



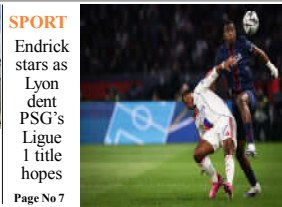
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# QUETTA VOICE

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## Balochistan Security, Development Reviewed at 22nd Hardening of the State Conference in Quetta



**NEWS DESK:**

The 22nd meeting of the Hardening of the State Conference was held in Quetta under the chairmanship of

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, with participation from the

Corps Commander General Rabat Naseem

Commander Balochistan Lieutenant General Ahmed Khan, provincial ministers,

and senior civil and security officials.

The high-level meeting focused on strengthening law and order, accelerating development projects in Balochistan, and ensuring the effective use of all available resources to promote sustainable growth and stability.

The leadership emphasized close coordination between civil and military institutions to maintain peace across the province.

A detailed review of the Afghan refugees repatriation process was also conducted.

The Chief Minister directed authorities to ensure a dignified, safe, and orderly return of refugees in line with humanitarian principles.

Addressing the conference, Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti stated that the forum has become an effective platform for implementing security strategies and development initiatives.

He reiterated that delivering the benefits of development to the common people of Balochistan remains a key priority of the state.

Participants paid tribute to the sacrifices of security forces, police, and the people of Balochistan, with special recognition of martyred Lady Constable Malik Naz.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to work collectively for lasting peace, economic development, and a stable future for the province.

## Bugti Ends Job Selling, Revives 3,700 Schools to Expand Education Access in Balochistan

**SYED ALI SHAH, ALI HAMZA:**

**QUETTA:** The Balochistan government has initiated a major push to reform the education sector, focusing on enrolling out-of-school children and restoring non-functional institutions. As part of this province-wide campaign, thousands of children have already returned to classrooms, signaling a renewed commitment to improving access to education.

To showcase these developments, a high-level ceremony was held at the Chief Minister's Secretariat. Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti attended as the chief guest, alongside Education Minister Rahila Hamid Durani, Secondary Education Secretary Lal Jan Jaffar, and senior officials.

Officials revealed that over 3,700 previously closed schools have been reactivated across the province. These revived institutions have enrolled approximately 100,000 children, marking a significant milestone in addressing the education gap in Balochistan.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Bugti stressed that transparency has been strictly upheld in the recruitment of more than 12,000 teachers, claiming near-complete adherence to merit. He



noted that eliminating the longstanding practice of selling government jobs was one of his administration's top priorities. He further acknowledged that past shortcomings had

weakened education indicators but maintained that the current government is introducing meaningful reforms to reverse the trend. Despite these gains, chal-

lenges remain. According to education officials, a substantial portion of children—around 53%—are still out of school, largely because they have exceeded the standard

age for enrollment. The event highlighted the government's ongoing efforts to rebuild the education system and ensure wider access to schooling across Balochistan.

## PM Shehbaz approves streamlining of P3A to expedite development projects

**NEWS DESK:**

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday gave in-principle approval to further integrate and strengthen the Public-Private Partnership Authority (P3A) and its related framework to speed up development initiatives during a high-level meeting.

According to a statement by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), PM Shehbaz chaired a high-level meeting in Islamabad to accelerate development projects through public-private partnerships (PPP) and instructed authorities to expedite the implementation of the newly approved system.

"Meeting decided that the P3A would be placed under the Privatisation Division to align its performance with modern requirements and improve efficiency in PPP-based projects," it said. The statement further added that the prime minister directed that the capacity of relevant ministries and departments be enhanced to enable them to initiate development projects through public-private partnerships.

Premier said PPP-based projects should be made part of the key performance indicators (KPIs) of ministries and departments, adding that "through P3A, we were making the public-private partnership system more transparent and faster".

"The meeting was given a comparative overview of PPP models in various countries at regional and global levels, along with a briefing on the proposed new system."

# QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

## Punjab's Child HIV Tragedy Echoes in Balochistan

**Editorial:**  
In the quiet town of Taunsa, Punjab, a silent horror has claimed the innocence of hundreds of children.

Between November 2024 and October 2025, 331 children tested positive for HIV — a shocking figure that lays bare the deep cracks in Pakistan's public healthcare system.

Eight-year-old Mohammed Amin was one of them.

His high fevers were so unbearable that he begged his mother to let him sleep in the pouring rain for relief.

"It felt like he had been thrown into boiling oil," Sughra recalled, her voice breaking with grief.

He passed away shortly after his diagnosis. At his graveside, his 10-year-old sister Asma knelt quietly and whispered,

"He used to fight with me, but he also loved me."

Tragically, soon after her brother's illness, Asma too was diagnosed with HIV.

The family firmly believes both children contracted the virus through contaminated needles during routine treatment at the government-run THQ Taunsa hospital.

The outbreak first surfaced when a private clinic doctor noticed the alarming spike in cases in late 2024.

Authorities promised swift action and suspended the hospital's medical superintendent in March 2025. Yet a BBC Eye investigation revealed that unsafe practices continued.

In 32 hours of undercover filming in late

2025, reporters documented syringes being reused on multi-dose medicine vials on 10 separate occasions.

In four of those cases, the same vial was used for different children.

Dr Altaf Ahmed, a respected consultant microbiologist and infectious disease expert, reviewed the footage and warned:

"Even attaching a new needle does not eliminate the danger. The syringe body itself can carry the virus."

This tragedy is not confined to Punjab. Pakistan as a whole is grappling with a growing HIV crisis, with over 84,000 registered cases nationwide and estimates suggesting the true figure could be much higher.

Here in Balochistan, the situation remains deeply concerning. As of December 2025, the province has recorded 3,303 registered AIDS cases — a sharp rise from 2,851 the previous year.

Hundreds more may be living with HIV undiagnosed due to limited screening and unsafe medical practices in government facilities and unregulated clinics.

Even in the usually stable neighbouring country of Bhutan, HIV cases have risen to 1,020 by the end of 2024.

These numbers are not mere statistics. They represent shattered childhoods, grieving mothers, frightened families,

and a complete failure of basic infection control — the bare minimum we expect from any healthcare system in Pakistan.

Quetta Voice, reporting from the soil of Balochistan, has always believed in fearless journalism that reaches the world.

We cannot stay silent when children across Pakistan are paying

with their lives for official negligence and systemic carelessness.

We demand immediate and decisive action:

- An independent, transparent audit of injection safety across all government hospitals in Pakistan, with priority given to high-risk districts in Punjab and Balochistan.

- Strict enforcement of single-use syringe policies and mandatory training for all healthcare staff.

- Massive expansion of free HIV screening, antiretroviral treatment, and community awareness programs — especially in rural areas.

- Full accountability. Families deserve justice, not empty promises.

The children of Taunsa — and the vulnerable families across Balochistan and the rest of Pakistan — did not deserve this suffering.

It is time for Pakistan to treat healthcare as a fundamental right, not a privilege.

Unsafe injections must end. Negligence must be punished. Our children's lives must come first.

From Balochistan, we report to the world. Enough is enough.

### Pakistan's Heartbreaking Failure - Punjab's Child HIV Tragedy Echoes in Balochistan

#### 331 Children Tested Positive for HIV in Taunsa (Nov 2024 – Oct 2025) - BBC Eye Investigation

#### Balochistan's 3,303 registered cases.

"From Balochistan, We Report to the World"

## How AIs Making Modern Production Smarter and Faster

**Syed Muhammad Wisem:** AI is changing the way we create and collaborate, with 41% of brands already using it for video production.

Production teams now have to create more content faster than ever. Staying on track while keeping ideas fresh is a daily challenge. AI is changing how production teams plan, shoot, and edit. It's making the process faster, smarter, and more creative.

As the need for faster content grows, AI is becoming a key player in modern studios. It helps creators stay up to date with new trends and what audiences want. Studios are using AI to work faster and save money. According to Deloitte's 2024 report, 42% of executives say it boosts efficiency and productivity.

Let's explore how AI is changing production from planning to editing. You'll learn how it saves time, cuts costs, and boosts creativity. By the end, you'll see how it's making modern production smarter and faster.

**The Evolution of AI in Media Production**

AI in media production has evolved rapidly over the years. Initially, it served as a basic tool for handling repetitive tasks such as video editing, adding visual effects, and creating computer graphics. Over time, it has transformed into a powerful creative partner that now supports teams at every stage of production.

In the beginning, AI was mainly used for CGI, video automation, and voice synthesis. These tools helped save time but still required significant human input. Today, AI plays an active role across pre-production, production, and post-production, making the entire process more efficient and consistent.

During pre-production, it assists with scriptwriting, budgeting, and storyboarding. In production, it enhances camera tracking, lighting adjustments, and virtual set design. Finally, in post-production, it streamlines editing, color correction, sound design, and even creates advanced visual effects.

Major studios such as Netflix and Warner Bros. are now using AI-driven tools to analyze audience preferences, optimize content, and enhance storytelling. As a result, AI has shifted from being a simple technical assistant to becoming an essential force shaping the future of modern media production.

**Why Production Houses Are Turning to AI**

Production houses are facing rising costs and tighter schedules. Keeping up with deadlines while staying creative has become a major challenge. To stay efficient, many studios are now using AI to manage time and 60% of post-production studios utilize AI-powered editing tools to reduce editing time, reduce expenses. This trend is growing rapidly as the global AI in media and entertainment market is projected to reach \$34.1 billion by 2027.

