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Describes Balochistan as pride of Pakistan

CDF Asim Munir vows to defeat foreign-backed proxies' nefarious designs in Balochistan

RAWALPINDI, (Monitoring Desk): Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on Thursday resolved to defeat foreign-sponsored proxies' nefarious designs in Balochistan with "decisive response", saying consistent efforts of security forces would bring lasting peace to the province.

The army chief made the remarks while interacting with participants of the 20th National Workshop Balochistan at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement.

Addressing the participants, CDF Munir said that consistent efforts of security forces and law enforcement agencies, backed by the steadfast support of the people would bring lasting peace to Balochistan. The army chief reaffirmed that targeted operations against Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan would continue with full resolve until the menace of terrorism and its abettors are eliminated from Pakistan, the ISPR said.

"He reiterated Pakistan's firm resolve to dismantle terrorist infrastructure wherever it poses a threat to the country and its people," it added. Field Marshal Munir underscored that foreign-sponsored proxies have persistently sought to fuel violence, undermine stability and disrupt peace in Balochistan. He, however, affirmed that their "nefarious designs" will be defeated through a firm and decisive response of the armed forces, supported by the resilience and unity of the people of Pakistan. In today's session, Field Marshal Munir described Balochistan as the pride of Pakistan, endowed with immense natural wealth and blessed with vibrant, resilient and patriotic people who constitute the province's greatest strength. He said that the ongoing development initiatives of the federal and provincial governments were aimed at transforming the province's socio-economic landscape through an inclusive and people-centric approach. CDF Munir lauded the constructive role of civil society, academia, media and youth in strengthening national integration.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir interacts with participants of the 20th National Workshop Balochistan at General Headquarters



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on Population development and stabilization.

Provision of fundamental rights to every citizen forms foundation of healthy, developed society: Governor

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor of Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail said that Quetta is not merely the provincial capital but the face of the entire province. Quetta is a city blessed with a rich history, unique urban character, and exceptional natural beauty. Therefore, it is essential that all relevant provincial ministers focus on the city's genuine development, beautification, and restoration of its historical identity.

He said it was encouraging that several notable development projects had been launched in Quetta during the tenure of the present government. However, greater collective efforts were still needed to provide quality education, clean drinking water, and basic healthcare facilities to the city's residents.

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation led by Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Muslehuddin Mengal.

On the occasion, Governor Mandokhail said that the provision of fundamental rights to every citizen forms the foundation of a healthy and developed society. Provincial ministers, parliamentary secretaries, members of the provincial assembly, and other relevant departments can all contribute to Quetta's genuine development, prosperity, and public welfare.

He said that integrated planning, transparency, accountability, and the effective implementation of development projects can play a lasting role in the city's progress.

Governor Mandokhail added that sustainable development can only be maintained when government institutions and the public work together.



QUETTA: Former Chief Minister of Balochistan and Chief of Sarawan, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani, is speaking to the media on the occasion of challenging the government's decision to include Mastung District in the Quetta Division and abolish the Kalat Division by filing a petition in the Balochistan High Court.

Pakistan trusted partner, second home for all Iranians: Dr Masoud Pezeshkian

TEHRAN, (APP): President of Iran Dr Masoud Pezeshkian has said that expansion of bilateral collaboration between Pakistan and Iran, ranging from economic and trade sectors to security, must be pursued with greater urgency as current bilateral cooperation did not yet reflect the full potential of both nations.

Accepting the diplomatic credentials of new Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran Imran Ahmed Siddiqui held on Wednesday, the Iranian president described ties between the two nations as much deeper than a conventional neighborly relationship.

He said that the bilateral partnership was anchored in profound historical, cultural, religious, and fraternal bonds, reaffirming that Iran viewed Pakistan as a trusted partner and a brotherly nation—calling it a second home for all Iranians.

He expressed confidence that Pakistan-Iran relations would continue to strengthen in the years ahead.

President Pezeshkian commended the Pakistani leadership for their active role in recent regional developments, specifically praising efforts by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir to facilitate dialogue between Iran and the United States which demonstrated Pakistan's genuine commitment to peace and regional stability.

He said that such initiatives and the ongoing consultations between Tehran and Islamabad were highly valued by the government and people of Iran.

The Iranian President also conveyed his warm regards and best wishes to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, and Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, while assuring Ambassador Siddiqui of full official support during his diplomatic tenure.

In his remarks, Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui described the Iran-Pakistan relationship as an exemplary model of historic solidarity, noting that both nations have consistently supported one another through challenging times.

He reaffirmed his commitment to unlocking vast opportunities in trade, investment, and infrastructure projects.

Six terrorists killed, several arrested in IBO in Mastung

Several terrorist hideouts completely destroyed during the operation

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Security forces killed six terrorists belonging to Fitna al Hindustan and arrested several others during a successful intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Khad Kocha area of Mastung district.

The arrested terrorists include facilitators as well as male and female suicide bombers, according to security sources.

Several terrorist hideouts were also completely destroyed during the operation. A large cache of arms and ammunition was recovered from the terrorists' hideouts, security sources added.

Search and clearance operations are continuing in the area, while security forces have maintained full surveillance to ensure that no terrorists escape.

Security sources said intelligence-based operations had been intensified in the Khad Kocha area of Mastung following recent terrorist activities in the region.

Security forces reaffirmed that operations will continue until terrorism is eradicated and lasting peace and stability are restored in the region.

Balance in population sole guarantor for sustainable national development: PM

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday emphasized the urgent need to align population planning with national development, economic stability, and human resource improvement, calling for enhanced provincial coordination and effective public awareness campaigns to control population growth.

The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting regarding population welfare in the country, said that rapidly growing population was the country's biggest challenge and measures for population control and welfare must be treated as a national duty.

Calling the balance in population a sole guarantor for sustainable national development, he directed authorities to convene a meeting of the National Population Council at the earliest.

During the meeting, the relevant officials briefed the prime minister on the country's demographic trends, population welfare initiatives, and preparations for the National Population Council meeting.

It was informed that the council's meeting would be convened soon, bringing together the chief ministers of all provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, the prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and representatives of all relevant institutions and stakeholders to formulate a comprehensive national strategy. It was told that the operating procedures for the National Population Council Secretariat have been finalized, and the National Stabilization Plan 2026–2035 was currently being prepared.

Balochistan government strongly condemns Mastung attack

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister's Adviser on Information and Political Affairs, Shahid Rind, strongly condemned the tragic incident in Mastung in which Session Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar and his gunman were martyred in a terrorist firing attack.

He said that attacking the guardians of the law was in fact a failed attempt to challenge the writ of the state and the justice system, and such attempts would never be allowed to succeed. Shahid Rind said that targeting lawyers and judges was part of a deep and organized conspiracy aimed at spreading fear and panic in Balochistan and pressuring state institutions.

