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CM Bugti urges opposition to avoid politics over blood of martyrs

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said that terrorism in the province is part of an organized conspiracy aimed at targeting innocent citizens and then blaming the state to spread mistrust and chaos. He declared that the government and the people, through their collective strength, will foil all such plots. Speaking at a condolence reference marking the eighth death anniversary of veteran political leader and Shaheed Nawabzada Mir Siraj Khan Raisani, Bugti emphasized that Pakistan and Balochistan are firmly on the path of peace, stability, and development, and no amount of pressure or terrorism will divert them from this course.

The event was attended by Member National Assembly Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani, provincial ministers, PPP leaders, tribal elders, social figures, and a large number of citizens. The ceremony began with Quran recitation and communal prayers for the late leader.

Sarfraz Bugti added that if sacrificing his own life could resolve Balochistan's issues, he was ready to do so, stressing that serving the people mattered more than holding office. He reiterated that the government's top priorities are education, healthcare, employment, and sustainable development, while terrorists are attempting to mislead youth into a futile war. Addressing foreign backers, he said: "No matter how many Siraj Raisanis are martyred, every household in this land will produce another defender of Pakistan." He condemned politicizing the sacrifices of martyrs, noting that the provincial government has consistently stood with victims' families in places such as Babri, Hanna Urak, and Ziarat. He assured that the legitimate demands of the martyrs' heirs will be fulfilled. Bugti recalled recent tragedies, including the killing of innocent laborers in Mashkhel and the attack on Mir Shafiq ur Rehman Mengal's residence, highlighting that their families chose dignity over political exploitation.

Chief Minister urged the opposition to criticize governance and performance but avoid using the blood of martyrs for political gain. He praised the daily sacrifices of Pakistan Army, FC, police, and other law enforcement agencies in the fight for peace in Balochistan, affirming that the government and people stand united with their security forces. Addressing the gathering, MNA Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani said that his father's martyrdom only strengthened the people's love for Pakistan. He vowed to continue his father's mission, pledging that the Raisani family would never hesitate to make sacrifices for the province's peace, prosperity, and development.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing the participants of condolence reference marking the eighth death anniversary of veteran political leader and Shaheed Nawabzada Mir Siraj Khan Raisani



DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits Lusail Palace in Doha to offer condolence to Amir of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on the demise of Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Hanna Urak's tribal elders condemn baseless propaganda campaign, vow response at appropriate time

QUETTA (ANN): Tribal elders of Hanna Urak said that their sit-in protest was based on principles and that they had presented three major demands to the government. Since the government accepted their demands and successful negotiations were held, they felt it was their moral responsibility not to cause further hardship to the people of Quetta and therefore ended the protest. During a press conference, the tribal elders placed their hands on the Holy Quran and rejected all allegations against them. They said that a particular lobby was conducting an organized propaganda campaign against them, which they strongly condemned. They stated that the people of Hanna Urak had carried the bodies of the martyrs and that many residents had been injured. They said they would neither tolerate such propaganda nor engage in such behavior themselves, adding that they would respond to all false propaganda at the appropriate time.

These remarks were made by Mufti Rahmatullah, Ajab Khan Kakar, Malik Naseem Kakar, Maulvi Ali Jan, Malik Asif Kakar, and relatives of the victims during a joint press conference.

They said they wished to present several important facts to the nation. They stated that on Sunday, July 5, unidentified attackers assaulted Killi Babri in Hanna Urak. While defending their honor, dignity, and the sanctity of their homes, five young men—Naqeebullah, Gulraiz Khan, Muhammad Younis, Muhammad Ashraf, and Muhammad Rafiq—were killed, while eight others were seriously injured and twelve were abducted.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani addressing during the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women

Demands protection of citizens:

Arifa Siddiq Advocate urges political parties to unite for peace in Balochistan

Warns against continued violence, calls for peaceful future

QUETTA (ANN): Pashtunkhwa National Awami Party's Provincial Secretary for Women and Human Rights and former member of the Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Arifa Siddiq Advocate, while addressing the ongoing protest sit-in at Coal Phatak in memory of the national martyrs of Ziarat, paid tribute to the martyred police personnel and called upon the oppressed Pashtun nation to strengthen unity among themselves.

She also demanded an end to official patronage of armed groups in the Pashtun homeland, particularly in Southern Pashtunkhwa, to prevent such unfortunate incidents in the near future.

On Monday, while participating in the ongoing sit-in along with hundreds of lawyers, Arifa Siddiq Advocate said she had the opportunity to visit the homes of the martyrs' families, where the grief of parents over the loss of their children is beyond description.

She said all women lawyers in Quetta stand with the affected families and will continue to raise their voices for the protection of their constitutional and legal rights. Referring to the late Pashtun nationalist leader Usman Khan Kakar, she said his sudden passing was a great loss, but wished he had been the last martyr of the Pashtun-Afghan homeland. However, the continued occurrence of such terrorist incidents in the joint Pashtun-Baloch province after his death remains a question mark. She said it has become essential for all political parties in the Pashtun homeland and people from every section of society to put aside their differences and unite around a single-point agenda for the establishment of peace in the province.

Balochistan Governor vows continued support for minority communities

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor of Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail said that since the very first day, the doors of the Governor House have remained open to all citizens regardless of their religious or ethnic background. He said that under the Constitution of Pakistan, every minority member is an equal citizen of the country, and the 1973 Constitution guarantees equal opportunities, basic facilities, and protection of life and property for all.

The Governor said that meeting people who visit the Governor House—whether they belong to the majority or minority communities—and helping reduce their difficulties gives him peace of mind and satisfaction.

He expressed these views during a meeting at the Governor House in Quetta with Emmanuel Athar Julius, a Member of the Punjab Provincial Assembly from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Chairman of the Pakistan Christian Alliance, and a member of the Chief Minister of Punjab's Inspection Team.

Governor Mandokhail said that he enjoys cordial and active relations with the Christian community as well as the leading representatives of other minority communities in the province.

As Governor of Balochistan, he regularly participates in their various programs and religious events.

PAC orders probe into SBK Women University appointments

QUETTA, (VoM Report): A meeting of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Balochistan Assembly was held in the Assembly Committee Room under the chairmanship of Committee Chairman Asghar Ali Tareen. Committee members Rehmat Saleh Baloch, Ghulam Dastagir Badini, and Safia Bibi attended the meeting. The meeting was attended by Secretary of the Balochistan Assembly Tahir Shah Kakar, Vice Chancellor of Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University Dr. Rubina Mushtaq, Director General Audit Shuja Ali, Special Secretary PAC Siraj Lehri, Additional Accountant General Balochistan Hafiz Noor-ul-Haq, Additional Secretary Law Department Saeed Iqbal, and other relevant officials. The committee conducted a detailed review of audit objections, expenditures, administrative matters, and compliance with PAC directives relating to Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University.

Committee member Rehmat Saleh Baloch said that merit should be given top priority in appointments and promotions, and that favoritism in daily wage recruitments should be discouraged. He said universities are institutions linked to the future of the country's children, and therefore their credibility and transparency must be maintained at all costs.

PAC Chairman Asghar Ali Tareen said that government funds and budgets should be utilized in accordance with rules.

Speaker reviews security arrangements of Balochistan Assembly

QUETTA, (APP): Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai, reviewed the security arrangements of the Assembly in light of the prevailing law and order situation.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Hamza Shafqaat, Inspector General Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir, and Assembly Secretary Tahir Shah Kakar. During the meeting, officials presented a detailed briefing on the measures taken to strengthen the Assembly's security.

