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Deal in sight as govt, opposition resolve 95% of issues ahead of PTI Islamabad long march

Barrister Gohar says talks are very important for the country, nation and democracy

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): The government and opposition remained engaged in negotiations on Saturday to finalise a draft agreement ahead of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) planned October 4 long march towards Islamabad, but the two sides had yet to reach a final understanding, sources said.

The development came during the second round of talks between representatives of the federal government and the opposition, with discussions continuing to give final shape to the proposed agreement.

National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq is chairing the talks aimed at easing political tensions and resolving differences over the PTI's planned march.

Sources said the two sides had agreed to issue a joint statement on the outcome of the negotiations, while the National Assembly's director general of media confirmed that the talks were still underway and there would be no media talk after the meeting. An official statement on the session would instead be issued.

"Things are underway and have not been settled yet," one member of the negotiating committee told reporters.

Earlier, sources had said the government had agreed to facilitate a meeting between opposition leaders and jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, while the opposition had given its nod to calling off the planned march.

The opposition also demanded the release of Imran Khan's sisters, as well as PTI parliamentarians and workers, during the negotiations. Meanwhile, in Peshawar, KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi was holding consultations with PTI leaders over the latest situation, according to party sources.

PTI leaders Junaid Akbar and Atif Khan were also present at the Chief Minister's House, the sources said, adding that Afridi would make an announcement regarding the long march after the negotiating committee reached a decision.



ISLAMABAD: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti speaking as the chief guest at a special lecture organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI).



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people participate in the unveiling ceremony of the 'Yadgar-e-Fatah', a symbol of Pakistan's victory in Marka-e-Haq, in the federal capital. The ceremony featured a musical programme, along with an attractive projection mapping show highlighted the victory

Peaceful resolution of disputes vital for regional stability: Saleem Khosa

QUETTA (ANN): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) parliamentary leader in the Balochistan Assembly and Provincial Minister for Communications and Works Mir Saleem Khosa has said the communiqué issued after the Corps Commanders' Conference reflects the national resolve concerning Pakistan's security, sovereignty, peace and stability.

In a statement, Khosa said protecting the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity was a shared national responsibility, adding that citizens stood with state institutions in carrying out their respective responsibilities.

He said security forces, police, law-enforcement agencies and civilians had made significant sacrifices in confronting terrorism. The sacrifices of those killed in the fight against terrorism, he added, would remain an enduring part of the country's national history. According to the provincial minister, countering terrorism required more than security operations and also depended on effective governance, timely action on public concerns and stronger interaction between state institutions and citizens. Khosa emphasized the importance of strengthening police and other law-enforcement agencies, making effective use of modern technology, providing professional training and conducting intelligence-based operations to improve law and order and security.

He also stressed adherence to the Constitution and law and greater coordination among state institutions, describing these as important elements of internal stability and national security. The PML-N parliamentary leader said the nation remained united with the armed forces and law-enforcement agencies in matters concerning the country's defense, sovereignty and territorial integrity.



Thousands of people marched in Geneva, Switzerland, calling for an end to the genocide in Gaza, which is under Israeli attack and blockade. Gathering near the Mont Blanc Bridge, the demonstrators, carrying Palestinian flags, marched for hours through the city center.

Dar underscores importance of timely completion of development projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting on the development agenda for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The meeting reviewed ongoing development projects, including road refurbishment, and progress on socio-economic initiatives in AJK. Measures to strengthen administrative coordination were also discussed.

The DPM/FM underscored the importance of timely completion of development projects and efficient utilization of financial resources to support long-term growth and improve public welfare, in line with the directions of the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the aspirations of the people of AJK.

The meeting was attended by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Secretaries of Finance and Kashmir Affairs, Special Secretary Finance, Chief Secretary AJK, Additional Chief Secretary (Development) AJK and the Joint Chief Economist of the Planning and Development Division.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, on underscored the importance of the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) in further expanding Pakistan-Bahrain cooperation. The DPM/FM chaired an inter-ministerial meeting to review preparations for the third session of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC), which he would co-chair with his Bahraini counterpart.

Dar further directed the concerned ministries to finalise preparations in close coordination and pursue concrete outcomes from the Bahraini Foreign Minister's visit next week, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, acting foreign secretary, and secretaries and senior officials from all concerned ministries and departments.

The Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, briefed the DPM/FM on the agenda and key areas of bilateral cooperation for the forthcoming session.

11 India-backed terrorists killed in KP, Balochistan

RAWALPINDI (INP): The security forces personnel have eliminated 11 Indian-sponsored terrorists affiliated with Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khwarij during intelligence-based operations carried out in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Security sources confided to the TV channel early Saturday that troops have killed six terrorists affiliated with Fitna al-Hindustan during an intelligence-based operation in Gorindar area of Mashkeel in Balochistan. The operation was conducted under Operation Radd-ul-Fitna 3, with security forces targeting the militants.

The security sources said the terrorists tried to flee after resorting to firing on a security checkpost in Mashkeel. The troops retaliated swiftly and shot dead the fleeing terrorists.

A clearance operation was underway in the area to eliminate any remaining terrorists and secure the locality, the sources said. In South Waziristan District, the security forces obliterated a number of hideouts belonging to Fitna al-Khwarij during an intelligence-based operation conducted under Azm-e-Istehkam vision.

CM Bugti reaffirms Balochistan govt's commitment to protect citizens

Commends the security forces for successfully thwarting a terrorist attempt in Mashkel

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has commended the security forces for successfully thwarting a terrorist attempt in Gorandar area of Mashkel, Washuk district, reaffirming the provincial government's commitment to protecting citizens and maintaining peace and stability across the province.

The chief minister said the entire nation stood behind the security forces in their efforts to counter terrorism, adding that the state would not compromise on the safety of the people or the protection of their lives and property.

Bugti paid tribute to the security personnel involved in the operation against terrorists described by authorities as belonging to "Fitna al-Hindustan." saying their timely and effective response had prevented another attempt to carry out terrorist activities in the area.

He said security forces remained committed to eliminating terrorism under the Azm-e-Istehkam framework.

Balochistan govt utilizing all available resources for development projects, says Zahoor Buledi

GWADAR, (VoM Report): Balochistan Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahoor Buledi has said additional resources will be prioritized for Gwadar's development projects, with new initiatives planned for sports, urban rehabilitation, water supply and education.

He expressed these views while chairing a high-level meeting on the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) during his visit to the city. The meeting reviewed ongoing and completed development schemes, water supply arrangements, funding requirements, administrative matters and the performance of GDA School. The meeting was attended by Balochistan Assembly members Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman, Syed Zafar Ali Agha and Engineer Abdul Majeed Badini, GDA Director General Moin-ur-Rehman Khan, Chief Engineer Haji Syed Muhammad and other relevant officials.