However, he said the government was determined to foil all such malicious designs.

He stated that those involved in the terrorist attack, as well as their facilitators, would not be spared under any circumstances. Law enforcement agencies have been directed to take decisive action against the terrorists.

People of Balochistan stands with state against terrorism: Dr Rubaba

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister's Adviser for Women's Development, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, expressed profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of Session Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar and his gunman Muhammad Zaman in the terrorist firing incident in Mastung and strongly condemned the attack.

In a statement, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said that targeting the guardians of law and justice was deeply regrettable and unacceptable. Such incidents are intended to spread fear and weaken state institutions, but terrorists will never succeed in their malicious objectives.

She extended heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the martyrs and prayed that Almighty Allah may grant them the highest ranks, bless the bereaved families with patience, and grant speedy and complete recovery to the injured.

Operations against terrorist networks, anti-peace elements to be intensified: CM Bugti

District and Sessions Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar and his gunman martyred in Mastung district

QUETTA (ANN): Unknown armed assailants opened fire on the national highway in Mastung, resulting in the martyrdom of District and Sessions Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar and his security gunman, while Additional Sessions Judge Tariq Lashari and another person were seriously injured.

According to Deputy Commissioner Mastung Bahram Saleem, Sessions Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar was traveling from Quetta to Mastung when unknown terrorists targeted his vehicle on the national highway. As a result of the attack, the Sessions Judge and his gunman were martyred on the spot, while Additional Sessions Judge Tariq Lashari and another individual sustained serious injuries.

The bodies of the deceased and the injured were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital, where the injured are receiving medical treatment.

Following the incident, security forces and law enforcement agencies cordoned off the area and launched a search operation. Checkpoints have also been established at various locations to apprehend the attackers.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti strongly condemned the attack, stating that the assault on Sessions Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar was, in fact, an attack on the state.

He said that the terrorists and their facilitators would be brought to their logical end at all costs.

The blood of the protectors of the law would not go in vain, those challenging the writ of the state would be crushed, and no safe haven for terrorists would remain in Balochistan.



Due to the intense attacks carried out by the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip, some Palestinian families displaced from their homes have taken refuge in the Furqan Mosque in Khan Yunis

Provincial Ministers vows to completely eliminate terrorism from Balochistan

QUETTA (ANN): Provincial ministers, parliamentary secretaries, and members of the Balochistan Assembly strongly condemned the terrorist attack on Session Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar and expressed profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of the judge and his gunman.

They stated that targeting the guardians of the law was a failed attempt to challenge the writ of the state, which would never be allowed to succeed.

These remarks were made in a joint condemnation statement issued by Provincial Minister for Communications and Works Mir Saleem Khosa, Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani, Provincial Food Minister Noor Muhammad Dummar, Provincial Minister Ali Madad Jatak, Parliamentary Secretaries Haji Muhammad Khan Lehri, Sardar Masood Loni, Haji Wali Muhammad Noorzai, Assembly Members Sheikh Zarak Khan Mandokhail, Haji Muhammad Khan Tor Utmankhail, and others.

They said that the attack on Session Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar was, in fact, an attack on the state, the Constitution, and the justice system, aimed at spreading fear and weakening state institutions. However, such cowardly acts can never enable terrorists to achieve their malicious objectives.

The leaders said that the Government of Balochistan firmly believes in the rule of law, and protecting the lives and property of the people remains its top priority.

Mastung judge's martyrdom signals BYC's expanding terror campaign from targeting LEAs to civilians

MASTUNG, (APP): The martyrdom of Session Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar and his bodyguard in Mastung signals a dangerous shift in Balochistan as after failing to break law enforcement agencies, the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) and its associate terrorist outfits have now turned their attacks on civilians and state institutions.

This tragic attack reflects a calculated shift in strategy to instil widespread fear and destabilize public administration across Balochistan. For months, state law enforcement agencies successfully stood as a wall against anti-state elements. In response, these terrorist networks—operating under the cover of the BYC—have expanded their scope of violence to soft targets, unarmed citizens, and judicial officers in a desperate bid to create chaos.

The attack comes as part of a sudden wave of violence deliberately directed at non-military, civilian targets, including the targeted killing of Session Judge Kakar, five innocent laborers in Mashkel and bus passengers in Khadkocha.

This shift toward targeting civilian institutions reached a breaking point following the June 22, 2026, sentencing of BYC chief Mahrang Lango by an Anti-Terrorism Court in Quetta. Unable to confront law enforcement directly on the ground, the leadership turned its sights on the court system.

On the day of the verdict, Sammi Deen, a close associate of Mahrang, issued a provocative statement via social media explicitly inciting hostility against judges.

The martyrdom of Justice Kakar occurred exactly one month after Sammi Deen's statement, confirming warnings from local observers that the BYC's rhetoric serves as a direct operational signal for the BLA and affiliated terrorist outfits to execute attacks against soft targets.

Having lost the ground against resilient law enforcement forces, these terrorist elements and their political facilitators are now demonstrating that they recognize no distinction regarding religion, humanity, or ethnicity.

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Culture of gender bias

At all ages, throughout their personal and their professional lives, women have to combat rigid gendered stereotypes that seek to confine them in boxes of what society deems a woman to be. One stereotype that remains consistent calls for both young girls and women to be placable and subservient. Anyone who defies this norm is treated as a rowdy outcast, determined to disrupt the 'natural order of the universe.'

In workplaces, this stereotype is often coupled with blatant ageism, when women who refuse to act maternally towards their counterparts are labelled "unstable", allegedly "causing... problems for others." This quote verbatim belongs to the Vice Chancellor of the Federal Urdu University (FUUAST), Dr Zabta Khan Shinwari, whose remarks have recently been declared as workplace harassment by Pakistan's Federal Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment.

The accuser, a lecturer at the same university, claimed that Dr Shinwari repeatedly cited "hormonal issues" for women over 35 as cause for their assertive behaviour. For this, the Vice-Chancellor has incurred a minor penalty of censure, alongside the University Syndicate being directed to monitor his behaviour.

According to a study conducted by a leading global organisation, Women of Influence+, nearly 80 per cent of women across the world have encountered age-related discrimination in their careers. Similarly, a top UC Berkeley professor found out that male professors encounter consistent evaluations over time, while female professors experience a quick decline after their 30s, and are usually termed as "unfriendly" or not "warm".

It is almost as if workplaces expect women to liven up a place, instead of exerting confidence, competence and skill. Such remarks, that too from an administrative body, reflect the culture of an institute, guiding several thousand students to act the same. Universities must work to dispel such stereotypes, instead of being active participants in the degradation of women.

Social media depicts truth, but not how you think

IMRAN JAN

In the age of broadcast media — yes, we now have to talk about them as a thing of the past — the emphasis was what we used to call ratings. In a nutshell, it was about money but a different method of earning money than the method of views as we see in the age of social media. There used to be gatekeepers of information, which were these faceless villains whose job it was to act as a giant filter, allowing only certain kinds of news and views (not the YouTube views but the opinion one) to pass through to the newsroom.

