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Pakistan moves towards unified prison reform framework

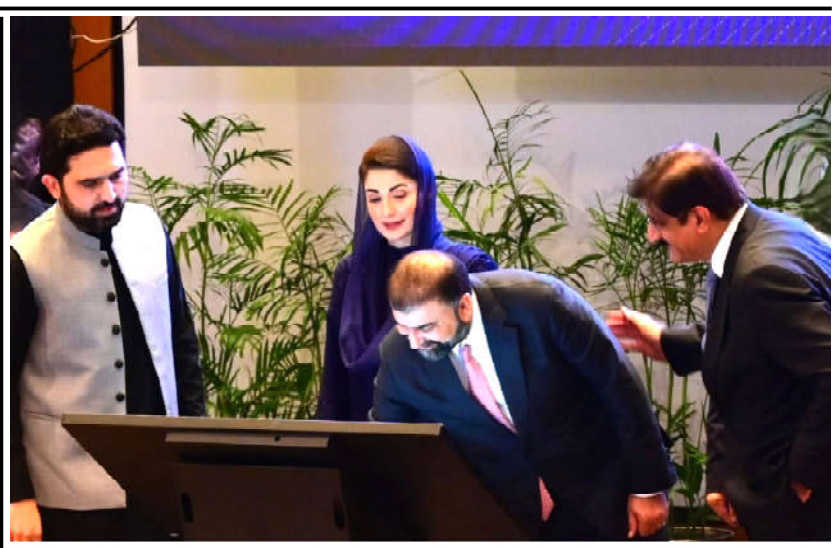
CJP says prisons reflect true pulse of criminal justice system; meaningful reform requires shared institutional responsibility, sustained provincial leadership

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan today hosted the National Conference on Prison Reform under the auspices of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) at the Supreme Court Auditorium, Islamabad.

The conference marked a significant step towards building a nationally coordinated prison reform framework, with the Provincial Governments expressing their collective commitment to advancing the reform agenda envisioned by the NJPMC.

The conference brought together representatives from the judiciary, federal and provincial governments, prison administrations, human rights institutions, law enforcement agencies, and development partners to deliberate on the future of Pakistan's prison system through a collaborative and solutions-oriented approach. A defining feature of the conference was the participation of the Chief Ministers of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh, who unanimously reaffirmed their commitment to supporting and implementing the prison reform agenda under the guidance of the NJPMC. The Federal Minister for Law and Justice and Chairperson of the National Commission for Human Rights also addressed the audience.

Their participation reflected a shared national resolve to strengthen prison administration, improve rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates, uphold human dignity, and modernize correctional services through coordinated federal-provincial cooperation. In his keynote address, the Chief Justice of Pakistan observed that prisons reflect the true pulse of the criminal justice system and emphasized that meaningful reform requires shared institutional responsibility and sustained provincial leadership. His Lordship welcomed the collective commitment of the Provincial Governments to advancing the NJPMC's National Prison Reform Action Plan through coordinated and practical reforms. The conference provided a high-level platform for constructive dialogue on the challenges confronting Pakistan's prison system and explored practical measures to strengthen prison governance, improve rehabilitation programmes, enhance inter-agency coordination, and promote a rights-based approach to prison management.



ISLAMABAD: Hon'ble Chief Ministers of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtumkhwa (KPK), Punjab, Sindh signing the Islamabad Declaration on Prison Reforms during the National Conference on Prison reform, held under the theme "Justice, Dignity and Reforms," at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the officers of Federal Board of Revenue meets with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Governor for innovative strategies to create sustainable employment opportunities for Balochistan's youth

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail on Thursday said that BUITEMS University possessed the capacity to host an international seminar on climate change, emphasizing that climate change was not merely a global challenge but a matter of humanity's survival and progress.

Speaking during a meeting with BUITEMS Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Khalid Hafeez at Governor House Quetta, the Governor noted that the upcoming seminar would be linked to the United Nations (UN) Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), enabling participation from UN representatives, leading scientists, and experts worldwide. He announced that soon Quetta would host international seminars and conferences on climate change and artificial intelligence, marking a significant step in aligning public universities with global needs.

Governor Mandokhail stressed that enabling universities to contribute to public welfare and humanity's survival was a major achievement. He expressed concern that while the number of educated professionals in Pakistan was steadily increasing at both national and provincial levels, job opportunities were not expanding at the same pace, creating a serious challenge. He underscored the need for public-private partnerships and innovative strategies to create sustainable employment opportunities so that no educated youth or professional degree holder remained economically dependent.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar administering a prestigious Oath-Taking Ceremony of the newly elected RISJA body organized by Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA) at local hotel.

World Bank asks Pakistan to revise NFC Award formula

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): The World Bank (WB) has asked Pakistan to revise the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award formula, both vertically and horizontally, and adopt fiscal 'equalisation' for resource distribution among the provinces based on spending needs and projected revenue capacity.

The WB also supported excluding population from the main criteria for resource distribution and suggested fiscal equalisation as the way forward.

This was mentioned by World Bank lead economist and report author Tobias Haque while launching the report titled "Strengthening Fiscal Federalism in Pakistan," alongside Country Director Bolormaa Amgaabazar at the WB's office on Wednesday. The bank highlighted the fragmented General Sales Tax (GST) on goods and services as a major challenge and proposed a unified collection mechanism, with the collected amount then distributed among provinces — though this would require legislative changes.

The WB also noted that out of Rs1,035 billion in grants committed by provinces for the Centre under Article 164, Punjab reversed grants of Rs546 billion and Sindh Rs260 billion. The PTI-led KP and Balochistan governments did not commit any amount for the Centre in their provincial budgets for 2026-27.

On the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), the WB asked for the continuation of national registry at the federal level but with cost-sharing from all provinces, as social protection falls under the domain of federating units.

The reprot stated, "Fiscal federalism arrangements have led to the emergence of a structural federal fiscal deficit.

Provincial revenues, including federal transfers, rose from less than 4% of GDP to an average of 6.5% over FY10 to FY24, but federal expenditures did not adjust commensurately. The loss in federal revenues from transfers (1.9% of GDP) was roughly equivalent to the increase in federal primary deficits post-devolution (1.7% of GDP)."

In the context of weak overall revenue and macroeconomic performance, the misalignment between federal financing and functional needs has been a material contributor to Pakistan's fiscal deficit and to the accumulation of public debt."

Pakistan, Qatar say "positive progress" made in US-Iran talks in Doha

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistani and Qatari mediators on Wednesday concluded separate meetings with United States and Iranian negotiators in Doha, reporting "positive progress" on the issues related to the aspects of Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

"Qatari and Pakistani mediators concluded separate meetings with the US and Iranian negotiators in Doha today, with positive progress made on issues related to the aspects of the Islamabad MOU, building on the Lake Lucerne Summit," according to a Foreign Office statement.

It said that the parties have agreed to continue discussions over the coming period.

Iran warns US, Israel against attacks ahead of funeral processions for Khamenei

TEHRAN, (Monitoring Desk): An Iranian military commander warned the United States and Israel on Thursday against any attack on Iran as it prepares for the state funeral of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in airstrikes on the first day of the war.

"We warn the enemies of Iran, especially the US and the Zionist regime (Israel), to avoid any miscalculation and to think about the harsh retaliation our armed forces would make to any threat and aggression against our country," Ali Abdollahi, commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, said in a statement carried by state media. Funeral processions for Khamenei will begin on July 4 in Tehran and conclude on July 9 with his burial in his hometown of Mashhad, with additional ceremonies planned in Qom and Iraq between these dates.

On Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi gave a similar warning that Tehran would deliver an immediate and powerful response to any threat against its people or leadership after comments by Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz that Iran's current Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei was "marked for death."

