Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

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

Rabi-ul-Sani 17,1448 AH Vol: XX No. 48 Wednesday September 30,2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

Inaugurates Jinnah Peoples Metro Train Service in Quetta

Jinnah Peoples Metro Train Service marks new era in Balochistan's public transport: CM Bugti

Mir Sarfraz Bugti says the Jinnah Peoples Metro Train Service is a positive development for the people of Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, while inaugurating Quetta's first Jinnah Peoples Metro Train Service, announced free travel facilities for senior citizens and special persons and said that the metro train service would be expanded to two trains in the future, while steps would also be taken to extend the service to Pishin, Bostan and Mastung. Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, along with Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi, formally inaugurated the Jinnah Peoples Metro Train Service here on Tuesday.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister Balochistan and the Federal Minister for Railways unveiled the project plaque and also participated in the first trial journey of the metro train. Parliamentary Secretary for Transport Mir Liaquat Ali Lehri, provincial ministers, members of the assembly, Chairman Pakistan Railways, Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakil Qadir Khan, senior officials and representatives of political parties were also present at the ceremony.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti welcomed Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi to Balochistan and appreciated his spirit of public service.

He said that the participation of representatives belonging to different political parties in the ceremony in Balochistan reflects that this is a joint and public-oriented project for the people of Balochistan.

The Chief Minister said that the Jinnah Peoples Metro Train Service is the first metro train service of its kind in Balochistan, aimed at providing citizens with safe, comfortable and low-cost transportation facilities. He said that the common man, workers, students and professionals would benefit the most from this project.

He said that initially there was a proposal to import engines and coaches from China for the project, which would have cost Rs. 50 to 60 billion and required three to four years for completion.

However, on the suggestion of the Federal Minister for Railways, it was decided to have new engines and coaches manufactured by Pakistan Railways itself, which not only saved time and resources but also utilized the capacity of a national institution.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi formally inaugurates the province's first Jinnah Peoples Metro Train Service.



LONDON: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attending the Market Open ceremony at the London Stock Exchange, which also featured the unveiling ceremony for Pakistan's $3 billion dual-tranche bonds listing

Govt committed to promote business activities in Balochistan: Governor

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has said that traders and industrialists are the backbone of the country's economic system, and serving the business community is, in fact, serving the country and the nation.

The business community not only contributes significantly to the national exchequer in the form of taxes through its businesses but also creates employment opportunities for thousands of people.

Governor Mandokhail congratulated newly elected President of the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahmed Gul Kakakar, Senior Vice President Mirza Khan Khilji, and all other newly elected office-bearers, expressing hope that the new leadership would play an effective role in resolving the problems of the province's traders and industrialists and promoting economic activities in Balochistan.

He expressed these views while presiding over the annual general meeting of the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The meeting was attended by newly elected President of the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahmed Gul Kakar, Senior Vice President Mirza Khan Khilji, other members of the cabinet, Patron-in-Chief Ghulam Farooq Khilji, and representatives of the business and industrial community.

He said that the activities of traders and industrialists keep commercial and economic markets active throughout the country. The business community, through hard work and lawful earnings, is not only improving the economic future of its families but also playing its role in strengthening the national economy.



ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan speaks to the media after meeting PPP leader Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari.

WPC, WFP join hands to strengthen food security, nutrition in Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): High-level consultative meeting between the Women Parliamentary Caucus and the World Food Programme; detailed discussion on food security, nutrition, and the health of women and children.

A high-level strategic dialogue and consultative meeting was held under the auspices of the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly with the World Food Programme (WFP) Pakistan regarding food security, prevention of malnutrition among children, and the welfare of women and children.

The meeting was chaired by Deputy Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly and Chairperson of the Women Parliamentary Caucus Ghazala Gola. Member of the National Assembly Akhtar Bibi, Pulain Baloch, members of the Balochistan Assembly Shahida Rauf and Salma Kakar, Secretary Balochistan Assembly Tahir Shah Kakar, along with WFP Representative and Country Director in Pakistan Anita Harsch and Head of the WFP Balochistan Provincial Office Dr. Faria Ahsan, as well as other relevant officials, participated in the meeting. At the outset of the meeting, Ghazala Gola welcomed Ms. Anita Harsch on her first official visit to Quetta in her capacity as WFP Representative and Country Director in Pakistan, saying that the WFP delegation was welcomed on behalf of the Balochistan Assembly and the Women Parliamentary Caucus.

She termed the holding of this important and timely consultative meeting on food security, nutrition, and the welfare of women and children a welcome development.

The meeting held detailed discussions on issues such as food insecurity in Balochistan, maternal and child nutrition, and malnutrition among children. The parliamentary role and cooperation of WFP were also considered to further improve the effectiveness of various ongoing government programmes and social protection initiatives in the province. While briefing the meeting about WFP programmes currently underway in Balochistan.

Somalian forces rescue tanker with Pakistanis among crew from pirates

MOGADISHU, (Agencies): Security forces from Somalia's semi-autonomous Puntland state have rescued the MT Honour 25, a Palau-flagged petroleum products tanker seized by pirates in April, Puntland's state television channel reported on Tuesday.

The broadcaster said pirates who had been holding the vessel had been detained and would be brought to court.

Puntland officials did not respond to requests for comment. The MT Honour 25 was seized on April 21 around 30 nautical miles off Puntland's coast with 17 crew members on board, including 10 Pakistanis. The rescue follows a similar Puntland counter-piracy operation last week, when the regional maritime police force said it had freed the US-sanctioned tanker Sibu 1, which Somali pirates had hijacked in August. Piracy has resurfaced off Somalia's coast in recent years, raising concerns for shipping through the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean.

Afghan interim govt must abandon militant mindset for lasting peace: Tarar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said the Afghan interim government needed to move away from its militant mindset and adopt a statesmanlike approach to achieve lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

"Pakistan believes in peace, Pakistan has always believed in peace, and we believe in peaceful coexistence," he said while addressing a ceremony titled "Afghan Predicament and the Trajectory to Peace", organised by the International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC) in collaboration with Senator Sitara Ayaz.

The minister said Pakistan and Afghanistan were neighbouring countries and would always remain neighbours, although their relations had experienced turbulence in the past.

He said Pakistan had hosted around four million Afghan refugees over the past several decades, demonstrating its generosity towards the Afghan people.