Once the general masses everywhere moved to social media, the news broadcasts and the opinion makers also moved there. Now they earn money through views instead of what was called ratings. And that migration also prompted the gatekeepers to move over there. Once there, they realised that they couldn't really suppress views expressed by people but they could suppress how many people it would reach by playing with the algorithm. So, before the gatekeepers prevented news from being broadcast. Now, they catch and drown it after it has been broadcast by suppressing its reach to the mass audience.

Many nations have used what I called the retail algorithm control method, where they manipulate the algorithm in order to suppress the video reach of certain journalists and opinion makers who make troubling noises that the regime in charge anywhere doesn't like.

America, however, has what I call the wholesale algorithm control. Algorithms are the new slaves of America. Voices critical toward Israel are just either outright not allowed to be broadcast on popular platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, X, and now even TikTok or they are massively suppressed. TikTok was truly the only platform I knew that allowed voices critical of Israel to go viral but not anymore. At least for most people.

The villains of humanity have algorithms in their arsenal, but we mind using human beings can still use the good old police work to decipher the truth and paint a simple picture of an otherwise overwhelmingly complex plot orchestrated by money-hungry and democracy hating charlatans. Just pay attention to who praises whom and who bashes whom.

Two great examples are those of Elon Musk and Zohran Mamdani. Before TikTok was forced to sell to compromise its algorithm to Israel's liking, Elon Musk was taken on board because he owns X. Bringing Musk on board where he had to allow pro-Israel voices while at the same time suppress pro-Palestinian ones would not have been difficult because we are now seeing that Musk has always been a racist man who deeply cares only when a non-white person kills a white person.

Not the other way around, where the statistics are much higher. The entire idea of Israel is based on hatred and racism because it is a fake country inhabited by blue eyed white skinned Ashkenazi Jews from Poland, Russia and elsewhere who justify grabbing Palestinian land.

After all, the Palestinians look brown and are not very educated.

So, bringing Musk on board would have required just a text from Netanyahu. And Musk bowed like any other American politician. Ever since, Musk has lost a massive support and love from the people but weird accounts would always appear on your feed, even though you never followed them, tweeting in his favour and talking great things about him. When you look closely, they're pro-Zionist accounts.

As for Mamdani, more tweets about 9/11 have happened in this last week than during the anniversary of 9/11 last month. All of those tweets are from similar accounts about reminding America that 9/11 was done by Muslims and that Mamdani is a Muslim.

The creation of that perception was the driving force behind Israel allowing or maybe orchestrating the 9/11 attacks to happen. It benefits their bad Palestinians argument.

BJP's Bihar playbook: religion, repression & polarisation

DURDANA NAJAM

The 2025 Bihar elections have emerged as more than a state-level contest; they are a reflection of the evolving political doctrine of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) — one that blends religion, repression and the careful construction of external threats to consolidate power. Bihar, historically a site of social movements and caste politics, has now become the testing ground for a new experiment in political control and ideological uniformity.

In recent months, the BJP's campaign rhetoric in Bihar has undergone a notable shift. Development, once the centrepiece of Modi-era politics, has been quietly replaced by the language of identity and grievance. The emphasis has moved from vikas (development) to virasat (heritage), and from governance to faith. The party has perfected the art of merging religious symbolism with political strategy, invoking the imagery of Hindu pride, cultural revivalism and national security to appeal to voters.

The shift is deliberate. Bihar, with its entrenched caste divisions and fragile economy, provides fertile ground for emotive politics. The party's messaging paints Hindus as victims of historical neglect and Muslims as perpetual beneficiaries of so-called appeasement. By turning majority anxiety into political mobilisation, the BJP has managed to overshadow discussions on unemployment, rural distress and the state's ailing public services.

At the same time, the suppression of dissent has become an inseparable feature of the BJP's electoral approach. Opposition leaders find themselves entangled in corruption cases and procedural investigations that conveniently intensify during campaign seasons. The media, increasingly constrained by economic and political pressure, amplifies the government's narrative while marginalising alternative voices. The state machinery has been systematically aligned to reinforce the ruling party's dominance, blurring the boundaries between state and party.

Equally significant is the deployment of the anti-Pakistan narrative within the Bihar campaign. Once confined to national security debates, it now permeates local politics. In speeches and rallies, references to Pakistan are invoked not to address foreign policy but to sustain a heightened emotional climate among voters. By projecting external hostility, the BJP effectively deflects attention from domestic failures. The narrative equates dissent with disloyalty, recasts opposition parties as conspirators, and frames electoral choice as a moral test of patriotism.

This use of Pakistan as an ideological construct serves a dual purpose. It reinforces Hindu nationalist sentiment while creating a convenient "other" against which the BJP can position itself as the sole guardian of India's unity and security. In Bihar, a state where Muslim communities have long been an integral part of its cultural fabric, this narrative deepens divisions that were once mitigated by shared histories of struggle and coexistence.

The BJP's campaign strategy reflects a broader redefinition of democracy in India. Elections are no longer about governance or policy outcomes but about moral binaries, nationalism versus betrayal, faith versus threat, unity versus subversion.

The result is a form of democratic theatre in which voters are compelled to choose sides not between competing visions of governance, but between competing claims of loyalty to the nation.

This reorientation has been accompanied by the weakening of key democratic institutions. The Election Commission operates under visible pressure, civil society faces constant scrutiny, and the judiciary often avoids confrontation with the executive. When institutions bend to political will, elections lose their capacity to hold governments accountable and instead become instruments to legitimise their power.

For opposition parties in Bihar, the challenge is formidable. Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Congress and smaller regional groups have struggled to build a cohesive counter-narrative that can cut through the noise of religious polarisation. Their focus on governance and social justice finds limited traction in an environment dominated by emotive appeals to identity. The BJP's control over political discourse ensures that alternative visions are either ignored or ridiculed.

Yet, the real cost of this transformation is borne by ordinary citizens. Bihar remains one of India's poorest states, with limited industrialisation, high unemployment and a persistent exodus of young workers to other regions. These structural problems require sustained policy focus, but the political conversation remains consumed by cultural symbolism and imagined threats. By substituting performance with perception, the BJP has turned political communication into a substitute for governance itself.

For Pakistan and other external observers, Bihar's election offers an insight into the BJP's long-term ideological project. The repetition of anti-Pakistan rhetoric in domestic campaigns suggests that foreign policy is no longer an arena of diplomacy alone but a tool for shaping domestic political identity. It illustrates how external hostility is being domesticated into electoral capital — a means of constructing unity through fear.

The 2025 Bihar elections thus represent more than a state contest; they are a referendum on the future of India's democratic pluralism.