They assured the Speaker that all necessary steps are being implemented to make security more effective, reinforce protective measures, and maintain constant vigilance. Speaker Achakzai emphasized that the Balochistan Assembly is a vital constitutional institution and its security must not be compromised under any circumstances.

PDMA, WFP organizes workshop on sexual abuse and emergency response

QUETTA, (APP): Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan, through its Gender and Child Cell, in collaboration with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) organized a one-day introductory workshop on "Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): Strengthening Safety Measures in Monsoon Preparedness and Emergency Response (RSP)".

Representatives from various government departments, humanitarian organizations and development partners participated in the workshop, which aimed to make safety measures during disaster preparedness and emergency response more effective at the institutional level.

PM conveys condolences to Qatari leadership on Sheikh Hamad's death

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, undertook a day-long visit to Doha to personally convey condolences on behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan, to the leadership and people of the State of Qatar on the passing away of the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

The prime minister was accompanied by former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Information Minister Atta Ullah Tarar and other senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. In Doha, the prime minister and Pakistan delegation called on Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and conveyed heartfelt condolences at the sad demise of the Father Amir.

He paid rich tribute to the late Father Amir's visionary leadership, statesmanship, and enduring contributions to Qatar's remarkable transformation as well as to regional peace, stability, and development.

The prime minister recalled with deep appreciation, the Father Amir's warmth, kindness, and abiding affection for Pakistan, and his many memorable visits to the country over the years.

He also reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast solidarity with the leadership and people of Qatar during this period of profound grief and prayed that Allah Almighty grant the departed soul the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdaus and bestow strength upon the Royal family and the Qatari nation to bear this irreparable loss.



QUETTA: Member of the Punjab Provincial Assembly Emmanuel Athar Julius called on Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Terrorism, target killings paralyzes Balochistan's economy, claims Central Traders Association

QUETTA (ANN): President of the Central Traders Association of Balochistan Rahim Kakar, along with Hazrat Ali Achakzai, Yasin Mengal, Imran Tareen, Haji Saadullah Achakzai, Haji Hashim Kakar, Muhammad Jan Agha Darwish, Abdul Khaliq Agha, Haji Zafar Kakar, Ghaffar Lango, Kaleem Kamalzai, Allah Dad Achakzai, Naimat Agha, Haji Saleh Norzai, Naimat Tareen, Naqeeb Kakar, and other cabinet members, said in a joint statement that the Central Traders Association of Balochistan fully supports the sit-in by the families of the Mangi martyrs and the protest schedule announced by the All Parties and Mangi Martyrs Sit-in Committee.

In this regard, all units of the Central Traders Association in Quetta city, all market associations, and all district units across the province have been directed to organize strong protest demonstrations in their respective districts on July 15 in solidarity with the Mangi martyrs. They have also been instructed to ensure the complete success of the province-wide shutter-down strike on July 17 by keeping all business centers completely closed.

The statement said that the martyrdom of a large number of police personnel in the Mangi area of Ziarat is among the most tragic incidents in Balochistan's history. The ongoing protest by the martyrs' families for justice and their legitimate demands is a constitutional, democratic, and humanitarian struggle that every conscious citizen has a responsibility to support.

The Central Traders Association expressed complete solidarity with the bereaved families and fully endorsed all of their legitimate demands.

The statement added that the law and order situation in Balochistan continues to deteriorate.

Traders, transporters, farmers, laborers, government employees, and ordinary citizens all feel insecure. Frequent attacks on national highways, robberies, the burning of cargo vehicles, kidnappings, terrorism, and targeted killings have paralyzed Balochistan's economy.



SALFIT, WEST BANK, PALESTINE: A girl holds a bird cage in front of debris as Israeli forces demolish the home of Palestinian Hasan al-Rinawi with a bulldozer and heavy machinery alleging it was built without a permit in the village of Kufr al Dik

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Tuesday July 14, 2026

Trump engaged in political cost-benefit analysis

"The empire… gradually destroyed the distinctive structures of government that had brought it into existence in the first place, paving the way for one-man rule ."

The United States, despite its aggressive foreign policy rhetoric and occasional predatory war, always felt conflicted about becoming an imperial power. As late as the 1930s, most American citizens had little desire to be involved in the world's problems and used "empire" as a derogatory epithet to label the British. Until Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, domestic political sentiment forced President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) into various subterfuges while aiding the British against Nazi Germany.

Probably only the WWII generation of US political leaders had a true understanding of what US global leadership entailed. Since the US President Eisenhower administration, the scene has been one of slow decline. US economic productivity and military prowess maintained America's global dominance, but the deterioration of America's leadership ability has been evident for many decades.

Concurrently, the power and wealth stemming from America's status as the world's premier economic, military, and political actor eventually exerted distorting influences on U.S. society and its political system. The "Reagan Revolution" of the 1980s ended FDR's New Deal, which had redistributed wealth in US society. US elections became contests of money and image manipulation.

In early 2017, it was explained that, no matter how bad Donald Trump's presidency turned out to be, in the short term, he would most likely not be the cause for the US economic and political system's disintegration.

During Trump's first presidency, the US witnessed "increased cronyism and nepotism, along with four years of poorly informed domestic and foreign policy" , but the US political system not only weathered the storm; Joe Biden's administration even retained many policies instituted by Trump. Among federal institutions, the State Department, which Trump defunded and left to wither, suffered the most. But the State Department's profile had already declined significantly over the previous 60 years.

The second time around, Trump returned to US federal institutions like Arnold Schwarzenegger returned to the police station in "Terminator." Every week has featured multiple instances of Trump either pushing or completely ignoring the traditional and legal limits on the president's (the executive branch's) powers. Some of those actions have been stopped or delayed through court decisions, but precedents are being established nonetheless.

Trump and his supporters see the president's powers as largely unlimited, even though this is clearly not what the creators of America's constitutional system envisioned. Fundamentally, "checks and balances" means that each governmental branch wields some powers, but is limited by the powers of the other branches. The executive branch's powers were purposefully limited in order to ensure that kings or emperors would not result.

On the other hand, talk of the "Imperial Presidency" has featured in US political debates since Arthur Schlesinger wrote a study bearing that title in 1973. The US Presidency's powers have been expanding for many decades, and opposition to that expansion has seen little success.

As an illustration, Congress has helped presidents avoid the Constitution's mandate of Congressional approval for sending US forces to war. The last time the US formally declared war was in 1942. Since that point, instead of guarding its control over such an important power, Congress used resolutions to authorize the president to use the military abroad, and then passed the War Powers Resolution of 1973 after controversies stemming from the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

That legislation, however, actually delineated how the president could utilize the armed forces without Congressional approval, and Congress has never found a president to be in violation of that resolution.

From that perspective, it seemed only a matter of time until a president arrived who decided that the armed forces could also be used domestically since they, as the Commander-in-Chief (a title granted by the Constitution), already enjoyed expansive powers to utilize the armed forces. At the moment, it is not possible to foresee what will happen to US governmental structures in the coming years. Trump has already destroyed one institution (the Education Department), neutralized the State Department, and dismantled the US Agency for International Development. He has also politicized many others in an unprecedented fashion, including the Justice Department, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, the intelligence agencies, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Federal Reserve Board. All of those actions are geared toward implementing what Trump's advisors refer to as the "unitary executive."

Is the American public disturbed enough by Trump's decisions to penalize him in the November 2026 midterm elections? Polls currently indicate that Trump's public support has declined, so Trump's response has been to push issues that he believes will solidify his voting base. Consider Trump's deployment of the National Guard and the Marines to Los Angeles, and the FBI to Washington, DC, under the pretext of fighting crime. Since crime has actually been decreasing across the US since the pandemic, Trump's actions are clearly intended as exhibitions that will appeal to his voters.