Tarar said Pakistan had made various efforts to resolve issues through negotiations and dialogue, as every problem could be addressed through talks. Several high-level Pakistani delegations had visited Afghanistan to find solutions and ensure peaceful coexistence between the two countries.

He added that talks had also been held in friendly countries, including Istanbul and Doha.

"Peace can be achieved, yes.

Was peace given a chance, yes. But is there a will to achieve peace? The answer, unfortunately, is no," he said.

PPP to seek Bilawal's nod as TTAP reaches out ahead of opposition APC

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Tuesday said it would refer an invitation from the Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Ain Pakistan (TTAP) to attend an upcoming APC to party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari after a meeting between the two sides at the party's Islamabad secretariat.

A TTAP delegation, comprising representatives of opposition parties, visited the PPP Central Secretariat and met PPP Parliamentarians Secretary General Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari, formally inviting the party to participate in the conference.

Welcoming the delegation, Bukhari said the invitation would be conveyed to Bilawal and that the TTAP would subsequently be informed of the PPP chairman's stance on participating in the conference. The PPP leader said the party considered continued consultation and engagement among political parties on constitutional and democratic matters important.

Commissioner for coordinated efforts to complete QDP projects

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Quetta Division Zeeshan Lashari regarding progress on development projects being carried out under the Quetta Development Package (QDP), removal of obstacles being faced and timely completion of the projects. Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini and other relevant officers attended the meeting.

During the meeting, detailed progress on development projects under the Quetta Development Package was reviewed, while issues including obstacles in the way of the projects, release of funds, land acquisition and encroachments were also discussed. On the occasion, Project Director QDP Rafiq Baloch briefed the meeting and said that 12 QDP development projects under the PSDP have been completed, while work on seven projects is ongoing.

PM Shehbaz makes history as first Pakistani premier to open LSE session; inaugurates historic US$3 bn Eurobond

LONDON, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, became the first prime minister from Pakistan to open the London Stock Exchange trading session and formally inaugurated Pakistan's landmark US$3 billion dual-tranche sovereign Eurobond.

During his address at the LSE headquarters in Paternoster Square, the prime minister highlighted Pakistan's immense potential to attract high-yield, safe, and mutually beneficial foreign investment.

He said in recent years, they had worked very hard to strengthen Pakistan's economy. "As I speak, we have strengthened our macroeconomic indicators, which are very promising and augur very well for the future," he added.

The ceremony was attended by CEO of London Stock Exchange Group David Schwimmer, Finance Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Aurangzeb, Advisor on Privatization Mohammad Ali, Pakistan High Commissioner Tipu Usman, members of Pakistani delegation and relevant British authorities.

The prime minister's visit to London Stock Exchange underscored Pakistan's return to global capital markets and reflected renewed international investor confidence in the country's economic trajectory.

The prime minister, in his remarks, further said that the latest contribution of their finance minister and his team to arrange $3 billion worth of dual-tranche sovereign Eurobond spoke volumes about their hard work, deep-rooted structural changes, the digitization of economy, and taking all the necessary measures to put their national economy back on track.



QUETTA: MNA Akhtar Bibi called on Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Education Minister vows to improve quality of education in Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Provincial Minister for Education Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani, while appreciating the organization of the Science and Arts Exhibition at Government Girls Degree College, Quarry Road, Quetta, said that such extracurricular activities play an important role in promoting students' creative abilities, scientific and research-oriented thinking, and self-confidence.

Director Colleges Professor Muhammad Hussain Bakhsh Baloch, Joint Director Colleges Ms. Saeeda Niaz, and Education Specialist Ms. Saadia Farooqui were also present on the occasion. They reviewed the scientific and creative projects presented by the students at the exhibition and appreciated their efforts.

Addressing the participants, the Provincial Minister for Education said that the girls of Balochistan possess immense potential, and providing them with better educational opportunities and a conducive environment to showcase their abilities is among the priorities of the provincial government.

She said that science and arts activities can help students keep pace with modern requirements while also developing an interest in research, creativity, and practical experiences. She said that the scientific models and examples of experimental projects presented by the students at the exhibition held at Government Girls Degree College, Quarry Road, Quetta, reflected their hard work, capabilities, and creative abilities.

The Provincial Minister for Education further said that the Education Department would continue taking steps to improve the quality of education in the province, provide quality education to female students, and promote positive and constructive activities in educational institutions. She congratulated the college administration, teachers, and students on successfully organizing the exhibition.



QUETTA: Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani inaugurates science and arts exhibition at Govt Girls Degree College, Quarry Road.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Wednesday September 30, 2026

Netanyahu must be arrested

What is happening in Gaza can no longer be seen as simply the result of war. It is an immense destruction of humanity happening before the world's eyes: killing, displacement, humanitarian suffering, and grave allegations of crimes under international law.

The international community faces a fundamental question: Will international law apply equally to everyone, including powerful political leaders?

On Nov. 21, 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, alleging war crimes and crimes against humanity. In theory, these warrants mean that no individual, regardless of political power, is above the law.

The enforcement of the arrest warrant issued against Netanyahu is not only about arresting one individual. It is also a test for the future of international law.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is severe. Tens of thousands of people have lost their lives. Children and women were killed, hospitals were bombed, families lost their homes, and millions have been displaced. The international community's silence, while a society's basic means of survival are destroyed, further widened the gap between law and power.

The ICC warrant also creates a striking contradiction. Netanyahu's address from the United Nations podium also has symbolic importance in this regard. On one side, an international court has ordered his arrest on allegations of serious crimes; on the other, a head of government speaking from the podium of the world's largest international organization.

Where does law begin, and where does political power end? If international law is applied only to weak states, then what we have is not a legal order but a power order.

Pakistan has not approached the Palestinian question as a regional issue but as one concerning the common conscience of humanity. This understanding lies at the foundation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's political stance on Palestine.

What must be done today is to ensure that what happened in Gaza is not allowed to be forgotten. When the images of war fade from the agenda, the suffering of children, women, and civilians will not disappear.

Will the law of the powerful overcome the power of law?

As Netanyahu began speaking, delegates from 77 countries walked out of the United Nations General Assembly chamber. Their departure left large sections of the hall visibly empty, in protest against Israel's military campaign in Gaza and in support of the growing international recognition of Palestinian statehood. The scene was more than a diplomatic action; it was a powerful expression of the conscience of humanity.

Law is a matter of conscience. Netanyahu is being condemned not only by the decisions of the ICC, but also by the conscience of the nations of the world.

