Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

www.voiceofmillionsqta.com Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah Quetta

Safar 05, 1448 AH Vol: XIX No. 335 Monday July 20, 2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

Hails US$ 440 mln Pak-China Pharma deals

Islamabad played vital mediating role during recent regional crisis: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hailed the signing of nine agreements worth around US$ 440 million between Pakistani and Chinese private enterprises in the pharmaceutical sector, describing the development as a major step towards strengthening bilateral economic cooperation and advancing the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0).

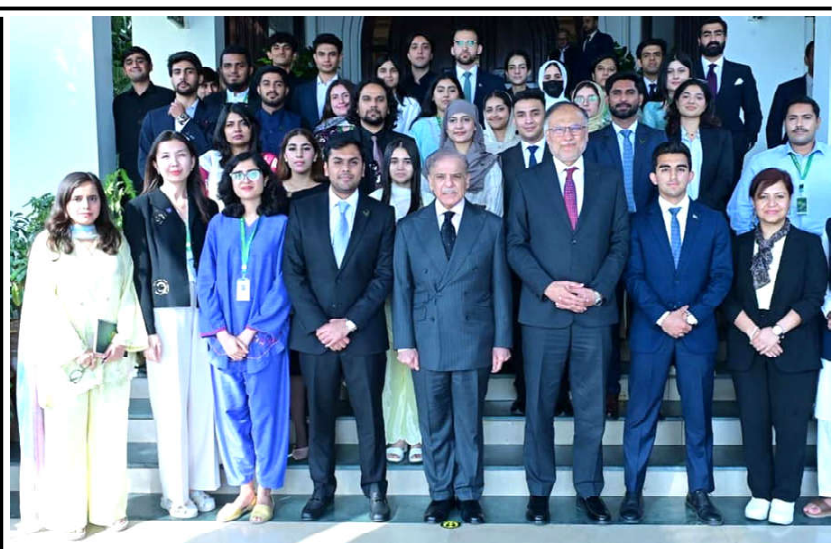
Addressing the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical Business-to-Business Conference here, the prime minister expressed confidence that the agreements would turn into practical projects, saying they would boost investment in pharmaceutical manufacturing, vaccines, research and development, and help Pakistan emerge as a regional centre for the production and export of life-saving medicines.

"I think this will ultimately result into manufacturing life saving medicines, vaccines, research and development and become a center of excellence for exporting our wonderful products to neighboring countries," he said. He said China had consistently stood by Pakistan during difficult times and had already invested more than US$ 30 billion under first phase of CPEC, calling the new partnerships another milestone in expanding economic cooperation.

The prime minister congratulated Pakistani and Chinese entrepreneurs on the agreements and praised the efforts of Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, government institutions and business leaders for making the conference a success.

The prime minister also highlighted Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace, saying Islamabad had played an important mediating role during the recent regional crisis with the support of friendly countries, particularly China.

He appreciated the contributions of President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and other Chinese leaders, while also acknowledged the efforts of Field Marshal, Syed Asim Munir, and Deputy Prime Minister, Ishaq Dar in diplomatic engagements.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of students from foreign universities, working as interns under the "Uraan Overseas Pakistan Summer Scholars Programme" called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



QUETTA: PML-N Parliamentary Leader Mir Saleem Khan Khosa meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti about irrigation water issue in Nasirabad Division.

Mutual respect, brotherhood our greatest strengths: Governor

Balochistan Governor says Pakistan will never stop raising Kashmir issue at every Int'l forum

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel said that Pakistan has always raised its voice at every responsible international forum and will always do so for the genuine autonomy of its Kashmiri brothers and sisters.

He said that we consider the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir as our brothers, here in our province of Balochistan, we respect their dignity and are also taking steps to meet their social and educational needs.

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of political workers of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and prominent members of the Kashmiri community living in Quetta led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) central leader and focal person Prime Minister Youth Program Balochistan Naeem Karim. In response to a question, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel said that in view of our national values and traditions, it is satisfying to see pleasant and friendly relations with the local population and Kashmiri community in the provincial capital Quetta.

He said that this brotherly bond makes us realize that mutual respect and brotherhood are our greatest strengths.



QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) Balochistan chief and Senator Maulana Abdul Wasey addressing a press conference.

Pakistan Army's martyrs source of pride for entire nation: Maulana Wasay

Says any plan to declare Maulana Fazlur Rehman a traitor would be an injustice to Pakistan

QUETTA (ANN): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) Balochistan chief and Senator Maulana Abdul Wasey said that the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) was the most affected by Maulana Fazlur Rehman's speech. He alleged that the PML-N has always created conflict between the military and the public and claimed that it was the PML-N that caused the confrontation between PTI and the military on May 9. He said that during the Pakistan-India conflict, no one spoke against India except the JUI chief, who raised the issue in Parliament. He said the Pakistan Armed Forces should not allow anyone to engage in politics using their name. He stated that any plan to declare Maulana Fazlur Rehman a traitor would be an injustice to Pakistan. He said the martyrs of the Pakistan Army, along with all other martyrs, are a source of pride for the nation, adding that JUI has always stood with Pakistan and will continue to do so. He expressed these views while addressing a press conference at the JUI provincial secretariat alongside JUI Lawyers Forum Central President and Senator Kamran Murtaza. Provincial Lawyers Forum President Alauddin Kakar, Joint Secretary Haji Nawaz Kakar, former provincial minister Haji Ainullah Shams, Senior Vice President Maulvi Kamaluddin, and others were also present. Maulana Abdul Wasey said that a meeting of the JUI Lawyers Forum discussed preparations for the All Pakistan Lawyers Convention to be held in Islamabad. He said attempts were made to stop JUI's movement, despite Punjab being considered the freest province in Pakistan.

He said Maulana Fazlur Rehman presented the public's case in his speech, but it became the target of criticism. According to him, leaders of political parties privately admitted they agreed with the speech but were constrained.

No political issue can be resolved through use of force: Maulana Hidayat

QUETTA (ANN): Jamaat-e-Islami Balochistan chief and Member of the Provincial Assembly Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch said that political representatives are being prevented from carrying out their role in the province.

He said no political issue can be resolved through the use of force; instead, lasting solutions depend solely on political dialogue and the democratic process.

He expressed these views while speaking to a delegation comprising Jamaat-e-Islami District Kachhi chief Sanaullah and Deputy Chief Rais Abdul Haq Razi. During the meeting, they discussed the overall political and social situation, public issues, and the law and order situation in District Kachhi and across the province.

Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch said Jamaat-e-Islami is the strongest guarantor of protecting the rights of Balochistan's people and resources. He said the province cannot move toward development by depriving its people of their legitimate rights and suppressing political voices. He said Jamaat-e-Islami has emerged as the voice of the oppressed and deprived people and will continue its struggle for rights until it reaches its logical conclusion.

Health Minister Bakht Kakar vows to resolve problems of people at their doorstep

QUETTA (ANN): Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar said that the need of the hour is for the government and the public to work together to overcome challenges and ensure that Balochistan's resources are spent on its own people so the province can move toward development.

Speaking by telephone, he said the development work undertaken by the current provincial government, along with its efforts to reduce unemployment and improve law and order, has begun to produce positive results and will continue to do so.