Thus, Trump is engaged in a political cost-benefit analysis: his policies are causing problems for the Republican Party, so he incites a public uproar that will result in intense media coverage of issues his voters care about. He purposefully targets states or cities run by prominent Democrats or Democrats from minority groups.

If the Republicans, despite the new, gerrymandered districts in several states, suffer serious losses next year, would Trump change his behavior? If the Democrats succeed in retaking the White House in 2028, can US institutional strength and/or respectability be reconstituted?

It seems difficult to answer both questions in the affirmative. Trump, when faced with opposition to his instincts or evidence that contradicts his preconceived notions, tends to lash out and double down. Federal institutions that would normally be expected to curb such tendencies, like Congress or the Supreme Court, have consented to nearly everything that Trump has done. And Trump attacks courts that rule against him. The damage done to the functionality and credibility of federal institutions is already severe, and Trump has three years left in his term. Consequently, Trump is centralizing powers that had once been diffuse across various federal institutions, while those institutions are being politicized and, in many cases, rendered ineffective. For many historians, that is a familiar scenario. When Octavian (soon to be Augustus Caesar) settled into his role as princeps, he left Roman republican institutions mostly untouched because precedents for one-man rule had already been established over the previous 50 years. When Cosimo de' Medici returned to Florence in 1434, he established himself as its de facto ruler; the Florentine political system continued to function as it had previously. But Medici opponents were not allowed to hold office or make decisions at important junctures. Despite Roman and Florentine republican institutions not being fully democratic in the modern sense, they featured limited, democratic mechanisms to administer the society and solve political problems. Power and wealth then created socio-political conflicts that resulted in those republican systems being superseded by one-man rule.

Will the same happen to the United States?

'Send them away'

F.S. AIJAZUDDIN

Where on earth is Eswatini? It is one of the smallest countries in Africa, a landlocked kingdom ringed by South Africa and Mozambique. It is now the new home for five criminals (from Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, Jamaica and Yemen), deported recently from prisons in the US. Why Eswatini? Perhaps, the reason lies in its national motto: 'We are a fortress / We are a mystery / We hide ourselves away.' Deportation to a third country is not a new practice. In the 19th century, the British sent their criminals to Australia. Between 1788 and 1868, 162,000 convicts were transported there. Recently, one visitor entering Australia was asked whether he had any convictions. He replied wittily: "Why? Is conviction still a prerequisite to enter Australia?"

Normally, convicts and undesirables used to be deported to their home country. Today, they can be sent anywhere. Countries in the Global North have begun exporting their human detritus, like unwanted waste, to poorer ones in the Global South.

Today, undesirables can be sent anywhere.

For example, Denmark, to ease overcrowding in its jails, has signed a 10-year deal with Kosovo worth millions, leasing 300 cells in a refurbished prison. Belgium is considering a similar deal with Kosovo. The Netherlands may send up to 500 foreign inmates to Estonia from next year. Austria wants to follow suit. Sweden is studying the export of both Swedish and foreign prisoners.

In March this year, President Donald Trump deported more than 200 Venezuelans held in the US to a mega prison in El Salvador, some 2,500 kilometres away from their home.

In Britain, housing a prisoner is costly — over £50,000 a year. Its prison population is 87,000, ie, 97 per cent of jail capacity. The true threat is not from this captive audience but from asylum seekers. The last Conservative government misspent a fortune — £700 million — in a scheme to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda. These included payments to Rwanda's government of £290 million, the wasted cost of chartered flights that never took off, the detention of hundreds of asylum seekers in British hotels, and the salaries of 1,000 civil servants who formulated this harebrained scheme.

The present Labour Government has admitted that no asylum seekers were ever deported to Rwanda. The four illegal immigrants who did opt for Rwanda agreed after receiving a sweetener each of £3,000.

Today's Britain is suffering from a replay of Dunkirk, in reverse. Asylum seekers are crossing the Channel in anything that floats. Despite the efforts of the British and French governments, the number of boat people has increased by 50pc over last year. In 2025, more than 21,000 have crossed with impunity.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron have announced a 'one in, one out' deal — one person would be admitted in the UK and in exchange another who arrived irregularly would be returned to France. A second part of the deal is the interception of overcrowded dinghies up to 300 metres out to sea. In one recent incident, the French gendarmerie punctured a dinghy. Undeterred, its crew picked up yet more passengers along the French coast and landed them in Britain. That same day, another 10 boats unloaded 573 asylum seekers.

One must marvel at the ingenuity of these boat people. They have the resources to dodge all hurdles. They manage to foil passport controls at every European border. And they still have enough left over to buy a seat on a leaking dinghy.

Ironically, it is often the least developed countries that be----ar the burden of migrants. Pakistan at one time hosted over 4m Afghans. Many have been repatriated since, although more than a million remain. Iran has been more ruthless. Within the fortnight of June 24 to July 9 2025, more than 500,000 Afghans were evicted and left Iran for home. Meanwhile, Afghans who collaborated with British troops during the Afghan war find themselves the victims of friendly fire, after the data of nearly 19,000 helpful Afghans were revealed in an accidental breach.

Under a covert resettlement scheme, 4,500 Afghans and their family members have been moved to the UK. Another 2,400 are expected. The total cost will exceed £850m. The British regard this as the price for their help. The Taliban view it as the equivalent of 30 silver pieces for betrayal.

Pakistan's prison population today is over 100,000, overcrowded into jails which have a notional capacity of 65,000. Every inmate here and everywhere — whether in Kot Lakhpat, Adiala, El Salvador, Kosovo or Eswatini — lives out these words of Oscar Wilde's: "All that we know who lie in goal/ Is that the wall is strong;/ And that each day is like a year,/ A year whose days are long."

The growing resource hunger

KHURRAM HUSAIN

Consider two things carefully. First, the burden on compliant taxpayers is spiralling higher and higher every year, with a marked acceleration in the preceding three years. Second, dollar-buying by the State Bank is continuing with unchecked ferocity, leaving behind little for the rest and starving private markets.

Both these phenomena are symptoms of a single problem: a state apparatus that can no longer generate the resources required for its own upkeep. In short, this relentless tightening of conditions in the economy, despite the much-vaunted stabilisation that has taken place, reflects the erosion of the underlying financial and economic viability of the state, and by extension, of Pakistan's economy. As presently constituted.

These last three words are key, because it is equally important to remind ourselves that it does not have to be like this. But for the time being it is. And the problem is going to aggravate with time.

Just consider two stories from the week thus far. On Tuesday, a well-connected group of business leaders from Lahore and Karachi met with the army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, to convey their concerns about the ramped-up powers being given to the FBR, particular the powers of arrest.

"The delegation presented a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by the industrial sector" their press release said following the meeting, "with particular emphasis on the recently enacted expansions of the Federal Board of Revenue's powers".

The expansion in powers refers to the powers of arrest that the FBR enjoys, which have been strengthened in the latest budget. Other things came under discussion too, but the press release suggests this was the primary reason for the visit, while the opportunity was used to also convey other concerns regarding interest rates and power tariffs.

The relentless tightening of conditions in the economy reflects the erosion of the underlying financial and economic viability of the state.

The second story, published in this paper, points to an enduring dollar shortage that has gripped financial markets in Pakistan for a number of months now and refuses to go away. And on Wednesday, a statement was released by Malik Bostan, the head of the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan, announcing that on Tuesday he met with the ISI in which they were asked to explain why the rate of the dollar has been rising in the open market in recent days.