Netanyahu must be arrested. Because the issue is greater than Netanyahu. The issue is whether the common law of humanity can endure, as it is clearly approved by the conscience of humankind.

The ecology of civic spaces

Marvi Mazhar

In Karachi, development is often imagined as an upgrade in scale — a quiet residential zone becomes commercial chaos, and an informal, difficult-to-maintain civic place is replaced by a larger, safer, more manageable and programmable space. On paper, this looks like progress. In urban life, the equation is complicated. Cities, particularly in South Asia, have a habit of mistaking expansion for continuity. The expansion of a building means that public mission has grown. When a facility offers more amenities, such as rooms, equipment, parking and programming, it is seen as advancement. But civic spaces do not live by square footage alone. They live through democratic access, repetition, informality, memory and the possibility of arrival.

This is where the debate between preservation and development in Karachi needs to be rethought. Preservation is not only about old buildings, stone façades, carved balconies or colonial-era elevations. It is also about the preservation of relationships: between a place and its street, between a room and its regulars, between a threshold and the people who feel they can cross it without permission, and without an agenda. Development, likewise, is not automatically the enemy. Cities must repair, rebuild, expand and adapt. But development turns destructive when it preserves the name while displacing the ecology that gave that name meaning. Karachi has already perfected the language of superficial preservation. We hold up façades while hollowing out interiors. We have seen this in Kanji Building, Duarte Mansion, and many more. We retain the front elevation but erase the spatial memory behind it. We allow history to remain as a surface while new commercial logic occupies the depth. This is not preservation. It is heritage as costume. The same danger exists with cultural and civic institutions. One can preserve a brand, a plaque, a founding story, even a commemorative wall, and still lose the urban life that made the institution matter.

The main characteristics between event-based large infrastructure arts councils, corporate institutions and informal community projects is that a neighbourhood-level cultural space depends on a delicate network of conditions. It needs public transport, walkability, evening life, mixed-use surroundings, casual visibility, porous thresholds, and a sense of familiarity. People must be able to drop in, not just arrive by invitation. Students, artists, writers, activists, young professionals, neighbours and strangers must feel that the space is part of their mental map of the city. Such spaces are not only attended; they are inhabited. Therefore, they are community projects and not corporate or state councils.

Karachi's grassroot community institutions understood this instinctively. Mehr Ghar in Lyari, Rangoonwala Community Centre in Bahadurabad and Ghalib Library in Nazimabad are not only buildings with programmes. They are embedded in neighbourhood histories. Their value comes from the way they sit within communities that already have their own rhythms, languages, anxieties, memories and forms of gathering. They do not need to become monumental in order to matter. Their scale is part of their intelligence. Lyari, for example, cannot be understood in isolation. It is a dense urban world of cultural production, political memory, sport, music, migration and resilience. A community space there carries a different meaning from the same programme placed elsewhere. It is not simply 'service delivery'; it is recognition. Similarly, a library in Nazimabad or a community centre near Bahadurabad belongs to a geography of everyday use. Its users are not only audiences. They are neighbours, students, families, passers-by and repeat visitors who build attachment over time.

This is also visible in newer Karachi spaces that have emerged with modest means but strong civic imagination. The Centre For Art-based Methodologies and Well-being and Nani Ghar, Darham/Marham, Kitab Ghar and Danish-o-Ramish represent a different model of public culture: smaller, intimate and community-facing. Once upon a time so was T2F. They are not trying to become grand cultural complexes. Their significance lies in creating rooms for reading, conversation, collective care, arts practice, learning, reflection and belonging. In a city where public space is scarce and often hostile, such areas become civic infrastructure on a neighbourhood level. They are not insulated from the city; they absorb it. They allow people to enter without the intimidation of institutional grandeur. They survive through trust, informality, shared labour, borrowed furniture, public generosity, uneven funding and the fragile ethics of care. They remind us that Karachi's cultural future may not only lie in large master-planned facilities, but in a constellation of smaller spaces rooted in different localities.

An industrial or employment-dominated district works differently. Its rhythms are shaped by work-hour mobility, production, institutional destinations, transport corridors and commuting patterns. It may contain communities, mixed-use pockets and important public institutions, but its dominant urban logic is not the same as that of a porous civic neighbourhood.

For want of a nail

Arifa Noor

Are the days of the government numbered? This is a question (or gossip) in Islamabad these days; I call it 'a question' because it is not the only one, which in itself reveals that it has its takers and its critics. Though this is an issue never far from anyone's mind in this city (or Pindi) no matter which government is in place, this particular session of the debate in public was sparked by the column of senior journalist Sohail Warraich. The operative part of the column was his prediction that the government's downfall would begin in July. Since then, he has been clarifying or explaining this prophecy in articles as well as interviews.

Many are eager to latch on to his views while others argue against it equally passionately. The former point out, as did the column writer himself, about the government's lack of success on the economic front and its inability to gain popularity. The government has little to offer other than its mantra of stability for five years or so. And this is frankly of little consolation to people who have experienced back-breaking inflation and a slower-than-a-tortoise economy for the past so many years. Even less needs to be said about the PML-N's lack of popularity. Even those who can't stop waxing lyrical about the 'success' of Maryam Nawaz as chief minister cannot argue that she has made the party popular.

On the other hand, those who feel the government is on solid ground point out the comfortable relationship between the prime minister and the military leadership. This is more than a hybrid regime now; it is one in which the civilian side takes no risks and asserts no power. There is only one side writing on the page, the other is simply following the moving finger. The 'same page' is far too dicey a proposition. They also point out the disaster that is the PTI, bereft of any political strategy to woo over those in power. So why would there be any rift or disagreement, ask those on this side of the argument.

However, it needs be said that even those who don't think the government is in any danger concede the economic fragility in the country. The docility of the prime minister and his generosity in giving credit where it is due might be unprecedented but perhaps so are the economic challenges facing the country and the pressures on the more vulnerable classes. And this is exactly why arguments such as those made by Sohail Warraich, and others, might sound credible, even if — as he himself says — he has no information, just analysis. Those who disagree with this sound far more confident, for they have spoken to the powers that be and heard their assurances with reference to the strong position of the government. But the argument that the government is in danger could simply be an assessment based on experience rather than knowledge.