He said that in the past, people were unwilling to seek treatment at government hospitals, but now patients are coming not only from Quetta but also from other provinces for medical care, calling it an achievement for the provincial government and particularly the Health Department.

He said providing healthcare facilities to the people of Balochistan is the Health Department's top priority under the vision of the Chief Minister. Every possible facility will be provided at people's doorsteps, and negligence or carelessness will not be tolerated. Departmental action will be taken against those found negligent.

He added that absenteeism in government hospitals will not be tolerated. "We are bound by our oath. The people trusted us and elected us.

Daily fuel pricing mechanism to ensure transparency: Tarar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said that the government's transition to a daily fuel pricing mechanism would ensure transparency and allow the immediate impact of international price fluctuations to be passed on to consumers.

Talking to media alongside Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik, Tarar outlined the strategic efforts being made to stabilize the fuel supply and protect the public from global market volatility.

Under the new system, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), acting as the sector's regulator, would publish the price daily on its website, he noted.

The minister said Pakistan is shifting from a one-week average to daily pricing to align with international standards, citing examples of some countries that swiftly adjust domestic prices in tandem with global oil rates.

Timely action essential to prevent criminal activity: IGP Balochistan

QUETTA, (APP): Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Muhammad Tahir, has stressed the importance of adopting modern policing practices to provide swift relief to citizens and strengthen the positive image of the police force. He noted that enhancing the sense of security among the public is vital for building trust and ensuring timely justice. Speaking at an introductory meeting at the Central Police Office for newly appointed Deputy Superintendents of Police recruited directly through the Balochistan Public Service Commission, the IG highlighted the responsibility of supervisory officers in ensuring effective performance at the subordinate level.

He said that when officers fulfill their command role efficiently, citizens can receive justice promptly and their grievances can be addressed without delay.

CM Balochistan reaffirms commitment to women's economic empowerment

Congratulates 500 women on completing the first phase of the Balochistan Women Entrepreneurship Development Program

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister (CM) Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, congratulated 500 women on completing the first phase of the Balochistan Women Entrepreneurship Development Program, calling it a landmark initiative for the economic empowerment of women in the province. In a message shared on social media, CM Bugti said that empowering women economically was among the government's top priorities. He highlighted that under this program, women from various districts received comprehensive training in modern business skills, marketing, business planning, and digital tools, enabling them to pursue self-employment and contribute meaningfully to the provincial and national economy. Sarfraz Bugti emphasized that such training would not only help women achieve self-sufficiency but also strengthen their role in driving sustainable development. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to expanding the scope of similar initiatives to create more opportunities for women in skills development, entrepreneurship, and employment. The Chief Minister extended congratulations to Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, Advisor to the Women Development Department, and to all the institutions and teams involved in organizing the program.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar talking to media alongside Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik.

Prolonged political crises could create space for undemocratic forces to intervene, warns Bilawal

DADYAL, (INP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has proposed the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to help resolve political and constitutional issues in Azad Jammu and Kashmir through dialogue.

Addressing an election rally in Dadyal, Bilawal described the upcoming elections as among the most significant in the history of Azad Kashmir, saying the prevailing situation was a test for both the state and political parties. He said politicians must focus on resolving public issues and representing the people's voice, warning that political vacuums often allow non-political and extremist elements to gain influence. Bilawal said he had received a letter from protesters and suggested establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to identify solutions to the region's longstanding issues. He proposed that protests be suspended until the commission completed its work. Calling for constitutional solutions, Bilawal stressed that constitutional amendments should be made through parliament rather than through force or street agitation. He also criticised the suspension of internet and mobile phone services in Kashmir, saying innocent citizens should not suffer because of the actions of a few individuals.

Bilawal urged voters to give the PPP a strong mandate, saying it would enable the party to pursue constitutional reforms and secure greater rights for the people of Azad Kashmir. He also criticised the ruling PML-N over its position on Kashmir-related issues and demanded clarification from the defence minister over recent remarks, saying he should resign if they reflected only his personal opinion or be removed if they did not represent government policy.

Concluding his address, Bilawal appealed to both protesters and the government to avoid actions that would create hardship for ordinary Kashmiris, warning that prolonged political crises could create space for undemocratic forces to intervene.



QUETTA: MPA Rehmat saleh Baloch awarding to doctors during excellence award ceremony organized by Balochistan Reforms Social Network .

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Monday July 20, 2026

Corporal punishment never helps in character-building

A school is a place where children are sent to learn.

Sometimes it can also be a place of bullying, harassment, verbal abuse and other forms of violence.

So, we will focus on violence in schools.

The oft-repeated jargon for violence in schools and madrassahs is corporal punishment. It is an entrenched cultural norm in Pakistan. While it also prevails in private schools, corporal punishment is largely synonymous with state-run schools and religious seminaries.

These infamous practices have gradually faded away but are yet to end completely.

In Pakistan, hardly a week passes when we do not hear about an ugly incident of corporal punishment.

In Pakistan, teachers believe that corporal punishment is a tool with the help of which they can reform a rogue child.

The fact is that those who think this way are mistaken.

Corporal punishment never helps in character-building.

In June 2021, The Lancet journal published a comprehensive review of studies, which indicated how physical punishment made children's behaviour worse over time and did not help achieve positive outcomes.

There is a need for enhanced and effective training to be imparted to teachers. In Pakistan, teachers believe that corporal punishment is a tool with the help of which they can reform a rogue child.

Managing a classroom with students more than its capacity is, indeed, a tough task but this does not justify a teacher's violent behaviour.

Teachers must try to provide an environment that appeals to children.

Corporal punishment not only affects a child's mental and physical health but it sows seeds of hatred in the child's mind towards the teacher.

This also hurts a child's self-respect, creating long-term negative impacts. For a teacher, it is essential to handle things professionally and avoid violence.

For a student, a teacher is a role model.

An aggressive teacher can never grow a student into the good citizen that this country needs.

Musician Shehzad Roy, whose Zindagi Trust campaigns for children's rights, particularly in the area of education, once said: "When a child gets physical punishment, society is telling them – and an entire generation – that violence is a valid means of resolving a problem."

Teachers at all educational settings and madrassahs must work as role models for children and not just try to police them.

Violence in the name of character-building or discipline is an outdated practice and must end. According to UNICEF, Pakistan has the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children with an estimated 22.8 million children aged 5-16 not attending school.

One can imagine how many of these out-of-school children are those who have suffered corporal punishment.

Ending violence in schools is the need of the hour.

Ethical leadership and universities of Pakistan

DR INTIKHAB ULFAT

Ethical leadership, a concept that initially emerged from industry, has been usefully applied in educational leadership. In universities, it encompasses the values of society such as honesty, transparency, equity, fairness, respect for diversity, adherence to laws and non-coercive behaviour. Despite this, Pakistani universities are far from democratic institutions, as decision-making is often centralised, with limited engagement from students and faculty.

Ethical leadership in universities includes adherence to professional standards and principles for public life. However, defining ethical leadership is a complex process, influenced by changing societal trends and leadership styles. Current trends favour shared leadership and empowerment over directive or coercive leadership. Comparing ethical leadership to toxic leadership helps institutions define their own ethical standards, although it is essential to avoid unethical relativism.