Iranian media reported heightened security measures during the funeral period.

BFA intensify crackdown on hazardous vegetables

QUETTA, (APP): Acting on the special directives of Provincial Minister and Chairman of the Balochistan Food Authority (BFA), Haji Noor Muhammad Dummar, the authority has initiated a large-scale crackdown against vegetables cultivated with sewage water to ensure the supply of safe and quality food to the public.

In a major operation led by Director Operations Fakhruddin Mari, teams destroyed crops grown on 22 acres of land along Sabzal Road, including cauliflower, mint, coriander, khulfah, onions, and beetroot. The move was aimed at preventing these hazardous vegetables from reaching markets and posing health risks to citizens.

Director General of the Balochistan Food Authority, Habibullah Khan, stated that despite clear directives from the High Court and the provincial government, the cultivation of edible crops using sewage water will not be tolerated. He explained that such vegetables contain harmful bacteria, heavy metals, and other contaminants that can cause serious diseases.

Police register case against suspects over abduction, sexual assault of two foreign women

LAHORE, (Monitoring Desk): Police in the provincial capital on Thursday registered a case against five suspects on charges of kidnapping for ransom and sexually assaulting two foreign women.

The Police Emergency Helpline 15 received a call from Spain, made by the father of one of the women, reporting the incident.

The alleged victims, who are nationals of the Netherlands and Venezuela, had come to Pakistan to visit their 'friends'.

DIG Faisal Kamran told media that police acted accordingly, dispatched a team of senior officials, recovered the women, arrested four suspects and lodged an FIR.

He said the suspects had been tracked and apprehended with the help of the Punjab Safe City Authority's cameras installed in the city.

The recovered foreign women were later produced before a judicial magistrate at Cantonment Courts to record their statements under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

A women's counsel for the victims was also present in the courtroom during the recording of their statements. The victims narrated the incident before the magistrate in a closed-door hearing.

FBR's new operating model to be based on digital, faceless tax administration system: PM

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday lauded senior officers of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for surpassing the historic revenue collection target of Rs 12.957 trillion during the last fiscal year, and described the achievement as a major milestone in Pakistan's economic journey and the result of sustained reforms, digitisation and institutional teamwork.

Chairing a meeting with senior FBR officers here at the Prime Minister's Office, the prime minister congratulated the officers individually and the entire FBR workforce collectively for achieving the record revenue target for fiscal year 2025-26, a news release said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the timely disbursement of nearly Rs 600 billion in tax refunds during the fiscal year had provided much-needed relief to the business community while supporting export growth.

He expressed confidence that FBR field formations and officers would maintain the same level of commitment to achieve the government's revenue target of more than Rs15 trillion during the current fiscal year. The prime minister also commended Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Attorney General Mansoor Awan, FBR Chairman Rashid Mahmood Langrial, Finance Secretary Imdad Ullah Bosal, members of the government's economic team and FBR officers for their role in the institution's improved performance.

He paid tribute to Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and law enforcement agencies for their efforts in curbing smuggling and ensuring the security of FBR personnel.



QUETTA: BUITEMS Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Khalid Hafeez called on Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

India attempting to use terrorism allegations as pretext to obstruct Pakistan's lawful share of Indus waters: FO

Ansrabi says PM Shehbaz to visit Iran, Turkiye from July 3-5, attend funeral of late Iranian Supreme Leader

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to undertake an official visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkiye from July 3-5, Foreign Office spokesperson, Tahir Andrabi said on Thursday. The spokesperson, at the weekly press briefing, said that the prime minister would travel to Iran first to participate in the funeral ceremony of the late Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei.

He said that the prime minister would convey condolences on behalf of the people and the government of Pakistan to the Iranian leadership and the bereaved families while reaffirming solidarity with the brotherly nation in their hour of profound grief. Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would proceed to Istanbul, Turkiye, at the invitation of the President of Turkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, where he would hold discussions on the entire gamut of bilateral relations. The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's rejection of India's decision to place the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, describing the move as illegal, unilateral and without any basis. He maintained that water could not be used as a tool of coercion and accused India of attempting to use terrorism allegations as a pretext to obstruct Pakistan's lawful share of the Indus waters.



QUETTA: Director General Public Relations Balochistan, Askar Khan chairs a meeting regarding advertisement policy.

Quetta Police neutralize suspected robber, arrest two accomplices

QUETTA, (APP): A police operation in the Saryab area's Kachi Baig locality resulted in an exchange of fire with suspected motorcycle and mobile snatchers, leaving one suspect dead and two others injured and arrested.

According to police, officers responded promptly to reports of street robberies in Kachi Baig. Upon arrival, the suspects allegedly opened fire on the police party, prompting a retaliatory response.

In the ensuing shootout, Nasrullah of the Jatoi tribe, resident of Dhadar and currently living on Saryab Road, was killed, while Asadullah of the Rahija tribe and Sanaullah of the Jatoi tribe, both residents of Dhadar, were apprehended in an injured condition.

Police confirmed that the arrested suspects were involved in multiple robberies and mobile-snatching incidents across different police jurisdictions in Saryab.

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Every cry that is silenced will return in future at a much greater cost

Bodies fused to their bones by phosphorus bombs, children pulled from the rubble in pieces and their limbs stuffed into bags, babies left to die and whose bodies were not allowed to be touched until they were devoured by vultures, bodies buried in mass graves by bulldozers, thirst, hunger...

We have witnessed unimaginable cruelty due to the genocide that has been ongoing in Gaza for nearly two years. The leader of these barbarians can attempt to legitimize an attack on Iran by beginning his speech with an address to the civilized world. The leaders of the U.K., the U.S., France and the EU can also invoke "Israel's right to self-defense."

The most aggressive actor in the Middle East, without a doubt, has been Israel since its inception. With its unilateral nuclear power advantage, it has acted with impunity in this region, both politically and militarily. Behind every bomb it drops and every execution it carries out lies the same confidence: the silent West.

The destruction Israel initiated in Gaza was not a military operation but a systematic campaign of annihilation. Since October 2023, over 55,000 people have lost their lives. At least 26,000 of them were civilians, thousands of whom were children. The bombardment Israel launched under the pretext of "fighting terrorism" targeted schools, hospitals and refugee camps. Gaza's infrastructure, water, electricity, roads and livelihoods were deliberately destroyed. This was not a war, but an extermination operation. In the West Bank, people were taken from their homes in night raids. Those arrested either disappeared forever or were shot in the streets. Official figures are insufficient, but the crackdowns, which resulted in hundreds of deaths and thousands of arrests, created an illegal occupation regime.

Attacks launched in Lebanon under the pretext of targeting Hezbollah rained down on civilians. More than 4,200 people lost their lives. More than 2,800 of them were civilians. Villages were razed to the ground. Even U.N. observation points were hit. Israel directly targeted civilian areas as well as military targets. It disregarded international law. Silence was also complicit in this crime.

The air operations carried out in Syria not only target military facilities. In 2024, Iran's Consulate in Damascus was hit. Diplomatic immunity was shattered by an airstrike. Revolutionary Guard commanders lost their lives in this attack. That year, approximately 390 people were killed in Israeli attacks across Syria. Some of them were Iranian soldiers, but dozens of civilians also lost their lives under the bombs.

The operations carried out in Iran were more insidious. Nuclear scientists were killed one by one. In the last two weeks alone, 14 Iranian scientists were murdered. Some were assassinated in their cars, others in their homes. In 2024 and 2025, Iran's territory was targeted by direct airstrikes. On June 13, 2025, alone, 78 civilians lost their lives. More than 300 people were injured. These attacks carried out in Iran amounted to a clear declaration of war.