In his response, Bostan blamed the black market operators, saying their hand is strengthened the more the state clamps down on exchange company operations in the formal sector. Meanwhile, the shortages in the banking system persist despite rising inflows into the country in the last fiscal year.

Initially, a few months ago, we were told this shortage exists because of delays in the rollover of some Chinese debt obligation. But those rollovers were secured by the end of June, and another $1.5 billion secured through loans from two Middle Eastern commercial banks, and government sources confirmed to news reporters that their IMF-mandated target for foreign exchange reserves by end June 2025 had been met.

Then came news that remittances posted a record high (they post a record high almost every year so not a big deal really), but more importantly, the current account posted a surplus of $2.1bn whereas the IMF programme had projected a deficit of $200 million. Foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank were projected by the Fund to be around $13.9bn by end FY25. They came in at $14.5bn instead, higher by $600m.

So, if the external sector of the economy has performed better than expected, and foreign currency reserves are even higher than what they were projected to be, why is there still a shortage of dollars in the financial markets? Why are black markets springing up, and pressures mounting in the open market to the point? One answer is that all the dollars flowing into the country from high remittances and 'resilient exports' are being bought up by the State Bank, leaving behind little for private players. And the open market, which is also fed by remittances and foreign currency brought in by travellers from abroad (as per their own telling anyway), is finding black market customers for foreign currency at higher price points and therefore preferring to keep a growing share of their transactions there as opposed to the regulated market, where they are compelled to sell dollars at a rate agreeable to their friends in Pindi. As a result, reserves are outperforming their projections while private market players wonder aloud where all the dollars are going. "I am surprised why the State Bank has tightened the market so severely when it has already met the IMF target," a story published in this paper quotes a market analyst as saying.

Why indeed? The government over-performed on fiscal and external sector metrics in FY25, and they waste no opportunity to remind the rest of us of what a great achievement this is, to have stabilised the economy following the epic upheavals that wracked it post-2021. But yet here we are. The hunger for dollars continues, the hunger for revenues leaves the state famished despite having not just met but blown past some key targets in the Fund programme, and this hunger drives them to press harder and harder on financial markets and compliant taxpayers to extract more and more from them.

This is not going to end by itself. It will continue like this

because the pressure for resources — fiscal and FX in this case — is not coming only from the need to meet IMF programme targets. It is in significant measure also coming from the need to rearm following the recent war with India. But in very large measure, the pressure is mounting because the failure to reform the system over the preceding years has yielded a rigid economy that cannot meet the emerging requirements of a growing economy.

Until those reforms or an external bailout come, these pressures will only keep mounting.

Peace and youth

MOHAMMAD ALI BABAKHEL

"Youth is easily deceived because it is quick to hope." — Aristotle.

Due to the increased influence of social media, talking about 'the youth' has become a trend. From political parties to militant organisations, everyone wants to lure them. However, neither civil society nor the media seems to give priority to the role of youth in peacebuilding.

The youth must be our central focus. Investing in them is investing in the future, as the youth have the energy to pursue ideals and the passion to learn, excel and bring change. The challenge lies in saving them from crime, extremism, terrorism, drug addiction and social disorder.

Given the spread of virulent extremism, it is essential to focus on educational institutions and motivate them to enhance preventive measures. Out-of-school children and drop-out students need special attention from the community and government. Disillusioned youth are easily targeted by militant groups, who present themselves as alternative sources of purpose and identity. The majority of suicide bombers, target killers, and street criminals have been youth. A significant challenge for states is thus to protect future generations from extremism and effectively counter such narratives.

The youth have a crucial role in preventing conflict.

In Pakistan, 125 million people (60 per cent of the population) are under the age of 30, making this the largest young generation in Pakistan's history. They have a crucial role in preventing conflict, promoting social cohesion, and building sustainable peace. When engaged constructively, they can become mediators, educators, digital peacebuilders and community leaders. Dialogue and mediation are the best ways to engage them. Youth-led forums can promote interfaith, interethnic and interprovincial dialogue. To counter hate speech and misinformation, the youth can be effective in leading social media campaigns and promoting tolerance. Through community engagement, the youth can act as ambassadors in their neighbourhoods to resolve disputes, prevent violence and promote inclusion.

In 2023, some 196m mobile phone connections were in use in Pakistan. By early 2025, the country had 116m internet users, representing 45.7pc of the total population. Social media allows militants to attract uneducated social media addicts. Digital misinformation and hate speech spread faster than the truth. Lack of digital literacy and weak regulation exacerbate the issue, often resulting in mob violence. Digital peacebuilding through social media campaigns can challenge hate speech, religious bigotry and fake news. Digital storytelling and peace narratives can promote diversity, tolerance and resilience. Universities can offer online peace education during vacations. Social media influencers can be engaged for the dissemination of messages of coexistence and inclusion.

Political instability and polarisation are other irritants that keep youth away from peacebuilding efforts, as parties often mobilise youth for protest and confrontation rather than for dialogue or peace. Consequently, youth engagement becomes politicised rather than peace-oriented. Ethnic and sectarian divides also fuel mistrust among youth as do weak rule of law and injustice. When the criminal justice system fails to resolve issues and the youth experience human rights violations that alienate them, they may resort to violence. Finally, gender inequality is another significant barrier. Women are excluded from most peace processes, even though they suffer the most from conflict. Cultural and religious barriers li--mit women's visibility in public and pe--ace efforts.

Conseq-uently, women are sidelined in reconciliation and reform.

Social empowerment requires more investment, and when planning youth empowerment, gender gaps need to be addr-essed. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-24, 4.5m individuals are unemployed, with youth aged 15-24 having the highest unemployment rate of 11.1 pc. Addressing this issue requires opportunities for career counselling, education, skills enhancement, employment, inclusive governance and justice, not just kinetic measures.

Pakistan's youth possess potential, but without channelling their energy, their talent is useless.

Therefore, the inclusion of the voice of youth in policymaking is necessary.

It is essential to recognise youth as key peace stakeholders in local and national frameworks, fund youth-led projects, integrate peace education by teaching empathy, dialogue and civic engagement, and include youth representation in local peace committees. Art, music and culture are other attractive avenues through which youth may be educated about identity, trauma, healing and the softer aspects of life.

From Frontier to Federal

AFZALALI SHIGRI

The Frontier Constabulary (FC), forged by the statute of 1915 from the fearless Samana Rifles and Border Military Police, was born not merely of administrative necessity, but also of a greater understanding by the British rulers that only those who walk the mountains can guard the mountain paths.

The FC was therefore tasked with protecting the settled area against incursions from the tribal area; it did so remarkably well and created a barrier between chaos and order — not of stone or iron but of blood and bone. The British, wise to the ways of empire, only recruited from among these sons of the soil to harness the strength of tradition. Thus, the FC was designed as a shield, a tribal force on the threshold of settled territory. It was not merely a force of containment, it was also a bridge between statecraft and tradition.

After Partition, the FC's role underwent a quiet transformation. No longer merely the guardian of the frontier, it was summoned to the heart of the republic to restore order amid unrest; to aid the people in times of flood and fire, and to serve as the federal arm of protection and restore order.

