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All available resources to be utilized to eradicate terrorism from Balochistan: CM Bugti

Balochistan govt approves immediate security operation in Hanna Urak

QUETTA, (VoM Report): The Balochistan government, in a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has decided to launch an immediate sanitization operation in Hanna Urak and adjoining areas to eliminate terrorists and their facilitators.

The meeting, attended by Provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove, cabinet members, senior civil and military officials, and representatives of law enforcement agencies, reviewed the province's overall law and order situation with particular focus on Hanna Urak. Officials provided a detailed briefing on the recent tragic incident and the broader security environment.

Several key measures were approved to restore peace. CM Bugti directed indiscriminate action against all those involved in terrorism, stressing that operations must continue until perpetrators are brought to justice. He firmly stated that the writ of the state would not be compromised under any circumstances.

To strengthen security, the meeting also approved the activation of a joint check post where all law enforcement agencies will work together to monitor terrorist movements and ensure a safe environment for citizens.

Expressing condolences to the families of those martyred in the Hanna Urak tragedy, the Chief Minister instructed that financial assistance and official compensation be provided within two days to support affected families. The meeting also addressed the concerns of peaceful protesters. CM Bugti emphasized that peaceful protest is a constitutional and democratic right, and the government is committed to addressing legitimate demands. A high-level committee led by Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove and Provincial Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar has been formed to engage with protesters, tribal elders, elected representatives, civil society, and other stakeholders to find a sustainable solution through dialogue.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti talking to media.



RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces, presided over the 276th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at General Headquarters (GHQ)

Army top brass vows to take all measures to ensure Pakistan's 'rightful share of water' amid IWT tensions with India

RAWALPINDI, (Monitoring Desk): The military's top brass on Monday expressed a resolute commitment to undertake all necessary measures to ensure the availability of Pakistan's "rightful share of water" amid tensions with India over the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

For more than six decades, India and Pakistan amicably managed the Indus River system through the IWT transboundary water-sharing agreement signed on September 19, 1960. In April last year, India suspended the treaty in the wake of the Pahalgam attack.

According to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Asim Munir, presided over the 276th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. The forum took note of Indian rhetoric surrounding the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and reaffirmed the guidance issued in the National Security Committee's directive of April 24, 2025.

"It expressed a resolute commitment to undertake all measures necessary to ensure the availability of Pakistan's rightful share of water as per the directives of the Government and the aspirations of the people of Pakistan," ISPR said.

The statement further added that the forum expressed serious concerns over the continued use of territory under the control of the Afghan Taliban regime by Indian sponsored terrorist groups, including Fitna-al Khawarij (FAK) and Fitna-al Hindustan (FAH) to orchestrate attacks inside Pakistan.



A farewell ceremony is being held in the streets of Tehran, the capital of Iran, for Ali Khamenei, the former leader of Iran who died in US-Israeli attacks.

Govt believes in consultation; cooperation with all political forces to meet public expectations, says CM Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, on Monday held separate meetings at the Chief Minister's Secretariat with various senior officials, political leaders, and heads of government institutions. During the meetings, detailed discussions were held on the overall law and order situation in the province, public service delivery, governance, improvement of the energy sector, and other important administrative matters.

Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Muhammad Tahir Khan, briefed the Chief Minister on law and order in the province, ongoing operations against terrorism, security arrangements in sensitive districts, and measures taken to protect the lives and property of the public. The Chief Minister said that the establishment of peace in Balochistan is the government's top priority and that operations against terrorist elements will continue with full force. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to further strengthening the professional capabilities of the police force and providing them with all possible resources.

Inspector General of Prisons Balochistan, Captain (Retired) Asim Qaimkhani, also met the Chief Minister. During the meeting, matters relating to ongoing prison reforms, security arrangements, prisoner welfare, rehabilitation programs, and enhancing the administrative capacity of prisons were reviewed. The Chief Minister directed that prisons be aligned with modern requirements and made more effective as correctional institutions.

Parliamentary Leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) Balochistan, Mir Saleem Khan Khosa, also met the Chief Minister. The meeting discussed the overall political situation in the province, public issues, ongoing development projects, legislation, and matters related to public welfare.

The Chief Minister said that the government believes in consultation and cooperation with all political forces to meet public expectations, promote transparent governance, and ensure the sustainable development of Balochistan.

Balochistan govt pursuing zero-tolerance policy against terrorism: Shahid Rind

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan for Political and Media Affairs, Shahid Rind, said that security forces have launched a full-scale operation against terrorists in the suburban areas of Hanna Urak and Babri near Quetta. The objective of the operation is to completely clear the area of terrorist elements and ensure the protection of the lives and property of citizens.

He said that the terrorists have suffered heavy losses during the operation, while the security forces are pursuing them in a highly professional manner. He stated that the operation is progressing effectively and will continue without interruption until the complete elimination of the terrorists. Shahid Rind said that four personnel of the Anti-Terrorist Force (ATF) were injured during the operation and are being provided immediate medical treatment. He expressed his best wishes for the speedy recovery of the injured personnel and said that the security forces are displaying unparalleled courage and sacrifice in the fight against terrorism. He said that security has been further tightened at all entry and exit points of Hanna Urak and Babri during the operation to prevent the movement of terrorists.

Balochistan Print Media demands immediate suspension of controversial Balochistan Advertising Policy 2026

Syed Anwar Shah says meaningful consultations can only succeed if govt immediately suspends implementation of current media policy

QUETTA (ANN): Chairman of Balochistan Print Media, Syed Anwar Shah, said that the situation arising from the media policy in Balochistan is clear evidence that decisions made without comprehensive consultation, consideration of ground realities, and inclusion of the opinions of media organizations not only become controversial but also damage trust between the government and the media.

He said that immediately after the proposed media policy was approved during the cabinet meeting on April 16, 2026, Balochistan Print Media informed the President of Pakistan, the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Senate, the Deputy Chairman of the Senate, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Opposition Leader, members of the National and Provincial Assemblies, the Government of Balochistan, coalition parties, the opposition, political and social organizations, representative bodies of the newspaper industry, and other relevant stakeholders about the fundamental flaws in the policy, its potential drawbacks, and its adverse impact on the journalism industry. As a result, the policy received strong criticism from political, journalistic, and social circles, and several responsible individuals and institutions also expressed serious reservations. However, instead of addressing these concerns, the government began implementing the policy from July 1.

The government's current invitation for consultations is itself an acknowledgment that the shortcomings of the policy require reconsideration.

True political leadership lies in meeting needs of present generation: Governor

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor of Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail said that politics is fundamentally about serving the people and protecting their rights and authority. He stated that during his 40-year political career, he laid strong foundations for education, healthcare, and infrastructure across the province, particularly in the Zhob Division. He expressed confidence that these development projects and initiatives would continue to benefit future generations. The Governor said the day is not far when District Zhob will become a major educational center for the entire region. He noted that the BUITEMS Zhob Campus, the Daanish School established under the Punjab Government's education project, and other educational and technical institutions will have a significant positive impact on the lives of local residents. He made these remarks while meeting separately with various delegations from the Zhob Division at the Governor House in Quetta. Governor Mandokhail emphasized that true political leadership lies in meeting the needs of the present generation while safeguarding the future of coming generations. He said it is a matter of pride that the BUITEMS Zhob Campus has emerged as a prominent center for quality education, youth academic and professional training.