The demand for quick content is also increasing. Streaming platforms are pushing for faster release times. At the same time, advertising agencies are already using AI tools for content creation, showing how quickly the industry is adapting to new technology. There is also a shortage of skilled post-production professionals. AI tools step in to

handle repetitive work like cutting scenes or syncing dialogue. This gives creative teams more time to focus on storytelling and innovation while keeping projects on schedule and within budget.

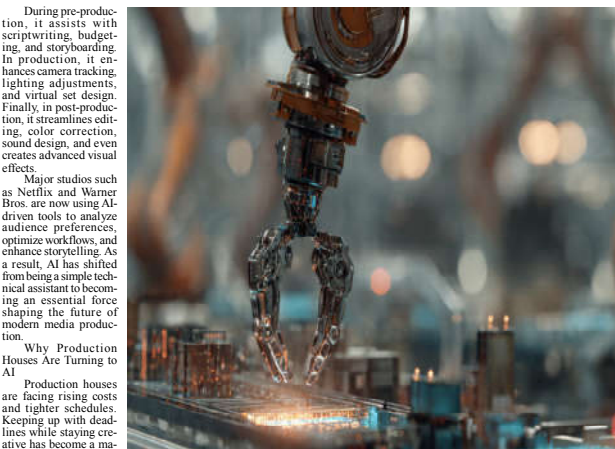
How Production Houses Are Using AI

AI is changing how production houses work from start to finish. It supports every stage of filmmaking, from planning and shooting to editing and final delivery. In Pre-Production, AI is making the pre-production stage faster and more creative. Writers now use tools like ChatGPT, Jasper, and Sudowrite to draft scripts or explore story ideas. In fact, 60% of film studios are exploring AI-driven tools to speed up brainstorming and script development.

These tools help generate dialogue, plot twists, and creative concepts in minutes, saving time while keeping creativity flowing.

Storyboarding and concept visualization have also become easier. Tools like Midjourney, Runway ML, and Pika Labs turn written ideas into visuals, helping directors and producers see how scenes might look before filming begins. This makes planning smoother and reduces the need for costly revisions later.

AI is also improving casting and budgeting. Some tools analyze data to predict how well an actor will connect with audiences. AI software like Celtx and StudioBinder helps plan budgets and schedules. These tools make it easier for studios to manage costs, track



spending, and stay on time. Production AI is transforming the way films are shot on set. For example, AI-powered cameras can automatically track actors, adjust framing, and optimize lighting in real time. This helps directors capture perfect shots faster and reduces the need for repeated takes. According to MarketsandMarkets, the use of AI cameras in film production is expected to grow by 22% annually by 2027.

Virtual production is becoming more common. Tools like Unreal Engine and NVIDIA Omniverse allow filmmakers to create realistic digital environments before filming begins. These virtual sets save time, cut costs, and give teams more creative freedom, especially for large-scale or fantasy projects.

AI supports crews during filming. Voice recognition systems can follow script lines or adjust camera settings through simple voice commands.

As a result, on-set work becomes smoother, and the crew can focus more on storytelling rather than technical details.

In Post-Production, this phase gets a big boost from AI, especially in editing and sound design. Tools like Runway ML, Adobe Premiere Pro AI, and Descript automate tasks like cutting, syncing, and scene detection. Smart apps can identify key moments and streamline workflows, helping editors focus on storytelling.

AI also improves color grading and sound editing. It can automati-

cally balance colors, refine lighting, remove background noise, and sync soundtracks. Even some free tools can apply complex color grading for a consistent look. These features save time and make the final product polished and professional.

In addition, AI enhances VFX, CGI, and localization. It removes green screens, fills missing frames, and generates realistic effects quickly. Voice tools like Resemble.ai and ElevenLabs speed up dubbing and translations for multiple languages.

The use of AI in video editing has reduced production time by an average of 30%, showing how much it improves efficiency.

AI also helps with versioning and distribution. It can create multiple edits for different platforms like social media, TV, or YouTube Shorts. This allows studios to repurpose content easily and deliver it quickly. Overall, AI makes post-production faster, more precise, and more creative.

**Case Studies: How AI is Shaping Modern Production**

**Case Study 1: Netflix Builds a Cloud-Based VFX Studio**

Netflix, one of the biggest entertainment companies in the world, began producing its own content in 2012. To make collaboration easier, the company wanted to create a visual effects (VFX) studio in the clouds. This would let artists work from different countries together without being limited by location.

Using NICE DCV and Amazon EC2 G4 instances, Netflix built fast and secure remote workstations. These tools allowed artists to edit, animate, and

render with high-quality visuals while keeping performance smooth. The system helped Netflix move from testing to full production in just one year.

By using AWS, Netflix reduced costs and technical barriers for creators. The company could now attract top VFX and animation talent from anywhere in the world. This innovation showed how cloud and AI tools can transform modern film production.

**Case Study 2: Croptify's AI Innovation in Grain Grading**

In South Australia, Anna Falkner and Andrew Hannon founded Croptify to make grain testing faster and more accurate. Traditional testing relied on human inspection, which often caused mistakes and disagreements.

The founders wanted a smarter AI-based way to grade crops. Working with the Australian Institute for Machine Learning (AIML), they built AI software that could analyze grain samples in seconds.

Their system reduced testing time from 24 minutes to just 90 seconds and achieved 98% accuracy. This built a grain supply chain faster and more reliable.

In 2024, Croptify raised \$2 million AUSD from investors to expand its technology. Their success proved that AI can bring real value to agriculture by making testing faster, easier, and more consistent.

Falkner advises businesses to focus on real problems first and then see if AI is the right solution.

**Case Study 3: What's Next? Entertainment's Use of AI in Creative Production**

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# Diplomatic flurry as US-Iran truce deadline nears

**NEWS DESK:** With the ceasefire between Iran and the US set to expire tomorrow (Wednesday), a US delegation is expected to head to Islamabad today (Tuesday), while Tehran also appeared open to sending its team for the second round of peace talks.

CNN reported that Vice President JD Vance and other top US officials were expected to depart for Islamabad on Tuesday, while an unnamed Iranian official told Reuters that Tehran was considering attending talks following reported moves by Islamabad to end the US blockade of Iran's ports.

However, there was no official announcement from Iran by the time this report went to press.

Police officers divert traffic from a road leading to Serena Hotel, the venue for the expected US-Iran talks. — Reuters

Speaking about the talks, US President Donald Trump said the ceasefire ends on Wednesday evening, and told Bloomberg it would be highly unlikely he would extend the two-week ceasefire if a deal was not reached before the expiry of the ceasefire. The two-week truce was supposed to expire at 8pm (Eastern) on Tuesday, April 21. As per Trump's latest claim, it will now end on Wednesday evening US time.

In a separate post on Truth Social, he de-

fended his war with Iran, saying that he was not persuaded by Israel to attack the country. "The results in Iran will be amazing," he said, adding, "And if Iran's new leaders (regime change) are smart, Iran can have a great and prosperous future!"

In a social media post, President Trump said he believed a nuclear deal the US was currently negotiating with Iran would be better than a 2015 international agreement to curb Tehran's nuclear programme.

On the other hand, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi criticised "unconstructive and contradictory" signals by the US, saying they carried a "bitter message".

"Honouring commitments in the basis of meaningful dialogue," he said on X. "Deep historical mistrust in Iran towards the US [government] conduct remains, while unconstructive and contradictory signals from American officials carry a bitter message; they seek Iran's surrender. Iranians do not submit to force."

He also said that his country would try to end the Middle East war with "integrity, wisdom and expediency", state-run news agency IRNA reported.

Media and security personnel are seen on Constitution Avenue — Mohammad Asim / White StarIran's foreign ministry said that the US



was not serious about pursuing diplomacy, citing what it called "violations" of their two-week ceasefire. AFP reported. Its spokesman Esmail Baqaei said a US attack on an Iranian cargo ship, the US naval blockade on Iranian ports, and delays in implementing a ceasefire in Lebanon were all "clear violations of the ceasefire".

Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf also said Tehran was continuing talks with the United States but was ready to take "necessary measures" amid rising tensions. RT World reported. "We do not trust the enemy. At any moment, it may escalate the war," Ghalibaf said in televised remarks, according to the Mehr news agency.

Horzum blockade

The US has maintained its blockade of Iranian ports, while Iran lifted and then reimposed its own blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

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The Gulf of Oman by US forces on Sunday. Trump described the move as enforcement of restrictions on Iranian ports, while Tehran called it "piracy" and responded with increased drone activity near US naval assets in the region surrounding the Strait of Hormuz.

The US has maintained its blockade of Iranian ports, while Iran lifted and then reimposed its own blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

The blockade is also featured in a reported conversation between Pakistan's army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and the US president. Reuters reported on Monday that FM Munir told Trump the US blockade on Iranian ports was a hurdle to negotiations and that Trump said he would consider the army chief's advice. When asked about the report, President Trump told The Hill that FM Munir

"didn't recommend anything on the blockade".

"The blockade is very powerful, very strong. They lose \$500 million a day with the blockade up," he said, referring to Iran. "We control it. They don't control it."