Yemen was also targeted. In attacks on ports controlled by the Houthis, 14 civilians were killed in July 2024. Over 90 people were injured. Every blow to food and medicine supplies was aimed at punishing civilians. Israel turned hunger into a weapon.

Israel's five-year record of aggression includes tens of thousands of deaths, hundreds of thousands of injuries and millions of displaced people. Behind these numbers are children buried under rubble, young people taken from their homes in the middle of the night, fathers, mothers and doctors who never returned. Each one is a life, each one a violation of the law.

All these attacks took place under the shadow of a nuclear power. As the only nuclear state in the Middle East, Israel is not subject to any oversight. Its nuclear arsenal is not officially recognized but exists in practice. This advantage fuels its aggression. Every bomb, every assassination, every act of sabotage is protected by this shield of impunity. If international law were a reality, it would protect the victim, not the aggressor. This distorted rhetoric both undermines the law and renders the suffering of hundreds of thousands of civilians invisible.

Israel may be protected today, but this state of immunity is dragging it into an increasingly deep isolation and a more fragile future. Every cry that is silenced will return in the future at a much greater cost.

Fire and air

BY F.S. AIJAZUDDIN

One has to be either a fool or in government not to fear a nuclear conflict. Fools need not worry; they live in their own paradise. Governments make provision for their safety in case sirens blow. It is we — the citizenry of nuclear states — who are unprotected, when the doomsday button is pushed.

Modern tactics have taught nations that conventional civil defence preparations such as drills, blackouts and mass evacuation would be ineffective in the event of a nuclear attack. Every nuclear state, therefore, has developed its own strategy. In essence, it mirrors the priorities defined by the USSR in the 1960s: "to protect the leadership first, the essential work force second and the remainder of the population third". Contaminated survivors would nevertheless need to be fed, housed and medicated.

Unlike Hiroshima and Nagasaki which were city-specific, any future nuclear attack would be target-specific. No one would have time to relocate, only retaliate. Today, single bombs have been replaced by tactical nuclear weapons. These are "short-range nuclear weapons designed for more contained strikes".

Ever since India and Pakistan joined the macabre nuclear club in the 1990s, their strategies have hung, like fluttering pennants, for all to see.

India's nuclear doctrine was developed in the 2000s by K. Subrahmanyam, a former civil servant, regarded as "the doyen of India's strategic affairs community". It balances on three principles. One, no first use (NFU): India will not be the first to launch a nuclear attack. It will only retaliate. It will, however, use chemical or biological weapons, if need be. Two, credible minimum deterrence: India's nuclear weapons are to discourage others from attacking India. Three, massive retaliation: India's retaliation to a first-strike will be to 'annihilate' its enemy's capabilities.

The decision to approve a nuclear attack (or not) can be taken only by PM Modi, as head of the political council of India's Nuc-lear Command Authority. It is not (regardless of what the Indian foreign secretary was told to say) at the discretion of its DGMO.

And Pakistan's strategy? Responsibility for "the command, control, and operational decisions regarding Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and strategic assets" is vested in its National Command Authority, a civilian-cum-military body. Pakistan's equivalent of Subrahmanyam is retired Lt-Gen K.A. Kidwai, adviser to the NCA.

He has identified four 'red lines' that could trigger a deployment of Pakistan's nuclear armoury: spatial threshold (loss of territory); military threshold (destruction of its land, sea or air forces); Economic threshold (any action that might choke Pakistan's economy, such as water terror — for example, the Indus Waters Treaty's suspension); and the political threshold (internal political destabilisation or disharmony, such as India's covert terrorism in Balochistan). Deterrence remains their capstone.

According to the CSIS, "India is currently estimated to have more than 180 nuclear warheads."] Pakistan's arsenal is said to have over 170. These warheads have "explosive yields of up to 300 kilotons, or 20 times that of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima". India relies on Russian, Israeli and US technological support; Pakistan looks to China. India and Pakistan have enough missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads that would leave both countries devastated, turning their citizens (as the dying Cleopatra said) into "fire and air".

'Disarmament' and 'non-proliferation' are two words erased from the blackboard of nuclear states. Less is no longer more. While India hides behind the fig leaf of its NFU policy, Pakistan flaunts a 'No NFU' posture. No more Mister Nice Guy. For the moment, both are in a state of suspen-ded animation. Their DGMOs continue to implement a withdrawal of their forces to a pre-Pahalgam situation.

The misguided missiles of Indian MPs propelled abroad to advocate India's cause have been received with polite incredulity and unexpected responses. Dr Shashi Tharoor took umbrage when his Colombian hosts condoled the deaths of Pakistani casualties, rather than Indian victims. In the US, Tharoor riled President Trump by comparing him unfavourably with former presidents Bush senior and junior, Clinton and Obama. Tharoor, a Francophone, should have heeded the French philosopher J.J. Rousseau's advice: "Insults are the arguments employed by those who are in the wrong." On his return, a bruised Tharoor may find the Congress door closed to him, and the BJP one locked from the inside.

As mentioned, K. Subrahmanyam was the ideological father of India's nuclear doctrine. Few know that S. Jaishankar, India's militant minister for external affairs, is his son. The son seems determined to test his father's nuclear strategy — on Pakistani soil.

Pension for all

BY NAEEM SADIQ

While slavery was officially abolished across the US in 1865, it did not die out. Instead, it mutated, taking on subtler but still lethal forms. Pakistan, too, became one of the practitioners of what is referred to as 'modern-day slavery' by either not registering 95 per cent of its workers with the Employees' Old-age Benefit Institution (EOBI) or not depositing their regular monthly pension contribution. This is large-scale cruelty and incompetence.

Here are a few basic facts to grasp the magnitude of this self-created chaos. Pakistan has a workforce of approximately 75 million workers. Only 11m of them are registered with the EOBI. Of the 11m registered workers, the monthly EOBI contribution is deposited only for 3.28m or 4.4pc of the total workforce (confirmed by the EOBI through a Right to Information request). Thus, 71.7m Pakistani workers have been deprived of their rightful pension and pushed towards a dependent and demeaning future.

An in-depth study of the EOBI reveals earth-shattering insights into our collective callousness. We are guilty of mandating the task of managing the pensions of 75m precious workers to a legally, functionally and professionally inadequate organisation. The EOBI department could not even produce a notification of its existential task, ie, the value of the 6pc amount that must be deposited by the employers. The EOBI website still refers to a 10-year-old monthly contribution of Rs780, while the verbal response by the EOBI management suggested a contribution of Rs2,220. Fifty random samples of 'proclaimed' EOBI registered workers were chosen to verify the true status of payments made by their employers. There was not a single employee whose payments were completely or correctly reflected on the EOBI website. The department had no answer to explain how it will ever know the amount deposited against a specific employee. A study based on several retired workers revealed that it took many months, reams of photocopies, endless runaround and numerous three-way disputes to determine the true amount contributed against any employee.

Pakistan could learn from a developing country like Uzbekistan whose entire workforce of 19.76m workers is registered in the national pension scheme. There are no inspectors or institutions for collecting pension contributions. All employers electronically contribute 12pc of the employees' gross salary bill, as 'social tax' along with other taxes, directly to the tax department. The distribution of pensions is subsequently implemented by the finance ministry.

Why has Pakistan allowed a known dysfunctional system to deprive 96pc of its workers of their legal right to pension? We have made a titanic blunder, and we must be willing to make amends by undertaking immediate, radical and forward-looking pension reforms. Start by completely shutting down the existing EOBI and repealing the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Act, 1976. This would immediately save about Rs2.7 billion of management expenses, recover 96 government vehicles, get back billions invested in buildings and plazas and relieve 657 employees currently engaged in further organisational decay. Declare that the state shall honour and provide for universal pension and social security for all citizens including unorganised workers and self-employed individuals.