Key thinkers in ethical leadership emphasised important principles. Thomas J Sergiovanni (Professor of Education at Trinity University) highlighted the need for leaders to prioritise moral values, build trust and foster a sense of community.

Michael Fullan (Educational Consultant and the former Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) stressed leadership that drove reforms through equity, empowerment and student welfare.

Joseph Murphy (1898-1981; an Irish author) focused on addressing systemic inequalities and advocating for marginalised groups while Andy Hargreaves (Research Professor at Boston College) emphasised collaboration and sustainability in leadership decisions. John West-Burnham (1947-2022; Professor of Educational Leadership at St Mary's University College) called for leaders to lead by example with integrity, fostering a culture of empathy, respect and social responsibility. Lastly, Christopher Day (Professor at the University of Nottingham) underscored the role of ethical leadership in improving teaching and learning standards, advocating for a supportive and inclusive academic environment.

Ethical leadership in Pakistani universities centres on key principles essential for a just and effective academic environment. Leaders must be driven by a strong moral purpose, focusing on holistic student development, quality education and the broader academic community's interests. Integrity and honesty are foundational, requiring leaders to model ethical behaviour consistently and set a positive example. A commitment to equity and social justice is crucial, addressing disparities in education and ensuring inclusivity and equal opportunities, especially for marginalised groups.

Collaboration and trust are emphasised, with leaders engaging faculty, staff and students in open dialogue and shared decision-making to build a supportive community.

Sustainability is important, with a focus on long-term solutions and enduring reforms rather than short-term fixes.

Accountability is vital for upholding ethical standards and maintaining transparency, fostering trust within the institution.

Empowering faculty and students to actively participate in decision-making is critical, promoting a culture of shared leadership.

Lastly, continuous professional development is essential, with leaders prioritising growth and improvement to enhance the institution's overall quality and effectiveness.

Pakistani universities face significant challenges in maintaining ethical leadership due to resource constraints, political interference and a focus on achieving targets that may compromise academic integrity. These challenges often lead to ethical dilemmas, such as prioritising short-term gains over long-term development or unequal resource distribution.

Ethical leadership in Pakistani universities is essential for fostering a culture of transparency, equity and respect.

While challenges abound, leaders who prioritise moral values, collaborative decision-making and long-term sustainability can create positive academic environments that benefit both students and faculty.

Addressing ethical lapses requires a concerted effort from university leadership, policymakers and the broader academic community, working together to uphold the highest ethical standards in higher education.

The writer is a Professor of Physics at the University of Karachi

Housing justice and urban mobility

DR SHAHID HUSSAIN KAMBOYO

Cities are economic and cultural engines that drive global growth, innovation, and social development. However, unchecked urbanisation in Pakistan has resulted in challenges such as inadequate housing, strained infrastructure, and environmental degradation. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 - "Sustainable Cities and Communities" - provides a framework to address these issues by promoting inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban development. For Pakistan, achieving SDG 11 is necessary and an opportunity to redefine its urban future. Pakistan has one of the fastest urbanisation rates in South Asia, with its urban population increasing from 32.5% in 1998 to 36.4% in 2017, projected to reach 50% by 2025 (UN-Habitat Pakistan, 2022). Cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad contribute significantly to the economy, generating 55% of Pakistan's GDP, with Karachi alone accounting for 12–15% of the national GDP and 55% of federal tax revenues (IIPS, 2023). Despite this economic importance, these urban centres are plagued by inefficiencies, including unplanned growth, informal settlements, and limited infrastructure (UN-Habitat Pakistan, 2022; IIPS, 2023). Environmental degradation is a growing concern. Karachi's urbanised area expanded from 13.4% in 1990 to 23.7% in 2020, significantly reducing green spaces. Projections indicate that 66.65% of the urbanised regions will be flood-prone by 2035, primarily due to impervious surfaces and inadequate drainage systems (Mumtaz et al., 2025). The Malir River, once spanning 17.19 km² in 1990, has shrunk to just 5.07 km² in 2020, increasing the risk of urban flooding. The consequences of rapid urbanisation extend beyond flooding. The reduction of water bodies from 3.4% in 1990 to just 1.3% in 2020 and declining vegetation cover exacerbate heat island effects and reduce biodiversity. The transportation sector in Pakistan accounts for 31% of the country's carbon emissions, with a heavy reliance on fossil fuels and outdated public transport systems. Lahore and Karachi consistently record (Particulate Matter) PM2.5 levels 10-15 times higher than WHO guidelines, contributing to 128,000 premature deaths annually in Pakistan (UN-Habitat Pakistan, 2022; IIPS, 2023). Karachi, home to nearly 20 million residents, lacks a functional mass transit system, causing severe traffic congestion and air pollution. Traffic congestion alone costs Karachi's economy $2.5 billion annually in lost productivity (IIPS, 2023). Lahore and Islamabad have introduced Metro Bus systems, yet these serve less than 10% of the population, highlighting the need for a more inclusive and efficient transportation network (IIPS, 2023). The Electric Vehicle Policy (2020) aims to shift 30% of vehicles to electric by 2030, reducing emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. However, high vehicle costs, inadequate charging infrastructure, and limited public awareness hinder widespread adoption. Investments in multimodal transport systems, integrated with green infrastructure, are essential to achieving SDG 11 goals (UN-Habitat Pakistan, 2022). Globally, 1.8 billion people lack access to adequate housing, with 150 million considered homeless (UN-Habitat, 2023). In Pakistan, the housing deficit exceeds 10 million units, with demand increasing by 350,000 units annually and projected to rise to 400,000 units (Evaluation of Naya Pakistan Housing, 2023). Rising land costs have further exacerbated the crisis. Between 2011 and 2021, land prices increased by 195.3%, making housing unaffordable for low-income groups, who represent 62% of unmet demand (Evaluation of Naya Pakistan Housing, 2023). The Naya Pakistan Housing Program (NPHP) aims to construct 5 million affordable housing units. However, as of 2023, only 100,000 units have been completed, and most remain inaccessible to daily wage earners and low-income families (Evaluation of Naya Pakistan Housing, 2023). To address housing justice in Pakistan, strategies must focus on regularising informal settlements by providing secure land tenure and upgrading infrastructure to reduce inequalities. Community-led solutions are essential to ensuring local participation in housing projects that meet cultural and social needs. Incentivising low-cost housing by discouraging land speculation and promoting affordable, high-density developments is also necessary. Housing improvements yield broader benefits; for instance, constructing 100,000 housing units could contribute up to 2% of GDP, while improving housing stock reduces healthcare and social costs associated with urban slums (UN-Habitat Pakistan, 2022; Evaluation of Naya Pakistan Housing, 2023). Urbanisation offers immense opportunities for sustainable development in Pakistan. Between 2020 and 2023, Pakistan imported over 25 gigawatts of solar panels from China, significantly boosting its power capacity by approximately 50% (Vox, 2024). Initiatives like the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami and urban forest programs in Lahore aim to mitigate environmental degradation and enhance urban resilience (UN-Habitat Pakistan, 2022). Geospatial technologies and remote sensing, as demonstrated in Karachi's flood studies, provide tools for better urban planning. By integrating these technologies, Pakistan can monitor land use changes, predict vulnerabilities, and implement targeted interventions. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) remain vital for financing sustainable infrastructure projects (Mumtaz et al., 2025).