Diplomacy continues Against this backdrop of distrust, Pakistan continued its diplomacy to pave the way for a peace framework that could end the weeks-long war. Prime Minister

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had a phone call with his Iranian counterpart, in which he reiterated the need to uphold the ceasefire and stressed the importance of continued diplomatic efforts.

The Iranian side confirmed its readiness to do everything in its power to ensure the uninterrupted passage of Russian ships and cargo through the Strait of Hormuz, AFP reported.

Shehbaz Sharif on Monday received a telephone call from Antonio Costa, President of the European Council as both leaders expressed their desire for the continuation of dialogue between the United States and Iran for lasting peace in the region.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar called his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi to discuss "regional developments and ceasefire-related issues, exchanging views on ongoing coordination".

FM Dar "emphasised the importance of continued dialogue and engagement at the earliest to resolve all pending issues, in order to promote regional peace and stability" in the phone call. He also spoke to Australia's FM Penny Wong on Monday.

Global efforts for peace International powers also stepped up their diplomacy to prevent any flare-up of hostilities, particularly due to the Strait of Hormuz blockade.

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## PAA extends airspace ban for Indian aircraft until May 24

**NEWS DESK:** The Pakistan Airport Authority (PAA) on Tuesday extended its airspace ban for Indian aircraft for another month until May 24, marking a year of flight restrictions on India's airlines.

"Pakistani airspace will remain closed to Indian-registered aircraft, or Indian airlines/operators

(including military flights)," a PAA Notice to Airmen (Notam) said.

"This ban will now be effective till May 24, 2026 at 4:59am." Pakistan's airspace is divided into two flight information regions (FIRs) — Karachi and Lahore, according to a Pakistani Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) document from 2022. The Notam applies to both the Karachi (OPKR) and Lahore (OPLR) FIRs.

The Notam issued by Pakistan for barring Indian flights in its airspace till May 24, 2026. — PAA website

The previous extension was set to expire on April 24, India and Pakistan

have closed their airspaces to each other's airlines since late April 2025, when tensions between them escalated in the wake of a deadly attack in India's Kashmir's Pahalgam.

On April 24, Pakistan's top brass had announced a series of measures, including the closure of its airspace to all India-owned or Indian-operated airlines with immediate effect, as it retaliated against New Delhi's slew of aggressive measures against the country.

New Delhi, without evidence, had alleged that Islamabad backed the attack; however, Pakistan had strongly denied any involvement and offered a neutral probe. The nuclear powers had the fiercest air battle in May, in which Pakistan said it downed seven Indian fighter jets.

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## Downing Street exerted pressure to approve Mandelson's appointment, sacked official tells MPs

**NEWS DESK:** Downing Street applied constant pressure on civil servants to approve the appointment of Peter Mandelson as UK envoy to Washington and seemed to brush off security concerns, a sacked official told MPs Tuesday.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office had a "dismissive attitude" towards the security vetting for its envoy pick, said Oly Robbins, the foreign ministry's most senior official before being fired last week.

He was appearing at a watchdog parliamentary committee, as Starmer remained mired in the scandal over Labour's grandee Mandelson's appointment, which has haunted him for months.

The Foreign Office subsequently green-lit Mandelson — who had long been known to have close ties to the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein — despite the

government now confirming independent vetting officials had recommended security clearance. That revelation, first reported by The Guardian last Thursday, has prompted fresh calls for Starmer to resign, after he previously insisted all "due process" had been followed.

The beleaguered British leader has blamed officials for deliberately keeping him in the dark about the security clearance issue, and

on Monday denied misleading parliament with his previous statements on the scandal.

In his much-anticipated testimony, Robbins provided a more nuanced assessment, insisting he formally approved Mandelson after vetting officials — housed in another government department — concluded he was a "borderline" case.

"I was briefed that... they were leaning towards recommending that clearance be denied but that the Foreign Office security department assessed that the risks... could be managed and/or mitigated," Robbins told MPs.

Mandelson also told the risks did not relate to Mandelson's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, he added.

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## Japan opens door to global arms market with overhaul of defence export rules

**NEWS DESK:** Japan on Tuesday unveiled its biggest overhaul of defence export rules in decades, scrapping restrictions on overseas arms sales and opening the way for exports of warships, missiles and other weapons.

The move aimed at strengthening Japan's defence industrial base marks another step away from the pacifist restraints that have shaped its postwar security policy. It has been made in tandem with efforts to deepen ties with other nations in Asia to counter China's growing regional influence.

While Ukraine and the Middle East are also straining US weapons production, expanding opportunities for Japan. At the same time, US allies in Europe and Asia are looking to diversify supplies, as Washington's long-held security commitments look less certain under President Donald Trump.

person Guo Jiakun told a daily press conference, adding that Beijing "will remain highly vigilant and resolutely resist any reckless actions by Japan towards a new form of militarism".

Relations between Japan and China have been at a low ebb since Fackaichi said in November that a Chinese attack on Taiwan threatening Japan's survival could trigger a military response.

Philippines, US and Germany welcome the shift. The revision re-moves five export categories that had limited most military exports to rescue, transport, warning, surveillance and mine-sweeping equipment. Ministers and officials will instead assess the merits of each proposed sale.

Japan will keep in place three export principles that commit it to strict screening, controls on transfers to third countries and a ban on sales to countries involved in conflict. But in a presentation outlining the changes, the government said exceptions could be made when deemed necessary for national security.

Countries ranging from Poland to the Philippines are exploring procurement opportunities as they modernise their forces, Japanese officials and foreign diplomats have told Reuters.

One of the first deals could be the export of used warships to Manila, two of the sources said.

Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro welcomed Japan's rule change, saying in a statement that it would provide access to defence "articles of the highest quality" that would "strengthen domestic resilience" and "contribute to regional stability through deterrence".

The Philippines, together with Japan's southwestern island chain, forms part of what military planners call the First Island Chain, a string of islands that hems in China's access from its eastern waters to the Western Pacific.

Manila and Tokyo signed an agreement in September, making it easier for their forces to operate in each other's territory and in January, eased rules for exchanging military supplies.

US Ambassador to Japan, George Glass, heralded the export rule change in a post on X as a "historic step" to strengthen collective defence.

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## 7,900 people died, disappeared on migration routes in 2025: UN

**NEWS DESK:** Around 7,900 people died or disappeared on migration routes worldwide in 2025, taking the total dead and missing since 2014 beyond 80,000, the United Nations' migration agency said on Tuesday.

The UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said the figure represented only the lowest boundary of the true number of affected people.

"While these figures represent only the lowest boundary of the true number of affected people, they nonetheless underscore the need for urgent action to end migrant deaths and address the complex needs of families left behind," said the IOM.

The IOM said the 7,904 deaths and disappearances documented in 2025 "mark a continuation and escalation of these preventable deaths".

"2025 was marked by an unprecedented level of aid cuts and restriction of information on dangerous irregular routes, rendering more and more missing migrants invisible," it said.

Meanwhile, "an even more hidden population" of at least around 340,000 family members were estimated to be directly affected by the

The IOM said the 7,904 deaths and disappearances documented in 2025 "mark a continuation and escalation of these preventable deaths".

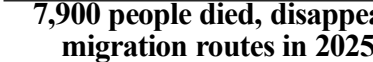
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# Minister for measures to increase social awareness regarding cleanliness

LAHORE (INP): Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique chaired a meeting of Sathra Punjab Authority (SPA) held at SPA office, Secretary Local Government Shaheel Ahmed Mian and Director General SPA Babar Sahib Din were also present while all divisional commissioners participated in the meeting through video link.

During the meeting, the administrative matters of Sathra Punjab

Authority were considered and the work of the committees established at the divisional level for the transfer of assets to the district agencies was reviewed. Minister Local Government Zeeshan Rafique, while emphasizing the need for measures to increase social awareness regarding cleanliness, said that the preparation of an animation under the supervision of the SPA is commendable.

"In this animation

film, 'Suthra Hero' gives lessons to young generation about necessity of cleanliness," he elaborated. He directed that this interesting awareness film series be widely disseminated on social media. The Minister said that it is possible to achieve the cleanliness targets only with the full cooperation of the citizens. He said that the activities of the agencies at the district level under the authority model are yielding

good results. "Deputy Commissioners and District MDs should make the monitoring process more effective," he urged. He said that the Suthra Punjab is a program close to the heart of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. "The existence of such a large network today is the result of the Chief Minister's vision. The trust of the people in the recent IPOR survey is a great honor for Suthra Punjab."



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding mechanism for Public-Private Partnership Authority.

## Federal govt seeks detailed progress report from Punjab on URAAN Pakistan

LAHORE (INP): The federal government has written a letter to Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Zaman seeking a detailed report on the "URAAAN Pakistan" initiative.

In the letter, progress reports on the targets assigned to provinces under URAAN Pakistan have been requested. Details on implementation regarding exports, energy, environment, and economic equity have also been sought.

The letter directs Punjab to submit a performance report on its economic targets to the federal government and instructs that

## Children's gala marks 75 years of China-Pakistan diplomatic ties

ISLAMABAD (INP): A children's gala was held here to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, bringing together young performers from both countries in a celebration of cultural ties.

The event at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts featured 13 performances, including a violin solo, classical and folk dances, jazz dance, a piano ensemble and a recitation of an original bilingual poem in Chinese and Urdu, according to a Gwadar Pro's report.