Govt expanding overseas job prospects for skilled, qualified Pakistanis: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed Pakistani embassies abroad to intensify efforts to identify and secure employment opportunities for the country's workforce, emphasizing the government's commitment to expanding overseas job prospects for skilled and qualified Pakistanis.

Chairing a review meeting on youth employment, the prime minister said Pakistan's workforce possessed immense potential and stressed the need to strengthen international outreach to connect skilled workers with global labour markets. He instructed embassies to actively collect and share information on available jobs and required qualifications in host countries. The prime minister directed the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC), and the Prime Minister's Youth Programme to ensure that the workforce, particularly young people, received vocational skills training along with foreign language courses and internationally recognized certifications. The prime minister pointed out that Pakistan's workforce was highly capable and that the government was taking every possible step to provide education and training that meet international standards and improve global employability. The prime minister emphasized that all relevant institutions should strengthen cooperation with other countries to align Pakistani certifications with international standards.

He also directed that language training, along with certification, be ensured for countries where employment opportunities existed for skilled Pakistani workers.



GILGIT: Chairman Pakistan People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing During the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan

APNS Rejects Balochistan Advertising Policy 2026

New advertising policy will widen gap between Balochistan govt and media: APNS

QUETTA (ANN): The Government of Balochistan has enforced the "Balochistan Advertising Policy 2026" with effect from July 1, despite strong reservations expressed by media organizations regarding the unilateral policy. Under amendments made to the 2023 policy, it has been decided that all tender notices, auction notices, prequalification notices, and Expressions of Interest (EOIs) will only be uploaded to the website of the Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (BPPRA).

The purpose of this policy is to limit the publication of such notices in newspapers.

As a result, the newspaper industry in Balochistan will face a severe financial crisis, while the cordial relationship between the government and the press will also be adversely affected.

A similar policy had previously been introduced by the Government of Punjab. However, following protests and representations by the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), the Chief Minister of Punjab announced the withdrawal of that policy. It is noteworthy that no other province in the country has implemented such a policy.

APNS believes that the new advertising policy will widen the gap between the provincial government and the media and damage the cordial relationship between the government and the print media. It maintains that discontinuing the publication of tender notices in newspapers will not only significantly reduce newspapers' advertising revenue but will also deprive potential bidders of timely access to important public information, preventing them from effectively participating in the government procurement process. Furthermore, APNS argues that the policy is likely to increase the risk of corruption. Therefore, it considers the measure to be contrary to the principles of transparency and procurement laws and calls for its immediate withdrawal. APNS has demanded that the Government of Balochistan maintain its tradition of strengthening relations between the government and the press by withdrawing the policy and formulating a new media policy through consultation with media organizations so that the issue facing the province's newspapers can be resolved amicably.

PPHI Balochistan to establish 100 new laboratories at BHUs

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Addressing the Third Health Conference, PPHI Balochistan CEO Dr. Muhammad Bakhsh Darijo said that PPHI Balochistan is rapidly moving towards digitalization to modernize the province's healthcare system. He stated that the organization is gradually transforming Basic Health Units (BHUs), district offices, and administrative and monitoring systems into a fully digital platform to ensure transparent, efficient, and timely healthcare services for the people.Dr. M.B. Darijo announced that PPHI Balochistan is set to operationalize 157 previously non-functional Basic Health Units across the province. This initiative will significantly improve access to essential healthcare services for millions of people living in remote and underserved areas.

He further stated that, to strengthen diagnostic services, PPHI Balochistan plans to establish 100 new laboratories at Basic Health Units.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

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Balochistan attractive destination for global investment

In a major step toward transforming Balochistan into a hub of economic growth, stability, and opportunity, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti held a highly productive meeting with a high-level delegation of the Asian Development Bank led by Country Director Xiaoqin (Emma) Fan. The meeting reflected growing international confidence in the leadership and development vision of the Government of Balochistan.

At the heart of the discussions was the provincial government's ambitious ten-year comprehensive development plan, a roadmap designed to bring sustainable progress, economic prosperity, and institutional reforms across critical sectors including water resources, agriculture, minerals and mining, education, healthcare, information technology, skills development, and employment generation.

The engagement between the Government of Balochistan and the ADB signals a new chapter of international cooperation and long-term investment in the province. The ADB delegation expressed strong interest in expanding financial and technical support for transformative projects, particularly the strategically important Kachhi Canal and other initiatives aimed at improving water management and agricultural productivity. Such projects are expected to revolutionize farming, strengthen food security, and uplift rural communities across Balochistan.

Chief Minister Bugti's vision for Balochistan is rooted in inclusive development and people-centered governance. Despite resource limitations inherited from years of underdevelopment, the provincial government has demonstrated remarkable commitment to reform, transparency, and merit-based administration. Under CM Bugti's leadership, governance reforms are being accelerated to ensure that development reaches ordinary citizens and creates long-term socioeconomic benefits.

The Chief Minister emphasized that the government is pursuing phased reforms under a carefully designed ten-year strategy that prioritizes sustainable growth, institutional strength, and economic modernization. His clear message to international partners was that Balochistan is no longer viewed through the lens of challenges alone, but as a province full of untapped potential, investment opportunities, and strategic importance.

Equally significant is the government's focus on education and human capital development. In a landmark achievement, the provincial administration has successfully reopened 3,200 previously closed schools while establishing 2,100 new community-based schools. This unprecedented educational expansion reflects the government's determination to empower the youth through access to quality education, modern learning facilities, and skills development programs that prepare them for future economic opportunities.

The meeting also highlighted collaborative efforts in healthcare, information technology, vocational training, and youth employment, sectors that are essential for building a modern and self-reliant Balochistan. Through partnerships with international development institutions, the provincial government aims to equip young people with market-driven skills, create jobs, and stimulate entrepreneurship throughout the province.

Chief Minister Bugti also reassured investors and development partners that the government is fully committed to ensuring peace, stability, and security for all development initiatives. His assurance reflects the improving law-and-order environment in Balochistan and the administration's growing capacity to protect mega projects and facilitate investment activities.

The participation of senior officials, including Provincial Minister for Development and Planning Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Development Zahid Saleem, and Additional Secretary Chief Minister Secretariat Muhammad Fareedun further demonstrated the seriousness and institutional coordination behind the province's development agenda.

The meeting stands as a strong endorsement of the Government of Balochistan's forward-looking policies and reinforces the growing trust of international financial institutions in the province's future. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, Balochistan appears firmly on the path toward peace, prosperity, and sustainable development.

Islamabad Talks 2.0

ANEELA SHAHZAD

The Islamabad Talks 1.0, seemingly unavailing, actually redefined a lot of things.