Countries like Denmark and Singapore demonstrate how integrated urban planning and sustainability initiatives can transform cities. Copenhagen's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2025 highlights the potential of green infrastructure and efficient transportation systems.

The Afghan Taliban's war on women

DURDANA NAJAM

As of late, the term Taliban has become synonymous with everything unrelated to the values and ethics practised in a civilised world. In essence, being a Taliban denotes engaging in activities undesirable to human nature. The justification they use to defend this rigid and fundamentalist approach to life is Islam. Had their interpretation been the one that descended from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Taliban would undoubtedly be embraced by the world. However, the disdain and animosity directed toward them suggests their religious beliefs are heavily influenced by Afghan tribal culture and are tainted by the personal likes and dislikes of a society divided along ethnic lines.

I wonder if the Taliban have ever realised how severely they have damaged the image of a religion that teaches respect and equity for all individuals, regardless of their class, gender or status.

I wonder if they have ever considered the impact their behaviour has had on Muslims worldwide, particularly those living as minorities or foreigners in non-Muslim countries. I also wonder if they have ever recognised how their actions have provided the Western world with an alibi to target Muslims under the banner of combating terrorism.

For almost four decades, Afghanistan has remained in a state of war. While Afghans take pride in claiming that no invading power could ever find a foothold in their country, they often fail to explain why invaders have found it easy to attack, occupy and rule them in the first place. Although it is significant that Afghans eventually drive out their invaders, it is equally important to acknowledge that these invasions have thrown the country backward in time and space, resulting in the deaths of their children, women, elderly and youth alike.

The stark reality is that Afghanistan's fragmented governance structure, combined with complex tribal dynamics, has given external powers a convenient pretext to establish a foothold. Moreover, the country's history of conflicting ideologies and its struggle to align with the demands of the modern world, alongside a tendency to reinterpret Islam, have transformed it into a battleground for geopolitical interests. This environment allows these so-called invaders to exploit ongoing instability and internal rivalries for their own agendas.

The issue with Afghans, particularly the Taliban, is their failure to learn from history. For them, Afghan pride takes precedence, regardless of whether it earns respect in the comity of nations. They seem unconcerned about whether this pride leads Afghanistan into the depths of backwardness or contributes to the suffering of its people. It hardly matters to them if that pride results in widespread starvation or further isolation on the global stage.

Take for example the case of women. In the three years since the Taliban seized power, on 15 August 2021, each day has seen a further decline in the rights, conditions and social and political status of women. An Afghan woman cannot study beyond sixth grade. She is not allowed to travel more than 78 km without a male chaperone. She is barred from holding government positions. An Afghan woman cannot sing, recite poetry or speak aloud in public. In short, an Afghan woman is systematically erased from public life.

While Islam may encourage women to dress modestly and cover their faces, it does not prohibit them from working alongside men. The commandments regarding education, literacy and the pursuit of knowledge apply equally to both men and women. A man may serve as the administrative head of a family, but this does not diminish a woman's status as an independent and thoughtful human being.

Though women may be advised to speak to unfamiliar men in a stern manner, they are not forbidden from engaging in conversation with them. They may be encouraged to maintain a distance from their male counterparts, but they are not required to isolate themselves at home or refrain from stepping out to earn a living or pursue their career aspirations.

The misguided decrees to revoke women's right to education, eliminate employment opportunities, and restrict their public participation bear no relevance to Islam.

When the Taliban impose these rules under the guise of religion, they mislead people and misattribute their intentions to the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH).

The marginalisation of women in Afghanistan under Taliban rule is not rooted in any religious dictum; it stems from a patriarchal mindset that seeks to subjugate women as lesser beings, meant only to satisfy the animal instincts of their male counterparts. Such treatment of women, especially in a so-called Islamic emirate, is not only an aberration to civilised world norms and expectations but also a profound insult to Muslims.

When you marginalise a woman, you are not demonstrating your faith as a good Muslim but rather your adherence to a patriarchal system. Misogyny is a state of mind, just as being a Muslim is a state of mind.

A misogynist can be Muslim, but a true Muslim cannot be a misogynist.

I want to ask the Taliban: why else would you replace the Ministry of Women's Affairs with the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, unless you resent the idea of women living as equals to men? Unless you despise their contributions to the economic development of their country? Unless you loathe the prospect of them raising educated and informed children? Keeping women backward is not merely about hindering their progress; it is about plunging a dagger into the hearts of future generations.

You are doing exactly that.

In your quest to control women, you have waged a war against them that is arguably more devastating than a military incursion by an invader. But since putting women down and keeping them subservient feeds into your pride, this atrocity does little to prick your conscience.

The encouraging part is that, despite the darkness, a significant number of Afghan women remain determined to reclaim their lost status.

They are resolutely fighting against their systemic exclusion from public life and striving to regain their right to education, earn an income, and have a voice.

These women are looking to the international community to pressure the Taliban into adhering to international rules and regulations concerning women's rights.

It is imperative to reject the Taliban's claim of imposing a regressive version of their interpretation of Islam that has no relevance to its true teachings.

The writer is a public policy analyst based in Lahore. She tweets @durdananajam

Squandering away our most precious resource

SMALI

Pakistan was never great at managing its natural resources, especially its freshwater, but growing population pressures and the need to contend with climate change have made it an existential imperative to pay more attention to this issue. Nature has been kind to Pakistan. The country enjoys access to the three major rivers of the mighty Indus, and the country is home to more than 7,000 glaciers, the highest number of such natural freshwater reservoirs anywhere other than the polar regions. These glaciers have been providing a perpetual source of water for the country, which alongside rainwater, feed the mighty rivers which traverse Pakistan, before pouring into the Arabian Sea. However, rising temperatures due to global warming have begun to cause an alarming level of glacial melt. In the short term, glacial melts lead to the creation of glacial lakes, which can burst when more melted water keeps gushing into them. Melting glaciers also increase the amount of water in the rivers which, coinciding with heavy rainfalls, causes flooding further afield. In the longer term, the reduction in the size of these glaciers will deplete water availability within major rivers on which the lives and livelihoods of multitudes of people depend.

Rather than thinking about water conservation and improving water efficiency, Pakistan has been wasting its precious freshwater resources using wasteful flood irrigation, and due to badly maintained irrigation systems which also cause massive water losses. Over 90 per cent of the country's freshwater is diverted to agriculture, where a significant proportion of it is lost due to inadequate water management, and due to the producing of water-thirsty crops like sugarcane.

