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President, PM form committee to initiate talks with PTI leadership

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): The government on Thursday formed a committee to hold talks with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership on the current political situation in the country.

The development comes amid continued tensions following PTI's announcement of an Islamabad march. Although the protest was postponed from September 27 to October 4, the standoff between the federal and provincial governments remains unresolved.

The decision was taken during a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at Aiwan-e-Sadr, according to a statement issued by the President House.

The meeting decided that a joint delegation comprising representatives of the federal government and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) would meet the PTI leadership the following day to discuss the current political situation.

The delegation will comprise Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah and Amir Muqam from the federal government. At the same time, Sherry Rehman, Syed Naveed Qamar and Ejaz Jakhrani will represent the PPP.

The president and prime minister also discussed the country's overall political and security situation during the meeting.

The meeting expressed concern over the security situation in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and reviewed the country's overall security situation.

President Zardari and PM Shehbaz stressed the need to further strengthen the national resolve against terrorism and ensure effective coordination among all relevant institutions for peace and stability in the country.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Law and Justice Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, Rana Sanaullah, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan, PM's Adviser Dr Tauqir Shah, PPP Senators Sherry Rehman and Saleem Mandviwalla, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon and provincial minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah.

PTI confirms Friday meeting with govt

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan also confirmed the development, saying the party had accepted the government's request for a meeting on Friday.

In a post on X, he said the PTI chairman had received a message from the government on Wednesday requesting a meeting, which he had accepted in light of the decision to be taken at Thursday's opposition meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif holds a meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.



QUETTA: A delegation of tribal elders called on Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

Security forces kill six terrorists in Kachhi district

QUETTA, (APP): Security forces killed six terrorists belonging to Fitna al Hindustan in an intelligence-based operation in Sanni area of Kachhi district, Balochistan.

Security sources said, the terrorists were successfully targeted by using quadcopters. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was also recovered from the killed terrorists. They said that a clearness operation is continued in the area to eliminate any possible remaining terrorists. Under the Azm-e-Istehkam Vision, security forces remain determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from across the country.

Balochistan govt taking practical steps for welfare of people: CM Bugti

Says govt is taking measures to restore public confidence in govt hospitals through reforms in health sector

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochsitan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday that providing quality medical facilities to the people of Balochistan is among the government's top priorities.

He said that positive results from ongoing health sector reforms and improvements in medical facilities at government hospitals in Balochistan are becoming evident, ordinary citizens and Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) alike are now seeking treatment at these public hospitals.

A successful angioplasty was performed on Mir Rahmat Saleh Baloch—an MPA and former Provincial Health Minister at the Cardiology Department of Civil Sandeman Provincial Hospital, Quetta.

Expressing satisfaction with the medical facilities provided at the hospital, Mir Rahmat Saleh Baloch noted that the availability of quality healthcare is sparing the people of Balochistan the hardship and extra expense of traveling to other cities for treatment. Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, accompanied by National Party chief Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch visited Civil Sandman Provincial Hospital to inquire after the health of the hospitalized MPA, Mir Rahmat Saleh Baloch. The Chief Minister also consulted the doctors regarding Mir Rahmat Saleh Baloch's condition.

On this occasion, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti stated that providing quality medical facilities to the people of Balochistan is among the government's top priorities.

Writing on the social media platform X, the Chief Minister said that the primary objective of the ongoing health sector reforms is to relieve the province's residents of the need to travel to other cities for medical treatment.

Indian claims of killing Pakistani SSG officer in operation debunked as he appears alongside DG ISPR

RAWALPINDI, (APP): Director General (DG) Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, while reiterating that there would be no compromise on the protection of the country's geographical borders and national security, on Thursday categorically said that the Pakistan Armed Forces were fully prepared to promptly respond to any move by India. Addressing a press conference here, the DG ISPR said that Pakistan was ready to counter any Indian "drama" and would do whatever was necessary for the security of the country. He said that Pakistan would deliver a "very painful" response if New Delhi chose to create any "drama". Exposing another Indian false flag operation, he presented retired Special Services Group (SSG) Havaldar, Muhammad Asif before the media, after Indian authorities claimed that a senior Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Asif alias Musa had been killed during an operation in the Korag area of IIOJK. The Indian authorities had identified Muhammad Asif as a militant killed during an operation on September 29, he clarified, questioning why India had presented a living Pakistani citizen as a militant killed in Kashmir.

Muhammad Asif, who appeared before journalists during the press conference, said he was at home when he learned through calls and media reports that he had been reported killed by the Indian Army. Asif said he began receiving calls after reports about his death emerged and was told that the Indian Army had claimed he had been killed.

Sharing further details, Asif said that he joined the Pakistan Army in 2000.

Senior citizens valuable asset of our society: Governor

KARACHI, (VoM Report): In his message on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail said that senior citizens are a valuable asset of our society and custodians of our collective wisdom, experience and cultural heritage.

He said that their lifelong hard work, insight and experiences are an important source of intellectual guidance for coming generations.

He said that a civilized and developed society does not consider its elderly a burden; rather, it respects their dignity, rights and needs and makes them an active and valued part of society. Our national values and traditions also teach respect, service and care for the elderly.

Generally, in the later stages of life, or after retirement, senior citizens should not have to face financial insecurity, health problems and social isolation. Ensuring quality healthcare facilities, social protection, a dignified life and equal access to basic services for them is the shared responsibility of the government, society and every individual.

Programs should be organized at educational institutions, community centers and various social platforms where senior citizens can share their experiences, knowledge and insights into life with the younger generation. In this way, bonds between generations will be strengthened and the valuable experience of older people will be passed on to future generations.

Young people should learn from the experiences and observations of their elders, spend time with them and consider respecting and honoring them their social responsibility.



RAWALPINDI: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director-General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry presents Muhammad Asif — a retired Pakistani Army soldier — before the media during a press conference.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary for Population Welfare Agha Umar Ahmadzai called on Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani.

DPM underscores need to strengthen Pakistan's resilience against natural disasters

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister (DPM/ FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday called for the effective use of artificial intelligence and digital technologies to shift the focus from reactive response to early warning and preparedness.

The deputy prime minister issued these directions amid chairing a high-level meeting on the Establishment of the Joint Pak Global Tech Facility at the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), a DPM's Office news release said.

The Chairman NDMA briefed the meeting on NEOC's role in disaster monitoring, early warning, preparedness and coordinated response. He also outlined NDMA's Next Generation Technology project and plans to establish the Global Resilience Hub for international cooperation in proactive disaster management.