What was happening behind stage was in fact more defining than what was happening at the stage. Saudi Arabia declaring the arrival of military support from Pakistan; Aramco finalising a $10 billion oil refinery in Gwadar while partnering with PSO, OGDCL, PPL & GHPL; and Pakistan sending its first export container to Uzbekistan via Iran, were all unprecedented shockers.

One should understand that all this did not happen per chance. Rather, this points to increasingly deepening strategic alliance between Pakistan, the Arabs and the Persians. Seems like these players were already measuring their moves for integrating in an emerging Global South environment, just waiting for the right time to play the right moves.

One should understand that in the lapse of the first round of these talks, Pakistan has become the security provider for Saudi Arabia; and this service will soon be sought by other Gulf states.

Also, that Pakistan cannot solely provide this service without China's participation, with whom it shares technology, reconnaissance, intelligence and strategic allegiance.

So, to complete the security architecture, the Peninsula will soon be getting rid of US fighter jets, defence mechanisms, satellite coverage and intelligence penetration, all in one go – replacing them with everything Pakistani and Chinese.

Moreover, having the Saudi refinery closer to finalisation was exactly the push needed for Gwadar and CPEC. With this move, not only will international shipping be refueling from Gwadar, Pakistani consumers will also be getting a 20 per cent cut in oil prices. Topping that, Pakistan's opening of the Pak-Iran-Uzbekistan route means the opening of the long-awaited markets of Central Asia to the world via Pakistan and Iran.

The Saudi oil to the refinery in Gwadar, probably via an undersea pipeline, will also permanently shatter the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor dream and smash the relevance of the I2U2.

One should remember that CPEC is not a lone project, rather, the BRI connects similar corridors via Afghanistan and Iran, and connecting them all internally was always the goal of BRI. This is a future we are looking forward to for the region.

So, were the Islamabad Talks about US-Iran peace, or were they about signaling to the US and Allies that the order of the world has changed. Already in this war, Spain and Italy have categorically disallowed the US the use of their bases in the Mediterranean.

And now Britian, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Greece have refused to join a US-led blockade of Iranian ports. They simply do not want to participate militarily in the Strait of Hormuz conflict.

Already President Pedro of Spain and Prime Minister Meloni of Italy have joined the South Africa suit in the ICC alleging Israel of genocide in Gaza.

Already Chinese diplomacy is on turbo-charge, with Pedro in China for new economic and strategic ties.

And then we have Taiwanese Opposition Leader Cheng Li-wun standing in China, expressing a desire for a "peaceful" resolution to the long-running dispute over the island's future, and saying, "We can't allow the Taiwan Strait to become a Strait of Hormuz."

The fear that the failure of Islamabad Talks would reignite a much fiercer war, with widespread destruction throughout the region, has dissipated with Trump's half-baked blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

The US could not open the Strait despite all its bombing campaigns in straight 39 days; and now when it's clear that the US practically has no allies to stand behind it, the armadas at the mouth of Hormuz are like sitting ducks that will be targeted by Iranian missiles as soon as the ceasefire ends.

How many more billions will be lost then, with the US wasting a billion dollar a day, each day of the war.

But even before the talks first started in Islamabad, Trump had received a light, perhaps from the Divine, when he posted on Truth Social: 'World's Most Powerful Reset', President DJT. He knew more than anyone else that the war had been lost, and with that the US prestige and influence.

Now, Trump has hinted that Islamabad Talks 2.0 may resume in a couple of days, after which he has also given the good news of 'permanently' opening the Strait because President Xi Jinping has agreed not to give weapons to Iran.

The irony is that Hormuz was open for everyone; the US war on Iran caused its closure; then the US called all its friends to help open it and no one came; then the US boasted to close it for Iran; and now the US will re-open it because Trump is happy that China won't give Iran the weapons it was already saying it did not give.

So, what is Islamabad Talks 2.0 for?

Maybe it will be as irrelevant as the US has become. Perhaps it is clear to major powers that if left alone, the US will not be able to row for a long time in the Gulf of Oman or the Arabian Sea.

China and Russia may keep a promise of not providing weapons to Iran, but only if they aren't required anymore, and that the US has left the Arabian Ocean to its natural hires.

What was initiated by the King and his valiant stooges as 'regime change' exercise and a 'God's plan' has ended up in hastening the downfall of an already crumbling empire.

If the US was thinking that boost and pomp and vainglory were the magic beans that make an empire, it was wrong; they only rot the roots of whatever is standing.

Or, does the idea of Islamabad Talks 2.0 remind us of the Yalta Conference where the Big Three – Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt – met to decide who gets what from the spoils of war.

And in all this, does Israel, who started with the greedy idea of 'Greater Israel', want to run away with at least South Lebanon?

Or will Iran draw a red line on that too?

But then, there is always the possibility that the King will receive another 'commandment', and decide to go on with a ground operation after all!

Though it would be extremely unlikely, counter-productive and counter-intuitive; in fact, a suicide mission for the tens of thousands of troops being deployed – but you never know! Your know not, how many ritualistic sacrifices are to be made for the Kingdom of Zion to be established.`

You don't know the esoteric levels.

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Pakistan's mediatory role, an act of self-preservation

SYED MOHAMMAD ALI

In recent weeks, Islamabad has moved to the centre of efforts to de-escalate the US-Iran war, relaying messages, hosting talks and presenting itself as a credible venue for negotiations just as the region edged toward wider catastrophe.

Pakistan's role has been reinforced by the current government close ties with President Trump, and by support from other vital partners such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and China, all of which have helped elevate Islamabad's profile as a go-between.

Pakistan is one of the few countries that currently maintains meaningful lines of communication with all the key players at once. It has a working relationship with Tehran, deep strategic ties to Riyadh, a direct channel to powerbrokers in Washington, and close coordination with Beijing, which has also openly backed Pakistan's mediation efforts.

Pakistan's ongoing mediation in the Middle East has certainly bolstered its diplomatic profile. However, describing Pakistan's proactive engagement in the Gulf as diplomatic opportunism is inaccurate. Islamabad is not merely seeking prestige abroad; it is trying to prevent instability from crossing its own border as well.

Pakistan shares a long frontier with Iran, and its southwestern province of Balochistan is already under intense strain from militancy, weak governance and cross-border insecurity. Pakistani policymakers know that a prolonged war, or worse, state fragmentation in Iran, would cause major turmoil beyond its own borders.

Long-term instability in Iran could easily ricochet into Pakistan's own fragile domestic security landscape, intensifying pressure in restive Balochistan. Mediation is thus not a luxury for Pakistan, but also a form of strategic self-protection.

The economic imperatives are just as urgent. Pakistan remains heavily exposed to Gulf energy flows. According to recent analysis, Qatar and the UAE account for 99 per cent of Pakistan's LNG imports, and Islamabad has already had to implement emergency gas-management measures as the regional conflict disrupted supply chains.

The country is still operating under severe macroeconomic constraints, with limited fiscal space, heavy debt-service pressures and longstanding dependence on imported energy. IMF and World Bank assessments have repeatedly underscored these structural vulnerabilities, warning that Pakistan remains exposed to external shocks.

When the Hormuz disruption drives up import costs, Pakistan does not absorb the hit easily.