In August 2022, I wrote a column in this newspaper about redefining the role of the FC. With time, the FC's role had practically converted it into a federal law-enforcement force that was deployed all over Pakistan. Since it was commanded by police officers, its deployment side by side with local police posed no problem and it blended perfectly with the civilian police instead of working as a parallel force under a different command. FC restructuring strikes a careful balance between tradition and modernity. Every civilian government has valued the need for a federal force to deal with internal security threats. But due to the unfortunate experience with the Federal Security Force, created in 1972 and disbanded by the military government that followed, no one was prepared to initiate any proposal. In 2018, the then interior minister Ahsan Iqbal floated the idea of converting the FC into a federal force. However, no action was taken. It is now that the government, realising the need for such a force, has decided to convert the Frontier Constabulary into the Federal Constabulary. The responsibility of preparing a proposal for restructuring the force was assigned to the present team of officers who have a profound respect for the Pakhtun tribal code of conduct. Their understanding of Pashtunwali enables them to preserve the tribal strength and spirit that have long defined the force, while shaping it into a modern security institution — one that draws its resilience from age-old customs but adapts to contemporary needs. Their discipline is not imposed, it is inherited. Their loyalty is not bought, it is sworn. Where others rely on uniform and oath, the FC is strengthened by the enduring vows of ghairat (honour), nang (dignity), and badal (revenge) — concepts misunderstood by the foreign mind but recognised in the Pakhtun heart. In response to today's security challenges, while preserving the legacy of the Frontier Cons-tabulary, an imaginative and pragmatic restructuring plan has been proposed. The proposal carefully protects the unique architecture of the FC by ensuring its continued role as a distinct and vital component of the new federal force.

To enhance operational efficiency, improve command and control and streamline deployment, two new supervisory tiers have been introduced: the Company, comprising three platoons, and the Wing, consisting of five companies. This structural refinement will strengthen coordination and field effectiveness. Initially, six new wings are being raised against reallocated vacancies of the existing strength, with additional ones to be raised as and when required in the future. Substantial financial resources will be provided to upgrade infrastructure and weapons to deal with emerging challenges. The new organogram envisions two divisions within the federal force: the Security Division, which will include the existing FC and focus on security and counterterrorism operations; and the Federal Reserve Division, which will undertake riot control and special protection duties. This division will be recruited on a nationwide basis according to a defined provincial quota system. The headquarters of the overarching federal force will remain in Peshawar, upholding historical continuity. Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve Division will have its headquarters in Islamabad, under the command of a deputy inspector general of police. This restructuring strikes a careful balance between tradition and modernity. It ensures the preservation of the FC's proud heritage of tribal valour and sacrifice, while creating a national-level federal force equipped to respond to emerging security demands. Furthermore, the decision to retain police command over the entire structure through legislation reinforces civilian ethos and oversight of this unique force. By grounding the new federal force in both tradition and professionalism, this visionary reform not only dispels misconceptions surrounding its creation but also enhances the federation's ability to uphold law and order within federally administered territories while providing support to the provinces upon request.

Major quake off Philippines kills at least 35, dozen still missing

Monitoring Desk

Philippine: A 7.8-magnitude earthquake in the southern Philippines on Monday killed at least 35 people, according to provincial authorities, after toppling buildings and sparking tsunami warnings across the region.

National disaster authorities said at least a dozen people were still missing, while 134 had sustained injuries.

Philippine authorities urged people in affected coastal regions to move to higher ground after the offshore quake hit south of General Santos, a city of about 720,000, where the death toll was now 12, according to the tally at a local command centre.

A series of powerful aftershocks rocked the area from about two hours after the first quake, according to the United States Geological Survey, with the largest measuring magnitude 6.5.

As night descended, AFP journalists watched as rescue workers in General Santos used their hands to dig through the rubble of a popular grocery store chain in a desperate bid to reach two employees buried beneath.

Morphy Angcad, a 35-year-old security guard, told AFP he was not ready to accept that his sister, one of the two, was dead.

"We received a call this morning telling us that she was one of the trapped there," he said, adding he had refused a hotel room so he could stand watch.

"I don't want to leave this site until I see the body of my sister… (but) I'm hoping against hope that she is still alive."

Dioslinda Deluvio told AFP her son Joey, the other employee, had come to visit her just weeks earlier, asking: "Ma, what is your plan for your life? Are you OK?"

"All I can do is cry now, imagining the good things he did in the world," she said. A few kilometres away, others were preparing to spend the night on a sidewalk.

"I'll be sleeping here outside even if it's uncomfortable, because I'm scared there will be an aftershock," 34-year-old sales clerk Johnson Alerta told AFP.

"I feel safer here." 'So many lives'. Rene Punzalan, disaster chief for hard-hit Sarangani province, told AFP 14 people had died in Glan municipality alone when a landslide buried their homes at the foot of a mountain. "The landslide happened immediately after the earthquake, so many lives were lost," he said, adding that some areas had yet to report if they had sustained casualties.

"The greatest challenge is communication. The power was cut, so it's hard to get updates," Punzalan said. Videos posted to social media and verified by AFP showed a shopping centre with a Jollibee fast food restaurant reduced to rubble in General Santos, while a school building that officials said was unoccupied crumpled in another.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house whose residents were warned to evacuate before the attack, near a tent camp sheltering displaced people that was damaged in the strike, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza.



Xi looks to win over Kim during North Korea visit.

Trump says Israel, Iran seeking 'immediate ceasefire as final peace talks proceed'

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has said that Israel and Iran are both seeking an immediate ceasefire as final negotiations over a potential peace agreement are underway.

"Both sides, Israel and Iran, are looking to do an immediate CEASEFIRE! Final negotiations on "Peace" are proceeding, subject to ignorance or stupidity getting in its way," he said in a post on Truth Social on Monday. He added that the blockade would remain in place and continue to be enforced "until a final deal is reached."

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday said Tehran remained at the negotiating table after halting attacks on Israel following the first exchange of fire since the April truce.

"Diplomacy and defence are the two wings of national power; we have neither left the battlefield nor the negotiating table," Pezeshkian said in a post on X, adding that Tehran "will not retreat in the face of any threat".

Urging all sides to avoid further escalation, the prime minister appealed for restraint, saying, "We sincerely urge all sides to exercise restraint and give peace a little more chance." He further emphasised the importance of continuing on the path of peace and diplomacy, which he said held "bright prospects of success" compared to violence and destruction.

Iran's military command on Monday announced it was halting its operation against Israel after the two sides exchanged fire for the first time since a truce took effect in April.

Iran had delivered a "painful response" to Israel and "accordingly, the cessation of armed forces operations is hereby announced", the Khatam al-Anbiya command said in a statement carried by state television.

"However, it is emphasised that should acts of aggression and hostility continue, including in southern Lebanon, much more severe and crushing measures than before will follow," it added.

Iran warns of strong response, holds US responsible for Israeli ceasefire violations

TEHRAN (INP): Iran's Foreign Ministry has accused the United States of supporting Israel and said repeated ceasefire violations are unacceptable, urging Washington to stop backing Israeli actions.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said Iran had long harbored concerns about both the United States and Israel, questioning their intentions. He alleged that Washington bears direct responsibility for recent ceasefire violations and argued that Israeli actions cannot be separated from US policies.

Baghaei stated that Iran has no issues with neighboring countries but expressed regret over states that allowed their territories to be used against Iran.

He further accused Israel of carrying out what he described as a three-year-long campaign of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and criticized neighboring countries, particularly Egypt, for failing to speak out against it. According to Baghaei, Iran remained committed to the ceasefire while the United States and Israel continued to violate its terms, claiming that recent developments were part of a broader US strategy.