Syedaal calls for responsible, fact-based journalism

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar held a meeting with a delegation of senior journalists associated with various television channels, print and electronic media outlets at Parliament House, Islamabad.

The meeting provided an opportunity for a detailed exchange of views on issues confronting the journalist community, the prevailing political situation in the country, and the role and responsibilities of the media. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar said that the government was taking all possible measures to address issues faced by the people, while practical efforts were continuing at various levels to provide relief to the public.

He said efforts were also underway at the government level to address the issues faced by the journalist community.

He added that Parliament had also undertaken legislation concerning journalists and media-related matters. The Deputy Chairman emphasized that journalism constitutes an important pillar of the state, while journalists serve as a vital bridge between the people and the government. He said the media plays a significant role in informing the public about government initiatives, public welfare programmes and measures being undertaken for the country's future. Syedaal Khan Nasar observed that, alongside traditional media, social media had assumed unprecedented importance in the present era. He stressed that all segments of society must play their respective roles for the country's progress, development and prosperity.

The Deputy Chairman urged journalists to ensure the dissemination of verified and fact-based news and to refrain from promoting false propaganda, unverified information or content contrary to facts against any individual or institution. He said that while social media offered numerous benefits, its irresponsible use could also have negative consequences.

Every individual, he added, had a responsibility to avoid sharing or disseminating content that could undermine the dignity, honour or reputation of any person.

BHC Orders action against unauthorized occupants in educational institutions, offices

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A two-member bench headed by the Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court has directed the Balochistan Education Department to submit a comprehensive report regarding unauthorized occupants present in the relevant offices and educational institutions in the name of unions and associations.

The two-member bench comprising Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Muhammad Kamran Khan Malakhail, and Mr. Justice Najmuddin Mengal heard a contempt petition concerning Imran Hussaini versus Secretary Education (Schools), Balochistan and others.

During the hearing, Additional Advocate General Balochistan Zahoor Ahmed Baloch informed the court that all unauthorized occupants present in the Directorate of Education (Schools), Quetta, in the name of unions and associations had been evicted and that no unauthorized person was currently occupying any part of the said premises.

The petitioner's counsel disagreed with the government's position and requested the court that photographic evidence also be submitted along with the report in this regard. The court consequently directed both parties to submit reports of a similar nature.

The honorable court directed the Director of Schools Education Balochistan, under the direct supervision of the Secretary Education (Schools), to submit a comprehensive report regarding all unauthorized occupants present in the name of unions and associations in all district education offices and educational institutions across Balochistan.

The honorable court further ordered that if any unnecessary or unjustified resistance was encountered during implementation of the court's order, the concerned Deputy Commissioner should be contacted, who would be bound to provide all necessary assistance for implementation of the court order.

The honorable court also directed that a copy of the order be sent to the Additional Advocate General's Office for information and compliance.

Timely, effective implementation of govt orders fundamental indicator of good governance: Chief Secretary

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A high-level meeting of the provincial administrative secretaries was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary Balochistan, in which administrative, financial, developmental and public-service-related affairs of the provincial government were reviewed in detail.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Member Board of Revenue, Chairman CMIT, Additional Chief Secretary Development and Planning, Secretary Finance and other administrative secretaries.

At the outset of the meeting, progress on instructions issued to various departments and the status of implementation of government decisions were reviewed. On the occasion, the Chief Secretary directed that timely and effective implementation of government orders is a fundamental indicator of good governance.



French student protesters burn trash bins and bicycles during clashes with French riot police (CRS) in Aubervilliers, near Paris, France

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Friday October 02, 2026

Return to talks

The Islamabad MoU, and the broader US-Iran ceasefire this document is supposed to underpin, is unravelling before our eyes. Following a recent escalation, Washington and Tehran have been trading fire across the Gulf, with each round more intense than the last. The US has struck locations in Iran, while Tehran has responded in kind by hitting targets in the GCC states allied with the US, as well as in Iraq, Jordan and Syria. Both sides have hit civilian sites, including water plants. The immediate trigger for hostilities was Iran's demand that only its 'approved' route be used for transit of the Strait of Hormuz. Its attacks on ships using 'unauthorised' routes invited an American military response. Apparently, both sides were reading the MoU's clause regarding the vital strait differently. Yet beyond Hormuz, Israel's attacks in Lebanon have also put great strain on the MoU. As of Saturday, the MoU seemed all but dead, as Iran's deputy foreign minister has said his country is "no longer implementing" its commitments as per the document. The threat of the war restarting and the conflict expanding is very real. The US attacks have failed to deter the Iranians while there is talk of a possible American ground invasion. This idea must be dropped immediately, as it would prove to be an unmitigated disaster, and torpedo any chance of peace, however remote, that exists today.

Furthermore, Yemen's pro-Iran Houthis have threatened to close the Bab al-Mandeb strait another key chokepoint for global trade in case the conflict expands. The effect this would have on the global economy would be brutal. Therefore, to prevent further bloodshed and a new global economic shockwave, all regional states and members of the international community should redouble their efforts to revive the ceasefire. The Pakistani and Chinese foreign ministers have called for an immediate return to dialogue. There is great wisdom in their words. Other states, such as Egypt and Turkiye, as well as Qatar, should also try and bring the belligerents back to the table. This entirely preventable war is the result of hubris and arrogance; it was launched by the US and Israel, who thought they could knock out the Iranian system in a few days or weeks. Clearly, their assumptions were delusional. The US particularly finds itself in a quagmire, standing at the precipice of another 'forever war' as midterms loom in November. It has few good options before it. Rather than sink deeper in the Iranian quicksand, the US should halt hostilities immediately. Iran, too, must silence its guns. It is time the US realised that Iran sees the conflict as an 'existential war', as its parliament Speaker has observed.

The only way to prevent a catastrophic regional conflagration is for both to return to the negotiating table.

Charging for Hormuz

Sikander Ahmed ShahSana Afraz

Iran is seeking to recalibrate its control over the Strait of Hormuz by regulating maritime traffic and establishing a 'smart management' system that includes passage fees for vessels traversing the strait. The principal treaty governing these matters is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which establishes the legal framework applicable to passage through international straits. It recognises two principal regimes: innocent passage and transit passage.

Under UNCLOS, innocent passage is defined as passage that is "not prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of the coastal State". Activities that render passage non-innocent, expressly include any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence of the coastal state, or in any other manner in violation of the principles of international law embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. Nevertheless, warships enjoy a customary right to innocent passage through straits used in international navigation in times of peace as recognised in the ICJ Corfu Channel case.

