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Rs.10.00 Vol.VII:No:183
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QUETTA VOICE

Tuesday 14, April, 2026



Balochistan Launches Digital Monitoring for Field Officers

Web Desk:

The Government of Balochistan has announced the launch of a cutting-edge digital monitoring system aimed at improving the attendance, performance, and accountability of field officers across the province.

The new system will feature a live location-based attendance mechanism, allowing authorities to monitor officers in real time and ensure their presence at assigned duty stations.

The decision was finalized during a high-level review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, where officials assessed the progress of ongoing development projects.

Departmental secretaries presented detailed briefings on project timelines, quality standards, challenges, and implementation strategies.

Strict Action Against Officers Absent for More Than 10 Days

Emphasizing strict timelines, the Chief Minister directed that all ongoing development schemes must be completed before June 2026, warning that delays or negligence will not be tolerated.

He instructed district officers to remain present in the field rather than staying in the provincial capital, Quetta, and to ensure that projects are executed efficiently and in line with approved standards.

Highlighting the importance of field supervision, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that effective monitoring is critical for timely resolution of public issues and successful completion of development initiatives.

He ordered strict action against officers found absent from their assigned areas for more than 10 days, stressing zero tolerance for poor performance.

Warning to Officials Responsible for Inefficiency, Delays, or Negligence

The Chief Minister stated that the digital monitoring system will enhance governance, improve transparency, and strengthen accountability within the provincial administration.

He noted that the initiative will ensure efficient use of public funds while accelerating the pace of development in Balochistan.

Reaffirming his government's commitment, he

said that transparency, quality assurance, and timely completion of development projects remain top priorities. He warned that officials responsible for inefficiency, delays, or negligence will face strict consequences.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister also appreciated the role of Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan for consistently holding Secretaries' Committee meetings and driving reform efforts. He directed authorities to further strengthen the digital monitoring framework to ensure fast-track and sustainable development across the province.

PMD predicts rainfall in upper parts of country from April 16 to 19

NEWS DESK:

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Monday said that the upper parts of the country were expected to receive rain and thunderstorms from April 16 to 19.

In a press release, the PMD said a westerly wave was likely to approach the country's north-western parts on April 16 (Thursday) and likely to persist in the upper parts till April 19 (Sunday).

Under the influence of the weather system, rain-windstorm/thunderstorm with isolated heavy falls were likely in areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

In KP, rain-windstorm/thunderstorm with isolated heavy falls/hailstorm (snowfall over mountains) was expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kalam, Shangla, Buner, Kohistan, Malakand, Battagram, Manshera, Abbottabad, Balakot, Haripur, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Bajaur, Mohmand, Swabi, Charsadda, Kohat, Kurram, Khyber and Hangu from the evening of April 16 to April 19 with occasional gaps.

"Light rain wind/thunderstorm is likely at isolated places in Orakzai, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan and Waziristan on April 17 and 18," the PMD added.

In GB, "rain-wind/thunderstorm with moderate to isolated heavy falls (snowfall over the mountains)" was forecasted in Diamer, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Guanche and Shigar during this period with occasional gaps.

For AJK, the PMD predicted "rain-windstorm/thunderstorm with isolated hailstorm" in Neelum Valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kothi, Bhimber and Mirpur from April 17 to 19 with occasional gaps.

Moderate to isolated heavy falls were expected on April 18 and 19, the Met Office added.

According to PMD, "rain-windstorm/thunderstorm" was expected in Quetta, Ziarat, Chaman, Peshin, Qila Abdallah, Qila Saifullah, Nushki, Sherani, Musakhel, Loralai, Harnai, Zhob, Barikhan and Loralai on April 17 and 18.

It further said "rain-windstorm/thunderstorm with isolated hailstorm" was expected in Murree, Galliaty, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Khushab, Sargodha, Minawali, Faisalabad, Jhang, Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Narowal from April 16 to 18.

During the same period, "windstorm/thunderstorm may occur in Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Layyah, Bhakkar, Khushab, Noorpur Thal, Multan and Khanewal", the PMD said.

Meanwhile, the upper parts of Sindh were expected to see windstorms or "dust-raising winds" from April 16 to 18, according to the Met Office.

PMD warns of possible landslides, flash floods.

Listing the possible impacts, the PMD warned that landslides may occur in vulnerable areas of upper KP, GB and AJK from April 17 (Friday) to April 19 (Sunday).

Due to heavy rains, flash floods were expected in vulnerable areas of upper KP (Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Batgram, Chitral) GB and Kashmir (Neelum Valley), the PMD stated.

It cautioned that hailstorms or windstorms and lightning may damage weak structures, such as electricity poles, billboards and solar panels.

Noting that hailstorms or windstorms may damage standing crops in KP and upper Punjab, the Met Office advised farmers to manage their crops according to the prevailing weather conditions.

It further urged tourists to remain extra cautious and avoid unnecessary travelling during the forecast period.

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has ordered a full-scale inquiry into the alleged killing of a young man by police in Quetta, calling the incident "deeply tragic" and assuring that the truth will not be hidden. Addressing the provincial assembly, the chief minister acknowledged the seriousness of the case and confirmed that the government had already taken notice. "We will carry out a thorough investigation, and if there has been any mistake on our part, we will not attempt to cover it up," he said.

Initial findings suggest the victim may have been innocent, though officials are still examining how the situation unfolded. Authorities are investigating whether the incident resulted from a misjudgment by police personnel or if the individual failed to stop when signaled. A detailed report is



expected within days and will be shared with the assembly.

Bugti admitted that operational errors can occur in such situations but stressed that the loss of an innocent life is irreversible. In a move aimed at providing relief to the grieving family, he announced that the government would offer financial compensation, take responsibility for the education of the victim's children, and provide employment assistance to an unemployed brother.

He also highlighted that, in accordance with local Baloch traditions, the government would personally approach the bereaved family to seek reconciliation and support.

An internal investigation into the conduct of the police officials involved is already underway to determine accountability.

The chief minister reiterated that justice would be ensured and that the findings of the inquiry would be made public.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

SBKWU Teacher Recruitment Scandal Raises Alarms for Pakistan's Education System



Editorial:

Serious questions have emerged over the secondary teachers recruitment process conducted by Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University (SBKWU), triggering widespread concern about merit, transparency, and accountability in Balochistan's education system.

It is essential to clarify a point that has caused public confusion: the advertised posts were NOT for SBKWU itself. The university was only assigned the responsibility of conducting tests and interviews for Secondary School Teacher recruitment across Balochistan.

According to initial findings, hundreds of candidates who had failed were allegedly declared successful through the teacher recruitment process.

Given the scale of the exercise, involving

thousands of applicants for secondary teaching positions across the province, such irregularities cannot reasonably be described as clerical mistakes.

The magnitude strongly suggests organised manipulation, carried out with the involvement or protection of influential individuals rather than the actions of a single official.

This issue strikes at the heart of education governance in Balochistan. Secondary school teachers shape the academic foundation of students, and any compromise on merit directly damages learning outcomes.

In Balochistan, where literacy rates remain among the lowest in the country, flawed teacher recruitment further deepens an already critical education crisis.

Reports that deserving candidates were sidelined only intensify public frustration and mistrust.

All anti-corruption and accountability institutions must take immediate notice.

A transparent, independent, and time-bound investigation is necessary to identify those responsible for manipulating the recruitment process conducted under SBKWU's authority. Accountability must reach every individual involved, regardless of status or influence.

This is not merely an administrative controversy; it is a matter of justice and the future of Balochistan's education system. If credibility in teacher recruitment collapses, public trust in institutions will collapse with it.

Geographical location, looming threat of natural calamities including earthquakes,

Quetta City, Proposed Master Plan

Abdul Latif Kakar : The mountain-ringed, Quetta city needs a comprehensive master plan to ensure the solution of problems faced by citizens and

drought, and floods, the need for making a comprehensive master plan for Quetta city is growing. Rather, it is now indispensable to make this plan, before

near foothills, the soil consists of sandy loam, mixed with pebbles and rock fragments and is suitable for vegetation. In the Hanna val-

ley, the greater part of the valley floor is covered by barren rock about crops of low relief and dry mala bed. The soil is restricted to the narrow banks and low terraces along the mainstream.

Soil erosion As far as soil erosion is concerned, both stream erosion of soil and wind erosion is occurring in the district. The stream ero-

Current and future population trends need to be reviewed. Transportation, mass transit, and city traffic management and monitoring system,



address the mega question of climate change. Through the proposed plan, scarce resources would be transparently and rationally utilized to make it a better living city in the country. For the first in the history of the province, the Urban Planning Development (UPD) under the leadership of chief minister Balochistan, Jam

Kamal Khan has started the preparation of the master plan.

Geographical location, looming threat of natural calamities including earthquakes,

it is already late. Geography and Soil

Four main units may describe the soils of Quetta i.e. (1) piedmont plains (very deep and well-drained soil) (2) piedmont basins (3) salinity and alkalinity (4) gravelly piedmont fans and aprons bordering the mountains and plains.

The central part of the Quetta valley is covered by a soil that ranges from sandy loam to silt loam. This type of soil is good for crop production. At the margin of the valley

leaves, the greater part of the valley floor is covered by barren rock about crops of low relief and dry mala bed. The soil is restricted to the narrow banks and low terraces along the mainstream.

However, the nature of the soil in Belli is silty clay which is not suitable for cultivation. Similarly, the Chiltan surface has soils that are predominantly gravelly loams. The vegetation on these soils is mainly Haloxylon which provides poor grazing for livestock.

Soil erosion As far as soil erosion is concerned, both stream erosion of soil and wind erosion is occurring in the district. The stream ero-

Such streams are Sariah Lora, Hanna river, Habib Nallah near Hudda. Wind erosion occurs in the valley. This all requires a review of the existing plans and documents and preparation of the digitized base map of Quetta with a protocol for its updating. A review of existing policies, procedures, plans studies conducted by donor agencies, and other relevant data

housing commercial, and industrial land use evaluation of the existing condition of buildings and housing schemes should be thoroughly reviewed. To be precise, the city needs a master plan on an emergency basis to address the looming threat of climate change and natural disasters.

