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Balochistan Government, Opposition Resume Dialogue Over Madrasa Registration and Political Affairs

Ali Hamza, Syed Ali Shah, News Desk:

QUETTA: The Balochistan government and opposition leaders held an important round of talks in Quetta on Thursday, signaling efforts to maintain political dialogue amid ongoing discussions over madrasa registration and other key provincial matters.

The government delegation was led by Provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove and included Provincial Ministers Mir Ali Madad Jatak and Mir Barkat Rind along with other officials.

Senior opposition leaders also attended the meeting, including JUI-F Balochistan chief Senator Maulana Abdul Wasey, Opposition Leader in the Balochistan Assembly Mir Younis Aziz Zehri, PAC Chairman Asghar Fareen, opposition MPA Syed Zafar Agha, and MNA Usman Badini.

According to participants, the meeting focused on madrasa registration, political affairs, and issues related to religious institutions in the province. Both sides agreed to continue consultations and keep communication channels open in the coming days.

Speaking during the meeting, Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove said religious seminaries have historically played a vital role in Islamic education and unity within the Muslim world. He said madrasas continue to produce religious scholars and Huffaz who contribute to society.

Langove also highlighted



Balochistan's diversity, describing the province as a blend of different ethnicities and religions living together. He praised Maulana Abdul Wasey as an experienced and respected political figure.

Provincial Minister Mir Ali Madad Jatak said it is important for political and religious stakeholders to understand the government's position on

madrasa-related matters. He added that the provincial government has consistently tried to take opposition and religious parties into confidence before making important decisions.

He said the government delegation's visit to opposition leaders reflected seriousness and willingness to resolve issues through dialogue rather than confrontation.

The meeting comes at a time when discussions around madrasa registration and political coordination remain an important issue in Balochistan politics.

Nawabzada Lashkari Challenges Proposed Demolition of Balochistan Assembly Building in High Court



NEWS DESK

QUETTA: In Quetta, senior political leader and former senator Mir Lashkari Raisani has formally challenged the government's decision to proceed with the demolition of the historic Balochistan Assembly Building by filing a petition in the Balochistan High Court.

Nawabzada Lashkari, through Advocate Sial Khan Kakar, has moved the court seeking cancellation of the proposed demolition tender and has also requested the issuance of a stay order to immediately

halt any further action on the project.

He has urged the court to take up the matter on a priority basis, citing its constitutional and public importance.

In his position, Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani argued that the Balochistan Assembly building is not only a key governmental structure but also a valuable provincial asset that should be preserved rather than dismantled. He emphasized that the province is already facing multiple pressing issues, and administrative focus should be redirected toward public welfare instead of

infrastructure removal.

He pointed out critical challenges in Balochistan, including shortages of clean drinking water, deteriorating conditions in universities, and the ongoing financial crisis affecting higher education institutions.

According to him, these problems require urgent attention and effective governance. The petition is expected to generate significant legal and political debate, particularly regarding public infrastructure protection, heritage preservation, and policy priorities in Balochistan.

Three Bugti Brothers Killed in Rahim Yar Khan Encounter

NEWS DESK:

RAHIM YAR KHAN: Three sons of late tribal elder Wadera Khan Muhammad Kalpar Bugti were killed in an alleged encounter during a Crime Control Department (CCD) operation in Punjab's

Rahim Yar Khan district, sources said.

The deceased were identified as Shaukat Kalpar Bugti, Mazar Kalpar Bugti, and Mushtaq Kalpar Bugti. According to reports, the brothers were killed when CCD personnel carried out an operation in the area.

Officials have yet to issue a detailed statement regarding the incident or the allegations linked to the reported encounter.

The incident has drawn attention in tribal and political circles, with calls for clarity over the circumstances surrounding the operation.



OPINION VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Defense Pact – A Historic Milestone in Bilateral Relations



Editorial: For over eight decades, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have enjoyed close and cordial relations rooted in faith, friendship, and mutual cooperation. The recent visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the Kingdom has further strengthened these historic ties, marking a new chapter in the relationship between the two brotherly nations.

SMDAA Unprecedented Event
The signing of a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is unprecedented. For the first time, both states have formally pledged that an attack on one will be considered an attack on both.

This landmark pact is not only a testament to their shared commitment to peace and security but also a reflection

of the growing geopolitical importance of Pakistan in the wider Middle East and South Asia. Over the years, Saudi Arabia has stood firmly by Pakistan, extending support in critical times, whether financial, diplomatic, or strategic. At the same time, Pakistan has successfully managed to maintain positive ties with both Saudi Arabia and Iran, balancing its role in a region often marked by divisions. This ability to uphold cordial relations with diverse regional players demonstrates Islamabad's maturity in diplomacy.

China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia Fully Support Pakistan

Equally significant is the fact that Pakistan continues to receive consistent and unconditional support from major global actors such as China, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. These relationships enhance Pakistan's leverage on

the international stage and help consolidate its role as a bridge between the Muslim world and the global community.

The defense agreement with Saudi Arabia is, therefore, a matter of immense pride for the Pakistani nation. It not only secures Pakistan's strategic interests but also strengthens the balance of power in the region. Such developments assure the people of Pakistan that their country is not isolated but deeply engaged in shaping the future of regional security and cooperation.

