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Security forces neutralise 11 India-sponsored terrorists in Balochistan IBOs: ISPR

President, PM lauds security forces for killing 11 terrorists in Balochistan

RAWALPINDI/ ISLAMABAD, (APP): Security Forces killed neutralised 11 terrorists belonging to Indian proxy Fitna al Hindustan during intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Kharan and Washuk districts of Balochistan.

"On 6 September 2026, terrorists attempt to establish roadblock in Kharan and disrupt local traffic. The security forces promptly intercepted and engaged the terrorists, whereby, killing eight Indian sponsored terrorists," said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

In another engagement on 7 September 2026, a deliberately planned intelligence based operation was conducted in Washuk district on reports of presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively busted terrorists hideout and after an intense fire exchange, three terrorists were sent to hell, the news release further said.

Moreover, security forces also recovered 2.9 tons of explosive which was being used for preparation of improvised explosive devices. "Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist found in the area. Relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country," the news release said.

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday paid tribute to the security forces for conducting successful operation against the Indian sponsored terrorists in Balochistan's districts of Kharan and Washuk.

In separate statements, the president and the prime minister commended the security forces for killing 11 terrorists during a timely and effective operation. They expressed the resolve that the nefarious designs of terrorist elements operating with Indian patronage would be thwarted at all costs.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Access to Finance for Agriculture, Housing and SMEs sector.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti presides over the fourth meeting of the Board of Directors of Balochistan Aviation Company

CM Bugti directs modern reforms to boost Balochistan Aviation Company's performance

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Wednesday chaired the fourth meeting of the Board of Directors of the Balochistan Aviation Company here, during which important administrative, financial and operational matters related to the company were reviewed. Approval was given to several important decisions and proposals, as well as ratification of the decisions taken in the previous board meeting.

The meeting held a detailed discussion on the performance of the Balochistan Aviation Company, administrative affairs, operational matters and its future course of action. On the occasion, various matters related to making the affairs of the company more effective and organized, enhancing operational capacity and improving the performance of the institution were discussed.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti directed that the Balochistan Aviation Company should be further improved in terms of its operational and administrative capabilities in line with modern requirements so that the institution can play an effective role in promoting air services in the province.

The Chief Minister directed the relevant authorities to ensure transparency, professional management and effective oversight in the affairs of the company, while a clear mechanism should be formulated for the timely implementation of the approved decisions.

The meeting was attended by Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakil Qadir Khan, Secretary Finance Jahangir Khan, Director General Balochistan Aviation Company Captain Ali Azad, members of the Board of Directors of the Balochistan Aviation Company and relevant officials.



QUETTA: UNFPA's Provincial Coordinator holds a meeting about youth program with Provincial Advisor for Sports and Youth Affairs Meena Majeed Baloch

PM vows to provide affordable housing to low-income, middle-class segments under Apna Ghar Scheme

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the provincial chief secretaries to conduct a comprehensive survey of properties that could be made available for providing loans to people seeking to build homes under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Scheme.

Chairing a review meeting on access to finance plan 2026-28, the prime minister said that providing affordable housing to low-income and middle-class segments was the government's top priority.

During the meeting, the prime minister was informed that 147,504 applications had so far been received under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Scheme, of which 53,127 applications have been approved.

The total value of approved applications under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Scheme stands at Rs313.42 billion, while loans amounting to Rs45.43 billion have been disbursed to 8,739 applicants.

A system is being developed to identify plots across the country that meet mortgage requirements, with Islamabad serving as the pilot city, the meeting was informed.

It was informed in the meeting that an effective mechanism will be devised to involve renowned housing developers in the process to further streamline the Apna Ghar Scheme. The prime minister stressed the banks and financial institutions to play their role in extending loans to farmers, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the housing sector.

"The government would encourage banks that play an active role in providing loans," he said adding that the agriculture sector was the backbone of the country's economy, and working for its promotion is a national responsibility.

The prime minister directed that easy and uninterrupted access to financial resources be ensured for farmers.

The meeting was informed that volume of bank lending to the agriculture sector stood at Rs1.268 trillion in August 2026, while a target of Rs2 trillion by June 2028 has been set under the Access to Finance Plan 2026-2028.

Gilani lauds security forces for eliminating 11 terrorists in Balochistan

Acting President reaffirms commitment to achieve lasting peace and stability across the country, including Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday paid tribute to the security forces for eliminating 11 terrorists in an operation carried out in Balochistan. The acting president, in a statement, commended the courage, professional capability, and unwavering resolve of the security forces, terming the recovery of a huge quantity of explosive materials from the terrorists' hideout in Washuk area of the province a major success.

Gilani said that no force could shake Pakistan's resolve to eliminate terrorism and that the entire nation stood firmly alongside its security forces, who continued to make sacrifices for the peace and security of the country.

Houthi attacks on KSA might trigger Makkah defence pact, warns Defence Minister

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned that Houthi attacks on Saudi territory would invoke the Makkah Defence Alliance, a tripartite defence agreement signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye. "Under the trilateral agreement, any aggression against any of the three [countries] is regarded as an aggression against all. There is no ambiguity about that," he said while speaking with private news channel. At least 71 people were injured on Tuesday after Houthis launched an attack on several cities in Saudi Arabia, further undermining stability in the Middle East. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attacks, terming them a "cowardly" act that endangered innocent lives and threatened regional peace and security.

The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for the kingdom's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity.

Speaking with the private news channel, the defence minister said that unprovoked aggression or the spillover from Yemen into Saudi Arabia "will definitely" operationalise the Makkah Defence Alliance.

Country's fate cannot be decided by "handful of businessmen": Bilawal

LONDON: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has challenged Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to take his criticism of Pakistan's political and governance "collapsed" system to parliament, saying the country's fate cannot be decided by "a handful of businessmen" at business forums. Speaking to the media in London, Bilawal said Naqvi had every right to express his views, but if he believed that the system had failed, then the issue must be debated in the National Assembly to establish why it had failed and what could be done to fix it.

"It cannot be the case that the fate of the country is decided by a handful of businessmen," the PPP chairman said, insisting that questions about the weaknesses and failures of Pakistan's system belonged to elected representatives.

Bilawal also took a pointed swipe at Naqvi over his absence from the lower house, saying: "Mr Mohsin Naqvi does not come to the National Assembly very often, so instead of business forums, he should come to parliament."

Pakistan at "inflexion point"; could not afford to repeat past mistakes: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday said the benefits of devolution had not reached the grassroots over the past 15 years, stressing the transfer of powers and resources to local governments for effective service delivery and development.

Addressing the national inception workshop and launch of the Technical Working Group on "Integrated Land & Water Use Planning," he said devolution itself was not the problem, but its implementation had stopped at the provincial level. "It is not that devolution was wrong; it should have been devolution. The whole world is being devolved," the minister said, stressing that powers should also flow from provinces to district and municipal governments.

He said the 18th Amendment had devolved substantial responsibilities to the provinces in 2010, but local governments were not given corresponding powers and resources. "If you give a local government a responsibility, but there is no power or resources behind that responsibility, then that responsibility becomes a burden," he remarked.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan needed a development ecosystem.