The GDA director general briefed the meeting on the Old Town Rehabilitation Project, municipal services, water supply and other development activities. The project has covered construction, rehabilitation and beautification of roads, streets, markets, educational institutions, graveyards, Eidgahs, squares and intersections in different parts of the city. Officials said more than 5,000 trees had been planted, while around 31 kilometres of sewerage drains and 23 kilometres of stormwater drains had been developed.

Establishment of peace in Balochistan key priority of provincial govt: Babar

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Home Affairs Aide Babar Yousafzai has described the reported elimination of six militants in Mashkel during Operation Radd-ul-Fitna III as a significant success for the security forces, saying efforts to disrupt peace, stability and development in the province would be firmly countered.

In a statement, Yousafzai commended the security forces for what he termed an effective action against militant elements in Balochistan. He said the personnel demonstrated courage and professionalism during the operation and successfully neutralized the reported militant threat.

He paid tribute to security personnel who had lost their lives or faced risks while maintaining law and order and safeguarding citizens and their property, saying their sacrifices remained highly valued.

Political differences should be resolved through democratic means, says CM Bugti

ISLAMABAD, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said his government remains prepared to engage with political groups through constitutional and democratic channels, while making clear that negotiations cannot be pursued with armed elements involved in violence against civilians.

Addressing a special lecture organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Bugti said political differences should be resolved through democratic means and within the framework of the Constitution and law.

He maintained that the state's authority and the safety of citizens were matters that could not be compromised.

The chief minister said durable peace in Balochistan required more than security measures, stressing the importance of effective governance, political participation, merit-based recruitment, education, economic development and greater opportunities for young people.

He emphasized that the complexities of Balochistan could not be understood by examining isolated incidents or relying on one-sided narratives. Instead, he said, the province's history, geography, social composition, political development and contemporary circumstances needed to be studied collectively.

Referring to Balochistan's ancient heritage, Bugti pointed to Mehrgarh as evidence of the region's thousands-of-years-old civilization.

He said the province's successive political and administrative arrangements, including local communities, tribal systems, the Khanate of Kalat, British rule and its eventual integration into Pakistan, should be examined within their respective historical contexts.



KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses the inauguration ceremony of Treatment Plant-I

Political stability to enable country to tackle terrorism more effectively: Bilawal

KARACHI, (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has called for a written agreement between the Centre and provinces to jointly combat terrorism.

Addressing an inauguration ceremony of Treatment Plant-I in Karachi, the PPP leader said that the federal and provincial governments must work together to address the worsening security situation. Bilawal, the former foreign minister, also urged all political parties to keep political interests separate from the terrorism issue, warning that deteriorating conditions would not remain confined to a single province. He said that India is behind the terrorist activities originating from Afghanistan and criticised the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for "failing to give sufficient importance" to terrorism despite frequent attacks in the province.

He warned that if the provincial government did not cooperate with the Centre, constitutional options such as governor's rule or an emergency could eventually have to be considered. Bilawal said KP is not giving due importance to the issue of terrorism, and this might eventually lead to the imposition of governor's rule.

Turning to political tensions between Imran Khan-founded Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the PML-N-led government over the former's decision to hold a long march towards Islamabad, Bilawal said all political parties should recognise the importance of ongoing negotiations and work towards a political solution in the national interest.

The PTI had earlier postponed its planned long march towards Islamabad from September 27 to October 4. The former ruling party has said the protest is aimed at seeking the release of its jailed founding chairman, Imran Khan, and what it describes as the restoration of constitutional supremacy.

The PPP chairman said political stability would strengthen democracy and enable the country to tackle terrorism more effectively without resorting to emergency measures.



Police detain a demonstrator during a protest demanding the resignation of India's Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, in New Delhi, India

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

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United Nations unable to restore global trust

The United Nations was established in 1945 by the victorious powers of World War II. Despite the confrontational nature of the bipolar world system, it established a relatively successful world order. However, its collapse began at a time when expectations for the organization were at their peak. The United States, the architect of the organization, turned its back on the U.N. because it believes the organization no longer serves its interests.

The most recent U.N. General Assembly (UNGA), held in New York from Sept. 22 to 28, showed that the prospect of making the U.N. functional and effective again is diminishing day by day. The theme of the 81st session of the UNGA was "Restoring Trust, Managing Transformation: A United Nations That Delivers for All."

Today, the U.N. is unable to restore global trust because it has failed to find solutions to major regional and global crises. Furthermore, it is unable to effectively manage the ongoing global transformation. As every state is preoccupied with saving itself and maximizing its national interests, states have started to ignore global interdependence. Unfortunately, the projects developed under this mandate, such as "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) and "Make Europe Great Again" (MEGA), are mostly destructive rather than constructive.

More than 130 heads of state and government attended the meeting to deliver their message to the world. The primary goal of world leaders is to announce their states' agendas to the global public. They want to be understood. However, the global powers, namely, the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, do not want to relinquish their privileged positions. Consequently, the U.N. Security Council has lost much of its effectiveness and, therefore, much of its significance. The UNGA has taken its place; however, the decisions it adopts are not binding. As a result, the U.N. has lost much of its meaning and effectiveness. Overall, the U.N.'s executive power has been destroyed.

The reality of today's world is simple. The threats facing humanity as a whole can only be met and overcome through collective efforts. No state can overcome the threats it faces on its own. On the other hand, if the boundless wealth of one state is achieved at the cost of the unbearable poverty of others, no one will be safe. Therefore, all states, whether small or large, will need a global order in which the behavior of key actors is predictable.

All states know very well that the worst peace is better than the best war. The world and the international public opinion are exhausted and fed up; they want to be free of these hardships. Most leaders have emphasized the importance of the U.N. and the global order it established.

However, the recent meeting indicated that it is unlikely that the U.N. will change its stance in the near future. The host country, the U.S., did not allow Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas to attend the meeting. Denying Abbas a visa, the leader of the most suffering nation in the world, is one of the greatest acts of lawlessness and lack of conscience on earth. Palestinians subjected to genocide were not allowed to make their voices heard by the world. It was ironic to see that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, against whom the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant, was allowed to speak at the UNGA. This is also an indication that the U.N. has gone bankrupt. Therefore, one of the biggest ironies of today's world is that global powers call for a predictable global order. They do not want international norms and rules to constrain their foreign policies. They do not want to be constrained. Despite being the ones who violate international rules and norms, the global powers continue to use the U.N. system as a tool against weaker parties. As several leaders have stated in numerous speeches, this situation will persist until a more just world order is established. This is a main precondition for global interdependence and the implementation of a win-win strategy. It seems that the world will continue to need greater fairness in international organizations.