This Is Indeed A National Achievement

This historic step deserves to be celebrated as a national achievement. It is a reflection of Pakistan's enduring diplomacy and its ability to transform long-standing friendships into strategic partnerships that ensure stability, prosperity, and peace for generations to come.

Balochistan in the Eye of Climate Change Storm: Calls for Resilient Climate Policies Surface

Chandni Kakar:



In the global battle against climate change, Balochistan, Pakistan, serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for climate resilience. The province is experiencing increasingly severe weather events, a consequence of human-induced climate change. However, many residents mistake regular fluctuations for regular weather occurrences, hindering recognition of the escalating climate crisis.

Balochistan becoming unbearably hot

Balochistan is becoming unbearably hot, with rising temperatures transforming heatwaves into a year-round threat. These heatwaves pose severe health risks, including heat stress, dehydration, and even fatalities. In 2017, Turbat recorded a scorching 53.5°C (128.3°F), setting a record for Pakistan. Unfortunately, forecasts suggest that temperatures will continue to rise.

However, the climate challenges in Balochistan extend beyond relentless heat waves. The province grapples with devastating droughts and floods, both of which wreak havoc on homes and infrastructure. The floods of 2010 and 2022 left nearly 4 million people displaced, disrupting lives and triggering food shortages and price spikes due to their impact on the agriculture sector.

The 2022 flood in Balochistan underscores the looming climate change threat

The 2022 flood underscored the looming threat of climate

change over Balochistan. Driven by intensified and increasingly frequent monsoon rains, the full extent of the damage is yet to be comprehended. However, it exposed the province's vulnerabilities and highlighted the urgent need for effective management strategies.

Balochistan's annual rainfall of just 200 mm barely meets the needs of its parched population. This water scarcity adversely affects food production, access to drinking water, and livestock numbers, exacerbated by climate change.

The severe droughts of 1997-2003 and 2014-2017 forced migrations to water-rich areas.

CC affects economy

Climate change also decimated the region's economy

through the loss of livestock. Between 2010 and 2022, over 1.5 million livestock were lost, costing over \$1 billion and displacing over 100,000 people, particularly in districts like Quetta, Pishin, Turbat, Pajpore, and Khuzdar.

Tree plantations could mitigate sweltering temperatures

In a province where tree planting could mitigate sweltering temperatures and climate change impacts, government initiatives should engage younger generations in green initiatives. Achieving a resilient future necessitates a collaborative effort involving government, local communities, civil society, and the commercial sector. Balochistan's path towards resilience begins with a symphony of collective action.

By addressing these critical issues, Balochistan can better adapt to the challenges posed by climate change, ensuring a more secure and sustainable future for its residents.

Israel and Iran Conflict and Its Impact on Middle East Stability

Syed Muhammad Wassem:

Israel and Iran are exchanging deadly attacks. Israeli strikes have hit homes, hospitals, and aid workers in Tehran. Iran responded with missile and drone attacks on cities like Tel Aviv and Haifa. Many civilians have been killed or injured on both sides.

The conflict is drawing global attention. President Trump left the G7 early due to the crisis. UK leaders warn against military action without approval. Tensions are rising, and the risk of a wider war is growing. Global powers are urging both sides to de-escalate.

The violence is shaking the region's stability. Political alliances are shifting, economies are under pressure, and millions fear what comes next.

Behind the strikes and statements lies a deeper struggle for military power, especially between Iran and Israel. From the origins of their rivalry to current military actions, regional fallout, and global reactions, this article breaks down what you need to know.

Historical Background
The Iran-Israel conflict history began intensifying after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which transformed Iran from a close ally of Israel into one of its fiercest opponents.

Iran's support for armed groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, along with Israel's targeted assassinations and airstrikes, deepened the divide.

Over the years, the tensions have played out through a timeline of provocative events. Iran's controversial nuclear program has



drawn repeated warnings and attacks from Israel.

Both nations have launched cyberattacks against each other, with the Stuxnet virus and strikes on nuclear sites. Proxy wars have continued across Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza, keeping the region in a constant state of unrest.

External powers have also shaped the conflict's course. The U.S. strongly supports Israel with military aid and intelligence, while Iran receives political backing from Russia and economic support from China.

These global ties have made the situation more complex, raising the stakes and limiting diplomatic solutions.

Current State of the Conflict
The conflict between Israel and Iran is intensifying, with Israel intercepting 30 drones

and multiple ballistic missiles. From Iran, Israel's airstrikes targeted nuclear sites, while also killing Iranian chief of staff Ali Shamamir.

Iran retaliated with missile strikes on Israel, causing damage in places like Herzliya, though no injuries were reported. The conflict has led to at least 224 Iranian and 24 Israeli casualties, with countries like India and Pakistan evacuating their citizens from Tehran.

Israel's attacks have disrupted Iranian energy infrastructure, including the South Pars gas field. The violence has strengthened support for Iran's hardliners, with global concerns rising over the ongoing conflict.

Impact on Middle East Stability
The Israel-Iran conflict has triggered a regional arms race. Countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt are increasing their defense spending.

They want to upgrade weapons, air defenses, and missile systems. This rise in military buildup reflects growing fears of future attacks. The chances of a wider war are also rising. Iran's support for militias and Israel's direct strikes have already pulled

on regional alliances are shifting. Syria is moving closer to the West. Iraq struggles to balance relations with Iran and the U.S.