It transmits quickly into inflation, balance-of-payments stress and social pressure at home. And the damage goes well beyond oil and gas. Pakistan is one of the world's largest tea-consuming countries, and disruptions linked to the Middle East conflict have already hit tea exports through Mombasa, with millions of kilograms reportedly stranded, freight costs rising, and shipments to Pakistan and other markets rerouted at much higher expense.

The broader agricultural sector is also under increased stress. UN agencies have pointed out how the Gulf is also central to fertiliser production.

Pakistan's own emergency response has already included curbs on LNG supply to the fertiliser sector.

Even where local urea production offers a temporary cushion, Pakistan remains exposed through imported fertilisers and DAP shortfalls. This means the costs of war in the Middle East can reappear in Pakistan's wheat fields, in farm input prices, and ultimately in food inflation for ordinary households.

Thus, Pakistan's diplomacy should be read for what it is: not just an attempt to punch above its weight, but an effort to keep a regional fire from burning into its own economy and security order.

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A strategic Pakistan in a dangerous world

NASIM ZEHRA

The last 72 hours have acquired unusual significance. Against the backdrop of US-Israel aggression targeting Iran, Pakistan's efforts to end the war and help the two sides work towards an agreement have reached a critical stage. Through constant telephonic interaction with Washington's principals, alongside the Tehran visit, Pakistan's COAS-CDF Field Marshal Asim Munir has led the process, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the foreign minister have worked the political and diplomatic channels to build trust and understanding. The prime minister is on a three-nation visit to Saudi Arabia and Turkiye to keep key friends in the region informed and engaged.

Taken together, these moves suggest that Pakistan is no longer merely responding to developments in West Asia. Both principals acknowledge, publicly and privately, Pakistan's extraordinary role as an active participant in peacemaking, not merely a facilitator.

This matters because the central issue today is not simply that multilateralism is under strain. That is already evident.

The more consequential question is whether, in a world marked by war, selective legality, strategic distrust and overlapping regional crises, there remain states with both the incentive and the capacity to slow disorder, defend minimum rules and reopen diplomatic space. Middle powers cannot restore an older order in any full sense. They can, however, help repair parts of a damaged one. They can stabilise, convene, mediate and build coalitions at a moment when several major powers are themselves contributing to fragmentation rather than containing it. What is unfolding globally is the erosion of the rules and assumptions that underwrote the post-1945 order. The UN Charter remains clear on the prohibition of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of states. Yet the international system increasingly displays selective legality, normalised exceptionalism and weakening institutional credibility whenever major strategic interests are involved. Sovereignty, however compromised, formally remains intact, but confidence in the principles embedded in the seventeenth-century Peace of Westphalia is steadily evaporating. Instability reigns.

We have witnessed a US-Israel-triggered war turn rapidly into a wider international crisis, disrupting the global economy and altering the strategic calculations of states far beyond the immediate theatre of conflict. It is precisely in this context that middle powers acquire renewed importance. They can initiate processes, reopen channels, restore some measure of restraint, widen diplomatic space and create platforms for coordination when stronger actors are locked into coercive logic.

Middle powers do not necessarily bring vast material resources into conflict zones, but they can create the critical political space within which engagement becomes possible. In recent weeks, Pakistan has clearly demonstrated that it belongs in this category of consequential middle powers. It possesses demographic weight, military credibility, nuclear deterrent status and geographic centrality linking South Asia with West Asia and China.

It also has political relationships that extend across the Muslim world and into major-power settings. Pakistan's relevance to West Asia is demonstrably strategic. Instability in West Asia affects Pakistan through energy vulnerability, shipping insecurity, financial exposure, regional military pressures and domestic political consequences. Pakistan's diplomacy in recent weeks has therefore been substantive. It has involved sustained engagement with both regional and extra-regional actors. This also explains why Islamabad has increasingly sought not merely to respond to crisis, but to shape the environment within which crisis management occurs.

One important recent development in this regard has received too little attention. On April 14, senior officials from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Egypt met in Islamabad in what was effectively the first serious follow-up to the March 29 meeting of the four foreign ministers. That earlier contact had already begun to be described, informally, as an emerging West Asia Quad. The significance of the April 14 meeting lay in the fact that the effort was not being allowed to remain confined to immediate war diplomacy alone. The purpose appears broader: to explore whether a small group of influential regional states can gradually work towards a more cooperative political understanding on key regional questions. This is not, at least at this stage, a formal alliance or rigid structure. It is better understood as a flexible consultative mechanism.

Pakistan's diplomatic flexibility is one of its strengths. In a region marked by fragmentation, intra-regional rivalries, and persistent external pressures this is an asset. It allows room for confidence-building, issue-based coordination and gradual institutional buy-in, as was evident in the April 14 meeting. There was, significantly, also interest in the possibility of widening the circle over time.

The importance of this lies in the strategic direction it signals. Pakistan appears to be moving, however modestly and incrementally, towards institution-building rather than relying only on crisis-response diplomacy. And in a fractured regional environment, even a flexible consultative mechanism among four key Muslim-majority states can serve as a stabilising force – not through rigid alignment, but through sustained consultation, political signalling and the gradual formation of common ground. Pakistan's diplomacy with China fits into this wider pattern. The Five-Point Initiative of China and Pakistan for Restoring Peace and Stability in the Gulf and Middle East Region, issued in Beijing on March 31, 2026, was the clearest formal expression of this effort. The initiative called for an immediate ceasefire and an end to hostilities; dialogue and negotiations grounded in sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence and security; protection of civilians and civilian facilities, including peaceful nuclear facilities; joint efforts to preserve regional peace, including the security of shipping lanes and energy supplies; and adherence to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law. Analytically, this was not merely a statement of sympathy. It was a middle-power framework for order repair. It linked de-escalation, legality, civilian protection, maritime security and diplomacy within one compact agenda. It also showed Pakistan acting as part of a wider, networked strategy, supported by China and reinforced by broader Muslim-country coordination. Pakistan's role has acquired even greater visibility through its mediation between Washington and Tehran. Whatever the eventual outcome of those talks, this diplomatic fact itself remains significant. Pakistan was operating as mediator, venue provider and political channel at a time of acute regional fracture. That is classic middle-power behaviour. That is why Pakistan's recent, heightened engagement in West Asia carries value and purpose beyond the immediate crisis. Pakistan's role as a middle power has been surfacing with greater clarity since May 2025. In its strategic, military and diplomatic response to Indian aggression, and now to US-Israel aggression against Iran, Pakistan has demonstrated how middle powers can influence outcomes in complex environments. By engaging the US while defending Iran's threatened sovereignty, it has connected regional crises to wider strategic stakes and reminded a fractured system that force is not the only language available to states.