The Pakistani establishment has considerable institutional expertise in managing public expectations and anger. Or so it had always seemed in the past (other than 1971). And this has manifested itself in two ways. The first is their ability to accept popular parties into the mainstream. This was true of the PPP in 1988, after the death of Ziaul Haq. Despite distrust of the party, which meant forcing Benazir Bhutto to accept certain cabinet choices and hindering her government, she was allowed to take power.

And this was equally true in 2007. In other words, unpopular governments or those with a questionable mandate are not kept in power indefinitely and popular parties are accepted, regardless of misgivings, which then causes considerable instability in civilian governments. It usually happens when the institution becomes uncomfortably aware of its unpopularity and feels the need to assert its more 'professional' role to gain acceptability.

This decision is linked to the second factor — governments especially those brought into power through questionable elections don't necessarily complete their terms. Back in the 1990s, the first PML-N government (brought to power in a heavily rigged election) was sent home and replaced with the PPP which, too, was sent home before time. Post Musharraf, governments completed their terms but only till the elections were largely seen to be fair, till 2018, when the electoral exercise became far too controversial and unfair. The resultant PTI government was sent packing in 2022. There are specific political issues for why each government was sent packing but it can also be argued that these quick changes prevent the building up of a pressure cooker like situation.

Unpopularity in itself doesn't necessarily lead to organised outrage; longevity also acts as a catalyst that brings disparate forces and organisations to join hands. The riots which led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina didn't just happen because she had become unpopular but also because of her long reign of nearly 15 years. Similar longevity was linked to the widespread protests against Hosni Mubarak, which the military he had led did not push back against.

In Pakistan, the populace perhaps has a shorter tolerance level and the establishment understands that. Musharraf was struggling with unpopularity within seven years, a fact his institution took advantage of.

As a result, those who remember what has happened in the past are now asking questions about what the Shehbaz Sharif government has to show after presenting five budgets. And other than not picking a fight with those who brought the government to power, it has also done little to bring any legitimacy to the set-up. So the steam continues to build up. And despite the 'sab acha hai' (all's well) mantra on news channels, it is evident to everyone.

It is a simple assessment that should also not escape some of those ruling Pakistan right now; and this includes those in Islamabad, Pindi and some of us who watch politics. Whether it shapes policy is another matter — and better known by those who have powerful zaraaye (sources).

Temple heist and Hindutva

Jawed Naqvi

Every religion has its moral code. Hinduism, better still Brahminism, has a clutch of dos and don'ts enshrined in its classical scriptures. Does Hindutva, distinct from Hinduism, subscribe to the moral code? There's a political critique of the fascist movement, which requires it to be fortified and addressed urgently, but increasingly there's an equal need for a moral probe of Hindutva. Stealing gold and priceless treasures from a temple was explicitly categorised as one of five deadly sins — mahapatakas — in classical Hindu scripture.

The ancient caution remains a compelling pointer to the reality that temples were regularly targeted in old India by robbers whether from within the precincts or without.

Some Hindu kings in southern India plundered temples for treasure, others sacked the ones of rival kings and took home the deities as trophies. Kashmir, too, records a similar experience of plunder by an ancient king. In the mediaeval era, Mahmood Ghaznavi joined the raids and his sacking of the temple of Somnath is all too well recorded.

A Persian chronicler is cited as asserting that Mahmood had a religious purpose in the raids even if Sanskrit sources of the region at the time do not express any such trauma that matches the Persian boast. Somnath, a name for Lord Shiva, according to the Persian chronicler was conflated with Manat, one of several idols expelled from Makkah as Islam advanced belief in a single invisible God. The scriptural censure in ancient texts is not the only evidence of stealing the riches offered to the temples by devotees. Other historical evidence also points to a possibly routine malaise.

Gambling, while condemned as a severe moral vice in the Vedic texts, didn't qualify as a deadly sin though drinking was. Drinking was listed among the serious mahapatakas. Gandhiji, a pious Hindu, condemned drinking but slammed tribal peasants in Gujarat for violently opposing Hindu and Parsi vendors for selling alcohol to their communities. Today, BJP-ruled Gujarat and Bihar formally observe prohibition to express cursory respect for Gandhi. The ban has created a thriving parallel market for liquor. The moment you drive out of Gujarat and into Rajasthan, a bevy of liquor shops lure clients by announcing their brands and prices in Gujarati.

The other three unforgivable mahapatakas, listed in Chandogya Upanishad and Manu Smriti, were killing a Brahmin and committing adultery with the wife of the guru. The fifth commandment, to borrow a phrase from the Old Testament, forbade keeping the company of those that participated in the committing of the first four sins.

One of the most prevalent sins today is described in the Rigveda in the famous 'Dice Hymn', where a gambler laments losing his family, wealth and respect, warning others to "play no longer with dice, but till thy tillage". The central conflict of the epic Mahabharata occurs because King Yudhishthira succumbs to a gambling addiction, losing his kingdom, brothers and wife in a rigged game of dice. Gambling, the scriptures warn, breeds dishonesty, greed and chaos. Texts like the Bhagavata Purana define gambling as one of the major pillars of 'adharma' (unrighteousness) because it destroys truthfulness. Gambling under Hindutva rule, though not exclusively because of it, has become a serious scourge with families succumbing to the addiction of their own loved one to online gambling. Sports have not been spared the merciless guile of the bookies.

A lore among the children in our predominantly Hindu neighbourhood in Lucknow was that houses needed to be more carefully watched after Diwali since it had become an occasion for serious gambling, evidently with contrived religious sanction. The losing parties were accused of often pillaging private homes to make up for their losses.

In the larger world of agrarian India, the Marxian class struggle stalks the peasantry dressed as a friend or a facilitator of monetary support at times of distress. Indira Gandhi was wary of Sukhi Lala, the uncouth and wily moneylender featured in the movie Mother India. She had barred the weather bureau from sharing monsoon forecasts with the press. The role of satellites in monitoring the climate patterns would arrive in India later. In Mrs Gandhi's calculation, the baniya exploited his insights into the pattern of the arriving rains to manipulate the helpless peasantry. David Hardiman in his amazing book on usury in colonial western India — Feeding the Baniya — records instances where the moneylender prays for drought, using tantric help to drive away rain. He maximises his profits from a peasantry in crisis. Gambling is a tradition. Will it rain? Will it not? The baniya wagers on his insight. The monsoon rains this year are said to be worryingly low, creating a loaded political possibility. Mrs Gandhi lost her grip on power after two successive failures of monsoons in the mid-1970s undermining her victory in the 1971 war.