Egypt and Jordan are working to protect their own security. This conflict is not just about two nations—it's changing the political map of the Middle East.

Security and Military Impact
The Israel-Iran conflict has triggered a regional arms race. Countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt are increasing their defense spending.

They want to upgrade weapons, air defenses, and missile systems. This rise in military buildup reflects growing fears of future attacks.

The chances of a wider war are also rising. Iran's support for militias and Israel's direct strikes have already pulled

producers and consumers.

Trade routes and airlines are also affected. Several carriers suspended flights to Iran, Iraq, and nearby nations. Jordan, Iraq, and Iran closed their airspace, halting traffic on some of the world's busiest air corridors. These changes hurt tourism and slow cargo movement across continents.

Conflict-hit countries like Iran face added economic pressure. Sanctions, rising inflation, and oil infrastructure damage are worsening Tehran's financial crisis.

Iraq and Lebanon may also suffer due to economic ties with Iran and ongoing instability. Global inflation may rise if this war continues.

Humanitarian and Social Consequences

The human toll is rising fast. Over 220 Iraqis, including women and children, have been killed.

Israeli casualties are also growing. Missiles and airstrikes are displacing families, destroying homes, and leaving civilians trapped in unsafe areas.

Anger is spreading across the region. Anti-Israel protests have erupted in Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt.

At the same time, anti-Iran sentiment is growing in countries like Jordan and Syria. The conflict is deepening political divides and fueling mistrust among neighboring populations.

This rising hostility is damaging regional unity. People are taking sides based on political or religious beliefs. Online hate speech and propaganda are also increasing. If the conflict continues, the social fabric of many Middle Eastern countries could unravel even further.

International Reactions and Mediation Efforts

The United States strongly backs Israel and warns Iran of tougher retaliation. President Trump stated that future strikes could be even more brutal if Tehran doesn't step back.

Meanwhile, the EU and United Nations have urged both sides to show restraint and return to dialogue to avoid a wider war.

Russia and China have taken a different stance. Both nations criticized Israel's actions and called for a peaceful solution.

Russia offered to host peace talks, while China emphasized the need to protect energy routes and maintain regional stability.

Despite rising tension, diplomatic efforts are slowly moving.

The UN is considering emergency talks, and some countries are proposing fresh sanctions on Iran.

Others are pushing for a ceasefire and talks to prevent further bloodshed and protect civilians on both sides.

Conclusion
The Israel-Iran conflict has triggered political instability, military escalation, and economic shockwaves.

Neighboring countries like Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq face serious risks, while oil prices and trade routes are under pressure.

Civilian lives have been lost and public anger is growing. Global powers are taking sides, but some are also pushing for peace.

This conflict is not just about two nations, it affects the whole region and beyond. With rising deaths and economic damage, urgent diplomacy is needed. Only strong regional cooperation and global mediation can stop the violence and bring long-term peace.

UAE says Iran cannot be trusted over Hormuz, peace efforts at an impasse

NEWS DESK: A senior United Arab Emirates official said on Friday that Tehran could not be trusted over any unilateral arrangements it makes for the Strait of Hormuz, in a "sign of deep mistrust on all sides as efforts to end the US-Israeli war on Iran remained at an impasse."

Two months into the conflict, the vital sea channel is still largely "closed because of an Iranian blockade and the US Navy is blocking exports of Iranian crude oil. The blockade has choked off 20% of the world's oil and gas supplies, pushing up global energy prices and increasing concerns that there will be an economic downturn."

A ceasefire has been in place since April 8 but reports that US President Donald Trump was to be briefed on plans for new military strikes to compel Iran to negotiate pushed global oil prices up to a "four-year high at one point on Thursday."

Iran has activated air defences and plans a wide response if attacked, having assessed that there will be a short, intensive US strike, possibly followed by an Israeli attack, two senior Iranian sources told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

"Treacherous aggression!" Washington has not said what its next steps are, Trump said on Tuesday he was unhappy with the latest proposal from Iran, and



mediator Pakistan has not set a date for new talks on ending a war that has killed thousands, mainly in Iran and Lebanon.

After US and Israeli airstrikes on February 28, Iran fired at US bases, infrastructure and US-linked companies in Gulf States, while the Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah launched missiles at Israel, which responded with strikes on Lebanon.

Underlining the concerns of the Gulf states, UAE presidential adviser Anwar Gargash said the "collective international will and provisions of international law" were the primary guarantors of freedom of navigation through the Strait.

"And, of course, no unilateral Iranian arrangements can be trusted or relied upon following its treacherous aggression against all its neighbours," Gargash wrote.

Trump faces a formal US deadline on Friday to end the war or make the case to Congress for extending it under the 1973 War Powers Resolution.

The date looks set to pass without altering the course of the war after a senior administration official said that, for the resolution, hostilities had terminated due to the April ceasefire between Tehran and Washington.

Financial and energy markets remained on edge because of con-

cerns about the impasse over negotiations and worries that there could be a prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude "figures rose again on Friday, up slightly at over \$111 a barrel and poised for a 5.7% gain over the week after hitting \$126 a barrel on Thursday, the highest level since March 2022."

Iran says not to expect quick results from talks Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei cautioned on Thursday against expecting quick results from talks.

see the same thing? Baghaei cautioned on Thursday against expecting quick results from talks.