Proxy wars reality

DR ANUM NAZ

Understanding Middle Eastern politics through slogans, emotional claims and a single narrative of "secret conspiracies" may be convenient, but history is rarely that simple. One question, however, deserves serious consideration: did the balance of power in the Middle East change after Iran's 1979 revolution in a way that weakened the possibility of a united Arab front against Israel?

To answer that question, we need to move beyond slogans and examine history, wars and developments on the ground.

It would be historically inaccurate to suggest that Arab states never fought Israel. In 1948, the armies of Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq participated in the war, while Saudi Arabia also dispatched a military contingent that fought under Egyptian command. In 1956, Egypt confronted Israel, Britain and France during the Suez Crisis. In 1967, Egypt, Jordan and Syria went to war with Israel. Within six days, Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

Then came the 1973 war. Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel, placing the Israeli military under considerable pressure during the initial phase. By the end of the war, however, Israel had regained much of its military position. The conflict also had consequences far beyond the battlefield: Arab oil-producing states imposed an oil embargo on the United States and some Western countries, sending shock waves through the global economy.

The first historical lesson, therefore, is clear: Arab states did fight Israel, but Arab unity was neither permanent nor uniform.

What changed in 1979?

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 represented a fundamental geopolitical and political transformation in the Middle East. The pro-Western monarchy of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was overthrown and replaced by an Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The new Iranian leadership made the projection of the revolution and opposition to Western influence important elements of its foreign policy. A new form of regional competition began to emerge. Rather than relying exclusively on conventional warfare, Iran expanded its regional influence through relationships with armed groups, providing varying degrees of financial support, training, weapons and political backing. This network is now commonly described as Iran's regional armed network or the "Axis of Resistance".

It has included Hezbollah in Lebanon, several armed groups in Iraq, the Houthis in Yemen and some Palestinian groups.

But an important qualification is necessary.

It would be an oversimplification to claim that Iran simply created proxies in every Arab country that had fought Israel. Hezbollah, for example, emerged in Lebanon during the 1980s amid the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and the particular political and social circumstances of the Lebanese Shia community. Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps subsequently provided it with substantial financial and military support. Similarly, Iran's role in Syria became closely associated with its support for Bashar al-Assad's government. In Iraq, the influence of Iran-aligned militias was shaped by the political and security vacuum following the 2003 US invasion and later by the war against the Islamic State. In Yemen, the roots of the Houthi movement lie in local Zaydi politics and a prolonged conflict with the Yemeni state. Iran later provided the Houthis with varying forms of support, including technology and training. To describe the Houthi movement simply as an "Iranian creation", however, would ignore its complex local origins.

Did Iran's proxy strategy make Israel safer?

This is an important question, but it cannot responsibly be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

On the one hand, Iran has supported armed groups that have carried out attacks against Israel. Its relationships with Hezbollah and Hamas are prominent examples. The Houthis have also launched missiles and drones towards Israel and attacked shipping in the Red Sea linked to Israel. On the other hand, Iran itself has directly attacked Israel. In April 2024, Iran launched a large-scale drone and missile attack directly against Israeli territory for the first time.

Regional groups aligned with Iran also became involved in the wider confrontation. It is therefore inaccurate to claim that Iran has never fired a shot at Israel.

The more meaningful question may be different: Has the confrontation between Iran and Israel contributed to diverting Arab states from the possibility of a common anti-Israel front towards dealing with their own competing security concerns?

There is a strong case for viewing this as one of the significant regional consequences.

Lebanon: Resistance or a State Within a State?

Hezbollah emerged in the name of resistance to Israel and developed into a powerful military force opposing Israeli presence in southern Lebanon. Over time, however, it also became a major actor within Lebanon's political system.

This creates a fundamental dilemma. When a country has an exceptionally powerful armed organisation operating alongside the regular state military, questions of sovereignty and decisions about war and peace become considerably more complicated.

Lebanon's predicament, therefore, is no longer simply a matter of Israel versus Hezbollah. It involves the Lebanese state, domestic politics, Iran, Israel and a range of regional actors whose interests intersect and often conflict.

Syria: From the Israeli Front to Civil War.

Syria fought Israel in 1948, 1967 and 1973. But after 2011, Syria itself became engulfed in a prolonged and devastating civil war.

Iran supported the government of Bashar al-Assad, while Hezbollah and other armed actors also fought on the government's side. The conflict severely damaged Syria's military and economic capabilities. It would nevertheless be an unjustified attribution of motive to claim that Iran "destroyed Syria simply to prevent it from fighting Israel". Such a claim would require compelling evidence.

The reality was considerably more complex. Syria's war involved the government, opposition groups, Islamic State, Russia, Iran, Turkey, the United States and Israel, among others, with different actors pursuing different objectives at different stages.

The fall of the Assad government in 2024 also represented a major setback for Iran's regional network.

Iraq and Yemen: What Is the Real Story?

Iraq fought Israel in the 1948 war and also participated militarily in the conflicts of 1967 and 1973. But the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 transformed the country's political and security structure.

In the resulting environment, Iran-aligned Shia militias acquired considerable influence. Their importance increased further during the war against the Islamic State.

Yemen presents another complicated picture. The Houthi movement emerged from local political and social conflicts, but its military relationship with Iran subsequently deepened. Houthi missiles and drones have been used against regional targets, including Saudi Arabia, and against Israel.

It is therefore difficult to sustain the argument that Iranian-aligned armed groups target Muslims but never Israel. The available record shows otherwise.

Qatar Raises a New Question.

Recent tensions involving Iran and the United States have highlighted another reality: the costs of war are not merely military. They are economic as well.

Damage to Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG infrastructure following Iranian missile attacks led QatarEnergy to invoke force majeure on gas supplies. Severe disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz also affected the global LNG market.

By September 2026, QatarEnergy had warned that the Hormuz crisis could affect the schedules of new LNG projects, while disruptions were also affecting gas availability and prices in Asian markets.

The question, therefore, is not simply: "Who is whose agent?"

The more important question is: Who ultimately pays the economic price of regional wars?

The answer is straightforward. Wars are not fought only by armies. Ports, energy routes, industries, employment and ordinary citizens also bear their costs.

Is "Greater Israel" Becoming a Reality?

This is another subject that requires an examination of facts rather than emotion.

The term "Greater Israel" has been used in different ways by religious, historical and political movements. Some extremist and nationalist groups have advocated visions of expanded Israeli borders. But treating such visions as a settled, universally accepted or operational policy of the Israeli state would be misleading.

More importantly, drawing a territory on a map and permanently controlling that territory are two very different things.

The 1967 war provides an important example. Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Yet the Sinai was subsequently returned to Egypt under the Egypt-Israel peace treaty.

Even today, permanently controlling a large territory requires much more than advanced aircraft, drones, missiles and technology. Governance, population, water, infrastructure, economic sustainability, local resistance and long-term political administration are fundamental challenges.