The BJP's strategy combines three reinforcing elements: the instrumentalisation of religion; the repression of dissent; and the manufacture of perpetual external threat. Together, they create a self-sustaining cycle of emotional politics that sidelines the language of rights, equality and governance.

The BJP's Bihar playbook demonstrates that in contemporary India, political success depends less on policy performance and more on the capacity to transform fear into faith and faith into votes.

Perfectionism and suicide

MUHAMMAD WAJAHAT SULTAN

Suicide was once a forbidden element of society to discuss and deliberate openly. In the 21st century, suicide has become a normal word in day-to-day discussion. After 1990, we opened societies with the generational shift of perception about worth, value and achievements. Out of this global shift in attaching worth and value to humans with their perfect image, the recent generations of young people are more demanding of themselves, of others, and are perceiving that others demand more from them.

The wave of modernisation after 1990, with the End of History and the emergence of the Neoliberal model in society and politics, instilled this idea into every single person that they are like commodities whose complete worth lies in constantly achieving and becoming a permanent part of a rat race where one can never reach the top — because after every cross of different levels of achievement, there is someone who is more competent, capable, rich and perfect than you.

The modern world and our economic model are based on fundamental principles like revering competition, promoting hyper-ambition and discouraging cooperation. The most critical aspect of the global order is to instil an idea of perfectionism. Perfectionism is constantly burdening people, which is the root cause of anxiety, stress and depression.

A new study published by Thomas Curran and Andrew Hill in the journal Psychological Bulletin establishes that perfectionism is on the rise. There are three types of perfectionism, which are unrealistically setting high standards for the self, others and society. These three types of perfectionism are self-oriented, other-oriented and socially-prescribed.

Self-oriented perfectionism means we set very high expectations of performance, achievement and measuring the worth of the self. Other-oriented perfectionism implies that we set exaggerated expectations of support and confidence from others. The third type is more relevant to the modern world, in which we constantly believe that we have to advance our skills and wealth because society is observing us and we have to prove that we are worthy and capable.

Once we believe in socially ascribed perfectionism, the idea of anxiety and stress begins — because we expect that our single failure or multiple successes will characterise our deficiencies or approval in society. It is where shame, failure and fear take place in our lives. Our self-examination becomes dependent on the hyper-perception of others.

Perfectionism introduces shame. Why do most people fall into depression after a failure, a missed opportunity, a bad memory or a terrible setback? In the majority of cases — unknowingly — it is because of shame, not guilt. We feel shame when we fail. We feel shame when we experience a breakup, lose a career path or miss an opportunity. Shame is deeply rooted in our psychology not biologically, but culturally through perfectionism.

This competition and perfectionism alienate many from others like peers and family. They constantly chase to prove their worth before society through wealth, accomplishment and perfectionism. Cooperation also compromises because cooperation is replaced with competition.

All these scenarios lead to a hyper-responsibility of attaining different levels of perfectionism. At some point, it becomes tightening on our psyches, leading to hard steps to release all pain and suffering through a single step which is hard to imagine even. We need to decrease hyper-individuation and create collective values and detoxification from associating worth with possessions only. Humanistic values like compassion, empathy, self-regulation and civic sense must also be appreciated just like approving a high-paying job or possession of luxuries.

Shegara — IEA & the collapsed peace talks in Istanbul

INAM UL HAQUE

During the last two weeks, given the October skirmish between Pakistan and Afghanistan, we discussed IEA's covert and demonstrated hostility towards Pakistan, which remains unjustifiable from sociological (Pashtunwali), Islamic fraternity and/or good neighbourly standpoints. That this acrimony is in sheer violation of the basic tenet of Pashtunwali, that is shegara (or khegara) — doing good and returning good with good. That militarily Pakistan can fight a '1.5 Front' Indo-Afghan aggression, a scenario best avoided. That Afghanistan and CARs are not of any 'outsized and overwhelming' geo-strategic and economic relevance, except energy; for which other inexpensive alternatives also exit.

After outlining the Doha Agreement, as reported, and the prospects of parleys in Istanbul, I surmised that continued IEA obduracy, gender apartheid and human rights abuses are gravitating the main national, international and regional stakeholders towards a possible regime change. The Afghan-based terrorism is hardening attitudes, because behind the smokescreen of Haqqani-hosted TTP; the IEA is also and perhaps more complicit. The incendiary statement by Afghan interior ministry spokesperson Abdul Mateen Qani, made during an interview with Ariana News, speaks for it and will not be helpful.

The actual reasons for the collapse of the Istanbul talks after crucial and intense negotiations are yet to be known; however, as per my construct, the composition of the negotiating team speaks a lot about the lack of clarity, confusion and internal fault-lines within the IEA, in addition to the ongoing Afghan-based anti-Pakistan terrorism. Some pointers are in order.

First, the IEA changed its interlocutors and those fielded during the Istanbul Round ostensibly enjoyed little confidence in Qandahar and had limited mandate. Inter-state relations, among 'normal states' are regulated by the foreign ministries the world over, until specifics are discussed. In case of Pakistan (a normal state) and Afghanistan (a motely crowd of tribal militants), the talks in Doha were shifted by the IEA from Muttaqi's interim foreign ministry to Afghan defence ministry under Mulla Yaqub, the son of venerated Mulla Umer.

Because FM Muttaqi, given his anti-Pakistan diatribes during his Indian yatra, was 'ostensibly' persona non grata. And then again in Istanbul, Rahmatullah Najib, a Sulemankhel Pashtun from Paktia, is leading the Afghan side as deputy interior minister. The deflection from foreign to defence to interior ministry is telling and betrays confusion and fault-lines within the IEA.

Second, TTP is hosted in the Loya Paktia under Haqqani suzerainty, and they are in subservient 'hamsaya' status in the three provinces of Khowst, Paktia and Paktika that comprise the Loya Paktia. Haqqani Network (HQN) was not forcibly incorporated into the IEA like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar et al, and they are 'alliance partners' within the IEA, maintaining their independent and individual position within the Emirate. Haqqanis differ with puritanical Qandahar on some policy issues like female right to education and employment, social liberties, relations with Pakistan, etc.

HQN, as bedrock of resistance against the USSR and then the NATO-US Combine, kept the jihad alive in 2009, when IEA's Qandahari leadership, in exile, had seriously considered laying down arms. That offer was rejected by Doanld Rumsfeld, the then US Secretary Defense.

HQN, as openly known, maintains its second line of defence in Pakistan's North Waziristan District, where most of its leadership has filial ties and properties, including their largest seminary near Miramshah. Hence in the 'potential' jockeying for power inside Afghanistan, HQN - the IEA's military strategist - is compelled to maintain TTP as its mlatar (proxy) force, a force-in-being for internecine fighting, that Afghanistan is accustomed to.