Quetta City, Proposed Master Plan

The author is currently serving as the secretary urban planning and development department government of Balochistan

Quetta has a better environment, rich culture, manageable population

Amjad Rashid

Quetta is not a case of deprivation related to lack of resources, not a case of unemployment, not a case of climate change, and not even a case of poverty. It's a true and real case of the richness of culture, environment, climate, natural resources, and manageable human population. Unfortunately our planners, thinkers, decision-makers proved to be very selfish and greedy.

In Quetta, we had municipal water posts (I wish I can get the pictures). Quetta was a natural habitat with a small population of trees, flowers. The city had few streets with few vehicles and dynamic socio-political harmony.

We did establish universities but abandoned knowledge

Unfortunately, global and regional influences badly affected the capital with less modernization and more adversity. We did establish a university, but abandoned consciousness, we did build plazas, but without building codes. If we look back at the pictures of Quetta of the sixties. It was like Zurich but evolved as little Karachi or Mumbai. Transformed from little London to huge slums (full of garbage and filth). Bad governance, poor education, corruption, and poor planning converted Quetta into an ugly place.

We don't see green Koh e Mur Daar a multi-lingual culture which was its beauty and uniqueness has vanished and replaced by the prac-

tion. Every day in the morning when I look at the sleeping beauty of Quetta I feel that the mother of Quetta (sleeping beauty) has become

bricks and cement which after few more years will look like a dumping place of garbage. We must listen and learn from our heroes like Rehman

its true beauty and culture.

Climate change poses a serious threat to the developing world Environment, Cli-

Now we from Adams to twenty-first-century experienced, slavery; the industrial revolution, conflict of ideologies, various version of world orders

chambeli, bitakh, surkahi and places like hanna, thandi Sarak, and associated culture of art and poetry. Masses of our beloved

motherland is demanding the attention of our international commitments. It's a matter of our survival. We need a green economy,



nces influenced by regional inhuman and unnatural drama. We lost our green Quetta with wild roses which was its aroma and identity.

Balochistan and Quetta need our attention

Balochistan in general and Quetta, in particular, need our at-

sick and looking toward her siblings for help and cure.

Our water level reduced, our population increases, our poor justice system, and our greed for material gain will never make it a little London but will change its fate like the city full of garbage supported/fixd by

Baba, Atta shad, Asher Jalili and take their vision as guiding torch. Quetta does not need more engineers but needs Thinkers, guides who should work to replace the current citizenry struggling for self-interest with the soft power and values of Quetta which can bring back

mate change, global warming, deforestation and desertification, and many such terms were alien to humanity and especially to developing world like Pakistan. We were used to singing and telling stories to our siblings (younger generation) about the kindness of nature.

driving to save and benefit humanity. But all our efforts to take humanity to its peak are bring ended up as a disaster. The temperature of the motherland is increasing. habitat of Balochistan and our piece of Heaven (once called as 'miss it's jangly Gulab, chakore,

Balochistan facing a host of issues

First-time after seventy-two years and since the establishment of Balochistan Province, its habitats are frequently faced by challenges like conservation.

In the context of the above-mentioned scenario, our beloved

green industry, green employment, green politics, and above all green development.

This situation calls for a committed social, political and religious commitment to rebuild and reclaim of our title. Quetta has a better environment, rich culture, manageable population

US military to begin blockade of Iranian ports on Monday

NEWS DESK: The US military said it would begin a blockade of all Iranian ports on Monday, after talks between the warring sides in Pakistan failed to produce an agreement, with President Donald Trump blaming the Islamic republic's refusal to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

Trump had announced on social media he would blockade the strategic Strait of Hormuz trading route that he has been demanding Tehran fully reopen, after his vice president, JD Vance left negotiations with an Iranian delegation in Islamabad on Sunday.

The stall in talks dashed global hopes of a deal to permanently end the war that has killed thousands and thrown the global economy into turmoil since it began in late February.

As negotiations teams flew out, mediator Pakistan said it would keep facilitating their dialogue and has called on both sides to honour the fragile two-week ceasefire struck last week that experts said could be put at risk by any maritime military



blockade. Monday.

The blockade will be enforced impartially against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas, including all Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, US Central Command said in a statement, adding it would begin at 1400 GMT on

Monday. US forces would not impede vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz to and from non-Iranian ports, it added.

Trump on his Truth Social platform confirmed the US military's statement, a more limited operation than envisaged in his earlier post

that asserted all ships trying to enter or exit the strait would be blocked. Iran's Revolutionary Guards had warned before the US military announcement that they had full control of traffic through Hormuz and would trap any challenger "in a deadly vortex".

In his lengthy social

media post, Trump said on Sunday his goal was to clear the strait of mines and reopen it to all shipping, but that Iran must not be allowed to profit from controlling the waterway.

"Effective immediately, the United States Navy, the Finest in the World, will begin the process of BLOCKAD-

ING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz," Trump said. "Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL!!" Oil prices — which tumbled last week after the temporary ceasefire — jumped around eight percent Monday, with both key WTI and Brent

contracts topping \$100 a barrel. Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who led Tehran's delegation in Pakistan, said Tehran would "not bow to any threats" from Washington, while navy chief Shahram Irani called Trump's blockade threat "ridiculous".

After the highest-level US-Iran talks since the 1979 Islamic Revolution failed to deliver a deal, Iranian foreign ministry Abbas Araghchi blamed "maximalism, shifting goalposts, and (a) blockade" that prevented an agreement he said they were "just inches away from".

Trump told reporters on Sunday he was ambivalent on the prospect of talks continuing with Iran. "I don't care if they come back or not. If they don't come back, I'm fine," he said.

"Final and best offer" Tehran has already been restricting traffic through the strait — a key route for global oil and gas shipments — while allowing some vessels serving friendly countries such as China to pass. "Nicole Grajewski, an assistant professor at Sciences Po's Center for Interna-

tional Research, said a US blockade was "not a minor coercive signal" but could rather be considered an effective resumption of the war.

The US military said Saturday that two US Navy warships had transited the strait to begin clearing it of mines, a claim Tehran denied.

But the strait was far from the only friction point jettisoning global efforts led by Pakistan to end the war, which began on when Israel and the US launched strikes on Iran, which retaliated by attacking Gulf and Israeli cities.

The US delegation in Islamabad — led by Vance, special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner — was frustrated by Iran's refusal to give up what it called its right to a nuclear programme.

"I have always said, right from the beginning, and many years ago, IRAN WILL NEVER HAVE A NUCLEAR WEAPON!" Trump later posted. Vance told reporters in Islamabad that Washington had made Tehran its "final and best offer," adding "We'll see if the Iranians accept it."

Trump says 'not a big fan' of Pope Leo after his anti-war message

NEWS DESK: US President Donald Trump told reporters on Sunday that he is "not a big fan" of Pope Leo XIV, after the global leader of Catholics made a plea for peace amid the war in the Middle East.

The 70-year-old American pope publicly implored leaders on Saturday to end the violence, telling worshippers at St Peter's Basilica: "Enough of the idolatry of self and money! Enough of the display of power! Enough of war!"

"I'm not a big fan of Pope Leo. He's a very liberal person, and he's a man who doesn't believe in stopping crime," Trump told reporters at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland.

He accused the pontiff of "toying with a country that wants a nuclear weapon."

Trump later doubled down on his comments to reporters

with a post on Truth Social, saying: "I don't want a Pope who thinks it's OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon."

"Pope Leo is WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy," he said.

The president added that Leo had only been elected "because he was American, and they thought that would be the best way to deal with President Donald J. Trump."

"If I wasn't in the White House, Leo wouldn't be in the Vatican," Trump later posted on an AI-generated image of himself.

In the image, the president appears dressed in red and white robes as he cures a man with his healing hand. The American flag is shown over his shoulder.

Trump and the White House have previously shared AI-generated images, including

one that showed the president dressed as the pope.

Rejecting a rift Washington and the Vatican have rejected reports of a rift. On Friday, a Vatican official denied reports that a top Pentagon official gave the church's envoy to the United States a "bitter lecture" over Pope Leo's criticisms of the Trump administration.

The story in the Free Press — which the White House has already dismissed as "distorted" — reported that Cardinal Christophe Pierre was summoned in January to the Pentagon, where he was given a dressing-down by US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Elbridge Colby.

The military official reportedly told the cardinal that the United States "has the military power to do whatever it wants — and that the

Church had better take its side."

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said in a statement "the account media outlets regarding this meeting does not correspond to the truth in any way."

While both parties insist the meeting was cordial, the Holy See and the White House have openly been at odds over the Trump administration's headline mass deportation campaign — which the pope called "inhuman" — and the use of military force in the Middle East and Venezuela.

When Trump made genocidal threats against Iran — saying the pope called "inhuman" — and the use of military force in the Middle East and Venezuela.

Earlier this month, Pope Leo hailed the news of a ceasefire between the United States and Iran as a "sign of real hope."

But peace talks between the United States and Iran, held in Islamabad, ended abruptly and without a resolution on Saturday, with US Vice President JD Vance telling reporters after a marathon session of talks that Washington has delivered its "final and best offer".



Australia appoints woman to lead its army for the first time

NEWS DESK: Australia on Monday said a woman would lead its army for the first time in history, as part of a reshuffle of the country's defence force leadership.

Lieutenant General Susan Coyle, the current chief of joint capabilities, will become chief of army in July, the government said in a statement. She will replace Lieutenant General Simon Stuart.

Coyle's appointment comes as Australia's military seeks to boost the number of female officers in its ranks. It faces a wave of allegations of systemic sexual harassment and discrimination.

"From July, we will have the first ever female chief of army in the Australian Army's 125-year history," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement.

Defence Minister Richard Marles called



Coyle's appointment a "deeply historic moment". "As Susan said to me, you cannot be what you cannot see," he said.