Innocent passage is more restrictive of the two regimes and applies within a coastal state's territorial sea. Ships of all states enjoy the right to innocent passage through territorial seas and such passage must be continuous and expeditious. Under Article 25(3), a coastal state may temporarily suspend innocent passage in specified areas of its territorial sea, without discrimination, where necessary for its security and after due publication.

Article 45 of UNCLOS applies to straits that connect a part of the high seas or an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with the territorial sea of another state, thereby extending the innocent -passage regime to such straits used for international navigation. Iran would argue that the Strait of Hormuz falls within this special category of straits, much like the Straits of Tiran. This could, in turn, allow Iran to argue that, in specified areas of its territorial sea rather than throughout the entire strait, and upon giving due notice, it may temporarily suspend the innocent passage of foreign ships, without discrimination in form or fact, where such suspension is essential to protect its security.

Under Article 37 of UNCLOS, the transit-passage regime applies to straits used for international navigation between one part of the high seas or an EEZ and another part of the high seas or an EEZ. It grants broader rights than innocent passage: submarines may transit while submerged, aircraft enjoy a right of overflight, and passage may not be suspended by the coastal state.

Iran signed UNCLOS in 1982 but never ratified it. Under Article 34 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a treaty does not, of itself, create obligations for a state that is not a party to it. As per this view, the legal basis for subjecting Iran to the transit-passage regime established under a treaty it has not ratified is questionable, unless it can be shown that the regime exists as a rule of customary international law — a proposition that, in this case, is not fully established. The US, however, maintains that the right of transit passage is part of customary international law, even though it has not ratified UNCLOS.

In 1959, Iran extended its territorial sea to 12 nautical miles, citing security concerns over Hormuz. Upon signing UNCLOS in 1982, it declared that transit passage was not part of customary international law but was, instead, a treaty compromise binding only on state parties.

Iran has maintained this position in its domestic law despite the Revolution. The 1964 Maritime Code, a 1981 decree left un-amended after the conclusion of UNCLOS, the 1993 Act on Marine Areas — which requires prior authorisation for numerous categories of vessels, including warships — and the 2012 amendments, all treat Hormuz as subject only to innocent passage.

Assuming arguendo that the right of transit passage applies, Iran would nevertheless maintain that passage through its territorial sea within the Strait of Hormuz remains governed by the innocent-passage regime, with the right to temporarily suspend for security reasons, particularly against belligerent states such as the US and its allies.

However, the innocent-passage regime prohibits imposing a fee merely for the right of passage. Consequently, any charge imposed solely for passage, or applied discriminatorily, would be legally questionable. Articles 16(4) and 18 of the 1958 Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone prohibit charges for mere innocent passage through straits. Although Iran and the US are not parties to UNCLOS, it is worth noting that Article 26 of the Convention permits charges only for specific services actually rendered to a foreign vessel during innocent passage and requires that such charges be imposed without discrimination.

Iran's newly formalised Persian Gulf Strait Authority requires vessels to obtain transit authorisation, submit cargo details and pay fees before entering the Strait of Hormuz. This policy, however, is strongly disputed internationally. Although Iran's sovereignty supports the exercise of administrative, environmental and customs jurisdiction, international law strictly limits passage fees to reimbursement for specific services actually rendered.

To justify its tolls, Iran points to Turkiye's fee system under the 1936 Montreux Convention and Egypt's Suez Canal tolls. Unlike the Bosphorus, however, Hormuz is not governed by an existing multilateral treaty legitimising such fees, and, unlike the Suez Canal, Iran has not demonstrated that it provides dedicated services or maintenance for the strait.

If Iran is able — with or without Oman — to conclude an internationally recognised multilateral treaty, attracting a sufficient number of consenting states, that treaty could provide a legal basis for passage tolls, even if opposed by states such as the US. Without such a widely ratified treaty, Iran may struggle to justify a toll system legally, particularly one that is not linked to services actually provided and that accords preferential treatment to certain states.

The bottom line

Zarrar Khuhro

As there is no realistic scenario in which the Houthis would enforce a naval blockade of Saudi Arabia, and then launch attacks on its facilities without the approval — or on the instructions — of Tehran, we need to ask why a besieged Iran has taken the risk of provoking Saudi Arabia, which has thus far avoided direct participation in the war despite massive pressure from the US. Saudi Arabia's chequered and violent history with Yemen and its armed factions notwithstanding, this blockade is a tool used by Iran to swing outcomes in its favour.

The strategy is simple: Iran wants the clock to run down on global oil supplies while ensuring that the world feels the pain as prices rise. Saudi Arabia is not only the world's largest crude oil producer but also the one country with enough spare capacity to stabilise energy markets. By attacking Saudi tankers trying to transit Bab-El-Mandeb, the Houthis force them to take the circuitous route through the Suez to Asian markets, easily doubling the fuel cost.

Thus far two tankers — one bound for India, the other for China — have been forced to turn back but two Chinese supertankers were allowed to pass, showing that the blockade is selective. The threat to Saudi Arabia has rung alarm bells in Pakistan. The Foreign Office warned that Pakistan will "take all necessary measures, including lawful use of force, in the exercise of self-defence to protect its maritime assets and national interests". The bottom line is clear: Saudi Arabia is Pakistan's red line but oil is Pakistan's lifeline.

Saudi Arabia — barring one spat over Pakistan's (wise) refusal in 2016 to join the Saudi-led military intervention — plays a major role in keeping Pakistan running through rollovers and oil facilities. During this war, it ensured that oil supplies reached Pakistan from its western port of Yanbu thus preventing a serious fuel crisis. However, that port is now under threat of blockade and even attack which creates an intolerable and possibly existential crisis for Pakistan.

Now, with outright Houthis attacks on Saudi facilities, there is the Pak-Saudi defence pact to consider: were Islamabad to refuse a call for action it would not only seriously damage our relations with a critical ally but also regional and, in fact, global credibility. While outright entanglement has been avoided thus far, a direct attack on Saudi soil would naturally change the calculus rapidly and the result would be in no one's interests, certainly not Iran's.

Much has been written about America's obvious lack of planning and foresight, and about the odious behaviour of its leadership, but this should not be taken as proof that Iran's leadership — whoever is calling the shots at this time — is making the correct calculation. Yes, they acquitted themselves better than expected in the first round of conflict and yes, in the short term the squeeze on Riyadh will hasten the global energy crisis Iran desires, but at what cost? If Pakistan's oil lifeline or treaty ally is threatened, what will that mean for Iran in coming months and years, with yet another neighbour not exactly looking at it favourably?

