

# QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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## Ten Generations of Terrorists Cannot Harm Pakistan: COAS Gen Asim Munir

### News Desk:

"Ten generations of terrorists cannot harm Balochistan or Pakistan," said Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir while addressing the first Overseas Pakistanis Convention.

Speaking at the convention, Gen Munir expressed his admiration for the patriotism and passion shown by overseas Pakistanis. "I am deeply moved by the sentiments of Pakistanis living abroad, and I assure you that the feelings of those of us back home are even stronger," he stated.

He described overseas Pakistanis not just as ambassadors of the country but as a radiant light that shines across the world. Responding to concerns about brain drain, he remarked, "Those who speak of brain drain should know this is actually a brain gain—and overseas Pakistanis are the finest example of it."

Gen Munir emphasized the importance of preserving and passing on Pakistan's story to the next generation—a story built on the sacrifices of forefathers. He questioned the intentions of Pakistan's enemies, stating, "Do they really believe a handful of terrorists can decide the fate of our country?"

Reaffirming national unity, the COAS said, "Balochistan is the crown jewel of Pakistan's destiny," and added that no power could harm Pakistan as long as the courageous people of this nation stand with their armed forces.



He also praised Pakistan's natural wealth, calling it a divine gift for which the nation must remain thankful.

He urged unity and resilience, stating, "Together, we are sending a clear message—whichever stands in the way of Pakistan's progress, we will remove that obstacle together."

Addressing the overseas community, Gen Munir said, "Wherever you live, never forget that your heritage is one of high

values, a noble ideology, and rich civilization."

He declared that Pakistanis do not fear adversity and have never bowed before hardship, reaffirming the commitment to uphold national pride and honor. "Our martyrs are held in the highest esteem, and their sacrifices are eternal—we will never let their legacy be forgotten."

On Kashmir, Gen Munir reiterated, "Kashmir was, is, and will always remain the jugular vein of

Pakistan." He also expressed solidarity with the people of Gaza, saying, "The hearts of Pakistanis beat with the oppressed Muslims of Gaza."

Concluding his address, the Army Chief affirmed, "The journey of Pakistan's development continues. The question is not whether Pakistan will progress, but how fast."

The session ended with the resounding slogan, "Pakistan Zindabad!"

## 3 Balochistan Constabulary Personnel Martyred in Mastung Blast, CM Strongly Condemns Attack

**From Our Correspondent:** MASTUNG: powerful explosion near a Balochistan Constabulary vehicle on Dasht Road in Mastung claimed the lives of three personnel and left two others injured on Tuesday.

According to police officials, the blast occurred near Khand Mehsori and was carried out using a remote-controlled improvised explosive device (IED) hidden in a motorcycle.

The Balochistan Constabulary officers were returning from duty when they were targeted.

Rescue teams and security forces rushed to the scene and shifted the martyred and

injured personnel to a nearby hospital for medical treatment.



The area was cordoned off, and a search operation has

been launched to trace the attackers.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti strongly condemned the attack and expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives. He assured the families of the martyred that the government stands with them in this difficult hour.

"Those behind this cowardly act of terrorism will not be spared. We will bring the perpetrators to justice," he stated.

The Chief Minister reaffirmed the provincial government's resolve to continue the fight against terrorism and said that such attacks would not shake the morale of security forces.

## Reko Diq Shareholders Greenlight Project, Fluor Selected as EPCM Partner

### News Desk:

**ISLAMABAD:** The Reko Diq Joint Venture has reached a major milestone as shareholders approved the project's updated Feasibility Study and conditionally sanctioned Phase 1 development capital. This approval is contingent on securing up to \$3 billion in limited recourse project financing, paving the way for large-scale construction to begin in 2025. First production is targeted by the end of 2028.

In a strategic move, Fluor Corporation has been appointed as the lead Engineering, Procurement, and Construction Management (EPCM) partner. The company will work in close coordination with the Barrick Owner's Team to deliver one of the world's largest undeveloped copper-gold mining projects, located in Balochistan.