The recent theft of large quantities of gold and ornaments from the heavily guarded Ram temple at Ayodhya is of a piece with the ancient Indian phenomenon. Someone seems to badly need the plundered wealth amid deliberate opaqueness. Reports allege that senior officials of the temple trust decreed by the supreme court and appointed by the Modi government are being spared the probe while some junior staff were arrested.

There are reports also of someone linked with high officials of the trust often leaving the temple with a loaded sack. He preferred to travel by train instead of flying out of Ayodhya.

Elections are due in Uttar Pradesh next year, which represents the most politically influential state accounting for 80 MPs. The temple heist may or may not become an electoral issue. The rural distress caused by a failed monsoon and the Iran war, however, offers a likelier chance to drub the BJP government in its stronghold state.

UN chief urges US, Russia to negotiate new nuclear treaty amid growing arms risks

UNITED NATIONS, (Monitoring Desk): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday called on the US and Russia to negotiate a successor framework to the New START Treaty, warning that growing nuclear arsenals and weakening safeguards are increasing risks to global security.

"The United States and the Russian Federation must negotiate a successor framework to New START," Guterres said at a UN General Assembly plenary meeting marking the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

The New START Treaty expired earlier this year, leaving, for the first time in more than half a century, no binding limits on strategic nuclear arsenals, according to Guterres. "This undermines not only the security of those who possess nuclear weapons, but the entire international community," he said.

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) was signed on April 8, 2010, in Prague by the United States and Russia and entered into force on Feb. 5, 2011. It replaced the 1991 START I treaty, which expired in December 2009, and superseded the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), which terminated when New START entered into force, according to the US-based Arms Control Association.

Guterres warned that nuclear arsenals are being expanded and modernized while technological advances are increasing the risks of mistakes and miscalculations. "Nuclear arsenals are being expanded and modernized. The rattling of nuclear sabers is growing louder. Advances in technology are increasing the odds of mistake and miscalculation," he said.

He also pointed to the failure to reach a substantive consensus of the 11th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the UN Disarmament Commission's inability to produce substantive recommendations during its latest three-year cycle.

"These are not simply diplomatic disappointments — they are warning signs. And the lights are flashing red," Guterres said.

He said nuclear disarmament is "a binding legal obligation" under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and urged all nuclear-weapon states to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their security policies through confidence-building measures that ensure transparency.

UN General Assembly President Khalilur Rahman said the global inventory stood at more than 12,000 nuclear warheads as of January 2026.

He said between 2,100 and 2,200 warheads are kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles capable of being launched at very short notice.

"For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the global stockpile is expected to grow again, as new and more modern warheads enter arsenals faster than retired ones are dismantled," Rahman said.

He said global military expenditure reached nearly $3 trillion in 2025, marking the 11th consecutive annual increase.



TEHRAN, IRAN: Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has prepared a 25-page letter addressed to the US public outlining what it describes as the reasons behind attacks on Iran and Washington's support for Israel, IRGC spokesperson Hossein Mohibi said at a news conference



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte (right) met with Lithuanian Prime Minister Mindaugas Sinkevicius (left) at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. Following their meeting, Secretary General Rutte and Prime Minister Sinkevicius held a joint press conference.

Qatar continues US-Iran shuttle diplomacy to end Middle east war

DOHA, (Agencies): The Qatari Foreign Ministry confirmed Tuesday that it has continued shuttle diplomacy between the U.S. and Iran as part of mediation efforts to end the Middle East war. "Qatar's mediation efforts are ongoing, and we are currently relaying messages between the American and Iranian sides," ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari told a press conference in Doha. Asked about the possibility of a large-scale U.S. military attack on Iran, Ansari said: "We are concerned about any escalation in the region and are working to find a peaceful solution." In February, the U.S. and Israel launched a war against Iran, which responded with attacks on U.S. assets across the region before a ceasefire agreement was reached in April. Washington and Tehran later signed a MoU in June to halt hostilities and maintain navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, but implementation stalled over disagreements related to security in the strategic waterway as tensions continue to escalate between the two sides.

NATO to strengthen lower-cost counter-drone defenses: Rutte

Alliance seeks alternatives to deploying fighter jets against inexpensive drones amid repeated incidents on eastern flank

BRUSSELS, (Agencies): NATO will strengthen lower-cost counter-drone defenses so it does not have to deploy advanced fighter jets against inexpensive threats, Secretary General Mark Rutte said Tuesday.

"We will strengthen cheaper counter-drone defenses so we are not using high-end jets against low-cost threats," Rutte said at a joint news conference with Lithuanian Prime Minister Mindaugas Sinkevicius at NATO headquarters.

He said repeated drone incidents along the alliance's eastern flank showed how the threat was evolving. NATO was reinforcing its integrated air and missile defenses through a "multilayered, 360-degree approach" and adapting its posture against drones through initiatives such as Drone Edge, he added.

Rutte cited an incident two weeks ago in which Italian jets deployed by NATO from Lithuania's Siauliai Air Base shot down a drone that had violated Lithuanian airspace, calling it "collective defense in action."

Sinkevicius said air defense and preparedness on NATO's eastern flank were among the main topics of their talks. He said Lithuania remained on track to host a permanently deployed German brigade by the end of 2027.

Trump refutes sanctions relief claims as Iran voices will to talk

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): President Donald Trump said he has offered Iran nothing to end the war, rejecting reports that he was willing to ease sanctions and release frozen funds for concrete steps on its nuclear program.

"This is untrue. I offered them NOTHING," Trump wrote on Truth Social Monday.

Axios and CNN both reported, citing unidentified U.S. officials, that Trump was willing to give Iran sanctions relief and free Iranian funds as part of a final deal on the condition that Iran showed "concrete progress" on the nuclear issue. Trump has cited preventing Tehran from acquiring a nuclear bomb as a key goal of the war, along with ending its ability to attack its neighbors and creating conditions for Iranians to topple their leadership.

Iran does not have nuclear weapons and denies it wants to develop them, but argues it has the right to a domestic nuclear energy capacity.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in an interview with the CBS show "Face the Nation," said Tehran was ready for talks on its nuclear program and other issues, but would not accept "bullying or coercion."

"Iran is not seeking war, but will defend itself against pressure, threats and attacks," Pezeshkian said, adding that it had already agreed that "we're not supposed to develop nuclear weapons."

U.S. and Iranian officials spoke separately with mediators Monday as part of a renewed effort to end the seven-month war, according to officials of both countries.