BHC directs concrete measures for safe, reliable transport in Quetta

Seeks progress on EVs, buses, bus stand and People's Train Service

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A two-member bench of the Balochistan High Court, comprising Chief Justice Justice Muhammad Kamran Khan Malakhail and Justice Muhammad Najamuddin Mengal, while hearing a constitutional petition concerning public transport in Quetta city, electric vehicles, pink scooters for women lawyers, the local bus stand, dilapidated buses, and travel-related problems faced by citizens, issued several important directions to the relevant provincial departments.

During the hearing, petitioners were represented by advocates Sharmeen Rehman and Anum Khair, while Ali Ahmed Kurd, Muhammad Usman Yousafzai, B.K. Marwat and Abdul Jabbar Bugti, advocates, appeared on behalf of the petitioners/ interveners. Muhammad Farid Dogar, Additional Attorney General; Zahoor Baloch, Additional Advocate General; Secretary Transport Department Muhammad Hayat Kakar; Secretary RTA Quetta Naimat Tareen; Project Director Balochistan Traffic Engineering Bureau Muhammad Sabir; DSP Headquarters Salman Khan Tareen; MQC counsel Izhar-ul-Haq Tareen; QDA counsel Muhammad Akram Shah; Deputy Director Urban Planning and Development Kaleemullah; Chief of Section P&D Shakeel Ahmed; and DS Judicial Muhammad Akhtar were also present in court.

The court was informed by the Transport Department that the scheme for introducing electric vehicles as public transport and using them as an alternative to motor rickshaws had been revised, with a total estimated cost of Rs595.720 million.

According to the report, the scheme includes 37 EV stops, electric vehicle chargers, a 300-kilowatt solar power system, and 16 rickshaw stands. The revised PC-I has already been sent to the P&D Department and is to be presented at the next meeting of the PDWP for approval of the project.

The Chief of Section of the P&D Department told the court that certain observations had been raised regarding the proposal of the Transport Department and that a letter had been sent to the Transport Department seeking a response.



QUETTA: A delegation of representatives belonging to the Christian, Hindu and Sikh communities, led by former Member of the Provincial Assembly Anita Irfan, in a group photo with Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Govt taking steps to bring youth into national mainstream: Governor

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A delegation of representatives belonging to the Christian, Hindu and Sikh communities, led by former Member of the Provincial Assembly Anita Irfan, met Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail and congratulated him on his successful visit to the United States and on participating in and addressing the Youth and Artificial Intelligence Summit held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

During the meeting, former Member of the Provincial Assembly Anita Irfan, Irfan Bashir, Bishop Wilson Fazal, Bishop Amanat Masih, Amer Jan, Tariq Gul and Raj Kumar were also present.

Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail expressed his special gratitude to all minority representatives for congratulating him upon his return to the country after his successful visit to the United States.

He said that addressing the Youth and Artificial Intelligence Summit at the United Nations Headquarters in New York is a matter of honor for all of us. "It is a matter of happiness for me to have all of you visit the Governor House." Governor Mandokhail said that serious and effective measures are being taken to bring young people in line with modern requirements and to include them in the national mainstream. He said that highlighting the voice of our youth before delegates from different countries at the world's largest global forum is a matter of pride.

The Governor Balochistan said that during his visit to the United States, he also participated in events organized by the Pakistani community in connection with Pakistan's Independence Day in Texas, Houston and Los Angeles.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan chairs a meeting.

No compromise on quality of education; future of youth: Mir Zahoor Buledi

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Minister Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi on Wednesday said that within the limited and available resources, efforts are being made to ensure the provision of modern and basic facilities to the people of the entire area including Buleda. He said this while starting of shuttle service regularly of bus for students of Buleda studying at the University of Turbat who has given for the students. The Minister said that the bus would provide travel facilities to the students from Buleda to Turbat University and back every morning and evening. With the start of the shuttle service, access to the University of Turbat has become easier for the students of Buleda and its surroundings, which could also save them from the problems of daily transportation and additional travel expenses to a large extent.

He said that this initiative is expected to further expand the opportunities for the youth of the area to pursue higher education.

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Thursday September 10, 2026

Trump's threats

There were few details in US President Donald Trump's presser late on Monday about which way his war on Iran could go, with the American leader continuing to issue threats as well as hold out the promise of a possible negotiated solution.

The media interaction followed Mr Trump's social media posts on Sunday, which were unhinged even by his standards, as he used foul language against the Iranians, while also appearing to mock Islam.

Most of the event was dedicated to the mission inside Iran in which two American troops were reportedly rescued, with the US president and his subordinates heaping praise on each other for accomplishing the mission.

What did emerge on Monday was the fact that Mr Trump's deadline for Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz stands: unless Tehran does so by early Wednesday Pakistan time, Donald Trump has threatened to take out the entire country in "one night".

In his posts on Sunday, he had warned of destroying Iranian civilian infrastructure, specifically bridges and power plants. His abrasive war secretary also warned Tehran of heavy strikes.

Mr Trump's long list of threats comes as supposedly last-ditch efforts to secure a negotiated settlement also continue. Media reports say a potential 45-day truce is on the table, with Pakistan, Turkiye and Egypt leading the effort. When questioned, the Foreign Office spokesman simply said the peace process was "ongoing".

However, it should be understood that team Trump's consistent threats and insults will hardly make Iran come running to the table and sign the dotted line to secure peace. The Iranians have shown that they can defend themselves even in the face of massive aggression from two of the most powerful militaries in the world, the US and Israel. Mr Trump's use of profanity — highly unbecoming of a public office-holder — and his mockery of Islamic sanctities will only strengthen the Iranian resolve to resist. Moreover, it is highly unfortunate that Muslim states have largely kept quiet despite the US leader's appalling and offensive outburst.

Instead of more violence and bullying, if Mr Trump wants to end this war, he must reach out to the Iranians with respect. The window for diplomacy is closing fast and the commendable efforts made by Pakistan and other regional states will come to nought if the US and Israel continue their illegal aggression against Iran.

Meanwhile, Trumpian threats to obliterate civilian infrastructure inside Iran may fall under the purview of war crimes. Tehran is interested in permanent guarantees of no more aggression. If Iran is assured of this, the devastating war can hopefully be wound down. But if Mr Trump delivers on his latest ultimatum, the region, and the global economy, should be prepared for further shockwaves from the Gulf.

Tight rope act

Arifa Noor

With a war in the region, Pakistan has been at the centre stage of all conversations, negotiations and talks about and around the conflict.

For this, there has also been much praise and some heartburn (from some in the neighbourhood). However, Islamabad still needs to be careful; it continues to perform a tight rope balancing act domestically and internationally, as this conflict goes on. And if the hostilities continue, staying upright will be a trick and a half.

This is primarily linked to the country's precarious economic situation and an 'unpopular' government struggling to gain a foothold with the people. And as some or many economic experts point out, there is little to fall back on if the world is facing uncertainty in terms of oil prices or other shocks. However successful this government may have been, as we are told continuously, in every aspect.