Zadran Haqqanis, understandably, were extensively wired into the Pakistani vortex, and are perceived as such by suspecting Ahmadzai/ Muhammadzai Qandahar. So, the HQN protégé, Rahmatullah Najib was sent to Istanbul to sort out problem with Pakistan, their erstwhile benefactor, but with restricted mandate. The talks seem to have failed primarily because of IEA's inability to provide guarantee to Pakistan about zero anti-Pakistan terrorism from Afghan soil.

Third, given the over 70 per cent Afghan signature in the recent 'TTP' attacks and the fact that most slain terrorists belonged to provinces like Wardak, Zabul, Qandahar, etc, outside HQN's Loya Paktia, point to the direct involvement of IEA in the spike in violence against Pakistan. So, in changed percepts about the IEA's inability and unwillingness to rein in terrorism, the scale is now more tilted towards 'unwillingness'. TTP is just a smokescreen.

Fourth, IEA finds terrorism useful as an instrument of policy to: a) keep Islamabad under pressure; b) solicit Indian support including logistics, finances, training and interlocution; c) keep its internal militant cadre busy and occupied; and d) deplete the TTP rank and file by continuous infiltrations, consequent killing by the Pakistani military, etc. Not all entities within the TTP, the motley grouping of over 13 constituents with different aims and objectives, are on the same page with HQN.

Therefore, Qandahar's manipulation of TTP cannot be ignored, as it serves Qandahar's interests by keeping HQN under pressure, paint them in bad light with their former handlers in Pakistan, and deplete their military/ mlatar strength through operational losses. However, the present tashkeels (militants' grouping) against Pakistan are still 'ostensibly' under the TTP banner. This is what I call the 'Haqqani Complexity'. This complexity begets resolution for sustained peace in Afghankhwa (Afghanistan, erstwhile FATA, KPK, Balochistan). TTP et al is a bone stuck in HQN's neck, and Qandahar skillfully manipulates their predicament.

Following on from the above, IEA cannot and will not give guarantees as sought by Pakistan; and the wily IEA will continue to persist in error in the foreseeable future. Private conversations with Afghan interlocutors are still full of effusive pleasantries, desire for brotherly ties evocation of clichés; but on the ground, their jihad continues. The world be damned. So, sadly a peaceful Afghanistan is only a pliant Afghanistan and vice versa.

Qandahar needs to realise that Pakistan is more important than its anti-Pakistan proxies, or its adventurous and bored youth. Mentoring a 12-year-old boy, when his venerated father dies, helping him ascend to become defence minister in the service of his country and people, is shegara, plain and simple, and it begets shegara... no strings attached.

India's police crackdown further fuels Cockroach movement protests

NEW DELHI, (Monitoring Desk): Supporters of India's youth-led Cockroach movement vowed Thursday to continue their protest in New Delhi, a day after police used tear gas and batons to break up a march toward Parliament.
Hundreds of protesters camped at Jantar Mantar, a designated protest site, under heavy police presence, saying they would stay until Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigns over alleged failures in India's examination system.
"We are going to continue our protest," said Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the Cockroach Janta Party, which emerged just two months ago.
The movement, drawing students, professionals and families, marks a rare public challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in its third term, reviving criticism over its handling of dissent and its use of force to respond to protests.
Also today, opposition leader Rahul Gandhi and dozens of his Congress party lawmakers staged a sit-in protest outside Modi's residence, marking a dramatic escalation. Several were seen fastening zip ties around their wrists.
They are there to "demand answers from him for the brutalities against young students yesterday," Gandhi wrote on X. He urged "every patriotic Indian who believes that our students should get justice" to join the sit-in.
The Cockroach movement began as a satirical protest but quickly evolved into a nationwide, youth-led movement focused on exam leaks, unemployment and government accountability. It gained momentum over the weekend after prominent activist Sonam Wangchuk, whose three-week hunger strike has become a symbol of the protests, was forcibly taken to a hospital by police.
Video of police beating protesters and dragging them away spread on social media, fueling public outrage. Footage showed young protesters crying and pleading with officers not to hit them, while others stood their ground and endured blows.
Delhi Police said nearly 180 people were injured, including 118 security personnel and 60 protesters.
Sona Bisht, a 20-year-old student who was part of the protest, said the confrontation strengthened her resolve.
"If the government thinks that doing this with Gen Z, they can stop us, then that won't happen. We are here talking about education, talking about securing our future. And till the time our demands are not met, we will not move from here," she said.
After nearly a month of silence, the government made its first apparent move to engage with the protesters yesterday.



Palestinian Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian Shahin and Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski held a joint press conference in Warsaw

Poland urges Israel to end West Bank settlement expansion

WARSAW, (Monitoring Desk): Poland on Thursday called on Israel to halt the expansion of illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank, with Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski reaffirming Warsaw's backing for a two-state solution during talks with his Palestinian counterpart.
Speaking at a joint news conference in Warsaw, Sikorski called for an end to the illegal seizure of Palestinian land and settler violence. "The West Bank is not part of Israel," Sikorski said, calling for "an end to the illegal seizure of land, settler violence and the dismantling of illegal settlements in the West Bank."
He also urged Israel to protect places of worship, ensure unrestricted access for believers of all faiths and release customs and tax revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority.
Sikorski said Poland has recognized the State of Palestine since 1988 and has continued to provide political and humanitarian support.
"While helping neighboring Ukraine defend itself, we are also supporting the Gaza Strip and the West Bank," he said.

Duststorms and lightning kill at least 96 people in northern India

Monitoring Desk
PRAYAGRAJ: Duststorms, heavy rain and lightning have killed at least 96 people in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and damaged homes and other structures, officials said.
According to them, more than 50 people were injured in these weather-related incidents across several districts of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, on Wednesday.
Storms are common in northern India from March to June, before the annual monsoon rains arrive.
Officials said many deaths were caused by falling trees, collapsing structures and lightning.
Police and disaster response teams used chainsaws and cranes to clear fallen trees from roads and railway tracks in several districts.
Narendra Srivastava, an administrative official, said emergency teams were deployed across the affected areas and that homes, crops and power infrastructure were widely damaged, particularly in rural parts.
In Prayagraj district, residents were in panic as strong winds tore through neighbourhoods.
"The storm came suddenly, and the sky turned completely dark within minutes," Ram Kishore said. "Tin roofs were flying.


Heavy rains in Sivsagar district of Assam state in India have negatively impacted the region.

Putin visit to China will take place very soon, Kremlin says

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir will visit very soon and preparations for the trip are already complete, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry said ' on Thursday.
Putin and Chinese President Xi ' Jinping have met more than 40 times over the years, most in Beijing last September.
The two men signed a "no limits" strategic partnership in 2022, less than three weeks before Russia to war in Ukraine.
U.S. President Donald Trump is visiting China week.