The war in Gaza has also demonstrated that military superiority and a political settlement are not the same thing. A military force may inflict enormous damage on a territory, but establishing sustainable political control is a fundamentally different challenge.

By September 2026, the humanitarian situation in Gaza remained severe, with a large proportion of its roughly 2.1 million inhabitants displaced or facing shortages of essential services and other serious humanitarian difficulties.

The real danger may not be the map, but the fragmentation of power.

The central problem of the Middle East may not simply be whether a particular country dreams of reaching "from the Nile to the Euphrates".

The deeper problem is that regional states have struggled to translate their collective potential into effective power because of internal divisions, sectarian conflicts, economic dependencies, weak institutions and external intervention.

Israel, on one side, enjoys strong military and political support from the United States. Iran, on the other, has expanded its regional influence through non-state armed groups. The Gulf Arab states have relied heavily on the United States, advanced weapons systems and diplomatic partnerships for their security. The result is that the traditional model of state-versus-state warfare has increasingly been supplemented—and in some cases displaced—by multi-layered conflicts involving proxies, missiles, drones, cyber operations, economic pressure and political competition.

And in this entire process, ordinary people often pay the highest price.

What really changed after 1979?

Israel did not suddenly become invincible after 1979. Nor can it be established that Iran entered into a secret arrangement with Israel to eliminate the military power of the Arab states. But a major historical transformation did take place.

The Arab-Israeli conflict ceased to be the Middle East's only central strategic confrontation.

It became intertwined with the Iran-Saudi rivalry, Shia-Sunni political competition, the US-Iran confrontation, Turkey-Arab tensions, domestic civil wars and the growing power of non-state armed groups.

That transformation made the regional balance of power far more fragmented and complicated.

If the question is whether the Arab states presented a more unified state-based front against Israel before 1979 than they did afterwards, the historical record suggests that the regional power structure became considerably more fragmented after 1979.

But if the question is whether Iran is secretly protecting Israel, such a claim would require credible evidence. The available record instead shows a prolonged and intense confrontation between Iran and Israel, involving both direct attacks and proxy warfare.

Perhaps this is the bitterest lesson of the Middle East's long conflict:

The problem is not only the strength of one's adversary. It is also the fragmentation of one's own strength. If the Arab world genuinely seeks to play an effective role in advancing Palestinian interests and protecting its broader collective interests, slogans alone will not be enough. It will require stronger state institutions, greater economic self-reliance, political stability, regional diplomacy and sustained cooperation.

History also teaches us that wars are not won only on battlefields.

Sometimes nations lose when they become so consumed by the urge to settle solvable political problems through force that they leave no room for negotiation.

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Pakistan's climate hazards

DR. ZAMURRAD AWAN AND DR. DIEGO F. CISNEROS-HEREDIA

Pakistan's 2026 monsoon season has once again hit the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) particularly hard. Now incorporated into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), these communities face flash floods and landslides on landscapes already shaped by decades of conflict, displacement, weak infrastructure and environmental degradation. According to Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the unprecedented monsoon season, which began earlier this year in June 2026, caused widespread damage to standing crops, overflowed seasonal waterways and flooded villages and towns, including urban centres. As of 21 August, fatalities exceeded 163 and injuries surpassed 483, with KP being the most affected among all provinces. The normal monsoon cycle runs from mid-July, but this early heavy rainfall played havoc. According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), following last year's pattern, the 2026 monsoon has once again caused loss of life, along with rain-related incidents such as flash floods, roof collapses and landslides in KP. The main tribal districts included North and South Waziristan, Kurram and Bajaur. In Lower South Waziristan, flash floods washed away large tracts of agricultural land as seasonal streams overflowed. All of these areas were part of the erstwhile FATA.

Although many factors contribute to this situation, including the global climate crisis, extreme rainfall alone does not explain the disaster's scale. In the conflict-affected tribal areas of KP, climatic hazards interact with damaged infrastructure, displaced communities, poverty, weakened institutions, environmental degradation, and accelerated resource exploitation. The prolonged conflict has damaged agricultural land, irrigation systems and soil conservation structures, accelerating pressure on natural resources and ecosystem services. For example, security forces deliberately cleared hillside vegetation to deny militants cover, compounding a broader deforestation crisis. This has posed a severe threat to the subtropical forest, especially in the tribal agencies, where forest loss accelerated from about 74,600 hectares between 1990 and 2000 to about 95,600 hectares between 2000 and 2010. A substantial share of that loss is concentrated in the North/South Waziristan and Kurram districts, where deforestation in remote mountainous regions has been identified as a key driver of change in the local biophysical environment.

This vegetation loss in the tribal belt is not isolated or incidental but a sustained, measurable trend. The loss and degradation of forest and scrub vegetation can reduce ground cover and root systems that stabilise soil, alter runoff and fragment habitats for the region's insects, birds, mammals and other organisms. Although habitat degradation and biodiversity loss are clearly occurring, we still know remarkably little about their extent, patterns and long-term ecological consequences in the former FATA, as decades of insecurity have severely constrained ecological research and long-term biodiversity monitoring. According to the Inter-Agency Early Recovery Need Assessment (IAERNA), the livestock population declined by 35%, while mortality increased due to disrupted veterinary services. Such losses may also threaten locally adapted livestock genetic resources, although their genetic consequences in the former FATA remain largely undocumented. Forest depletion has been particularly severe, with over 70% of coniferous forests lost, driven by militancy, illegal timber smuggling, and reliance on wood for fuel and construction. Although the flagship Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Project (TBTTPP) planted 150 million trees in the erstwhile FATA, including significant contributions in Kurram and North/South Waziristan, the project faced setbacks due to insurgency and land ownership disputes, leading to the removal of forest guards and the abandonment of enclosures. Tree planting is only one part of ecosystem restoration; recovery also depends on tree survival, native vegetation, soils, watershed functions, biodiversity, and community participation. This matters particularly now, because reconstruction efforts will help determine whether environmental degradation is reversed or carried into the region's next phase of development. Thus, all these challenges have made the beautiful landscape of these areas, which featured "thick forests, lush meadows, healing springs, and majestic mountains", merely a place of suffering for its inhabitants. These dynamics reveal how conflict-induced displacement, neglect, and exploitation can create a cascading ecological crisis in underprivileged tribal areas, undermining biodiversity and agricultural sustainability.

It is worth noting that today's barren, tree-stripped mountains of the erstwhile FATA region carry a history that stretches back to the colonial era, when much of this terrain was forested. Historical accounts describe 19th-century Waziristan as home to tribes occupying the "wooded scrub-covered peaks" of the region, in the shadow of the Sulaiman Mountain Range. When the British fought against tribal uprisings during 1897–98, the largest British operation on the frontier, General Lockhart's forces levelled villages, destroyed crops and felled orchards in retaliation for tribal attacks on the Khyber Pass, while, more broadly, British and Indian troops systematically destroyed over a hundred fortified villages, towers and grain stores across the Tirah Valley to impose economic hardship and deter future incursions. The rationale for targeting villages, crops and orchards was also to deny insurgents cover—a step that directly affected the terrain and tribal livelihoods.