Consider the management of the petrol prices. The somersaults by the government have been quite remarkable. It began by being one of the first in the region to act decisively once the international prices went up by hiking the price by Rs55. At that point, the government defended its move by arguing that it was not possible to take any other decision, but for the next couple of weeks, it moved to a different tactic. The prime minister himself came on air to announce that he was not passing on the price, while a story in Dawn reported that he told his colleagues that he and the army chief had agreed to not pass on petrol price hikes for the near future.

Government representatives were at pains to explain this 'subsidy' could not go on forever but there was little clarity on how long this would last and what would come next. Then came a spate of meetings as Islamabad tried to convince the provincial governments to share the burden, from funding the subsidy to providing relief. But even then, few expected the bombshell. Late Thursday night, which just passed, three government ministers announced a raise in prices that overshadowed the previous hike.

The next day wasn't easy for the people or for the government, it seems, because within 24 hours, the prime minister turned up on television again. He announced a new lower price, explaining that he had reduced the tax on the fuel.

The government was targeted for being indecisive — and rightly so. The explanation from government quarters that the tax could only be lowered after permission from the IMF (which apparently came a day later) is not really being bought.

In addition, it has highlighted once again the government's failure in reducing its expenses or widening the tax base, which forces it to impose high indirect taxes on fuel.

This was emphasised by an interview of the petroleum minister in which he acknowledged that there should be accountability of those who agreed to these revenue targets and then failed to meet them. In fact, questions are being raised whether the government is a house divided or if there are serious reservations within about some key people.

It is hard to say how serious the blame game is. But it is worth asking whether recriminations will intensify if oil prices go up further and other economic shocks make the tight rope walking even more difficult. After all, news about the possible impact on exports, balance-of-payments and inflation is yet to become visible.

Add to this, the people and the situation becomes even more wobbly.

Can the petrol price be the final straw on the camel's back? No one can predict for sure but the fear is always there that the next economic shock will lead to chaos on the streets.

That the powers that be share this fear is evident from their overreaction to any protest. Just consider that the Federal Constitutional Court has taken notice of the Imran Rehai Force, a kooky idea of Chief Minister Sohail Afridi that even the PTI didn't take seriously. However, the court wants to know more about it and there are guesses galore about why this is so.

But the economic balancing act is simply not limited to the domestic headaches.

Even internationally, the country, with its weak economy, moves to please many Pied Pipers, struggling to ensure no tune is ignored.

There is the Fund and the US, at one end, then friends in the Gulf on the other, as well as those further east.

The recent fracas was over the UAE loan, which Islamabad has 'decided' to return if reports are to be believed.

A loan that was given in the 1990s and now is being returned because the UAE is apparently no longer interested in rolling it over is being linked to Islamabad's policy of maintaining relations with the Gulf Arab states as well as Iran.

There are reports that the UAE (and perhaps others) are not happy that Islamabad is trying to balance its various relations, especially maintaining an even keel with its immediate neighbour Iran.

Upsetting anyone in the Gulf comes with its own economic costs, while relations with Iran can impact the Shia community within the country. Along with this, there are concerns about what it will mean for Pakistan if there is a different regime in Tehran.

Indeed, if any of the friends or benefactors in the Gulf take offence at the support for Iran or Pakistan's refusal of any demand, the economic situation for the government can become more difficult.

And the longer the conflict goes on, the more complicated this delicate balancing act can become. Especially, if the US also decides to take a second look at Pakistan's role. Indeed, the conflict in the Middle East may be tough for the world but it is taking its own toll on Islamabad. The sooner it ends, the better it is for the country.

Choking on their own venom

Jawed Naqvi

Donald Trump's expletives-laced threats to Iran landed on Easter Sunday showcasing the abysmal vulgarity that his brand of politics increasingly wraps itself in, aided and abetted by religious and racial violence. It was Pakistani scholar Ahmad Javaid who drew a distinction recently between religious zealots and liberals of his country. It's difficult to find a bigot who doesn't take recourse to violence or abuse to assert their point. It was equally improbable to find open-minded agnostics to be abusive with their opponents, he said. Violence and abuse is the feature of groups such as Hindutva and Zionism, which binds them in an unequal relationship of mutually exclusive bigotry. Zionists are ardent opponents of idolatry, to which Hindu nationalists can do little more than to pocket the insults.

Open-mindedness has little to do with being religious or irreligious. The day Trump hissed his curse words at Iran, the Pope counselled him and his followers against waging wars in the name of Christianity. The Pope's criticism was a clear response to Pete Hegseth's hissing invocation of his Christian faith to rally the military in the unprovoked war on Iran he is supervising. It was in a similar vein that Marco Rubio urged European leaders at the Munich security conference, two weeks before deceptively attacking Iran, to discard their democratic pretence and return to the colonial-style conquest of the Global South in which Trump's United States saw itself in the lead role. "Godless communist revolutions and anti-colonial uprisings" were the killjoys of the West.

Europe should look to the future of the "Christian West", Rubio hectored. President Trump's project to Make America Great Again (MAGA) was in fact a strategy to 'Make the West Great Again'. The exhortations notwithstanding, the Christian West of Rubio's dream comprises avatars that range from the late Charlie Kirk to the Ku Klux Klan.

Trump's MAGA movement is bursting at the seams with mutual hostilities within the group. The three men lynched in the KKK-run county in the classic movie Mississippi Burning were two "Jew boys" from the Kennedy era. They were driving a frightened "Black boy" to safety when they were stopped and executed in their car. The KKK-inspired hatred of Jews and Blacks exudes little patience with MAGA worshippers of Christopher Columbus who see him as a Christian hero. The KKK represents white supremacist Protestants, while Columbus as a Catholic predator plundered gold from the "new world" to reignite the Crusades.

Trump installed a marble statue of Columbus on the grounds of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, adjacent to the White House the other day and signed a proclamation officially recognising Columbus Day as a federal holiday, calling Columbus "the original American hero".

The statue and the holiday proclamation have a context. They are part of a broader effort by the president to restore what he considers traditional American symbols. This directly counters recent moves to remove or contextualise monuments to Columbus due to his controversial legacy regarding the colonisation and treatment of indigenous peoples. The new statue is a replica of one that was toppled in Baltimore by protesters in July 2020 during the racial justice protests that followed the murder of George Floyd.

As his ratings erode over the Iran war, Trump's leaning on Columbus for help casts the electoral net wider. Rescuing the legacy of Columbus from "left-wing arsonists who have sought to destroy his name", the move has been celebrated by many Italian-American groups as a symbol of their heritage. Trump acknowledged this directly, saying after signing the proclamation: "We're back, Italians!"

Remember that Columbus lived in a Spain that had just completed the Reconquista — the centuries-long Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula — with the fall of Granada in 1492. The same year, the Alhambra Decree expelled or forced the conversion of Jews to Christianity. In his Book of Prophecies, Columbus argued that his discoveries would provide gold to finance a new crusade to liberate the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. He wrote to the rulers: "I have already petitioned Your Highnesses to use the profits from this my enterprise for a crusade against Jerusalem." Consider reading this out aloud today to America's Christian Zionists working overtime to overrun an entire world on Israel's behalf.