"Susan's achievements will be deeply significant to women who are serving in the Australian Defence Force today and women who are thinking about serving in the Australian Defence Force in the future."

Coyle, 55, enlisted in the military in 1987

and has held a number of senior command roles. She will be the first woman to lead any service branch of the military, Marles said.

Women currently make up around 21 percent of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and 18.5pc of senior leadership roles. The ADF has set a target of 25pc of overall participation for women by 2030.

Last October, a class action lawsuit was filed against the ADF al-

leging it failed to protect thousands of female officers from systematic sexual assault, harassment and discrimination.

The government on Monday also appointed Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, the current chief of the navy, as the head of the ADF, succeeding Admiral David Johnston.

The current deputy chief of navy, Rear Admiral Matthew Buckley, will replace Hammond as head of the branch.

Israel seeks to declare Turkiye 'new enemy', says FM Fidan after Netanyahu's remarks on Erdogan

NEWS DESK: Israel "cannot live without an enemy" and its government is now trying to portray Turkiye as one, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Monday.

"After Iran, Israel cannot live without an enemy," Fidan said in a televised interview with Anadolu Agency.

"We see that not only Netanyahu's administration but also some figures in the opposition — though not all — are seeking to declare Turkiye the new enemy," he said.

"This is a new development in Israel... turning into a state strategy," he added.

Turkiye, a fierce critic of Israel, had joined diplomatic efforts with Pakistan and Egypt aimed at de-escalation during the US-Israeli war on Iran.

Tensions between Turkiye and Israel have steadily escalated since the latter's war on Gaza erupted following

Hamas's Oct 7, 2023 attacks.

Netanyahu "described as the Hitler of our time," Turkiye.

The dispute entered a new phase over the weekend after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned his US counterpart Donald Trump of "possible provocations and sabotage" that could jeopardise an initial ceasefire arrangement in the US-Israeli war on Iran.

Subsequently, on Saturday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sharply criticised Erdogan in a post on X and vowed Tel Aviv would continue to confront Tehran and its regional allies.

Later on Saturday, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz also lashed out at Erdogan on X, calling him a "paper tiger".

Erdogan "who did not respond to missile fire from Iran into Turkish territory and has proven to be a paper ti-

ger, is now fleeing into the realm of anti-Semitism and calling for show trials in Turkiye against Israel's political and military leadership," Katz said on X.

The Turkish foreign ministry then slammed Netanyahu for remarks targeting Erdogan, saying the remarks were a result of "the discomfort caused by the truths we have consistently voiced on every platform".

"Netanyahu, who has been described as the Hitler of our time due to the crimes he has committed, is a well-known figure with a clear track record,"

the ministry said in a statement.

It contended that Netanyahu's "current objective is to undercut ongoing peace negotiations and continue his expansionist policies in the region".

"Failing this, he risks being tried in his own country and is likely to be sentenced to imprisonment," it added.



New York's Zohran Mamdani touts 'socialist' plans after 100 days in office

NEWS DESK: New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani marked his 100th day in office on Sunday with a rally to tout early successes and vow to follow through on his unabashedly "socialist" agenda.

"I know there are many who use 'socialist' as a dirty word, something to be ashamed of," the 34-year-old told a packed room in Queens.

"They can try all they want, but we will not be ashamed of using government to fight for the many, not simply the few," he said.

Mamdani pointed to a program to fill city street potholes — will open next year — and providing free childcare for young children.

He has also reformed city committees that could pave the way for freezing rent increases in the coming months.

Free bus rides, however, are still under discussion with New York State authorities, he said.

The mayor's approval rating, according to two polls released this week, stood at 48 per cent with New York residents and 43pc among voters.

According to the Emerson College Polling/PIX11 survey of voters, 54pc praise

his initiatives on childcare and 49pc on housing costs.

However, the survey also shows that 68pc of Hispanic voters and 58pc of Black voters believe the city is "on the wrong track".

Although highly critical of Donald Trump during his campaign, Mamdani has apparently struck up a cordial relationship with the Republican US president, visiting the White House twice in recent months.

According to a Marist Poll, 59pc of voters according to New Yorkers believe he has struck the "right balance" with Trump.

Pakistan acts as peace messenger in Iran-US talks says Hanif Abbasi

RAWALPINDI (INP): Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi has said that Pakistan has played a significant role in facilitating peace talks between Iran and the United States, proving that the country is a messenger of peace.

He stated that such progress should be viewed as a step towards achieving lasting peace, adding that wars cannot sustain the world and peace is the only viable solution.

Speaking to media at Rawalpindi Railway Station, Hanif Abbasi said that it is a matter of pride that Pakistan's national anthem is being heard in Iran, Egypt, and even in the European Union, a distinction he claimed is rarely achieved by any country.

He expressed hope that Pakistan's economy will continue to grow and that ports like Gwadar and Karachi will be upgraded to the point where they will be fully

active hubs of economic activity. He further stated that the people of Pakistan recognize the importance of the country's current role and are appreciating its efforts.

He added that even temporary closures in Rawalpindi and Islamabad were accepted by the public in good spirit as they were in national interest. Referring to Pakistan's strategic position, he said that after conducting

nuclear tests, no country dares to look at Pakistan aggressively, and today the country is recognized as a promoter of peace.

Hanif Abbasi also sent a message to India, advising its leadership to focus on public welfare, claiming that a large portion of the population lacks basic facilities. He further remarked that India should learn from its internal challenges and focus on development.



TANDOALLAH YAR: President Asif Ali Zardari offer condolences on the passing of PPP leader Haji Ghulam Qadir Marri at village Rais Ghulam Qadir Marri.

Agreement can't be reached in a single sitting; consensus reached on several points, says Iran

ISLAMABAD (INP): Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ismail Baghaei has said that the success of the Islamabad talks depends on the United States demonstrating seriousness and good faith, adding that no agreement should be expected from a single meeting.

In a message posted on X, the spokesman said that no one had expected a quick agreement. He noted that the complexity of the issues and circumstances was a key factor, and that some new topics had also been introduced during the talks. He added that Iran would continue its efforts on the diplomatic front to secure its rights and interests. Baghaei said it had been a long and busy day for the Iranian delegation in Islamabad.

Intense negotiations, which began in the morning under Pakistan's serious efforts and mediation, have continued without interruption. During this time, multiple messages and written drafts were exchanged between the parties.

The spokesman stated that discussions covered the Strait of Hormuz, nuclear issues, compensation for war damages, the lifting of sanctions, and a complete end to war in the region. He added that while agreement had been reached on several points, differences of opinion on two or three key issues prevented a comprehensive deal. Consultations and contacts between Iran, Pakistan, and other friendly countries in the region will continue.

"Diplomacy never ends, it is a means of safeguarding national interests," he said.

The spokesman reiterated that success should not be expected from a single round of talks, stressing that the outcome of the diplomatic process depends on the opposing side's seriousness, good faith, and recognition of Iran's legitimate rights and interests.

Balochistan to provide subsidised fibreglass boats to Gwadar fishermen

GWADAR (INP): The Balochistan Fisheries Department has announced the distribution of 92 modern fibreglass boats to low-income fishermen in Gwadar under a provincial subsidy programme, officials said.

The 24-foot vessels, part of the "Green Fibreglass Boats Scheme," are equipped with 85-90 horsepower engines and modern insulated holds designed to preserve catch quality and reduce spoilage, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro.

Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch, a member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) for Gwadar, was briefed on the initiative during a visit to the Surbandar fisheries office.

Fisheries officials stated that the total cost for each boat is set at 5.295 million rupees (\$19,000). Under the scheme's terms, the Balochistan government will cover 90 per cent of the cost.

Registered fishermen are required to pay the remaining 10 per cent—approximately 529,500 rupees—through instalments over a four-year period. "This scheme is an important step towards improving the economic conditions of the coastal fishing community and will help modernise the fisheries sector," Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman said. The distribution will be conducted through a transparent balloting process overseen by a committee led by the Director General of Fisheries.

Quotas have been allocated based on the number of registered fishermen in various coastal districts, with six boats specifically reserved for the Surbandar area.

Authorities have urged eligible fishermen to submit applications at their respective Fisheries Assistant Director offices within the specified timeframe.

Islamabad Talks: JD Vance led delegation leaves for US without any deal with Iran

ISLAMABAD (INP): US Vice President JD Vance said on Sunday that his negotiating team was leaving Pakistan after not reaching a deal with Iran following 21 hours of Islamabad talks, jeopardizing a fragile two-week ceasefire.

"The bad 'news is that we have not reached an agreement, and I think that's bad news for Iran much more than it's bad news for the United States of America," Vance told reporters after the talks ended. "So we go back to the United States having not come to an agreement. We've made very clear what our red lines are."

Vance cited shortcomings in the talks and said Iran had chosen not to accept American terms, including to halt nuclear tests and allow a short time later, Vance waved goodbye from the top of the stairs as the Boeing Air Force Two in Islamabad.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency said that "excessive" US demands had hindered reaching an agreement and that negotiations had ended. Before Vance spoke, Iran's government in a post on X had said negotiations would continue and technical experts "from both sides would exchange documents."

The talks in Islamabad were the first but nuclear tests resumed in more than a decade and the highest-level discussions since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"We need to see an affirmative commitment that they will not seek a nuclear weapon, and they will not seek the tools that would enable them to quickly achieve a nuclear weapon. That is the core goal of the president of the United States, and that's what we've tried to achieve through these negotiations."

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The conflict has sent global oil prices soaring and killed thousands of people. Vance's delegation included special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. Vance said he talked with Trump a half a dozen to a dozen times during the talks.

Iran's team included Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

The Iranian delegation arrived on Friday dressed in black in mourning for late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and others killed in the war. They carried shoes and bags of some students killed during the US bombing of a school in a military compound, the Iranian government said. The Pentagon has said the strike is under investigation but Reuters has reported that military investigators believe the US was likely responsible for it.

"There were mood swings from the two sides and the temperature went up and down during the meeting," a Pakistani source said in reference to the first round of talks.