The programme was divided into four chapters: First Encounter on the Silk Road, Symphony of Civilizations, Childhood and Vitality and Flourishing Friendship.

## Interior Minister, Acting US envoy discuss security for second round of Islamabad talks

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met Acting US Ambassador to Pakistan Natalie Baker on Monday to discuss security arrangements for the upcoming second round of talks in Islamabad.

The meeting took place at the US Embassy in the Diplomatic Enclave, where both sides held detailed discussions on the evolving regional situation.

Security preparations for the next phase of negotiations in Islamabad were a key focus of the meeting. The interior minister briefed the US envoy on measures taken to

ensure the safety of all participants.

"We have made special security arrangements for all distinguished guests," Naqvi said, expressing hope for the success of the upcoming round of talks.

Baker appreciated Pakistan's efforts and its constructive role in helping reduce regional tensions.

Senior officials, including Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency Dr Usman Anwar, Islamabad Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf, Inspector General of Islamabad Police Ali Nasir Rizvi, and Deputy Commissioner Irfan Memon, were also present on

the occasion.

Separately, US President Donald Trump ordered US negotiators to travel to Pakistan on Monday, just days before a ceasefire in the Middle East expires.

The ongoing US blockade of Iranian ports has been a significant sticking point, an issue further complicated by an American destroyer on Sunday firing on and seizing an Iranian ship that tried to evade it.

Tehran said it would retaliate with very fair and reasonable DEAL, and I hope they take it," Trump said in a post on Sunday, while also renewing his threats against Iran's infrastructure if a deal is not made.

The gala ended with a choir performance of Sino-Pak Friendship Song.

Awards were also presented for several competitions aimed at promoting cultural and literary exchanges between the two countries.

Winners included participants in the Zhongshan Essay Competition and Chinese Classics Recitation Contest, the Gen Z Hua Xing Youth Journalist programme, and the 360 Global Chinese Essay Competition.

The event, held under the theme "75 years of enduring friendship, united in building the China-Pakistan bond," drew nearly 500 guests, including government officials from both countries, diplomats,

United States, along with Israel, are just days away from the end of the two-week ceasefire that halted the Middle East war, ignited by surprise US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28.

There has so far been only a single, 21-hour negotiating session held in Islamabad on April 11 that ended inconclusively, though groundwork for fresh talks continued afterwards.

"We're offering a very fair and reasonable DEAL, and I hope they take it," Trump said in a post on Sunday, while also renewing his threats against Iran's infrastructure if a deal is not made.

Two Khwarji including ringleader killed in IBO in Bannu: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (INP): Security forces killed two Khwarji belonging to the Indian-sponsored Finaal Khwarji, including their ringleader Waheedullah alias Mukhtar, during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Bannu district, according to ISPR.

"During conduct of the operation, after intense exchange of fire, two khwarji, belonging to Indian sponsored Finaal-Khwarji, including their ringleader Waheedullah alias Mukhtar along with a Suicide bomber were killed. A suicide jacket, weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the khwarji," ISPR said in a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Khari Ring leader Waheedullah amongst the most wanted terrorist list for his active involvement in numerous terrorist ac-

## Chinese investor urges balanced view of Pakistan market

ISLAMABAD (INP): A Chinese investor in Pakistan has urged businesses to take a balanced view of the country's investment climate, describing it as an emerging market with both opportunities and risks.

Andy Liao, a Chinese investor who runs an export factory in Gwadar, told Gwadar Pro that online discussion about Pakistan has become increasingly polarised, with some portraying it as a place of easy profits and others dismissing it as too risky for investment.

He said both views were overly simplistic. Liao said mature and tightly regulated markets often have high entry

barriers, with opportunities concentrated among those with capital resources and strong market access.

Developing markets such as Pakistan, by contrast, may offer more room for ordinary investors, though with greater uncertainty and risk.

"Opportunity in such environments is never free," he said, adding that success depended on sound judgement, strong execution and resilience.

Drawing on his own experience, Liao said doing business in Pakistan could involve administrative inefficiency, cumbersome procedures and occasional unfair treatment.

Still, he said projects that contribute

## SC uses video-link technology to avoid disruption in scheduled hearings

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday successfully conducted court proceedings despite an emergent situation, using video-link technology to avoid disruption in scheduled hearings.

According to an official statement, Justice Ayesha Malik joined the bench from the Lahore Registry via a secure video link, while proceedings continued from the principal seat in Islamabad. The arrangement was made after an unexpected issue affected the composition of the bench at the Lahore Registry. Under normal circumstances, such a situation could have led to the delisting of cases, causing inconvenience to litigants and lawyers. However, due to the court's ongoing investment in digitisation

## SC uses video-link technology to avoid disruption in scheduled hearings

and modern technology hearings proceeded without interruption.

The bench heard and disposed of 20 out of 28 scheduled cases, reflecting a focus on timely adjudication.

The development highlights the judiciary's efforts to ensure uninterrupted access to justice and improve efficiency through technological reforms. The Chief Justice of Pakistan appreciated the cooperation of the legal fraternity, as well as the prompt coordination by court staff and IT teams, which enabled the smooth transition to remote proceedings. The statement described the move as a significant step towards a more adaptive and technology-driven judicial system, reaffirming the court's commitment to strengthening digital capabilities.

## KP CM vows no child to be deprived of education, announces major reforms

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi has said that efforts are underway to ensure that no child in the province is deprived of their basic right to education.

He made these remarks while chairing an important meeting on reforms in the education sector.

The meeting reviewed the progress of ongoing reforms and discussed in detail the current reform initiatives being implemented across the province.

The Chief Minister directed the relevant authorities to

Liao said Pakistan could benefit from a demographic dividend driven by its young population, offering long-term growth potential despite institutional instability.

He said this mix of opportunities and risks is typical of emerging markets.

Liao said investors should avoid black-and-white judgements and instead assess whether they had the capacity and patience to operate in Pakistan's evolving market.

He added that, within the framework of long-term China-Pakistan cooperation, structural opportunities in Pakistan are likely to remain significant for those prepared to navigate the challenges.



ISLAMABAD: European Union Envoy to Pakistan, Raimundas Karoblis called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb.



ROHRI (SINDH): Federal Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and Sindh Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah inaugurated the Rs. 1.33 billion project, aimed at transforming the historic 150-year-old Rohri Junction into a modern railway facility within six months.

release Rs 500 million for the establishment of an interdisciplinary research centre in the province.

During the meeting, several proposals were discussed including the establishment of community schools in remote areas to rapidly increase literacy rates, expansion of the double shift school programme, and introduction of IT and AI courses.

Sohail Afridi instructed officials to convene a detailed meeting on the proposed suggestions and submit the future strategy by the earliest.

He also ordered

the formation of a coordination committee comprising relevant officials and follow-up meetings to ensure implementation of agreed proposals.

He said that special focus has been placed on education and health sectors over the past five to six months, adding that positive results are emerging from these initiatives.

He noted that health and education are directly linked to the public, and the provincial government is investing in human development in line with Imran Khan's vision.

The Chief Minister further said that the ultimate goal is to bring comprehensive transformation in the education sector and ensure that no child is left without access to basic education.

He also expressed satisfaction over initiatives such as e-transfer policy, uniform curriculum, semester system, monitoring, teacher training, school-based assessment, virtual schooling and AI courses, and directed consideration of a broader framework to increase literacy, promote modern trends, and ensure equal access to education.

Institute of Development Studies and Practices (IDSP) Briefs Balochistan Communications Secretary on Development Initiatives

QUETTA: Secretary Communications and Works Babar Khan held an important meeting with Dr. Quratulain Bakhtari, Founding Director of the Institute of Development Studies and Practices (IDSP), to discuss the organization's role, objectives, and ongoing initiatives in Balochistan.

IDSP Highlights Role in Social and Economic Development. During the meeting, Dr. Quratulain Bakhtari provided a detailed briefing on the establishment, vision, and contributions of IDSP toward social and economic development in the province.

She emphasized Government Ap- preciates Development Efforts. Secretary Babar Khan appreciated the efforts of IDSP, stating that such institutions play a key role in sustainable development across Balochistan.



that IDSP is actively working to develop youth potential through community development projects. Strengthening education and research "Contribute to policy-making. The organization is particularly focused on empowering youth in remote areas by providing leadership and development opportunities.

and research institutions Focus on Future Collaboration. Both sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation between IDSP and the Communications and Works Department, particularly in Infrastructure development. Community engagement Policy-level improvements Commitment to Joint Initiatives.

The Secretary affirmed his commitment to promoting joint initiatives and partnerships aimed at accelerating development and improving public welfare in Balochistan. The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to work collaboratively for sustainable growth and better service delivery in the province.

Qalat Education Group Reviews Performance, DC Orders Strict Action Against Absentee Teachers

QALAT: A monthly meeting of the District Education Group was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Munir Ahmed Durrani to review the performance of the education sector.

important matters, including: School enrollment campaign progress Teacher attendance in schools Distribution of textbooks Cluster budget utilization Completion of under-construction

education reviews full attention, adding that teachers must focus on providing quality education as children are the future builders of the nation. Instructions for Regular Monitoring



schools Repair of school buildings Re-opening of non-functional schools Shortage of teaching staff Transfer, posting, and officials also briefed the DC regarding salary deductions of absent teachers. Strict Action Against Absenteeism

Deputy Commissioner Munir Ahmed Durrani emphasized that teacher absenteeism is unacceptable, stating that legal action is being taken against those who fail to perform their duties. He stressed that

The DC issued strict instructions to education authorities and RTSM representatives to conduct daily school visits to ensure teacher attendance and improve monitoring systems. Commitment to Education Reform He further stated that all available resources are being utilized to resolve issues faced by the education department in Qalat, reaffirming the administration's commitment to improving the quality of education across the district.