As for Iran, there could be a hundred things wrong with the way the clergy has stoked a controversially patriarchal society in which well-educated and progressive women have struggled to claim their agency. Yet Iran is not a religiously sectarian society. If anything, it has borrowed considerably from the liberation theologians of yore. What riles the likes of Hegseth is the fact that Iran's revolution was shaped by an "unholy alliance of the Red and the Black" (as the Shah called it) — a fusion of Marxist revolutionary thought and Shia Islamic theology, largely forged by the intellectual Ali Shariati.

Scholars widely refer to Shariati as the "ideologue" or "intellectual forefather" of the Iranian Revolution. Though he died in 1977, nearly two years before the revolution's triumph, his ideas provided the revolutionary framework that mobilised millions.

Shariati's 'Red Shiaism' has been likened to the liberation theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Peruvian priest who founded the Latin American movement. Prof Dustin Byrd has taught philosophy and religious studies at the University of Olivet in Michigan. He says that Shariati "developed an Islamic form of liberation theology" that "closely follows the theological orientation" of Gutiérrez.

Iran's open embrace of its historical invaders offers a contrast with the airbrushing of Mughal rule from Indian history under the current Hindutva rule. Iran easily co-opted foreign invaders led, for example, by the forces of Changez Khan and Alexander the Great among others. After conquering Iran's Achaemenid Empire, Alexander adopted Persian customs to legitimise his rule, as did the Mughals in India. Nehru extolled the multicultural synthesis Mughal rule bequeathed even as Hindutva ideologues revile him as anti-Hindu for doing that.

Galactic lunacy

Shahzad Sharjeel

It seems we've been fascinated by the moon since the earliest days. The 'we' includes not just humans but other creatures as well. Many companies use the myth-inspired wolf howling at the moon logo.

There's folklore about the Chakor circling the moon as a symbol of unrequited love. The idea that erratic mental conditions are caused by moon phases led to the term 'lunatic', meaning 'moonstruck.' Science shows that the rise and fall of ocean tides are driven by the moon's gravitational pull.

Yuri Gagarin, a Russian cosmonaut, was the first human to orbit the Earth in 1961. American astronaut Neil Armstrong took the famous 'one giant leap for mankind' by walking on the moon in 1969. As is common in this part of the world, we stuck to our usual claim, that is, 'did it before everyone else', albeit in that near-lunatic state called poetic inspiration. In our Indo-Persian cultural tradition, this closest of celestial bodies is likened to the most divergent objects and relations, such as the beloved's face and the maternal uncle. The majority of Muslims still determine the religious calendar and festivals by the moon phases.

While the faithful around the world are open to using scientific, more accurate methods to determine the Earth's movement, segments of the clergy insist on sticking to tradition and sighting the moon to guide the lives of billions of Muslims. Despite the important work undertaken by Muslim scientists during the 'Golden Age', of late our interest in the moon has been limited to the possibility of multiple honeymoons. In fact, our complacency in 'reaching for the stars' could be evinced by the vehemence with which certain quarters still deny the human landing on the moon. If it is any solace, the so-called developed world, including Europe and North America, has a sizeable community of deniers despite the 382 kilograms of moon rock brought back by various missions.

The Cold War rivalry between the America and the Soviet Union led president John F. Kennedy to vow in 1961 that the US would land a human on the moon within the decade. Many other nations have since joined the space race, sending satellites and bringing back samples. After a hiatus of a few decades, the race to claim outer space was reignited by private companies, mainly Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin. What started out as space tourism has evolved into a frantic rush to colonise space and establish permanent stations on celestial bodies such as the moon.

As long as it was focused on scientific research and the adventures of the wealthiest individuals, it was somewhat acceptable.

However, it was only a matter of time before those exhausting Earth's resources and destroying its environment would seek to colonise every available 'foothold', even in outer space, and monopolise alternative habitats for those who can afford it.

An extremely alarming aspect has been added to the nuclear holocaust scenario. Since the invention of nuclear weapons, people have feared a post-apocalyptic world, often described as a 1,000-year nuclear winter, with nothing but layers of permafrost or a scorched-earth landscape lacking all vegetation. In such a doomsday scenario, the search for an alternative living space becomes even more urgent. It is strange that those rushing to create habitats in space are planning to build nuclear stations on the moon to support a permanent human presen--ce.

The destruction wrought on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the Americans did not stop the wo--rld from developing nuclear we---apons and their delivery systems. Accidents like Chernobyl in Ukraine and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in Japan slowed the construction of new nuclear power plants, but only temporarily. It takes a certain kind of nihilism to develop a technology capable of destroying the only habitat for living organisms, plan for such a disaster, and then decide to transfer the very source of the feared destruction to a still-imaginary new home.

While our poets can lounge about in the moonlight, the 'developed' world seems to have accepted Faiz sahib's challenge — "Jalwa gah-i-visal ki shamein, woh bujha bhi chukai agar tau kia/ Chand ko gul karein to hum janein" (So what, if they blow out the candles in the lovers' chamber/ Dare them to snuff out the moon).

For now, the moon's fate can be summarised in a line by Akhtar ul Iman: "Chand phiki si hansi hans ke guzar jaata hai" (The moon passes by with meek mirth).

Cultural investment

Marvi Mazhar

Over the years, layers of decay have been piled on Karachi. Be it the built environment or the social sphere, the rot is pervasive. The city's skyline is visually chaotic, mirroring a deep social fatigue. Yet beneath the corrosion lies a hunger for spaces alive with energy, for non-transactional encounters, and for a life that is more than survival. A significant reason for this state is the lack of sustained cultural and urban investment.

There is negligible increase in art and cultural funding that supports young, independent artists, musicians and multidisciplinary practitioners. The avenues for emerging creatives to experiment, produce and engage with the city are scant. This gap reflects that authorities see culture as expendable.

Globally, cultural funding works like investment in start-ups. It nurtures risk, innovation, and new forms of thinking, allowing individuals to test ideas, adapt, and contribute to a broader civic discourse. Regrettably, in Karachi cultural expression remains largely dependent on sporadic festivals, institutional programming and centralised platforms. These are spectacular but temporary, unable to sustain long-term engagement or cultivate grassroots ecosystems.

A city of over 20 million cannot depend on a singular narrative, or central body to define its cultural direction. It deserves many voices, centres and forms of expression. It is time to rethink how culture can be supported at the micro level. Perhaps, through investing in neighbourhood-based cultural infrastructures? Each locality could host its own small arts council, shaped by residents to showcase its histories as well as respond to the current context. Such a model decentralises cultural authority, making way for multiple cultural leaders.

It also offers a way out of reductive linguistic, ethnic and class-based binaries that often structure our cultural discourse. When neighbourhoods produce their own cultural programming, they generate infrastructures rooted in lived realities.