That legacy of vulnerability continues today as Tirah Valley, once celebrated for its beauty, is losing its forests at an alarming rate, with trees that took centuries to grow being cut down in days and timber reportedly being loaded and taken out of the valley.

This has been attributed to a governance vacuum left by decades of insurgency, military operations and mass displacement, which dismantled the valley's customary tribal forest-management institutions and allowed organised criminal timber networks to operate amid a structurally weak state forest administration, with credible allegations of official complicity in smuggling. Tribal elders have tried to intervene, formally petitioning the Chief Minister to act against the "timber mafia", but with limited effect—meaning the mountains that were stripped of cover a century ago under colonial punitive campaigns are, in Tirah's case, still being stripped today, just by a different set of actors and for different reasons. The local scepticism towards state-led conservation also persists, with fears that afforestation projects mask attempts to nationalise forests and strip communities of ownership rights. This is crucial because restoration is not just a technical issue; it also depends on land tenure, trust, legitimacy, and who holds authority over natural resources. Local residents also report "dramatic reductions in snowfall and rainfall, accelerated soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and the emergence of previously unknown disease burdens". Together, these changes reveal how environmental degradation is reshaping a landscape already strained by conflict, climate change, and decades of weak governance. Areas like Shawal Valley, once a summer retreat where people sought relief in its snowfields, are now described as places where snowfall has diminished so severely that people have stopped visiting.

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King Charles to confront Britain's slavery past during Caribbean tour

LONDON, (Agencies): King Charles will confront what Buckingham Palace described as "the darkest days of our past" when he visits the Caribbean later this month, amid renewed calls for Britain to address its role in the transatlantic slave trade.

Charles and Queen Camilla will visit the Bahamas and Guyana before traveling to Antigua and Barbuda, where the king will attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), scheduled for Nov. 1-4.

The visit comes as Caribbean and African countries intensify calls for Britain and other former colonial powers to pay reparations for their role in slavery. The issue is expected to feature prominently at the Commonwealth summit.

The British government has ruled out reparations, while Charles, who remains head of state of several Caribbean nations, including the Bahamas and Antigua and Barbuda, has previously expressed his sorrow over the legacy of slavery.

"There are important discussions taking place in various fora about colonial legacy and the intergenerational impact of the transatlantic trade in enslaved persons," a Buckingham Palace spokesperson told reporters, saying the visit was coming at an important time in the relationship between Britain and Caribbean nations.

"The visit program will therefore not shy away from 'the darkest days of our past,' as His Majesty has described them, but, in keeping with the wishes of our host nations, it will principally be oriented to the vibrant present and promising future of each country." From the 15th to the 19th century, at least 12.5 million Africans were abducted and sold into slavery by European merchants, with Britain responsible for transporting an estimated 3.2 million people, making it the second-most active European nation after Portugal. Charles, who is head of the Commonwealth, a group of 56 nations, mainly former British colonies, encompassing some 2.7 billion people, has backed research into the British monarchy's own historical links to the trade.

Last month, the Jamaican government formally asked him to seek legal advice on whether Britain should pay reparations and said it was "encouraged" by Buckingham Palace's engagement.

"It is important to note here the work His Majesty himself has done over many years both to acknowledge the wrongs of the past and to find creative ways to right inequalities that endure," the palace spokesperson said. "As you would therefore expect, opportunities will be found during the visit to reflect and renew his personal, wholehearted and continuing commitment to that process." In February, Commonwealth Secretary-General Shirley Botchwey told media she expected its members to make progress toward beginning negotiations on reparations.



Palestinian citizens of Israel gather during a commemorative march marking the 26th anniversary of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in Arraba, northern Israel



On the 100th day since the earthquakes that struck Venezuela, a memorial event was held in La Guaira state for those who lost their lives.

Over 80% of emergency oil release already delivered: IEA

PARIS, (Agencies): More than 80% of the emergency oil stocks pledged by International Energy Agency (IEA) members in March have already been released, the head of the agency said Friday.

"Around 325 million barrels of the IEA collective action announced on 11 March have so far been released," Executive Director Fatih Birol told G7 leaders, according to an agency statement. Birol said this represented more than 80% of the 400 million barrels originally pledged.

Energy markets continued to face significant pressure from the Strait of Hormuz crisis, particularly in diesel supplies, Birol said. Ukrainian attacks on Russian refineries added further pressure to diesel markets, tightening supplies and pushing up prices, according to the agency statement. In March, the IEA agreed to release 400 million barrels from emergency reserves to offset Middle East war-related supply disruptions, which it described as the largest coordinated release in its history.

KSA weighs possible offensive to retake Bab el-Mandeb

RIYADH, (Agencies): Saudi Arabia is preparing for a possible military offensive against Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen, with Riyadh considering a limited operation to retake territory around the strategic Bab el-Mandeb strait or a broader assault on several fronts, regional and Western officials told Reuters.

The operation could begin as soon as the coming weeks and would be led by Saudi-backed Yemeni forces on the ground, supported by Saudi airstrikes, according to six people familiar with the preparations.

The officials, who include Gulf and Yemeni officials and Western diplomats, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing sensitive security matters.

The United States is providing intelligence, including targeting information, to support Saudi operations, while several regional and European countries are supplying mainly defensive military assistance. Saudi allies are not expected to take a direct combat role, the people said.

The planned offensive, which has not previously been reported, would seek to reverse recent Houthi advances along Yemen's western coast and restore access to the Bab el-Mandeb, a vital maritime chokepoint at the southern entrance to the Red Sea.

The Houthis seized control of the strait after advancing down the coast last month, giving the group greater leverage over one of the world's most important shipping corridors. The Bab el-Mandeb connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and is a major route for commercial traffic between Europe and Asia.

The officials said Riyadh is considering two main options. The first would be a focused assault around Bab el-Mandeb aimed at restoring control of the coastal areas. The second would involve a much larger, coordinated campaign across several parts of Yemen, including Al-Bayda, Marib, Taiz and Al-Jawf. More than 100,000 Yemeni troops could be mobilized depending on the scale of the operation, the officials said.

Saudi Arabia has concluded that it cannot return to peace negotiations with the Houthis while the group controls Bab el-Mandeb, according to Western diplomats and a Gulf official.

The timing remains uncertain. The six people familiar with the preparations gave estimates ranging from within a week to a launch after the U.S. midterm elections in early November.