Iran allowing transit of Chinese vessels in Strait of Hormuz

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran has begun allowing some Chinese vessels to transit through the Strait of Hormuz following understanding over Iranian management protocols for the waterway, the semi-official Fars news agency said on Thursday, citing an informed source.
The Fars report came as U.S. President Donald Trump, who is on a state visit to China, agreed with the Chinese leader Xi Jinping that the Strait of Hormuz must be open for the free flow energy.
The source told ' Fars news the move followed requests by China's foreign minister and ambassador to Iran, with Tehran agreeing ' to facilitate the passage of a number of Chinese ships


Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi met with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in Tehran

Trump weighing 'massive' US strikes on Iran: report

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): United States President Donald Trump is considering launching a new military operation against Iran that could surpass the scale of the US strikes from Operation Epic Fury earlier this year, Axios reported on Thursday.
In an interview with the outlet, Trump said he was nearing a decision on a potential major attack but stressed that no final determination had been made. Two US officials also told Axios that no new military orders have been issued.
"I am considering a massive attack. Bigger than ever before. I am close to making a decision. We are all set for it," Trump said. He also said Israel could join the operation almost immediately if requested, but maintained that the US would not require assistance from another country to carry out a new campaign against Iran.
According to Axios, Trump said Iranian officials wanted to negotiate but have not yet agreed to the latest proposal presented through mediation efforts.
"They haven't received enough pain yet," he claimed. Citing two regional sources familiar with the mediation efforts, Axios reported that Iran's leadership had not accepted the latest proposal. One source said: "We are trying, but the Iranians are not being helpful." United States President Donald Trump said on Thursday that Washington would hold Tehran accountable if the Yemeni Houthis attacked commercial vessels. "A year ago the United States of America attacked, very powerfully, the Houthis, for their interference with commerce and trade, by shooting at ships," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.
"Since that time, and during our conflict with Iran, they have acted very responsibly. Unfortunately, now they are starting up again, shooting at two Saudi Arabian ships last night," he added. "Please let this truth serve to represent that if they do this again, the US will hold Iran responsible, in that the Houthis are a surrogate and/or proxy of Iran, and major military punishment will be inflicted upon Iran and, of course, the Houthis, themselves, who I am very disappointed with in that they have, until now, acted very professionally and smart."

UK's Farage describes $7 million gift as a 'reward' for Brexit

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Nigel Farage, leader of Britain's right-wing Reform UK party, on Thursday said a 5 million pound ($6.75 million) donation from a cryptocurrency billionaire he received before entering parliament was "a reward for campaigning for Brexit".
Farage is being investigated by parliament's standards watchdog over whether he should have the money upon being elected in 2024, though he says it was an unconditional gift and therefore exempt from the rules.
Farage has previously said he accepted the donation from Thailand-based crypto investor Christopher Harborne to pay for his personal security before he announced his candidacy in the 2024 national election.
In a video interview with the Sun published on Thursday, Farage - who was an influential campaigning voice at the 2016 referendum that triggered Britain's exit from the European Union - said he was "not in the least bit concerned" by the parliamentary ` investigation.
"This was given to me on an unconditional basis - completely unconditional basis - but frankly, it was given as a reward for campaigning for Brexit for 27 years," Farage said.
Farage's anti-immigration ' party, the biggest winner in last week's local elections, had said on Wednesday it was in talks with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards over the donation.

Pope Leo decries European military spending as 'betrayal' of diplomacy

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Pope Leo on Thursday decried rising European military spending, which grew last year by the highest since the end of the Cold War amid pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump, saying it was a betrayal of diplomacy.
Leo, who has drawn Trump's ire in recent weeks after criticizing the Iran war, told university students in Rome that they should not refer to such rearmament as defence spending, adding that the world was being "maimed by wars".
"Let us not call 'defence' a rearmament that increases tensions insecurity, impoverishes investments ` in education and health, betrays trust in diplomacy, and enriches elites who care nothing for the common good," said the ` pontiff.


Elif Sahin (12) of Turkiye celebrates after a point during the 2026 FIVB Volleyball Nations League (VNL) quarterfinal match between Turkiye and Canada at the East Asian Games Dome in Macau, China

20 million people in Sudan still face acute hunger

CAIRO, (Agencies): Some 19.5 million Sudanese people, or more than 40% of the population, are facing acute hunger, according to a report by a hunger monitor, as the contours of a war that has created the world's worst hunger crisis shift.
The spread of hunger and famine has become a hallmark of the three-year-old war in Sudan.

Gaza risks becoming permanently divided, top official warns

Monitoring Desk
GAZA CITY: A prolonged stalemate in Gaza risks cementing the territory's permanent division, a top international official overseeing the ceasefire has warned, as Israel deepens its control over the enclave.

TENDER NOTICE

THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ROADS CW,PP&H DEPARTMENT KHUZDAR INVITES BIDS FROM ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR EXECUTION OF FOLLOWING WORKS FOR THE YEAR 2026 BASED ON COMPOSITE SCHEDULE RATES 2026 ON PERCENTAGE RATES

S. No	Name of Work/s	Estimated Cost	Tender Fee	Bid Security
1	Road extension from Kanta to Nai Bazar Chowk (BSDI PHASE-III) TSE-2627071134793	24,875,513	500 PKR	2%
2	Repair/Renov of BT rd from Qadeer Shaheed Chowk to BUET Khz (BSDI PHASE-III) TSE-2627071134813	15,919,526	500 PKR	2%

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required The bidder must have completed 1 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over for both works can be seen in bidding documents Other terms and conditions can be seen in bidding documents **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of **Bank Gurantee,Deposit at Call** of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed **500 PKR Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication of NIT to **10 August, 2026** during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by **10 August, 2026** till **11:00 AM** . **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at **12:00 PM Address:** XCN nare post office khuzdar
Phone no: 0848412243 Fax no: Email: farooqmengal27@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ROADS CW,PP&H DEPARTMENT DISTRICT KHUZDAR

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Iran warns of 'eye for an eye' response if infrastructure hit

Regional security depended on the absence of U.S. forces

TEHRAN, (Agencies): Iran's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi warned Thursday that Iran would retaliate in kind to any attack on its infrastructure, after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to bomb a bridge or power plant for every ship attacked in the Strait of Hormuz.
"Our defence doctrine is clear: eye for an eye. Any aggression against Iran, including our infrastructure, will compel a powerful and decisive response," Araghchi said on X.
Iran's state broadcaster quoted the military as saying that U.S. threats "will have no result other than the expansion of the war".
The remarks came hours after Trump warned that Washington would strike Iranian infrastructure if Tehran attacked commercial vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz.
Trump said the U.S. would target Iranian bridges or power plants in response to any Iranian missile, drone or other attack on commercial shipping in the strategic waterway.
Earlier, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf warned that no country in the region would be able to sell oil if Iran was prevented from doing so, adding that the Strait of Hormuz would not return to its pre-war status and that regional security depended on the absence of U.S. forces.
The exchange reflects rising tensions over the Strait of Hormuz following the Iran-U.S. war and continuing disputes over navigation and security arrangements in the strategic waterway.