The spokesperson also alleged that Israel has continued attacks on Lebanon despite the ceasefire. He stressed that Lebanon is an integral part of the ceasefire agreement and said Tehran seeks full implementation of ceasefire commitments across all fronts, including Lebanon. He added that Iran would not allow the agreement to be weakened and accused both Israel and the United States of attempting to undermine it.

Baghaei warned that Iran cannot remain silent in the face of ongoing ceasefire violations and said the country is fully prepared to deliver a strong response to any hostile actions.



Pope Leo XIV (C) gestures next to the speaker of the lower house, Francina Armengol (C-L), before delivering a speech at the Spanish lower house in Madrid, Spain.

UN urges Afghan Taliban to end arrests of women over dress rules

Monitoring Desk

NEW TORK: The United Nations mission in Afghanistan has expressed concern over the arrest and detention of women in a western province for allegedly failing to comply with "dress requirements" and urged Taliban authorities to treat all people equally.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (Unama) did not specify how many women had been affected, though local media reported last week that at least 21 women and girls were detained in Herat province.

The Afghan Taliban did not respond to Reuters request for comment.

"Unama is concerned over multiple arrests and detentions of women in Herat…for alleged non-compliance with dress requirements, which raises serious human rights concerns," Unama said in a post on X late on Sunday.

"We remind the authorities that all people have the right to freedom of movement and that all persons, both women and men, are entitled to equality before the law," it said.

The reported detentions follow a Taliban directive issued last week prohibiting women from appearing in public without what authorities described as a "proper hijab," according to local media.

The directive warned that women who failed to comply with the dress code — including those showing their faces or wearing makeup — would face punitive measures, the reports said. Reuters was unable to independently verify the directive.

Three Air India planes damaged by storm at Delhi airport

NEW DELHI (INP): Three Air India aircraft parked at the Delhi airport's Terminal 2 (T2) sustained damage when strong winds and heavy rain displaced nearby ground support equipment, causing it to strike the planes, Indian media reported on Monday.

Officials from the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) said that the three narrow-body aircraft had to be withdrawn from service following the incident.

"Three Air India aircraft were damaged due to ground support equipment hitting the aircraft as they moved from their position due to sudden strong wind and rain. The incident occurred at 4.40pm," an airport official said.

Israeli military kills six in Gaza & expands control zone, locals say

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Israeli strikes killed six Palestinians, including a child, in the Gaza Strip on Monday, health officials there said, as Israel's military expanded the area under its control, according to residents.

The reports came as mediators Cairo said they were pressing on with efforts to salvage a fragile U.S.-brokered ceasefire deal that has ended major but left many key points unresolved.

Medics said two people were killed when an Israeli strike hit near a tent encampment in the Mawasi area of Khan Younis in the south of the enclave.

In the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, medics said three Palestinians, including an 8-year-old boy, were killed and others were wounded in an Israeli airstrike that hit near a group of people digging a well.

Later on Monday, an Israeli airstrike near the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip, killed one person and wounded three others, medics said, taking Monday's death toll to six.

The Israeli military did not comment on the reports of the attacks or of its forces moving markers to expand the "Yellow Zone" under their control.

Israel and Hamas have repeatedly accused each other of violating the truce. Israeli strikes have killed more than 950 people since the truce, health officials say, while Israel says four soldiers were killed by militants during the same period. Israeli troops still control more than 60% of Gaza's territory, where they have ordered residents out and destroyed remaining buildings.

Peru's presidential vote tightens, stocks dip, as count enters second day

Monitoring Desk

LIMA: Leftist congressman Roberto Sanchez was closing in on conservative Keiko Fujimori Peru's presidential race on Monday, sending markets and mining lower as the official count continued into a second day.

With about 93% of votes tallied, Fujimori's lead had shrunk to 50.07%, while Sanchez was up to 49.93%. Sanchez has been gaining ground since Sunday night as votes from Peru's rural regions continue to be counted.

Sanchez has a significant overhaul to Peru's economic system, which has proved resilient despite the country's political turmoil.

U.S.-listed shares of Peruvian companies were down. Miner Buenaventura fell 3%, while Credicorp was down 4.8%. Intercorp Financial Services fell 2.8% and iShares MSCI Peru and Global Exposure ETF was down 1.4%. Aside from reforming the constitution, Sanchez has proposed reforming mining concessions.Peru is the world's third-largest copper producer and a major producer of gold, silver and zinc. Fujimori had a slight lead in exit polls and early results, but her lead dwindled as the count reached its final stretch.

An early tally by pollster Ipsos, has accurately predicted previous races, showed Sanchez leading with 50.3%.

US adds visa restrictions for Nicaraguans over death of indigenous leader

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States imposed additional visa restrictions Monday on than 100 Nicaraguan officials and family members over the death of indigenous leader Brooklyn Rivera.

"The United States will not ignore the Murillo-Ortega dictatorship's responsibility for the horrific death of political prisoner Brooklyn Rivera," Secretary State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

Rivera, a former lawmaker, died in state custody at age 73 in May, Nicaragua's health ministry said.

Rivera, who had been detained since 2023, died from bacteria generated by COVID-19, Nicaragua's ministry said on May 31.



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan declared victory in the parliamentary elections early Monday morning.

Poised to accelerate a pivot away from Russia, Armenian PM claims election win

Monitoring Desk

ARMENIAN: Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had appeared poised to win a clear victory in a closely watched parliamentary election Sunday, but the ballot result now defies easy geopolitical takeways.

In results announced Monday, Armenia's Central Election Commission said Pashinyan's ruling Civil Contract party had secured 49.81% of the vote, Reuters reported. That puts Pashinyan well ahead of the opposition Strong Armenia party, but it means he may lack the overwhelming mandate he needs to solidify a pivot away from Russia – the country's longstanding security guarantor and trading partner – and to negotiate a lasting peace with Armenia's neighbor and longtime adversary, Azerbaijan.

Pashinyan declared victory after early results came in, though the final allocation of seats in parliament is unclear. Smaller parties need to cross a 4% threshold to win seats, and it does not appear at this stage that Pashinyan will have the two-thirds constitutional majority to push through the most ambitious parts of his agenda.

The elections in Armenia were widely viewed as a referendum on the direction of the country's foreign policy. Pashinyan ran on a pledge to secure peace with Azerbaijan, normalize ties with Turkey and strengthen ties with the European Union, a platform that won an endorsement from US President Donald Trump.

In a post on Truth Social ahead of the vote.

Pope Leo XIV slams war as first pontiff to address Spanish parli.

Monitoring Desk

MADRID: Pope Leo XIV said every war represents a "painful defeat" in negotiations Monday in the first time a pontiff has addressed the Cortes Generales, Spain's parliament.

He said that while weapons can cause momentary silence, they can never bring true and lasting peace to humanity.

"Every war constitutes, ultimately, a painful defeat of the capacity to negotiate and also of that shared conscience of humanity that recognizes bonds of justice between nations," Pope Leo said.

"The world is going through a profound spiritual and cultural crisis, which manifests itself in multiple forms of violence, polarization and mutual distrust. In this context, peace presents itself as a political aspiration.

Iran closes its airspace following escalation with Israel

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iran on Monday closed its entire airspace after the latest military escalation with Israel, with state news agency IRNA reporting that the flight ban would remain in place until further notice and connections at all Iranian airports had been cancelled.

China's Xi lands in N.Korea for rare visit

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: China's President Xi Jinping hailed an "invincible friendship" with Pyongyang on arrival in North Korea Monday, his first trip abroad this year after hosting back-to-back summits in Beijing.

China, Washington's chief geopolitical rival, has been North Korea's main trading partner by far for decades and a key source of diplomatic and economic support for a country hit by multiple international sanctions.

