



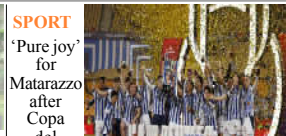
BALUCHISTAN
Quetta Railway Police Foils Iranian Currency...
Page No 5



INTERNATIONAL
Blue Origin lands reused rocket booster for first time
Page No 3



NATIONAL
CM Maryam approves Punjab's first sky glass...
Page No 8



SPORT
'Pure joy' for Matarazzo after Copa del Rey triumph
Page No 7

First Digital, Print Daily of Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan.

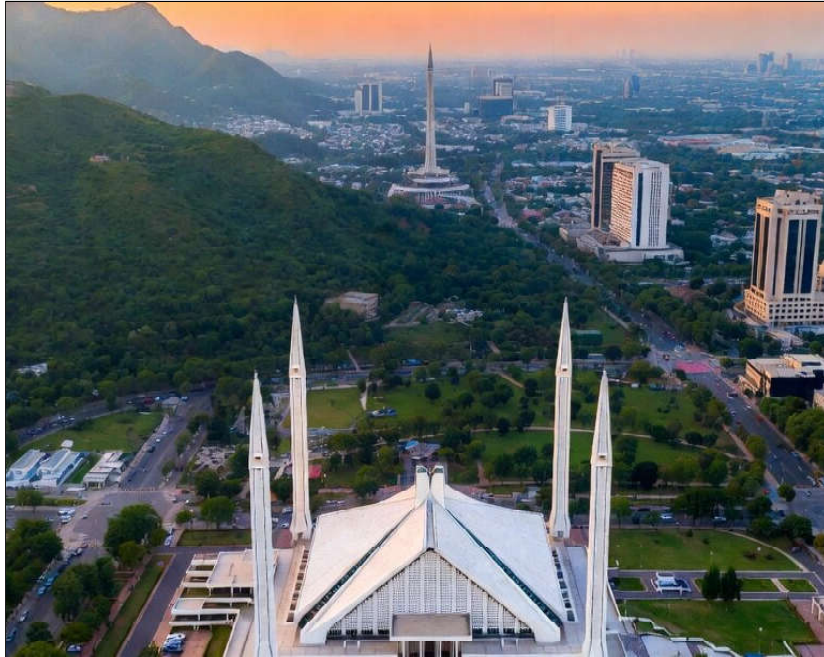
QUETTA VOICE

Rs. 10.00 Vol. VII: No: 189

Email address: dquettavoice@gmail.com
Website: www.quettavoice.com

Tuesday 21, April, 2026

Islamabad Tightens Security as US-Iran Talks Loom, Naqvi Meets US Envoy



Zeshan Ahmed:

Pakistan has stepped up high-level security preparations in the capital ahead of a expected second round of US-Iran talks, as Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held key discussions with US Charge d'Affaires Natalie Baker at the US Embassy in Islamabad.

The meeting focused on regional security dynamics, Pakistan-US relations, and arrangements for the visiting American delegation. Officials confirmed that "foolproof" security measures have been finalized to ensure the safety of foreign dignitaries arriving for the Islamabad talks, which follow an earlier round that concluded without a formal agreement. Islamabad Has Been Placed on High

Alert. According to the Ministry of Interior, Naqvi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to facilitating dialogue and expressed hope for a successful outcome in the upcoming negotiations. The

US envoy, in turn, appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in easing regional tensions and supporting diplomatic engagement between Washington and Tehran.

The talks come after US President Donald Trump announced that a delegation would arrive in Islamabad for renewed negotiations with Iran, signaling continued diplomatic efforts despite ongoing disagreements, particularly over the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, Islamabad has been placed on high alert, with strict traffic and security measures enforced across the city. The Red Zone and Extended Red Zone have been completely sealed, while major arteries including the Expressway from Koral to Zero Point and parts of Srinagar Highway face closures or intermittent suspensions.

M1, M2, and M3 Temporarily Closed

Authorities have banned the entry of heavy traffic into the capital, urging transporters to avoid routes to Islamabad. Several motorways, including M1, M2, and M3, have also been temporarily closed to public transport, although private vehicles are permitted under regulated movement.

Residents have been advised to use alternate routes such as Ninth Avenue, Margalla Road, and Rawal Road to navigate between Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Police have urged citizens to stay updated through official communication channels, including social media and FM 92.4, to avoid disruptions.

Senior officials, including FIA Director General Dr Usman Anwar, Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf, Inspector General of Police Ali Nasir Rizvi, and Deputy Commissioner Irfan Memon, were also present during the briefing.

With Islamabad once again hosting sensitive diplomatic engagements, Pakistan's role as a regional mediator remains in focus, even as geopolitical tensions persist between the United States and Iran.

Balochistan Govt Approves Lawyer Welfare Reforms, Medical Coverage



WEBDESK:

Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti chaired a high-level meeting with a joint delegation of the Pakistan Bar Council and Balochistan Bar Council, focusing on lawyer welfare, legal sector reforms, and improving access to justice in Balochistan.

The meeting resulted in key decisions aimed at strengthening lawyer facilities and welfare.

The provincial government approved enhanced medical coverage for lawyers to improve healthcare access, while also agreeing to provide subsidized chambers at Municipal Plaza.

Additional transport initiatives, including pink scooters, shuttle carts, buses, and pink vans, will be introduced to facilitate the legal community.

Officials also shared progress on major initiatives such as the digital library project and the Lawyers Welfare Housing Scheme.

Both designed to modernize legal infrastructure and support the legal fraternity in Balochistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti emphasized that lawyer welfare

remains a top government priority, noting that better facilities for lawyers would directly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to resolving lawyers' issues through practical measures and ensuring timely completion of all welfare projects in collaboration with the legal community.

The meeting was attended by key legal representatives, including Munir Ahmed Kakar, Nadir Chalgari, Ayaz Mandokhail, Najeeb Kakar, and Azal Hamri, along with senior government officials.

Balochistan Terror Attacks, Accidents Leave Seven Dead, Fifteen Injured

Qassem Shah:

In the last 24 hours, Balochistan has been struck by a series of tragic incidents involving terrorism, shootings, landmine explosions, and traffic accidents.

These events have claimed the lives of seven people, including police personnel, and left more than fifteen others injured.

In Khuzdar's Baghiana Bajoi area, unidentified armed men attacked a police party.

The assault resulted in the martyrdom of a police officer and a lady constable, while the Additional SHO and other officers sustained injuries.

Following the attack, police and security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation.

In another incident within the same district, armed men targeted

a private mobile company's tower and machinery, causing severe damage to the installations.

In Mastung's Dashi Tehsil, a clash between security forces and militants led to the martyrdom of SP Saryab's reader, Rahmatullah Khilji.

Meanwhile, in Dera Bugti's Lanjoo area, a landmine explosion killed Mohib Ali, son of Jafar Chakarani.

Traffic accidents also added to the toll.

At Dhammad Cross, a collision between a Mazda truck and a car claimed two lives.

In Quetta's Chashma Achozai Hinna Bypass, a speeding vehicle collided with a Zaran rickshaw, killing 15-year-old Nasiba Bibi on the spot and injuring several others who were rushed to hospital.

Other fatalities were reported in different districts.

In Duki, an Afghan citizen named Mansoor, son of Shah Wali, died due to electrocution inside a coal mine.

In Dera Allah Yar, a firing incident claimed the life of Ghulam Qadir. In Nasirabad's Mangoli area, a domestic dispute ended in tragedy when a husband shot and killed his wife.

All injured individuals have been shifted to hospitals, with some reported to be in critical condition. Police have registered cases for all incidents and initiated investigations.

Security forces are conducting raids in various areas to apprehend the attackers and perpetrators involved in these crimes.

This wave of violence and accidents highlights the ongoing challenges of law and order in Balochistan, where both terrorism and everyday tragedies continue to claim innocent lives.



QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Trump's Peace Plan: Legitimising Israel's Occupation

Editorial: A Peace agreement often loses its credibility when it fails to recognize the rights of the oppressed. This is the case with President Trump's much-surfaced Gaza peace plan. Far from being a genuine step toward peace, it presents a surrender document that legitimizes Israel's long-standing occupation of Palestine. Sadly, this so-called peace plan was endorsed by major Muslim countries, including Pakistan.

While standing with Trump, Netanyahu, accused of war crimes, accepted the plan and also threatened to finish the job if Hamas does not accept the plan wholeheartedly. However, outrage sparked among various analysts when Netanyahu claimed victory in Hebrew language at Tel Aviv. The question arises: How can Trump propose a plan for peace without involving an international arbitrator—the United Nations Organisation? Critics have rejected this plan on various grounds.

First, the plan has no two-state solution. In fact, it blurs the possibility of an independent Palestinian state in the future. Sadly, Netanyahu has already repudiated the idea of an independent state. Also, President Trump called Palestine recognition by France, Britain, Canada, and Spain a reward to those who have helped the United States has stopped Israel from occupying the West Bank,



but some government officials of Netanyahu intended to do so.