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Nasirabad Commissioners Reviews PHE, Local Government Projects, Stresses Clean Water Supply

NASIRABAD: Commissioner Salahuddin Noorzai chaired an important review meeting on development schemes of the Public Health Engineering and Local Government departments, emphasizing timely completion and quality execution of projects.

Detailed Briefing on Ongoing Projects. The meeting was attended by key officials including Ahmad Nawaz Jatak, Mubashir Khosa, Zafar Iqbal Zehri, Shukrullah Baloch, Nasir Lehri, Amjad Bangulzai, Saeed Ahmed Mengal, Zakir Hussain, and other concerned officers.

Officials from Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) and the Local



Government Department presented detailed briefings on ongoing development projects across various districts, highlighting progress and challenges.

Clean Water a Top Priority. Addressing the meeting, Commissioner Salahuddin Noorzai stressed that

PHED and Local Government projects are directly linked to public welfare, particularly the provision of clean drinking water, which he termed a fundamental right. He directed authorities to ensure uninterrupted water supply and resolve all obstacles hindering service delivery.

He further directed engineers to personally monitor

projects to prevent negligence and corruption. Focus on Urban and Rural Development Highlighting the importance of balanced development, he said that projects must equally benefit urban and rural areas, ensuring improvements in streets, neighborhoods, and villages.

Strict Monitoring and Field Presence Officials were directed to maintain active field presence and prioritize timely completion of projects to provide tangible solutions to public issues. The administration reaffirmed its commitment to improving infrastructure and ensuring access to essential services across Nasirabad Division.

University of Turbat Students Visit DC Office, Learn About District Governance

TURBAT: Students of the 7th semester from the Department of Political Science at University of Turbat visited the Deputy Commissioner Office to gain practical insight into the district administration system and government operations.

Briefing on Administrative Structure During the visit, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Kech Asadullah Baloch met with the students and provided a comprehensive briefing on governance and administrative functions. He explained the role, responsibilities, and authority of the Deputy Commis-

sioner, stating that the DC serves as the head of the district administration, with broad powers to manage and oversee administrative affairs effectively. Tour of Office Departments Students were taken on a detailed tour of various branches of the

Practical Learning Speaking to the students, the ADC emphasized that practical exposure is a vital part of education, helping students better understand governance systems and preparing them for future leadership roles. Positive Feedback From Students The stu-

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Jafarabad Expands Open Court Initiative to Resolve Public Issues at Grassroots Level

JAFARABAD: Following the directives of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, the district administration of Jafarabad has expanded the scope of open courts (Khuli Kachehris) to address public grievances more effectively.

Open Court Held at Union Council Level As part of this initiative, an open court was held at Union Council Jhadeer Goth. Ghulam Mustafa Leht Shahi Chowki under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan. A large number of residents participated, presenting their concerns both verbally and in writing.



Participation of Officials and Community Leaders The session was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Huzoor Baksh Bugti, Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Muhammad Kazim Lum, other district officials, and notable political and tribal figures including Mir Mitha Khan Badini. Bringing concerns to the Doorstep Addressing the

gathering, DC Khalid Khan stated that organizing open courts at the union council level aims to bring governance closer to the people, ensuring their issues are heard at their doorstep and resolved promptly. He appreciated the public's active participation, noting that it helps in accurate identification of issues and enables authorities to develop practical and effective

solutions. Focus on Immediate and Long-Term Solutions The Deputy Commissioner assured that issues solvable at the district level will be addressed immediately. Complex matters will be taken up with provincial authorities for sustainable solutions. Directives for Swift Action. He instructed all relevant officers to ensure prompt redressal of complaints and to further

strengthen the open court system for faster and more transparent public service delivery. The Deputy Commissioner reaffirmed its commitment to improving governance and ensuring timely resolution of public issues across Jafarabad.

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Kachhi: Health Sector Sees Major Improvements Under CM Vision, Staff and Ambulance Facilities Expanded

DHADAR: District Support Manager Kachhi Imran Khan Khajak stated that, in line with the vision of the Chief Minister of Balochistan, effective measures have been taken in coordination with the Health Department to improve basic healthcare services for the public.

He shared these views during a conversation with Deputy Director Information Department Nasirabad, Nek Muhammad, in the presence of Superintendent to Deputy Commissioner Kachhi Abdul Haq Mastooi. Major Improvements in Health Infrastructure Imran Khan Khajak highlighted sig-



nificant progress in the district's health sector, stating that previously only 33 health workers were serving the entire district. Staff strength has now increased to around 100 employees. Ambulance services have expanded from 1 to 5 ambulances. These improvements have strengthened emergency medi-

cal response and improved patient care. "Functional Health Facilities Expanded He further stated that a total of 17 Basic Health Units (BHUs) are now functional across the district. These BHUs are actively providing primary healthcare services to the population. The district's population of nearly

100,000 is being jointly served by the Health Department and PPHI Solar Power Installation. Ensures Continuity to address electricity issues, solar systems have been installed in all basic health centers, ensuring uninterrupted medical services during power outages. Commitment to Better Healthcare Delivery Imran Khan Khajak reaffirmed his commitment to performing his duties with honesty and responsibility, stating that continued cooperation from the district administration will further improve healthcare outcomes for the public.



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Commissioner's Office, where they were informed about: Departmental functions Working procedures Delivery of public services Importance of

Practical Learning Speaking to the students, the ADC emphasized that practical exposure is a vital part of education, helping students better understand governance systems and preparing them for future leadership roles. Positive Feedback From Students The stu-

TENDER NOTICE TSE-252601024873 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. The Municipal Corporation Hub invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates. Tender Fee 1000 PKR. Bid Security 2% S.No. Name of Works/ BORES WITH SOLAR SYSTEM/HUB 150,000,000. Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 100,000,000 PKR in last subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C4 and above. ( upto 200 million) in Relevant Category As Specified Code in CERN) (Water Supply). The BIDDER MUST PROVIDE THE BID SECURITY AND CHALAN JA The forms must provide performance certificate which is mandatory for the bidding process. For them to provide performance certificate verified from concern department. MUST BE FRESH AND EDIT COPY IS NOT ALLOWED. Submission of audited balance sheets, for the last Three (3)00 years by date to be submitted to the office. Capacity to have cash flow reasonably enough to the cash flow requirements of meet the bid work. MUST BE FRESH AND EDIT COPY IS NOT ALLOWED. The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work with completion having 60% cost in process for 4 years (within confirmation period of 30 days) authorizing a person, All Pending litigation. All Non-performance of a contract did not occur within the last 5 years, under execution. Conflict of interest. Documents originally MUST BE FRESH. THE BIDDER MUST UPLOAD THE ALL DOCUMENTS WITH COMPANY STAMP SIGNATURE Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bid must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signer from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The Bid Security Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk Issuance of Tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at tender.bppra.gov.pk. Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically after by 05 May, 2026 11:00 AM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 11:00 AM. on EPPS System Address: Municipal Corporation Hub, Phone no: 304230319 Email: info.mcorporation@gmail.com Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Hub

# Around 3.3 million jobs may have been affected by 2025 floods in Pakistan: ILO

**NEWS DESK:** Around 3.3 million jobs may have been affected by the 2025 floods in Pakistan, according to an assessment conducted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The ILO — a specialised United Nations agency — announced on Tuesday that it had undertaken an employment and livelihoods loss assessment for 14 of the worst-affected districts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to the ILO, the assessment showed that the majority of employment losses and disruptions were borne by the nine flood-affected districts in Punjab.

It further indicated that rural areas accounted for nearly 78 per cent of the total estimated employment losses, with agriculture emerging as the most affected sector, followed by services and industry.

According to the statement, the assessment was in support of the review and validation by the Preliminary Assessment of 2025 Flood Damages, a collective exercise supported by the United Nations, Asian Development Bank, European Union, and the World Bank, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as overall technical coordination lead.



The assessment noted that while provincial compensation measures helped address immediate relief and resettlement needs, there remained a strong need for more comprehensive support to restore livelihoods and income-generating activities in flood-affected areas, the ILO said.

The ILO also recommended a package of recovery measures, including cash-for-work programmes, skills training, and subsidised credit, to help affected households restart small-scale farm and non-farm economic activities.

On the outcome of the assessment, Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain said that the floods had caused serious damage to livelihoods, particularly for self-employed workers, daily wage earners, small farmers, and vulnerable households in rural areas.

He added that targeted employment recovery and livelihood restoration measures were needed to help affected communities rebuild their lives and income sources.

Hussain said that his ministry, in collaboration with provincial governments, social partners, and development partners, would restore livelihoods through targeted and employment-intensive recovery programmes.

The ministry and the ILO reaffirmed their commitment to working together with employers' organisations and other stakeholders to support flood-affected communities and promote recovery through sustainable employment and livelihood interventions.