Barrick president and CEO Mark Bristow highlighted the importance of collaboration, stating, "This progress reflects the strength of our partnership with the governments of Balochistan and Pakistan. Fluor's selection adds tremendous value, ensuring we maintain technical excellence, operational discipline, and socio-environmental responsibility."



Fluor will be supported by experienced engineering consultants such as Knight Piésold, PRDW, and Vecturis—firms that have been integral to the Feasibility Study process. Equipment giants Metso, Wirtl, and Komatsu

have also joined the project, supplying critical processing and mining machinery.

"This team brings global expertise in delivering copper projects in complex, remote envi-

ronments—skills that align well with Barrick's global track record," Bristow added. "Our shared focus is not just on operational success but also on uplifting local communities and maximizing local

content." The Reko Diq project is jointly owned by the governments of Pakistan and Balochistan and operated by Barrick Gold Corporation.

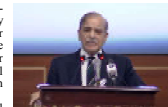
## Govt announces special courts, university quota for overseas Pakistanis

**NEWS DESK:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday announced a special package for overseas Pakistanis, including the establishment of special courts for the swift resolution of their legal cases and a five per cent quota in federal universities.

Addressing the First Annual Overseas Pakistanis' Convention in Islamabad, the PM paid tribute to the contributions of the diaspora, a day after the country reported record monthly remittances of \$4.1 billion.

"Special courts have been set up in Islamabad for speedy disposal of overseas Pakistanis' cases," he said, adding that similar courts would be established in all provinces. The government also plans to facilitate virtual attendance of hearings and enable e-filing for overseas citizens.

The prime minister announced a 5% quota for overseas Pakistanis in federal universities and said 3,000 children of overseas citizens would be given ad-



mission in medical colleges. He also declared a five-year age relaxation in government jobs for overseas applicants.

To improve access to services, an online sale deed registration system has been launched in Punjab, and a special facilitation office has been designated in the province.

Sharif further announced plans to build an international airport in Mirpur, the capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, a long-standing demand of the diaspora. He said 15 civil awards would be given annually to overseas Pakistanis for excellence in their respective fields, beginning each year on April 14.

## Xi Urges China, Vietnam to Jointly Pursue Modernization

**ANOI (Xinhua News):** Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday called for China and Vietnam to jointly pursue modernization and strengthen their strategic partnership, during a meeting with Tran Thanh Man, Chairman of Vietnam's National Assembly.

Highlighting the deep-rooted China-Vietnam friendship, Xi said both countries are at critical junctures in their development and national rejuvenation.

He emphasized the importance of reinforcing confidence in their socialist paths, deepening solidarity, and enhancing coordination amid a turbulent global landscape.

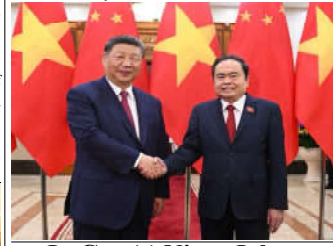
Xi also stressed the significance of continued high-level exchanges, saying political direction is key to the success of both nations. He encouraged regular dialogue between the top leaders, as well as cooperation between legislative bodies and political con-

sultative organizations.

Marking the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties and the China-Vietnam Year of People-to-People Exchanges, Xi urged both sides to promote youth engagement, share governance experiences, and make use of revolutionary heritage to strengthen bilateral bonds.

Tran Thanh Man echoed Xi's sentiments, reaffirming the long-standing camaraderie between the two nations. He praised Xi's visit as a sign of the Chinese leadership's commitment to bilateral ties and welcomed deeper cooperation between the two legislatures.

The Vietnamese National Assembly expressed readiness to implement key consensus reached by both countries' top leaders and support efforts toward mutual prosperity and strengthened people-to-people ties.



## Lt Gen (r) Nigar Johar appointed brand ambassador for women empowerment

### news desk: Lt Gen (Retd)

Nigar Johar Khan has been appointed as the brand ambassador for women empowerment and related initiatives by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI).