Second, Hamas and the Palestine National Authority, the only representatives of Gaza and the West Bank, have been eliminated in the process. Even the United States barred the Palestinian Authority from entering New York during the UNGA annual session. It reflects the colonial plan because peace is mutual; it cannot be imposed at the dictate of aggressors.

Zahid Hussain in his essay pointed out that it practically brings to an end the concept of a Palestinian state.

Third, in the post-war administration, both Hamas and PA have no share. The proposed plan contains the demilitarization of Hamas. They can live in peaceful coexistence after getting amnesty, and also safe passage will be given to those who want to exit. What kind of peace is this, where those who suffer have

no voice in the decisions that shape their future? This is total surrender to be forced on the group.

Fourth, this official instrument lost its credibility when the UN was excluded. It discredits the international organization. Although the question are raised about the ineffective role of the UN—unable to stop genocide—its sanctity must prevail. Critics always blamed the United States. For instance, every time

US vetoed a resolution to stop Israel's evil deeds.

Fifth, Hamas has been given the ultimatum of 72 hours to accept the plan. It is not a plan but a surrender charter for the group. It means Hamas has no choice but to go with the plan. They are not consulted on their fate.

The Trump-Netanyahu plan has fortified Israel further. It openly advocates for Greater Israel. Sixth, this plan also

provoked worldwide criticism.

Seventh, no future guarantee is mentioned in the proposed framework. It fails to prevent Israel from occupying. Most important, the aggressor's accountability has not been outlined. In fact, Israel has impunity in its every action. The President assured Tel Aviv that they can do what they want if Hamas rejects the plan.

Eighth, no recognition, no peace. Durable

peace hinges on the recognition of Palestine. Both the US and Israel have rejected recognition. Seemingly, they have no plan to recognize Palestine in the near future. The record of history demonstrates that illegal occupation and peace cannot move together. Peace remains impossible without an end to illegal occupation.

On the positive side of the plan, if this project is implemented, it will end ruthless killing and Gaza genocide. The aid blockade will be drawn. The supporters of this plan also cited the same reason. The deputy prime minister, Ishaq Dar, also said that the first priority of Pakistan is to end uncontrolled killing of Gazans. He further said that we are on a bid to remove all Netanyahu's excuses to continue war.

In the end, occupation, annexation, and illegal settlements cannot run with peace. Two states are the only answer to long-term peace. This controversial plan is biased and destined to crumble.

Gazans cannot be left to the mercy of warmongers. It is a wake-up call for the United States and the World to let Gazans live a free life in their own independent state. Netanyahu's transgression must not go with impunity. The only solution lies in an independent Palestinian state.

The writer can be contacted through: dinzaad19@gmail.com

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 replaced by the bricks and cement

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

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

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

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 a green economy,

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

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,

chaos and pollution. We need a green economy,



ness 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 increased, 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/fixed by

Baba, Atta shad, Asher Jallil 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 once called as "mass" 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

Quetta has a better environment, rich culture, manageable population

Uncertainty prevails over Islamabad talks amid mixed signals from Iran

NEWS DESK: Uncertainty prevailed on Monday over whether the United States and Iran would hold a second round of direct talks, as mixed signals emerged from Tehran amid intensifying tensions with Washington, even as Islamabad prepared to host the two sides.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Bagheri said Tehran has yet to decide on whether to attend the next round of talks with the US.

His statement came after Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said earlier today that the US was continuing negotiations with the US but remains ready to take "necessary measures" amid fears of renewed escalation.

The statements coming from Iran are reminiscent of Tehran's stance ahead of the first round of Islamabad talks, when Iran demanded that its "preconditions" be met in order for the dialogue to proceed.

Iran's leaders were reiterating that stance even hours before the Iranian delegation landed in Pakistan, as a last-minute hurdle over Israeli strikes in Lebanon was eased.

Although a US delegation is expected to arrive in the capital tomorrow, according to US

President Donald Trump, there is no confirmation so far that talks will be held.

The possibility has been cast in doubt after Trump said the US Navy had targeted an Iranian ship attempting to evade its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, although both sides offered differing accounts of the incident.

Iran again closed the strait on Saturday, saying it would not reopen the maritime trade route until the US ended its blockade of Iranian ports.

Addressing a weekly press briefing in Tehran on Monday, Bagheri said, "As of now, while I am at your service, we have no plans for the next round of negotiations, and no decision has been made in this regard."

The foreign ministry spokesman elaborated that the US was not serious about pursuing dialogue, citing "violations" of their two-week ceasefire.

"While claiming diplomacy and readiness for negotiations, the US is carrying out behaviours that do not in any way indicate seriousness in pursuing a diplomatic process," he said.

He highlighted that the US attack on the Iranian cargo ship early on Monday, the US naval blockade on Iranian ports, and delays in



implementing a ceasefire in Lebanon were not "clear violations of the ceasefire."

"Regarding the issue of transferring enriched uranium, neither during this period of negotiations nor before has transferring it to the United States been discussed," Bagheri said.

"We are negotiating, but we are prepared for the necessary measures," said Ghalibaf.

He asserted that the ongoing conflict with the US and Israel began "through American deception in the middle of negotiations" and added that Iran had learned from the 12-day war in June 2025 and remained prepared for any future conflict.

Islamabad prepares as US team expected

Meantime, Islamabad continues to set the stage for a possible second round of negotiations between Washington and Tehran.

Extraordinary security measures are in place in the federal capital and the garrison city, with reports that advance teams from the US for security arrangements arrived in Islamabad on Sunday.

Subsequently, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with US Charge d'Affaires Natalie Baker today to discuss security arrangements.

A US Air Force Boeing C-17A Globemaster III aircraft

prepares to land at the Nur Khan airbase in Rawalpindi on April 20, 2026 — AFP

More than 10,000 security personnel, including commandos and snipers, had been deployed across Islamabad and Rawalpindi, besides separate arrangements at the Islamabad International Airport.

Authorities sealed the high-security Red Zone in the capital and other key routes, besides suspending public transport in the twin cities.

Two luxury hotels were also vacated for the expected guests.

"My Representatives are going to Islamabad, Pakistan — They will be there tomorrow evening, for Negotiations," Trump posted on Truth Social on Sunday.

But it remained unclear who would head the US team.

During the first round of talks, US Vice President JD Vance led the delegation.

But this time, there was no clarity whether he would be coming to Islamabad, particularly due to contradictory statements by the US administration.

Initially, Trump said his vice president would not lead the delegation "only because" of security concerns.

"JD's great," he told ABC News. The White House quickly flipped the script when asked about those comments.

"Security of the Strait of Hormuz is not free"

Aref's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref also warned earlier in the day that security in the Strait of Hormuz cannot be guaranteed if Tehran's oil exports remain restricted, referring to the US's naval blockade of Iranian ports.

Major 7.5-magnitude quake hits off Japan, tsunami warning issued

NEWS DESK: An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.5 struck off the northeastern coast of Japan on Monday, as authorities urged residents to stay away from coastal areas where tsunami waves of up to three metres (9.84 ft) were expected.

The tremor had an epicentre in the Pacific Ocean and was 10 km deep, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

The biggest waves were expected in Iwate, Aomori and Hokkaido prefectures, authorities said.

Speaking to reporters, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said the government had set up an emergency task force and urged citizens in the affected areas to evacuate to safety.

Broadcaster NHK showed ships sailing out of Hachinohe port in Hokkaido in anticipation of the waves, as an alert "Tsunami Evacuate!" flashed across the screen.

Meanwhile, bullet train services in Aomori at the northern tip of Japan's main Honshu island were halted due to the tremors, Kyodo news agency reported.

The quake measured an upper 5° on Japan's seismic intensity scale — strong enough to make it difficult for people to move around.

In many cases, unreinforced concrete-block walls collapse.

Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone countries, with a tremor occurring at least every five minutes.

Located in the "Ring of Fire" of volcanoes and oceanic trenches partly encircling the Pacific Basin, Japan accounts for about 20% of the world's earthquakes of magnitude 6.0 or more.

There are no nuclear power plants currently in operation in Hokkaido and Tohoku regions but Hokkaido Electric Power Co and Tohoku Electric Power Co have a number of shutdown nuclear power plants there.

Tohoku Electric said it was checking the impact of the earthquake and tsunami on its Onagawa nuclear power plant.



Blue Origin lands reused rocket booster for first time

NEWS DESK: Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin on Sunday that its New Glenn rocket booster had touched down after launch, marking its first landing, marking its first reuse and intensifying its rivalry with Elon Musk's SpaceX.

The rocket, which had a launch window of 6:45am to 12:19pm ET on Sunday, lifted off at around 7:25am ET (11:25 GMT) from Cape Canaveral, Florida, and the booster touched down in a single mission.

New Glenn carried the SpaceX's BlueBird 7 satellite to low-Earth orbit in a flight that marks a pivotal step for the company.