Public spaces have mostly been approached from an infrastructural viewpoint. This is necessary but incomplete. Why is creative practice not recognised as legitimate education that occurs in what urban theorists call 'third spaces'? When spaces fail to host dialogue and creativity, the citizenry becomes disengaged. A city without a vibrant public life loses its capacity to think collectively, to question, to dream.

The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's initiatives to activate Denso Hall, Frere Hall, Empress Market and Hoti Market show a recognition of the role heritage and culture play in public life. The adaptive reuse of historic buildings is encouraging, and deserves appreciation.

But when the mayor chooses non-heritage experts, contractors and engineers who use sandblasting as a form of preservation with AI images serving as the blueprint of an idea, conservation endeavours remain trapped in top-down bureaucratic frameworks. A transparent, participatory system for civic engagement is the solution.

Moreover, establishing a government public art fund to support grassroots initiatives should be considered. This will enable community curators, artists, and organisers to apply for resources to develop neighbourhood-based cultural programmes with specified multi-year commitments. The model will shift the focus from spectacle to sustainability, and from consumption to participation.

But what if institutional support does not materialise? What if cultural investment is not a priority for the rulers? In that case, we must devise alternative modes of cultural production that function outside formal structures.

We could start with the streets, the rooftops that overlook this restless skyline, front yards, corridors, etc, to shape daily life. Through this, a form of majlis will re-emerge as a new, uniting practice; a peaceful revolution of proximity.

In these gatherings, poems can be recited, films projected onto a white wall or a draped cloth, and new music can surface. Simple yet radical, these will rebuild the cultural muscle memory of Karachi. Although the need for institutional support is irreplaceable, such efforts will prove that culture is not entirely dependent on it, and that the city still has the capacity to self-organise for alternative futures.

Karachi can then become a living archive where fragments of connection drive change. A community-led cultural navigation is fluid, local and responsive. It rejects isolation. And micro-level togetherness infuses vitality.

Finally, what kind of a city do we want to invest in? One that merely exists or one that thinks and imagines? The answer will determine the future of Karachi's spaces and people.

Kundi for quality education, character building to prepare youth for national service

MANSEHRA (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi's soft corner for education and youth development was evident during an Independence Day ceremony at Pakistan Scouts Cadet College Battarasi, where he stressed the need to equip students with quality education, character building and skills to contribute to the country's progress.

The Governor attended the ceremony as chief guest, hoisted the national flag, cut the Independence Day cake and inaugurated a tree plantation campaign. He also visited the Martyrs' Memorial, where special prayers were offered for the security, stability and prosperity of Pakistan.

Addressing the ceremony, Faisal Karim Kundi said Pakistan came into being on August 14 after immense sacrifices by the nation's elders. He paid tribute to the Pakistan Army and security forces for their sacrifices, saying their services had enabled the people to live a free and peaceful life.

The Governor said Pakistan Scouts Cadet College Battarasi was playing an important role in promoting education and producing students who were contributing to national development in different fields.

He urged the cadets to utilize their abilities and energies for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan when they entered practical life.

He stressed that they should focus on education, character building and serving the country with dedication.

Faisal Karim Kundi said the cadet college was providing not only quality education but also effective training and character building to students.

He assured the students that he would make every possible effort to address their issues and appreciated the college administration for its services.

Principal Pakistan Scouts Cadet College Battarasi Brigadier ® Abdul Hafeez welcomed the Governor and other guests. He said Pakistan was facing various challenges and the security forces had always rendered exemplary services for the defence of the country.

He said the college was established by former Prime Minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto with the objective of preparing future leaders and talented individuals for the service of Pakistan. Thousands of students had graduated from the institution and were serving the country in various fields.

The Principal thanked Governor Faisal Karim Kundi for attending the ceremony at short notice and urged the students to devote their energies to acquiring knowledge and building strong character.

Earlier, the Governor was warmly received by Principal Brigadier (Retired) Abdul Hafeez, Adjutant Captain Hussain, Professor Ikram Sarwar and other officials and was presented with a guard of honour.

The Governor inspected various sections of the college and appreciated its performance, describing the institution as an asset of Pakistan. He was also briefed on a proposed plan to establish a Pakistan Scouts Cadet College in Dera Ismail Khan to promote education in the region. As part of the plantation campaign, Governor Kundi planted a sapling on the college premises.



ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan received the ambassadors of Thailand, Sweden, Azerbaijan, the United Kingdom, and Canada. At the reception held at the Presidential Complex, Ambassador Chaturont Chaiyakam of Thailand, Ambassador Ulrika Funered of Sweden, Ambassador Resad Aslanov of Azerbaijan, Ambassador Jennifer Elizabeth Anderson of the United Kingdom, and Ambassador Marcel Lebleu of Canada presented their credentials to President Erdogan

Keti Bandar development

Sindh CM directs Investment Department to prepare Public Private Partnership model

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday directed the Investment Department to prepare a comprehensive Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for the development of Keti Bandar, in accordance with the vision of former prime minister Shaheed Mohterma Benazir Bhutto.

Presiding over a meeting of the Investment Department at the CM House, the Chief Minister said that Keti Bandar must be transformed into a large-scale maritime and economic development project centred on a modern deep-sea port and an integrated economic corridor.

"I want a comprehensive and bankable PPP model proposal for Keti Bandar. The project must be developed in line with the vision outlined in the provincial budget and should position Sindh as a leading maritime, logistics, industrial and energy hub of the region," the Chief Minister said.

The meeting was attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Qasim Naveed, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Agha Wasif, Chairman Planning & Development board Najam Shah, Secretary Investment Raja Khurram, Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, Secretary Finance Asghar Memon and other senior officials.

The Chief Minister directed the relevant departments to undertake detailed planning and present a phased development strategy covering port infrastructure, industrial development, logistics, fisheries, energy facilities and tourism-related investments.

Murad Shah said the proposed Keti Bandar Integrated Corridor would serve as a catalyst for economic growth, employment generation and foreign investment while unlocking the development potential of Sindh's coastal belt and the Indus Delta region.

The proposed development plan envisages Keti Bandar as a world-class maritime, logistics, industrial and energy hub under a PPP framework.

The major components include a deep-sea port, logistics and warehousing facilities, industrial zones, energy infrastructure, fisheries and seafood processing facilities, tourism projects and export-oriented economic activities.

The Chief Minister noted that the Keti Bandar Maritime, Fisheries and Petroleum Economic Corridor, announced in the Sindh Budget 2026-27, has the potential to attract investments ranging from $1 billion to $2.5 billion. The corridor would comprise a modern fishing harbour, seafood export processing facilities, petroleum handling terminals, logistics infrastructure and industrial support zones.

Murad Shah also called for detailed planning of supporting infrastructure, including road, rail and maritime connectivity, with particular emphasis on linking Keti Bandar with industrial and energy projects in the province.

The Chief Minister reiterated that the project would be implemented in phases. The first phase would focus on establishing mini fish harbours at Keti Bandar and Shah Bandar, equipped with modern auction halls, cold storage facilities, docking infrastructure and related fisheries services.

Sindh Governor takes oath as Chief Scout Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi took oath as the Chief Scout of Sindh.