As the talks started, the US military said it was "settling the conditions" to start clearing the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz is central to the ceasefire talks. The US military said two of its warships had passed through the strait and conditions were being set to clear mines, while Iran's state media denied any US ships had entered the waterway.

Overseas Pakistanis express immense pride over Pakistan's recent diplomatic success

ISLAMABAD (INP): Overseas Pakistanis have expressed immense pride over Pakistan's recent diplomatic success, stating that the achievements of the country's strong leadership on the global stage have elevated its image and strengthened national confidence.

According to statements from the overseas Pakistanis, the country has emerged as a "victor of peace," earning recognition and respect internationally. They noted that Pakistan's identity is closely tied to promoting peace and regional stability, adding that the recent diplomatic success is clear evidence of the country's responsible role and peace-oriented policies.

They further emphasized that this achievement reflects the nation's honor, dignity, and commitment to peace and stability.

The overseas community reiterated that Pakistan's identity is closely tied to promoting peace and regional stability, adding that the recent diplomatic success is clear evidence of the country's responsible role and peace-oriented policies. They said the vision and courage of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif are being appreciated at the international level.

Punjab CM sets deadline to complete all drainage projects before June

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has set a deadline to complete all drainage projects before June.

The plan includes laying 2,265 kilometers of sewerage lines and 189 kilometers of pipelines for rainwater drainage across 15 cities. In the first phase, 86 disposal stations and nine underground storage tanks will be constructed. It was further decided that upon completion of drainage projects, 752 kilometers of roads will also be built. Hostels for officers will be established within WASA complexes, while real-time monitoring of projects will be ensured through dashboards and mobile applications.

Authorities also informed the meeting that a large-scale desilting campaign will be launched before the monsoon to clean drains and improve water flow across urban areas.

Hafizabad, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, and Rawalpindi. The plan includes laying 2,265 kilometers of sewerage lines and 189 kilometers of pipelines for rainwater drainage across 15 cities. In the first phase, 86 disposal stations and nine underground storage tanks will be constructed. It was further decided that upon completion of drainage projects, 752 kilometers of roads will also be built. Hostels for officers will be established within WASA complexes, while real-time monitoring of projects will be ensured through dashboards and mobile applications.

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China-Pakistan Neurosurgery Training Center inaugurated in Wuhan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The China-Pakistan Joint Neurosurgery Training Center was inaugurated during the "Belt and Road" China-Pakistan International Neurosurgery Symposium, held alongside the 11th East Lake International Cerebrovascular Surgery Forum in Wuhan, China Economic Net reported on Sunday.

The East Lake International Cerebrovascular Surgery Forum, hosted by Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University, has been held annually since its inception and has developed into a leading academic platform for neurosurgical exchange in central China. The 2026 edition has brought together leading domestic and international experts to discuss the latest advances in the diagnosis and treatment of cerebrovascular diseases.



HYDERABAD: Mayor Hyderabad, Kashif Shoro visits different UCs to inspect ongoing development works in respective UCs.

Wuhan University, has been held annually since its inception and has developed into a leading academic platform for neurosurgical exchange in central China. The 2026 edition has brought together leading domestic and international experts to discuss the latest advances in the diagnosis and treatment of cerebrovascular diseases.

The newly inaugurated training center is a joint initiative of Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University, the Punjab Institute of Neurosciences (PINS), and the China-Pakistan Medical Association (CPMA).

It aims to strengthen neurosurgical capacity, advance medical education, and promote medical tourism between the two countries.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between Zhongnan Hospital and PINS on the occasion, establishing a framework for cooperation in clinical training, academic exchange, joint research, and patient care.

The inauguration ceremony, attended by medical experts and industry representatives from both countries, underscored growing cooperation in the health sector under the Belt and Road Initiative.

The center is expected to serve as a platform for knowledge exchange and capacity building, further deepening bilateral collaboration in medicine.



QUETTA: MPA Huda Nawaz with international badminton player Sarwat Fatima and her parents, Sarwat Fatima set a new record by winning two gold medals in badminton competitions held in Malaysia.

IPP to meet on Tuesday to deliberate on upcoming by-elections, other key matters

ISLAMABAD (INP): The central leadership of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) would meet in Islamabad on Tuesday to deliberate on the upcoming by-elections in Punjab constituency PP-83 Noor Porthal and other key political and organizational matters.

The meeting would be chaired by IPP President and Federal Minister, Abdul Aleem Khan, who has already initiated consultations with

senior party leaders regarding the by-election on the vacant seat, said a press release issued on Sunday.

In this regard, IPP Member National Assembly, Gul Asghar Khan Baghoor from the constituency gave a detailed briefing to the Party President and the political situation of the constituency, previous election results and future strategy were discussed.

It is pertinent to mention that IPP candidate Ehsanullah Khan had secured around 30,000 votes in the 2024 general elections from PP-83, reflecting a significant support base in the area.

The meeting would be attended by Punjab President Rana Nazir Ahmed Khan, North Punjab President and Federal Parliamentary Secretary Engineer Gul Asghar Khan Baghoor, White Central General Secretary Mian Khalid Mahmood and General Secretary Punjab & MPA Shoab Siddique along with other senior leaders would also be participating in this meeting.

Important decisions regarding participation in the by-elections would be expected in this consultative meeting.

The IPP leadership has already intensified its political engagement in constituency PP-83 under a comprehensive strategy.

Plan to Establish University of Balochistan Campus in Islamabad with China's Support Gains Momentum

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffer Khan Mandokhail has termed the proposed establishment of a campus of University of Balochistan in Islamabad, with the support of China, as a significant step toward providing equal and high-quality higher education opportunities to the youth of the province.

He stated that formal discussions will be held at the federal level with key institutions, including the Higher Education Commission and the Capital Development Authority, for land allocation and necessary approvals.

The Governor emphasized that the initiative aims to establish a permanent academic presence of Balochistan in the federal capital, thereby promoting inter-provincial harmony. He expressed optimism that, for the first time in history, the province will successfully establish its campus in Islamabad, describing the project as a bridge between the aspirations of Balochistan



and the intellectual mainstream of the nation. The proposal aims to provide students from Balochistan with access to quality higher education opportunities in the federal capital. During the meeting, directors of various university centers also briefed the Governor on academic and research activities, as well as financial challenges faced by these centers.

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Governor Mandokhail appreciated the academic and research contributions of the university and assured full cooperation in addressing financial issues and advancing the Islamabad campus project. Vice Chancellor Dr. Zahoor Ahmed Baza expressed gratitude to the Governor for his keen interest and continued

support in promoting higher education in Balochistan. University of Balochistan Islamabad campus, China Pakistan education project, Jaffer Mandokhail statement, higher education Balochistan, HEC Pakistan campus proposal, CDA Islamabad land allocation, University Campus in Islamabad

96% Textbooks Delivered Across Balochistan as Demand Surges in Public Schools

QUETTA: Chairman of the Balochistan Textbook Board, Dr Gulab Khan Khilji, announced significant progress in the printing and distribution of textbooks for the 2026 academic year, with 96% of books already delivered to districts across the province.

According to official details, over 11.5 million textbooks have been printed this year following demands from the Directorate of Schools. These books have been dispatched to relevant districts, with the majority already reaching designated warehouses and District Education Officers.

Dr. Khilji noted that while most have received their required supply, some areas have reported partial shortages. He explained that the primary reason behind this is a substantial increase in student enrollment in public schools during 2026. He further highlighted that government education policies and the ongoing enrollment campaign have led to a significant rise in student numbers compared to previous years.

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He further highlighted that government education policies and the ongoing enrollment campaign have led to a significant rise in student numbers compared to previous years.

Additionally, a growing preference for English-medium education has also contributed to increased demand for textbooks. The Chairman assured that the remaining textbooks will be delivered soon to ensure that the academic process continues smoothly without disruption in any school.

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Balochistan textbooks distribution 2026, Quetta education news, Dr Gulab Khilji statement, Pakistan school books supply, public school enrollment increase, education policy Balochistan, textbook shortage Pakistan

Balochistan textbooks distribution 2026, Quetta education news, Dr Gulab Khilji statement, Pakistan school books supply, public school enrollment increase, education policy Balochistan, textbook shortage Pakistan

Quetta Authorities, Hazara Community Agree on Enhanced Security Measures to Improve Law and Order



QUETTA: A high-level meeting on law and order was held in Quetta under the chairmanship of Commissioner Shahzaib Khan Kakar, focusing on security concerns and measures to protect the Hazara community.

The meeting was attended by Member of Provincial Assembly Abdul Samad Gorji, DIG Police Imran Shaikat, Deputy Commissioner Mehruallah Badim, SSP Operations Asif Khan, SP Security Naem Achakzai, along with representatives from various organiza-

tions including Hazara Democratic Party, Shia Ulema Council, Balochistan Shia Conference, Hazara Jirga, Anjuman-e-Tajran, and other stakeholders. During the session, the overall security plan for the city was reviewed in detail.

It was decided that in collaboration with the Hazara community, a dedicated control room will be established to help prevent terrorist incidents. Authorities also agreed to increase police patrolling across the city.

Participants emphasized that law enforcement agencies are working jointly to ensure the safety of citizens. Instructions were issued to strengthen patrols on key routes and ensure the installation of CCTV cameras for improved surveillance.

Commissioner Shahzaib Khan Kakar stated that all available resources are being utilized to protect the publisher terrorist incidents. He highlighted that cooperation with the

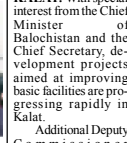
Hazara community will help make security arrangements more effective and foolproof. DIG Police Imran Shaikat reaffirmed that protecting citizens remains the top priority of the police, with zero tolerance for compromise.

He added that terrorists are targeting innocent people through cowardly acts, but law enforcement agencies are actively countering such threats. He further noted that operations against are ongoing in coordination with intelligence agencies, and all re-

sources are being deployed to ensure the city's safety. The meeting also directed authorities to provide the best possible medical care to those injured in recent incidents.