De-link the existing 'impossible-to-manage' process of employers making payments against a small number (usually 10pc) of their workforce. Introduce mandatory 6pc social tax on the gross salary bill of every em--p-loyer — industrial, commercial or agricultural. Also introduce 1pc social tax on the taxable in--come of every tax-paying individual. The social tax for organisations as well as individuals should be collected by FBR as an element of the routine yearly income tax. Using CNIC, pensions could be linked to Nadra records and managed on similar lines as BISP for distribution to all workers of Pakistan. Also, pension is a form of income and like most other countries (including India), must be declared as 'taxable income' for those receiving a pension of more than Rs50,000 per month.

If a judge of the high court can be entitled to a pension that is 70pc of his last salary, why can the workers' pension not be pegged to 70pc of the latest notified minimum wage? Inability or inefficiency in collecting 6pc social tax from each employer ought to be the responsibility of the state for which workers cannot be penalised. Pakistan can become a reformed model state by simple acts of providing minimum legal wage and a decent pension to every citizen. Is that asking for too much?

Climate resilience facility

BY ALI TAUQEER SHEIKH

Pakistan's engagement with the IMF enco-m--passes two complementary facilities. The Exte-n--ded Fund Facility provides support for macroeconomic stabilisation, while the Resilience and Sus--tainability Facility (RSF) targets climate ad--aptation and mitigation for resilience building.

For the IMF, resilience is the capacity of countries to withstand, adapt to and recover from external shocks that threaten macroeconomic and financial stability. Within the RSF framework, this concept emphasises structural reforms that reduce vulnerability to climate-related shocks while enabling sustainable economic growth. How effectively can the RSF address our climate vulnerabilities and adaptation needs?

The RSF's following five reform areas define its approach: 1) climate-integrated public investment management to restructure project selection to prioritise climate-sensitive infrastructure development through enhanced screening and budget integration mechanisms; 2) water system resilience and disaster response coordination, to focus on irrigation modernisation and disaster preparedness through digital systems and financing frameworks; 3) climate information architecture and financial risk management to establish banking sector climate risk integration and corporate disclosure requirements; 4) transport decarbonisation and green mobility to implement carbon pricing and EV promotion schemes; 5) energy sector alignment with climate commitments to restructure subsidy systems and mandate efficiency standards for consumer appliances.

These reform areas encompass 13 specific measures expected to mainstream climate considerations across government planning and investment processes. While the RSF framework establishes important institutional foundations, there are several critical gaps.

Integrating local governance: The RSF's federal-centric approach does not adequately engage local government roles mandated by the 18th Amendment. Climate resilience depends on local institutional capacity for early warning systems, emergency response coordination, and locally led adaptation measures. However, the current framework lacks strengthening mechanisms for municipal-level implementation of LG institutions. For instance, the RSF has created provincial irrigation tariff mechanisms and digital collection systems. But it does not address municipal water management, drainage systems, or flood management that directly affect community resilience. It assumes provincial-level reforms will automatically translate into local level improvements, without creating institutional linkages that connect policy to implementation.

This gap is an opportunity for enhancement. Provincial set-ups could use RSF-supported imp-rovements to strengthen local climate capacity by enhancing LG Acts that clearly define climate duties for district and municipal authorities. Sub-provincial resource allocation mechanisms could create climate-weighted fiscal transfer systems that encourage LG climate investments while co--ordinating with provincial and federal priorities.

Urban development gaps: The RSF framework does not explicitly recognise urban planning, land-use regulation, or pollution control that have critical importance for climate resilience. Pakistan's cities are vulnerable to air pollution, plastic waste, inadequate drainage, heat-island effects, etc, yet none of the 13 reform measures directly target these challenges.

Without effective urban planning and zoning laws, cities experience haphazard expansion, inefficient land use, and inadequate infrastructure provision, leading to increased exposure to environmental hazards and higher disaster recovery costs, creating broader economic instability.

As already seen, the absence of green infrastructure and pollution controls leads to environmental degradation, poor air quality and increased disaster vulnerability, raising healthcare costs. The RSF's infrastructure screening requirements may indirectly influence urban development patterns but lack explicit frameworks for climate-sensitive urban planning. This represents a missed opportunity to leverage the facility's institutional reforms and support provincial development of model legislation for climate-sensitive urban planning.

Differential vulnerability considerations: The framework lacks requirements for gender-disaggregated data collection, gender-sensitive impact assessment, or inclusive participation mechanisms despite climate impacts disproportionately affecting women, children, the elderly and marginalised. The lack of gender-segregated data results in policies that overlook differentiated impacts on marginalised groups. The exclusion undermines resilience-building effectiveness by assuming uniform impact distribution rather than addressing differential vulnerabilities that determine actual community resilience capacity. Not invoking the IMF's Strategy Towards Main-stre-aming Gender inadvertently reinforces existing inequalities while failing to harness the full poten--tial of inclusive resilience strengthening approaches. Cross-sectoral integration: The RSF's sectoral approach reinforces institutional silos rather than promoting integrated strategies. The five reform areas operate through different agencies with separate timelines, lacking clear cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms. Climate resilience requires integrated approaches that address interconnections between water management, energy systems, transport infrastructure and urban planning. Yet, the RSF's monitoring mechanisms rely primarily on federal-level performance indicators that may not capture local-level implementation effectiveness. This creates accountability gaps where reform implementation may achieve procedural compliance without building substantive resilience capacity. Strategic opportunities: Effective climate resilience requires addressing these gaps through enhanced integration of local governance, urban planning and social inclusion within the RSF framework. Rather than fundamental restructuring, these enhancements could build upon the facility's strong institutional foundation to create more comprehensive approaches to climate adaptation. The framework could include LG capacity-building mechanisms and community-level resilience indicators, aligning international support with constitutional requirements. This would strengthen institutions most critical for augmenting subnational resilience.

The RSF's emphasis on coordination mechanisms could be expanded to include enhanced integration with existing sectoral policy frameworks.