The Provincial Scout Commissioner Justice (Retd.) Hassan Feroze administered the oath to the Governor at a ceremony held in Karachi. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor Hashmi said scouting is an important means of instilling patriotism, discipline and a spirit of public service among young people. He stressed the need to revive and promote scouting in schools and colleges across the province. He said that for the true development of nations, technology alone was not enough, adding that a strong ideology, discipline, knowledge and good character were equally essential. The Governor emphasized the need to inculcate in young people a love for Pakistan, a commitment to serving the country and a spirit of helping others. Recalling the role of scouts in the past, he said scouts used to play a prominent role in national events and also served as ambassadors of Pakistan. The Governor Hashmi called for renewed efforts to promote Scouts, Girl Guides and the National Cadet Corps, saying these institutions could play a vital role in character-building and preparing the younger generation.



GAZA CITY, GAZA - PALESTIN: Smoke rises following an Israeli army strike on a building. The Israeli army bombed the building after issuing an evacuation warning. The building's residents fled the area in panic following the attack.

CM Maryam for formal launching of Punjab AI Vision 2029

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has set a target of making Punjab the most artificial intelligence-enabled province in South Asia by 2029, with the provincial government accelerating work on its AI agenda.

The chief minister held a meeting with her Adviser for Artificial Intelligence and Special Initiatives Ali Mustafa Dar in Lahore on Saturday, during which progress on Punjab AI Vision 2029 and plans for its formal launch were discussed.

Ali Dar gave Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz a detailed briefing on the performance of the AI Office during the past two months. He also briefed her on the establishment of an AI-enabled delivery unit in Punjab, described as the first of its kind in the world.

The meeting also reviewed the work of a high-level team formed to implement Punjab's artificial intelligence agenda. The chief minister was further informed about an onboarding program developed with the support of global delivery experts to strengthen the province's AI capabilities.

Ali Dar briefed the chief minister on the progress being made toward the vision of transforming Punjab into South Asia's most AI-enabled province by 2029.

The meeting also covered the six key pillars of AI Vision 2029, which will serve as the foundation for the province's artificial intelligence strategy. The participants also discussed the first Chief Minister's AI Stocktake, a review mechanism aimed at assessing progress on AI Vision 2029 and monitoring the implementation of the province's artificial intelligence initiatives. The meeting is part of the Punjab government's broader efforts to integrate artificial intelligence into public-sector delivery and improve governance and services through technology.



People mourn as they attend a mass funeral for twelve people, including two children, following the Israeli attack on Kfar Reman town of Nabatieh, Lebanon



LONDON: Local Government Minister Angela Rayner left the Prime Minister's Office after first cabinet meeting of the new legislative session

Sindh all set to launch facial recognition attendance system in educational institutions

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh School Education Department has completed preparations for the launch of the Facial Recognition Attendance Monitoring and Evaluation System (FRAMES) in government schools across the province.

The pilot phase of the system will formally begin on August 17 in six districts of Sindh.

For the pilot phase, one district from each division has been selected. The districts include Karachi East, Hyderabad, Naushehro Feroze, Jacobabad, Ghotki and Umerkot. In the initial phase, the attendance of 49,565 teaching and non-teaching staff members in these districts will be monitored through FRAMES.

Sindh Minister for Education Syed Sardar Ali Shah said that FRAMES was being launched initially as a pilot initiative in the six districts. Based on the results and experience of the pilot phase, the system would gradually be expanded to all districts of Sindh.

The provincial minister said FRAMES was not merely an attendance system but an effective mechanism to ensure that students have access to teachers at schools.

He added that the application had been designed to be user-friendly, while a proper mechanism had also been established to identify, monitor and resolve potential technical issues in a timely manner.

KP plans Rs17.55 billion initiative to strengthen local governance in merged areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government plans to invest Rs17.55 billion ($65 million) in strengthening local institutions and improving public service delivery in the province's merged areas under a World Bank-backed rural investment and institutional support project.

According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the Institutional Development of Merged Areas initiative is one of five components of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment and Institutional Support Project.

The project covers all districts of the Newly Merged Areas (NMAs) and Frontier Regions (FR) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and combines investments in infrastructure, institutional development, flood response, project management and emergency response.

The Rs17.55 billion institutional development component will finance investments aimed at improving the government's responsiveness to citizens, with particular emphasis on lower tiers of government and public service delivery.

A major part of the initiative involves institutional strengthening and capacity building of village councils and communities. Support will be provided for participatory planning, budgeting and monitoring, as well as strengthening social accountability systems, community development and behavioural-change outreach.

Punjab govt to start online admissions from 2027

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab Education Department will stop manual admissions in all colleges across the province and start online admissions from 2027.

Director Public Instruction (DPI) Punjab Dr Ansar Azhar said that the department has taken this decision in line with the Punjab government's paperless policy. He said that prospectus and admission forms will not be issued on paper and the entire process will be completed online.

He further revealed that college fees will be received online. He asked the students and parents to ensure using e-system instead of waiting in queues. Dr. Ansar Azhar said that college fees are already shifted to online mode and all other

Petroleum levy federal matter, has nothing to do with Punjab govt: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information and Culture Minister Azma Bokhari has said that the petroleum levy is a federal matter and has nothing to do with the provincial government. Speaking to the media during her visit to an exhibition at Expo Centre Lahore on Saturday, she criticized political parties for raising the issue at the provincial level. Azma Bokhari said the season of sit-ins appeared to have begun again in an attempt to revive a "dead political agenda."

Referring to the electoral performance of a political party, she said, "Look at the results of a political party in the last three elections and you will know how many votes it actually received."

She said the government was not concerned about the "frivolous demands" of any party staging protests.

The minister made it clear that no one would be allowed to take the law into their own hands or block roads. She said peaceful protest was a democratic right, but no party would be permitted to violate the law or create difficulties for the public.

Talking about youth development, Azma Bokhari said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had declared 2026.

World Bank delegation visits WASA Lahore head office

LAHORE (APP): A World Bank (WB) delegation, comprising Senior Urban Development Specialist Sohaib Rashid and Senior Water Expert Carlos, visited the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Lahore head office on Saturday.

WASA Lahore Managing Director Ghufran Ahmed welcomed the World Bank delegation and an important meeting with the World Bank delegation was held under the chairmanship of WASA MD.

WASA Director Mudassar Javed briefed the World Bank delegation on WASA Lahore's potential and priority projects.

The meeting included detailed discussions on WASA Lahore's wastewater treatment plants, including the Babu Sabu Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase-II, the plant on Barki Road near BRB Canal, and the Ferozepur Road Gajjumata Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Detailed discussions were also held on the proposed wastewater treatment plant near the Indian border at Hudiara Drain and the Mohlanwal Treatment Plant.

Furthermore, the World Bank delegation was briefed on the Surface Water Treatment Plant Phase-II project.



The West Indian Day parade held along Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York City.

Punjab fully prepared to deal with flood threat: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Health and Chairman Cabinet Committee for Disaster Management Khawaja Salman Rafique has said that the health, rescue, livestock and other relevant departments are fully active in the field to prevent and deal with possible flood threats.