Pakistan has demonstrated that middle powers cannot eliminate coercion from international politics, nor can they fundamentally overturn the asymmetries of global power. But they can influence outcomes through proactive, trusted engagement in conflict zones. They can keep open the possibility of accommodation and reconciliatory politics even when formal international structures are weakened or paralysed. That is the deeper significance of Pakistan's present moment. The old order is weakened, and that very weakening is creating both the logic and the space for new forms of inter-state behaviour. Middle powers will shape that space, as Pakistan is now doing in West Asia. Pakistan has factored in the military realities on the ground, the catastrophic potential of an extended war and the urgent necessity of political restraint. In doing so, it has shown that even amid fracture, states with strategic credibility, diplomatic stamina and political trust can still help pull the system back from the brink. That is no small achievement. In a world increasingly driven by force, Pakistan's West Asia moment is a reminder that diplomacy, when backed by seriousness and strategic weight, can still matter profoundly.

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'Violation on one front violation on all fronts,' Araghchi on Lebanon ceasefire

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that the ceasefire between Tehran and Washington is "unequivocally a ceasefire on all fronts, including in Lebanon".

"Its violation on one front is a violation of the ceasefire on all fronts. The US and Israel are responsible for the consequences of any violation," he wrote on X.

The top diplomat's comments come after Netanyahu announced that he had ordered his military to strike Beirut's southern suburbs.

Iranian parliament speaker and lead negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf had called out the US on Monday for breaching its ceasefire with Iran, including by continuing its blockade of Iranian ports and failing to restrain its ally Israel from escalating attacks in Lebanon.

"The naval blockade and escalation of war crimes in Lebanon by the genocidal Zionist regime are clear evidence of US noncompliance with the ceasefire," Ghalibaf wrote in a post on X. "Every choice has a price, and the bill comes due. It will all fall into place," he added.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Monday that Iran and Oman are the only two countries that have a right to "exercise sovereignty" in the Strait of Hormuz.

In comments carried by Iran's IRIB broadcaster, Gharibabadi said Iran has implemented a new process for "controlling traffic and navigation" in the waterway but arrangements are coordinated with Oman.

He said Iran has urged Oman to "not give in to" threats from the US after Trump threatened to "blow up" the country if it does not "behave just like everybody else" with respect to the strait.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei has said on Thursday that any deal with the US to end the war must include guarantees for a ceasefire in Lebanon, where Israel has expanded its attacks and invasion despite a truce in mid-April, according to Al Jazeera.

Speaking at a news conference, Baghaei said: "We insist that a ceasefire in Lebanon is an essential condition for any deal aimed at ending the war."

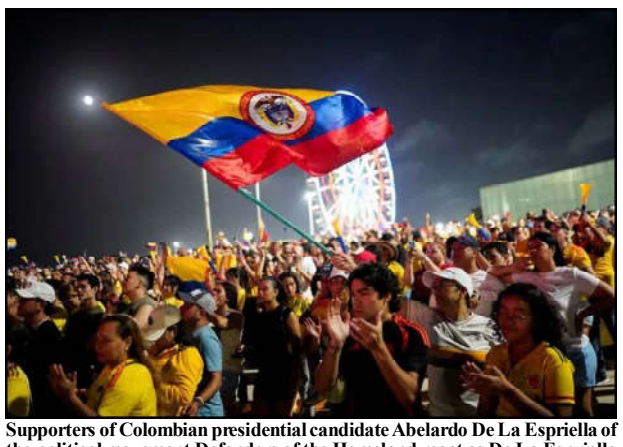
Baghaei also said Iran is not currently engaging in talks with the US on the details of its nuclear programme, according to Al Jazeera.

"We know when it is necessary to act on nuclear matters," Baghaei said. "No negotiations have taken place on the details of the nuclear file. At this stage, our priority is ending the war."

Baghaei also accused the US of having violated the ceasefire, "including this morning". He said, "Iran will take whatever measures we deem necessary to defend Iran's national security."



Demonstrators participate during a protest against a U.S.-backed Ebola quarantine plan on the establishment of a 50-bed facility at a Kenyan air force base that was intended to host Americans exposed to Ebola, in Nanyuki town.



Supporters of Colombian presidential candidate Abelardo De La Espriella of the political movement Defenders of the Homeland react as De La Espriella addresses them after the results of the first round of the presidential election, in Barranquilla, Colombia.

Indian PM Modi meets Myanmar military gov't leader in New Delhi

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: India says it will continue engaging with Myanmar after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Min Aung Hlaing, the leader of the country's military government, in New Delhi.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters on Monday that India's policy is "not intended to be a commentary on the internal political arrangements" in Myanmar and that New Delhi believes engagement is the best way forward.

Western nations have sought to isolate Myanmar's military rulers since they overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a 2021 coup that triggered a crackdown on opponents and a brutal civil war.

The conflict began when the country's army leader, Min Aung Hlaing, ousted the government and detained civilian leaders, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. Some critics and human rights groups have said Min Aung Hlaing's visit to India risks lending legitimacy to the military-backed government.

"We have always proceeded on the principle that sustained dialogue is what is important," Misri said, adding that isolating Myanmar would be counterproductive.

"History has shown that disengagement doesn't give us any results that are better than engagement."

The visit is Min Aung Hlaing's first to India since he was sworn in as president in April following an election that critics say was designed to cement his hold on power. His last visit to India was in 2019, when he served as Myanmar's military chief.

He arrived in India on Saturday, first in the eastern state of Bihar, with a visit to the Buddhist pilgrimage site of Bodh Gaya, where believers say that the Buddha attained enlightenment.

India shares a 1,643-kilometre (1,020-mile) border with Myanmar and a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal.

Philippine president, Rubio discuss 'peace, security' in South China Sea

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr and United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio early Monday discussed "peace and security" in the disputed South China Sea.

In a phone call, Marcos and Rubio discussed a range of bilateral economic and security priorities, including "efforts to advance peace and security in the South China Sea." The disputed waters of minerals-rich South China Sea have seen the Philippines and China regularly engage in verbal clashes due to overlapping maritime claims.

Philippines is one of the oldest military allies of the US in the wider Asia-Pacific region with a mutual defense agreement.

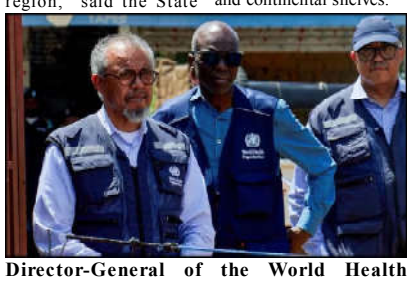
According to the office of Marcos, the two sides discussed "critical regional and economic priorities, as well as bilateral trade matters."

Rubio also reaffirmed US "commitment to developing the Luzon Economic Corridor and exploring ways to address the energy challenges in the region," said the State Department.

The Luzon Economic Corridor is a trilateral initiative of the US, Japan, and the Philippines, according to details shared by the US Embassy in Manila. It also engages their partners, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, South Korea, Sweden, and the United Kingdom — to "catalyse mutual economic growth, create jobs, strengthen connectivity, and improve transport and logistics, energy, and digital infrastructure."

Separately, Chinese Coast Guard Monday conducted "law-enforcement patrol" in waters east of Taiwan in "response to Japan and the Philippines' unilateral announcement of maritime delimitation talks in the area," state-run Xinhua News reported.

In a joint statement last week following talks between Philippines President Marcos and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in Tokyo, the two countries agreed to begin formal negotiations on delimiting the maritime boundaries of their exclusive economic zones and continental shelves.