War, Iran's denuclearisation and the region

INAM UL HAQUE

The war in the Middle East is in its 7th day. Essential aspects were covered in my article titled, "Rising Lion, True Promise: the Israel-Iran shadow war goes hot" on 15 June. As discerned, from eliminating Iran's ability to acquire nuclear weapons; and to 'facilitate' regime change in Tehran, the US-Israel nexus now demands unconditional surrender of the Islamic Republic. Israel reckons nuclear weapons in the hand of clerics would continue to pose it an 'existential threat', therefore removal of both is an imperative. IDF's current targeting strategy of killing almost the entire Irani military, leadership and important political, religious leaders and scientists; its wide-ranging attacks on infrastructure; its operations against Irani military facilities, in addition to nuclear installations at Natanz, Fordow, Bushehr, IR-40 (Arak) and elsewhere are aimed at achieving these dual objectives. Tel Aviv reckons Irani regime stands on shaky grounds due to prolonged sanctions, poor economic performance, political unrest and degradation of its regional clout and proxy potential. Hence persistent operations 'would' lead to the regime change but before that nuclear potential has to be taken out. For this, Israel had been 'shaping the environment' for years through military and diplomatic coercion, assassinations, cyber-attacks and degradation of Iran's 3H (Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthi) proxies through relentless overt and covert military, cyber and sabotage operations. Mossad has deep ingress at sensitive levels of the Irani state and society as substantiated by the recent assassinations of Irani scientists and military, religo-political leaders, not deemed possible without 'Humint' or human intelligence. However, Israel cannot go it along without substantial support from its key allies, the US, UK and France. Militarily, to take on the deeply burrowed Fordow fuel enrichment plant for example, IDF lacks bunker-busting munitions like the GBU-43/B, GBU-57 and the transporting bombers. It is also dependent upon its limited number of KC-707 air-to-air refuelers, to enable IAF's F-15L, F-16 and F-35 fighter jets to target Iran, during some 3,000 km of roundtrip. The US may join the war to compensate for Israeli shortfalls and has been repositioning its military, air as well as naval assets in the theatre. From messaging to posturing to shooting war, parties have room for diplomacy under coercion. Netanyahu from Day One was desperate to suck the US into this war. That outcome might leave Iran badly bruised but determined and hostile; Tehran's nuclear programme retarded, not eliminated but capped; and power within Iran re-arranged. The US is letting Israel weaken Iran sufficiently so that it is ready to sign a nuclear deal on unfavorable terms, which could be capping and rolling back the nuclear programme, short of an attack by the US forces. Such a deal might irreparably weaken the clerics, laying grounds for a regime change. Israel's deal, imposed on Hezbollah after recent military degradation, forcing Hezbollah to stay neutral in this war, can be a US-Israeli blueprint. However, the US participation in a shooting war has implications. First, declaration of war by any US president without consulting the Congress is unconstitutional, but US presidents have been doing so after World War II. So, domestic legal challenges can be circumvented. Second, any further degradation of nuclear facilities after the US involvement may cause dangerous radiation leaks and set wrong precedence; as the US, a responsible power would be attacking nuclear installations, legally forbidden even in war. Third, the US involvement may expose around 50,000 US troops on 19 bases in the Middle East to Irani and proxy retaliatory attacks. Although Tehran has been careful in its targeting strategy so far, desperation leads to errors and blunders. Fourth, conflagration would upend regional stability as Iran borders some six countries including Pakistan and Iraq, and has some 14 maritime neighbours. Regime change, domestic instability would have religious and sectarian repercussions especially in Iraq, that still bases US troops on sprawling Victory (Al Asad), Habbaniyah and Marez camps, etc. Iraq is Iran's known ally. Although the Jewish influence on the American policy is no hidden secret, and although Netanyahu sees everything through a dangerous and hate-filled binary, the world Jewry should be more careful in reigning Netanyahu, rather than allowing the US to get involved in a deeply unpopular war. World Jewry needs to be sensitive to the damage Netanyahu has already caused to their cause, and sense the international rage directed at Zionism and Jews for their genocidal war under America's criminal complicity in Gaza. So, by rational standards, the US should, instead of getting involved, push seriously to halt hostilities and work for a deal. However, as Netanyahu is apparently under nobody's control; Trump is unpredictably mercurial; ceasefire is making no apparent headway; and Israel is sustaining damage, however limited, so the conflict might escalate in the short term with or without the direct US involvement. The recent US pronouncements of Iran's unconditional surrender and killing Khamenei etc are part of posturing strategy aimed at bringing Iran to the negotiating table without getting involved in a shooting war. Iran is likely to fight back using its missile arsenal, the largest in the region. Continued military degradation would, however, reduce its lethality and effectiveness. With the present rate of around 11% missiles, especially in the Hypersonic category (Khyber Shikan for example) getting through the four-tiered Israeli AD system, the much smaller Israeli population would be subjected to fear, psychological trauma, shelter psychosis and insecurity. Iran may also usher in crisis in the oil markets by shutting down the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway allowing 20% of global oil flows.

Trump says US to remove Iran's high-level enriched uranium in 'near future'

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump said the US would remove high-level enriched uranium from Iran in the "near future", and that the two countries were close to reaching an agreement.

"We will enter at some point in the near future to remove Iran's high-level enriched uranium from the ruins," Trump told the Financial Times on Wednesday, noting that the US would do it in coordination with Tehran.

Asked if Iran agreed to let the US get the uranium, Trump said that "they did agree", adding, "It's one of the things we talk about. It's very overrated. I'm the one that overrated it. To me it's important. To other people, it's not important."

Regarding the fragile ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon, Trump said he was still "trying to separate" the issue from his efforts to get a deal with Iran. Tehran demanded a cessation of Israeli attacks in Lebanon as a condition for a deal to open the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump also praised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a "great partner", adding that Israel "couldn't have done [Iran war] without us, couldn't have even come close ... They needed us, and they got us to help them".

Trump separately slammed the US House of Representatives' vote that took place on Wednesday to block him from continuing the war against Iran.

In a Truth Social post on Thursday, he called out the "meaningless" vote that took place "right in the middle of my final negotiations to end the War with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"Who would do such an unpatriotic thing. They know where the negotiations stand," he said.

For now, the vote is largely symbolic, as legislation must pass the Senate as well as the House to become effective, and there is debate over whether war powers resolutions would be constitutional even if they are approved by Congress.

The vote, nonetheless, reflects unease among some Republicans over Trump's handling of the conflict and marks a rare bipartisan effort to curb presidential war powers as the war has entered a fourth month.



Fighting continued overnight after breaking out on evening.



The Budapest Pride parade went ahead in defiance of a ban.

Putin under pressure as Ukraine war finally comes to Moscow and St Petersburg

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: The war in Ukraine may have slipped down the news agenda in recent months, but recent large-scale attacks deep inside Russia – including around St Petersburg – are a reminder that the conflict is entering a new and potentially decisive phase. Ukraine is demonstrating an increasing ability to strike targets once considered beyond its reach, suggesting that the initiative is shifting.

At the same time, Russia continues its campaign of missile strikes against Ukrainian cities and civilian infrastructure. Much has been made of Moscow's hypersonic missile capability, yet many of these weapons have proved far less decisive than advertised.

Modern Western air defence systems such as the US Patriot have shown a remarkable ability to counter threats billed as unstoppable, like the vaunted Russian Kinzhal and Zircon hypersonics. As with much of Russia's military capability, the reality on the battlefield has often failed to match the rhetoric emerging from the Kremlin. Ukrainian drone and missile technology is now bringing Moscow and St Petersburg within striking distance. For many wealthy Russians living in these cities, the war is no longer a distant conflict fought on the steppes of eastern Ukraine. It is beginning to touch their daily lives.

It may also now be touching their sons of military age. Until now, the burden of the war has fallen disproportionately on poorer regions, ethnic minorities and those recruited from prisons. However, after enormous losses over more than four years of conflict, concerns are growing among families in Russia's major cities that their young men may be rounded up and sent to the meat grinder too.

Hezbollah rejects latest ceasefire agreement as Israeli strikes kill 4 in Lebanon

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: Hezbollah on Thursday rejected the latest ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Lebanese government, and the militant group demanded a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon as more fighting there hampered efforts to end the Iran war.The Hezbollah announcement came as Israeli strikes killed at least four people, according to local authorities, and a U.N. peacekeeper was killed in the crossfire.

Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem, in a written statement read on TV, called the negotiations "absurd, humiliating and insulting." He said the agreement's demand that Hezbollah fighters leave southern Lebanon under fire would mean "surrender, defeat and achieving the enemy's goals."

"What we are concerned about is an end to the aggression, ceasefire and Israel's withdrawal," he said, underscoring that Hezbollah has not made any commitment to stop fighting. "So long as our villages are not safe and are being bombed and destroyed and our people are killed," he said, northern Israel "will not be safe."

Following Kassem's statement, drone alert sirens sounded in several border communities in northern Israel. Israeli media reported that the alerts came shortly after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other officials wrapped up a visit to the area.

The Israeli military later said the sirens were triggered by attempts to intercept several drones that hit near soldiers in southern Lebanon. No injuries were reported.

The fighting in Lebanon, where Israeli forces have seized large swaths of the south, threatens efforts to end the Iran war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a key transit point for oil and gas. Its closure has jolted the world economy. Iran has demanded that any lasting truce extend to Lebanon. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who faces elections later this year, wants to press ahead with Israel's offensive until Hezbollah no longer poses a threat.