Michael Ratney, a former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said he expected any operation to be relatively limited compared with the Saudi-led campaign launched in 2015.

He said Riyadh would have an interest in reversing the Houthis' territorial gains around Bab el-Mandeb without becoming trapped in another large-scale war.

"it would be a fairly limited operation to retake coastal areas and get back to normal maritime traffic," Ratney said.

Egypt's Sisi calls for peaceful solutions to Africa's conflicts

CAIRO, (Agencies): Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Saturday urged African countries to prioritize peaceful solutions to conflicts, strengthen state institutions and respect national sovereignty, saying stability is essential for economic development.

"Economic development cannot be built in unstable countries, and stability is not a luxury but a fundamental pillar sought by investors, manufacturers and farmers so they can operate in a safe environment," Sisi said in his opening speech at the Alamein Africa Forum, which began Friday in New Alamein on Egypt's northern coast.

"Across our African continent, we fully understand that security begins with supporting the national state and its institutions, respecting its unity and sovereignty, prioritizing peaceful solutions to conflicts and crises, and upholding the principle of good neighborliness," he added.

The three-day forum has brought together about 1,500 government officials, business leaders, investors and representatives of financial institutions from across Africa, with discussions focused on economic development, investment and greater continental integration.

Sisi said Africa's private sector is the main driver of the continent's economies, contributing more than 70% of its gross domestic product. About 85% of transactions by Africa's private sector are conducted with companies from outside the continent, Sisi added.

Despite trade agreements and preferential arrangements among African countries, intra-African trade has accounted for only about 18% of the continent's total trade in recent years, Sisi said.

On international developments, Sisi said Africa aspires to "a world characterized by peace and stability, rather than being made to bear the consequences of global crises in which it was not a party but whose negative repercussions it suffers."

He cited the current energy crisis as an example, pointing to the impact of rising fuel and fertilizer prices and disruptions to supply and shipping chains on African countries.

Last February, the African Union summit in Addis Ababa approved plans to hold the Alamein Africa Forum every two years in New Alamein.

Egypt is organizing the forum in cooperation with the African Export-Import Bank and the African Union Development Agency.



Thousands of people, including pro-Palestinian supporters, gather at the historic Brandenburg Gate to protest against rearmament, war and compulsory military service in Berlin, Germany



Demonstrators protest at Puerta del Sol square after a parliamentary vote on two government decrees approved by the cabinet this week on a package of social and housing measures in Madrid, Spain

Sudan's army inflicts heavy losses on RSF, allies in Blue Nile state

KHARTOUM, (Agencies): The Sudanese army said Saturday it had dealt a "knockout blow" to the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the allied Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in Blue Nile state, inflicting heavy losses in personnel and equipment.

The army's Fourth Infantry Division said in a statement that its troops and supporting forces struck the two groups in the areas of Minza and Bashkarkad.

The operation inflicted "heavy losses in lives and equipment," disrupted their movements and thwarted attempts to advance toward army positions, the statement said. Troops destroyed several vehicles and pieces of equipment and forced attacking fighters to retreat under fire, it added, without providing casualty figures.

There was no immediate comment from the RSF on the army's account.

Earlier Saturday, Sudanese authorities said RSF drones had targeted the Blue Nile governor's home and several civilian sites in Damazin, the state capital. Blue Nile in southeastern Sudan has witnessed a military escalation in recent days, with the RSF and allied SPLM-N launching attacks on several areas in the state.

On Aug. 24, the UN said drone attacks had killed 1,100 civilians in Sudan between January and June this year.

Sudan has been engulfed in war between the army and the RSF since April 2023, following disagreements over integrating the paramilitary group into the military. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced about 13 million, according to UN and international estimates.

Philippines urges ASEAN talks after 50 killed in Myanmar airstrike

MANILA, (Agencies): The Philippines, which holds the 2026 chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, has expressed concern over a deadly airstrike in Myanmar's Rakhine state and offered to facilitate regional discussions on how ASEAN can help address the country's worsening crisis.

Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary for ASEAN Affairs Ana Marie Hernando said in an email response Saturday that Manila was closely monitoring developments after the Sept. 28 attack in Kyauktaw, where the death toll rose to 50 and at least 58 people were wounded, according to local aid workers and the Arakan Army, the ethnic armed group that controls the area.

"The Philippines is closely monitoring developments and expresses concern over the attacks which resulted in destruction, loss of lives and injuries to those affected," Hernando said.

Manila said it would remain mindful of the positions of ASEAN's member states and follow the bloc's consensus-based approach. The Philippines also said it was prepared to facilitate discussions on ways to assist Myanmar, in line with ASEAN's stated goal of finding a solution that is "Myanmar-owned and led."

The statement came days after the airstrike hit a busy market area and a nearby bridge in Kyauktaw, a town in western Rakhine state near the Bangladesh border.

The Arakan Army said a military fighter jet dropped two bombs near the market around midday, when the area was crowded with vendors, shoppers and other civilians.

Spain housing protesters vow new rallies after parliament vote

MADRID, (Agencies): Housing protesters in Spain vowed to return to the streets and continue their encampment in central Madrid after parliament rejected the government's proposed response to the country's deepening housing crisis.

Crowds gathered outside the assembly chanted "your profits, our misery" as lawmakers voted down the minority government's decree that had been drawn up to address mass anger over the eviction of an 87-year-old woman.

Protesters expressed exasperation as the debate in parliament over the measures highlighted bitter divisions about how to address the crisis. Earlier Spanish media said Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez might call a snap election for November if the legislation failed to pass.

Sanchez's office declined to comment on the reports.

The legislation had sought to ban evictions of vulnerable tenants until 2030, impose a two-year rent freeze extension for existing leases and introduce tighter rules for short-term rentals.

The decrees failed after lawmakers from Catalan separatist party Junts - a sometime ally of the left-wing government - joined the opposition in voting it down, arguing that the proposals would exacerbate matters by reducing housing supply. A second decree proposing automatic and indefinite renewal of rental contracts also failed.

The Tenants' Union, which had driven the protests, said it would press on with plans for more mass rallies for Saturday, piling pressure on the coalition.

The eviction of pensioner Maricarmen Abascal last week triggered protests across Spain. Young people pitched tents in Madrid's central square and other cities for almost a week, reviving memories of anti-austerity sit-ins sparked by the global financial crisis in 2008-12.

"The encampment will continue and will continue expanding to other neighbourhoods. We're aiming for a general strike," Tenants' Union spokesperson Alicia del Rio said after the decrees were struck down.

Israeli strike kills 2 Christian women, lecturer, her mother

GAZA, (Agencies): A Christian mother and daughter who served displaced families, and a university lecturer and her mother were killed in an Israeli airstrike targeting a residential building in Gaza City early Saturday.