Meanwhile, ILO Country Director for Pakistan Geir Tostøl emphasised that restoring employment and livelihoods must remain central to the recovery response.

"The floods have deepened economic vulnerability for already at-risk communities. There is a need for timely measures that support decent work, income recovery, and promote long-term resilience to climate-induced disasters," he said.

He also highlighted the need to revive the World of Work Crisis Response Strategy developed in the aftermath of the 2022 floods, so that future disaster responses can be more coordinated, timely and centred on the protection and recovery of employment and livelihoods.

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## Oil jumps on Hormuz tensions, Azerbaijan says it is ready to supply LNG to Pakistan

**NEWS DESK:** US and European stocks reversed on Monday as oil prices surged over fears hostilities could resume in the weeks-long Middle East war after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz following its brief reopening.

Investors were on edge, approaching the end of the US-Iran ceasefire, with Washington saying it will send a delegation to Pakistan for a new round of talks "soon" and Iran saying it had yet to decide

whether to attend. Brent crude futures advanced \$4.61, or 5.1 per cent, to \$94.99 a barrel by 11:26am ET (1526 GMT) and US West Texas Intermediate was up \$4.33, or 5.16pc, at \$88.18.

Both contracts had tumbled by 9pc on Friday for their largest daily declines since April 18 after Iran said that passage for all commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz was open for the remainder of the ceasefire.

"The market mood is very different at the start of the week compared to Friday," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at trading group XTB.

Crude had plunged Friday after Tehran said it would again allow ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas usually passes.

But world oil prices bounced on Monday as Iran closed the waterway and said the US blockade and seizure of an Iranian cargo ship breached the two-week ceasefire.

Renewed attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz increased fears of supply disruptions and raised the risk of a broader escalation in hostilities between the US and Iran," said Trade Nation analyst David Morrison.

Uncertainty also remains over whether negotiations in Islamabad will proceed after Iran said it would not attend talks while the blockade remains in place," he added.

Wall Street's main stock indices dipped, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite falling from record closes.

The S&P 500 shed 0.3pc, the Nasdaq Composite 0.5pc and the blue-chip Dow less than 0.1pc.

The losses were sharper in Europe. Frankfurt dropped 1.2pc, Paris shed 1.1pc and London gave up 0.6pc.

That came after gains for Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai.



## Govt actively pursuing diversified capital markets strategy, finmin tells EU envoy

**NEWS DESK:** Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said the government was actively pursuing a diversified capital markets strategy, aimed at strengthening external buffers and ensuring sustainable financing.

He made the remarks during a meeting with European Union (EU) Ambassador to Pakistan Raimundas Karoblis, the finance ministry said in a post on the social media platform X.

The minister underscored Pakistan's steady return to macroeconomic stability and renewed engagement with international capital markets, highlighting "growing investor confidence and the government's commitment to a structured and forward-looking economic reform agenda".

"He noted that Pakistan has recently issued international capital markets after a four-year hiatus through a privately placed Eurobond transaction, which witnessed strong investor interest and was successfully upsized," the ministry said.

It added that Aurangzeb emphasised that "this milestone reflects improving economic fundamentals and signals a positive trajectory for Pakistan's global financial integration".



Aurangzeb further stated that "the government is actively pursuing a diversified capital markets strategy, including future international issuances and innovative financing instruments, aimed at strengthening external buffers and ensuring sustainable financing".

The ministry added that the EU ambassador extended an invitation to the finance minister to participate in the high-level EU-Pakistan Business Forums scheduled to

be held on April 28 in Islamabad, which the minister accepted.

According to the ministry, Aurangzeb is expected to deliver the keynote address at the opening plenary session on the theme "Pakistan Rising: Incentives, Reforms, and the Next Investment Frontier".

It added that the minister appreciated the EU's efforts in "bringing together a large number of international and domestic business representatives,

noting that such initiatives provide a valuable platform to showcase Pakistan's improving business climate and investment

potential, while fostering meaningful business-to-business engagement".

Aurangzeb also highlighted the government's broader efforts to maintain macroeconomic stability, strengthen

foreign exchange reserves, and advance structural reforms to support sustainable and inclusive growth," it said.

He acknowledged the continued support of key bilateral partners in reinforcing economic resilience and emphasised

the importance of sustained international collaboration in this regard, the ministry said.

## Azerbaijan says it is ready to supply LNG to Pakistan

**NEWS DESK:** Azerbaijan's state energy company SOCAR is ready to supply liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Pakistan as soon as it receives a request from Islamabad, the company told Reuters on Tuesday.

Islamabad seeks spot cargoes to "ease a growing energy shortfall."

SOCAR said a "framework agreement signed in 2025 between SOCAR Trading and Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) allows the Pakistani buyer to purchase LNG cargoes directly under an accelerated procedure."

"SOCAR is ready to provide LNG to Pakistan as soon as PLL submits a corresponding request," the company said in response to Reuters questions.

SOCAR did not say whether such a request had already been made, when a "first delivery could

take place, or whose LNG would be supplied under the agreement.

Pakistan, which relies heavily on "gas for its energy needs, remains vulnerable to declining domestic production and swings in global LNG prices amid the supply disruptions related to the US-Israeli war on Iran."

Facing criticism over loadshedding in the beginning of summer, the power division has already placed an order with the petroleum division to arrange around 400 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) of LNG for power generation, amid hopes for the opening of international supply routes.

A day earlier, it had also emerged that Pakistan and Qatar were in an advanced stage of discussions for the supply of at least four LNG cargoes,

which could pass through the Strait of Hormuz within a couple of days.

Qatar had declared force majeure early last month on all its global LNG contracts, including those with Pakistan.

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## SBP receives \$1b from Saudi Arabia, second tranche of \$3b deposit

**NEWS DESK:** The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said on Tuesday that the country has received \$1 billion from the Ministry of Finance of Saudi Arabia, marking the second tranche of a \$3 billion deposit agreement with the Kingdom, in a post on X.

In the statement, the central bank said the funds were received "with a value date of 20 April 2026" as part of the financing arrangement between the two countries.

"This is the second tranche of the \$3 billion deposit recently agreed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the bank said, adding that the first tranche of \$2 billion had already been received, with a value date of 15 April 2026.

The inflows are expected to support Pakistan's external position by bolstering foreign exchange reserves amid ongoing efforts to maintain macroeconomic stability.

On April 15, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that Saudi Arabia has committed \$3 billion in additional deposits with disbursement expected in

the coming week. He further stated that the existing \$5 billion Saudi deposit would no longer remain subject to the earlier annual rollover arrangement and would instead be extended for a longer period.

Aurangzeb has said that the government remained committed to maintaining reserves in line with its obligations under the IMF, including the objective of achieving around \$18 billion in reserves, equivalent to approximately 3.3 months of import cover, by the end of the fiscal year. The inflow

comes at a critical juncture as Pakistan moves to meet its external financing needs and maintain reserve targets under its IMF programme.

Separately, Pakistan has already cleared a longstanding \$450 million loan owed to the UAE. Officials said Saudi financial backing would help cushion the impact of these outflows, ensuring stability in the external account. They added that with an additional \$3 billion expected from Saudi Arabia, the total Saudi deposit exposure could rise to \$8 billion.

Beyond deposits, Pakistan is also seeking to secure further financial space through oil facility arrangements with Saudi Arabia. The current deferred oil payment facility, valued at around \$1 billion annually, is nearing completion, under which Saudi Arabia has been supplying oil worth approximately \$100 million per month. Meanwhile, Pakistan expects to receive around \$1.21 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) next month, subject to approval by its executive board, following a staff-level agreement.



# Qalandars look to knock Gladiators off playoff spot on home return

**NEWSDESK:** Defending champions Lahore Qalandars return to their fortress at Gaddafi Stadium on Tuesday with renewed hunger, desperate to claw back into the playoff race when they face a stuttering Quetta Gladiators side in a crucial day match of the HBL Pakistan Super League.

The high-stakes contest kicks off a double-header that will also see the witless Rawalpindz take on inform Multan Sultans in a night fixture at Karachi's National Bank Stadium.

With the league entering its decisive phase after shifting back between the two venues following the second-round matches in Karachi, every point now carries massive weight.

Qalandars, led by explosive pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi, sit sixth on the points table with six points from seven matches, while Gladiators occupy fourth spot with the same six points from eight games but a marginally better net run-rate.

Both sides know defeat could either end their playoff ambitions, especially as



Peshawar Zalmi have already qualified at the top with 15 points.

Qalandars have shown fighting spirit at home. In the first round at Gaddafi Stadium, they secured two wins against Hyderabad Kingsmen and Multan Sultans — before suffering a loss to Karachi Kings.

Back on familiar turf after the break, they will

look to unleash their potent batting line-up featuring Fakhar Zaman, Abdullah Shafique, Muhammad Nisam and all-rounder Sikandar Raza. In the bowling department, captain Shaheen has been the standout performer with 13 wickets, the second-highest in the tournament. However, he needs greater support from Haris Rauf, Raza and

young pacer Ubaid Khan who have struggled to find consistent rhythm with the new ball and in the death overs.

Gladiators, the 2019 champions, have been inconsistent, particularly at Gaddafi Stadium, where they have managed only one victory in four attempts. Defeats to Karachi Kings, Islamabad United and

Multan Sultans highlight their vulnerabilities, with their sole success coming against Hyderabad Kingsmen.