Iran's new supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei has not been seen in public since being appointed, his health condition is a mystery, and it's unclear how much power he wields.

N. Korea announces opening of new nuclear facility

Monitoring Desk

NORTH KOREA: North Korea on Thursday unveiled a new facility to produce nuclear bomb fuels, with leader Kim Jong Un announcing plans to bolster the country's nuclear forces "at an exponential rate."

The official Korean Central News Agency said the facility used "more sophisticated technology" but didn't provide further details, such as where it is located and when it began its operation. State media photos showed what appeared to be a large centrifuge hall, indicating the plant is likely used to enrich weapons-grade uranium.

The disclosure of the new factory is in line with Kim's repeated vows to expand its nuclear weapons program to cope with what he called escalating U.S.-led military threats.

KCNA said Kim visited the nuclear facility on Wednesday to learn about its operation indices and its long-term production plan.

KCNA quoted Kim as saying the urgency for bolstering up the country's nuclear war deterrent, both in quality and quantity, has grown because of confrontations with "the most ferocious enemies," an apparent reference to the United States and South Korea. Kim cited other unspecified threats and crises as a need to boost North Korea's nuclear capability, it said.

Kim claimed that North Korea's weapons-grade nuclear materials production capacity has more than doubled compared with five years ago, according to KCNA. There are virtually no ways to independently verify his claim.

IIT graduate Mishra posed as 'Sadhu' to exploit, blackmail women in UP

MATHURA (INP): Police have arrested Abhishek Mishra, an IIT Roorkee mechanical engineering graduate who posed as sadhu 'Adhikarta Narayan Das', for alleged sexual exploitation and blackmail of women in Govardhan area.

The case came to light after a B.Sc Nursing student's family complained that Mishra allegedly drugged the woman with "prasad" on May 15, sexually assaulted her while unconscious, then threatened to leak her photos and demanded Rs 5 lakh via video call.

The family filed the case on May 25 due to fear of social stigma. During the probe, police said Mishra lured educated women and students through online discourses and kirtans, secretly recorded objectionable videos, and used them to extort money.

Iran targets US vessel carrying a command center in Gulf waters

TEHRAN (INP): Iran has claimed that its naval forces targeted an American military vessel in the Sea of Oman, while the United States has strongly denied the allegation.

In a statement, the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy said it had targeted a US military ship carrying a command-and-control centre.

Iranian officials alleged that the vessel was moving towards Iranian territorial waters and had violated regulations governing navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

According to the Iranian Navy statement, Iranian naval forces took action after identifying what they described as a breach of maritime rules by the American vessel.

However, the Iranian claim was swiftly rejected by United States Central Command, which described the Iranian account as false. In a statement posted on X, Centcom said Iran's allegations were untrue and insisted that US military aircraft and naval vessels were continuing their operations without interference.

The US military command maintained that its forces remained fully operational and dismissed Tehran's assertions regarding the reported incident. The conflicting claims could not be independently verified, and neither side provided immediate evidence to support its version of events.

Brazil may purchase 20 more fighter jets from Sweden

Monitoring Desk

SWEDEN: Brazil wants to acquire 20 additional Gripen fighter jets, made by Swedish defence company Saab, on top of the 36 it already has, Sweden's defence minister said Thursday.

Defence Minister Pal Jonson said that the countries had signed a declaration of intent.

"In the statement of intent, there is an interest also on the Brazilian side to go beyond the 36 that's been delivered and possibly also procuring another 20 Gripen," Jonson told a Stockholm press conference alongside his Brazilian counterpart Jose Mucio.Jonson added that the additional planes would be manufactured in Brazil.



Relatives and friends of a man who was killed along with his son and daughter in an Israeli strike in southern Lebanon attend their funeral in the Christian border village of Qlayaa.

Lebanon's PM stands by Israel talks despite Hezbollah rejection

Monitoring Desk

LEBANON: Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam on Thursday defended his government's negotiations with Israel as the "fastest and least costly path" for Lebanon, after the talks produced a new ceasefire initiative that was swiftly rejected by Hezbollah.

The Lebanese-Israeli negotiations led overnight to a US-backed agreement aimed at ending hostilities between Israel and the Iran-backed militant group and paving the way for Hezbollah's disarmament.

In a statement released by his office, Salam said the negotiations represented the best option available for the people of Lebanon.

"We could have stood by in the face of a reality and a war that we did not choose, but that was never an option for a single moment," he said, describing the talks as difficult and the Israeli position as "tough."

Under the agreement announced in Washington on Wednesday, Hezbollah militants would be disarmed.

Salam said the principle of a state monopoly on arms had already been established after the country's civil war ended in the early 1990s and that Lebanon should not miss another opportunity to enforce it.

As a next step, he announced the gradual deployment of the Lebanese Army in southern Lebanon, warning that any delay would come at the expense of the region and its residents.

However, Hezbollah rejected the agreement.

Secretary General Naim Qassem described the direct negotiations as a "farce" and a "humiliation." He said the group would not accept any arrangement centred on its disarmament.

Hezbollah insists that any agreement must focus on a comprehensive ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

Hungary drops charges against organisers of banned Pride marches

Monitoring Desk

BUDAPEST: Hungarian prosecutors said Thursday they had dropped charges against organisers of last year's Pride marches, citing a landmark ruling from the EU's top court.

Budapest's progressive mayor, Gergely Karacsony, was charged in January for organising the city's 30th Pride parade despite an official ban ordered under the former prime minister, nationalist Viktor Orban.

But in April, the European Court of Justice found that Hungary's 2021 anti-LGBTQ legislation—which served as the basis for the ban—was in breach of EU rules.

Since the ban was based on "a provision that was later found to violate EU law, the facts described in the prosecutor's indictment no longer constitute a criminal offence," prosecutors said in a statement.

Hindu groups perform havan after Jamia Masjid sealed in Dehradun

DEHRADUN (INP): Tensions gripped Thano area of Uttarakhand state after the authorities sealed the Jamia Masjid. The authorities acted after the Uttarakhand High Court dismissed a plea by Jamia Masjid Society in February. The mosque committee said the court order was for a 20×40 ft room built in 2023

TENDER NOTICE

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 Assistant Director Local Govt, Quetta invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2026 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee 1000 PKR and Bid Security 3% for each work

S. No	TSE Number	Name of Work's	Last Date and Time of Bid Submission	Tender Opening	Estimated Cost
1	TSE-2627071113083	CONSTRUCTION OF B/T ROAD, SEWERAGE LINE, AND TUFF TILE AND STREET LIGHTS AT RAMEEZABAD BAKHTOO MAIDANI QUETTA	17 July, 2026 09:30 AM	10:30 AM	49,505,738
2	TSE-2627071113043	Construction of B/T Road, Sewerage Line, and Tuff Tile and Street Lights at Noorzai Colony and Babar Muhalla Quetta	17 July, 2026 09:30 AM	10:30 AM	49,505,947
3	TSE-2627071113013	Construction of B/T Road, Sewerage Line, and Tuff Tile and Street Lights at Karbala Street and Akram Street Quetta	17 July, 2026 09:30 AM	10:30 AM	49,505,338
4	TSE-2627071112983	B/T Road Drains and Street Light and Peen Nana Sab Sra Ghurgai Bypass.	17 July, 2026 09:30 AM	10:30 AM	59,406,802
5	TSE-2627071112973	Construction of Road, Sewerage, Tuff Tiles, Solar Street Lights at Lala Khan Badizai and Adjoining Areas Saryab Road Quetta.	17 July, 2026 09:30 AM	10:30 AM	69,308,514

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Eligibility Criteria for bidders may be seen in the Bidding Documents **Bidding Procedure:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure (TSE-2627071113083, TSE-2627071113043, TSE-2627071113013, TSE-2627071112983, TSE-2627071112973) **Tender Documents:** The Bidding document can be downloaded from www.bppra.gob.pk (free of cost) and the same can also be obtained from the office of the under-signed upon payment of prescribed tender fee.