It concluded with prayers for those who lost their lives in acts of terrorism. Quetta security meeting 2026, Hazara community protection, Balochistan law and order, Shahzaib Kakar statement, Quetta police operations, terrorism prevention Pakistan, city security measures Quetta

Development Projects Accelerate in Kalat Under BSDI with Focus on Education and Infrastructure



KALAT: With special interest from the Chief Minister of Balochistan and the Chief Secretary, development projects aimed at improving basic facilities are progressing rapidly in Kalat.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Shah Nawaz Baloch conducted a detailed visit to various ongoing development schemes under the BSDI initiative.

During the visit, he reviewed the pace of work and inspected the quality of construction materials being used. He visited multiple educational institutions, including Government Boys High School, Government Boys High School Kuing, Government Boys High School Mughalzai, Government Girls High School Mughalzai, Cricket Ground Malki, and Government Primary School Gyaawan.

Officials provided detailed briefings on both physical and financial progress of the projects. The inspection also covered construction of new classrooms, repair work, painting, and other improvement activities.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner carefully assessed the quality and progress of ongoing work to ensure timely completion. Issuing clear directives, Shah Nawaz Baloch instructed contractors to expedite work under BSDI projects and further improve construction standards so that the public can fully benefit from these development initiatives.

Kalat development projects 2026, BSDI schemes Balochistan, school construction Kalat, infrastructure development Balochistan, Shah Nawaz Baloch inspection, education facilities Pakistan, Kalat news development

Loralai DC Reviews Polio Campaign on Day One, Urges Public Cooperation for Eradication Efforts

LORALAI: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Haseeb Shuja visited areas of the anti-polio campaign on the first day.

He also appealed to parents to ensure that all children under five years of age receive polio drops during the campaign.

Health authorities stated that thousands of children are targeted for vaccination during the campaign.

Sibi Polio Campaign Launched as 43,000+ Children Targeted for Vaccination

SIBI: Deputy Commissioner Ilyas Kabzai officially launched the anti-polio campaign in Sibi by administering polio drops to children in a roadside settlement of nomadic families.

The inauguration was attended by Assistant Commissioner Mansoor Ali Shah, District Health Officer Dr Qadir Haroon, ISD Coordinator Mir Wais Khan, N-Stop representative Dr Shehzada Kamran, District Polio Officer Salahuddin Marri, and other officials.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected various transit points and fixed vaccination sites, reviewing team performance, tally sheets, and official records.

Children traveling in vans, buses, and on motorcycles were also administered polio and Vitamin A drops during the campaign. According to officials, a total of 43,192 children will be vaccinated during the campaign.

For this purpose, 46 fixed teams, 22 transit teams, and a total of 292 teams have been deployed across the district. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Ilyas Kabzai emphasized that reaching every child is essential to eliminate Polio.

He directed teams to ensure that no child is left unvaccinated, especially in remote areas, nomadic communities, and informal settlements.

He also urged parents to vaccinate all children under five years of age to protect them from lifelong disability. The Deputy Commissioner instructed authorities to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, take action against absent staff, and ensure transparency and quality throughout the campaign.

He reaffirmed that the district administration will utilize all available resources until complete eradication of polio is achieved. Sibi polio campaign 2026, Balochistan vaccination drive, polio eradication Pakistan, Ilyas Kabzai launch, child immunization Sibi, Vitamin A campaign Pakistan, public health Balochistan

He reaffirmed that the district administration will utilize all available resources until complete eradication of polio is achieved. Sibi polio campaign 2026, Balochistan vaccination drive, polio eradication Pakistan, Ilyas Kabzai launch, child immunization Sibi, Vitamin A campaign Pakistan, public health Balochistan

Ziarat Launches Four-Day Polio Campaign Targeting 27,000 Children

ZIARAT: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Abdul Qudus Achakzai inaugurated a four-day anti-polio campaign in Ziarat by administering polio drops to children at the District Headquarters Hospital.

The ceremony was attended by IC Captain Muhammad Haris, District Health Officer Dr Rafiq Ahmed Mastoi, and Medical Superintendent Dr Irfanuddin.

According to officials, approximately 27,000 children under the age of five will be vaccinated during the campaign. A total of 139 mobile teams have been deployed to conduct

door-to-door vaccination, supported by 29 fixed sites and 12 transit points across the district. Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qudus Achakzai stated that full security has been provided to all polio teams.

He emphasized that although there are no no-go areas in Ziarat, strict action will be taken against anyone attempting to disrupt the campaign. He urged parents to ensure that all children under five receive polio drops, stressing that both the government and the public share responsibility for protecting children from Polio and ensuring no child is left unvaccinated.

Ziarat polio campaign 2026, Balochistan vaccination drive, polio eradication Pakistan, Abdul Qudus Achakzai statement, child immunization Ziarat, public health campaign Pakistan, anti-polio initiative Balochistan

Ziarat polio campaign 2026, Balochistan vaccination drive, polio eradication Pakistan, Abdul Qudus Achakzai statement, child immunization Ziarat, public health campaign Pakistan, anti-polio initiative Balochistan



of the anti-polio campaign, reviewing the performance, attendance, and awareness of field teams. During the visit, he checked for recording polio drops administered to children and verified finger markings to ensure transparency and accuracy in the process.

Speaking to the teams, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that the eradication of Polio is a shared responsibility, adding that the government is utilizing all available resources to achieve this goal.

He praised frontline workers for their dedication, calling them "real heroes" of society. protect them permanently from the disease. The visit was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Muhammad Ismail Mengal and Assistant Commissioner Nadeem Akram. Campaign Arrangements and Progress "According to district administration officials, hundreds of mobile, fixed, and transit teams have been deployed across the district to conduct door-to-door vaccination drive, Pakistan polio eradication, Muhammad Haseeb Shuja visit, child vaccination campaign, public health Pakistan, polio awareness campaign

with supervisory staff actively monitoring field operations. Awareness Campaign Intensified "To raise public awareness, campaigns are being conducted through mosques, schools, and local community leaders. Officials stressed that public cooperation is crucial, as the complete eradication of polio is not possible without collective effort.

Loralai polio campaign 2026, Balochistan polio drive, Pakistan polio eradication, Muhammad Haseeb Shuja visit, child vaccination campaign, public health Pakistan, polio awareness campaign

Loralai polio campaign 2026, Balochistan polio drive, Pakistan polio eradication, Muhammad Haseeb Shuja visit, child vaccination campaign, public health Pakistan, polio awareness campaign

Gas supply to power sector may double amid LNG shortfall

NEWS DESK: Domestic natural gas supply to the power sector is expected to at least double by the end of the current month to minimise tariff hikes and loadshedding, which have become inevitable following the non-availability of imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) and upcoming hike in summer consumption.

Informed sources told Dawn that arrangements were being made on a war footing to increase gas supply to around 160-170 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) by end-April or early May, up from about 85-90mmcf at present. An additional 20-25mmcf could be diverted from the LNG sector, provided the government is able to sustain political pressure.

Gas supplies to the fertiliser sector would be protected as far as possible, alongside vigilance on stocks due to a wide price gap between locally produced urea at Rs2,500 per bag and imported one at Rs15,000 per bag, creating a scope for smuggling.

However, fertiliser plants may not receive uninterrupted gas and could be operated on an



Power plant in Islamabad.

alternate basis to meet demand for both the current and next seasons. Minister's warning Sources said Power Minister Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, at a recent meeting of the special cabinet committee on petroleum prices and supplies, warned that unless additional gas was di-

verted to the power sector to replace LNG fuel costs in electricity tariffs could rise exponentially or result in massive loadshedding. His ministry suggested diverting supplies from residential consumers, CNG or fertiliser.

Some ministers recommended that diverting

gas from domestic consumers could cause a political backlash, affecting more than seven million users. "It is a choice between the uproar of 7m gas consumers or 30m power consumers," an official quoted the power minister as telling the cabinet committee. The

only alternative fuel for domestic use, particularly cooking, is liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), whose prices have surged to more than double the rates set by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) due to weak enforcement.

The power division

also pointed out that the fuel cost adjustment (FCA) for February stood at Rs1.42 per unit and could have been around Rs2 without the use of furnace oil and RLNG, given subdued demand. It warned that the FCA for April could be slightly higher than March but might more

than double in May if furnace oil was used extensively, unless excessive loadshedding was carried out. Furnace oil prices have more than doubled between February and early April.

The matter has now been taken up by the National Coordination and Management Council, led by General Zafar Iqbal, to address electricity shortages and ensure maximum supply to economic sectors at affordable rates.

Without RLNG, about 5,000MW of efficient plants in Punjab become either redundant or expensive to run on diesel.

The fuel cost gap between RLNG and high-speed diesel ranges from Rs20-21 to Rs50-54 per unit, while furnace oil-based generation costs around Rs35-45 per unit. Sources said additional gas supplies had become available following completion of a pipeline enabling flows from the Betpani gas field in Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to Punjab, along with other enhancements.

The government has already resorted to at least two hours of loadshedding in recent

days, which is expected to increase, particularly at night when solar generation declines and demand on the national grid rises.

As part of hybrid load management, early market closures have been ordered for conservation.

Despite improved water availability, hydro-power generation will depend on Wapda's management of Farbela, where delays in tunnels 4 and 5 persist, while the 999MW Neelum-Jhelum plant remains out of order.

Furnace oil remains the key replacement fuel during peak summer demand. Current stocks exceed 500,000 tonnes, sufficient for more than 35 days of full requirement, though the cost differential remains enormous.

Summer peak demand typically rises to 27,000-28,000MW, compared to less than 14,000MW currently during peak hours, partly due to increased reliance on solar power.

Given these constraints, the government is expected to enforce two to three hours of daily loadshedding on average, alongside conservation measures.

Aurangzeb arrives in Washington for IMF, World Bank spring meetings

NEWS DESK: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb arrived in Washington on Monday to attend the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring Meetings 2026, the Ministry of Finance said.

According to a statement, the minister is scheduled to hold key meetings with global financial leaders to advance "Pakistan's reform agenda and economic priorities".