Hasan Nawaz has emerged as a reliable performer, amassing 288 runs at an average of 41.14, while captain Saud Shakeel has chipped in with 206 runs at an average of 20.6.

Their bowling attack hinges on the spin duo of Ahrar Ahmed and Usman Tariq, each with eight wickets so far.

Following their

require explosive contributions from overseas stars Rilee Rossouw, Shamyul Hussain, Khawaja Nafay and Bevon Jacobs to improve their middle-overs batting, an area where they have faltered.

Their bowling attack hinges on the spin duo of Ahrar Ahmed and Usman Tariq, each with eight wickets so far.

Following their

heavy loss to Peshawar Zalmi on Sunday, Gladiators bowling coach Sohail Tanvir urged his players to move forward without dwelling on setbacks.

"In my view, this happens sometimes — there comes a day as a team when nothing clicks for you," he said. "So, in such situations, as management, as a coach, or as senior players, all we can say is: forget this match and let's move on."

"Because the good performance from the previous match didn't help us today, and if we played badly today and didn't perform well, it shouldn't affect the upcoming matches."

"We still have two games. And we are still in fourth position. We have all the chances —

if we play the next matches well, we can qualify for the playoffs." Sohail pinpointed middle-overs batting struggles and the inability of the pace attack to build pressure in key issues, stressing that spinners Ahrar and Usman need a strong platform from the top order to be effective.

On Monday, Qalandars held a practice session at the LCCA

Ground alongside Karachi Kings, fine-tuning strategies for the must-win encounter.

The Gladiators, arriving in Lahore later in the evening, chose rest to ensure freshness.

The day's second match in Karachi pits the hapless Rawalpindz against high-flying Multan Sultans. The newly introduced Rawalpindz franchise has endured a torrid debut campaign, remaining winless in seven matches with a dismal net run-rate.

Despite boasting talents such as Mohammad Rizwan and a blend of experienced locals and overseas players, the side has failed to click, leaving them anchored at the bottom of the table.

Multan Sultans, in stark contrast, sit second with 10 points from seven matches. With five victories already, they are among the most consistent teams and heavy favorites to extend their dominance against the struggling Pindz outfit.

A win would further strengthen their playoff position, while Rawalpindz face yet another daunting challenge in their quest for a maiden PSL victory.

## Sabalenka, Alcaraz sweep top honours

**NEWS DESK:** Tennis ruled the red carpet in Madrid on Monday as Aryna Sabalenka and Carlos Alcaraz were crowned Sportsman and Sportsman of the Year at the Laureus Awards.

The pair were honored after glittering 2025 campaigns that saw them "finish at the women's and men's tennis rankings respectively."

Spainiard Alcaraz, 22, reclaimed the year-end world number one spot after capturing two Grand Slam titles at the French Open and U.S. Open, underlining his supremacy "across surfaces."

Belarusian Sabalenka, 27, stood alongside him in the winners' circle in "New York and also reached the final in Australia and France, capping "a season of relentless consistency."

With her triumph,

Sabalenka joins a roll call of Laureus "Sports-woman of the Year" recipients from her sport including Serena Williams, Jennifer Capriati, Justine Henin "and Naomi Osaka."

In a first for the awards, the ceremony was hosted by two athletes — both former Laureus winners — Novak Djokovic and Elina Svitolina. One's honors went to gymnast Simone Biles and pole-vaulter Mondo Duplantis.

McElroy takes comeback prize

Elsewhere, Rory McElroy claimed the 2026 Formula One's World Comeback of the Year Award "after ending an 11-year wait to complete the career Grand Slam with a playoff victory at the "2025 Masters," a title he defended in "2026 Formula One's World Cup where the former Pakistan all-rounder noted, "And if you look at him throughout the PSL, you will see his proper cricketing shots again."

The coach revealed that his message to Babar was simple: "Go and enjoy yourself, and play your own cricket the way you have always played it."

Azhar then turned his attention to Babar's struggles in the T20 World Cup where the batsman that his strike rate for a relatively modest strike rate. He argued that the demand for Babar to bat at number four and accelerate unnaturally created unnecessary pressure.

"When you made him bat at number four in the World Cup, people talk about his strike rate," he said.

took World Team of the Year after a trophy haul in 2025 that included the French league and Cup plus their first Champions League crown.

The "Laureus World Sports "Awards nominees are selected "by the global media, while the winners are determined by the 49 members of the Laureus World Sports Academy."

The awards have been "presented annually since 2000."

Winners: World Sportsman of the Year Award: Carlos Alcaraz; World Sports-woman of the Year Award: Aryna Sabalenka; World Team of the Year Award: Paris St Germain World Breakthrough of the Year Award: Landor Norris; World Comeback of the Year Award: Rory McElroy; World Sportsman of the Year Award: Landor Norris; World "Disability Award: Gabriel Araujo; World Action Sportsman of the Year Award: Chloe Kim.

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## Babar was not utilised properly in T20 World Cup: Azhar Mahmood

**NEWS DESK:** Peshawar Zalmi bowling coach Azhar Mahmood has strongly defended Babar Azam, asserting that the star batsman was not utilised properly during Pakistan's disappointing campaign in the T20 World Cup where expectations of a higher strike rate forced him out of his natural game.

Zalmi recorded a commanding 118-run victory over Quetta Gladiators at the National Bank Stadium on Sunday night, that featured Babar's unbeaten 100 off just 52 balls — an innings laced with elegant stroke play, a hallmark of Babar's batting.

"The knock propelled Zalmi to a formidable total and underscored Babar's return to form in the ongoing HBL Pakistan Super League, where he has already crossed 400 runs at a strike rate exceeding 143."

"Babar has always been world-class," Azhar, who recently ended his stint at the Pakistan Test coach, said. "He was going through a slightly difficult phase."

"When he was with me during the Test matches, we spoke to him and worked with him. We told him that the cricket he knows how to play — he is a proper cricketing shots player. He is not someone who goes and plays power-hitting straight away."

Azhar highlighted how Babar has rediscovered his "artistic kind of batting" in the

PSL, with fluid shots flowing through for him.

"The way he played today, he presented his innings so beautifully," the former Pakistan all-rounder noted. "And if you look at him throughout the PSL, you will see his proper cricketing shots again."

"So there isn't that much difference. But what you get with Babar is consistency. He sets a platform for you... After that, your power-hitters can play freely."

Azhar contended that excessive hype around Babar's strike rate and suboptimal utilisation contributed to his difficulties.

"So I think there was a lot of hype on Babar that his strike rate is low, and the way we have used him... I think he wasn't utilised properly," he remarked pointedly.

The Zalmi coach broadened his critique to Pakistan's cricket ecosystem, lamenting an overemphasis on immediate results rather than long-term process.

"International matches obviously have pressure... unfortunately in Pakistan, it has always been that there is too much focus on the outcome — if you get knocked out of the tournament," he said. "I always believe that you have to work on the process."

"So we focus too much on results. If you follow the process for a long time... give them proper opportunities and hold them accountable."

Azhar also pointed to frequent changes in the coaching staff as a destabilising factor. In the last two years, he noted, six to eight coaches had come and gone, leaving players uncertain.

"Every coach has his own mindset... now the players know that today this coach is there; tomorrow who knows if he will be or not," he observed.

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## Endrick stars as Lyon dent PSG's Ligue 1 title hopes

**NEWS DESK:** Brazilian prodigy Endrick scored one goal and set up another as Lyon won 2-1 away to Paris Saint-Germain on Sunday, denting the reigning European champions' bid for another Ligue 1 title.

Endrick gave Lyon an early lead at the Parc des Princes and then released Alfonso Moreira to double their advantage.

PSG rested several stars from the side that beat Liverpool away in midweek to reach the Champions League semi-finals and were far from their best, with Goncalo Ramos having a penalty saved before Khvicha Kvaratskhelia grabbed a late consolation.

It was a fifth defeat in Ligue 1 this season for Luis Enrique's side, who are one point ahead of nearest challengers Lens with a game in hand — a win at home to Nantes in a rearranged fixture in midweek will leave them four points clear with five to play.

PSG must still travel next month to Lens, who beat Toulouse 3-2 on Friday, and remain on course for a fifth straight domestic title, but this remains a setback for a side preparing to face Bayern Munich in the Champions League

semi-finals.

"You want a more close-fought league and you have it. Lens keep winning and it will be difficult until the end," said Luis Enrique.

"That's football and now we just need to prepare for the upcoming games. We are going to be playing every three days now and we need to cope with that."

Meanwhile, Lyon's win is a huge boost in their quest to return to the Champions League after an absence of six years from Europe's elite club competition — since they lost to Bayern

in the 2020 semis.

Paulo Fonseca's side are joint-third on 54 points with Lille, who drew 0-0 with Nice on Saturday.

"Endrick was decisive but I am especially happy with how hard he worked defensively," said Fonseca.

Rennes are a point behind Lyon and Lille in fifth after a 3-0 victory at Strasbourg, while Marseille are another point back in sixth following a 2-0 loss at Lens on Saturday.

Monaco are two points further adrift in seventh after having to

come from behind to draw 2-2 with Auxerre.

The top three qualify directly for next season's Champions League, with fourth entering in the third qualifying round.

Fifth goes into the Europa League and sixth into the Conference League.