Trump repeated on Thursday that "Iran would not be allowed to have a nuclear weapon, and said the price of gasoline - an important concern for his Republican Party before mid-term elections in November - would "drop like a rock" as soon as the war ended.

Iran says its nuclear programme is solely for civilian purposes. Trump said on Thursday that Iran's

economy was "a disaster", but analysts said that "if he expects Iran to blink first in a game of economic chicken, he may be waiting a while."

The conflict has aggravated Iran's dire economic "problems, risking calamity after the war, but it looks able to survive a standoff in the Gulf for now, despite the US blockade that has cut off its energy exports."

Axios news site reported that one plan to be shared with Trump during a briefing by top US military leaders that was scheduled for Thursday involved using ground forces to take over part of the strait to reopen it to commercial shipping.

Trump is also considering extending the US blockade "or declaring 'a unilateral victory, officials have said."

Washington did not immediately announce any details of its plans. It is a sign that the US was also "revisiting a scenario where hostilities cease, a State Department cable due to be delivered orally to partner nations by May 1 invited them to join a new coalition to help the Maritime Freedom Construct, to enable ships to navigate the strait."

France, Britain and others have held talks on contributing to such a coalition but said they would like to open the Strait only when the conflict ends.

"US war on Iran 'definitely not self-defence: Iranian foreign ministry."

US resumes flights to Venezuela after seven years

NEWS DESK: The first direct flight between the United States and Venezuela in seven years landed at an airport near Caracas on Thursday, a new sign of a thaw after Washington deposed leftist leader Nicolas Maduro.

The American Airlines flight took off at 1426 GMT from Miami en route to the Venezuelan capital,

where the United States has resumed diplomatic presence after years of tension.

The first flight's manifest was dominated by officials and journalists, with senior officials from Washington flying to Caracas to meet government leaders, a prospect unthinkable just months ago.

Representatives of the city of Miami, a

hub for Latin Americans that sees itself as a gateway to the region, greeted passengers at the gate, as did the Venezuelan ambassador to Washington, Felix Plascencia.

The inaugural flight featured a special Venezuelan menu, including corn pancakes known as cachapas and a Venezuelan-style chicken salad. Some 1.2 million Venezuelans live in the United States, and the thaw is expected to boost the US business presence in the South American nation, which has the world's largest proven oil reserves.

But President Donald Trump has also been moving aggressively to remove Venezuelans from the United States, terminating a programme that shielded migrants from deportation.

US forces carried out a deadly raid in Caracas on Jan 3, snatching longtime US nemesis Maduro and flying him and his wife to New York to face charges of drug trafficking, which they deny.

Maduro was replaced by his vice president, Delcy Rodriguez, who has largely cooperated with the United States despite her ideological background.



Israeli HR group asks high court to order release of Gaza doctors

NEWS DESK: An Israeli rights organisation petitioned the country's top court on Thursday to demand the immediate release of 14 Palestinian doctors from Gaza who have been held without charge for more than a year.

Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI) said the doctors have been denied adequate medical care and food and subjected to physical abuse while in detention. The group said they are being held under Israel's Unlawful Combatants Law, which allows for indefinite detention without charge.

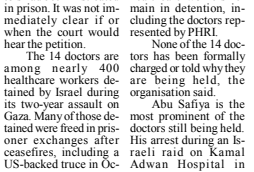
"The Israeli army already investigated them and despite the lack of any evidence incriminating them ... (prosecutors) decided to continue their detention," said lawyer Nassim Odeh, who represents Hussam Abu Safiya, the detained director of Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital.

None of the 14 doctors are among nearly 400 healthcare workers detained by Israel during its two-year assault on Gaza. Many of those detained were freed in prisoner exchanges after ceasefires, including a US-backed truce in October intended to halt fighting. Around 60 healthcare workers remain in detention, including the doctors represented by PHRI.

None of the 14 doctors has been formally charged or told why they are being held, the organisation said. Abu Safiya is the most prominent of the doctors still being held. His arrest during an Israeli raid on Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza in late 2024 drew international condemnation.

His brother, Muafiq Abu Safiya, said they were informed by their lawyer that Hussam Abu Safiya had lost 40 kg (88 lb) while in prison, and suffered four fractured ribs.

All the crimes inflicted on him by the occupation were just because he refused to leave the hospital and patients."



Trump's war powers deadline expires Friday as officials cite ceasefire loophole

NEWS DESK: President Donald Trump faces a critical legal deadline on Friday that could determine the future of US military operations against Iran, even as his administration signals it may rely on a controversial legal interpretation to bypass congressional approval.

Under the War Powers Resolution of 1973, a US president must terminate military action within 60 days of notifying Congress unless lawmakers authorise the operation.

The Trump administration formally notified Congress on Friday that it would end the 2024 strikes launched on February 28, setting up a May 1 deadline.

But administration officials now argue that the deadline may not apply, claiming that a ceasefire with Iran — in

place since April 7 — effectively ended "hostilities" under the law. A senior official told reporters the conflict had "terminated" for War Powers purposes, allowing the White House to continue operations without seeking congressional approval.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth reinforced that position during congressional testimony on Thursday, saying the statute does "pause or stops in a ceasefire."

The claim has triggered sharp pushback from lawmakers and legal experts, who argue that the War Powers Resolution contains no such provision.