The mission was key to demonstrating that New Glenn, a 29-storey, heavy-lift rocket, has a reliable booster reuse capability and can compete with the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

The rocket's booster, dubbed "Never Tell Me the Odds," previously flew on the NG-2 mission in November and was recovered, setting up this week's milestone attempt.

The booster's name is a nod to a Han Solo line in the film Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back. Following a series of delays earlier this month, the mission comes amid a surge of activity in the space sector, including the successful Nasa Artemis II lunar flyby that took humans further

from Earth than any had traveled before.

Blue Origin had said in November that it would build a bigger, more powerful variant of its New Glenn rocket, called New Glenn 94.

Satellite constellation New Glenn is designed for the higher end of the commercial launch market with a seven-metre (23-foot) nose cone allowing it to carry bulkier payloads, including multiple satellites in a single mission.

"We foundationally developed New Glenn for what we think space is going to look like 50 to 100 years from now," said New Glenn Vice President Jordan Charles.

A S T

SpaceMobile's BlueBird 7, carried into orbit on NG-3, is the second satellite in its next-generation Block 2 constellation.

The satellite features what the company describes as the largest commercial communications array deployed in low-Earth orbit.

Designed to compete directly with smartphones, the satellite is part of an effort to build a space-based cellular broadband network, similar to Amazon's Leo or SpaceX's Starlink.

SpaceX's Blue Origin is developing a massive stainless-steel Starship-based Human Landing System, while Blue Origin is developing a more traditional Blue Moon lander and aims to achieve a pivotal uncrewed soft lunar landing (Mark 1) this summer.

SpaceX agency reported earlier this month confidentially filed for a US IPO targeting a valuation of about \$1.75 trillion.

SpaceX and Blue Origin, in the latest competition between the billionaire-run companies, have been racing to help return humans to the moon ahead of a planned crewed mission by China in 2030 by designing the lunar landers Nasa will use.

SpaceX is building a massive stainless-steel Starship-based Human Landing System, while Blue Origin is developing a more traditional Blue Moon lander and aims to achieve a pivotal uncrewed soft lunar landing (Mark 1) this summer.



US seizes Iranian-flagged cargo ship near Hormuz

NEWS DESK: President Donald Trump said the US forcibly seized an Iranian-flagged cargo ship that tried to get around a naval blockade near the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday, the first such interception since the blockade of Iranian ports began last week.

Trump on social media said the ship was warned by a US Navy guided missile destroyer in the Gulf of Oman to stop, but it did not.

He said the Navy "stopped them right in their tracks by blowing a hole in the engine room" and that US Marines had custody of the vessel, named Touka, and were "seeing what's on board!"

There was no immediate Iran comment. The news threw into question Trump's earlier announcement that US negotiators would head to Pakistan on Monday for another round of talks with Iran.

That had raised hopes of extending a fragile ceasefire set to expire by Wednesday, even as Washington and Tehran remain in a

standoff over the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has not confirmed it would attend. While its chief negotiator, parliament speaker Mohammed Bagher Qalibaf said in an interview aired on state television late Saturday that "there will be no retreat in the field of diplomacy," he acknowledged a wide gap remained between the sides.

Meanwhile, Iranian officials earlier on Sunday held firm that ships wouldn't pass while the US blockade remained in effect. "It is impossible for others to pass through the Strait of Hormuz while we cannot," Qalibaf said.

In his post about talks, Trump accused Iran of violating the ceasefire by firing at ships transiting the strait. Iran has called the US blockade a violation, and foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei on Sunday

called it an "act of aggression."

Iran had announced the strait's reopening after a 10-day truce between Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon took hold on Friday.

But Iran said it would continue enforcing its restrictions there after Trump said the US blockade "will remain in full force" until Tehran reaches a deal with the United States.

with those detained later swapped in exchange for Russians jailed abroad.

Detentions of Western citizens, including Ukrainians, are much rarer.

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said the woman, born in 1969, had been dragged into the alleged plot by a citizen from a Central Asian country, who was working on orders from Ukraine.

She was detained and found with an improvised explosive device in her bag in the Caucasus city of Pyatigorsk, the FSB said.

The FSB said it had "prevented a terrorist attack planned by the Kyiv regime against a law enforcement facility in the Stavropol region, involving a German citizen born in 1969," the agency said in a statement.

The FSB said the device — which contained an explosive charge equivalent to 1.5 kilograms (three pounds) of TNT — was supposed to be detonated remotely, killing the German woman.

The blast was prevented by electronic jamming the FSB added.

"Radical ideology" A man from an unidentified Central Asian state, "born in 1997 and "a supporter of radical ide-

Russia arrests German woman in alleged bomb plot

ology", was found and arrested near the targeted site, it added.

The pair faces life in prison on terrorist charges.

There was no immediate reaction to the allegations in Kyiv or Berlin.

Video footage of the purported arrest published on state media showed armed Russian security agents approach the woman, who was lying face down, dressed in all black, in a car park.

Another video showed masked plainclothes agents pulling a man into a station, followed by a controlled explosion of the backpack.



Over 2.254m children vaccinated during first six days of anti-polio drive in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): The on-going anti-polio campaign in Lahore, launched under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has achieved significant progress, with over 2.254 million children vaccinated during the first six days of the drive.

The progress was reviewed in a meeting co-chaired by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Uzma Kardar and Deputy Commis-

sioner Lahore Muhammad Ali Jaz. The meeting was attended by ADCG, CEO Health, all Assistant Commissioners and DDHOs.

The meeting was briefed that polio teams visited over 1.57 million households to administer drops to children under five years of age. During the first catch-up day, tracing of missed children was carried out, while field surveillance would continue on the second catch-up day to ensure maximum coverage.

The World Health Organization termed the campaign coverage satisfactory, while no errors were reported in field operations.

Speaking on the occasion, Uzma Kardar stressed that benchmark targets must be achieved at all costs, warning of accountability in case of failure. She directed DDHOs to ensure strict field monitoring and reiterated that the campaign must be made successful in every possible way.

DU Muhammad Ali Jaz emphasized that accurate data reporting was crucial to present the true picture of the campaign, adding that no child under five years of age should be left unvaccinated. He urged citizens to cooperate with teams to ensure complete coverage.

Both officials highlighted that administering polio drops to every child under five was a national responsibility.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan in a meeting with I.E. Dr. Omer Hussain Oba to discuss expanding Pakistan-Ethiopia trade, joint ventures, and tourism cooperation, with focus on industrial collaboration, direct connectivity, and new business opportunities across African markets.

PBM, NOWPDP distribute Rs1m aid, wheelchairs among special persons

SUKKUR (INP): On the directives of Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Senator Captain (Retired) Shaheen Khalid Butt, and Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Sindh, Abdul Haqeeb Mahesar, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Sukkur and a social organization NOWPDP jointly organized an event for the welfare of special persons. The event was held at the Special Education School located in the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Complex in Sukkur on Sunday.

Fresh spell of rain, hailstorms affect several regions of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): A fresh spell of rain and hailstorms has affected several regions of Pakistan, including Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Kashmir.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rainfall was recorded in Swat Valley, Karak, Malakand, Abbottabad, and Mansehra. Snowfall in Galiyat and Naran Valley has significantly lowered temperatures in these areas.

Commissioner Sukkur, Abid Saleem Qureshi, participated as the chief guest. Commissioner Qureshi said that special persons are a part of our society, and it is the responsibility of the government and administrative institutions to provide them guidance, welfare, and education.

Rescue teams, police, and local administration moved affected tourists to safer locations overnight. However, intermittent rainfall continues, and landslides have blocked parts of the Neelum Highway near Muzaffarabad.

Rain was also recorded in upper areas of Ziarat Valley, as well as Toba Achakzai and Toba Kakari. Meanwhile, a landslide near Lachi Nala has temporarily blocked the Karakoram Highway. The Pakistan Meteorological Department has forecast further rain in the country's upper regions.

Religious scholars issue comprehensive code of conduct for Hajj, Umrah pilgrims

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Ulema Council, Dar-ul-Itfa Pakistan and the International Tazemm-e-Haramain Sharifain Council on Sunday have issued a comprehensive code of conduct for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, urging strict adherence to Saudi regulations and preservation of the sanctity of the holy sites.

The code further cautioned against engaging in remembrance of Allah, recitation of Durood Sharif and Talbiyah, especially during travel delays or crowded situations.

The scholars urged pilgrims to strictly follow the instructions of their group leaders, particularly during movement between Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah, and to avoid haste that could lead to accidents.

The guidelines were announced at a press conference in Lahore led by Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Secretary General of the International Tazemm-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, along with prominent scholars and religious leaders.

Addressing the gathering, Ashrafi emphasized that pilgrims must respect the sanctity of the Two Holy Mosques and fully comply with the rules and regulations issued by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah.

Pilgrims were also urged to avoid engaging in political activities during Hajj and not to become part of any such efforts, warning that such actions could disrupt the peaceful environment of the holy sites.