Aurangzeb departed for the United States on Saturday to

participate in the high-level gathering, which will take place from April 13 to 18 in Washington, DC.

The Spring Meetings bring together finance ministers, central bank governors, policymakers and experts from around the world amid ongoing global economic uncertainty.

As per an earlier statement, during his visit, the finance minister will represent Pakistan at important events organised by the IMF and the World Bank

Group". At the conference, he is expected to engage with leading academics, policymakers, and members of the Pakistani diaspora, and share Pakistan's economic outlook, reform trajectory, and growth prospects.

During the visit, he will also meet the senior IMF leadership, including First Deputy Managing Director Dan Katz, Deputy Managing Director Nigel Clarke, and Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department Jihad Azour.

As per the press statement, this visit "underscores Pakistan's commitment to macroeconomic stability, structural reforms, and strengthening partnerships with international financial institutions and global stakeholders to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth".

In recent days, the IMF, the World Bank, and the International Energy Agency have announced a joint coordination mechanism to help countries navigate the economic disruptions triggered by the

initiative aims to "strengthen real-time monitoring of global energy markets and assess the broader macroeconomic consequences of supply disruptions, price volatility and financial market stress".

The IMF has cautioned that the conflict has "injected sharp volatility into global oil and gas markets, tightened financial conditions and driven up the cost of essential commodities, including food and fertiliser".



Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb speaking at a podium during a meeting.

Financialisation of business firm

NEWS DESK: A business firm is said to be financialised when it involves in financial activities. In other words, a business firm permanently expands its financial activities. This permanent involvement gives rise to a long-run trend where shareholder value maximisation takes the driving seat. Hence, the business firm orients itself for the benefit of shareholders.

When shareholder value maximisation becomes the goal of the business firm, it deviates from the key goal of profit maximisation in production. This change in goalpost alters the structure of the business firm a great deal. In this changed scenario, the business firm intends to maximise return on equity.

Return on equity is increased through dividend disbursement. For the sake of instant gratification of shareholders, the business firm intends to distribute profit among shareholders. This profit disbursement in the form of dividends takes prominence over other requirements. Even the business firm downsizes its labour in order to generate and distribute dividends.

Furthermore, the business firm also buys



A modern office building representing financialisation.

back its shares from the stock market. The purpose of buyback is to increase return on equity and hence shareholder value maximisation. Even the firm takes loan to buy back its shares - borrowing for the sake of buyback.

The business firm acquires shares of other business firms from the stock market in order to get management control. For instance, a large cement company acquires shares of a relatively smaller company.

In the jargon, this is known as merger and acquisition (M&A). This merger and acquisition further increases the market size of the large company which, in turn, increases the return

on equity. Business firms in Pakistan also invest in financial activities. They invest in term deposits to get fixed interest income. Similarly, they also invest in units of mutual funds. In addition, they invest in listed shares at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) to receive dividend income and capital gains.

Export-oriented business firms in Pakistan buy derivative instruments such as interest rate swaps and currency swaps as they face interest and exchange rate risks and intend to protect themselves against these risks. In addition, they have enough cash and use these instruments for

speculating gains. There are instances where business firms speculated on these instruments and experienced heavy losses and even went bankrupt. This normally happens in a topsy-turvy international financial environment as their speculative bets turn out to be away from expected. However, the listed firms document gains or losses in their financial statements. A proprietary international business firm operates to fulfill the demand of consumers. If it produces goods and services according to the requirements of consumers, if the expected demand is high, it employs people and produces goods and services.

PSX sheds 6,600 points after Trump announces Hormuz blockade

NEWS DESK: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark index KSE-100 shed 6,600 points on Monday in a turbulent session, after weekend peace talks between the United States and Iran failed and the US president ordered a blockade of Iranian ports.

The KSE-100 index opened on a low note of around 161,000 points, compared to the previous close of 167,191.37.

The market fluctuated throughout the session, reaching an intraday high of 163,612.11 points at 12:13pm and then an intraday low of 160,158.92 points at 2:56pm.

It then finally

closed at 160,591.33 points, down 6,600.04 points or 3.95pc. This screengrab shows activity at the Pakistan Stock Exchange on April 13, 2026. —PSX Data Portal

In a post on the social media platform X, Topline Securities said the benchmark index registered a sharp decline in a "highly volatile trading session".

"The market witnessed significant fluctuations throughout the day, with the index reaching an intraday high of 163,612 points and slipping to a low of 160,158 points," it said. "The downturn was primarily driven by uncertainty surrounding

the lack of progress in the US-Iran talks held in Islamabad, coupled with growing concerns over a potential blockade of the Strait of Hormuz," it said, adding that these developments pushed global oil prices higher, triggering broad-based panic selling across the market.

"Selling pressure was particularly concentrated in index-heavy stocks, with FFC, UBL, ENGROH, LUCK, and MEBL emerging as major laggards, collectively pulling the benchmark down by 2,414 points," Topline Securities said. "Trading activity remained strong with total traded volume reaching 743 million shares and overall turnover

amounting to Rs34.2 billion," it said. After Washington and Tehran failed to reach an agreement in the marathon peace talks held in Islamabad, US President Donald Trump said the US Navy would begin the process of blockading vessels entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz.

Hormuz, a key shipping lane off the coast of Iran, has been virtually blocked by Tehran since the US and Israel started bombing Iran on February 28, though reopening the strait was ostensibly a condition of the ceasefire put in place on April 8.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) said that any military vessels attempting to approach the Strait of Hormuz would be considered a ceasefire violation, warning that it would be dealt with harshly and decisively. The PSX has witnessed single-day losses since the US-Israeli war on Iran began. It had witnessed the steepest single-day plunge, shedding 16,089 points (or 9.57pc), on March 2, following the assassination of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

CHANGE	VOLUME	COMPANY	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	LCSP	CURRENT	CHANGE	VOLUME
+143	1,119,242	PSX	264.51	268.09	260.75	264.76	261	+143	1,689,795
+0.01	8,149	FFC	75	75.1	74.9	75.1	75.1	+0.01	61,474
+0.001	34,073	PKC	51.1	51.99	51.1	52.2	51.99	+0.001	4,178,101
+0.001	19,147	PAFLS	6,853.1	6,900.9	6,823.1	6,911.9	6,911.9	+0.001	27,252
+0.01	2,881,211	WAPDA	1.80	1.83	1.80	1.83	1.83	+0.01	48,818
+0.01	1,111,111	UBL	100	100.1	99.9	100.1	100.1	+0.01	1,111,111
+0.02	1,171,142	2024	19.21	19.23	19.2	19.21	19.23	+0.02	1,949,820
+0.01	4,581,948	MEBL	4.65	4.68	4.65	4.68	4.68	+0.01	1,441
+0.01	1,200,000	ENPAC	19.25	19.45	19.2	19.45	19.45	+0.01	2,402,335
+0.01	4,012	SPPL	1.012	1.015	1.01	1.012	1.012	+0.01	11,200
+0.01	489,000	PLD	7.81	7.81	7.81	7.81	7.81	+0.01	211,000
+0.01	1,100	1500A	481	481	481	481	481	+0.01	15,264
+0.01	3,418	725	1465	1510	1410	1510	1510	+0.01	1,016,076
+0.01	11,804,000	REL	1.60	1.61	1.60	1.61	1.61	+0.01	1,449
+0.01	3,000	THRL	6.00	6.01	6.00	6.01	6.01	+0.01	1,449

Debt pressures prompt global initiative

NEWS DESK: Central bank governors of developing countries will launch the 'Borrowers Platform' to improve their debt management capacity in Washington on April 15, during the IMF-World Bank Spring meetings.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Egyptian Finance Minister Ahmed Kouchouk will jointly preside over the launching of the platform, to be held at the United Nations Foundation.

The launch comes amid rising debt pressures across developing countries. To mark this historic occasion, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will attend

the platform's launch. The initiative is member-state-led, with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) serving as the secretariat.

The platform addresses a gap in the international financial system, where developing countries remain under-represented while creditor coordination has expanded, UNCTAD says.

Pakistan and Egypt lead Borrowers' Platform launch.

The platform will open a new space for cooperation on debt. A key, long-recognised gap is the lack of a dedicated platform for cooperation among borrowers to elevate their collective voice, safeguard

knowledge. In June last, UN Secretary-General's Expert Group on Debt had proposed establishing a borrowers' platform as one of its recommendations.

The idea took shape in the 'Sevilla Commitment', adopted by member states at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2025. An initial working group, comprising Egypt and Pakistan (chair and vice-chair), along with Colombia, Honduras, Maldives, Nepal and Zambia, developed draft modalities outlining the platform's objectives, governance and participation.

The platform will strengthen South-South cooperation and knowledge-sharing, provide technical and advisory support to borrowing countries; improve representation in global financial and debt discussions; enhance debt transparency and public debt management; support sustainable financing and development outcomes; and send a positive market signal by strengthening debt-sustainability practices and improving data.

UNCTAD says debt servicing costs in developing countries have soared over the past decade, squeezing their public finances and forcing them into tough trade-offs. As more revenue goes to debt repayments, less is available for public services and climate action.

Developing countries' external debt burden reached \$11.7 trillion in 2024. In 2024, they spent almost 10 per cent of government revenue on interest payments to creditors abroad. Least developed countries pay nearly a quarter of their revenue to external creditors. 34 countries, home to 3.4 billion people, now spend more on debt than on health or education.



Hands holding banknotes, symbolizing debt or finance.

McIlroy falters, shares Masters lead with surging Young

NEWS DESK: Rory McIlroy charged back late after squandering a six-stroke edge to share the lead with Cameron Young after a wild third round at the Masters on Saturday.

A chaotic afternoon at Augusta National saw both men plunk key shots into water on the back nine but finish level atop the leaderboard on 11-under-205 through 54 holes, one stroke ahead of American Sam Burns.

McIlroy, who started the day with a record six-shot lead, carded a one-over-par 73 while Young roared into contention with a scintillating seven-under-par 65.