Iran insisted Sunday that only diplomacy can solve its conflict with the United States and Israel.

"Our conditions are clear, and any move toward reopening the Strait of Hormuz is contingent on these conditions being met," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi posted on social media. "Only a negotiated solution can get them out of this deadlock."

Araghchi told reporters at the U.N. Friday the proposed deal would trigger a seven-day countdown to reopening the strait and a pause in regional fighting.

Trump on Saturday rejected the plan and argued that desperation was driving the Iranians' push for an agreement on the key waterway.

"They want to make a deal to open the Hormuz Strait immediately because they're losing so badly," Trump told reporters at the White House. Araghchi said mediators facilitating Tehran's talks with Washington had not officially relayed a U.S. rejection.

"We are waiting for the mediators to convey the definitive views to us and we will make a decision based on them," Araghchi posted.

Oil prices rise

The war, which Trump launched alongside Israel in February as "Operation Epic Fury," has killed thousands of people, severely disrupted global energy supplies, pushing up oil prices and fueling global inflation. Iran and its have by extending the conflict throughout the region. Iran has struck U.S. allies in the Gulf with drones and missiles, while its Houthi allies in Yemen hit Saudi interests.



Britain's Prime Minister Andy Burnham delivers a speech on the third day of the annual Labour Party conference in Liverpool, northwest England.

Brexit did 'more harm than good': British PM Burnham

LONDON, (Agencies): British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said Tuesday that Brexit had done "more harm than good," pledging to present the public with options for reshaping the country's long-term relationship with the European Union.

Speaking at the annual Labour Party Conference in Liverpool, Burnham said Britain could not have "the clear path we need into the rest of this century" without deciding on its future relationship with the EU, which he described as "still our largest market."

The U.K. left the EU in 2020, four years after a referendum in which about 52% of voters chose to leave. The prime minister said he would use the opportunity around the summit to set out the choices available to Britain.

"And there are different options, and I will see if we can find consensus around one, which will give us clarity about our position and the future of the continent that we live in," he said. Burnham also announced that Labour's next manifesto would contain a commitment to change the U.K.'s electoral system.

He said he was creating a "new national commission on electoral reform" and invited all political parties to take part in its work.

"In past years, you have voted twice to support electoral reform. I hear you, I agree with you," Burnham said. "We will contest the next election with a manifesto commitment to change the electoral system so that everyone's vote counts and everyone's voice is heard," he added.



GAZA CITY, GAZA, PALESTINE: Relatives mourn the during funeral prayer held for Izz al-Din al-Baik, commander of the Northern Gaza Brigade of Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades

Norwegian parliament to question 11 ministers about Epstein-linked foreign ministry revelations

OSLO, (Agencies): Eleven current and former Norwegian ministers are set to face parliamentary questioning for two days beginning Wednesday about foreign ministry practices brought under scrutiny by revelations concerning Jeffrey Epstein media said on Tuesday.

The hearings will examine what officials knew about concerns of the Foreign Ministry, including grants to the IPI.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-2627091200053 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Killa Saifullah invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee 1000/- and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	CONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD PROTECTION WALL SHINA KHUWARA AND AKHTAR NIKA AREA UNDER "BSDI PHASE-III (2026-27)	19,903,405

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over of at least 15,000,000 PKR Amount in3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Registration with Pakistan Engineering council (PEC) C-6 and above (Upto 25 million)In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE04(ii) (Irrigation & Flood Control Systems). Litigation and black listing Affidavit, (Attach affidavit on Rs. 100 non-judicial stamp paper duly attested by notary public) In case of joint venture, (Joint venture agreement on affidavit on Rs. 500/- stamp paper duly attested by notary public) 2% Bid Security of Estimated cost the available bank credit line limit is 70% & above of project cost. credit line without name , TSE & Less then 70% will not be consider The bidder must have completed (Flood Protection Wall Works) at least 2 similar projects in the last 5 years. Each project should be at least 70% of the estimated cost (Attach Work Orders and Completion Certificates) Green Challan of 1000 Rupees with name of scheme & procuring agency **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Gurantee,Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR **Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication of NIT to 13 October, 2026during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 13 October, 2026till 11:00 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: Executive Engineer Office Near Circuit House Killa Saifullah

Phone no: 0823610660Fax no: 0823610660

Email: irrigationkillasaifullah7002@gmail.com

Executive Engineer
Irrigation Division
Killa Saifullah

DPRQ/PRQ No.1602/29-9-2026

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US completes Iraq pull out after 2 decades, leaving void for Iran

BAGHDAD, (Agencies): U.S. forces are scheduled to withdraw from their final bases in Iraq by Wednesday, a departure celebrated as a victory by Iran and its allies, who now hold deep influence in the country where 4,500 Americans died during more than two decades of war.

Iraqi security experts say the withdrawal – agreed in 2024 under President Joe Biden and carried out by Donald Trump's administration even as it wages war against Iran – could give Tehran and its powerful allies free rein, while also allowing other U.S. enemies to stage a comeback, including the Daesh terrorist group.

"Iran stands to benefit strategically from the coalition's departure because it removes a military presence that for years acted as a counterweight to Tehran's influence in Iraq," said Jasim al-Bahadli, an Iraqi security analyst specializing in studying armed Shiite groups aligned with Iran.

He predicted that the pro-Iranian militia groups would not only portray the departure as a victory for their movement, but also "seek to translate that momentum into greater influence over security and political decision-making."

Abu Mojtaba al-Yasiri, a commander in the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Iran-backed armed factions, described the U.S. withdrawal as "a historic victory for the Iraqi Islamic resistance groups and honorable Iraqis and a crushing defeat for the American project."

"On Sept. 30, we will celebrate the turning of a black page in Iraq's history and the failure of the occupation to impose its will on our country," he told media.

"Iraq has proven that its sovereignty cannot be secured by foreign forces, but by the resistance and the will of its people."



Belarusian human rights activist and recipient of the 2021 Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize, Maria Kalesnikava, attended the 2026 award ceremony

Myanmar military strike death toll in Rakhine state climbs to 50

NAYPYIDAW, (Agencies): The death toll from a Myanmar military airstrike in Rakhine state rose to 50 Tuesday after rescuers found more bodies, according to a local aid worker and the rebel group controlling the area.