Address: Assistant Director Local Govt & Rural Development Deppt Quetta
Phone no: 0081920209 **Email:** sadlgrdquetta@gmail.com

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Ex-national security adviser John Bolton will plead guilty in classified information case

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Former Trump administration national security adviser John Bolton has agreed to plead guilty to a single count of retaining classified information under a deal with the Justice Department that could allow him to avoid prison time, a person familiar with the matter said Thursday.

The deal would resolve a criminal case filed in October that charged Bolton with 18 counts of either retaining or disseminating classified information, including diary-like notes from his time in government that officials say he shared with his family members as he was preparing a memoir about his time in office.

Under the agreement, Bolton would also face a $2.25 million fine, said the person, who insisted on anonymity to discuss a deal that had not been made public. Any prison sentence would be capped at five years, but the agreement allows for him to avoid time behind bars, though the punishment will ultimately be up to a judge.

Bolton is one of multiple adversaries of President Donald Trump who have been prosecuted over the past year by the Republican administration. An FBI investigation into Bolton burst into public view int August when FBI agents served warrants at his Maryland home and office.

He is a a longtime fixture in Republican foreign policy circles who became known for his hawkish views on American power. Bolton served for more than a year in Trump's first administration before being fired in 2019 and publishing a critical book about the president.

The administration fought unsuccessfully to block the publication of "The Room Where it Happened" on the grounds that the book risked disclosing classified information.

Heavy gunfire in Somali capital as row over election delay escalates

Monitoring Desk

MOGADISHU: Government forces and opposition fighters have exchanged heavy gunfire in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, as a row over delays to elections has escalated. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's term in office ended on 15 May but was extended by a year. The opposition said this was unconstitutional and called for protests on Thursday. Gunfire was reported in several neighbourhoods of the capital and persisted throughout the night, according to accounts by residents. Police said they were conducting a "large-scale security operation" against "heavily armed militias who launched mortar attacks" in some areas. Somalia last held a one-person, one-vote election in 1969 and has been ravaged by civil war for more than 30 years. Former Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire said he had been attacked by government forces.

British media highlights growing curbs on women and girls in Taliban's Afghanistan

LONDON (INP): A report published by the British newspaper The Guardian has renewed international attention on the situation facing women and girls in Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban.

According to the report, girls in Afghanistan have remained largely excluded from education beyond the sixth grade, with restrictions on secondary schooling continuing several years after the Taliban returned to power.

The newspaper noted that access to education for adolescent girls remains one of the most significant human rights concerns in the country.

The report also highlighted concerns about legal changes affecting marriage laws, stating that critics believe the measures could increase the risk of child marriage and further restrict the rights of young women. The Guardian wrote that despite international conventions and widespread global criticism regarding the treatment of women, the Taliban authorities have continued to enforce policies that rights groups say limit women's freedoms and participation in public life.

Attention was also drawn to Afghanistan's judicial system, with analysts arguing that recent legal and institutional changes have further reduced protections and opportunities for women. The report referred to remarks made by Afghanistan's education minister in 2024, who reportedly told journalists that the reopening of schools for older girls was not currently possible and that discussion of the issue remained restricted.

International experts cited in the report said Afghanistan has become increasingly challenging for women and girls, particularly because of limitations on education, employment opportunities, and public participation.

Rights advocates continue to argue that meaningful progress on women's rights will remain a key factor in determining the international community's engagement with and recognition of the Taliban administration.

Gilani highlights role of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Thursday underscored Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening its longstanding and friendly relations with Portugal.

During a meeting with the Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, Paulo Miguel Guedes Dominguez, he said that both countries enjoy cordial ties and cooperate closely at bilateral and multilateral levels to promote peace, stability, and sustainable development.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of continued high-level engagement and expressed confidence that the upcoming Bilateral Political Consultations in Islamabad would further enhance cooperation between the two countries.

Highlighting economic relations, Gilani said the steady growth in bilateral trade and stressed the need to explore greater collaboration in trade, investment, agriculture, information technology, education, culture, and the blue economy, said a news release.

He also appreciated Portugal's support for Pakistan, particularly regarding the GSP Plus framework, and expressed hope for continued cooperation in this regard.

Referring to the Pakistani community in Portugal, he described the diaspora as an important bridge between the two countries.

He also emphasised the importance of expanding educational cooperation, academic exchanges, and workforce mobility, expressing hope for the early conclusion of the Labour Mobility Partnership Agreement.

The Chairman highlighted the role of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening bilateral relations and welcomed continued interaction between Parliamentary Friendship Groups and legislators of both countries.

Paulo Miguel Guedes Dominguez thanked the Chairman of the Senate for the warm welcome and reaffirmed Portugal's commitment to further deepening cooperation with Pakistan in the political, parliamentary, economic, educational, and cultural fields.

The meeting concluded with both sides reaffirming their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation for the mutual benefit of the peoples of Pakistan and Portugal.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the officers of Federal Board of Revenue meets with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, has departed for the Islamic Republic Of Iran to attend the official funeral ceremony of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, scheduled to be held in Tehran on July 03, 2026 amongst others, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi is also part of the delegation.

Dar underscores govt's resolve to promote games nationwide

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister (DPM/ FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday while reviewing preparations for the 2027 SAARC Games in Pakistan highlighted that the government has made a resolve to promote games and sports activities across the country as such events would further strengthen the country's soft image in the world.

The DPM/FM chaired a committee meeting to review preparations for the 2027 SAARC Games in Pakistan here, a DPM's Office news release said.

The committee decided to immediately establish the SAARC Games Secretariat in Islamabad, fast-track the upgradation of the Pakistan Sports Complex, and constitute key sub-committees to oversee finances, infrastructure, and venues.

The government reaffirmed its commitment to delivering the 2027 SAARC Games along international standards.

Pakistan undertaking comprehensive review of energy landscape: Pervaiz

Chinese group proposes major investment in Pakistan's energy sector

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, on Thursday held a meeting with Hou Jianxin, Chairman of Shandong Xinxu Group Corporation, China, to discuss expanding cooperation and investment opportunities in Pakistan's energy sector.

According to a news release, during the meeting, Hou Jianxin expressed his company's strong interest in investing across Pakistan's energy value chain and proposed a long-term strategic partnership.

He said that Shandong Xinxu Group possesses advanced technologies and expertise in upstream oil and gas operations, including field optimization, drilling services, and production enhancement, and is keen to collaborate in increasing hydrocarbon production in Pakistan.

The Chairman also expressed interest in refinery modernization, particularly the installation of a Fluid Catalytic Cracking (FCC) unit to convert furnace oil into higher-value refined petroleum products.

Mr Hou highlighted the company's expertise in offshore oil exploration and development and proposed joint collaboration in Pakistan's offshore sector.

He also shared proposals for cooperation in lead mining, establishment of a sulphur processing plant, and the development of integrated energy cities along Pakistan's coastline.

These energy-oriented industrial clusters would combine LNG infrastructure, petroleum storage facilities, and petrochemical industries to promote industrial growth and energy security.

Welcoming the delegation, Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik said Pakistan is undertaking a comprehensive review of its energy landscape with the objective of enhancing energy security, attracting investment, and promoting value addition across the sector.

CPC's 105-year legacy inspires stronger Pak-China partnership

ISLAMABAD, (APP): China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in collaboration with China Media Group (CMG), on Thursday organized a commemorative Seminar titled "CPC 105 Years: Achievements, Experiences, and the China-Pakistan Community with a Shared Future". The seminar brought together senior government officials, diplomats, scholars, academics, media representatives, and students to reflect on China's remarkable development under the leadership of the CPC and to discuss its significance for Pakistan-China relations and the evolving All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, said a press release.