Democratic Senator Tim Kaine rejected the interpretation outright, saying "the statute does not allow the president to suspend the 60-day

limit" based on a ceasefire. His objection reflects broader concerns among Democrats that the administration is attempting to sidestep Congress's constitutional authority to declare war.

The War Powers Resolution was enacted in the aftermath of the Vietnam War to prevent presidents from engaging in prolonged military conflicts without legislative oversight. It requires presidents to either obtain congressional authorisation or withdraw forces within 60 days, with a possible 30-day extension in limited circumstances.

Legal analysts say the administration's reliance on a ceasefire loophole is highly questionable. Experts note that the law makes no mention of ceasefires as grounds for resetting or

pausing the clock, particularly when military pressure — including a naval blockade — continues.

Some legal scholars also point out that previous presidents have stretched or ignored the War Powers Resolution, often arguing that it is unconstitutional or does not apply to limited military engagements.

However, critics argue that the scale of the current conflict with Iran — including sustained strikes and economic warfare — makes that argument harder to sustain.

The political response in Congress remains deeply divided. Democrats have repeatedly introduced resolutions to compel the administration to either seek authorisation or end military operations. All such efforts have failed in both chambers, largely along party lines.

Republicans, who control Congress by narrow margins, have mostly backed the president or avoided direct confrontation. Senate Majority Leader John Thune indicated "there are no immediate plans to hold a vote authorizing the war, reflecting a broader reluctance within the party to challenge Trump's authority."

At the same time, some Republicans have expressed unease. Senator Susan Collins said the 60-day limit "is not a suggestion; it is a requirement."



Japanese man arrested after wife incinerated at zoo

NEWS DESK: Japanese police arrested a man for allegedly incinerating his dead wife at the zoo where he worked, officials and local media said Friday, following the discovery of human remains.

Police arrested Tatsuya Suzuki on Thursday evening on suspicion that he "transported the victim's body to a tourist facility" in the northern island of Hokkaido and "destroyed it through incineration there," a local police official told AFP.

The victim, 33-year-old Yui Suzuki, was identified by local media as his wife. Police have not said how she died.

While held in voluntary police questioning, Suzuki said he used his zoo's incinerator — meant to dispose of waste and dead animals — to burn the woman's body "for a few hours," local media reported.

His confession sent police scouring the incinerator for her remains, whose partial discovery paved the

way for Suzuki's arrest, local media said.

While alive, the wife once told her relatives that her husband was threatening to "burn you until no trace of you will be left."

The gruesome case forced the Asahi-yama Zoo, a popular tourist attraction closed since early

Wednesday.

On Friday, the zoo resumed business, with officials bowing to visitors and apologising for the trouble caused.

"The zoo is in an extremely difficult situation at the moment," Hiroshige Imazu, mayor of Asahikawa City, which operates the facility, said, according to NHK.

"But we would like to turn your support into our energy, and convey the beautiful lives of our animals," he said.

Pak-China Friendship hospital launches endoscopy unit

GWADAR (NP): On the completion of two years since the establishment of GDA Pak-China Friendship Hospital, an endoscopy unit has been unveiled. A Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman Baloch, formally inaugurated the modern endoscopy unit at the hospital. According to the report, on this occasion,

Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman Baloch stated that this facility is a valuable gift for the millions of residents of Gwadar and its surrounding areas. He prayed that this new service becomes a source of healing for patients. Through endoscopy, timely diagnosis and treatment of complex diseases of the stomach, intestines, and digestive system will now be possible—con-

ditions for which patients previously had to travel long and costly distances to Karachi or other cities. Speaking on the occasion, Head of Campus Dr. Affan Faizqada said that the launch of the endoscopy unit marked the first time such services have been available in the history of Gwadar.

The ceremony was attended by Chief Engineer GDA Haji Syed Muhammad, Director Admin GDA Chahgeez Khan, District Health Officer Gwadar Yasir Tahir Baloch, Public Relations Officer GDA Hafeez Sheran, Faculty Chair & Consultant Urologist Dr. Zafarullah Baloch, hospital staff, and political representatives. A cake was also cut to celebrate the completion of two years and the launch of endoscopy services.



SANYA, CHINA: President Asif Ali Zardari being seen off by Mr. Wang Qiyang, party secretary of the CPC Haitan, at Sanya Airport.

40 kanals state land retrieved in Murree anti-encroachment drive

RAWALPINDI (INP): The district administration in Murree has retrieved 40 kanals of valuable state land worth approximately Rs3.5 billion during an anti-encroachment operation. The action was carried out on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi by the forest department. The deputy commissioner appreciated the performance of DFO Imtiaz Ahmed and directed authorities to eliminate all illegal encroachments and ensure retrieval of state land.

According to details, five acres of forest land located at Bhuban had been under illegal occupation for decades and was recently taken back into government possession after completion of legal formalities. Officials said the land was originally leased in 1953 by the forest department to the education department for establishing a youth hostel for a period of 30 years, along with construction of a building.

However, after expiry of the lease in 1987, the land was not returned and remained under illegal occupation for around 39 years, during which it was commercially used under the name "Destination Lodges" and additional illegal structures were constructed. The forest department had issued multiple notices but the occupants had obtained a stay order from court, delaying action.

Following dismissal of the stay order after strong legal pursuit under the supervision of DFO Murree, the department immediately retrieved the land located in Forest No 8. Residents appreciated the operation and urged authorities to utilize the retrieved land for public welfare, tourism promotion and community facilities.