The actions against Saudi Arabia come despite a China-brokered pre-war improvement in Iran-Saudi ties over the past few years, which had raised the tempting prospect of a post-war scenario in which Riyadh and Tehran could come to terms. The current confrontation makes that scenario less likely with every passing day. Indeed, it makes a Saudi-UAE rapprochement all the more likely, which would also be to Iran's detriment.

The irony is that the war provided a historic opportunity for Iran to drive a wedge between the US and its Gulf allies, who were clearly fuming at the US turning them into a target and then refusing to defend them. And while it is a reality that US bases in those countries serve as launching pads for American aggre-ssion, Iran's current strategy runs the risk of (a) forcing those countries into a deeper US embrace out of necessity, and (b) working to increase their own defensive and offensive capabilities and entering into regional alliances that exclude, and are aimed at containing, Iran. Is that a desirable outcome for Tehran? Would a carrot have been preferable to the stick?

There's a degree of selectivity when it comes to Iran's acquiescence in the Saudi blockade and the latest attacks on Gulf states as well, given that the UAE is and has been an active partner of Israel and in favour of the war on Iran but has been spared in the latest round of hostilities. Does this mean that the reports of a UAE payoff to Iran are true? Perhaps. Either way it points to a pragmatism that belies the rhetoric emanating from Iran.

And so, we must and should ask where that pragmatism is when it comes to Saudi Arabia and, by extension, Pakistan?

Healing touch needed

Tariq Khosa

Since early this month, Balochistan has been reeling from a series of dastardly terror attacks. The nexus of ideologically different banned terrorist groups — the religiously motivated extremists of the TTP and BLA terrorists — poses a grave challenge. The current spate of violence started on July 5, when terrorists managed to reach the fertile Shaban area next to Hanna-Urak in the suburbs of Quetta cantonment, and then launched another attack the next day on the Mangi Dam Ziarat police post at the pumping station. Despite a valiant fight put up by a DSP and 40 policemen, the terrorists, who had attacked in a large numbers, kidnapped and killed 27 ammunition-deficient law-enforcement personnel. Timely reinforcements by the police and FC could have prevented this tragedy.

Meanwhile, an FC convoy was attacked near Khad Kucha, district Mastung, resulting in casualties. In addition, a military contingent in unmarked vehicles was attacked at Bela-Vinder by the BLA's Majeed Brigade, resulting in casualties in double figures. Clashes in the mineral-rich district of Chagai were also reported, while a suicide attack took place in Khuzdar in which a tribal political leader involved in internecine strife lost 17 of his kinsmen to five attackers who rammed their explosive-laden vehicle into the gate of the fortified compound in Wadh. A three-hour gun battle left 30 injured. In the latest high-profile incident on Thursday, a sessions judge and his guard were killed on the road by assailants.

Since July 5, there have been more than 40 police, military, FC and civilian casualties, while a total of 121 terrorists have been eliminated. The operation is to continue "until the last terrorist is neutralised" say the state authorities. The government has agreed to constitute a judicial commission to probe the Urak violence and Mangi Dam tragedy. Hopefully, a judge of the high court will probe what led to the violence, in which there were four casualties among the local land owners in the agriculturally rich Shaban area around Killi Babri. The question is, how did the armed terrorist groups get involved? Similarly, Mangi is a project of national interest. It will supply fresh water to Quetta and its cantonment and reduce water shortage by around 20 per cent when operational. FC is deployed at the main dam and other ancillary sites. How come the pumping station post which was recently taken over from the defunct levies, was not being jointly manned by the FC and police, especially in light of the threat alerts issued? The most significant concern is the large number of TTP terrorists who have become active in the vast terrain joining Quetta's suburbs to the mountainous region linking the northern parts of Balochistan with KP.

During the 1980s, under martial law, Gen Ziaul Haq focused on reconciliation and good governance. The best police and civil administration officers were posted to focus on the administration of justice and service delivery. On promotion as SP and on top of my batch, I was allocated to Balochistan where for the next four years I served as additional SP Quetta, district SP Sibi in charge of the Kachi and Sibi districts and Dera Bugti and Kohlu agencies, and finally as SSP Quetta. We respected the citizens who reciprocated the sentiment. The military, police and civil administration worked for the welfare and progress of the province. Roads were safe for travel. Next, I had the honour of serving as IG Balochistan in 2007 under Gen Musharraf's military hybrid rule. The entire province was converted into a police jurisdiction replacing the ragtag levies model of rural policing. The issue of missing persons and enforced disappearances became a festering wound in the Baloch psyche. The killing of Nawab Bugti in a cave near Kohlu sparked intense violence.

After the 2008 elections, the PPP-led federal and provincial governments were unable to stop the kill-and-dump strategy. Mass graves were discovered. Human rights violations multiplied. The conversion to police jurisdiction was reversed. Following the 2013 polls, the PML-N-led government adopted a carrot-and-stick approach to the violence. The first-ever non-sardar chief minister genuinely worked for political reconciliation and met the BLA and BRA leaders in London and Geneva. His efforts were scuttled in 2015. The PTI-led government in 2018 could not change the tough security stance vis-à-vis Balochistan. Since the controversial 2024 elections, the PML-N-led federal and PPP-led provincial governments have actively supported this hard security-stance, with male and female Baloch activists convicted under draconian laws. The roads are unsafe. Trade and business are in decline. Fear rules and violence is widespread. Miscreants are active in the following districts: Turbat, Kalat, Khuzdar, Nushki, Surab, Gwadar, Mastung, Panjgur, Awaran, Kachi/Bolan, Kharan, Chaghi, Kohlu, and Washuk. That's a huge swathe of land.

Police have been facing a massive challenge since the recent conversion of the entire province to police jurisdiction. The experienced CT-related, KP battle-hardened police chief of Balochistan needs full support from the federal and provincial governments in terms of human resources, infrastructure and equipment. The Zia-era model of good governance is worth consideration: give him the best officers in the ranks of SP and SSP to serve for a fixed tenure of three years. The prime minister must review his decision to depute about 20 serving military officers as district SPs in the insurgency-infested areas. This militarisation of police will be a fiasco.

Balochistan suffers from many missed opportunities and unfulfilled promises. Addressing the crisis effectively requires a two-pronged strategy: decisively eliminating the terrorist threat while proactively addressing the grievances of the local population. As this paper rightly observed, "The long-term solution to Balochistan's problem remains the political path." The need for a serious political strategy cannot be ignored anymore.

Fifty people killed, 700,000 displaced by floods after monsoon rains in India

Monitoring Desk

GUWAHATI: Flooding in India's northeastern Assam state has killed at least 50 people and displaced 700,000 after days of heavy monsoon rain that overflowed the Brahmaputra River, officials said.