Besides using irrigation systems which tap the rivers flowing out of glaciers, Pakistan has also been exploiting its groundwater sources with reckless abandon. Now our policymakers are keen to entice the Gulf states and China into investing in agriculture in the desperate bid to earn foreign exchange, which threatens to further deplete underground water sources. Meanwhile, marginalised farmers have been experiencing major water stress, especially those whose land is located at the tail end of watercourses, where water often run out long due to inefficient water use by those more affluent, who occupy land at the head of watercourses. Conversely, ordinary citizens across many rural areas and in unregulated and poorer urban neighborhoods don't have enough water to meet their household needs. Badly maintained water lines are often located perilously close to sewage systems, and there have been repeated reports of drinking water mixing with sanitation. Sporadic water tests in major cities have revealed unacceptable levels of faecal matter and heavy metals in water meant for human consumption. It is thus not surprising that water-borne diseases are a major cause of mortality within the country, and they lead to repeated bouts of sickness for adults, which then deplete already meager average household incomes, and cause a loss of productivity. Women and girls bear the brunt of water scarcity, as the responsibility of fetching water for homes is usually a task relegated to females. The stubborn gender disparity in education, especially when girls become a little older, has also been linked to this onerous responsibility placed on girls to either help their mothers fetch water, or else, to stay at home to look after younger siblings while the mother is out getting water. Pakistan now has a plethora of policies and plans to ensure equitable water access to all citizens. What we still need is real action which can alleviate the water stress of our smaller farmers and which can provide reliable, convenient and safe sources of water for meeting the daily needs of all households, especially those who cannot afford the luxury of boring their own tube-wells, purchasing water pumps, using filters or purchasing mineral water on a regular basis.

The writer is an academic and researcher. He is also the author of Development, Poverty, and Power in Pakistan, available from Routledge

South Korea, Japan reaffirm denuclearisation goal, closer defence ties

SEOUL, (Agencies): South Korea and Japan on Friday reaffirmed their commitment to the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and agreed to revive joint search-and-rescue drills in a step forward for security ties between the neighbouring countries.

Meeting in Seoul, South Korean Defence Minister Ahn Gyu-back and his Japanese counterpart Shinjiro Koizumi agreed to work on regional stability bilaterally, as well as through their partnerships with Washington, in the sixth round of talks between the two countries. "Both ministers shared the view to continue cooperation for maintaining regional peace and stability amid a grave security environment," South Korea's defence ministry said in a statement.

South Korea and Japan, with US encouragement, have been working to develop closer ties since 2022 and overcome sometimes bitter historical differences, a policy continued by President Lee Jae Myung and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi.

In 2019, Seoul moved to end the GSOMIA intelligence-sharing pact with Japan after Tokyo restricted exports of semiconductor materials and removed South Korea from its preferential trade list, over lingering grievances rooted in Japan's past colonial rule of the Korean peninsula.

In 2025, Japan's then-Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and President Lee agreed to closer security and economic ties, and the defence ministers committed to working with Washington against North Korea's nuclear threat and Pyongyang's growing military ties with Russia, including cooperation on AI and unmanned systems and annual trilateral drills.

Takaichi and Lee agreed in January 2026 to deepen shuttle diplomacy and in May expanded cooperation on energy.

On Sunday, Ahn and Koizumi also agreed to continue fostering exchange between their air forces' respective aerobatic teams — South Korea's Black Eagles and Japan's Blue Impulse — to further advance search-and-rescue exercises designed for various maritime accident scenarios.

The two previously held talks in Japan in January and met again in May at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore where they discussed a possible military-logistics support agreement covering fuel, food and ammunition. The two sides also agreed to hold a joint humanitarian search-and-rescue exercise in June, the first in almost a decade.



Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and South Korean Defence Minister Ahn Gyu-back salute to national flags during a welcoming ceremony before their meeting at the Defence Ministry in Seoul, South Korea.



As hot weather continues to affect Berlin, the capital of Germany, city residents spent time in public areas with puddles and fountains to cool off. Adults and children tried to cool down by playing in the water areas in squares and parks.

Qassem rejects Lebanon-Israel deal; demands Israeli withdrawal

TEL AVIV: Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem rejected the framework agreement signed between Lebanon and Israel under US sponsorship, and called for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanese territory in line with the Iranian-US memorandum of understanding. In a statement, Qassem made his first comments on the framework agreement signed in Washington at the conclusion of the fifth round of negotiations between Beirut and Tel Aviv on Friday.

"This agreement is null and void, and the provisions of the Iranian-American memorandum of understanding must be implemented," he said.

Qassem also warned against linking an Israeli withdrawal to the disarmament of the resistance across all of Lebanon, calling it "a very dangerous proposal that crosses all red lines".

He said such a move would turn Lebanon "into a plaything in the hands of the Israeli enemy".

Hospitals across Europe ring alarm as heat wave roasts continent

PARIS, (Agencies): A deadly heat wave sweeping across Europe prompted authorities to issue health warnings today; with France banning public alcohol consumption in Paris and warning that hospitals were nearing capacity as soaring temperatures strained public services across the continent. The heat wave affected at least 101 million Europeans with temperatures exceeding 35 degrees C (95 degrees F). Authorities across the continent linked more than 220 deaths to the extreme heat.

French and British health services reported a surge in emergency calls and visits as the extreme heat affected the elderly and ill. France and Spain reported deaths from the extreme temperatures, including a 3-year-old boy who was trapped in his family's car "We are reaching a saturation point in hospital facilities," Paris police Prefect Patrice Faure said. "The number of hospitalizations keeps increasing." In Paris, 25 cardiac arrests were recorded over 24 hours, compared with fewer than 10 typically, the office of Health Minister Stephanie Rist said. Nationally, she said emergency room visits for heat-related reasons increased fourfold.

London Ambulance Service said the extreme heat led to the highest number of life-threatening emergency calls in a day.

The European Joint Research Center, indicated more than 380 million people would face temperatures exceeding 30 C.

Peace deal in tatters after Iran hits Bahrain, Kuwait over US strikes

TEHRAN, (Agencies): Iran lashed out at recent U.S. airstrikes by launching drone and missile attacks on Bahrain and Kuwait Friday, while warning it would completely suspend negotiations to end the Middle East war if Washington carried out further attacks.

Efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz without Iran's direct oversight sparked the crossfire now gripping the region and have imperiled negotiations for a lasting cease-fire.

A multinational maritime body overseen by the U.S. Navy said Saturday that it would expand a route near Oman for both inbound and outbound traffic, setting up a new flashpoint with Tehran.

The global community has long considered the strait an international passageway, despite its being situated in Iran and Oman's territorial waters.

In recent days, Iran has twice attacked vessels going through a route on the Omani side of the strait backed by a United Nations agency.

Iran insists that it alone must govern the strait, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf that once carried a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated the claim during a state visit to Iraq Sunday.

"Any interference in this matter, any attempt to establish new or separate arrangements from those currently being carried out by the Islamic Republic of Iran, will only lead to further complications, delay the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and increase the level of tension, just as over the past two nights we witnessed incidents in the Strait of Hormuz that led to an increase in tension and confrontation," he said in Baghdad.

The United States and Iran are still debating the terms of an interim peace deal, including shipping arrangements through the strait, removing a U.S. blockade and sanctions and addressing the future of Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium. Under the memorandum of understanding signed earlier this month, the U.S. and Iran have 60 days to iron out the details.

The strikes threaten to torpedo the deal before it can be finalized. Continued fighting in Lebanon, where an Israeli soldier was killed by Hezbollah fire early Sunday, has also threatened the agreement.

The Kuwaiti military said air defenses intercepted incoming Iranian drones and missiles Sunday morning, just after the U.S. strikes.

Kuwait, which hosts a major U.S. Army base, said it had detected and intercepted two ballistic missiles and there were no reports of injuries or damage.