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Pakistan steps up diplomatic outreach to promote regional peace: FO

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan is making strong diplomatic efforts to promote peace in the region, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif holding contacts with the leadership of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other countries, the Foreign Office said on Thursday.

The prime minister also held talks with the President of the European Council, with both sides stressing the importance of dialogue and diplomacy in resolving complex issues. The Foreign Office reiterated that Pakistan remains committed to peace, maintaining diplomatic engagement with all parties, including continued contacts with the United States and Iran.

He added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed Iran's decision to send a delegation to Islamabad. The spokesperson said the prime minister also spoke with the leadership of Iran and Saudi Arabia, thanking Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for his continued support for Pakistan.

He noted that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia share strong brotherly ties and are strategic defence partners.

The prime minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, with Qatar's leadership appreciating Pakistan's role in reducing regional tensions.

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BJP's war crimes exposed: 40 civilians martyred in Indian missile strikes in May 2025

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan has exposed the BJP-led Indian government's barbaric missile strikes on civilian areas in Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir on May 07, 2025, martyring 40 civilians including 7 women and 15 children, and injuring 121 others.

Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) under Director General I Gen. Ahmed I. Sherif Chaudhry laid bare the barbaric reality of India's reprehensible night assault. Consolidated figures released on 13 May 2025 confirm 40 civilians martyred including 7 women and 15 children and 121 civilians injured, including 10 women and 27 children. Initial briefings on 7 May reported 26 martyred and 46 injured; numbers rose as rescue and damage assessment progressed.

ISPR repeatedly stressed that the strikes deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure, residential areas, homes and places of worship (mosques) rather than any military or militant sites. India launched under the Indo Waters Treaty in April 2025. Pakistan responded with "Operation Bunyanum Marsoos," striking only military targets.

The PAF shot down Indian jets, including Rafales, and 93 ISPR said, adding "every drop of innocent Pakistani blood will be avenged." KMS-14K

ISPR said child martyrs' names were inscribed on retaliatory Al-Fateh missiles as a symbol of resolve. The attacks followed UN experts in November 2025 also raised alarm over Indian counter-terror operations in J&K post-Pahalgam, citing torture, custody deaths, and discrimination against Kashmiris and Muslims. Pakistan exercised restraint but proved its deterrence.

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Punjab jails to become illiteracy-free under major reform initiative

LAHORE (INP): Significant progress has been achieved under the Punjab Chief Minister's jail reforms agenda, under which no inmate in Punjab's prisons will remain illiterate. An adult literacy programme has been launched in all prisons across Punjab. Chairman Task Force Rana Manan Khan and Interior Secretary Dr. Ahmed Javed Qazi visited District Jail Lahore, where the Literacy and Basic Education Department will also provide compensatory to prison teachers. Chairman Task Force Rana Manan Khan said that Punjab's prisons are being transformed into true reform centers, adding that every inmate will undergo educational screening upon entry. He said a modern system has been introduced for the sale of products made by prisoners in jail industries, and efforts are being made to reform offenders through better environment and training.

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's youth programme while signed a letter of intent with Pakistan Olympic Association on behalf of Prime Minister's Youth programme.

Shehbaz Sharif launches 'PM's Apna Ghar Scheme'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has launched the 'PM's Apna Ghar Scheme' to provide affordable loans to low and middle-income groups to own their homes. Shehbaz Sharif expressed the confidence that this housing scheme will give impetus to the industries and the economy, and open the doors for prosperity.

The Prime Minister said that he will personally review the scheme at least once in a month to ensure timely disbursements as well as remove obstacles. He assured the procedure to obtain loans under this scheme will be simple. Earlier, the Prime Minister also disbursed cheques amongst the successful applicants.

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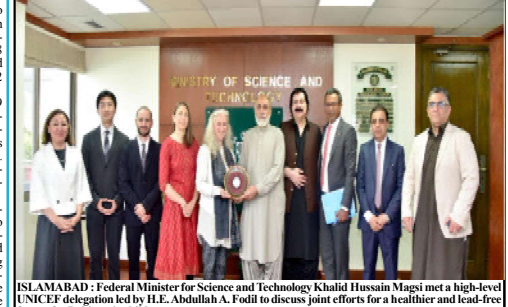
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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Hussain Magsi met a high-level UNICEF delegation led by H.E. Abdullah A. Fodil to discuss joint efforts for a healthier and lead-free future for Pakistan's children.

Pakistan customs launch first-ever TIR export from Karachi to Kyrgyzstan

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a major step toward expanding regional trade connectivity, Pakistan Customs has successfully processed its first-ever TIR (Transports International Routiers) export consignment from the Export Processing Zone (EPZ), Karachi, to Kyrgyzstan, opening up a new overland trade corridor to Central Asia through the Sost Dry Port and China.

The milestone shipment, valued at \$59.314 million and weighing 23.9 metric tons, consisted of assorted consumer and personal care products, including oil, tea, henna, herbs, cream, and soap. The cargo was exported by Hemani Group under the internationally recognised TIR system. Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. Officials from Pakistan Customs said in a statement that the consignment was processed entirely through the Pakistan Single Window (PSW) system, marking another advancement in the country's customs

digitisation drive. The Export Processing Zone was activated as a TIR station for the first time, enabling exporters based in the zone to dispatch goods directly under the TIR framework. All required Electronic Pre-Declarations (EPD) were completed in advance to ensure seamless border movement and reduce delays during transit. The TIR system allows sealed cargo to move across multiple countries with minimal customs intervention, significantly lowering transport time and logistics costs.