The scholars advised pilgrims to purify their intentions solely for the sake of Allah Almighty and avoid actions driven by showmanship, including unnecessary photography and videography during acts of worship.



ISLAMABAD: Frontier Constabulary Police personnel walking on express highway in capital city due to security purpose. Iran is not currently planning to attend talks with the United States, state media said, after President Donald Trump ordered US negotiators to travel to Pakistan on April 20, just days before a ceasefire in the Middle East expires.

Religious cleric Engineer Mirza narrowly survives gun attack in Jhelum

JHELUM (INP): Religious cleric and lecturer Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza narrowly survived a gun attack in Jhelum on Sunday after an unidentified assailant opened fire outside his academy, with police killing the attacker in retaliatory action.

Medical staff later confirmed that his condition was stable and out of danger.

District police authorities confirmed that a formal investigation has been launched to determine the motive behind the attack, which remains unclear at this stage.

The incident occurred outside the Duran and Sunnat Research Academy, located near GTS Chowk within the jurisdiction of the City Police Station in Jhelum. According to police officials, the cleric was present at the academy where he regularly delivers lectures, when the attacker approached armed with a 9mm pistol.

Following the incident, a heavy contingent of police was deployed to the area, and further tightened. Authorities indicated that the existing security arrangements in the area were reinforced to prevent similar incidents.

Police officials said the identity of the attacker has not yet been established. Efforts are underway to verify the suspect's identity, with assistance being sought from the National Database and Registration Authority. Investigators are also examining whether the attacker had any accomplices or links to a wider network.

Police spokesperson Kashif Kiani said the suspect entered the academy's vicinity, and was shot on the ground, and suddenly opened fire. Security personnel stationed at the site immediately responded, attempting to stop the armed individual before returning fire.

The cleric has also previously been detained over his public remarks and, at times, restricted from delivering speeches amid concerns over potential unrest.

Delay of PMDC crucial meeting leaves several important matters pending

ISLAMABAD (INP): The delay of a crucial meeting of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has left several important matters pending, including employee appeals, approvals of new medical colleges, and decisions in a high-profile corruption case. According to sources, the corruption case related to Bahawalpur Medical College remains unresolved despite clear directions issued by the Islamabad High Court two months ago.

APHC-AJK urges UN, rights bodies to secure dignified release of Shabbir Shah

ISLAMABAD (INP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter has strongly condemned the continued detention of senior Hurriyat leader Shabbir Ahmed Shah despite being granted bail by Indian courts, terming it a blatant violation of judicial orders.

APHC-AJK Convention Ghulam Muhammad Safi, in a statement issued in Islamabad, criticized Indian authorities for implicating Shah in another fabricated case from 1996, allegedly to prevent his release.

He said the case, originally registered on July 17, 1996, at Shergarhi Police Station Srinagar, has been deliberately delaying the matter until the formation of a new council to avoid accountability. It is also claimed that recommendations from the Prime Minister's Inspection Commission and the Intelligence Bureau have not been implemented.



RAWALPINDI: A US Air Force Boeing C-17A military aircraft prepares to land at Pakistan's Nur Khan military airbase in Rawalpindi on April 20, 2026. Iran is not currently planning to attend talks with the United States, state media said, after President Donald Trump ordered US negotiators to travel to Pakistan on April 20, just days before a ceasefire in the Middle East expires.

BJP regime seizes 58 schools in IIOJK, sparking education crisis

ISLAMABAD (INP): In Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), the BJP-led administration has forcibly seized control of at least 58 schools linked to Jamaat-e-Islami and its Falah-e-Aam Trust, triggering alarm and outrage over what many see as a direct assault on the region's already fragile education system.

Notably, the BJP-led Indian government banned IIOJK Jamaat-e-Islami, a prominent socio-political organization, in February 2019.

Since then, Indian authorities have conducted raids, arrested several leaders, including the organization's chief Dr. Hameed Fayaz and spokesperson Advocate Zahid, and seized multiple properties belonging to the group.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the IIOJK administration under the New Delhi-installed Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today directed the takeover of management committees of these 58 schools, citing so-called adverse intelligence reports and the expiry of the schools' management validity.

The IIOJK school Education Department invoked notifications issued by India's Ministry of Home Affairs, which had declared Jamaat-e-Islami an unlawful association under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Officials said that these 58 functional schools were bound to be directly or indirectly affiliated with the Jamaat-e-Islami or its trust.

Deputy Commissioner Sinha was instructed to assume control of the institutions.

Kashmiri people, arguing that it reflects a broader attempt to continue in an effort to dismantle the organization's social and political network in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

It is pertinent to mention that schools and institutions run by the Falah-e-Aam Trust have for decades played a significant role in education, social development and moral training in Kashmiri society.

Kashmiri watch-dog and civil society voices have described the takeover of these educational institutions as an attack on the educational, religious and cultural identity of the Kashmiri people.

Quetta Railway Police Foils Iranian Currency Smuggling Attempts Worth Rs 2.26 Billion

News Desk
QUETTA: Railway Police Quetta Division successfully thwarted two major Iranian currency smuggling attempts within just two days, seizing foreign currency worth over Rs 2.26 billion and arresting two suspects during separate operations at Quetta Railway Station.



Quetta Railway Station. Authorities recovered Iranian currency worth Rs 560 million concealed beneath items in his shoulder bag. He also lacked legal authorization for carrying foreign currency.

According to officials, the first operation was conducted by a police team led by SHO Muhammad Shahbaz during routine checking on the Jaffar Express. The suspect, identified as Muhammad Zafar Iqbal from Nankana Sahib, was found transporting Iranian currency worth Rs 1.7 billion, cleverly hidden inside date boxes.

The accused failed to produce any legal documents or licenses and was immediately taken into custody. In a second operation carried out on April 19, Railway Police intercepted another suspect, Syed Anjum Raza Kazma from Lahore Cantt, during a security check at

Quetta Railway Station. Authorities recovered Iranian currency worth Rs 560 million concealed beneath items in his shoulder bag. He also lacked legal authorization for carrying foreign currency.

In a second operation carried out on April 19, Railway Police intercepted another suspect, Syed Anjum Raza Kazma from Lahore Cantt, during a security check at

Quetta Railway Station. Authorities recovered Iranian currency worth Rs 560 million concealed beneath items in his shoulder bag. He also lacked legal authorization for carrying foreign currency.

Quetta Railway Station. Authorities recovered Iranian currency worth Rs 560 million concealed beneath items in his shoulder bag. He also lacked legal authorization for carrying foreign currency.

Quetta Railway Station. Authorities recovered Iranian currency worth Rs 560 million concealed beneath items in his shoulder bag. He also lacked legal authorization for carrying foreign currency.

Balochistan Govt Approves Lawyer Welfare Reforms, Medical Coverage

Web Desk:
QUETTA: Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chaired a high-level meeting with a joint delegation of the Pakistan Bar Council and Balochistan Bar Council, focusing on lawyer welfare, legal sector reforms,

chambers at Municipal Plaza. Additional transport initiatives, including pink scooters, shuttle carts, buses, and pink vans, will be introduced to facilitate the legal community.

Officials also shared progress on ensuring timely completion of welfare projects in collaboration with the legal community.



for initiatives such as the digital library project and the Lawyers Welfare Housing Scheme, both designed to modernize legal infrastructure and support the legal fraternity in Balochistan.

The meeting resulted in key decisions aimed at strengthening lawyer facilities and welfare.

ensuring timely completion of welfare projects in collaboration with the legal community.

Jafarabad DC Reviews SAP Record Corrections, Orders Swift Resolution of Pending Cases

JAFARABAD: Deputy Commissioner Jafarabad, Khalid Khan, chaired an important meeting to review cases related to the correction of date-of-birth entries in the SAP system, emphasizing the need for accuracy and transparency in official records.



The DC directed that all cases must be resolved promptly on merit and with full transparency, warning that negligence or delays will not be tolerated.

Detailed Briefing on SAP Data Issues The meeting was at-

ended by officers and staff from various departments. Officials presented a comprehensive briefing on: Accuracy of records in the SAP system Challenges faced in data correction Status of pending cases Departments also shared updates on their performance and progress.

Importance of Accurate Records Addressing the meet-

ing. Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan stressed that accurate and authentic information in government records is crucial, especially for fundamental data like dates of birth.

He further instructed officers to: Thoroughly verify each case Ensure all required documentation is complete Prevent future complications Strict Monitoring and Accountability The Deputy Commissioner made it clear that ensuring data accuracy in the SAP system is a top priority for the district administration.

Loralai Administration Cracks Down on Unsafe Marble Transport, Orders Strict Enforcement

LORALAI: On the special directives of Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Muhammad Hashim Shuja, Assistant Commissioner Loralai Nadeem Akram chaired an important meeting with marble factory owners to address the rising incidents caused by unsafe transportation of marble-loaded trucks.

Concerns Over Fatal Accidents During the meeting, serious concern was expressed over loss of lives due to overloaded and poorly secured trucks transporting marble.