The announcement came during an event titled SHE Leads – A Tribute to Women, held at RCCI's Chamber House on Monday. Nigar Johar, the first and only woman in Pakistan to achieve the rank of three-star general, served as the chief guest. Speaking at the ceremony, RCCI President Usman Shaukat praised Johar's career as one defined by courage and barrier-breaking achievements. "She stands as a beacon of hope and aspiration," Usman Shaukat said.

Group Leader Sohail Altaf reaffirmed RCCI's support for inclusive development, calling events like SHE Leads a way to recognise women's role in na-

tional progress. In her keynote address, Nigar Johar lauded RCCI's proactive stance on women's inclusion. "Creating spaces for women to lead, grow, and shape the future is essential," she said.

She also voiced support for RCCI's planned solidarity walk for Palestine, which will be held with participation from the Palestinian ambassador. Born in Swabi, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Nigar Johar joined the Army Medical College in 1981 and graduated in 1985. She later rose to become colonel commandant of the Army Medical Corps.



## Balochistan's Digital Transformation: Charting the Path to 2030

Continued to page 2

## No mention of Imran Khan by US delegation: NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq

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## Pakistan, Japan explore strategic and workforce cooperation

Continued to page 4

## QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

## School Meal Program in Balochistan – A Step Towards Better Education and Nutrition

### Editorial:

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Balochistan Education Department and the World Food Programme (WFP) marks a significant step towards addressing critical issues of malnutrition and low school enrolment in Balochistan.

Under this two-year initiative, 20,000 students in 65 schools will benefit from 5 million nutritious meals, aiming to combat nutritional deficiencies, improve attendance, and enhance learning outcomes.

Balochistan, despite being resource-rich, faces severe developmental challenges. Malnutrition, stunting, and anaemia, particularly among women and children, are widespread.

Hidden hunger—a condition where essential nutrients are lacking—contributes to high child mortality rates. Poverty and unemployment exacerbate these issues, leaving millions of children vulnerable.

Education Minister Rabeela Hameed Khan Durani emphasized the transformative potential of this program to promote enrolment and improving student health.

However, with over 3 million out-of-school children and 1 million enrolled in schools across the province, this initiative must be expanded.

Global organizations like the WFP should extend their support beyond the initial 20,000 students to reach marginalized neighborhoods and backward districts.

Providing free meals to all school-going children could significantly improve enrolment, retention, and overall well-being.

This program not only addresses nutrition but also promotes education as a tool for empowerment in Balochistan. Scaling up such initiatives is essential to secure a healthier, more educated future for the province's children.

## GB: undermined by 'governance'

By Afzal Ali Shigri:

THE government of

Pakistan has promoted

Gilgit-Baltistan as a premier

adventure tourism destination,

showcasing its breathtaking

landscapes and towering

peaks. Ironically, GB is

constitutionally not part

of the country.

Liberated by its

people in 1947 it opted

for Pakistan. Sadly, despite

assuming de facto

control, Pakistan has

held back from according

full constitutional

status to GB, citing the

unresolved implementation

of UN resolutions on

Kashmir to which GB has

been yoked. As a result,

GB continues to be governed

through presidential

decrees, unaccompanied

by parliamentary

representation.

This fragile arrangement,

lacking moral and legal

legitimacy, is upheld

through a local elected

assembly with circumscribed

powers which can be unilaterally

upended by the prime

minister, who remains

unaccountable to the

region's people. To prop

up this artificial governance

structure, national

political parties dominate

the political landscape

through local chapters,

essentially controlling

the regional leadership.

The primary role of these

local leaders is to suppress

growing discontent

against a system that

functions as a form of

colonial rule, offering

only an illusion of self-

governance.

Local governments

(LGs) are manipulated to

maintain the status quo,

resorting to short-

term measures to

suppress dissent.

These regional

variations underscore the

need for strategic

policy adjustments

tailored to the unique

challenges faced by each

region.

Pakistan's police

force operates under

severe financial con-

straints, reducing its ability

to deter crime effectively.