Bahrain's Interior Ministry said the Iranian strikes damaged a residential building near the international airport and no one was killed. The ministry released photos of an 8-story building, with the top floor destroyed, filled with rubble and its windows blown out.

Bahrain is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, whose base there came under repeated attack during the war. The damaged building on Sunday was not near the fleet's headquarters, in downtown Manama.

Bahrain's Foreign Ministry denounced what it called "a dangerous escalation that reveals that what Tehran is doing is not a passing act, nor an isolated incident, but rather a deliberate approach and a systematic pattern of repeated aggression." Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard claimed responsibility for both attacks.

The latest U.S. strikes came after the U.S. and Iran traded attacks earlier in the weekend.

The U.S. military's Central Command said it struck Iranian military "surveillance infrastructure, communication systems, air defense sites, drone storage facilities and minelayer capabilities" Sunday, following an attack on a ship at sea early Saturday morning. That ship, the Panamanian-flagged tanker Kiku, carried crude oil for the state-run energy company of Qatar, a key mediator between Iran and the U.S.

In a social media post, Trump said the U.S. had "struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations, and coastal radar sites, for violating the Cease Fire Agreement, AGAIN!" He warned of a point where the U.S. may no longer be able to be reasonable, "and will be forced to militarily complete the job."

"If that happens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist!" Trump wrote on Truth Social. The incident follows a similar back-and-forth that occurred just days prior, when an Iranian drone struck a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman Thursday, and the U.S. military retaliated with strikes

Iran has consistently said the cease-fire must include a halt to fighting in Lebanon, where Israel has launched an invasion and airstrikes in the name of fighting the Iran-backed armed group, Hezbollah. Days after the U.S. and Israel launched the war against Iran, Hezbollah joined the war in solidarity with its Iranian allies. Israel responded with an invasion that has occupied large swaths of southern Lebanon and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. Israel has said it will not withdraw its troops until Hezbollah is disarmed.

Last week, Israel and the Lebanese government signed a framework agreement to end the conflict. But their deal did not include Hezbollah or Iran. Hezbollah has criticized the deal and rejected calls to disarm. On Sunday, Araghchi again said during a visit to Iraq that the U.S. must force Israel to halt attacks and withdraw.



An anti-corruption protest was held in Metro Manila ahead of the Senate impeachment trial of Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte.

Death toll from Venezuela earthquakes rises to 920 with thousands missing

CARACAS, (Agencies): The official death toll from twin earthquakes in Venezuela rose to 920, National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez said, as rescuers raced to find survivors beneath collapsed buildings.

The South American country is reeling from the magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 quakes that hit the country's north within less than a minute of each other on Wednesday.

In a televised address, Rodriguez updated the death toll that had previously been at 589.

He also announced a military deployment to one of the worst-hit regions, the state of La Guaira.

More than 50,000 people were missing following the disaster, United Nations aid chief Tom Fletcher told AFP.

"We've got over 50,000 people missing, over 500 people dead, so a massive job to go through the rubble," he said, while the US Geological Survey predicted more than 10,000 deaths.

Families searched desperately for loved ones trapped under debris, with some of them using their hands to claw at the rubble of buildings. At one flattened building in La Guaira, AFP saw workers using sledgehammers to break debris and calling for "absolute silence" to detect cries from trapped survivors. Countries around the world have pledged humanitarian aid and rescue support to Venezuela.

Trump unveils new US passport, with picture of himself

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump unveiled a rendering of a new limited-edition United States passport to mark the country's 250th anniversary of independence — featuring his stern-faced likeness. "The USA's new passport, which says, 'Welcome, but be good!'" Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform featuring the passport mock-up. The image features a glowering Trump leaning on his desk and his signature, with the text of the Declaration of Independence in the background. It appears to be based on a portrait taken by White House photographer Daniel Torok. The opposite page shows a painting depicting the declaration's signing in 1776, with the words "United States of America 250."



People went to the polls to vote in the local government elections. In Bangkok, the capital of Thailand



A woman reacts as she mourns over the body of a victim killed in a reported Israeli airstrike on a police station in the Al-Mawasi district, during a funeral at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Palestine.

CJP becomes new political challenge for Modi govt

NEW DELHI: India's newly formed political outfit, the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP), has emerged as a challenger to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government while highlighting concerns over repeated examination paper leaks and the country's education system.

The report also cited CNN as saying that government examination paper leaks have become a persistent issue in India, fueling protests among students demanding greater transparency and accountability.

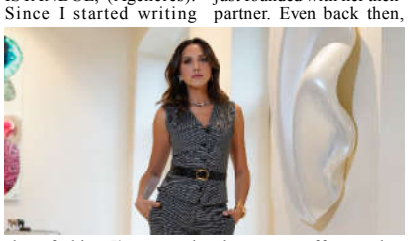
According to Abhijeet Deepke, founder of the CJP, diapers are the last solution left to prevent paper leaks in government exams. Indian students are heading towards suicide due to Modi's wrong policies.

Congress leader Abhishek Dutt says that the Modi government has ruined the lives of 65 million students by leaking 90 exam papers in 10 years. The incompetence of Indian Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has brought India's education system to the brink of collapse.

According to CNN, Modi's incompetent minister is hiding his failure by calling the protesting youth as terrorists.

How Turkish brand redefines everyday elegance globally

ISTANBUL, (Agencies): Since I started writing about fashion, I've crossed paths with many designers, brands and brand stories. I first met Yasemin Öğün years ago, around 2011 or 2012, when we sat down at Zorlu Center to talk about the brand she had just founded with her then-partner. Even back then, she gave off a calm, observant energy – someone who analyses her surroundings carefully, manages crises well and carries confidence without needing to be in the spotlight.



Over the years, we have met many times, and that impression never changed. Yasemin always felt composed, self-assured and quietly intelligent in the way she ran things. Most recently, we met at her Muse For All pop-up store in IstinyePark. Standing there, I saw a woman I had known for nearly 15 years – someone who had gradually built her own path, step by step.

She had left her first partnership behind, founded a new brand that expressed her vision more clearly, and continued to evolve.



Mexicans delivered humanitarian aid supplies they collected for those affected by the earthquakes in Venezuela to the Venezuelan Embassy in Mexico City

At least 14 killed in Saudi Aramco chopper crash near Ras Tanura

RIYADH, (Agencies): At least 14 people were killed when a helicopter operated by state oil giant Aramco crashed in Saudi Arabia, the kingdom's official press agency reported.

The Saudi Press Agency, citing an official at the energy ministry, reported the helicopter crashed in Ras Tanura in the country's east.

"The accident claimed the lives of all 14 passengers, all Saudi citizens," the agency said, adding that an investigation was underway to determine the cause of the crash.

Aramco says it operates more than 60 aircraft, including helicopters, serving more than 300 heliports in Saudi Arabia, making it one of the largest corporate fleets in the region.

The deadly accident comes as oil-rich Gulf nations seek to ramp up their output following Iranian attacks and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for the export of oil and gas.

The Gulf monarchy did not indicate the incident was in any way connected to a hostile attack.

During the Middle East war, Iranian attacks had targeted energy facilities in the Gulf.