Director-General of the World Health Organisation Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus tours the Evangelical Medical Center (CEM), one of the facilities at the forefront of the response to the Ebola outbreak during his visit to coordinate the response to the Ebola outbreak.

Mobile Internet shutdowns

Putin orders PM and FSB security service to ensure key services

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered the prime minister and director of the Federal Security Service (FSB) ensure access to key medical, information and payment services during periods when mobile internet service is limited.

Russia has this year sometimes shut down mobile internet services and cracked down on foreign messenger , forcing millions to turn to VPNs as part of what Putin's opponents say is an attempt to shore up domestic control after four years of war.

In a list of orders published on Sunday by the Kremlin, Putin ordered the and the FSB to "ensure the uninterrupted operation of the most important services" during periods of "limited operation of the Internet".

The order said that Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and FSB Director Alexander were to report back by July 1 on their progress. Putin has cast disruption to Internet and communications as a painful, but sometimes essential security measure needed to to prevent terrorist and Ukrainian drone attacks. But he has said that should be allowed access to vital online services during such periods.

UK wins court case over collapsed Rwanda asylum deal

Monitoring Desk

GRAVELINES: The UK will not have to pay Rwanda millions of pounds over the collapsed asylum agreement that was cancelled by Keir Starmer shortly after he took office, an international court has ruled. The Rwandan government had sought to sue the UK for more than £100m, saying it had breached the terms of the deal.

Signed by the previous Conservative government, it was meant to see the UK pay Rwanda to host asylum seekers who had arrived illegally in the UK. Lawyers representing the UK during the three-day hearing in the Netherlands.

Nepal PM seeks UK, China role against India's interference in its areas

KATHMANDU (INP): Nepalese Prime Minister Balendra Shah's call for Britain and China to intervene in the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura dispute exposes growing resentment, as observers noticed, against India's habit of dictating terms to its smaller neighbors.

Addressing Nepal's Parliament, Shah admitted both Kathmandu and New Delhi had "encroached" on each other's territory and urged third-party mediation.

"We have had talks with Britain, not only with India and China. Britain should also show concern," he said, linking the row to the 1816 Sugauli Treaty signed under British India.

India's Ministry of External Affairs has not responded to Shah's remarks or to Nepal's invitation to London. The dispute flared in 2020 after New Delhi inaugurated a road through Lipulekh Pass for the Kailash Mansarovar yatra, prompting Nepal to release a revised map incorporating Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura and later enshrine it in its constitution.

Analysts said the episode reflects a pattern: India routinely intervenes in the internal and foreign policy matters of Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives under the garb of "regional stability", while rejecting multilateral mechanisms when its own actions are questioned.

Israel urges south Beirut residents to leave as strikes intensify

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: The Israeli military has called on residents of the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital Beirut to flee.

In a message in Arabic on X, a military spokesman said that people should leave their homes for their own safety.

If the Hezbollah militia continues its attacks on Israeli cities and towns, the Israeli army will respond with attacks on targets in Beirut's southern suburbs, the message said.

This is the first such evacuation call for this area since a ceasefire came into effect in mid-April.

Israel had already announced new attacks on Hezbollah targets in the Dahiyeh suburbs, prompting many residents to flee the area from the morning. The suburbs are an important Hezbollah stronghold as well as being a densely populated residential area. Many buildings in the area have already been destroyed in the current conflict.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said earlier on Monday he intends to continue talks with the Israeli government despite the escalating tensions between Israel and the Shiite militia Hezbollah.

Israeli and Lebanese representatives are set to meet on Tuesday in Washington for direct talks to end the fighting. However, Hezbollah is not a party to the talks, and the conditions for an effective ceasefire are not promising.

Israel has expanded its ongoing offensive in the south and is advancing further north, while Hezbollah has stepped up its attacks on northern Israel.

Former Syrian general under al-Assad faces torture trial in Vienna

Monitoring Desk

SYRIAN: Two senior security officials from the former Syrian government of ousted ruler Bashar al-Assad are on trial in Austria, accused of torture, grievous bodily harm and sexual assault, the prosecution at Vienna's regional court said on Monday.

The defendants allegedly mistreated detainees themselves and gave orders for others to do so, the prosecutor said.

The former intelligence general is the highest-ranking representative of the former Syrian government to have been arrested in Europe, according to human rights organization the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR). The Berlin-based ECCHR and other organizations including Amnesty International are supporting the prosecution in the case, the prosecutor said.



Smoke billows from an Israeli airstrike on the southern Lebanese village of Arnoun. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, ordered the military to attack targets in the southern suburb of Beirut.

US and Iran trade strikes, Kuwait comes under fire as diplomacy drags on

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: The United States and Iran said they had both carried out strikes on military targets, and each accused the other of acting aggressively as omatic efforts to end the three-month US-Israeli war on Iran drag on.

The US military said it had, over the weekend, struck Iranian air defences, a ground control station and two drones that were threatening ships after "aggressive Iranian actions", including shooting down a US drone over international waters.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Monday it had targeted an air base used by the US in response to an attack on southern Iran.

It did not identify the base, but Kuwait activated air defences on Monday and denounced Iranian missile and drone attacks, which it said were undermining efforts to reduce tensions in the region.

Oil prices, which have risen sharply since the start of the war, gained more than 3% on Monday after ' the strikes. Tensions were also fuelled by Israel ordering troops to move further into Lebanon against Tehran-backed Hezbollah.

WHO chief to meet Congo president, as group warns Ebola likely spread

Monitoring Desk

KINSHASA: The head of the World Health Organization was due to meet with Democratic Republic of Congo's president on Monday to discuss the country's Ebola outbreak, which an aid agency warned was likely much than official figures reflect. The outbreak, already the third-largest on record, persisted for weeks undetected, say health officials, who now behind the curve and struggling to bring it under control.

Arriving in Congo last week, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for more international support to stop the disease's spread before he travelled to Congo's Ituri province where the first cases were confirmed.

In a joint statement on Sunday night, the WHO and the Congolese government acknowledged it was "a challenging time" and that they were working to improve surveillance, testing and care for patients. "Persistent challenges include early detection and isolation of cases, contact tracing, safe and dignified burials, robust infection prevention and control in health facilities.

De La Espriella, senator Cepeda set for heated Colombia runoff

Monitoring Desk

BOGOTA: Right-wing Colombian lawyer Abelardo De La Espriella and leftist senator Ivan Cepeda will head to a June presidential runoff after Sunday's tight vote, in a contest so far dominated by voter concerns over security and the economy, to which each candidate has populist solutions.

The two men were close in vote tallies in the first round of the contest.



An apartment building and houses in Odesa, Ukraine damaged by a Russian drone strike.

Nigeria's Obi to run for president again after opposition split

Monitoring Desk

LAGOS: Nigerian politician Peter Obi said he would run for president again in January after winning his party's nomination, setting up another contest incumbent Bola Tinubu and a divided opposition.

Obi was declared winner of the Democratic Congress primary on Sunday, less than a month after quitting an alliance that had tried to set up a single opposition challenger.