The Assistant Commissioner stated that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, fully comply with safety protocols. Avoid overloading under all circumstances. He warned that strict action, including fines and legal proceedings, will be taken against those violating safety regulations. Commitment from Industry Stakeholders Factory owners assured the administration that many trucks operate without proper safety measures, leading to frequent road accidents. He termed the situation unacceptable and called for immediate corrective actions. Strict Instructions to Factory Owners To ensure loading remains within legal limits, full

TENDER NOTICE
The Shahn Muhammad Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Institute of Cardiology invites bids from eligible bidders for supply of various items. TSE-2520041021741 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. T/Fee 1000 PKR

ing. Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan stressed that accurate and authentic information in government records is crucial, especially for fundamental data like dates of birth. He further instructed officers to: Thoroughly verify each case Ensure all required documentation is complete Prevent future complications Strict Monitoring and Accountability The Deputy Commissioner made it clear that ensuring data accuracy in the SAP system is a top priority for the district administration. He announced that performance will be regularly reviewed, and strict action will be taken against officials found negligent to ensure transparency and improvement in the system.

ing. Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan stressed that accurate and authentic information in government records is crucial, especially for fundamental data like dates of birth. He further instructed officers to: Thoroughly verify each case Ensure all required documentation is complete Prevent future complications Strict Monitoring and Accountability The Deputy Commissioner made it clear that ensuring data accuracy in the SAP system is a top priority for the district administration. He announced that performance will be regularly reviewed, and strict action will be taken against officials found negligent to ensure transparency and improvement in the system.

TENDER NOTICE
The Assistant Director Police invites bids from eligible bidders for supply of following items. TSE-2520041024781 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. Tender Fee 1,000 PKR

TENDER NOTICE
The Irrigation Division intends to carry out the following Development Work for the year 2025-26. Bidders are invited to submit proposals on composite schedule of rates 2023 GOB from the PEC Registered Government Contractors. Note in All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered at Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. Tender Fee: PKR 1000 and Earnest Money 2%.

درخواستیں مطلوب ہیں
The Assistant Director Police invites bids from eligible bidders for supply of following items. TSE-2520041024781 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. Tender Fee 1,000 PKR

India, South Korea plan \$50bn trade push with new deals

NEWS DESK: India and South Korea said on Monday that they would boost their economic ties by expanding cooperation in energy, critical minerals, shipbuilding, semiconductors and steel as they seek to double their trade to \$50 billion by 2030.

New Delhi and Seoul also agreed to resume and step up negotiations to give new energy to their 2010 trade agreement as India wanted their trade to be more balanced and South Korea wanted greater market access to the world's fastest-growing major economy.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung is in India for a three-day visit, the first South Korean presidential state visit to the country in eight years.

"We decided to upgrade the framework of economic cooperation between the two countries to create a new engine for shared growth," Lee told reporters after talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two countries created a ministerial-level economic cooperation committee for the first time, Lee said, adding that they would strengthen cooperation in areas such as nuclear power plants, clean energy as well as trade and investment.

With the US-Israel war on Iran squeezing global energy supplies, India and South Korea would also continue to cooperate to ensure the stable supply of energy resources and key raw materials such as naphtha, Lee added.

Modi said Lee's visit was extremely significant and that the two countries had taken important decisions to boost two-way trade to \$50bn by 2030 from around \$27bn at present.

Today, we are laying the foundation for the success story of the next decade," Modi said, as he held talks with his South Korean counterpart, Yeo Han-ko, and discussed ways to resume and revamp the trade pact and explored opportunities to deepen cooperation in the areas of industry, green energy and digital trade.

Lee will attend a joint business forum conference later on Monday where some 250 South Korean participants are expected, including leaders of household names in India such as Samsung Electronics, Hyundai Motor and LG Group, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said.

The two sides also plan to sign a total of 20 private-sector memoranda of understanding on the sidelines of the forum, covering areas including shipbuilding, digital technology and energy, Yonhap said.

Separately, South Korea's POSCO Holdings said in a regulatory filing on Monday that its steelmaking unit plans to build a joint venture integrated steel plant with India's JSW in Odisha state.

POSCO's investment until end-2031 is expected to be about \$1.09bn, the filing said. The joint venture deal to set up a 6-million-ton-per-annum steel plant in Odisha was announced last week.

In a policy seminar at South Korea's parliament last week, Maeng Hyun-chul, a research fellow at Seoul National University's Asia Centre, noted India's longstanding complaint of a widening trade deficit with South Korea and said that political ties had not kept pace with commercial ties.

South Korea had a \$12.8bn trade surplus last year, with exports worth \$19.2bn and imports of \$6.4bn, according to Korea International Trade Association data.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung (right) shake hands during their meeting in New Delhi on Monday. The two leaders discussed ways to resume and revamp the trade pact and explored opportunities to deepen cooperation in the areas of industry, green energy and digital trade.

Govt signs IFC deal to roll out smart metres for 10 million power consumers

NEWS DESK: The Power Division and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) on Monday signed a Transaction Advisory Services agreement aimed at modernising Pakistan's electricity distribution system through large-scale smart metering, PTV reported.

Under the plan, around 10 million electricity consumers across the country will be equipped with smart metres. Officials said the initiative is expected to attract both local and foreign investment and support the transition toward a digital power system.

Driven by the prime minister's vision, the digital transformation of the power transmission and distribution system is being accelerated.

The programme forms part of broader power sector reforms designed to improve efficiency, reduce electricity theft, and enhance transparency in billing, the statement said.

Through an international competitive process, the cost of smart metres has been reduced by around 40 per cent. Installation of smart metres has been made mandatory for all new electricity connections, while traditional metres are being phased out as part of the shift toward a digital system, it added.

Officials stated that existing three-phase, commercial, and industrial connections will also be converted to smart metres in phases. Authorities said effective measures have been taken to address faulty metre issues, with the process being expedited following approval from the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority.

The rollout of smart metres is expected to improve recovery, reduce system losses, and enhance overall efficiency.

The initiative, approved in line with regulatory requirements, is expected to strengthen the financial stability of the power sector while improving recovery and reducing losses.

Excitement around Karachi Port

NEWS DESK: The world appears to be re-discovering Pakistan as it plays a mediating role in easing regional tensions and helping avert global recession. Disruptions to key sea routes and rising risks at established regional shipping hubs have begun to divert attention and some traffic towards the country's underutilised ports. Fiscal incentives announced in March have further supported a modest uptick in activity at local ports.

According to port operators and private sector sources tracking recent trends, tariff cuts of up to 60 per cent and the introduction of volume-linked rebates have incentivised shipping lines, boosting throughput at Pakistani ports by stimulating trade flows and improving the maritime sector.

While hard data is not yet available, anecdotal evidence points to a noticeable increase in vessel calls, with a rising number of ships at anchorage and growing demand for ancillary services such as bunkering.

The government announced a comprehensive package of fiscal incentives, effective March 18, 2026, to enhance the regional competitiveness of its ports.

Measures include tariff and cargo discounts, notably up to a 60pc reduction in port tariffs for vessels carrying at least 50pc transhipment cargo, and a 50pc discount on net cargo charges for large container ships at Karachi and Port Qasim.

Measures include a 5pc discount for green shipping on dry bulk exports, a 50pc reduction in transshipment charges at Port Qasim, and approval of a new ferry service connecting Pakistan with Iran and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Experts believe that timely measures, meaningful reforms and enhanced port capacity could finally allow Pakistan to harness the natural advantage of its geography.

This is not the first time Pakistan has abruptly come into global focus. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and

again after 9/11 in 2001, the country swiftly moved into the West's strategic orbit. In both instances, inflows of dollars fueled short-term growth spurts, but these proved unsustainable amid weak policies and fragile political and economic structures.

This time may be different. The goodwill appears to stem from Pakistan's own diplomatic positioning rather than from external shocks, and the country is not under direct military rule as it was in earlier phases.

Still, outcomes will hinge on the leadership's ability to convert this moment into durable gains.

Peacemaking's economic payback

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's genuine efforts and role as a global peacemaker are finally being taken seriously. Diplomacy is a two-way street, and Pakistan is indeed a prime beneficiary of peace amid the US-Israeli war on Iran.

This is not just because high international oil prices severely upend our fragile macroeconomic recovery and increase the odds of higher inflation, higher interest rates and rupee depreciation. It is also because political instability in Iran affects Pakistan domestically, as we host the second-most populous Shia community in the world.

More importantly, the conflict puts our ties with Arab nations in a quandary. On one hand, we have a very strong economic and political dependence on countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait. On the other, we share a permanent 900km border and a warm relationship with Iran. Previously, Iran had a closer relationship with India, but that changed following the India-Israel nexus triggered by the torpedoing

of an Iranian ship after joint naval exercises. India would rather befriend Israel for the long term. Meanwhile, Pakistan's relationship with the UAE does not seem as seamless as the bonds we share with Saudi Arabia, Iran or even the US.