"I didn't have it today," McIlroy admitted. "I scrambled a lot on the front nine."

Second-ranked McIlroy birdied the 14th and 15th holes to regain the lead but found the trees off the 17th tee on the way to a bogey and his one-over round.

"This golf course has a way of, when you're not quite feeling it, you struggle," McIlroy said. "You have to dig deep."

"I still have a great chance," McIlroy added. "I'm in the final group. That's where I want to be. I need to be better tomorrow. If I'm going to win tomorrow I have to be better than I was today."

Young, last month's Players Championship winner, got off to a scorching start with Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo as the only back-to-back winners of the green jacket.

Third-ranked Young, last month's Players Championship winner, got off to a scorching start with Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo as the only back-to-back winners of the green jacket.

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McIlroy (left) and Young (right) are tied for the lead at the Masters on Saturday. McIlroy (left) and Young (right) are tied for the lead at the Masters on Saturday.

Fury cruises to decision victory over Makhmudov

NEWS DESK: Britain's former heavyweight world champion Tyson Fury outclassed Russia's Arslanbek Makhmudov en route to a comprehensive points win on Saturday and then called for a showdown with compatriot Anthony Joshua.

With Joshua watching from ringside, Fury fought for the first time since his second loss to Oleksandr Usyk in October 2022, in which he failed to regain the WBC belt he lost to the Ukrainian in the first defeat of his career.

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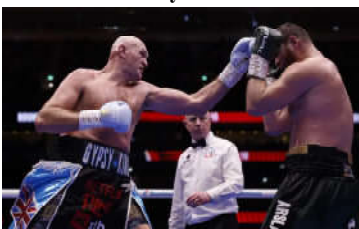
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Fury (left) and Makhmudov (right) are in a boxing ring during their fight. Fury (left) and Makhmudov (right) are in a boxing ring during their fight.

Kingsmen edge Karachi Kings in PSL

NEWS DESK: Muhammad Irfan Khan produced a composed yet explosive finish as Hyderabad Kingsmen chased down a daunting 189-run target to defeat Karachi Kings by four wickets in the 20th match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 at the National Bank Stadium on Saturday.

The victory marked a historic milestone for the Kingsmen, earning their first win in their debut PSL campaign after four consecutive defeats against Lahore Qalandars, Quetta Gladiators, Multan Sultans and Peshawar Zalmi.

Chasing 189, Hyderabad Kingsmen endured a roller-coaster innings but held their nerve in the final stages, with Irfan Khan and Hassan Khan stitching an unbeaten 50-run partnership to complete the chase in the final over.

The pursuit began aggressively, with captain Marnus Labuschagne setting the tone through a quick 26 off just 10 deliveries.

His innings ended in the third over when he was dismissed by Khushdil Shah, with the score on 36.

Maaz Sadaqat and Usman Khan then kept the momentum alive, combining for a brisk 60-run partnership off only 30 balls.

Sadaqat top-scored with a fluent 37 off 29 deliveries, hitting four fours and two sixes, while Usman contributed a rapid 27 off 13 balls, including three fours and two sixes.

However, their back-to-back dismissals triggered a middle-order collapse. Sam Ayub fell for six and Glenn Maxwell for just two as the Kingsmen slipped to 112 for five in 11.4 overs, suddenly under pressure despite a strong start.

Earlier, Karachi Kings posted a competitive 188 for 8 after being put into bat. Their innings began poorly when Reza Hendricks fell for two in the first

over, but Salman Ali Agha and Muhammad Waseem steadied the innings with a 45-run stand.

Hunain Shah broke through for Hyderabad, removing Salman at the end of the powerplay and forcing dismissing Waseem for 25, reducing Karachi to 59 for three.

A 69-run partnership between Saad Baig and Azam Khan rebuilt the innings before Labuschagne struck to remove Azam for 26. The innings then shifted dramatically when Moeen Ali launched a counter-attack, smashing 44 off just 16 balls, including five sixes, before falling in the penultimate over.

Baig anchored the innings with a well-compiled 53 off 37 deliveries, ensuring Karachi reached 188 despite regular wickets.

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Hunain Shah was the standout bowler for the Kingsmen, claiming 3 for 19, while Muhammad Ali supported with two wickets. Labuschagne also chipped in with one wicket.

In the end, Hyderabad Kingsmen's calm finishing under pressure proved decisive, as they secured a landmark victory to open their account in PSL 11.

The result handed Karachi Kings a second successive defeat, as they were left to rue missed chances and tactical missteps in a match that slipped away despite several strong phases.

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Jannik Sinner beats Alcaraz in Monte Carlo final to reclaim top spot in tennis rankings

NEWS DESK: Italy's Jannik Sinner dethroned defending champion Carlos Alcaraz 77-65 (6-3 in Sunday's Monte Carlo final to claim his first Masters title on clay and snatch back the world number one ranking from the Spaniard.

The victory capped a remarkable run for Sinner, who became just the second player to win the Sunshine Double and Monte Carlo in the same season — a feat previously achieved only by Novak Djokovic in 2015.

It marked Sinner's fourth consecutive Masters 1000 crown following triumphs in Paris, Indian Wells and Miami, and his eighth Masters title overall.

"We came here just trying to get as many matches as possible before other big tournaments coming up. Today was a very high level from both of us," Sinner said in an on-court interview.

"It was a bit windy, breezy — completely different conditions the tournament has brought until today. The result is amazing, getting back

to number one means a lot to me. At the same time, as I always say, the ranking is secondary. I'm very happy to win at least one big trophy on this surface."

The last time the pair met was nearly five months ago when Sinner beat Alcaraz in the ATP Finals title clash and fans had been eagerly looking forward to the next encounter of the "Sincaraz" rivalry.

Struggle in blustery conditions. Playing in blustery conditions, both players struggled initially as they traded early breaks until Alcaraz found his groove first, unleashing winners past Sinner when he caught "the Italian wrong-footed on the

baseline on a few occasions. Alcaraz also used the disguised drop shot to good effect to catch Sinner off guard but breaking serve proved elusive for both as they battled the wind.

Sinner was forced to work hard while trailing 6-5 but he held his nerve to force a tiebreak where his first serve proved decisive, clinching the opener when Alcaraz double-faulted on 'set point.

Alcaraz struck early in the second set, consolidating a break to lead 3-1 with a couple of impressive returns that had the fans leaping to their feet.

However, Sinner found his second wind and reeled off four

straight games to turn the match on its head and serve 'for the title. Sinner made no mistake on serve and as Alcaraz made an error on championship point, the Italian celebrated the biggest claycourt title of his career before embracing his rival at the net.

"It's impressive what you are achieving right now... Just one man in the Open Era won the Sunshine Double and then Monte Carlo, and you're the second one to achieve it," Alcaraz said. "It's something incredible and I just experienced how difficult it is to make that happen. So congratulations 'for everything, for the work you are doing with your team."

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Bayern closer to Bundesliga title

NEWS DESK: Bayern Munich romped to a 5-0 win at St Pauli on Saturday, breaking a 54-year Bundesliga goal-scoring record and moving to within touching distance of a 35th league crown.

Leon Goretzka's 53rd-minute goal, Bayern's second of the match, brought up 102 league goals this season, breaking a previous mark set by the Bavarian giants in 1972.

The longstanding record was set by a team that featured club legends Franz Beckenbauer, Gerd Mueller and Uli Hoeneß.

Bayern coach Vincent Kompany told Sky Germany he knew his side would shatter the total.

"I saw Uli Hoeneß yesterday and told him 'We're coming for the record'. The mark existed for so long and the lads can be proud, but we're going to keep going."

Top scorer Harry Kane was left on the bench but Jamal Musiala, Michael Olise,

Nicolas Jackson and Raphael Guerreiro joined Goretzka on Bayern's scoresheet as Bayern pulled 12 points clear of Borussia Dortmund, who lost to Bayer Leverkusen earlier on Saturday.

With five matches remaining this season, defending champions Bayern can win the title as early as next week at home against Stuttgart. Mindful of Wednesday's Champions League quarter-final second leg against Real Madrid, Bayern also

started with Luis Diaz, Davot Upamecano and Jonathan Tah among the substitutes. The missing firepower mattered little as Musiala headed the visitors in front with nine minutes gone.

Early in the second half, Goretzka turned the ball in from close range to best a record the Bavarians set over half a century ago. Olise added another just a minute later. Kane replacement Jackson got one of his second leg against Real

scored late to round out the victory and up the record to 105.

Andrich sinks Dortmund Robert Andrich hit a long-range strike late in the first half as Leverkusen became the second team to beat Dortmund in the league this season with a 1-0 away victory.

Dortmund, whose two previous defeats this season came against Bayern, remain eight points clear in second place despite their four-game winning streak coming to an end.

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Rose. Lowry, the 2019 British Open winner, became the first Masters player with multiple holes-in-one, having aged the 16th in the final round in 2016.

"That's wild," Lowry said. "You don't ever expect to make a hole-in-one. I just couldn't believe it. You're out there and you're in the hunt at the Masters and you're making hole-in-one. It's pretty cool. It was obviously amazing."

World number one Scottie Scheffler fired a bogey-free 65 — his lowest career Masters round — to stand four off the lead on 209 alongside China's Li Haotong, who also found water on his way to shooting 69.

"I put myself in position," Scheffler said. "I just need to get the job done." McIlroy made double bogey at the 11th when his approach sailed left into a pond and after a bogey at the par-three 12th, his lead had

vanished in Amen Corner. McIlroy responded with a 19-foot birdie putt at the 14th and dove the green in two at the par-five 15th to set up a tap-in birdie only for a bogey at 17 to drop him back.

and was one stroke in front of Ireland's Shane Lowry. Lowry aced the 190-yard par-three sixth hole on his way to a 68 that left him in fourth on 207, one stroke ahead of Australian Jason Day and England's Justin

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IFATCA praises Pakistan air traffic controllers amid airspace disruptions

NEWS DESK: The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) on Monday expressed strong appreciation for the professionalism and dedication of Pakistan's air traffic controllers, acknowledging their crucial role in maintaining safe and efficient operations during recent regional airspace disruptions.