The latest breakthrough follows another important development last week, when Pakistan marked a milestone in regional trade integration as the first-ever shipment from Kyrgyzstan successfully arrived at Sost Dry Port via China. Trade officials said the successful inbound movement demonstrated the viability of the emerging Pakistan-China-Central Asia logistics corridor in both directions.

Governor Balochistan Pays Tribute to Workers on International Labour Day, Calls for Dignity and Economic Empowerment

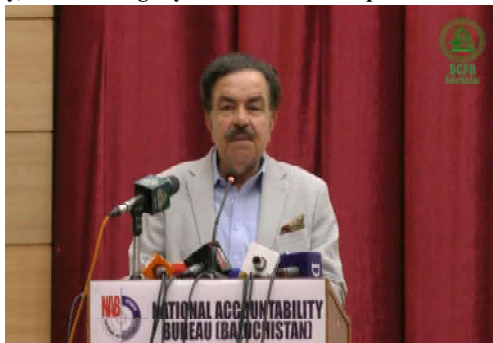
QUETTA: Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Governor of Balochistan, paid rich tribute to workers and farmers on the occasion of International Labour Day, recognizing their vital role in nation-building and economic development.

In his message, the Governor stated that hardworking individuals are a proud workforce that builds nations, fulfills the needs of populations, and leads societies from hardship to progress.

He emphasized that the contributions and sacrifices of laborers and farmers provide a strong foundation for both the economy and social structure.

Backbone of Economic Growth Mandokhail highlighted that workers and farmers tirelessly contribute to the development of cities, villages, agriculture, and industries.

He described them as the backbone of sustainable economic growth, noting that without their efforts, progress and development would remain unattainable.



Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail addressing the audience during the International Labour Day event.

Commitment to Workers' Dignity On International Labour Day, the Governor called for a renewed commitment to uphold the dignity and respect of the working class.

He said that national values, deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, provide clear guidance on respecting labor, treating workers with dignity, and ensuring fair and timely wages.

Focus on Employment and Opportunities He reaffirmed the government's commitment to working alongside the public to create new employment opportunities.

Efforts are being made to improve basic facilities and empower individuals economically so they can actively participate in social and economic life.

Need for Collective Action The Governor stressed that real change requires collective action. In today's rapidly evolving world, national development is increasingly driven by trade, industry, and innovation.

Deputy Commissioner Sohbatpur Reviews School Development Projects Under BSDI Scheme

SOHBATPUR: In line with the vision of the Chief Minister of Balochistan, Fareeha Tarzen conducted a detailed inspection of ongoing development projects at Government Boys High School Sohbatpur under the Balochistan Social Development Initiative.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner closely reviewed construction work, ongoing development activities, and the provision of educational and basic facilities.

She received a comprehensive briefing from relevant officials and engineering staff and assessed the progress of various projects in detail.

Emphasis on Quality Completion "Expressing overall satisfaction with the pace of work, Fareeha Tarzen directed concerned departments and contractors to ensure that all projects are completed within the stipulated timelines. She stressed that development work must adhere to high-quality standards, transparency, effective monitoring, and

sound engineering practices. She made it clear that negligence, delays, or substandard work would not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Focus on Improving Educational Infrastructure The Deputy Commissioner stated that, in line with the provincial government's vision, providing quality basic facilities in educational institutions and upgrading infrastructure to meet modern standards is a top priority.



Deputy Commissioner Sohbatpur reviewing school development projects under the BSDI Scheme.

She emphasized the importance of creating a safe, conducive, and progressive learning environment for students. Commitment to projects must reach the public in a timely and transparent manner to achieve their intended goal and strengthen public trust.

The visit reflects the district administration's commitment to improving education infrastructure and ensuring effective implementation of development initiatives in Sohbatpur.

Khali Kacheri in Kharan: Provincial Minister Announces Upgradation of Local Bodies and Strict Action Against Crime

KHARAN: An important open court was held in Kharan under the chairmanship of Mir Shaub Jan Noshewan, in line with his development vision for the region.

The session was attended by Deputy Commissioner Munir Ahmed Somro, Commandant Kharan Rifles Colonel Bilal Shaukat, officials from all relevant departments, district administration heads, tribal elders, local representatives, and leaders of various political parties.

Focus on Law and Order During the meeting, participants discussed the overall law and order situation in Kharan.

The Provincial Minister stated that the



Provincial Minister addressing the assembly during the Khali Kacheri session.

development of Kharan has remained his top priority from day one, emphasizing that peace is essential for job creation and economic prosperity.

He directed the district administration to take strict action against criminal elements, stating that those disturbing peace would not be given any leniency.

Development and Public Feedback The open court also included discussions on ongoing development projects, development schemes, and the Balochistan Social Development Initiative.

In a major announcement, the Provincial Minister declared that Kharan town will be upgraded to a Municipal Corporation, while Musakhel Qalat will be granted the status of a Municipal Committee.

Citizens shared suggestions regarding development priorities and municipal services, including sanitation issues in the city.

He said these steps would serve as a milestone for urban development, improved local governance, and better public service delivery in the region.