He expressed these views during a visit to the Provincial Emergency Centre at the PDMA Head Office on Saturday. On the occasion, concerned officers briefed the provincial minister on the latest situation regarding the monsoon season and water flows in the rivers. Khawaja Salman Rafique said that, under the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, all possible measures were being taken to keep Punjab safe from floods. He said the water flow in the rivers was currently normal, while preparations had been completed in sensitive areas to deal with any emergency. He said flood relief camps, rescue machinery, boats, staff and evacuation plans had been kept operational according to the requirements of sensitive areas, adding that the administration was fully prepared to respond to emergencies. The minister said Rescue had been equipped with modern equipment worth billions of rupees, while pre-disaster and post-disaster.

Zulfiqar Hameed lays foundation stone for new constabulary barracks

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inspector General of Police Zulfiqar Hameed laid the foundation stone for new Constabulary Barracks at Malik Saad Shaheed Police Lines on Saturday.

During the ceremony, Capital City Police Officer Mian Saeed Ahmed briefed KP IGP on architectural layout, primary objectives, accommodation capacity, and residential amenities designated for police personnel. Addressing the event, KP IGP highlighted that police personnel remain department's most valuable asset, making their welfare and standard of living a top operational priority. He said that enhanced, and dignified housing directly boosts police personnel morale and duty performance. He said that a motivated and confident police force is essential for delivering timely, efficient services to public.



MILAN, ITALY: Nationwide transport strike, caused disruptions to rail services. Footage from Milano Centrale train station during the strike showed congestion and train delays.

Gilani highlights role of technology in strengthening connection between Parliament and citizens

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Acting President and Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani launched the Senate Mobile Application, describing the initiative as a significant step towards digital empowerment, greater institutional efficiency and a more transparent and responsive parliamentary system.Addressing the launching ceremony at Parliament House, the Acting President said the application marked the beginning of a new era in the Senate's journey towards digital transformation since its establishment in 1973. He said the initiative was not merely about launching an application but about introducing "a new way of working, a new way of thinking and a new way of serving the people of Pakistan." Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said the digital initiative would have a transformational impact on the working and performance of the Senate and its Members, while helping build a modern parliamentary institution equipped to meet the demands of the contemporary era. Reflecting on his own journey in public service, he said parliamentary and governmental processes had traditionally relied heavily on manual systems, with considerable time being consumed by procedures rather than focusing on the ultimate purpose of public service. "That was then. This is now," he remarked, underscoring the need to embrace technology and innovation. The Acting President said the Senate Mobile Application represented a strategic shift and a shared commitment to ensuring that the Upper House kept pace with technological advancement.

He said that the Senate Secretariat had already embraced the e-office system with encouraging results, adding that the mobile application was part of a broader digital transformation aimed at saving time, improving efficiency and eliminating unnecessary redundancies. He emphasized that digitalization was not merely about convenience but about enhancing institutional effectiveness. "When our systems work seamlessly, we can focus on what truly matters: our constitutional roles and functions," he said. The Acting President also highlighted the role of technology in strengthening the connection between Parliament and citizens. He said the Senate's official website and social media platforms were providing timely information about parliamentary activities, facilitating public feedback and helping counter misinformation. He added that the expansion of digital archives had made authentic parliamentary information more accessible to parliamentarians, researchers and citizens, contributing to greater transparency and strengthening public trust in democratic institutions. Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said digital transformation was not a one-time initiative but an ongoing journey. Quoting Neil Armstrong, he said, "This is one small step in Senate digitization efforts, but one giant leap for parliamentary democracy keeping pace with modern times."



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presenting keys of 50 environmental friendly Electric Vehicles to Federal Minister for Interior Moshin Naqvi; the EVs will be a part of "Capital Patrol", an initiative of Islamabad Capital Territory Police.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani, MPA Mir Sadiq Sanjrani and Parliamentary Secretary Mir Barkat Ali Rind called on Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

IRGC announces capture of US unmanned submersible

TEHRAN, (Monitoring Desk): Iran's state media reported that the Iranian Navy had captured an unmanned US Navy submersible at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz.

"One of the US military's most advanced unmanned underwater vehicles was seized by Iranian armed forces at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz during a complex intelligence and field operation and brought into Iran," IRIB said.

Tasnim News Agency identified the captured system as a Dive-LD, an autonomous unmanned underwater vehicle developed by US defence technology company Anduril Industries and first delivered to the US Navy's Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Group 1 in 2025.

According to Press TV, the "unmanned submersible incorporates some of the world's most advanced underwater technology and was delivered to the US terrorist military in 2025".

Press TV further reported that the IRGC announced that "photographic evidence and detailed footage" of the captured US asset would be released in the coming hours.

Govt to ensure continued provision of quality education to deserving students: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal called for a high-level committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the National Curriculum Framework 2026 and stressed the need for consensus among all political parties, members of provincial assemblies and stakeholders on the framework.

He made these remarks while chairing the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Danish School Authority, which reviewed the authority's restructuring, human resource requirements, financial implications, governance and administrative structure.

The meeting also considered the five to 10-year financial sustainability of Danish schools, teachers' training and a roadmap for implementing proposed reforms.

The minister directed that the National Curriculum Framework 2026 be sent to the Prime Minister for a detailed review so that he could constitute a formal committee to examine the framework and help prevent any future issues.

Ahsan Iqbal stressed that a broad-based consensus on the National Curriculum Framework was essential, saying all political parties, members of provincial assemblies and relevant stakeholders should be taken on board. During the meeting, the Education Secretary briefed the committee that the Danish School model was entirely based on providing free education to underprivileged students. The students were provided free schooling, boarding, meals and other facilities. The minister said the Danish Schools were being established in underdeveloped and disadvantaged areas with the objective of transforming the future of communities living there.

Economic growth without export orientation to be meaningless: PM

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, said the government, in consultation with the business community, had introduced long-pending structural reforms over the past two and a half years, describing the process as a result of sustained teamwork between the government and the private sector.

The prime minister was addressing a meeting with leading industrialists, businessmen and entrepreneurs, which he attended along with the Deputy Prime Minister. He welcomed the members of the business fraternity to the meeting.

Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif said that Rs800 billion had been recovered in a year through enforcement measures alone, without imposing any new taxes. He said cases pending in courts for the past ten years had been pursued and followed up, particularly those relating to indirect sales tax paid by consumers, adding that such improvement in enforcement had not been witnessed before in the country's history.

The prime minister recalled that prior to the budget, multiple rounds of consultations had been held with the business community on various economic issues, in which the Finance and Commerce ministers, along with their secretaries, had also met with the stakeholders before his own interaction with them. He said that the recommendations put forward by the business community during earlier meetings, including during difficult periods, had helped the government bring about structural changes with their support. He termed it a long journey achieved through collective effort.

He said it was for this reason that the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for the first time, extended relevant allowance, and that the IMF Managing Director, during his interaction with the prime minister, had agreed to offer a tax waiver. The prime minister said all these measures were undertaken with consultation from the business community, describing it as a long journey accomplished through teamwork, and said the government would continue to proceed on this path with the guidance and assistance of the business community.