Military officers lined a red carpet as an Air China plane carrying Xi arrived for his first visit since 2019, video from Xinhua showed. Kim and his wife Ri Sol-ju welcomed Xi, who was accompanied by his wife Peng Liyuan.

The two leaders shook hands, and children presented flowers to Xi and Peng, while a banner reading "We warmly welcome Comrade Xi Jinping" and hailing the two countries' "unbreakable friendship" hung below Chinese and North Korean flags.

Xi makes the trip after hosting US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin separately in Beijing and as North Korea's nuclear talks with Washington remain deadlocked.

The White House said last month that Xi and Trump "confirmed their shared goal to denuclearise North Korea" during their summit in Beijing.

However, leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister said on the eve of Xi's arrival that North Korea's nuclear weapons programme was "the line of no retreat".

South Korea's dovish President Lee Jae Myung said Monday Seoul should not give up on North Korea's denuclearisation, adding that "North Korea is still producing nuclear material even at this very moment". Minseon Ku, a diplomacy professor at DePaul University, told AFP that "Beijing probably has accepted North Korea as a nuclear state".

Iran releases videos of crowds celebrating renewed attacks on Israel

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Celebrations were seemingly held in Tehran and Kermanshah, where crowds were recorded waving the regime's flag alongside the flag of Hezbollah, a Lebanon-based arm of the IRGC. Crowds gathered to celebrate in Iran as the Islamic regime launched ballistic missiles toward Israel, destroying the period of relative calm since the pause in hostilities in April, according to footage released by the Islamic regime. Celebrations were seemingly held in Tehran and Kermanshah, where crowds were recorded waving the regime's flag alongside the flag of Hezbollah, a Lebanon-based arm of the IRGC.

The Islamic regime attacked Israel late on Sunday night and early on Monday morning, claiming the missile barrage was retaliation for Israeli strikes in Lebanon.



Buildings including a Jolibee restaurant collapsed following a 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit off Mindanao island.



A supporter of conservative presidential candidate Keiko Fujimori holds a poster with an image of Former President of Peru, Alberto Fujimori, following early results of the runoff against left-wing candidate Roberto Sanchez, in Lima, Peru.

Women Empowerment Islamic obligation; prerequisite for sustainable development: Chairman Senate

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, on Monday, urged the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to move beyond declarations and translate their commitments into concrete action for women's socio-economic empowerment, as Pakistan assumed the chairmanship of the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women.

Addressing the opening session of the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women, as the chief guest, Gilani said empowering women is both an Islamic obligation and a prerequisite for sustainable development.

He said Islam has guaranteed women the rights to education, property, inheritance, economic participation, and dignity more than 1,400 years ago, while the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) continued to provide a timeless framework for ensuring women's meaningful participation in society.

Welcoming ministers, parliamentarians, and delegates from OIC member states, Gilani said women constituted nearly half of the population of OIC countries, and no nation could achieve inclusive growth while excluding half of its human capital from economic and political participation.

He paid tribute to the contributions of Muslim women in education, governance, science, diplomacy, business, and public service, and described Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto as the first woman Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Muslim world whose vision continued to inspire generations.

Highlighting Pakistan's efforts, he referred to the (BISP), Waseela-e-Taleem, initiatives for women-led enterprises, financial inclusion, digital skills, and e-commerce. He also recalled landmark legislation enacted during his tenure as prime minister, including laws against workplace harassment, acid crimes, and anti-women practices, and called on OIC member states to adopt measurable targets for girls' education, women's leadership, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and protection against gender-based violence.

Federal Minister for Law, Justice, and Human Rights, Azam Nazeer Tarar, after assuming the chairmanship of the conference, said Pakistan accepted the responsibility with humility and a firm commitment to serve all 57 OIC member states through partnership, inclusivity, and consensus. Referring to the conference theme, "Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of Women in the OIC Countries: Challenges and Way Forward," he said empowering women is not only a social imperative but also an economic necessity.



DOHA: Former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visits Lusail Palace in Doha to offer condolences to Amir of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on the demise of Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, in a meeting with Dr Maimoonah Al Khalil, Secretary General of the Family Affairs Council, Government of KSA

Naqvi vows to restore peace, stability in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday paid tribute to Pakistan's security forces for what he described as the successful Operation Shaban against militants in Balochistan, praising their professionalism and resolve in ongoing counterterrorism operations.

In a statement, Naqvi commended the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan, and police for their joint operation, which he said resulted in the killing of five more militants. He also praised the security forces for carrying out effective ground and aerial operations against militant elements. The interior minister said the campaign against what he referred to as "Fitna al-Hindustan" would continue until the complete elimination of the group's militants from Pakistan. He said those seeking to undermine peace in Balochistan were being brought to justice and asserted that the entire nation stood firmly alongside the country's security forces in the fight against terrorism.

Operation Shaban underway; Security forces kill eight more Khwarij terrorists

QUETTA (ANN): A joint security operation named Operation Shaban is continuing in Balochistan, during which another eight militants were killed. According to the report, the total number of militants killed over the past five days has reached 117.

According to security sources, the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan, and police are continuing joint operations against what they describe as Fitna al-Khawarij, targeting militants through both aerial and ground operations.

During the latest actions, eight more militants were killed. The report states that the operation has continued successfully and that, since 5 July, a total of 117 militants have been killed in Operation Shaban and other intelligence-based operations. Security forces said the operation would continue until the last militant had been eliminated from Balochistan. Meanwhile, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi praised the security forces for what he described as the successful Operation Shaban against militants in Balochistan.

He commended the Pakistan Army, FC Balochistan, and police for the latest operation in which additional militants were killed, and praised the forces for their professional conduct in carrying out effective ground and air operations. The Interior Minister said that operations would continue until what he referred to as terrorists linked to Fitna al-Hindustan had been completely eliminated from the country.

Political parties demands elimination of armed groups, terrorist elements

QUETTA (ANN): A joint meeting of all political parties and the families of the martyrs was held regarding the sit-in over the martyrs of Ziarat Mangi Dam Phase III, during which important decisions were made.

The meeting was chaired by Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party Central General Secretary Abdul Rahim Ziaratwal. It was attended by Awami National Party Provincial President Asghar Khan Achakzai, Rashid Khan Nasir, Sanaullah Kakar, Pashtunkhwa National Awami Party Central Information Secretary Isa Roshan, Provincial President Nasrullah Khan Ziaray, Provincial Secretary Faqir Khushhal Kasi, Pashtunkhwa MAP Provincial President Abdul Qahar Wadan, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's Maulana Kamaluddin, Jamaat-e-Islami's Abdul Mateen Akhundzada, Jameel Ahmed Mashwani, Haleem Hamas, National Democratic Movement Provincial President Ahmad Jan Khan, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Quetta President Noor Khan Khilji, MNA Adil Khan Bazai, Gul Akbar Domar, National Party Provincial General Secretary Chingiz Hayee Baloch Advocate, Ali Ahmed Langove, Balochistan National Party's Agha Hassan Baloch Advocate, Mazloom Ulasi Tehreek President Abbas Khan Durrani, Asfandyar Kakar, the martyrs' family members Naseem Khan, Dr. Abdul Samad, Tariq Tareen, Nawaz Khan, Naqeebullah, Feroz Khan, Haji Zainullah, Dr. Hidayatullah, Anjuman-e-Tajiran President Abdul Rahim Kakar, and Hazrat Ali Achakzai.

The meeting held a detailed discussion on all aspects of the ongoing sit-in and expressed satisfaction over the participation of thousands of people. Important decisions were made to further expand the protest movement.