Reports suggest it was Pakistan that acted as the vital peacemaker, warning the US that if Israel were to eliminate figures like Abbas Araghchi and Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, there would be no one left to talk to. This speaks volumes, as these two gentlemen spearheaded the Iranian delegation's peace ef-

orts by directly negotiating with the US team led by Vice President JD Vance. This is not normal courtesy or foreign policy; it is personal intervention to save lives, make permanent friends, win each other's forever trust, protect national prosperity and reduce the negative fallout of war on our friendly Arab neighbours.

The warm embrace Foreign Minister Araghchi gave Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Asim Munir upon his landing in Iran is not just symbolic – it reflects a lifesaving and welcoming cultivated personal relationship.

Similarly, President Trump's repeated

praises for Pakistan and his hosting of the army chief – publicly calling him a "great field marshal" and his "four-star field marshal" – have built a significant bridge. The personal attention from the duo of Sharif and Munir has developed a bond that must yield tangible benefits for Pakistan. We should remember that while Pakistan was initially hit with 19% tariffs compared with India's 25% (now 18%), the first Trump term saw a "Modi-Trump charm" that initially sidelined Pakistan before eventually welcoming Imran Khan. Now, the tide has turned.

Gold, silver prices drop across global and local markets

NEWS DESK: Gold and silver prices recorded an increase on Saturday in both international and local markets after declining on Friday, following a three-day upward trend in global and domestic markets.

According to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA), in the international bullion market, the price of gold fell by \$49 per ounce, settling at \$4,788.

According to the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Association (APGJA), in the local market, gold prices also recorded a significant drop.

The price per tola decreased by Rs4,900 to reach Rs501,162.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of gold declined by Rs4,201, settling at Rs429,665.

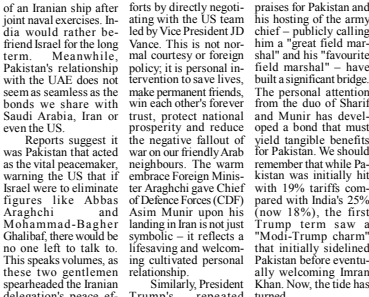
Silver prices also followed a downward trajectory.

The price per tola of silver fell by Rs145 to Rs8,417 while the price of 10 grams of silver dropped by Rs124, reaching Rs7,216.

Gold and silver prices rose by Rs3,858 to Rs433,866.

Silver prices also moved higher, with the per tola rate increasing by Rs118 to Rs8,562.

Similarly, the price of silver per 10 grams rose by Rs101 to Rs7,340.



Gold and silver prices recorded an increase on Saturday in both international and local markets after declining on Friday, following a three-day upward trend in global and domestic markets.



According to the All-Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA), in the international bullion market, the price of gold fell by \$49 per ounce, settling at \$4,788.

According to the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Association (APGJA), in the local market, gold prices also recorded a significant drop.

The price per tola decreased by Rs4,900 to reach Rs501,162.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of gold declined by Rs4,201, settling at Rs429,665.

Silver prices also followed a downward trajectory.

The price per tola of silver fell by Rs145 to Rs8,417 while the price of 10 grams of silver dropped by Rs124, reaching Rs7,216.

Gold and silver prices rose by Rs3,858 to Rs433,866.

Silver prices also moved higher, with the per tola rate increasing by Rs118 to Rs8,562.

Similarly, the price of silver per 10 grams rose by Rs101 to Rs7,340.

Babar's blistering century lights up PSL as Zalmi rout Gladiators

NEWS DESK: When the entire world desperately wants peace in these depressing times that have seen the stands here at the National Bank Stadium turn deserted, roaring cheers at cricketing venues in Pakistan have become a rarity.

However, when Babar Azam hits a century, when he does that after more than two years and 67 T20 innings, when he launches four cracking sixes in his knock during the high-pressure death overs, celebrations become inevitable.

The celebrations elude no one, surely not the Peshawar Zalmi players jumping up and down like kids in the team's dugout, not the VIP guests who populate the special boxes and galleries of the new building at the venue, not even

the Quetta Gladiators players who rushed to the middle to pat Babar's back when he completed the elusive three figures for the 12th time in the shortest format while sprinting back to the striker's end for a couple on the last ball of the Zalmi innings.

The captain's knock, accurate and powerful, exactly 100 not out coming off 52 balls, along



with Kusal Mendis 44-ball 83, boosted Zalmi to 255-3—the third highest total in HBL Pakistan Super League history.

That was just too much for Gladiators to chase as they went down to a 118-run drubbing, their fifth loss of the ongoing tournament.

Zalmi captain, Babar, meanwhile, remained perfect, with seven wins in eight games.

Opening the innings with Mohammad Hiris, Babar hardly took any risks, demonstrating trust in his natural game — as Zalmi batting coach Mishbah-ul-Haq put it in a few days ago, the right-hander was "tuning the ball".

Characteristic of his reputation, Babar facilitated the striker on the other end to launch the fireworks, relying on

singles and doubles when his natural flow of the bat wasn't resulting in boundaries.

Hiris' 16 off five, that included two sixes in the very first over of Jahandad Khan, gave Zalmi the platform to cruise to 80 in powerplay, with Mendis taking over after Hiris departed in the second over.

Mendis, in the form

of his life, hit three fours and two sixes making use of the field restrictions.

Babar, meanwhile, had cracked only two boundaries in the first six overs.

The 31-year-old continued to avoid the main role, with Mendis taking charge as the pair stitched together a 135-run second-wicket stand — the 47th century part-

nership of Babar's T20 career — that completely dismantled the chase before it even began.

The stand was a masterclass in contrasting styles.

Mendis was the aggressor, punishing anything short or wide with disdaim.

He brought up his fifty off just 24 balls with a crisp cut off Usman

Tariq and later drilled Saud Shakeel straight down the ground and through backward point with authority.

One of his most audacious strokes came against the same bowler when he danced down the track and thumped a slower ball flat past long-off.

Babar, on the other hand, kept playing the perfect foil in the early phase, content with rotating strike and picking singles and doubles while his partner launched the fireworks.

Babar had struck only five fours by the middle of the 17th over, relying on timing and placement rather than brute force.

But once Mendis caught at deep midwicket off Usman Tariq — and Farhan Yousaf's, smashing 19 off eight balls, departed, Babar turned the game on its head with Aaron Har—die joining the party at number five and unleashing a brutal onslaught.

Hardie smashed three sixes in his unbeaten 26 off 10, including a monstrous straight hit off Jahandad that helped Zalmi post their highest score of the season in Karachi.

Babar, sensing the

finish line, launched into the bowlers with vintage authority.

He cleared long-on with a stand-and-deliver six off Usman, hammered another of the same region against Abrar Ahmed, and produced a flat six over long-on off Alzari Joseph.

The defining moment came on the last ball when he rushed back for a desperate two to bring up his hundred, diving full stretch amid wild celebrations.

The target always looked beyond the Gladiators on a pitch that offered pace and bounce. Their chase collapsed spectacularly as Zalmi's young pace duo of Mohammad Basit and Ali Razaran not

Basit, operating with clever variations, struck twice in the fourth over, removing captain Saud and Rilee Rossouw on its head with Aaron Har—die joining the party at number five and unleashing a brutal onslaught.

Hardie smashed three sixes in his unbeaten 26 off 10, including a monstrous straight hit off Jahandad that helped Zalmi post their highest score of the season in Karachi.

Babar, sensing the

Bayern on cusp of title as Dortmund lose

NEWS DESK: Bayern Munich edged closer to the Bundesliga title for Borussia Dortmund lost 2-1 at Hoffenheim on Saturday, while pioneering Union Berlin coach Marie-Louise Eta was beaten on her debut.

Dortmund's defeat leaves Bayern 12 points clear and knowing they need just a point at home to Stuttgart on Sunday to claim their 35th German title.

Hoffenheim's club record goalscorer Andrej Kramaric converted three penalties, bringing his career total to 156, to help the hosts move past Bayer Leverkusen into fifth spot.

"To lose because of two penalties is tough," Dortmund defender Daniel Svensson said.

"We need more intensity — we need to end the season well."

Unlike Dortmund, who have all but locked up second place, Hoffenheim still have

plenty to play for as they chase a Champions League berth, and dominated proceedings in the opening half.

Just before the break, Dortmund defender Niklas Sule fell awkwardly in the box and handled the ball.

Kramaric converted the penalty as Sule fell awkwardly in the box and handled the ball.

Dortmund sporting director Lars Ricken told reporters they suspect it is a "serious injury".

Substitute Serhou Guirassy pulled one back for the visitors but Hoffenheim were awarded another penalty in stoppage time, which Kramaric once more dispatched to grab victory.

Dortmund have now lost their past two matches, having previously suffered just two defeats across the entire campaign.

In Saturday's late game, RB Leipzig's youngsters stole the

show in a 3-1 win at Eintracht Frankfurt to strengthen their hopes of a return to the Champions League.

Leipzig's first win in Frankfurt on their 11th attempt took them to third, five points clear of fifth-placed Hoffenheim.