Ras Tanura is home to one of the largest refineries in the Middle East, with a capacity of 550,000 barrels per day (bpd), and is critical to Saudi Arabia's energy sector.

The refinery has been targeted several times, notably during an Iranian drone attack at the beginning of the conflict, which caused a fire and forced a partial shutdown.

Riyadh said in April that the weeks-long attacks had disrupted several production operations at key facilities, with refineries in Ras Tanura as well as Jubail, Yanbu and Riyadh targeted.

Saudi Arabia, the world's leading crude exporter, produces a little over 10 million bpd.

Pakistan implementing zero-tolerance policy against illegal immigration, unlawful border crossings

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan and China have agreed to significantly expand cooperation on immigration, border management and institutional coordination, reaffirming their shared commitment to combating illegal immigration, arms smuggling and cross-border crime through closer collaboration.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and a Chinese delegation led by Qi Jingyang, Director General of China's National Immigration Administration.

The two sides agreed to accelerate the finalisation of a bilateral agreement aimed at streamlining immigration procedures and facilitating faster processing. They also decided to establish a Pakistan-China Joint Working Group on border management and security to strengthen coordination and improve operational effectiveness.

Speaking on the occasion, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said Pakistan and China would further enhance cooperation in land border management, seaport security and immigration administration.

He reiterated that the Government of Pakistan was implementing a zero-tolerance policy against illegal immigration, unlawful border crossings and smuggling, adding that indiscriminate action was being taken against all those involved in such activities.

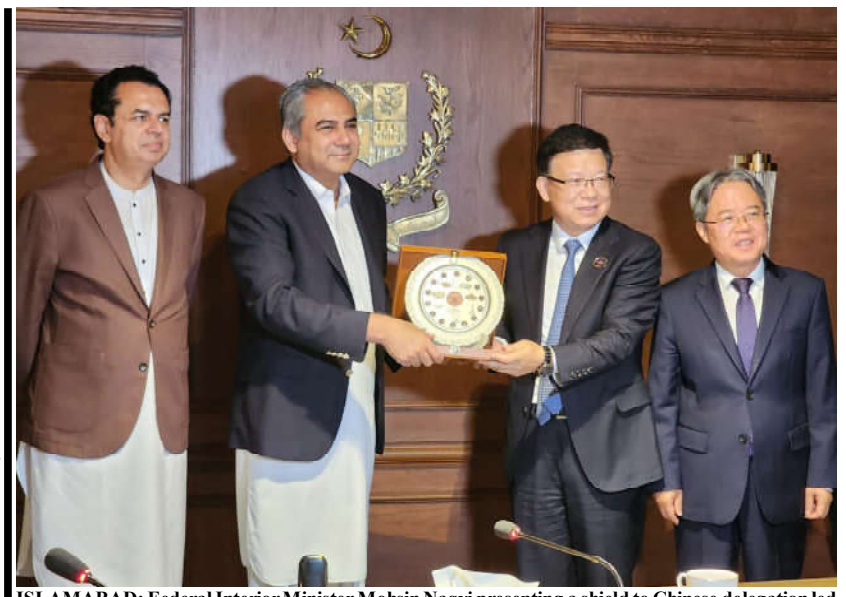
The minister also announced that a Gilgit-Baltistan Scouts checkpoint was being established at the Khunjerab Pass to further strengthen security along the strategically important border crossing.

Minister of State Talal Chaudhry said Pakistan and China would work together to effectively curb illegal immigration and other cross-border crimes through enhanced bilateral cooperation. Chinese delegation commended Pakistan's efforts to prevent illegal border crossings and smuggling, describing the country's measures as effective and encouraging.

Director General Qi Jingyang said China and Pakistan were strategic partners and that Beijing remained committed to strengthening cooperation with Islamabad. He added that China would continue supporting the capacity-building of Pakistani institutions in areas related to immigration and border security.

During the meeting, the Chinese delegation delivered an invitation from China's Minister of Public Security to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to participate in the upcoming Public Security Forum.

The delegation also invited a team from Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to attend the forum.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi presenting a shield to Chinese delegation led by Qi Jingyang, Director General of China's National Immigration Administration during a bilateral agreement. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry is also present.



Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses a public rally in Dadyal, Mirpur district.

PM directs to assess implementation of ease of doing business Act 2025

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif directed the relevant authorities that the implementation of the government's policy initiatives and the Ease of Doing Business Act, 2025 be expedited. Chairing a review meeting regarding ease of doing business, the prime minister instructed that third-party validation by international organizations be ensured to assess the effectiveness and implementation of the ease of doing business measures.

He said that fully utilizing Pakistan's vast potential for both domestic and foreign investment remained one of the government's top priorities.

He also directed that a comprehensive report on the implementation of ease of doing business policy measures be prepared and submitted at the earliest.

The prime minister appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Parliament committed to promote effective legislation, address public concerns: Chairman Senate

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has emphasized that national unity, political stability, and sustained economic reforms are essential for Pakistan's progress.

Addressing a dinner hosted by Zaheer Mehdi, Head of Jazz World, in honour of Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Chairman Senate Gilani, he reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to strengthening democratic institutions, promoting effective legislation, and addressing public concerns.

The event was attended by prominent figures from the business, financial, and social sectors.

Participants exchanged views on Pakistan's political and economic outlook, investment promotion, the digital economy, agriculture, youth employment, and the country's development priorities, said a news release. The Chairman Senate underscored the importance of digital technology and innovation-driven growth while stressing the need to modernize the agricultural sector through advanced technology, affordable financing, and greater support for farmers.

He said improved agricultural productivity would contribute significantly to economic growth and called for farmer-friendly policies to strengthen rural livelihoods.

Ulema, Mashaikh expresses complete solidarity with govt, security forces against terrorism

ISLAMABAD, (APP): A meeting of Ulema and Mashaikh, chaired by Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Friday announced support for the state's positive steps aimed at promoting peace, religious harmony, social stability and national security in the country. Addressing the meeting, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said Pakistan gained immense respect after the "Marka-e-Haq" and that the efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Hafiz Syed Asim Munir for establishing peace were appreciated around the world.

He said India's false propaganda was defeated. The minister said the Pakistani armed forces were presenting testimonies in defence of the country and that the gathering of Ulema was held to acknowledge their sacrifices. He added that the Ulema had always remained at the forefront in protecting the ideological borders of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The meeting resolved to continue full cooperation with the Government of Pakistan in every positive initiative and reaffirmed commitment to the supremacy of the Constitution and the stability of state institutions.

The participants appreciated the efforts of the Pakistani armed forces for peace, stability and national unity and expressed their unwavering support.

The Ulema and Mashaikh also expressed complete solidarity with the government and security forces against terrorism, extremism and destructive activities.

They paid tribute to the sacrifices of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies and security forces for maintaining peace and stability in Pakistan.

According to the declaration, the entire Pakistani nation is indebted to the great sacrifices of the martyrs and ghazis.

It stated that terrorism, extremism, sectarianism and violence have no place in Islam, describing Islam as a religion of peace, moderation, tolerance and respect for human life.

The declaration said every act that harms the peace of the state, society and the people is condemnable.

The scholars appealed to religious leaders of all schools of thought to promote national unity and religious harmony, saying the national narrative against terrorism would be highlighted through sermons, lessons and religious gatherings.