Response times have

been affected, with

reports indicating that

emergency police re-

sponse in high-crime areas

often takes significantly

longer than the global

standard.

The failure of deterrence

in Pakistan can be attributed

to the low probability of

punishment. Economic

evidence suggests that

increasing the certainty of

punishment has a stronger

deterrent effect. The Street

Crime Initiative in the UK

demonstrated that increased

police presence led to a

measurable decline in

crime rates.

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Anjeela Kaynati:

Quetta, once a city

known for its peaceful

ambiance, now faces an

escalating traffic crisis.

Every day, thousands of

commuters endure

hours of gridlock, navigating

congested roads, reckless

drivers, and deteriorating

infrastructure. From

rickshaws and motorcycles

to private cars, the over-

whelming number of vehicles

clogs major roads, while

encroachments and illegal

parking worsen the

situation.

The city's transport

system is on the brink of

collapse, demanding im-

mediate intervention

from both authorities

and residents. This article

explores the root causes

of Quetta's traffic prob-

lems, identifies the most

affected areas, and

outlines urgent solutions

to restore order to the

roads.

The Strain on

Quetta's Road Infra-

structure

Quetta's road network,

originally designed

during the colonial era,

was never intended to

accommodate the city's

rapid population growth

and rising number of

vehicles. Although the

city's infrastructure was

built after the 1935 earth-

quake, its road capacity

has remained largely un-

changed, struggling to

support over 1.2 million

residents and the thou-

sands of vehicles added

each year.

Key roads such as

Jinnah Road, Sariah

Road, Liaquat Bazaar,

and Zarghoon Road are

becoming perpetual

bottlenecks, choked by

the constant influx of

vehicles in the city. These

roads, which were once

efficient, now face severe

congestion, leading to

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## Balochistan High Court Disposes of Petition Seeking BYC Leaders' Release

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court has disposed of a petition seeking the release of Balochistan Yekheh Committee (BYC) leader Dr. Mahrang Baloch detained under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO), directing the petitioner to first approach the relevant forum.

A bench comprising Acting Chief Justice Ejaz Swati and Justice Amir Rana announced the reserved verdict in the case titled Nadia Baloch vs Government of Balochistan.

The court ruled that the petitioner must initially seek redressal from the Ministry of Interior, the appropriate authority for such



matters, before approaching the high court.

The ruling marks a critical development in the ongoing legal

proceedings related to the recent detentions of BYC leaders, as their supporters continue to demand their immediate release.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chairing a high-level meeting to discuss the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) 2026-2035 for Pakistan. The ADB delegation was led by Country Director Emma

## Contrary to US, Pakistan ranks third in number of int' students studying in China

ISLAMABAD (INP): Contrary to the US, Pakistan ranks third in the number of international students currently studying in China with more than 28,023 students.

A total of 492,185 international students from 196 countries studied in China, last year, up 0.62 per cent from the previous year.

The official data shows that China has become the top education destination for Pakistani students as out of all of them enrolled in Chinese universities, around 7,034 are studying on scholarships, says a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday.

The number of Pakistani students has risen in China mainly because of a series of preferential policies offered by the Chinese government after the launch of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a pilot project of Belt and Road Initiative.

Currently, 61,56 Pakistani students are studying in PhD, 3,600 in Masters, 11,100 in Bachelors and 3,000 in Short Term Exchange Programs across China. Pakistani students are also studying Chinese language, engineering, medical, computer science and various other fields. Various scholarships are provided by the Chinese government to lure international students over - most notably, students from the Belt and Road Initiative participating countries and regions have been facilitated to obtain scholarships under the Chinese Government Scholarship - Silk Road Program.

China has also launched a scholarship program for Pakistani students, including those from Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), for the academic year 2025-26.

The scholarships offer opportunities to pursue undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs, as well as conduct research at Chinese universities.

The report stated, amid the US's erratic mania that has left high and dry hundreds of Pakistani students enrolled in American universities by evoking their valid educational visas on the pretext of national security, China stands firm to be exclusively wide open for Pakistani as well as international students offering them stable, smooth and world-class quality knowledge at par excellence.

