chairmanship and its potential to strengthen regional cooperation and connectivity.
Delivering the keynote address, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Chairman Pakistan-China Institute, said the current SCO summit was taking place amid major changes in the international system and the growing strategic and economic importance of Asia. He highlighted China's rising global influence and the potential of Gwadar to serve as a connectivity hub linking Pakistan with Central Asian states. He said Pakistan's role as SCO chair could provide an opportunity to promote connectivity, economic cooperation and greater regional integration.

We cannot compromise on country's economic development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal stressed that the private sector should play a leading role in realizing the economic potential of CPEC Phase-II, stressing that Pakistan's focus must remain on economic growth, exports and investment rather than political confrontation.
Chairing a detailed review meeting on implementation of the CPEC Action Plan 2025–2029, finalized during Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China in August 2025, the minister reviewed progress made during the first year and discussed measures to accelerate work on agreed priorities, a news release said on Tuesday.
Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan-China relations had strengthened during difficult periods, recalling China's critical investment when Pakistan was facing severe energy shortages.
He said CPEC Phase-I brought around $25 billion in Chinese investment and added nearly 8,000 megawatts to Pakistan's power generation capacity, helping overcome the energy crisis and strengthen energy security.
The minister highlighted the development of Thar coal and the fibre-optic network as key achievements of the first phase, saying CPEC Phase-II would build on this foundation through business-to-business cooperation, industrial development, agricultural modernization, minerals, human capital development and technology.
He said the priorities of CPEC Phase-II were closely aligned with the five pillars of URAAN Pakistan through five corridors: Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green Economy and Openness. The Growth Corridor would enhance Pakistan's industrial and agricultural capacity to boost exports, while the Livelihood Corridor would promote social development and support less-developed regions, he added.
He said the Innovation Corridor, aligned with E-Pakistan, would strengthen IT capabilities and equip millions of young people with modern technological skills. "Our young population is Pakistan's greatest economic asset," he said.
The Green Economy Corridor, he added, would focus on climate resilience, water and food security, and agricultural modernization. The minister highlighted the government's initiative to send 1,000 agricultural experts to China for training in modern agricultural technologies, saying the programme would help create a critical mass of trained human resources and lay the foundation for a "Green Revolution 2.0".
He said the initiative would be supported by improved seeds, farm mechanization, efficient water use and climate-resilient crops.
Ahsan Iqbal stressed that the private sector must play a leading role in realizing the economic potential of CPEC Phase-II, with the government providing an enabling environment for investment and business partnerships.
He termed expansion of exports a "national emergency", saying the target of $100 billion by 2035 was essential for Pakistan's economic survival.



QUETTA: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expresses heartfelt condolences and deep sorrow over the death of Sanaullah Khan Achakzai the young son of Speaker of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly Captain (Retd.) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai



Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja met the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organisation (DCO), Deemah AlYahya, on the sidelines of the LEAP 2026 global technology conference in Riyadh

Security forces determined to ensure peace, stability in Balochistan: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi commended the security forces for eliminating 21 terrorists in different operations in Chaghi and Pishin districts of Balochistan.
The minister lauded the professional capabilities of the security forces for successfully conducting operations against terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khawarij.
Naqvi also paid tribute to six brave sons of the soil, including Customs officials, who embraced martyrdom while thwarting a terrorist attack on the Customs House.
"The martyrs sacrificed their lives to foil the attack on the Customs House," he said, adding that their supreme sacrifices reflected the nation's unwavering resolve to eliminate terrorism. He said the security forces remained determined to ensure peace and stability in Balochistan and lauded their personnel for successfully frustrating the nefarious designs of terrorists. "I salute the brave sons of the security forces for foiling the nefarious designs of the terrorists," Naqvi said.