The river, one of Asia's largest that originates in China's Tibet region and flows about 900 kilometers (560 miles) through Assam, flooded villages, swept away homes and forced nearly 300,000 people into government-run relief camps, officials said.

Authorities provided food and relief supplies to flood victims including airdrops from helicopters, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Nearly 900 villages were submerged and more than 7,000 homes were without electricity, he said.

Police, disaster response teams and local volunteers were working to rescue stranded residents and deliver essential supplies to flood-hit communities, officials said.

Jatin Gogoi, a 52-year-old farmer from Nazira, said the rising waters swept away his bamboo-walled home and destroyed his livelihood.

"I lost all my cattle. My five-member family and I have nowhere to go, so we are taking shelter in a relative's home," he said over the phone.

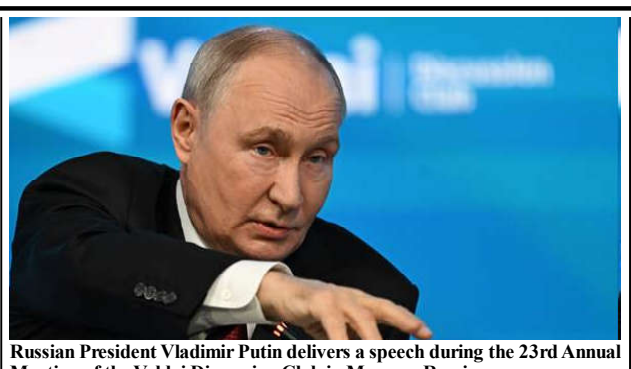
Flooding on Thursday evening disrupted parts of Guwahati, Assam's capital with about 2 million residents, as submerged roads left commuters stranded for hours.

"I had to stay overnight at my office. The roads were filled with water, some waist deep," said Sudip Mazumdar, a journalist in Guwahati.

Experts say human-caused climate change is intensifying South Asia's monsoons, which traditionally run from June to September and again from October to December. The rains, once predictable, now arrive in erratic bursts that dump extreme amounts of water in short periods, followed by dry spells.



People walk through stalls during the second day of the TEKNOFEST aviation, space, and technology festival at Sanliurfa GAP Airport in Sanliurfa, Turkiye



Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech during the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in Moscow, Russia

Trump's new wave of tariffs triggers global backlash

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is moving ahead with sweeping new tariffs on dozens of America's trading partners, escalating global trade tensions just as a temporary set of stopgap levies expires.

The Trump administration announced on Thursday it will impose tariffs ranging from 10 to 12.5 per cent on imports from 60 countries, covering roughly 99 per cent of US imports. The move comes after a legal setback earlier this year, when the US Supreme Court struck down some of Trump's most ambitious tariff measures.

The new duties will take effect at 12:01 am Friday in Washington, DC (04:01 GMT), coinciding with the expiration of temporary 10 per cent tariffs that had been introduced as an interim measure following the court ruling. Washington has justified the fresh tariffs by accusing trading partners of failing to adequately enforce bans on goods produced through forced labour. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer defended the decision, saying the move was long overdue.

"The United States has had a forced labour import ban for nearly a century, and rigorously enforces it; it's well past time for our trading partners to do the same," Greer said in a statement on Thursday. "Today's action will begin to correct what is both a human rights abuse and a distortive trade practice to improve the welfare of workers everywhere."

However, the announcement has triggered sharp criticism from governments across the globe, with many rejecting both the legal and moral basis of the tariffs.

European officials were quick to challenge Washington's justification. Kaja Kallas, Vice President of the European Commission, questioned the premise of the move, highlighting the bloc's labour protections.

'Source of any aggression' against Iran legitimate target: FM Araghchi

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Speaking at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran reserved the right to retaliate against any acts of aggression, according to Mehr news agency.

Araghchi stated that Iran has shown it is not an initiator of any war and that regional security depended on not using double standards.

He said that the origin of any act of aggression against Iran amounted to a legitimate target for the Iranian armed forces, underlining that Iran reserved the right to retaliate against any acts of aggression against it.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with international law, reserves its right to take all necessary measures within the framework of legitimate defence and will consider the source of any aggression against the Iranian nation as a legitimate target for defensive actions by its Armed Forces," he said.

Araghchi said Iran had exercised its inherent right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter following military aggression by the United States and the Israeli regime, adding that Tehran has not been the initiator of any war, as per Mehr.

The Iranian foreign minister condemned the US and the Zionist regime for launching repeated attacks against Iran, saying those actions have targeted not only Iran's national security but also principles of the international legal order. Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said Israel was "the number one enemy of all Islamic countries", state-run IRNA reports.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Ali Falih Kadhim al-Zaidi, the prime minister of Iraq, in Tehran on Friday.

Ghalibaf added that cooperation between Iran and Iraq to preserve the unity of Islamic nations against the Zionist regime was "certainly effective".



Turkiye's Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahceli (R) presents red and white roses to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Bangladesh's President Shahabuddin, 76, resigns citing health concerns

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin, a former ally of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has resigned citing serious health issues, his office said today.

Shahabuddin, 76, has held the largely ceremonial post of president since April 2023, a period that included volatile months after Hasina's flight to India following a student-led uprising against her rule in 2024.

"Recent medical examinations have diagnosed me with a condition known as Autonomic Neuropathy. Due to this condition, I occasionally experience momentary loss of consciousness," Shahabuddin said in a statement released by his press secretary.

The resignation of Shahabuddin would leave Hasina with no allies in high office five months before her planned return. Her Awami League party is banned, and many of its leaders and activists have jailed or gone into hiding since a deadly student-led uprising toppled her government in 2024.

The speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, the national parliament, will perform the duties of the president until a new one is elected, the statement said.

As head of state, Shahabuddin is commander-in-chief of the armed forces, but executive power rests with the prime minister and cabinet of the mainly Muslim country of 173 million people.

Reuters reported on Thursday that Shahabuddin, a former ally of ousted premier Sheikh Hasina, would resign on Friday. Last November, Bangladesh's war crimes court sentenced Hasina to death in absentia for ordering a crackdown on the uprising which.

Philippines says ship hit by Chinese water cannon at disputed reef

Monitoring Desk

MANILA: The Philippines accused China's coast guard of blasting a Filipino government vessel with a water cannon near a disputed South China Sea reef, the third confrontation between the two sides this week.

The incident at Scarborough Shoal, which took place during an attempt to resupply Filipino fishermen, came as top diplomats wrapped up a Southeast Asian regional forum in Manila.