The acceptance from Obi - who came third in the last election after galvanizing young voters - hit hopes among some opposition backers that he might return to the coalition. It prepares the ground for a re-run of 2023's three-way contest that is likely to whether public anger over rising living costs and insecurity can translate into votes against Tinubu, or whether the anti-government vote will once again be split.

"We must address insecurity with resolve and urgency, for no nation can thrive while its citizens live in trepidation," Obi said in a statement late on Sunday.

Nigeria is grappling with overlapping security crises that stretch far beyond the jihadist insurgency in the northeast, where Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province waged a conflict for more than 15 years.

In the northwest, heavily armed gangs known locally as bandits carry out mass kidnappings for ransom and raids on villages and schools, while north-central states have also seen recurring violence linked to disputes over land and grazing routes.

Voters will also be focused on Tinubu's economic reforms, including the removal of fuel and subsidies and ending currency controls.

Thailand ends visa-free entry for India

NEW DELHI (INP): Thailand has ended visa-free entry for India, which has dealt a serious blow to the tourism diplomacy of the Modi-led Indian government.

Indian tourists are causing a stir around the world due to their rudeness and worst social awareness and as a result, Thailand has imposed strict visa rules on Indian tourists, which is tantamount to a serious blow to Modi's diplomacy on another front.

According to the Indian journal "Economic Times", Thailand has ended visa-free entry for India and implemented a new immigration policy, under which India has also been put on the visa-on-arrival list.

According to the report, Indian tourists will now not be able to enter Thailand without a visa under the temporary visa exemption scheme introduced in 2024. The Thai government has

Chinese navy says

Chinese and US militaries met in Hawaii, stressed communication

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China and the United States held "candid and constructive" on air and maritime safety and discussed measures to improve military maritime security, the Chinese navy said in a statement on Monday.

The two militaries had a working group meeting of the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement in Hawaii from May 28 to 29 and agreed that improved communication could reduce miscalculation and enhance professionalism, the statement said. "China firmly opposes any action to undermine China's and security under the pretext of freedom of navigation and erflight, (and) opposes any infringement, provocation and close-in reconnaissance and harassment targeting China," the statement added.

Sacrifices of martyrs strengthens collective resolve to safeguard homeland: Ayaz

Matchless sacrifices of nation's martyrs constitute foundation of Pakistan's security, freedom and sovereignty

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq paid rich tribute to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on the occasion of his 27th martyrdom anniversary, saying that the valiant soldier laid down his life while defending the motherland.

He said that Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed's exemplary courage, unwavering sense of duty and supreme sacrifice have earned him an enduring place in the nation's history and remain a source of immense pride for every Pakistani.

Ayaz Sadiq said that on July 7, 1999, during the Kargil conflict, Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed embraced martyrdom while bravely repelling repeated enemy attacks with exceptional courage, steadfastness and professional excellence.

Despite intense shelling and extremely challenging battlefield conditions, he continued to defend his post until his last breath, foiling the enemy's designs through his extraordinary resilience and determination. NA Speaker said that the mountains of Kargil still stand as silent witnesses to his remarkable bravery and sacrifice. Ayaz Sadiq said that the officers and personnel of Pakistan's armed forces have always rendered unparalleled sacrifices in defence of the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. He said that the entire nation salutes its martyrs and holds their families in the highest esteem for their patience, resilience and invaluable sacrifices.

Ayaz Sadiq said that the sacrifices of the nation's martyrs continue to strengthen the spirit of national unity, stability and the collective resolve to safeguard the homeland.

The Speaker said that the nation will always remember the sacrifices made by its brave defenders in the line of duty.

Ayaz Sadiq also prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed in Jannat-ul-Firdous and to bless Pakistan with lasting peace, security, progress, and prosperity. Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah also paid rich tribute to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed and said that his courage, devotion to duty and unwavering loyalty to the motherland serve as a shining example for future generations.

He said that the nation remains the custodian of the legacy of its martyrs and will always remember their extraordinary sacrifices with profound respect, honour, and pride. Mustafa Shah said that the matchless sacrifices of the nation's martyrs constitute the foundation of Pakistan's security, freedom and sovereignty. He also prayed to Allah Almighty to grant Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed the highest ranks in Jannah and bless Pakistan with enduring peace, stability, and security.



President Asif Ali Zardari (front-left) walks with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov (front-right) at Issyk-Kul International Airport as he begins four-day official visit to Kyrgyzstan



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Mir Saleem Khosa called on Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

President Zardari departs for Kyrgyzstan on official visit

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari will undertake a four-day official visit to the Kyrgyz Republic from July 6–9, 2026, leading a high-level delegation, at the invitation of President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov. This is the first visit by a President of Pakistan to the Kyrgyz Republic in 21 years, marking a historic milestone in the bilateral relationship. It follows the successful visit of the Kyrgyz President to Pakistan in December 2025 and reflects the sustained upward trajectory of high-level engagement between the two brotherly countries, according to a Foreign Office press release.

During the visit, President Zardari will hold a one-on-one meeting and delegation-level talks with President Sadyr Zhaparov.

The two leaders will review the entire spectrum of Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan relations and exchange views on regional and international developments of mutual interest.

Stronger int'l cooperation vital to address mounting geopolitical tensions, emerging security challenges

BEIJING, (APP): The speakers including diplomats, scholars, and policymakers from more than 80 countries at the 14th World Peace Forum this week here called for stronger international cooperation to address mounting geopolitical tensions and emerging security challenges.

Held under the theme "Global Governance and International Security Cooperation: Integrity, Innovation, and Inclusiveness," the forum brought together over 400 participants to discuss issues, including conflicts in the Middle East, global governance reform, major-power relations, and the security implications of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence in armed conflict, underscoring the forum's focus on both current geopolitical tensions and contemporary security dilemmas. Jointly organized by Tsinghua University and the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, the forum has become one of China's leading non-governmental platforms for international security dialogue, People's Daily reported. Chinese Vice President Han Zheng addressed the opening ceremony on July 3 with a keynote speech. Tsinghua University President Li Luming delivered welcoming remarks. The ceremony was moderated by Yang Bin, Vice Chancellor of the Tsinghua University Council and Secretary-General of the World Peace Forum.

Hamas dissolves Gaza governing body to facilitate transfer of administration

GAZA STRIP, (Agencies): The Palestinian movement Hamas announced on Monday that it had dissolved its governing body in the Gaza Strip after nearly 20 years in power, paving the way for a technocratic committee to administer the territory.

The move marked a significant political shift by Hamas, which has administered Gaza since it gained control from rival Palestinian movement Fatah in 2007. Since a ceasefire took effect in Gaza last October between Hamas and Israel, the group has repeatedly asserted it is prepared to step aside from day-to-day governance, but the issue of its disarmament remains unresolved due to repeated Israeli ceasefire violations.

"The movement has decided to dissolve the Gaza government committee and to appoint a nationally accepted figure to oversee the committee's work until the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza formally assumes its responsibilities," a Hamas official told media, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to talk publicly on the matter.