According to the announced protest schedule: 15 July (Wednesday): Large protest demonstrations will be held in Zhob, Harnai, Chaman, Turbat, Gwadar, and Panjgur.

16 July (Thursday): Women and children will hold a special protest sit-in at the Coal Patek sit-in site. 17 July (Friday): A complete shutter-down strike will be observed across the province.

The meeting decided that if the demands are not accepted, more stringent protest measures will be adopted. A committee was formed to negotiate with the government. It will be headed by Abdul Rahim Ziaratwal, Nasrullah Ziaray, and a representative of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, while MNA Adil Khan Bazai, Asghar Khan Achakzai, and Agha Hassan Baloch will also be members. Representatives of the martyrs' families will also be included in the committee.

Another committee was established to examine the legal aspects of the matter. Its members include Changaiz Hayee Baloch Advocate, Salam Agha Advocate, Sadiq Alizai Advocate, Habibullah Nasir Advocate, Musawir Khan Tareen Advocate, Sardar Sher Dil Mengal Advocate, and Sajid Tareen Advocate. The meeting demanded that the government immediately accept the demands of the families of the martyrs of Mangi Dam, Ziarat.



QUETTA: Aurat Foundation's Director Alauddin Khilji presenting a book to Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Politicians calls for end to terrorism through talks

QUETTA (ANN): Leaders of various political parties have described the Hanna Urak tragedy as deeply heartbreaking and highly regrettable. They called on the government to conduct a complete, transparent investigation and present the facts to the public. They also demanded that the concerns of the people of Hanna Urak be addressed and that compensation be announced for the families of those killed and injured. The leaders further said that if terrorists are entering from Afghanistan, the government should take appropriate measures and hold talks with the Afghan government on the issue.

These views were expressed during a condolence visit and prayer gathering in Hanna Urak by Pakistan Muslim League-N Vice President and Member of the National Assembly Sardar Yaqoob Nasir, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Balochistan President Daud Shah Kakar, City President Dr. Haleem Nasir, Balochistan Awami Party leader Ahsanullah Khaksar, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam leader Hafiz Hamdullah, and others.

They stated that Balochistan is a peaceful and prosperous province where dialogue, rather than the use of force, is necessary to maintain law and order. They noted that terrorist incidents have occurred in different parts of the province, particularly the Hanna Urak tragedy, in which five people from one village were killed and eight others injured.

They strongly condemned the incident and assured the people of Hanna Urak that they share in their grief.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif addresses the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women

SC advances digital transformation to strengthen Justice delivery

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan has achieved a major milestone in its ongoing programme of institutional modernization by integrating technology across its judicial and administrative functions to build a comprehensive digital justice ecosystem.

Through a series of interconnected reforms, the Court is transforming the way cases are managed, judicial services are delivered and institutional processes are administered, with the objective of making justice more accessible, transparent, efficient and responsive. A cornerstone of this transformation is the successful completion of the digitization of all pending case records. A total of 44,995 pending case files have been scanned in searchable OCR format, barcoded, digitally catalogued and integrated with the Court's Case Information Management System (CIMS). Significantly, the digitization exercise was completed alongside the Court's regular judicial work, during which 11,999 of these digitized cases have already been decided.

Balochistan govt introduces first-ever e-domicile, e-local certificate system

QUETTA, (VoM Report): The Balochistan government has launched the province's first-ever E-Domicile and E-Local Certificate System, marking a major step toward digital governance and transparent public service delivery.

Advisor to the Chief Minister on Media and Political Affairs, Shahid Rind, announced that the initiative has been formally rolled out under the directives of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. The Home Department of Balochistan, in collaboration with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), has issued a notification for the implementation of the Integrated Domicile Management System (IDMS).

Once fully operational, citizens across Balochistan will be able to apply for e-domicile and e-local certificates through any NADRA center, Deputy Commissioner's office, or the Pak-ID platform. The new system is designed to eliminate unnecessary delays, reduce the role of middlemen, and curb the issuance of fake certificates.

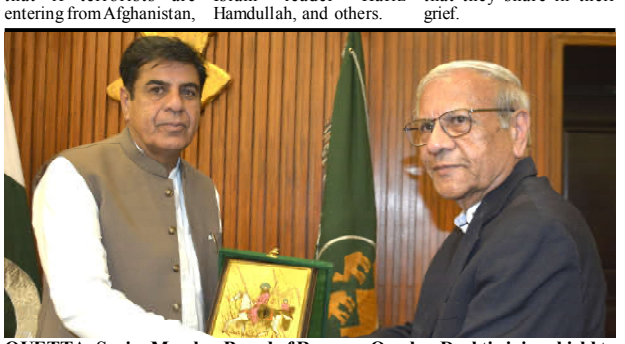
Shahid Rind emphasized that the digital system will ensure accuracy, security, and easy access to citizens' data, while also providing government departments and law enforcement agencies with a verifiable, province-wide database. This will strengthen administrative efficiency and enhance security mechanisms.

He added that under the leadership of Chief Minister Bugti, the provincial government is committed to making public services digital, transparent, and citizen-friendly, and the introduction of the e-domicile and e-local certificate system is a key milestone in this vision.

NUML confers honorary degree upon MWL Secretary General Dr Al-Issa

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The National University of Modern Languages held its 3rd Special Convocation 2026 to confer the prestigious Honorary Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree upon H.E. Dr Mohammad AbdulKarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to humanity, global peace, interfaith harmony, moderation, and the promotion of knowledge.

The distinguished ceremony was attended by H.E. Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan; Dr Wajiha Qamar, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training; Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M) (Retd); Director General NUML, Brigadier Muhammad Rafiq Khan; Pro-Rector Research & Strategic Initiatives, Dr Safeer Awan; deans, faculty members, eminent scholars, students, and a large number of distinguished guests, said a press release on Monday.



QUETTA: Senior Member Board of Revenue Qambar Dashti giving shield to Dr Qaiser Bangali.

Jamal Raisani vows to make every sacrifice for Balochistan

QUETTA (ANN): Central leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Member of the National Assembly Nawabzada Jamal Raisani said that the great sacrifice of martyred Nawabzada Siraj Raisani and his companions will never go in vain. He said the sacrifices made for peace, development, and prosperity in Balochistan will always be remembered, and the struggle against terrorism will continue.



He expressed these views while addressing a condolence reference held on the occasion of the eighth death anniversary of martyred Nawabzada Siraj Raisani.

Nawabzada Jamal Raisani said that martyred Nawabzada Siraj Raisani, his companions, and more than 300 people, including innocent children, embraced martyrdom for the country. However, he said, the question still remains as to what crime they were targeted for. He said Siraj Raisani's only "crime" was that he spoke for peace in Balochistan, Pakistan's unity, and the welfare of the people.

He added that anyone who speaks about peace, development, and the stability of Pakistan in Balochistan faces threats and terrorism, but such tactics have neither intimidated them in the past nor will they in the future.



QUETTA: Director General Public Relations Balochistan Askar Khan chairs a meeting regarding Advertisement Policy 2026.

People's mandate to determine AJK's future leadership: Muqam

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam on Monday said Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) general elections would be held on July 27, as scheduled, saying the people's mandate would determine the region's future leadership.

Muqam made the remarks while welcoming former AJK Legislative Assembly candidate Kamran Bashir Gorsi into the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Gorsi also announced his withdrawal from the LA-19 Poonch-II elections.

The minister said growing public support for the PML-N and its leadership, including former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, was evident across Azad Kashmir.

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