Beijing claims most of the South China Sea, including the flashpoint shoal, despite an international ruling that its assertion lacks any legal basis. The Philippine Coast Guard said Friday that the Chinese vessel conducted a "reckless" manoeuvre, coming within seven metres of the BRP Datu Paduhinog and hitting the ship with a water cannon blast.

Lavrov tells Rubio 'unacceptable' for US to continue arms sales to Kyiv

Monitoring Desk

PHILIPPINE: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned Washington against continuing arms sales to Kyiv during a meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in the Philippines on Thursday, the Kremlin said.

During the meeting, which took place on the sidelines of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) foreign ministers' summit, Lavrov told Rubio that it would be "unacceptable" for the US to continue arming Ukraine, according to a statement released by Russia's foreign ministry.

"Lavrov briefed his American counterpart on the actual situation along the front line and emphasised that it would be unacceptable to further arm the Kyiv regime," the statement reads.

Lavrov also "reaffirmed" Moscow's "readiness for a political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict," it said, adding that the two parties had also discussed the situation in the Persian Gulf, where the US remains locked in conflict with Iran.

Speaking to reporters after their meeting, Rubio said the pair had a "good," "frank" conversation, without going into further details.

Egypt receives €1.5bn loan as part of EU economic support

Monitoring Desk

EGYPT: The European Commission has disbursed €1.5 billion ($1.7 billion) in economic support to Egypt.

The payment is the second of three instalments of a €4bn loan, the European Commission said in a statement.

The fresh funds were subject to economic and democratic reforms requirements which, according to the commission, have been met.

Brussels and Cairo agreed on the loan in 2024 as part of a cooperation agreement between the EU and Egypt.



People visit cemeteries across Lviv to pay tribute to Ukrainian soldiers who lost their lives in the war with Russia, laying flowers, lighting memorial candles and praying for their souls on Defenders of Ukraine Day in Lviv, Ukraine

Iran keeps targeting U.S. bases as U.S. interceptor stockpiles dwindle

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iran claimed new drone strikes against U.S. military facilities in Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait, as explosions were heard near a military base hosting U.S. forces in northern Iraq and video showed dramatic drone interceptions.The attacks came hours after the U.S. military said it completed a 13th consecutive night of strikes on Iran aimed at halting attacks on ships in and around the Strait of Hormuz, which the Trump administration insists is open despite few ships risking passage.The pace at which the U.S. is using some of its most advanced missile interceptors and other weapons in the Middle East is unsustainable and has become a point of tension within the Trump administration, U.S. military and intelligence officials told CBS News Thursday.A spokesman for the Houthi rebels in Yemen said today that the Iranian-backed group was not seeking to block all traffic through the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait, just Saudi traffic. The group declared a maritime blockade earlier this week of Saudi Arabia, a long-time foe of both the Houthis and Iran.

"There is no closure of Bab el-Mandab as some are suggesting," said Mohammed Abdusalam, a top Houthi negotiator, in a post on X, adding that the group's actions - which have included attacking two vessels this week - were "limited to a maritime blockade that only affects the Saudi side."

Like the nearby Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el-Mandeb is a key transit point for global energy supply.

Talks with youth protest leaders

Indian govt seeks time on minister resignation demand

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Leaders of India's youth-led "cockroach" movement said today that the government has asked for time until Saturday afternoon to respond to their demand for the education minister's resignation, following talks between the two sides.

The talks came hours after activist Sonam Wangchuk ended his 26-day hunger strike, raising hopes that the two sides could reach a breakthrough after tens of thousands of angry youth converged in the capital , Delhi, to demand the minister's resignation over exam paper leaks.

The anti-government protests represent the biggest youth challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi since he came to power in 2014. Opposition parties have echoed the movement's demands and have disrupted the monsoon session of parliament that began this week.

The talks were the first substantive meeting between the two sides after a preliminary round held on Monday. The government was represented by senior federal ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh.

Nearly 3,000 confirmed infected with Ebola in Congo after data review

Monitoring Desk

CONGO: The number of people confirmed infected with Ebola in the Democratic of Congo was heading towards 3,000 Thursday after officials reviewed data in two of the worst-hit provinces and reported more than 300 new cases. The number of confirmed Ebola cases was 2,905, including 1,269 deaths, according to the daily from the central African country's public health institute. The number of confirmed deaths passed the 1,000 mark in figures announced late on Wednesday.

At least 11 killed in Russian strikes on Ukrainian cities

Monitoring Desk

KIEV: Six people died and dozens were injured in daytime missile strikes around Kiev on Friday, according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Glide bombs also killed at least five people in Sloviansk near the front lines in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, Zelensky posted on Telegram.

Authorities sounded a missile alert in the capital shortly before noon. Russia fired at least 10 ballistic missiles at the city, as well as Zircon guided missiles, the state news agency UNIAN reported.

Several explosions were heard over the city. According to Mayor Vitali Klitschko, ambulances were also deployed.

The surrounding area was hit even harder, with Zelensky citing rescue and recovery operations and posting photos of devastated residential blocks.

Russia has massively intensified its missile attacks on Kiev in recent weeks.

Iran repairing missile bases, sites bombed by US

Monitoring Desk

IRAN: "They refilled their stockpiles," WSJ quoted former IDF air defense chief Brig.-Gen. Ran Kochav as saying. "They have very impressive industrialization and reconstruction capabilities."

Iran has managed to rebuild infrastructure damaged in US and Israeli airstrikes faster than expected, the Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday, citing satellite imagery of several Iranian military sites.

In one instance, the Wall Street Journal noted that satellite imagery from Planet Labs in March showed two tunnel entrances to a reported Iranian missile base, and the adjoining access road that had been damaged by airstrikes near Kangavar in western Iran.

According to the Wall Street Journal, satellite imagery accessed through Airbus weeks later showed freshly excavated entrances and a paved road where the destruction had been.

In another case, the Wall Street Journal quoted an Israeli military official saying that Iran had succeeded in repairing a bridge that had been destroyed days prior.

Nigeria's president approves largest military expansion in recent times

Monitoring Desk

NIGERIA: Nigeria's president has approved the country's largest military expansion in recent times - an attempt to tackle the slew of security challenges plaguing the nation.

Bola Tinubu has greenlit the recruitment of 28,000 extra soldiers and the creation of four new army divisions, which will take the total number up to 12.

Nigeria's government is under intense pressure to curb the violence perpetrated by a variety of armed groups, including militant Islamists, separatists and gangs who kidnap civilians for ransom.

Over the past week, an armed gang killed at least 20 villagers in the north-western state of Zamfara and 46 students were abducted from a school in Borno state in the country's north-east.