Supporters of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, along with family members including his son Nicolas Maduro Guerra, gathered at the historic Plaza Caracas in the Venezuelan capital for a "Patriots' Meeting" event.

Lebanon, Israel hold new talks in US as ceasefire nears end

Monitoring Desk
DEIR EL ZAHRANI: Lebanon and Israel held new peace talks in Washington on Thursday, as their latest ceasefire—considered to still be in place despite hundreds of deaths in Israeli strikes—nears its end.
Israel's military said it was striking Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon on Thursday after warning residents of several towns and villages there and in the country's east to evacuate. It also said a Hezbollah drone fell in Israeli territory, wounding several civilians.
Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported Israeli airstrikes on the south and east, including in areas not covered by the warning, a day after the health ministry said intense raids killed 22 people, eight of them children.
One diplomat privy to the two-day talks in Washington said discussions started just after 9:00 am (1300 GMT) at the State Department.
Lebanese and Israeli representatives last met on April 23 at the White House, where US President Donald Trump announced a three-week ceasefire extension and voiced optimism for a groundbreaking agreement between the countries, which have technically been at war for decades.
Trump at the time made the bold prediction that during the three-week extension he would welcome Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun to Washington for a historic first summit between the countries.

FIA secures conviction in money laundering case, ex-auditor controller jailed for two years

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Money Laundering Circle Islamabad has secured a major court victory after a special court convicted a former Auditor Controller in a money laundering case, sentencing him to two years' rigorous imprisonment, imposing a fine of Rs200,000 and ordering the confiscation of his vehicle.
An FIA official told APP on Thursday that Special Judge Central Rawalpindi Abdul Rehman Muhammad Arif, in his judgment dated July 7, 2026, convicted Syed Maqsood Hussain Shah, a former Auditor Controller (MR Rawalpindi), in FIR No. 60/2021 under Sections 3 and 4 of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010.
The official said the investigation established that the accused had generated illegal proceeds through the predicate offence registered in FIR No. 40/2021, involving fraudulent salary bills prepared in the Officer Pay Section.
He said the investigation further revealed that the accused laundered the illicit funds and purchased a Toyota Corolla XLi in his own name using the proceeds of crime.
The court sentenced the convict to two years' rigorous imprisonment, imposed a fine of Rs200,000, and ordered the confiscation of the Toyota Corolla XLi in favour of the Government of Pakistan.


In Istanbul, local and foreign tourists tried to protect themselves from the hot weather by using umbrellas, face masks, hats, and fans.

President directs NDMA, PDMAs to intensify preparedness as monsoon risks increase

Urges the public to follow official advisories and avoid unnecessary travel to areas facing warnings of heavy rain, flash floods, landslides or other weather-related hazards

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday directed all federal, provincial and local authorities to intensify coordinated preparedness, rescue and relief measures as the country enters a critical phase of the monsoon season, amid the heightened risks of flash floods, cloudbursts, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), landslides, and urban flooding.

The president, in a statement, expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives and damage to homes, infrastructure and property caused by the recent rains and related incidents, while extending his heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones and expressed solidarity with all those affected.

He directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and provincial disaster management authorities (PDMAs) as well as provincial and local bodies to maintain close coordination and ensure timely dissemination of early warnings.

He called for continuous monitoring of rainfall, river flows and water levels in upper catchment regions, particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and directed downstream areas to make advance preparations for possible flooding.

President Zardari directed the authorities to pre-position rescue and relief resources, ensure the protection of vulnerable communities and critical infrastructure and take necessary measures to protect tourists and visitors in areas at risk from flash floods, GLOFs and landslides. He emphasised that all relevant institutions must remain vigilant and ensure an immediate response wherever lives or property are at risk.

He urged the public to follow official advisories and avoid unnecessary travel to areas facing warnings of heavy rain, flash floods, landslides or other weather-related hazards.

The president expressed appreciation for the efforts of rescue workers and emergency personnel engaged in relief operations and prayed for the safety of the people across the country.



MANILA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar addresses 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting



QUETTA: Former provincial minister Mir Abdul Karim Nosherwani called on Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

PM grieved over passing of JI Secretary General Ameer-ul-Azeem

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed deep grief over the passing of Secretary General of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Ameer-ul-Azeem.

Paying tribute to the deceased, he described the late Ameer-ul-Azeem as a visionary politician and said that his contributions to the field of politics would always be remembered.

Offering his condolences, he expressed sympathies with the bereaved family in this hour of grief.

The prime minister prayed for peace for the departed soul and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss.

Increasing domestic production essential to curtail national import bill: Azam Nazeer Tarar

RAWALPINDI, (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar emphasized that Pakistan's economic stability relies on expanding industrial capacity, bolstering local manufacturing, and reducing dependence on imported commodities.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of a new beverage facility at Murree Brewery, the minister highlighted that increasing domestic production is essential to curtailing the national import bill and fulfilling the market demand of a growing population.

"We will see improvement in our economy as our industrial output increases. With such a large market, how can we cater to our public without industrialization," the minister said.

Commending Isphanyar M. Bhandara, MNA for investing in modern, automated production lines for soft drinks, juices, and bottled water, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar noted that the facility successfully maintained workforce levels despite introducing advanced machinery.

"I saw how, in a small space, mechanical processes enable high-volume production. What is also very positive is that even with the installation of such modern machinery, employment has not been eliminated. This, I believe, is the balance we need to maintain," he said.

Amnesty Int'l report on Pakistan's precision strikes built on flimsy evidence, structural blind spots

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Amnesty International's latest report regarding Pakistan's precision strikes on March 16, 2026, has come under intense scrutiny for relying on unverified claims, ignoring operational context, and operating within complete structural blind spots.

Security analysts and official sources highlight that the report, built primarily on the narrative of the Afghan Taliban and UNAMA, completely overlooks critical operational evidence and intelligence that led to Pakistan's targeted actions against terrorist infrastructure.

Amnesty's central allegation—that a 2,000-bed hospital was targeted—is fundamentally contradicted by operational reality. A facility of such magnitude would accommodate over 4,000 people, including patients, medical staff, visitors, and emergency services. An attack on a functioning site of this scale would have triggered mass evacuations and a flood of real-time video evidence from mobile devices and CCTV cameras. However, the complete absence of any such footage raises serious doubts about the report's baseline claims.

Furthermore, Amnesty claims to have verified over 60 photos and videos and conducted merely 11 interviews with hospital staff and visitors—a statistically insignificant sample size for a facility purportedly housing thousands.