Recharge-well initiative should not be considered final solution: Musadik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Masood Malik called for scaling up groundwater recharge initiatives in Islamabad to address the continued decline in the city's groundwater reserves.
Addressing an event titled "Protecting Islamabad's Aquifers", the minister said around 200 recharge wells had been constructed in the capital as an important pilot initiative that needed to be expanded. He said the estimated increase in the water table resulting from the recharge interventions was 0.4 millimetres, compared with a decline of around 1.5 metres. Dr Musadik stressed that recharge efforts needed to be expanded sufficiently to reduce groundwater depletion and eventually reverse the declining trend.
He said the recharge-well initiative was an important achievement but should not be considered the final solution. The minister also highlighted the need for improved management of surface and groundwater following recent heavy rainfall in Islamabad. He said around 200 millimetres of rainfall had been recorded in the capital. Referring to flooding, Dr Musadik said several areas had been affected and relevant authorities and organizations had been directed to respond to the situation. The minister expressed concern over water quality and said treatment facilities were operating in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.
He said the treatment plants helped reduce contamination in treated water.

Stronger defence capabilities must be complemented by dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): "Germany has to take more responsibility and lead the way for its own and European security", Mr. Christoph Schmid, Member of the German Bundestag, quoted his Defence Minister while speaking at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). He stressed that stronger defence capabilities must be complemented by dialogue, trusted partnerships and sustained engagement beyond Europe, said a press release. Schmid was delivering a public talk titled "Defence and Security Policy in a Changing World Order: Perspectives from Germany and the EU," at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised by its Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP). He traced Germany's evolving strategic posture to the Ukraine conflict and the resulting reassessment of its defence preparedness and dependence on external security and energy arrangements. Highlighting recruitment, infrastructure and more efficient procurement as Germany's principal defence priorities, Mr. Schmid underscored the need to raise societal awareness. and resilience against emerging threats. From the German and European perspective, he described Russia as the foremost security challenge. At the same time, he maintained that greater military preparedness must not come at the expense of diplomacy. "Agreeing to disagree is also a way of building trust," he observed, emphasizing the importance of engaging partners across regions.
Schmid commended Pakistan's recent mediation efforts between the United States and Iran, describing the initiative as a major diplomatic achievement. He added that Germany would be ready to engage with Pakistan to learn from its mediation role. In his welcome remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Moin ul Haque observed that major-power competition, the Ukraine conflict, instability in the Middle East, exacerbated by U.S.-Israel attack on Iran, military-technological transformation and non-traditional threats were collectively reshaping the global security environment.

PM lauds positive trajectory of Pak-Belarus bilateral relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Republic of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, reaffirmed their shared commitment and resolve to elevate the long-standing friendly relations between Pakistan and Belarus to new heights.
The prime minister met with President Aleksandr Lukashenko, on the sidelines of the Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
"The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Belarus bilateral relations and the robust cooperation across political, trade, economic, defence, and cultural fields," PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.
While recalling President Lukashenko's historic visit to Pakistan in November 2024, followed by the prime minister's memorable visit to Belarus in April 2025, the two leaders agreed to further enhance bilateral cooperation in trade, industry, agriculture, Information Technology and vocational training as priority sectors.



SOHBATPUR: Deputy Commissioner Fareeda Tareen visits Govt Girls High School.



QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini chairs a meeting of UNDP.

Shaza Fatima meets DCO Secretary-General

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday met the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organisation (DCO), Deemah AlYahya, on the sidelines of the LEAP 2026 global technology conference in Riyadh.
The meeting discussed ways to promote and strengthen bilateral cooperation in the digital sector. The two sides also exchanged views on emerging technologies and digital transformation.
They agreed to promote innovation in the digital economy and enhance cooperation among DCO member states. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further promoting technical exchange and digital cooperation among member countries.

Pakistan ramps up efforts to expand digital workforce

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan is ramping up efforts to expand its digital workforce and boost IT exports, with the National Semiconductor HR Development Programme (INSPIRE) targeting 7,200 individuals, while other government-backed initiatives plan to train more than 25,000 youth in emerging technologies and another 100,000 students through an industry partnership.
According to an official document available with Wealth Pakistan, INSPIRE, being implemented by the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), will benefit 2,200 undergraduate and postgraduate students through Semiconductor Education and Research Clusters, while another 5,000 engineers will be covered through nationwide upskilling programmes.
The initiative aims to develop Pakistan's semiconductor talent pipeline.
Alongside this, the Prime Minister's SkillTech Pakistan Initiative plans to provide training to more than 25,000 youth over the next three years in emerging and industry-demanded technologies, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud computing, data analytics and software development.
The initiative also includes bootcamps, professional certifications, internships, soft-skills training and industry linkages to improve employability.

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