The students were rescued by the army hours after they were taken and generally, the authorities appear to have made recent inroads in their fight against armed gangs. Despite this, the criminal groups have become more sophisticated and violence remains a defining aspect of life in Nigeria.



Fishermen and those working in the fishing industry in Thessaloniki, Greece, staged a demonstration along the city center's waterfront to protest rising operating costs and government policies affecting the sector.

'Extremely significant' bomb in car intercepted on way to NI, Irish police

Monitoring Desk

IRELAND: A car containing an "extremely significant" bomb has been intercepted in the Republic of Ireland as it was being driven across the border for an attack in Northern Ireland, gardaí (Irish police) have said.

The vehicle was stopped during an operation targeting dissident republican activities on Wednesday, but further details are just emerging. Two people were arrested.

Garda Commissioner Justin Kelly confirmed on Friday that officers found an explosive device.

Police sources in Northern Ireland believe the New IRA was likely behind the intended attack.

The vehicle was stopped on the N2 near Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, at about 15:00 on Wednesday.

A woman in her 20s, who was the driver of the vehicle.

Intel Criminal Court members gather to vote on dismissing prosecutor Khan

Monitoring Desk

NETHERLAND: International Criminal Court member states were meeting on Thursday to vote on whether to dismiss chief prosecutor Karim Khan for alleged sexual misconduct.

Khan, 56, denies any wrongdoing and his lawyers have the decision by the court's governing body that led to Friday's vote unlawful, procedurally unfair and unsupported by evidence. The comes amid renewed U.S. criticism of the war crimes court, which Washington sees as a threat to its sovereignty.

If ICC member states dismiss Khan, it will be seen by his supporters as the result of political pressure after the prosecutor sought arrest warrants for senior Israeli officials for alleged war crimes committed in Gaza. Israel denies war crimes, is not a member of the court and has dismissed the warrants as bogus.

Even if Khan survives the vote, his position would be weakened and it would give critics of the court — established in 2002 by the international community to prosecute war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity — another stick to beat it with.

CPEC flagship manifestation of enduring Pakistan-China partnership: Gilani

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Thursday extended his warmest felicitations to President Xi Jinping, the Chinese leadership and the people of the People's Republic of China on the occasion of China's National Day, conveying his best wishes for China's continued peace, prosperity, stability and development.

In his message, Chairman Gilani said that Pakistan and China's All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership represents one of the most enduring and time-tested relationships between two nations, built on mutual trust, mutual respect, shared aspirations and steadfast support for each other.

He said that over seven and a half decades, the friendship between Pakistan and China had withstood the test of time and changing regional and global circumstances, growing from strength to strength.

He noted that 2026 holds special significance as Pakistan and China mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, describing the milestone as a celebration of a unique bond between two countries and peoples that have consistently stood by each other in times of both opportunity and challenge.

The two countries have reaffirmed their commitment to further advancing this relationship and building an even closer China-Pakistan Community with a Shared Future. The Chairman Senate underscored the vital role of parliamentary diplomacy in sustaining the momentum of this historic relationship, saying that regular exchanges between the Parliament of Pakistan and the National People's Congress of China provide an important platform for deepening mutual understanding, strengthening institutional linkages and advancing shared interests.

He said that the Pakistan-China partnership today encompasses strategic, political, economic, defence, trade, technological and people-to-people cooperation, reflecting the depth and breadth of the relationship.

He particularly highlighted CPEC as a flagship manifestation of the enduring Pakistan-China partnership, expressing confidence that its next phase would open new avenues for industrialisation, investment, agriculture, technology, energy, connectivity and socio-economic development.

Gilani also appreciated China's remarkable achievements in economic and social development and its growing contribution to international cooperation, connectivity and shared development.

He said that Pakistan greatly values China's consistent support for Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and development, just as Pakistan remains firmly committed to the One-China principle and supports China on its core interests.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the Gong Ceremony for Naya Nazimabad Apartments REIT listing on Pakistan Stock Exchange



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar chairing a high-level meeting on the Establishment of the Joint Pak Global Tech Facility at the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), NDMA

President Zardari for further expansion of Pak-Nigeria cooperation

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening its warm and friendly relations with Nigeria, saying the existing bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries would continue to deepen and expand in the years ahead.

"In his message to President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Nigeria's Independence Day, President Zardari said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Nigeria and expressed confidence that closer cooperation would serve the shared interests of the two peoples," President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

The president conveyed his best wishes for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Pakistan launches National Mental Health Policy 2026-35

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan on Thursday launched the National Mental Health Policy 2026-2035, aiming to expand mental health services and support for an estimated 32.4 million people in need of care across the country.

The policy was launched during the two-day Global Mental Health Summit being held in Islamabad from October 1-2, bringing together around 800 participants, including mental health experts, policymakers, academics and representatives of national and international development partners.

The initiative was launched under the leadership of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Global Institute of Human Development (GIHD)–Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University (STMU).

According to estimates, around 32.4 million people in Pakistan require mental health care, while only about five percent of the population has access to such services, leaving a treatment gap of around 95 percent.

The shortage of qualified mental health professionals is also a major challenge, with Pakistan having approximately 0.19 psychiatrists per 100,000 population compared with an average of seven per 100,000 in high-income countries. Speaking at the summit, Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal described mental health as an emergency and said it was linked to economy.

Pakistan to emerge as powerful economy; earn fame in comity of nations: PM

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday stressed the need to focus on sustainable economic growth, job creation, and export promotion, as the country has successfully restored macroeconomic stability through a collaborative team effort.

The prime minister, in his virtual address at the Gong Ceremony to celebrate the listing of Naya Nazimabad Apartment REIT scheme, lauded the joint efforts of the federal and provincial governments and financial institutions in steering the national economy out of severe challenges. The prime minister was accompanied by federal ministers Attaullah Tarar, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Dr. Musadik Malik, and others. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, prominent business leader Arif Habib, and leading corporate figures attended the event held at the Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi, which started with the cake-cutting to celebrate the occasion.

Recalling his recent interactions with international bankers and financial leaders in New York and London, including executives from Citibank, JPMorgan, and Barclays and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, the prime minister noted that global financial institutions had commended Pakistan's implementation of long-overdue structural reforms creating an attractive ecosystem for investment. He particularly thanked the finance minister, cabinet members, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and federal secretaries for establishing a replicable model of teamwork to achieve macroeconomic stability that has brought Pakistan back onto the path of sustainable development. He said that the successful implementation of reforms and macroeconomic stability were the result of a cohesive partnership between the political hierarchy and military leadership working in complete harmony.