Medical sources said the four women were among five Palestinians killed in the attack that hit the ground floor of the Al-Asala 1 building near Haidar roundabout in the western Rimal neighborhood, in the latest violation of an ongoing ceasefire agreement.

The women were identified as Maysa Abu Daoud, her daughter Mary Najjar, academic Yasmin al-Boubou and her mother, Halloum al-Boubou.

Maysa, known as Umm Michel, and Mary, known as Umm Fouad, were Palestinian Christians from Gaza City who devoted their time to helping parishioners and displaced people sheltering at the Holy Family Church, according to Palestine's Higher Presidential Committee for Church Affairs. The committee's chairman, Ramzi Khoury, described their deaths as a "painful loss" for their families, the church and its parishioners. Saint Porphyrius Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza mourned the women, as did Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who offered condolences to their relatives and Gaza's Christian community. Their funeral took place Saturday at Saint Porphyrius Church in Gaza City's Old City

Moldova says 5 Russian aerial weapons violated country's airspace, exploded on its territory

CHI'INÃU, (Agencies): Moldova's president on Saturday said five Russian aerial weapons, including Banderol missiles and drones, had violated the nation's airspace and exploded on its territory. Maia Sandu warned that Russia's attacks on neighboring Ukraine are "dangerously reaching Moldova." "Moscow is putting lives at risk across Europe and must be stopped," she wrote on US social media platform X.



Separately, Moldova's Foreign Ministry "strongly condemned" what it called a violation of the country's airspace, stressing that drone fragments were found outside Causeni, near the village of Dubovca, between the localities of Delacau and Puhaceni, and near Crocmaz, where the incident caused a vegetation fire and property damage. "Russia's war against Ukraine continues to pose concrete threats to our country and to the security of the entire region," it said.



TEKNOFEST organized by the Ministry of Industry and Technology and the T3 Foundation, is welcoming visitors at Sanliurfa GAP Airport in Turkiye.

CM Bugti vows to equip Balochistan's youth with market-oriented digital skills

Says technical and digital expertise could enable young people to benefit from emerging technologies, strengthen their earning potential and pursue more sustainable and dignified livelihoods

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said his government is focusing on equipping young people with market-oriented technical and digital skills to expand their access to employment, entrepreneurship and freelancing opportunities.

The chief minister expressed satisfaction over the launch of the Technical and Digital Skills Training Program under the Chief Minister Employment Program, describing modern skills development as an important step toward preparing the province's youth for the changing demands of the job market. Under the first phase, 500 young people from districts across Balochistan will receive three months of specialized training.

The initial group includes 400 men and 100 women, while the broader initiative aims to train a total of 1,000 young people in contemporary technical and digital fields.

The training program covers sales and marketing, digital marketing, web development and cybersecurity, with an emphasis on practical capabilities that can help participants meet current market requirements.

According to the program's objectives, the training is intended not only to improve prospects for conventional employment but also to encourage entrepreneurship and freelancing, allowing participants to pursue income-generating opportunities beyond traditional workplaces.

After completing the courses, trained youth will be able to explore potential employment in software houses, information technology and digital marketing firms, cybersecurity and data management fields, as well as media and public relations positions in both public and private organizations.

The initiative will also support young people seeking self-employment by providing skills relevant to online businesses, digital agencies and freelance services.

Bugti said the provincial government would continue investing in programs designed to bring the skills of Balochistan's youth in line with the requirements of an increasingly technology-driven economy.

He said access to relevant technical and digital expertise could enable young people to benefit from emerging technologies, strengthen their earning potential and pursue more sustainable and dignified livelihoods.



QUETTA: MNAs Jamal Shah Kakar, Sardar Yaqoob Khan Nasar, Akhtar Bibi and others in a group photo on the eve of Muslim Students Federation District Conference.



Protesters gathered in Rho, near Milan, Italy, to demonstrate against a plan to build three data centers covering approximately three square kilometers. A data center is defined as an infrastructure facility that ensures the uninterrupted operation of computing equipment, networks, and digital services.

Dar, Marriot welcomes positive momentum in Pak-UK bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, on Saturday, called on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed Pak-United Kingdom relations. Both sides welcomed the positive momentum in bilateral ties and discussed upcoming engagements to carry this cooperation forward, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. They also exchanged views on the evolving regional situation.

The DPM/FM underscored the importance of efforts to ease tensions and reaffirmed that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable way forward.

Naqi for diplomatic efforts to advance peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Dr. Muhammad Najeeb Naqi has called for intensified international diplomatic efforts to advance a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Talking to a delegation of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), led by Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, which called on him at Presidence in JK house, the president said the internationally recognised dispute could only be resolved by implementing the UN resolutions guaranteeing the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

The president said Pakistan had continued to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiri people and urged the international community to play its role in securing their right to self-determination promised under the UN resolutions.

Referring to India's unilateral actions of August 5, 2019, Dr. Naqi said legislation enacted by the Indian Parliament could not alter the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir. He urged the international community to take note of the human rights situation in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir and support protection of the fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people. He called for intensified diplomatic efforts to highlight alleged human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and prolonged detention of political and human rights activists, restrictions on freedom of expression and other reported abuses.

Right to development must occupy rightful place on human rights agenda: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Denouncing ongoing foreign occupations, Pakistan has called on the United Nations to implement its long-standing resolutions guaranteeing the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir and Palestine.

"International law cannot be invoked vigorously in one situation and disregarded in another," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the General Assembly's Third Committee, which deals with social, humanitarian and cultural issues. The Pakistani envoy spoke as the Committee began a general debate in which speakers focused on the threats to human rights and warned of poverty and climate pressures affecting social development.

"For nearly eight decades," Ambassador Jadoon said, "Kashmiris have awaited implementation of Security Council resolutions providing for the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir through a free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices."

Since 5 August 2019, when India illegally annexed Jammu and Kashmir, repression and restrictions have intensified on fundamental freedoms as also attempts to alter the demographic and political character of the occupied territory. "Arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, restrictions on expression and peaceful assembly, and demographic engineering cannot become acceptable merely because they persist over time," Ambassador Jadoon said, adding, "Rights delayed for generations do not become rights denied."

Ambassador Jadoon's remarks drew a predictable response from an Indian delegate who, while exercising his rights of reply, insisted that the Kashmir dispute was India's "internal matter", a claim that a Pakistani representative swiftly countered, saying that the State was an internationally recognised disputed territory, whose final status remains to be determined in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people, as enshrined in numerous UN resolutions. In his remarks, Ambassador Jadoon also drew attention to the suffering of the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza, saying it remains a "defining test of our collective conscience."

Civilians, he said, must be protected; humanitarian assistance must reach those in need without impediment; international law must be upheld; and accountability must be ensured. "Above all, the Palestinian people must finally realize their inalienable right to self-determination," the Pakistani envoy added.