Hamas's media office in Gaza said it would hold "an important press conference" later on Monday, without providing details. A second Hamas official said the group had already informed other Palestinian factions of the move at a recent meeting in Cairo.

"The factions welcomed Hamas's decision, describing it as a serious step towards enabling the National Committee to take up its governing role," the official said. The dissolution of the Hamas body paved the way for the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), headed by Palestinian official Ali Shaath, to assume administrative responsibilities.

The NCAG was established by the Board of Peace, which was in turn set up by US President Donald Trump when he brokered the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel last October.

But it has remained based outside Gaza for months, reportedly due to Israeli objections to its entry into the war-devastated territory.

Hamas and other Palestinian factions have held several rounds of talks in Cairo with mediators to narrow differences, particularly over the second phase of the Gaza "ceasefire". The first phase involved the release of the last Israeli hostages held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinians detained by Israel. The transition to the second phase, which was to involve Hamas's disarmament and a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, has been stalled for months.

Israeli forces have actually expanded their presence in the territory in recent months, taking control of nearly 70%.

Meanwhile, Hamas is demanding the establishment of a Palestinian administration before it will consider handing over any part of its arsenal. The question of Gaza's post-war governance remains one of the main sticking points in negotiations on implementing phase two.

Israel rejected any return of Hamas to power, but also rejected a direct takeover by the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority.



Ismail al-Thawabta, head of Hamas' government media office, addresses a press conference at the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip

Pakistan, Sri Lanka to promote digital economy, e-governance: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Monday held bilateral meetings with officials from Sri Lanka and Egypt on the sidelines of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva.

During her meeting with Dr. Hans Wijayasuriya, Chief Adviser to the President of Sri Lanka on the Digital Economy, the two sides discussed promoting the digital economy and e-governance. The meeting also featured detailed discussions on artificial intelligence (AI) sovereignty.

Pakistan's IT exports to Sri Lanka stood at US$424,000 in fiscal year 2025.

Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in the IT sector and share best practices.

Meanwhile, Shaza Fatima also held a bilateral meeting with Eng. Mahmoud Badawi, Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

During the meeting, the Pakistani and Egyptian delegations agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of information technology, telecommunications, and digital governance, according to a news release.

Shaza Fatima and Mahmoud Badawi also held discussions on the sidelines of the United Nations Global Dialogue on AI Governance.



María Fernanda Espinosa, former Foreign Minister of Ecuador and currently candidate for the position of United Nations Secretary-General called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar

Pakistan committed to active cooperation for global peace, says DPM Dar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continue working towards promoting the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect for international law and treaties, and active international cooperation for global peace and prosperity.

He was talking to María Fernanda Espinosa, former Foreign Minister of Ecuador and currently candidate for the position of United Nations Secretary-General who called on him here, according to a press statement issued by the Foreign Office Spokesperson.

Welcoming Ms. Espinosa, DPM/FM expressed Pakistan's full support for strengthening multilateralism, and ensuring the central role of the United Nations in the global affairs. He expressed the hope that the incoming Secretary General will carry out much needed reforms in the United Nations and will ensure the implementation of longstanding UNSC resolutions, especially for Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir which remain crucial for lasting peace in the Middle East and South Asia.



Syed Mehdi Shah, Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, administers the oath to newly elected Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, Advocate Amjad Hussain, during a ceremony

India using personal attacks to divert attention from Modi's image crisis: Khawaja Asif

ISLAMABAD, (Agencies): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said personal attacks by India against him would not solve the issues confronting New Delhi or restore Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "pitiably crumbling" reputation at home and abroad, particularly after what he described as Pakistan's victory over India last year. Responding to Indian propaganda in a post on social media platform X, Asif said attacks against him were an attempt to divert attention from questions surrounding Modi's international image and the credibility of foreign honours conferred on the Indian premier. In his post, the defence minister also referred to criticism by Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi and a recent report by British newspaper The Guardian, saying both had questioned the credibility of some of the awards bestowed on Modi.

"Coming after me doesn't solve the problem. Calling me mentally unstable won't bring stability to Modi's pitifully crumbling reputation both at home and abroad specially after beating he got from Pakistan last year," he wrote. "Rahul Gandhi is saying the same thing about the awards given to Modi - that they are AI-generated or self-managed to project a global statesman image. It has actually enhanced his reputation as a global con man." "Even The Guardian, a reputable paper, flagged the same issue and questioned the credibility of those awards," he added.

He said that Modi's desperate measures to import fake laurels from abroad are an attempt to stabilise a reputation that is "pathetically unstable at home". A day earlier, citing the British newspaper's investigation, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif had accused Modi of turning international recognition into a carefully staged public relations exercise. Modi's trophy cabinet came under uncomfortable scrutiny after the investigation questioned the origins of several foreign honours awarded to him, some of which were little more than last-minute creations rolled out ahead of his visits.

Balochistan announces short summer vacations for winter zone schools

QUETTA, (APP): The Department of Secondary Education, Balochistan, has officially announced short summer vacations for schools located in the province's winter zone.

According to the notification issued, all public and private schools in the winter zone will remain closed from July 18 to August 2, 2026.

The notification further added that teaching and academic activities across both summer and winter zones will resume regularly from Monday, August 3, 2026. The department has directed divisional directors, district education officers, school heads, and relevant administrators to ensure strict compliance with the schedule and to make all necessary arrangements for the timely resumption of classes after the holidays.

In its advisory, the department also appealed to parents, teachers, and students to plan their academic activities in line with the announced schedule so that the new academic session can begin in an organized and effective manner.

March train crash inquiry faults 9 employees; crossings and tracks blamed for most mishaps

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan Railways has finalized its inquiry into two major train accidents from March 2026, attributing them to human error and technical failures. Departmental action has been initiated against nine employees: six held responsible for the Shalimar Express collision (including a station master and head train examiner) and three for the Tezgam Express derailment. According to an official report presented to the National Assembly Standing Committee on Railways, out of 135 train accidents recorded in a year, 35% occurred at unmanned crossings, while 34 incidents were caused by defective tracks.

The probe revealed that the collision between the Shalimar Express and a container freight train at Mehrabpur was caused by gross driver negligence. The driver overshot a stop signal and failed to brake in time, ramming into a stationary cargo train on the loop line. The crash killed one railway employee and derailed the locomotive, two passenger coaches, and three freight wagons.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb addressing the launching ceremony of InvestPak, a web portal to digitize the process of investment in government securities

IWT seminar scores Pakistan's major diplomatic victory

ISLAMABAD, (APP): An international seminar on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) held in Islamabad on June 30 has marked an extraordinary milestone in Pakistan's legal, diplomatic, and media strategy.

This first-of-its-kind international gathering successfully catapulted the IWT back into the global spotlight, highlighting Pakistan's stance that the unilateral suspension or modification of international treaties aligns neither with international law nor the spirit of the international system.

The event proved that Pakistan has effectively shifted the narrative, transforming an issue that India sought to treat as a closed, silent bilateral file into a central topic of global diplomatic dialogue.



Princess Catherine of Wales visited Evelina London Children's Hospital in London.

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