Highlighting key economic indicators, he pointed out that Pakistan successfully achieved a $3 billion Eurobond issuance with $6 billion in offers, while State Bank foreign exchange reserves have risen to around $21.4 billion, alongside commercial bank reserves of $5.5 billion. He said that foreign remittances and IT exports were on an upward trajectory, while the Roshan Digital Account was performing robustly.

However, stressing the shift from stabilisation to growth, Prime Minister Shehbaz called for efforts to achieve economic growth driven by technology, employment generation, production, and exports to boost the national economy.

The prime minister recalled that the federal budget for 2026–27 offered hundreds of billions of rupees in tax breaks and incentives for exporters, manufacturers, and industries, including the construction sector. He said the incentives introduced by the government for the construction sector were coming to fruition.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb receives a souvenir during a meeting at the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) office

Pakistan warns Afghan Taliban over continued support to terrorist groups

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Spokesperson to the President Murtaza Solangi on Thursday issued a strong warning to the Afghan Taliban regime over its continued support to terrorist outfits by providing them with safe sanctuaries, training and logistical support.

"If the illegitimate Taliban regime thinks they will continue to provide safe sanctuaries, training and logistical support to a cocktail of terror outfits and act as a surrogate mother of terror, the global and regional forces of peace and civilisation shall surprise them," the spokesperson said in a statement on his X timeline.

He, however, said that the surprise by the global and regional forces of peace might not be too pleasant for the "beasts".

The statement by the president's spokesperson came after Pakistan carried out well-planned and calibrated aerial strikes against the hideouts and safe havens of terrorist organisations of Fitna al Khwarij and Fitna al Hindustan in Afghanistan, killing multiple terrorists, in continuation of operation Ghazab lil Haq.

Based on credible intelligence, selective targeting of terrorist camps and hideouts at two locations belonging to Fitna al khwarij, Fitna al Hindustan and their affiliates has been carried out in Afghanistan with precision and accuracy, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting announced.

"Targets were destroyed with precision, and initial reports suggest the killing of twenty-two terrorists. Large quantities of weapons and ammunition stored at these hideouts were also destroyed," it added.



U.S. President Donald Trump makes remarks to reporters on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington before boarding the Marine One helicopter.

Tribal jirga offers to help ease tensions between KP, federal governments

ISLAMABAD, (APP): A tribal jirga led by former Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shaukatullah Khan on Thursday met with Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam and offered to help reduce political tensions between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and federal governments.

According to a press released issued here, the tribal elders expressed their readiness to play a conciliatory role in resolving differences between the federation and the province.

Engineer Amir Muqam welcomed the jirga's offer and said the government would support any initiative aimed at serving the interests of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He assured the delegation that the jirga's recommendations and proposals would be brought to the notice of the leadership.

The tribal elders thanked the federal minister for welcoming their proposals and expressing support for their efforts.

No woman should miss treatment due to poverty, says First Lady

Asifa Bhutto calls for greater breast cancer awareness and timely treatment

ISLAMABAD, (APP): First Lady Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari on Thursday urged women to take breast health seriously and seek medical advice if they notice any unusual changes.

She said breast cancer is treatable and curable, and that early diagnosis and timely treatment can save lives.

In her message on the commencement of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, she said the month provides an opportunity to remind women that looking after their health also means knowing their bodies and taking action when something does not feel right. Regular self-examination can help women become familiar with normal changes in their bodies and recognise when they need to seek medical advice.

The first lady said women over 50 should consider regular mammograms at facilities that offer screening services. She also pointed out that more than 90 per cent of breast cancer cases are self-detected among those who do not undergo regular mammography screening, making awareness of body changes particularly important.

The first lady said what is most concerning is that many women, particularly in rural areas and low-income households, still reach doctors too late. Sometimes it is because of lack of awareness, sometimes because medical facilities are too far away and sometimes because the cost of diagnosis and treatment feels beyond reach. She said no woman should lose her chance of survival simply because she is poor, lives far from a major city or is afraid to seek help. Our government institutions and civil society must do more to ensure that every woman has access to the health education, screening and care she needs.

Pakistan-China partnership contributing significantly to regional peace: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended warm felicitations to the Chinese leadership, the National People's Congress and the people of China on the 77th National Day of the People's Republic of China. In his message, he paid tribute to the resilience and unity of the Chinese people, saying that China's remarkable progress under the leadership of President Xi Jinping serves as an example for the world.

Ayaz Sadiq said Pakistan-China friendship is rooted in mutual trust, respect, and shared interests. He said the people of the two countries share deep bonds of friendship and goodwill.

He said that 2026 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, a historic milestone that reflected the enduring strength of the exceptional and exemplary friendship between the two countries.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal addressing the Governing Council Meeting of the CAREC Institute

Nation stands shoulder to shoulder with security forces in war against terrorism: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi praised the security forces for carrying out successful intelligence-based operations against Khawarij in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying the forces once again thwarted the plans of terrorists through their professional capabilities.

In his statement, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi commended the performance of security forces for successfully countering the activities of Khawarij and conducting effective operations in different areas. He said the forces demonstrated professionalism and commitment in the fight against terrorism.

Mohsin Naqvi said that security forces eliminated six Khawarij during an intelligence-based operation in the Kachhi district of Balochistan.

He noted that the operation was part of ongoing efforts to prevent terrorist activities and maintain security in the region.

Reform unveiled to bring non-formal education at par with formal system

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training has unveiled major reform to bring non-formal education at par with formal system to activate a structured capacity-building and professional development framework to bring non-formal basic education on par with the formal schooling system across Islamabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).

Under this initiative, a third cohort comprising 45 master trainers selected from among 1,400 non-formal education teachers in the federal capital successfully completed an intensive three-day training program.

The concluding session of the "Three Days Professional Development Training for BECS Master Trainers," organized under the aegis of Basic Education Community Schools (BECS), at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Thursday.

Addressing the ceremony, Federal Secretary for Education and Professional Training Nadeem Mahbub stated that the Ministry had formulated a comprehensive road map a year and a half ago to modernize and streamline the non-formal education sector.

He emphasized that the primary focus of this road map is to hone the pedagogical skills and capacity of non-formal teachers serving marginalized segments, ensuring no compromise on the quality of education delivered in underserved communities. Mahbub highlighted that, unlike formal school teachers, non-formal educators historically lacked structured professional development. He noted that under the current initiative, standardized teacher guides were developed, and training sessions were conducted during the summer break.



QUETTA: Additional Finance Secretary Fakhruddin chairs a meeting regarding Balochistan Contribution Pension Scheme.

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