Trump administration is always notorious for its topsy-turvy and perilous steps irrespective of friends or foes around the globe. Now not set on an educational spectrum for international students. More than 500 international students including Pakistani students have had their US visas revoked in recent weeks as the administration of President Donald Trump intensifies enforcement on student visa holders.

The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) has officially announced the cessation of the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (Global UGRAD) for Pakistani students last Tuesday.

The decision, communicated by the U.S. Department of State, marked the end of the program after 15 years of fostering educational and cultural exchange between the two nations.

The Global UGRAD Program was a significant platform for Pakistani students to gain academic exposure, leadership skills, and cultural experiences in the United States. Speaking at weekly media briefings in Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) Spokesperson

Shafiqat Ali Khan said student exchange programs were vital for strengthening bilateral relations, fostering educational and technological collaboration, and deepening people-to-people ties.

Coupled with the blockade on humanitarian aid, these actions reflect a deliberate strategy to prolong suffering and entrench conflict.

He urged the international

community to take decisive action to hold Israel accountable and protect Palestinian civilians from further violence.

The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's call for an immediate halt to the hostilities by Israeli occupying forces.

He also reiterated support for the two-State solution, with a viable, independent and sovereign State of Palestine on pre-June 1967 borders with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

Similarly, the University of Toronto has seen a significant increase in interest from international and Pakistani students suffering the US insidious educational policies.

On the last Friday, a coalition of 16 university associations formally requested clarity from the Departments of Homeland Security and State, after receiving uncoordinated notices asking some students to "self-deport."



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the Federal Cabinet Meeting.

## Pakistan, Japan explore strategic and workforce cooperation

ISLAMABAD (INP): A meeting of the Japanese Business Delegation with the Pakistan-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group, convened by Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto and organized by Ms. Misbah Khar, Secretary of the Group, was held today at Parliament House.

Senator Nadeem Bhutto warmly welcomed the Japanese business community, including Members of the Japanese Parliament, and emphasized the importance of establishing a strategic partnership between Pakistan and Japan for future cooperation.

Highlighting Japan's current labor shortage—estimated at 3.4 million workers in 2023—Senator Bhutto proposed that Pakistan's youth can play a valuable role in addressing this critical challenge. He further underscored the potential of Pakistan's skilled youth to contribute to the global economy, particularly in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, as well as in Japan's economic and international platforms.

While acknowledging Japan's generous humanitarian assistance during the 2022 floods in Pakistan,

Senator Bhutto expressed gratitude and optimism for strengthening bilateral relations.

He also appreciated the long-standing support extended by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), noting its substantial contributions in addressing Pakistan's developmental needs.

He specifically highlighted JICA's significant support for Pakistan's Polio Eradication Programme, including the provision of grants, concessional loans, and the construction of educational facilities across the country.

Senator Bhutto further recalled the historical roots of Pakistan-Japan relations, tracing back to the San Francisco Peace Conference in 1951.

He emphasized that the Pakistan-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group serves as a foundation for fostering trust and enhancing collaboration. He pointed out that Pakistan could greatly benefit from Japan's expertise in disaster management, climate change, manufacturing, digital transformation, and other areas of mutual concern.

Underscoring the shared commitment to peace and stability, Senator Bhutto mentioned the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at advancing bilateral dialogue, en-

hancing defense cooperation, and facilitating the exchange of specified skilled workers.

He also appreciated Japan's role in supporting the establishment of weather forecasting centers in Pakistan and cited the Pakistan-Japan Cultural Association (PJCA) as a significant contributor to strengthening cultural ties between the two nations.

The Japanese Business Delegation, while expressing appreciation for the warm welcome, shared similar sentiments.

They conveyed their interest in expanding trade, human resource cooperation, and partnerships to build stronger relations with Pakistan.

The delegation noted that many in Japan remain unaware of the talent and potential present in Pakistan and stressed the need to bridge the cultural gap between the two countries.

They highlighted the availability of white-collar jobs in Japan, particularly in the IT, transportation, and accommodation sectors, but acknowledged that the language barrier poses a challenge.