The Chief Guest, Ms. Wajiha Qamar, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, described the CPC's 105-year journey as an extraordinary example of national rejuvenation, visionary leadership, and people-centred governance. She observed that China's modernization demonstrates the importance of pursuing development in accordance with national conditions while investing in education, innovation, technology, and human capital. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, she emphasized that the next phase of Pakistan-China cooperation should increasingly focus on education, scientific research, skills development, innovation, youth empowerment, and stronger collaboration among universities, think tanks, and research institutions. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, Board of Governors, ISSI, described the 105-year journey of the Communist Party of China (CPC) as a remarkable testament to visionary leadership, long-term strategic planning, institutional resilience, and sustained reform. He highlighted China's unprecedented achievements in economic development, poverty alleviation, technological innovation, modernization, and high-quality growth, observing that China's development experience offers valuable lessons for developing countries. He noted that this experience holds particular relevance for Pakistan, whose All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership with China continues to deepen and expand beyond traditional political and strategic cooperation into emerging areas such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence, green development, agricultural modernization, and human resource development under the evolving framework of CPEC. Ms. Wang Lei, Representative of China Media Group (CMG), appreciated ISSI for jointly organizing the Seminar and noted that it coincided with both the 105th anniversary of the CPC and the 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations. Highlighting China's socio-economic transformation under the CPC, she reaffirmed CMG's commitment to promoting objective understanding of China's development experience and strengthening people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

In his keynote address, Ambassador Masood Khan, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to China, highlighted the CPC's pivotal role in China's economic transformation, technological advancement, and historic poverty alleviation. He described the Belt and Road Initiative as a transformative framework for international cooperation and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong support for CPEC as its flagship project. He noted that CPEC 2.0 is expanding cooperation into industrial development.



ISLAMABAD: The Hon'ble Chief Juctice of Pakistan, Mr. Yahya Afridi presenting a shield to Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar, addressing a Seminar titled: "105 Years of Communist Party of China: Achievements, Experiences, and the China- Pakistan Community of Shared Future"

BISP, ILO agree to strengthen collaboration on skills development for beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Thursday that the Benazir Hunarmand Programme was a major poverty graduation initiative aimed at equipping beneficiaries with market-relevant skills to help them become financially independent and improve their quality of life. She expressed these views during a meeting with International Labour Organization (ILO) Pakistan Country Director, Geir Thomas Tonstol, at BISP Headquarters to discuss avenues for mutual collaboration under the Benazir Hunarmand Programme. The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation in the areas of skills development, employment generation, capacity building and institutional linkages to improve livelihood opportunities for BISP beneficiaries through market-driven and demand-led interventions.

Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted BISP's ongoing reforms, including the introduction of the Digital Wallet payment system to promote greater financial inclusion.

President's remission power bars enhancement of sentence after release, SC rules

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Supreme Court of (SC) Pakistan has ruled that once the President has exercised the constitutional power to remit or reduce a convict's sentence, any subsequent enhancement of that sentence required a clear legal basis. The court dismissed an appeal seeking to convert the life imprisonment of convict Tahreen Ilyas into the death penalty, noting that the convict had already completed his sentence and been released.

During the hearing, the Superintendent of Jail, Zhob, Balochistan, appeared before the court via video link. The bench questioned him about the report stating that the convict had served 14 years in prison before being granted remission of the remaining sentence under a presidential general remission. The court asked under which law a 14-year period had been treated as sufficient for a life convict.

The bench observed that, to its knowledge, Supreme Court precedents require a life convict to undergo at least 17 years of imprisonment. However, since the convict had already been released, the court said the legal question would be examined in another appropriate case.

The court also questioned how a second punishment could be imposed under Section 302 of the Pakistan Penal Code after the original sentence had already been executed.

Iranian diplomat lauds Pakistan's solidarity during recent conflict

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam on Thursday appreciated the solidarity shown by the government and people of Pakistan during the recent regional conflict and called for enhanced cooperation among key regional countries to promote lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity. He expressed these views while delivering the keynote address at a policy dialogue titled "Pakistan's Role in Building Regional Peace: Iran's Strategic Posture, Regional Alignments, and Pathways to Stability," organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), said a press release. The dialogue examined Iran's strategic posture, evolving regional alignments, the implications of the recent Iran-Israel conflict, and Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace and stability. The dialogue also paid tribute to Iran's leadership on the occasion of commemorative ceremonies held across the Islamic Republic of Iran. It provided a timely platform for discussing emerging security challenges in West Asia and exploring pathways for diplomacy, regional cooperation, and conflict prevention. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam, outlined Iran's assessment of the evolving strategic environment in West Asia and expressed appreciation for solidarity shown by the government and people of Pakistan during recent conflict.

He identified unified leadership, national cohesion, strategic geography, and an indigenous defence industrial base as the principal pillars of Iran's deterrence posture. Stressing the significance of regional cooperation, he proposed a closer engagement among Pakistan, Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt to advance peace, stability, and shared prosperity, while reaffirming Iran's commitment to dialogue and diplomacy.

Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, observed that Iran's strategic posture remained a key factor shaping the security landscape of West Asia.

Tarar pledges support for sports journalists' welfare

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday pledged government support for the welfare of sports journalists and invited the community to submit recommendations for the promotion of sports journalism. Addressing a ceremony held to mark World Sports Journalists Day 2026, the minister said sports occupied a special place in his life and described sports journalism as an essential pillar in promoting healthy competition, sportsmanship and positivity in society. He said the contribution of sports to society could not be realised without sports journalists covering events and presenting them to the public in an effective manner. Atta Tarar said recognition of sports journalists was important to encourage young people to enter a profession that demanded extensive field reporting, sustained hard work, and close monitoring of sporting activities. Referring to the conferment of the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz on a senior sports journalist Mohi Shah during his tenure, he said the honour belonged not only to the recipient but to the entire fraternity of sports journalists in Pakistan for their efforts in creating an environment conducive to sports.



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

Woman swept by flooding water at Shangla

PESHAWAR, (APP): A woman was swept away by flooding water in Machkandi Khawar of Tehsil Shangla, Rescue workers said here on Thursday.

According to Rescue 1122, two women fell into gushing water of a local stream that was overflowed due to continuos monsoon rain in Machkandi and adjoining areas.

Body of one woman was fished out by hectic efforts of locals and rescue workers while another woman who sustained injuries was also recovered and shifted to local hospital.

District administration and Rescue 1122 has urged people to avoid flooding streams during monsoon season and inform authorities about any mishap.

UNODC launches global campaign inviting youth to submit creative works on violence prevention

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has launched a global call for creative contributions under its Gamechangers campaign, inviting young people to submit creative works on the theme of youth violence and crime.

According to the campaign announcement, the initiative, themed "Understanding Violence and Crime Through the Lens of Youth," is open to young people aged 18 to 29 from all regions of the world and encourages them to share their perspectives, experiences and ideas through creative expression.

The campaign particularly welcomes submissions from young people who are, or have been, in conflict with the law or affected by involvement in violence or crime and wish to share their experiences, as well as those who have observed, experienced or been impacted by youth violence and crime in their communities. According to UNODC, youth violence and crime affect communities across the world in various forms, including delinquency, gang involvement and recruitment by organized criminal groups. The organization said lasting prevention requires understanding the root causes of violence, strengthening protective factors and supporting rehabilitation and reintegration.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, in a meeting with a delegation of the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Peshawar to discuss women's economic empowerment, digital inclusion, and skills development.

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