Van Dronkelaar, 19, danced in from the right before curling an expert shot into the bottom corner to put Leipzig in front.

Frankfurt equalised just after the half-hour mark with a Hugo Larsson header.

Antonio Nusa, 21, put Leipzig back in front with 20 minutes remaining but despite the defeat, the Berliners remain six points ahead of the relegation play-off spot and six from safety.

Union's Oliver Burke scored a late goal but despite the defeat, the Berliners remain six points ahead of the relegation play-off spot and six from safety.

Wolfsburg. Appointed on an interim basis until the end of the season, Eta received a rapturous response from the home crowd when her name was announced pre-match.

Union were quickly on the back foot when Patrick Wimmer scored after 11 minutes.

Dzenan Pejcinovic added another just after the break to help Wolfsburg move two points behind St Pauli in the relegation play-off spot and six from safety.

Union's Oliver Burke scored a late goal but despite the defeat, the Berliners remain six points ahead of the relegation play-off spot and six from safety.

Union's Oliver Burke scored a late goal but despite the defeat, the Berliners remain six points ahead of the relegation play-off spot and six from safety.

Union's Oliver Burke scored a late goal but despite the defeat, the Berliners remain six points ahead of the relegation play-off spot and six from safety.

'Pure joy' for Matarazzo after Copa del Rey triumph

NEWS DESK: Real Sociedad coach Pellegrino Matarazzo was elated after his side defeated Atletico Madrid to win the Copa del Rey on Saturday, making him the first American coach to claim a major trophy with a club from Europe's top five leagues.

La Real triumphed 4-3 in the shoot-out following a pulsating 2-2 draw after extra-time, to win the trophy for only the fourth time in the club's history.

Andar Barrenetxea had given Sociedad the lead after 14 seconds but Ademola Lookman levelled in the 19th minute.

Mikel Oyarzabal then put the Basque side back in front with a penalty in the stroke of half-time.

Alvarez drew Atletico level with seven minutes remaining to force the extra period in a dramatic final.

Sociedad last won the Cup in 2021, when the delayed 2020 final was also played at the La Cartuja stadium in Seville, but there were no supporters present due to the Covid pandemic.

This time, the Basque side's fans were behind the goal to witness goalkeeper Unai Marrero save Atletico's

first two penalties from Alexander Sorloth and Julian Alvarez.

Atletico keeper Juan Musso then stopped Orri Oskarsson's kick but Pablo Marin kept his nerve to net the winning penalty.

When Matarazzo was appointed in December the Basque team were hovering above the relegation zone, but he has driven them up the table and now to cup glory.

"It's probably the first (major trophy) for an Italian-American," said Matarazzo, a New Jersey

native born to Italian immigrant parents.

Matarazzo said it was not until Marin's decisive penalty in the shoot-out hit the back of the net that he could really begin to take any thing in.

"That was the moment where I realised this is real. It's happening," said the coach.

"You visualise success and you believe in it and you trust the players, but until you cross the finish line it's not really have the feeling that what is happening (is happening), and it happens. And with

that penalty, it took a couple of moments to realise, but it's just pure joy."

Matarazzo insisted the team's success over the past few months was not just about him but the daily work that everyone put in, and the quality of the players he has available.

"We have fantastic players, unbelievable players on this squad with unbelievable character," he said. "Behind the success is the daily work and the commitment that we all have to this team and for this club."



Kings slump to another defeat as Sultans trio star

NEWS DESK: Karachi Kings slumped to their fourth straight defeat on Sunday as Shan Masood, Josh Philippe and Arafat Minhas inspired Multan Sultans to an 11-run victory in a high-scoring HBL Pakistan Super League encounter here at the National Bank Stadium.

Chasing 208, Karachi made a promising start but kept losing wickets at regular intervals, finishing at 196 after Sultans had posted a commanding 207-7, propelled by explosive knocks from the top order and a late flourish.

Sultans' innings got off to a flying start as Awas Zafar announced himself with authority, opening the face to thwack an overpitched delivery up and over point for four, then guiding another behind square past third man.

He cleared the front leg to clobber a short wide ball from spinner Khushdil Shah over deep midwicket for six.

Steve Smith left cheeking for a duck, chipping to long-off, but Philippe walked in and immediately looked dangerous.

Philippe and Awas added 66 for the second wicket. The Australian punished anything short, belting a pull to deep midwicket and picking a slower ball from Abbas Afridi to club it over long-on.

He nailed sweeps and lofted drives, reaching 46 off just 25 balls with three fours and as many sixes before Moeen Ali deceived him with a slower ball from Abbas Afridi to club it over long-on.

Awas departed after 36 off 27 soon after, caught in the deep off Khushdil. Ashton



break delivery from Adam Zampa to the right of deep midwicket. Awas complemented Philippe with crisp drives and pulls, including a thunderous shot off Khushdil.

Philippe's enterprising 44 off 23 (five fives, two sixes) ended when he exposed his stumps while attempting a big shot over cover and was bowled by Khushdil.

Shan then took charge. Coming in at number four, the Pakistan Test captain used his feet superbly against Zampa, skipping down to drill one past mid-off and clubbing another to long-on.

He nailed sweeps and lofted drives, reaching 46 off just 25 balls with three fours and as many sixes before Moeen Ali deceived him with a slower ball from Abbas Afridi to club it over long-on.

Awas departed after 36 off 27 soon after, caught in the deep off Khushdil. Ashton

Turner and Arafat steadied the ship briefly but spinners continued to apply the brakes.

Sultans were 174-6 when Mohammad Nawaz and Arafat were dismissed in quick succession.

Nawaz caught brilliantly by Reeza Hendricks on the rope over a stunning effort that saw him step beyond the boundary and return to complete the catch.

With the innings charge momentum, Mohammad Imran and Mohammad Wasim Jr unleashed a breathtaking late onslaught.

Imran smashed 26 off just eight, including two fours and two sixes. He hogged Hasan Ali over cover corner, powered one down the ground and lifted another over the bowler's head.

Wasim contributed a quick seven off two, including a lofted six over long-off. The pair added 33 in the final two overs,

taking Sultans past 200 and setting a daunting target.

Kings' chase began brightly, Saad Batz and Jason Roy added 29 in quick time, with Roy leading particularly menacingly.

He crunched a cut past cover and heaved a six as delivery over long-off for six.

Arafat, however, provided the breakthrough in the third over. He floated one that drifted back sharply, Roy, attempting to cut, edged it to Philippe behind the stumps for 16 off nine.

Salman Ali Agha lasted only five balls as Arafat struck again in the fifth over with a teasing delivery that drifted in as the Pakistan T20 captain advanced for a slog-sweep.

Beaten in the flight and not quite to the pitch, he was bowled for two. Saad fell shortly after for 21, gloving a short ball from Peter Siddie to short fine leg.

Spurs relegation battle worsens

NEWS DESK: Tottenham manager Roberto De Zerbi said his side are "not finished yet" despite a bitterly disappointing 2-2 draw against Brighton on Saturday to leave them mired in the Premier League relegation zone.

Spurs twice took the lead in front of passionate home fans and Xavi Simons' wonderful strike in the 77th minute appeared to have earned a precious three points as the clock ticked down.

But wild scenes of joy among the fans turned to disbelief when Georginio Rutter slotted home to ensure the spoils were shared at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

The result left Spurs 18th in the Premier League, one point behind West Ham and two behind Nottingham Forest with five games remaining.

The spectre of a first relegation since 1977 looms large for last season's Europa League

winner, who are ranked by Deloitte as the ninth richest club in the world.

"And this team is able to win five games in a row."

The Italian urged his players, who looked distraught at the end of the match, to believe in him.

"They have to follow me, they have to follow me, they have to follow me and to listen to me," he said.

"Everyone of us knows it's a tough moment, it's a difficult situation, but we have another five games, 15 points."

"And this team is able to win five games in a row."

The Italian urged his players, who looked distraught at the end of the match, to believe in him.

"They have to follow me, they have to follow me, they have to follow me and to listen to me," he said.

"Everyone of us knows it's a tough moment, it's a difficult situation, but we have another five games, 15 points."

But wild scenes of joy among the fans turned to disbelief when Georginio Rutter slotted home to ensure the spoils were shared at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

The result left Spurs 18th in the Premier League, one point behind West Ham and two behind Nottingham Forest with five games remaining.

The spectre of a first relegation since 1977 looms large for last season's Europa League

winner, who are ranked by Deloitte as the ninth richest club in the world.

"And this team is able to win five games in a row."

The Italian urged his players, who looked distraught at the end of the match, to believe in him.

"They have to follow me, they have to follow me, they have to follow me and to listen to me," he said.

"Everyone of us knows it's a tough moment, it's a difficult situation, but we have another five games, 15 points."

"And to come to the training ground on Monday afternoon with a smile, because otherwise they go home immediately."

"I have no time to see negative people, to see sad players or sad assistants. No, we are lucky because we are working in a big club, a big stadium, we are working in the Premier League."