To address this, they shared their initiative of engaging Japanese language instructors to provide training.

## Punjab govt approves draft of 'Punjab Acid Control Act 2025'

LAHORE (INP): The government of Punjab has taken a landmark step to prevent acid attacks by approving the draft of the first-of-its-kind law in Pakistan, the 'Punjab Acid Control Act 2025'.

According to a spokesperson for the Punjab Home Department, the new law classifies the sale of acid without a license as a non-bailable offense.

Under the legislation, illegal sale of acid in Punjab will result in up to 3 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs-500,000.

Furthermore, even licensed sellers will face penalties for negligence, which include 2 to 5 years of imprisonment and fines ranging from Rs 200,000 to Rs 1,000,000.

The spokesperson added that under the new law, victims of acid attacks will also be entitled to compensation. The legislation mandates that during packaging, transport and sale of acid, clear safety instructions must be displayed on the container.

The packaging must include details such as the type of acid, volume, quantity, license holder information, and must display a red danger symbol.

The spokesperson noted that previously, there were no laws regulating the transport, storage, purchase or sale of acid. Considering the irreversible damage caused to victims of acid attacks, the government has introduced the new law to regulate the acid trade.

The proposed Act regulates 30 types of acid, and authority to issue licenses for acid-related businesses has been given to deputy commissioners.

The spokesperson said that the Act was initially introduced as a Private Member Bill by MPA Hina Pervaiz Butt.

The final draft was prepared by the Punjab Home Department and the Law Department on the direction of the Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

The Standing Committee has approved the Punjab Acid Control Act 2025, which will now be presented for final approval in the ongoing session of the Punjab Assembly. Once passed, the Home Department Punjab will implement the law throughout the province.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani Tuesday held a meeting with a high-level delegation of the International Finance Corporation.

## Sindh requests to halt construction of new Greater Thal Canal

HYDERABAD, April 15 (INP): The Sindh government submitted an application to the Federal Ministry of Water Resources demanding the government to halt implementation of the Greater Thal Canal Phase II.

The Sindh government filed this application in the Council of Common Interest (CCI) in 2024. The federal minister of water resources said that six canals will be constructed under the Green Pakistan Initiative.

IRSA issued a certificate in May 2008 for availability of water in May 2008 and was

constructed with an amount of Rs 10.17 billion.

In 2010 the above-mentioned canal was handed over to the Punjab government. Last year, permission to construct new canals was granted by ECNEC, for which CCI approval was mandatory.

The Punjab government wanted water resources for the construction of the Thal Canal in the second phase of the project.

IRSA issued an availability of water certificate for the construction of a canal in 2002. WAPDA completed this project with an amount of Rs

17.8 billion.

The canal was handed over to the Sindh government after its completion in 2022, while in February 2024, GOC suspended the second phase of the canals.

Balochistan issued the availability of a water certificate in 2003 for the Kachi Canal, which was completed in 2017. An amount of Rs 80.2 billion was released in March 2025 for the completion of the project.

WAPDA restored a limit of 500 cusec of water to all those areas that were affected by flooding.



ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Ameer Hafiz Naeem Ur Rehman addressing a press conference.

## Pakistan condemns bombing of Baptist Hospital in Gaza

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has strongly condemned the bombing of Baptist Hospital in Gaza by Israeli occupation forces.

In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafiqat Ali Khan said this attack, part of a pattern of targeting medical facilities, constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

He said the attack which occurred on Palm Sunday, a sacred occasion for Christians, under-

scores Israel's blatant disregard for religious sanctity and civilian lives.

Shafiqat Ali Khan said Israel's relentless assaults have crippled Gaza's healthcare system, depriving critically ill patients of vital medical care.

Coupled with the blockade on humanitarian aid, these actions reflect a deliberate strategy to prolong suffering and entrench conflict.

He urged the international

community to take decisive action to hold Israel accountable and protect Palestinian civilians from further violence.

The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's call for an immediate halt to the hostilities by Israeli occupying forces.

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