He said that any economic growth achieved must be export-led, stating that growth without an export orientation would be meaningless. He said it was for this reason that special tax relief had been extended to exporters in the budget.

The prime minister said the purpose of the meeting was to seek the opinion of the business community, as the country was in the first quarter of the fiscal year, on the challenges facing export enhancement and possible solutions to address them. Speaking on the occasion, the business leaders appreciated the government's engagement with the business community, expressing confidence that continued coordination would help boost investment and exports.

Arif Habib, renowned businessmen, said the government had incorporated several proposals of the business community in the federal budget and expressed hope for increased investment and export growth during the current year.

Amir Ibrahim, notable industrialist said the meeting focused particularly on enhancing exports, including from traditional sectors and emerging areas such as telecommunications, digital infrastructure and artificial intelligence (AI).

He said the business leaders called for greater focus on AI infrastructure.



QUETTA: Founder of Al-Hijra College Ziarat Abdul Karim Saqib called on Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Saudi Arabia's patience, restraint should not be mistaken for weakness: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan Ulama Council and Secretary-General of the International Tazeem-e-Harmain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, has strongly condemned the Houthi militia's targeting of Saudi Arabia's national resources, critical installations and civilian sites.He said the Pakistan Ulama Council fully supports all legitimate measures taken by Saudi Arabia to protect its security, sovereignty, civilian population and national installations. Saudi Arabia is the land of the Two Holy Mosques, and its security is therefore of vital importance to every Muslim.The people of Pakistanstand in complete solidarity with Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi government and the Saudi people. Ashrafi said Saudi Arabia has consistently pursued efforts to end the war in Yemen, promote political dialogue and achieve lasting peace. However, the Houthi militia's rejection of the peace process and continued actions that threaten regional security are unacceptable. He stressed that Saudi Arabia has an established right to defend its territory, citizens, national resources and holy sites, and that its patience and restraint should not be mistaken for weakness.



Palestinians mourn as they attend the funeral of Omar al-Tubas in the village of Hijja, east of Qalqilya in the northern West Bank, Palestine

DPM Dar stresses timely measures to ensure food security, price stability

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar underscored the need for continued vigilance, effective coordination, and timely measures to ensure food security, market stability, and availability of essential commodities at affordable rates.

The deputy prime minister chaired a meeting of the Steering Committee on Sugar here.

He expressed satisfaction over the availability of sufficient sugar stocks in the country, noting that current stocks, together with anticipated production, are adequate to meet requirements well into the next crushing season.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Food, Minister for Information, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Food, Secretary Commerce, and other concerned senior officials.

Effective water management vital for Balochistan's agricultural growth, economic development: Umrani

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Irrigation Minister Mir Sadiq Umrani has stressed the need for a comprehensive strategy to conserve available water resources, curb wastage and modernize the province's irrigation and canal network, saying effective water management is vital for agricultural growth and economic development. He also instructed officials of the Irrigation Department to ensure that development schemes were executed according to required quality standards and completed within their timelines. The minister expressed these views during a meeting with Irrigation Secretary Sohail-ur-Rehman, which was also attended by MPA Mir Zafarullah Zehri. Chief Engineer Quetta Zone Bashir Tareen and Section Officer Anjum Bashir were present as well. The meeting reviewed the functioning of the Irrigation Department, progress on ongoing development schemes, management of water resources and measures aimed at upgrading irrigation infrastructure across the province. Umrani directed officials to make effective use of available resources and maintain close oversight of development projects to ensure their timely completion without compromising quality. He said an efficient irrigation network and prudent utilization of available water were indispensable for strengthening agriculture and generating wider economic opportunities in Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal chairing the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Daanish Schools Authority.

Governor calls for comprehensive; equitable national education policy

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has said that the ability to read and write alone is no longer adequate in an age dominated by artificial intelligence, digital technologies and robotics, stressing the need to equip young people with technological expertise, scientific thinking, research capabilities, creativity and problem-solving skills.

In his message on International Literacy Day, the Governor said the concept of literacy had evolved beyond conventional reading and writing, with digital competence now becoming essential for people to participate effectively in modern social and economic life.

Mandokhail described education as the cornerstone of an empowered and sustainable future, saying the vision of a developed and educated Balochistan could only be realized through coordinated efforts involving the government, educational institutions, teachers, parents, civil society and communities.

He said the province's overall literacy rate had increased by seven percentage points, while 768,000 children had been brought back into schools.

He termed the progress a significant achievement of the provincial education department and said it demonstrated that sustained and well-directed efforts could produce tangible improvements in education. The Governor called for a comprehensive and equitable national education policy designed with a long-term vision. He said policymaking should be guided by scientific evidence and the practical requirements of society rather than emotional considerations.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui addresses a seminar

BEEF providing financial assistance to Balochistan's talented students

QUETTA, (VoM Report): The Balochistan Education Endowment Fund (BEEF) has awarded 23,520 scholarships under its various programmes, Chief Executive Officer Khalid Mandai said, emphasizing that financial constraints should not prevent talented and deserving students from continuing their education. In his message on International Literacy Day, Mandai described literacy and quality education as key pillars of sustainable development, economic growth and social stability, stressing the importance of expanding access to educational opportunities. He said BEEF was established to provide financial assistance to talented students from Balochistan and enable them to pursue their studies regardless of their economic circumstances.

PAC Chairman expresses concern over Health Department's performance

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Assembly Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chairman Asghar Ali Tareen has directed the Health Department to furnish complete records, explanations and supporting documents concerning financial audit objections at Sandeman Provincial Hospital Quetta within 15 days, warning that failure to provide a satisfactory response could lead to consideration of referral to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) or registration of an FIR. The directive was issued during a PAC meeting chaired by Tareen in the Balochistan Assembly committee room, where members reviewed several objections contained in the Special Audit 2022-23 of Sandeman Provincial Hospital. The chairman expressed serious concern over the department's failure to produce the required documentation despite repeated opportunities during the past one-and-a-half years. He emphasized that the PAC's statutory authority and proceedings must be taken seriously and directed officials to comply with its requirements under applicable rules and procedures.

The committee was informed that the hospital had received Rs10.443 billion during fiscal years 2017-18 to 2021-22, of which Rs9.576 billion had been utilized. Members questioned the non-availability of certain accounts and supporting documents required for examination of the audit objections. Rs30.016m Medicine Procurement Examined The PAC scrutinized an audit objection involving the procurement of medicines valued at Rs30.016 million. The special audit noted that the supply order had been issued in the name of M/s FDL Peshawar, while payment was made to M/s Health Tech Quetta.

The audit also pointed to discrepancies between supply orders and bills and highlighted the absence of relevant stock register entries, delivery challans and inspection reports required to verify the transaction. The Health Department had informed the Departmental Accounts Committee (DAC) that FDL was the manufacturing agency and Health Tech its authorized distributor, through which the medicines were supplied and payment received. The audit authorities, however, noted that some documents subsequently requested for verification had not been produced.

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