On human rights, Ambassador Jadoon said that the developing countries confront shrinking fiscal space, unsustainable debt, climate shocks and widening technological divides, with the international financial architecture often perpetuating rather than correcting these inequalities. The right to development must occupy its rightful place on the human rights agenda, he said



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar meeting the British High Commissioner Jane Marriott at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Gohar Ejaz says:

Pakistan must focus on productive economic activity instead of depending on borrowing

LAHORE (INP): Former caretaker federal minister Gohar Ejaz has said Pakistan cannot move forward by relying on interest-based financing and loans, stressing that the country needs to promote business and economic activity to address its challenges.

Addressing a gathering at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ejaz said education was the basic right of every child and called for improving the quality of education in government schools. He said the number of schools in the country was insufficient to meet growing needs, with around six million children entering the education system every year.

He stressed that improving the education system was therefore essential. On the economy, Ejaz said Pakistan needed to focus on businesses and productive economic activity instead of depending on borrowing.

He claimed that the country faced difficulties even in meeting its IMF payment obligations, while overall exports had remained around previous levels. He said the textile sector had improved its export performance, but other sectors had failed to make similar progress.

He added that businesses were ready to pay taxes and should fulfil their tax responsibilities. Ejaz also highlighted the need to strengthen expertise and business capacity in the country. He said Pakistan had experts with knowledge of different international economies and stressed the importance of increasing expertise at the household level.



QUETTA: MPA Malik Naeem Khan Bazai inaugurates Ameen Marshal Mini Sports Complex at Khuchlak. ANP Provincial Youth Secretary Malik Ajmal Khan Bazai is also present.

Probe into alleged financial irregularities gains momentum in Balochistan

QUETTA (ANN): The Anti-Corruption Establishment Balochistan has stepped up investigations into alleged financial irregularities and other suspected violations involving several provincial departments, with a number of inquiries reportedly progressing on the basis of evidence collected so far.

According to a spokesperson for the Anti-Corruption Establishment, investigations were accelerated following the collection of material concerning alleged irregularities in the Irrigation Department and other government institutions.

The spokesperson said proceedings had also been initiated against individuals alleged to have acted as frontmen for Irrigation Minister Sadiq Umrani. An inquiry involving SDO Amin Umrani has been intensified following the emergence of information regarding his alleged ownership of several companies. The allegations remain under investigation and have not resulted in a reported determination of wrongdoing.

Officials are also obtaining records relating to alleged financial irregularities in the Irrigation, Agriculture, Water Management, Market Committee, Revenue and Food departments. The inquiry additionally covers allegations concerning encroachments on government and commercial land, including properties where petrol pumps and CNG stations are reportedly operating.

The Pat Feeder Canal project is also among the matters being examined, with allegations of financial irregularities involving billions of rupees reportedly under investigation. The spokesperson said investigators were examining allegations involving the minister's sons, Arsalan and Bilal, including reported links to land-related activities in Naseerabad district, local government funds and contractors.

Pakistan actively engaged in int'l diplomacy: Masood Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The appearance of retired Pakistani soldier Mohammad Asif, whom Indian authorities and media had identified as a militant killed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), raised questions about the accuracy of the account, said former AJK president and ex-Pakistan ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, after the Pakistan military presented Asif alive on October 1.

In a statement issued here, Khan said the episode demonstrated the dangers of releasing and amplifying security-related claims without adequate verification and argued that information associated with sensitive incidents should be independently checked before being disseminated, particularly when such claims can have implications for relations between India and Pakistan.

He said journalists and media organizations have a responsibility to establish the veracity of information, including information attributed to government or military authorities.

He emphasized that claims should be cross-checked through multiple sources and, where facts remain uncertain, the existence of doubt should be clearly acknowledged.

Sardar Masood Khan described the incident as part of what he characterized as a broader pattern of information warfare and narrative-building directed against Pakistan.

He referred to previous episodes, including Pulwama, Uri and Pahalgam, and argued that allegations involving Pakistan should be supported by verifiable evidence rather than amplified before the facts are established.

He also referred to reports and research concerning coordinated information campaigns against Pakistan, including the findings attributed to EU DisinfoLab in 2020 regarding networks of websites and media outlets.

APHC convener briefs AJK president on latest situation in IIOJK and the challenges faced by Hurriyat leaders and activists.



QUETTA: Pakistan flour mills association regional president Saleh Agha talking to media during a Press Conference.

Balochistan Transport Dept reviews implementation of AI Appointment Policy

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan Transport Department, in its monthly reviewed the implementation of the AI Appointment Policy, the status of ongoing court cases, and the provincial action plan.

The meeting held under the chairmanship of Secretary Transport, Hayat Kakar was attended by Additional Secretary Transport Qurban Ali Magsi, Managing Director Mass Transit Authority Abdul Khaliq Zehri, Secretary Provincial Transport Authority (PTA) Abdul Majeed Junejo, Deputy Director Balochistan Traffic Engineering Bureau (BTEB) Shakeel Ahmed, Director BPPPA Ihsanullah, and Secretary Regional Transport Authority (RTA) Quetta Niamatullah Tareen.

The meeting reviewed progress on departmental development projects, maintenance of the transport database, recruitment and promotions against vacant posts, assignment accounts, tendering processes, and project implementation. Additionally, revenue collection progress for the fiscal year 2026–27 was assessed, comparing the set targets of PTA and RTA Quetta with actual performance.

Secretary Transport Hayat Kakar directed officials to ensure timely progress on all matters under discussion.

Nation ready to sacrifice lives for motherland

ISLAMABAD (APP): A large number of people thronged the Yadgar-e-Fatah Monument here after it was opened to the general public, commemorating the country's victory over India in the Marka-e-Haq Operation 2025 and paying tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the homeland.

The special ceremony jointly organized by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Capital Development Authority held at the monument's premises gathered people from all walks of life to celebrate the moment of national pride.

Talking to APP on the occasion, Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Ashfaq Ahmad Khalil said the Yadgar-e-Fatah monument serves as a landmark of the nation's victory anchored in courage and unwavering determination. He termed the opening of the Yadgar-e-Fatah monument a pride moment for the nation and for the coming generations.

The ceremony was attended by prominent figures including President Chess Federation Zeeshan Naqvi and emerging national cricketer Razaullah, as well as famous public personality from the world of sports, 'Chacha Cricket'.

Speaking on the occasion, cricketer Razaullah paid rich tribute to the bravery of Pakistan's armed forces and their invaluable sacrifices. He said that Pakistan's armed forces had defeated the enemy decisively in the past and would continue to do so in the future. He added that he felt immensely proud to be a Pakistani. Chacha Cricket congratulated the entire nation on the remarkable victory in Marka-e-Haq and said that the nation was ready to sacrifice their lives for the motherland.

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