Monday's airstrike in Rakhine state's Kyauktaw town killed 50 people and wounded at least 58, said the Arakan Army, which is battling the military. The numbers were confirmed by aid worker Wai Hun Aung.

Women and children were among the bodies recovered Tuesday, according to photos shared on social media by Wai Hun Aung.

Arakan Army spokesperson Khine Thu Kha said the military "deliberately targeted densely populated markets, schools, civilians, and residential buildings through airstrikes."

A Myanmar government spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment. The military has previously said it "exercises maximum restraint to avoid civilian harm."

Myanmar has been locked in a nationwide civil war since a 2021 coup, with an alliance of armed groups, including the Arakan Army, fighting against the military.

The protracted conflict has since killed around 100,000 people and displaced over 3.5 million in the Southeast nation.

Khine Thu Kha said the Arakan Army use all available means to retaliate against the military and anyone involved in the bombing of civilians.

The Kyauktaw airstrike is Rakhine's deadliest such attack since a December hospital bombing that killed at least 30 people.

PM encourages investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan's financial sector

LONDON, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday held a series of meetings with senior executives from leading global financial institutions including Barclays, J.P. Morgan, Citi, BlackRock and Rothschild & Co during his visit to the United Kingdom.

The engagements underscored growing international financial sector interest in Pakistan's economic reform trajectory and improving investment climate.

Amid meeting Mohammad Kamal Syed, Head of Private Bank and Wealth Management UK at Barclays, the prime minister welcomed the bank's interest in Pakistan and briefed him on the government's macroeconomic stabilization measures, encouraging Barclays to explore opportunities in the country's financial sector. With a high-level delegation led by Matthieu Wiltz, Co-CEO for EMEA, J.P. Morgan, the prime minister discussed deepening the partnership across capital markets, trade finance, and investment banking, and invited the firm to expand its footprint in Pakistan.

The delegation reaffirmed its interest in sovereign debt capital markets and corporate banking opportunities. The prime minister also met a group of senior officials of Citi, led by David Livingstone, Chief Client Officer. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commended the bank's long-standing presence in Pakistan and encouraged an expansion of its corporate and institutional banking services in the country.

In a meeting with a BlackRock delegation comprising Gordon Fraser and Sam Vecht, Co-Heads of Emerging Markets and Frontiers, and Emily Fletcher, Portfolio Manager and Research Analyst, the Prime Minister invited increased allocations to Pakistani equities and fixed income within the firm's frontier markets strategy, with both sides emphasizing the importance of sustained policy consistency in building investor confidence. In a meeting with Rothschild & Co, represented by Lord Mark Sedwill, Chair of Geostrategic Advisory and Mr. Majid Ishaq, Head of UK Investment Banking, discussions centered on Pakistan's geo-economic priorities and potential advisory collaboration on capital markets and investment strategy.

Across all engagements, the visiting executives expressed confidence in Pakistan's economic reform momentum and reaffirmed their institutions' commitment to deepening engagement with the country's financial sector. The meetings reflect the growing traction of Pakistan's economic reform program among the world's leading financial institutions.



LONDON: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met delegation of Rothschild & Co. headed by Lord Mark Sedwill, Chair of Geostrategic Advisory



QUETTA: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi meets Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti

CM Bugti, Hanif Abbasi expresses happiness over launch of first metro train service in Balochistan

QUETTA — (VoM Report): Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi met with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Quetta. The meeting discussed matters of mutual interest, including the launch of Balochistan's first metro train service.

Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi expressed their happiness over the launch of the first metro train service in Balochistan. The Federal Minister for Railways congratulated the Chief Minister of Balochistan on the launch of the metro train service. Hanif Abbasi said that Balochistan had taken the lead over the other provinces of the country with regard to the launch of the metro train service.

He paid tribute to the Balochistan government for its commitment and for the project aimed at facilitating the public.

Finance Minister kicks off talks with IMF mission for EFF, RSF reviews

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday held an opening meeting with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission as part of the negotiations for the fourth review of Pakistan's $7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and climate programme. The IMF mission, led by Iva Petrova, is in Islamabad for the fourth review of Pakistan's EFF arrangement and the third review of the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), the Ministry of Finance said in a statement.

During the meeting, Aurangzeb and the IMF delegation held preliminary discussions on key issues related to the ongoing reviews. The successful review of IMF talks will result in a recommendation to the board for the release of $1.2 billion worth of two tranches under EFF and RSF.

In May this year, Pakistan received $1.32 billion from the IMF after its Executive Board completed the third review under the EFF, the central bank had said.

Pakistan's 37-month EFF arrangement was approved on September 25, 2024, and is aimed at building resilience and enabling sustainable growth. Key priorities include entrenching macroeconomic stability through sound policy implementation, rebuilding foreign exchange reserves, and broadening the tax base.

Meanwhile. the IMF review mission reached the federal capital after spending the last week in Karachi, where it discussed monetary policy, inflation and the exchange rate with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) high-ups.

Modern technology transforming dynamics of crime investigation: Law Minister

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday said the National Forensic Agency (NFA) would serve as a centre of excellence for forensic science in Pakistan and provide support to other laboratories and relevant government institutions.

The minister expressed these views during his visit to the National Forensic Agency, where he was given a detailed briefing on various departments, laboratories and forensic investigation procedures.

He said modern technology had transformed the dynamics of crime investigation, while forensic evidence was playing a fundamental role in identifying crimes, effective prosecution and securing convictions. He added that forensic science was of particular importance in the fight against terrorism.

The minister was informed that the National Forensic Agency was established on December 24, 2024 under the National Forensic Agency Act, 2024. It is the country's central federal forensic institution and provides scientific forensic services to law enforcement agencies, prosecution and courts.

The briefing highlighted that 11 forensic laboratories of the NFA were operational and notified, while Centres of Excellence for Digital Forensics and Explosive Forensics had also been established.

The Digital Forensics Laboratory had received 2,506 cases, of which 2,158 had been completed, while 3,090 digital devices had been processed.

The Chemical and Biological Forensics Laboratories had received 1,525 cases, with 1,044 cases completed.

The minister was also informed that a National Bomb Explosion and Investigation System had been established under the Explosive Forensics Centre of Excellence.

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar appreciated Director General Jawad Ahmad Dogar and the NFA staff for making the agency operational within a short period.

He said forensic analysis could help determine the source of explosives and weapons used in crimes, while modern forensic capabilities were playing a key role in investigation, prosecution and securing convictions.