After the game at Wolves, Spurs have matches to come against Aston Villa, Leeds, Chelsea and Everton.

Terrorist involved in February suicide attack among two killed in Bannu IBO: ISPR

NEWS DESK: A terrorist and his accomplice, an alleged suicide bomber, were killed by security forces during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district, the military's media affairs wing said on Monday.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said an IBO was conducted on Sunday on the reported presence of "khwarij".

Khwarij, or Fimnal Khawarij, is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

"During conduct of the operation, after [an] intense exchange of fire, two khwarij, belonging to the Indian-sponsored Fimnal-Khawarij, including Kharij Ring leader Waheedullah alias Mukhtar, along with a suicide bomber, were sent to hell," the ISPR statement read.

It added that a suicide jacket, weapons



and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists.

The ISPR said Waheedullah "was amongst the most-wanted terrorist list for his active involvement in numerous terrorist

activities", including the martyrdom of security forces personnel and innocent civilians.

It noted that Waheedullah was also the "main perpetrator to justice. Timely action of security

forces also averted a major catastrophe," the ISPR asserted. It said a sanitisation operation was being conducted to eliminate any other "Indian-sponsored khwarij" found in the

area. The military's media wing added that the counter-terrorism campaign under vision 'Azmi-Istehkam' (as approved by the Federal Apex Committee on National Action

Plan) by security forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan "will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and Indian-supported terrorism from the country".

Bannu district has been the scene of repeated security incidents in recent months, with both civilians and local security forces coming under attack amid a broader surge in militant violence.

Violence in Bannu has included attacks on police and jirga members, prompting targeted operations by police and security forces in various localities to disrupt militant networks.

Also on Sunday, two personnel of the Federal Constabulary (FCN) were martyred in a firing incident carried out by militants in the jurisdiction of the Cantt police station.

Earlier this month, a suicide car bomb attack at the Domet Police Station in Bannu killed at least five civilians, while 13 others were injured, including one policeman.

Just days before that, a head constable was martyred when a police vehicle in the district came under attack, with the ensuing fire exchange killing two terrorists.

Australian FM lauds Pakistan's role in facilitating US-Iran talks in call with Dar

NEWS DESK: Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong on Monday praised Pakistan's "constructive role" in facilitating dialogue between Iran and the United States, as well as its continued commitment to diplomatic efforts, during a telephone call with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Wong expressed appreciation for Dar's efforts and Pakistan's role in promoting dialogue between Tehran and Washington.

"She commended Pakistan's continued commitment to promoting diplomatic engagement in this regard," the statement said.

The ministry added that Dar briefed Wong on the Islamabad talks held on April 11-12 and

reiterated Pakistan's resolve to continue encouraging dialogue and constructive engagement.

"The two leaders expressed concern over the broader implications for the global economy, particularly for developing countries, and emphasised the importance of peaceful conflict resolution," the statement added.

FM Dar has received unprecedented international recognition for his diplomatic leadership, as Pakistan positioned itself at the centre of high-stakes mediation efforts during the escalating Iran-US-Israel crisis.

Over the past week, senior officials and influential voices from more than ten countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, the US, China, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Uzbekistan, and Egypt,

have publicly acknowledged Dar's role in facilitating ceasefire negotiations.

Meanwhile, Islamabad is preparing to host the second round of Iran-United States talks after Washington confirmed that a high-level delegation led by US Vice President JD Vance would arrive in Pakistan.

Pakistan emerged as a central facilitator in the sensitive diplomatic track, positioning itself as an "honest broker" and sharply polarised positions between Washington and Tehran.

While the first round underscored deep disagreements over sanctions, maritime security, and regional influence, officials suggest both sides have so far kept the channel open, even as public rhetoric has hardened ahead of the next phase of talks.

CM Maryam approves Punjab's first sky glass bridge in Murree

NEWS DESK: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has granted approval for the province's first sky glass bridge project in tehsil Kotli Sattian, district Murree, to promote tourism.

The decision was made during a special meeting jointly presided over by PM-N President Nawaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif where progress on the Murree Protection and Rehabilitation Plan was reviewed.

The meeting also decided to engage international experts to address the issue of landsliding in Murree. The chief minister directed immediate measures to counter the mid-flow down-slope effect and ordered relief and rehabilitation efforts for those affected by landslides in Chattha Mor, Darya Gali, Bansera Gali, Namal, Jhika Gali and adjoining areas.

The meeting also granted approval for establishment of three new hospitality zones in Murree's suburban areas, Shawala, Sozo and brewery, where five-star standard hotels would be developed in collaboration with the private

sector. It decided to form a team of experts for the Murree rehabilitation project while the chief minister directed that debris from structures demolished during anti-encroachment operations be removed immediately.

The meeting was informed that Jhika Gali Road and Reach Bil Road would be widened by 10 feet each.

The chief minister

set a one-month deadline to initiate construction work on the Murree Glass Train project. International experts to be consulted for landslides issue, three hospitality zones to be set up in Murree.

A detailed briefing was given on three new parks to be established in Murree, including Angoon Road Park, MIF Park and Ariari Park Kotli Sattian.

Participants in the

meeting were told that a zoological garden, zoological garden eco-zone, bridge crossing and a state-of-the-art conference room would be developed at Bansera Gali. Facilities for wildlife conservation, including a bear house, tiger house and bird aviary, are also planned.

Murree's first glamping pod village will be established at Chevra Hill, designed as a state-of-the-art tourist attraction.

Participants in the

meeting were told that a zoological garden, zoological garden eco-zone, bridge crossing and a state-of-the-art conference room would be developed at Bansera Gali. Facilities for wildlife conservation, including a bear house, tiger house and bird aviary, are also planned.

Murree's first glamping pod village will be established at Chevra Hill, designed as a state-of-the-art tourist attraction.

Participants in the



Two FC men martyred in Bannu attack

NEWS DESK: Two personnel of the Federal Constabulary (FC) were martyred in a firing incident carried out by militants in Kuram Garhi on Sunday, in the jurisdiction of the Cantt police station.

According to police, the slain officials were shopping at a local market when the attackers, who arrived on a bike, targeted them and managed to flee the scene.

FC sources said the deceased were identified as Havaldar Rokhniyar and sepoy Rehmanullah.

Both were posted

in the FC Daryoba MI platoon.

Soon after the incident, the security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to trace the attackers.

Additional police personnel were also deployed for the task. Security officials stated all available resources were being utilised to apprehend the suspects at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the Sham-uzai police post in the remit of the Township police station was destroyed by the militants on Saturday night after they

rigged it with explosives.

Sources said the intense explosion destroyed the building, which had been lying vacant since 2022.

After the blast, the police and other law enforcement agencies reached the scene, cordoned off the area, and began collecting evidence to hunt the suspects.

Police confirmed that no casualties occurred in the incident.

Separately, a "Qami Jirga" announced a shutdown and wheel-jam strike on April 20.

NEWS DESK: Two terrorists were killed and a police constable embraced martyrdom in a gun battle in Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police said on Monday.

District police spokesman said Qudratullah Khan said the gunfight erupted when police conducted a targeted operation in a forest near the Khundan area, bordering Bannu district.

He said that a large police contingent was dispatched to the area after local law enforcement authorities received credible intelligence reports that Fimnal-Khawarij terrorists were hiding in the forest.

Fimnal Khawarij is a term that the state uses for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan.

"The exchange of fire continued for some time, resulting in the neutralisation and killing of two terrorists," he maintained. Qudratullah added that police constable Attiqur Rehman

Two terrorists killed, police constable martyred in Lakki Marwat



was also martyred in the exchange of fire.

The official said that several terrorists were injured in the clash but escaped with the help of their accomplices, taking advantage of the darkness and dense forest.

He identified one of the slain terrorists as Commander Amir Sohail alias Umar Khatab and said he was wanted by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) for target killings, attacks on police and security

forces, bomb blasts, and other terrorism-related incidents. "A large-scale search operation by a heavy contingent of police and CTD commandos, backed by APCs, is underway in the area to arrest fleeing terrorists," he added.

The funeral prayer of martyred constable was offered with full official honours at Police Lines, Lakki Marwat.

A large number of people attended the funeral prayer, including DPO Lakki Marwat

Nazeer Khan, Deputy Commissioner Hamidullah Khan, SP Investigation Murad Khan, police officers, officials of the district administration, and police personnel.

Funeral prayers of the martyred policeman being offered in Lakki Marwat. —Photo by author. On the occasion, officials laid floral wreaths on the coffin, and special prayers were offered for the elevation of the martyr's rank.

Paying tribute to the

martyr, DPO Nazeer Khan said that by sacrificing his life, he had set a supreme example of devotion to duty, bravery, and patriotism. He added that the martyr's great sacrifice would always be remembered.

Grenade attack on school in Mohmand Marwat. —Photo by author. In a separate incident, unknown assailants hurled a hand grenade at Ghazi Baig Mohmand Model School in the Hakeemzai Tehsil of Mohmand district.