Endrick opened the scoring in the seventh minute, beating home goalkeeper Matvey Safonov at his near post — he has now scored seven goals for Lyon since arriving on loan from Real Madrid in January.



## F1 to make rule changes from next race

**NEWS DESK:** Formula One teams and stakeholders agreed "unanimously on Monday to implement safety engine rule tweaks aimed at improving the racing and driver safety" from the next race in Miami on May 3.

The sport this season started a new era, with the hybrid power units now split roughly 50-50 between electric and combustion power.

Some drivers have complained over the first three races about having "to lift and coast" into

high-speed corners so the combustion engine can recharge the battery and "have aired safety concerns regarding the start and speed differentials during the race."

They have also had "to contend with 'superclipping' where the power unit automatically diverts energy from the engine to the battery, slowing down the car even if the driver is flat on the throttle."

Red Bull's four-times world champion Max Verstappen has

"questioned his future in the sport."

The governing International Automobile Federation (FIA) said in a statement, opens new tab that an online meeting with the 11 team bosses,

power unit CEOs and Formula One had agreed a number of in-season "refinements" that would now be put to a "virtual vote."

"The proposals agreed today... will be implemented from Miami apart from the race start

changes that "will be tested in Miami and adopted following feedback and analysis," it said.

More consistent flat-out driving

The FIA said energy management "parameters" would be adjusted for qualifying, a key area of concern, with a reduction in maximum permitted recharge from eight megajoules to seven.

"To encourage more consistent flat-out driving and peak 'superclip' power increased from 250kW to 350kW to reduce the time spent recharging."

In the race, measures were introduced to reduce excessive closing speeds and "limit sudden performance differentials with the maximum power "available through boost capped at an additional 150kW."

A new system has been developed and will be trialled to mitigate the risks of a slow-starting car being struck by a faster one close behind as well as measures to improve safety and visibility "in the wet."

# Massive Customs Scam Rocks Quetta: Six More Officers Suspended in Silver-to-Lead Fraud

**Syed Ali Shah:** Quetta In a dramatic escalation of Pakistan's biggest customs scandal in recent years, authorities have suspended six more officers after fresh evidence exposed their alleged involvement.

gross negligence, and direct facilitation in the shocking case of converting silver into lead.

Sources within the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) revealed that a deeper investigation uncovered clear signs of misconduct and serious lapses by several customs officials and staff members.

Following these findings, the authorities immediately suspended one Collector Customs (BS-20),

one Deputy Collector (BS-18), one Assistant Collector (BS-17), and three officers at the BS-16 level.

Criminal investigations are now in full swing. Those found directly complicit in the



the fraud have also been identified and will be brought to justice under the full force of the law.

To restore public confidence and ensure a fair probe, the entire previous team at the Collectorate of Customs Enforcement in Quetta has been replaced.

Three new officers have already taken charge of their duties in the provincial capital.

The unfolding scandal has sent shockwaves through the customs department and raised serious concerns about internal oversight and accountability.

## ECP halts Saeed by-election for Murad Saeed's vacant seat

**NEWS DESK:** The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday halted the by-election for the vacant Senate seat of PTI leader Murad Saeed and issued a stay order after a petition challenged the legality of the de-notifications process, adjourning further proceedings.

A three-member bench of the ECP heard the petition regarding the matter and issued notices to all concerned parties.

During the hearing, the lawyer for petitioner MPA Jalal Khan appeared before the commission and stated that Saeed had been elected senator but did not take the oath of office.

He argued, "Since Saeed did not take the oath, questions arise over how he was de-

notified as a member," adding that a person is considered a member of the house only after taking the oath.

The petitioner's counsel further requested the ECP to postpone the by-election and remove the existing ambiguity in the matter.

After hearing the arguments, the ECP accepted the request and put the scheduled April 23 by-election on hold, issuing a stay order and adjourning the case until May 7.

Later, the ECP also suspended Saeed's March 25 disqualification order "until further orders". The ECP had disqualified Saeed from his Senate seat following his conviction in a May 9 case.

The ECP's notification regarding Saeed's

disqualification mentioned his sentencing by an anti-terrorism court (ATC) on March 7.

Saeed was named among 47 proclaimed offenders sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in the May 9 General Headquarters (GHQ) attack case by a Rawalpindi ATC.

In a notification dated March 25 and available with Dawn, the ECP cited the court's March 7 order, stating: "Murad Saeed notified as returned candidate on a general seat of Senate from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province [...] has become disqualified under Article 63(1)(b) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and is hereby de-notified. Resultantly, his seat has become vacant."

## Pakistan Navy conducts successful test of locally developed air-launched cruise missile: ISPR

**NEWS DESK:** The Pakistan Navy conducted a successful test of the indigenously developed "Taimoor" air-launched cruise missile, the military's media wing said on Tuesday.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the "Pakistan Navy has conducted successful live weapon firing of Taimoor air-launched cruise missile—an indigenously developed Anti-Ship Weapon System—in a powerful demonstration of precision strike capability and operational readiness".

ISPR said that the cruise missile "executed its mission with exceptional precision, validating Pakistan Navy's combat capability to detect, target and decisively neutralise enemy sea-based threats at extended ranges".

The statement added that the test marked "a pivotal elevation of national defence capability".

It further said that the test had "strengthened Pakistan armed forces' multi-dimensional coordinated strike posture and capabilities in the conventional domain".

"Pakistan Navy stands resolute in its commitment to safeguard the nation's maritime interests and sovereign waters,"

ISPR said. "The president, prime minister of Pakistan, chief of defence forces and services chiefs have congratulated the scientists and engineers on achieving this significant milestone," the statement concluded.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also lauded the successful

test, stating that it was a "milestone" in Pakistan's defence capabilities.

As per a statement by the Ministry of Interior, Naqvi congratulated the nation on the successful test, affirming that Pakistan Navy remained "committed to protecting the nation's maritime borders".

On April 16, the navy successfully fired a locally developed anti-ship ballistic missile to engage targets at an extended range.

In January, the navy conducted a "comprehensive exercise" in the north Arabian Sea, where it successfully fired a surface-to-air missile.



## Karachi police lodge case after young doctor shot dead near Mehran Hotel

**NEWS DESK:** A young doctor was shot dead near Mehran Hotel on Karachi's Dr Daud Pota Road later on Monday night in what police described as a suspected targeted attack.

The victim was identified as Dr Sarang, 36, son of Muhammad Hussain and a resident of Karachi.

A first information report (FIR) was registered at Artillery Maidan Police Station today under Sections 34 (common intention) and 302 (murder) of the Pakistan Penal Code, on the complaint of the victim's brother, Sarmad Hussain.

According to the FIR, the incident occurred at around 11:55pm on Monday.

Dr Sarang's wife, who was present at the scene, stated that the couple were travelling in

a rickshaw along Dr Daud Pota Road towards the Karachi University Centre after the doctor had returned from duty.

Quoting his sister-in-law, the complainant said that near Mehran Hotel, a white car with an unidentified registration number intercepted their rickshaw.

He added that a man stepped out from the rear seat, pulled out a pistol and opened fire on Dr Sarang before fleeing the scene in the same vehicle.

The FIR said the driver of the car remains unidentified and the wife narrowly escaped unhurt.

Dr Sarang received bullet wounds to his chest and three additional injuries to his legs. He was taken to Jinnah Hospital, where

he later succumbed to his injuries during treatment.

The complainant said he was informed about his brother's death by his nephew via phone call, after which he immediately travelled to Karachi.

Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police Zulfiqar Ali confirmed the incident and said the body had been formally examined.

He said the crime scene had been inspected and physical evidence, including spent ammunition, was taken into custody. A sealed bag was also recovered from near the site of the incident.

Investigators said they were probing the case from multiple angles and efforts were underway to identify and arrest the suspects, who remain at large.

## SC notifies SOPs to ensure uninterrupted functioning during 'unforeseen public holidays'

**NEWS DESK:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday notified separate standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure uninterrupted judicial functioning during "unforeseen public holidays".

The development comes as extraordinary security measures have been put in place for the anticipated second round of US-Iran peace talks in Islamabad, expected to be held this week.

A day earlier, the Federal Constitutional Court also said no judicial work would be conducted at its principal seat in Islamabad on Tuesday in view of security arrangements ahead of the arrival of foreign delegations.

According to a press release issued by the SC on Tuesday, under the SOPs, administrative and judicial business will ordinarily



continue during "emergently declared public holidays" with minimal essential staff arrangements, unless otherwise directed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi.

The case fixation framework prioritises urgent civil and criminal matters, including family cases, bail matters, criminal review petitions, cases of prisoners above 80 years of age, restoration petitions and compromise matters and cases involving short legal questions," the statement said.

It added that to reduce pendency, at least 40 per cent of each final cause list would consist of the oldest pending cases up to the year 2018, with progressive inclusion of later years where required.

cases filed by counsel from Sindh and Balochistan.

"The SOPs further provide for the issuance of weekly and proposed monthly cause lists,

along with the development of an automated case fixation system to enhance transparency, minimise delays, and improve case flow management," it said.

The statement concluded that the measures reflected the SC's "continued commitment to efficient, technology-driven, and citizen-centric administration of justice".

On Monday, the SC had conducted court proceedings, where around 20 cases out of a total of 28 were disposed of, while one of the members of the bench participated from the Lahore Registry via secure video link.