The federal minister said the NFA would work as a centre of excellence for forensic science in Pakistan and extend support to other laboratories and relevant government institutions.

He said online fraud, data leaks and cybercrimes were emerging challenges in the digital age, making continuous training of investigators, prosecutors and forensic experts essential.

Senator Tarar said legislation would be introduced to address legal gaps in the forensic system and overcome the lack of institutional coordination.

He added that memoranda of understanding with relevant institutions would further strengthen coordination among forensic services, investigation and prosecution.



QUETTA: UNICEF Balochistan's Chief of Field Office Fitsum Assefa called on Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Pakistan making sustained efforts to promote regional peace: Musadik

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to promoting regional and global peace, saying the country would continue to contribute to international stability amid changing geopolitical circumstances.

Addressing a reception marking the Czech National Day and Czech Armed Forces Day here Tuesday, the minister said Pakistan had made sustained efforts to promote regional peace and remained committed to contributing to stability across the world.

Referring to the defence-industrial and logistics cooperation agreement signed between Pakistan and the Czech Republic in 2021, he said Pakistan would seek to utilize the existing framework to contribute to global stability and promote peace and hope for younger generations.

"While the world has been talking about net security provider, Pakistan has taken upon herself to become the net peace provider," he said.

Musadik Malik said Pakistan's prime minister and field marshal were committed to promoting peace and that the country would continue its efforts to advance regional and global stability.

Highlighting the longstanding relations between Pakistan and the Czech Republic, he said that bilateral ties predated Pakistan's independence and encompassed commercial, technological, educational and defence cooperation. Citing Bata's presence in Pakistan and the establishment of Batapur as examples of longstanding commercial ties, the minister said the company remained widely recognized across the country.



ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA: Federal Minister for Planning & Development Ahsan Iqbal in a group photo with participating ministers and delegates at the 25th Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Ministerial Conference

Anti-terror operations to continue with full force till eradication of terrorism: President Zardari

Praises security forces for anti-terror operations in KP and Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday paid rich tribute to the security forces and law enforcement agencies for successful operations against terrorists in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and for thwarting their nefarious designs through an effective strategy. The president, in a statement, said that the entire nation was proud of the courage of the security forces and law enforcement personnel, emphasising that anti-terror operations would continue with full force till the eradication of terrorism. He highlighted that Pakistan had sacrificed thousands of its brave sons and daughters in the war against terrorism and for the establishment of global peace. The president said that the Pakistani nation and its valiant armed forces were capable and resolved to foil the designs of the enemies of peace and stability in Pakistan, the region, and the world.

Safe public transport essential for women's economic independence: Dr Rubaba

Says Jinnah People's Metro Service marks new era in Quetta's public transport

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Advisor to the Chief Minister of Balochistan for the Women Development Department, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, has termed the launch of the Jinnah People's Metro Train Service an important step towards providing modern, safe and reliable transportation facilities to citizens, particularly women. Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said that access to safe and dignified public transport for women helps expand their opportunities to participate in education, employment, business and other economic and social activities. She said the Jinnah People's Metro Train Service would provide women with a more organized and convenient means of travelling to different parts of the city. She added that affordable and quality public transport not only facilitates citizens in their daily commute but also helps reduce travel time and transportation costs. Improved mobility for women is also important for enhancing their economic independence and effective participation in social activities. The Advisor for Women Development expressed satisfaction over the provision of free travel facilities for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, describing it as a welcome initiative. She said free transportation for these segments of society would improve their mobility and facilitate their access to essential services. Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi emphasized that addressing the needs of women, senior citizens and persons with disabilities in urban transport projects is essential for inclusive and people-centered urban development. She said the Jinnah People's Metro Train Service would not only provide citizens with improved transportation facilities but would also contribute to strengthening Quetta's public transport system.

Dar reviews foreign policy outlook, ongoing diplomatic engagements

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister (DPM/ FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday chaired a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to review Pakistan's foreign policy outlook and ongoing diplomatic engagements.

Discussions focused on evolving regional dynamics and the diplomatic engagements ahead, a DPM's Office news release said.

The DPM/FM provided guidance on the course forward and underscored the need for close coordination and timely follow-through.

Acting Foreign Secretary Ambassador Khalil Hashmi and senior officials of the Ministry attended the meeting.



CHAMAN: Balochistan Assembly Speaker Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai inaugurates development work at Eidgah Ground .

Pak, Sri Lanka vows to enhance cooperation in IT sector

ISLAMABAD, (APP): High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan Rear Admiral Fred Seneviratne (R) Tuesday called on Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja .

During the meeting, both sides reaffirmed the longstanding and time-tested bonds of friendship between the two countries and expressed their shared commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation in information technology and telecommunications. Both sides delved upon opportunities for greater engagement between the technology sectors of Pakistan and Srilanka, including joint ventures and partnerships between technology companies, with a view to building scale and exploring opportunities in international markets. The discussions covered a broad range of areas, including Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity, IT and IT-enabled services, digital transformation, FinTech, startups and digital skills development. Strengthening institutional linkages between IT sectors of both countries.



SOHBATPUR: Deputy Commissioner Fareeda Tareen reviews the construction work at under-construction Rescue 1122 Center.

Balochistan government intensifies welfare measures for deserving, vulnerable people

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Director General Social Welfare Balochistan Mir Saifullah Khan Khetran has said that, on the directives of Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, the Social Welfare Department is taking effective measures for the welfare of vulnerable, deserving, and special persons in society, to make them active members of society, and to protect their rights.

He said this while speaking to the state-run news agency APP. DG Mir Saifullah Khetran said that, along with further organizing and improving the effectiveness of social welfare programmes in the province, special attention is being given to ensuring access to government facilities for deserving people.

He said that the basic objective of the Social Welfare Department is to provide facilities to deprived and vulnerable segments of society, address their difficulties, and provide them with opportunities to lead dignified lives. In this regard, various welfare measures are underway for persons with disabilities, women, children, senior citizens, orphans, and other deserving segments.

Mir Saifullah Khan Khetran said that the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and providing them with a respectable position in society are among the important priorities of the Social Welfare Department. Various programmes are being worked on to provide persons with disabilities with assistive devices, rehabilitation, education, and access to employment opportunities so that they can utilize their abilities and lead self-sufficient lives.

He said that the Social Welfare Department, in cooperation with relevant institutions, is also taking measures to eliminate begging from society and rehabilitate beggars.

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