In a letter addressed to Pakistan's air traffic control authorities, IFATCA Executive Vice President for the Asia Pacific region Cheryl Chen praised the "dedication and professionalism demonstrated by the air traffic controllers of Pakistan in recent weeks."

The letter comes a day after the United States and Iran failed to reach an agreement to end hostilities despite marathon negotiations lasting around 21 hours. The talks, aimed at halting a conflict that has killed thousands and driven global oil prices higher over the past six weeks, ended with both sides blaming each other for the impasse.

The letter highlighted that amid evolving geopolitical developments affecting regional airspace, Pakistan's position as a key aviation corridor between Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe led to a significant surge in air traffic, including diverted flights



from neighbouring airspaces. Despite these pressures, the organisation noted that Pakistani air traffic controllers successfully managed "substantial volumes of non-scheduled traffic," with traffic levels in certain sectors increasing significantly, while maintaining "the highest standards of safety and efficiency."

IFATCA further acknowledged that these operations were conducted under sustained pressure, potentially involving extended duty hours and limited leave, describing it as a reflection of "a strong commitment to operational continuity and global aviation safety."

In her message, Chen also extended formal appreciation for the support provided by Pakistan's Ministry, stating that IFATCA "respectfully acknowledges the vital contribution of Pakistan's air traf-

fic control workforce" and expressed gratitude for continued institutional backing that enabled their performance.

The letter concluded with assurances of "highest consideration," underscoring international recognition of Pakistan's air traffic management efforts during a period of heightened regional aviation challenges.

The US and Israel launched a joint offensive on Iran on February 28, killing thousands of people in Iran, including then-Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and leaving tens of thousands injured, with civilian areas, including residential buildings and religious sites, among those hit.

The conflict also expanded geographically, Iran retaliated with drone and missile strikes targeting Israel as well as Jordan, Iraq, and Gulf countries hosting US military assets. It also restricted the movement of ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

Global air travel has been heavily disrupted as air strikes kept major Middle Eastern airports, including Dubai, the world's busiest interna-

tional hub, closed in one of the sharpest aviation shocks in recent years.

Key transit airports, including Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the UAE and Doha in Qatar, were shut or severely restricted as much of the region's airspace remained closed after US and Israeli strikes killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Also Read: Iran says Gulf ports are 'either for everyone or for no one'

Dubai International Airport sustained damage during Iran's attacks, while airports in Abu Dhabi and Kuwait were also hit.

Thousands of flights have been affected across the Middle East, according to data on flight-tracking platform FlightAware. Airspace over Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Israel, Bahrain, the UAE and Qatar remained virtually empty, maps by FlightRadar24 showed in March.

Four officials hurt as Afghan residents clash with police in Islamabad

NEWS DESK: A police search operation targeting Afghan residents in Islamabad turned violent when officers were attacked, resulting in injuries to four officers and the arrest of 23 people who now face terrorism charges, authorities said.

The clash erupted in the Sarai Kharboza area when residents resisted the operation, according to an FIR filed at the Golra Police Station.

The report, lodged by Assistant Sub-Inspector Saqib

Mehmood, alleges that a group led by a suspect identified as Mubeen abducted a police official, held him inside a house, and then set the building on fire.

Attackers also snatched a submachine gun from an officer and opened fire with the "intent to kill," the formal complaint stated.

The 23 individuals arrested in connection with the incident are being investigated under multiple statutes, including Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism

Act. A team from the Counter Terrorism Department has launched a wider operation to find and apprehend additional suspects who fled the scene, police said.

In a separate incident, a police sub-inspector died of a cardiac arrest while on special assignment in Islamabad.

Officials said Sub-Inspector Mukhtar Ahmed was deployed at the Serena Hotel when he suffered a cardiac arrest.



Concerns about health of incarcerated PTI leader Ejaz Chaudhry

NEWS DESK: The PTI has raised concerns regarding the health of its leader Ejaz Chaudhry, who is currently imprisoned in Kot Lakhpat jail.

The senior PTI leader is serving a 10-year jail sentence, along with other party leaders, for their involvement in violent riots in the country on May 9, 2023.

In a statement, the PTI's central information wing expressed its concerns regarding Chaudhry's health and the "negligence" of the incumbent regime.

"According to the latest medical examination, his kidney disease has progressed to stage three," it said, adding that doctors had not provided proper treatment to the 69-year-old former senator's treatment was not possible at the jail.

The PTI demanded that state institutions and the current rulers provide proper treatment facilities to Chaudhry and other "political prisoners" in Kot Lakhpat jail and that their cases be heard and decided promptly.

"Justice demands that the political prisoners' lives should not be put in danger," it said.

It may be mentioned that several reports had emerged on social media regarding Chaudhry's health as well as photos in which he was lying down in a

hospital bed. However, his son, Advocate Ali Chaudhry, had clarified that his father had not been shifted to the hospital.

"We are using legal and administrative avenues to ensure he gets medical care, including being shifted to the hospital for a complete and thorough check-up. He remains incarcerated at Kot Lakhpat Jail at the moment," he said in a post on the social media platform X on Sunday night.

Meanwhile, speaking to Dawn, the former senator's counsel Rana Mudassar Umer said Chaudhry's health deteriorated due to negligence in providing proper treatment on time.

He said that Chaudhry had first had issues with his heart in jail. He said that treatment was delayed and he was eventually operated on to fix his stents. Eventually, he said, Chaudhry's kidneys

were affected and he was not provided with proper treatment and taken back to jail. According to the lawyers, Chaudhry also contracted a gallbladder infection and was taken back to jail from the Punjab Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI) against doctor's advice.

"Now the fresh medical reports, conducted after several requests and court orders, suggest stage three kidney disease," he said. The lawyer said that he had obtained a fresh court order a couple of weeks ago for Chaudhry's treatment.

"No proper treatment has been yet implemented, adding that treatment required a specialised hospital."

Last year Chaudhry, who was under medical care for a heart condition, was reportedly admitted to the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) after suffering heart pain on Feb 20.



Cop martyred, 4 injured in attack on Hangu police team en route to provide security for polio drive

NEWS DESK: A police constable was martyred and four others were injured in an attack on a law enforcement party en route to provide security for polio teams in Hangu district on Monday.

The incident took place in Hangu's Thall tesli on the first day of a nationwide vaccination campaign taking place from April 13 to 19. The attack is this year's first on law enforcement personnel deployed for polio teams' security.

In a statement, the Hangu District Police said "terrorists opened sudden fire on a police party", resulting in the martyrdom of a policeman and injuries to four others.

The injured police personnel were immediately taken to a hospital.

The police team retaliated immediately, with "reports of two terrorists' deaths as a result", Kohat Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Irfan Tariq was quoted as saying.

However, terrorists took their accomplices' bodies from the scene.

According to the police statement, DIG Tariq commended the personnel's bravery in "thwarting the terrorists' attack". He asserted that the assailants would not be forgiven under any circumstances.

Following the inci-

dent, a search operation was launched in the area, with security forces busy tracing the terrorists.

"On the other hand, officials said the ongoing polio campaign in Hangu will continue as usual, and the terrorists cannot demoralise the nation," Hangu Police said.

The chief minister Sohail Afridi condemned the attack and sought a report from the provincial police chief.

In a statement issued by his office, CM Afridi said "targeting personnel on national duty is an extremely cowardly act". He asserted that the terrorists would never succeed in their nefarious aims.

Expressing grief over the deaths of the police constable, the KP CM affirmed the provincial government would provide every possible cooperation to the bereaved family.

The chief minister directed that the injured cops be provided with the best available facilities.

He asserted that the KP government and the public were "on the same page in the war against terrorism".

Attacks during polio campaigns, who go door-to-door to inoculate children, are frequently targeted by militants, especially in KP and Balochistan.

In February, a police of-fer was

martyred when armed terrorists opened fire on a polio vaccination team in Balochistan's Chaman district.

According to officials, the number of violent incidents against polio teams had decreased last year due to foolproof security measures, with four policemen and one civilian killed, and three police officials injured. They also said 17 health workers were kidnapped during vaccination campaigns.

Official data shows that a total of 96 people have been killed by alleged terrorists in KP since 2012, comprising 61 policemen, 27 health workers and five civilians. Also, 170 people, including 124 police-

men, 28 health workers and 21 civilians, have been injured in attacks on polio teams.

During this period, 32 health workers, three civilians and one policeman were kidnapped during vaccination campaigns.

Of the people who were subjected to violence in the shape of death, injuries and kidnapping, 283 were men and 18 women, according to an official report.

Pakistan is one of the last two countries in the world, alongside Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic. Challenges such as security issues, vaccine hesitancy, and misinformation have slowed the progress of eradication efforts.



3 cops martyred, 4 injured as unknown assailants open fire on police vehicle in GB's Diامر minister

NEWS DESK: Three cops were martyred and four others were injured on Saturday after unknown assailants opened fire on a police vehicle in Gilgit-Baltistan's Diامر district, a caretaker minister said.

The police team was on its way back from

Thor village after destroying poppy cultivation when unidentified assailants opened indiscriminate fire on the vehicle. Caretaker Home Minister Sajid Baig told Dawn.

As a result, three police officials were martyred and four others, including an officer, were injured.

The police team was on its way back from

Thor village after destroying poppy cultivation when unidentified assailants opened indiscriminate fire on the vehicle. Caretaker Home Minister Sajid Baig told Dawn.

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As a result, three police officials were martyred and four others, including an officer, were injured.

Shabbir Ahmed Mir, spokesperson for the chief minister, told Dawn that a deputy superintendent of police (DSP) was also injured in the incident.

Every year, the poppy crop is harvested in the area to prepare opium, while police conduct operations to destroy the crops.

Separately, in multiple tehsils of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa — including Barani tehsil in Bajaur, Bittani subdivision of Lakki Marwat district, Mohmand tribal district and mountainous areas of Kaza tehsil in Swabi — the police had destroyed the poppy crops.