The declaration also stressed the need for joint academic, religious and social efforts to protect the younger generation from extremist ideologies, hateful content and misleading propaganda.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Sajjad Qamar, Qari Mehboob-ur-Rehman, Maulana Zulfiqar, Maulana Abdul Qadir Sikandri, Maulana Ayub Ansari, Maulana Iqbal Abbasi, Maulana Dr. Munir Ahmed, Maulana Dr. Muhammad Saleem Saeedi, Maulana Syed Jahangir Shah Saeedi, Maulana Dr. Saeed-ur-Rehman, Maulana Abu Bakr Siddique, Maulana Dr. Hafeez-ur-Rehman, Allama Sajjad Naqvi, Allama Akhtar Abbas and Maulana Waqas Majeed.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of the Senate, Syedaal Khan Nasir, addressing the Saudi Company Formation and Business Expansion Summit 2026, organized by Al Raee Group

Taliban using Indian funds for cross-border terrorism against Pakistan: Ex-Afghan army chief

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Former Afghan Army Chief Lieutenant General Sami Sadat has validated Pakistan's long-standing stance on cross-border terrorism, revealing that the Taliban use Indian financial backing to sponsor militant operations against Pakistan.

In a media interview, General Sadat addressed the specific financial nexus driving this instability, stating, "And it is also true that the Taliban have very close relations with India, the money they take here, and then they give that money to TTP to carry out operations in Pakistan".

The former commander asserted that the Taliban facilitate militant organizations while leveraging financial assistance for strategic objectives. General Sadat said that the current Afghan authorities provide operational support to anti-Pakistan militant groups, effectively enabling these outfits to carry out attacks within Pakistani territory.

He said that external funding is being redirected to sustain the militant networks and that Indian financial assistance specifically reaches groups such as Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan to execute terrorist attacks inside Pakistan.

According to the analysts, General Sadat's remarks closely align with concerns frequently raised by Pakistani regarding the use of Afghan soil for militant activities.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, as chief guest, joining the Ambassador of Egypt and other distinguished guests in cutting the cake at a reception celebrating the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

DPM Dar winds up China visit after attending AI moot, meeting FM Wang Yi

SHANGHAI, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar concluded a "productive" official visit to Shanghai, China, expressing sincere appreciation to the Chinese government and its leadership for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements.

"Just concluded a productive visit to Shanghai, China. I express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China and its leadership for its warm hospitality and excellent arrangements throughout my short visit," Deputy Prime Minister Dar wrote on his X timeline.

He commended Chinese President Xi Jinping for his insightful keynote address at the opening ceremony of the World AI Cooperation Organization, in which he aptly observed, "AI is an invaluable asset that accumulates the collective wisdom of humanity" which is a timely reminder that this transformative technology carries both immense promise and a shared responsibility to ensure it serves the common good.



A Palestinian woman named Emani Ibrahim Abu Jazer (49) lost her life as a result of the Israeli army opening fire in the El-Kenis area, southwest of the city of Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip, despite the ceasefire.

Shocked, deeply saddened by Maulana Fazl's statement about martyrs, says Farooq Sattar

KARACHI, (INP): Senior Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leader Farooq Sattar said he was "shocked and saddened" by a recent statement made by JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman regarding the country's martyrs.

Speaking on a private news channel he said he had not expected such remarks from the veteran politician. "I was shocked and deeply saddened by Maulana Fazlur Rehman's statement. I did not expect such a statement from him," Sattar said, adding that he had urged the JUI-F chief to review and correct his remarks. He said personal, party or group interests could never take precedence over the national interest.

"Previously, Maulana Fazlur Rehman used to advise us. Today, we find ourselves advising him," he remarked.

Sattar noted that MQM-P last held its organisational elections in 2021, and the party is now approaching the five-year deadline as the Election Act requires political parties to hold internal elections every four to five years.

He said the party had set October as the target for conducting fresh intra-party elections. Sattar acknowledged that certain issues within the party had caused concern among workers and affected the party's public image.

He said Mustafa Kamal rejoined MQM-P on January 11, 2023, and should be grateful that the party accepted him back.

He stressed that MQM-P belongs to its workers and should remain under their leadership. "MQM-P belonged to its workers in the past, and it still belongs to its workers today," Sattar said. "No one should be imposed on the party. If anyone is imposed, both the workers and I will resist." Speaking about the Sindh governorship, Sattar said that the return of Kamran Tessori as Governor of Sindh remains MQM-P's official policy.

PDMA Balochistan issues monsoon alert, rain warning, windstorms in several districts

QUETTA, (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan has issued a weather alert warning of rain, windstorms, and thundershowers in several districts of the province between July 19 and July 23. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Islamabad, and the Regional Meteorological Center (RMC) Quetta, monsoon currents from the Arabian Sea are continuously penetrating the upper parts of the country and are expected to strengthen over the weekend. A western disturbance is also likely to approach the upper regions on Monday, intensifying weather activity.

The advisory said that isolated rain, windstorms, and thundershowers, with heavy falls at certain places, are expected in the districts of Zhob, Sherani, Kohlu, Sibi, Naseerabad, Jhal Magsi, Jaffarabad, Duki, Harnai, Loralai, Barkhan, Musakhail, Khuzdar, Dera Bugti, and surrounding areas.

ERC ensuring unified response mechanism to safeguard lives fuirng Monsoon 2026

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Emergency Response Committee, constituted on the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to oversee national preparedness and coordinated response during Monsoon 2026, directed all federal and provincial stakeholders to maintain a high state of operational readiness as it reviewed monsoon preparedness, emergency response plans and inter agency coordination at the National Emergencies Operation Centre of the National Disaster Management Authority Headquarters in Islamabad.



The Committee's third meeting was chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal and attended by Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, HI(M), senior NDMA officials, representatives of federal ministries, departments and other key stakeholders.

The Committee undertook a comprehensive review of preparedness measures put in place across the country. It assessed contingency plans, deployment of emergency response resources, coordination with district administrations, public awareness initiatives and arrangements for timely response to emerging emergencies during the monsoon season. The status of relief supplies, emergency communication mechanisms, evacuation plans and inter agency coordination was also reviewed to ensure swift and effective response capabilities.

Security forces kill 24 khawarij in Bannu IBOs: ISPR

RAWALPINDI, (INP): Pakistan security forces conducted intelligence-based operations in Bannu and surrounding areas, killing 24 khawarij over the past 24 hours, ISPR in a press release said. The military's media wing stated that terrorists belonged to the banned militant group referred to as Fitna al Khawarij and were involved in multiple terrorist activities. A large quantity of weapons and ammunition was recovered from the militants during the operations, ISPR said. The security forces remain committed to bringing all those responsible for terrorism to justice and will continue operations against militants and their facilitators. ISPR said efforts to eliminate terrorism, including threats allegedly supported from outside the country, will continue until the complete eradication of the menace.



LIMA, PERU: Keiko Sofia Fujimori receives the official credentials certifying her as President elect of the Republic of Peru during a ceremony

Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah printed at Shah Printing Press, Quetta and Published from Al-Syed Building M.A. Jinnah Road Quetta Ph. 2843190 E.mail: dailyvomqta@gmail.com.