The credibility of the findings is further undermined by the complete information vacuum under which international observers operate in Afghanistan. Under UNSC Resolution 2721 (2023), the UN was mandated to appoint a Special Envoy for Afghanistan for ground-level fact-finding. However, the Taliban regime rejected this appointment, barred the Special Envoy, and prohibited UN Special Rapporteur Richard Bennett from entering the country. Additionally, the Taliban regime has banned women from entering UNAMA compounds or working with the agency, effectively cutting off access to 50 percent of the Afghan population. Men have also been barred from entering sensitive areas, including medical facilities where women work, turning these locations into structural blind spots that are routinely exploited by the Taliban regime for terrorist activities. Without independent ground access, Amnesty's conclusions rely on unchallenged assertions from a regime with every incentive to distort facts. Questions have also been raised regarding internal political manipulation and leadership bias within Amnesty International.

The report was signed by Isabelle Lessee, acting Regional Director for South Asia, who holds the position of Deputy Director. The substantive Regional Director, Smriti Singh—an Indian national with a background at the Times of India, a publication linked to Indian intelligence agency RAW—prompts serious scrutiny over potential biases and alignment with India-based networks.

Critics argue that Lessee was used as a front to publish a report that Singh could not credibly attach her name to.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott calling on Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan

Senate panel orders provinces to transfer all pending Peca cases to NCCIA

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting was informed on Thursday that only nine of around 372 eligible cases nationwide have so far been transferred to the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency despite amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), 2025, granting the agency exclusive authority to investigate offences under the law.

Briefing the committee, chaired by Senator Sarmad Ali, NCCIA official said provincial police continued to retain the vast majority of Peca cases despite the amended law requiring investigations to be handed over to the agency once offences under the act were invoked in a first information report (FIR).

According to the agency, a province-wise breakdown showed 19 Peca-related cases registered in Islamabad, 268 in Punjab, 47 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 21 in Sindh, seven in Balochistan, 10 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and none in Gilgit-Baltistan.

However, officials said only nine cases — all transferred by Sindh Police — had so far been formally handed over to the NCCIA for investigation.

The agency maintained that once Peca provisions were included in an FIR, provincial police no longer had the legal authority to investigate the matter and were required to transfer the case to the NCCIA.

Officials said provincial authorities had informed the agency that the remaining transfers were still under process.



SHAMAKHI (Azerbaijan): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik, held a meeting with Ms. Fatma Varank, Deputy Minister for Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye.

Islamabad, Beijing deepen infrastructure partnership under CPEC framework

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, currently on an official visit to China, met with Li Lei, Vice President of China Railway Electrification Engineering Group Co., Ltd. (EEB), in Beijing to discuss expanding Pakistan-China cooperation in maritime connectivity, railway electrification and transport infrastructure.

EEB is one of China's leading engineering companies specialising in railway electrification, urban transit systems and large-scale transport infrastructure, said a press release issued on Thursday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed opportunities for cooperation in railway electrification, port connectivity, logistics infrastructure, smart transportation systems and other strategic projects to support Pakistan's maritime economy and strengthen regional trade under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Salik terms success of overseas Pakistanis as success of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Thursday unveiled the National Immigration and Welfare Policy 2026, a landmark initiative aimed at transforming Pakistan's labour migration system through safer migration pathways, stronger worker protections, advanced skills development and enhanced support for more than 12 million overseas Pakistanis, whose record remittances of over $41 billion last year played a pivotal role in strengthening the national economy. Addressing the launch ceremony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain described the policy as a historic milestone in Pakistan's migration governance framework and a reflection of the government's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights, welfare and aspirations of every Pakistani seeking opportunities abroad.

He said the policy is designed to place overseas Pakistanis at the centre of national development by ensuring safe and orderly migration, expanding access to globally relevant skills, protecting workers from exploitation, strengthening engagement with the diaspora and facilitating the dignified reintegration of returning migrants. The minister noted that rapid technological advances, demographic shifts and evolving global labour market demands were reshaping economies across the world.

In this increasingly competitive environment, he said, Pakistan must proactively prepare its workforce to seize emerging opportunities and position itself as a leading supplier of skilled human capital. Chaudhry Salik Hussain said the National Immigration and Welfare Policy 2026 would serve as a strategic roadmap for equipping Pakistani workers with the skills, knowledge and protections needed to thrive in international markets while contributing to national prosperity.

President felicitates Egyptian leadership on National Day

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday extended warmest felicitations to the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt Abdel Fattah El Sisi, and the people of Egypt on their National Day, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties for the mutual benefit of the two peoples.

The president, in a statement, said that Pakistan and Egypt enjoyed close and cordial relations, rooted in shared values, mutual trust and long-standing bonds of friendship. He noted that the two countries have maintained a tradition of cooperation and understanding, both bilaterally and in multilateral forums, and continue to work closely on issues of common interest. The growing cooperation between the two nations across diverse fields including trade, investment, education, culture, defence and people-to-people exchanges is very encouraging, the president remarked. President Zardari said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with Egypt.



The continuing heatwave in Gaziantep negatively impacted daily life. Some citizens tried to alleviate the effects of the heat by using hats or fans.

Senate panel for comprehensive, long-term flood management plan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources on Thursday reviewed the prevailing flood situation, preparedness measures and the role of the Federal Flood Commission (FFC).

The FFC briefed the Committee, chaired by Senator Jam Saifullah Khan, that low flood conditions were prevailing at Tarbela, Chashma and Nowshera, while higher inflows of around 275,000 cusecs were reported in the Chenab. While high flood levels were anticipated at Marala on the Chenab, upstream of Mangla on the Jhelum and in the Kabul River. The Committee was also briefed on flood forecasts, river lag times and flash-flood incidents in various areas.



The Committee expressed concern over reports regarding Indian dam releases and emphasized the need for effective early-warning and monitoring systems. It was informed that Pakistan's existing dams could mitigate only around 20 percent of flood flows, while downstream flooding could not be effectively controlled through reservoir operations. The Committee discussed the use of GLOF systems, weather radars, river-flow models and AI-based tools for flood forecasting. It endorsed the development of a comprehensive, centralized dashboard integrating information from federal and provincial departments for timely monitoring, early warning and coordinated response. The Committee also decided to visit NDMA in its next meeting to review its flood monitoring and command-and-control system.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NAB, Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed, addresses participants of the 3rd Senior Management Course from the Sindh Provincial Service at NAB Headquarters.

Khichi for further enhancement of Pak-U.S. friendship through sustained cultural collaboration

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening cultural ties with the United States as he jointly inaugurated the "Let Freedom Ring" American Liberty Bell display with U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Andy Halus at the Lok Virsa Heritage Museum.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the minister congratulated the American nation on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of U.S. Independence and extended heartfelt wishes on behalf of the people of Pakistan. Khichi said people-to-people contacts and cultural cooperation remained among the strongest pillars of the longstanding bilateral relationship between Pakistan and the United States.

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