Commitment to Stability and Development Noshewan reaffirmed that maintaining peace and ensuring good governance remain essential for sustainable development.

He stressed that stronger municipal systems would directly benefit citizens and improve living standards across the area.

Open Court Held in Mekhtar, Deputy Commissioner Loralai Orders Immediate Action on Public Issues

LORALAI: A comprehensive open court (Khali Kacheri) was organized in Mekhtar under the supervision of the district administration of Loralai, where Captain (R) Muhammad Haseeb Shuja directly listened to public complaints and issued on-the-spot directives for their resolution.

The initiative aimed to provide citizens with direct access to government officials and ensure swift and effective handling of their concerns. Immediate Action on Public Complaints Deputy Commissioner Haseeb Shuja emphasized that delays in addressing public grievances would not be tolerated.

He directed all relevant departments to ensure prompt action on received applications and stated that the district administration is



Deputy Commissioner Loralai addressing the assembly during the open court.

utilizing all available resources to maximize public relief.

Broad Participation from Officials and Community The session was attended by FC Colonel Col. Hassan, SSP Dr. Fahad Ahmed, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Noor Ali Kakar, Assistant Commissioner Yahya Khan, representatives of political parties, tribal elders, officials from various departments, and construction company representatives.

Their joint presence was described as a strong example of coordinated governance and institutional collaboration.

Focus on Development Planning (BSDI Phase III) "A key focus of the open court was gathering public input for the Balochistan Social Development Initiative. Participants reviewed the achievements of previous phases and discussed planning for the upcoming phase (2026-27).

Key proposals included: improvement of urban infrastructure provision of clean drinking water/Upgrading drainage and sanitation systems Expansion of education and health facilities Creation of employment opportunities Public Issues: High-lights Citizens raised several pressing concerns, including: Unannounced electricity load shedding Shortage of clean drinking water Poor road conditions Inadequate sanitation services Shortage of teachers in public schools Lack of medicines in basic health units Rising unemployment Delays and inefficiency in government offices Directives for Improvement The Deputy Commissioner instructed relevant authorities to prioritize improvements in essential sectors such as water, health, and education.

Municipal bodies were directed to take emergency measures to improve sanitation and drainage systems. He warned that negligence in public service would not be tolerated and that strict action would be taken against underperforming officials.

Application Process Applicants are required to submit all necessary documents, including educational certificates, domicile, CNIC, and recent photographs. Applications must be submitted through their respective institutions rather than directly to the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund. Commitment to Educational Reform Mandai clarified that under the Chief Minister's vision, revolutionary steps are being taken in the education sector.

IFAD Delegation Meets Deputy Commissioner Kachhi to Explore Rural Development Opportunities

KACHHI: A high-level delegation from International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), led by Dr. Muhammad Afzal, met with Junaid Ali Khetran in Kachhi District to explore avenues for rural and community-based development projects.

The IFAD delegation identified several priority sectors for development in Kachhi, including: Increasing agricultural productivity Providing quality seeds and modern farming technologies Ensuring access to clean drinking water Improving nutrition standards Constructing water storage ponds Upgrading rural infrastructure, especially farm-to-market roads Strengthening the livestock sector Enhancing healthcare and education facilities. The delegation expressed commitment to providing both technical and financial support to accelerate development

across these sectors. Emphasis on Community-Based Development Special emphasis was placed on community-based development models, which involve local populations in planning and implementation processes to ensure sustainable and long-term impact. Government Support and Future Outlook. Deputy Commissioner Mumtaz Ali Khetran welcomed the IFAD delegation and assured full cooperation from the district administration to effectively implement development initiatives. He expressed optimism that the collaboration would not only create employment opportunities in rural areas but also improve access to basic services and significantly enhance the overall quality of life for residents of the district.

viewed departmental performance, key challenges, development priorities, and major issues faced by the local population.

Labour Day Celebrated at Barkhan School with Ceremony and Awareness Rally

BARKHAN: A dignified ceremony was held at Barkhan High School Barkhan to mark International Labour Day, paying tribute to the contributions of the working class.

The event was attended by Assistant Commissioner Hussamuddin Kakar as the chief guest. Other notable participants included District Education Officer Naveed Latif, Principal Mu. Hajar Khan, Deputy District Officer Boys Schools Tariq Mahmood Khetran, DSP Barkhan, District Social Welfare Officer Parind Khan, and District Population Welfare Officer Eid Muhammad Khetran, along with teachers, students, and members of the public.

Speakers Highlight Importance of Workers Speakers emphasized that Labour Day serves as a reminder of the values of hard work, honesty, and perseverance. They noted that workers form the backbone of any society and their efforts drive national progress and development.

Student Performances and Awareness Students actively participated by delivering speeches and performing national songs. The event also highlighted workers' rights, welfare, and their vital role in society.



Labour Day celebration at Barkhan School with ceremony and awareness rally.

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BEEF Announces Out-of-Province Scholarship Scheme 2025-26 for Talented Students, Says CEO Khalid Mandai

QUETTA: Khalid Mandai, Chief Executive Officer of the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund, announced that under the vision of Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, providing access to top educational institutions across Pakistan for talented students remains a top priority.

He made these remarks while introducing the Out-of-Province Scholarship Scheme 2025-26, aimed at supporting deserving students from Balochistan.

Scholarship Details According to Khalid Mandai, the scheme will



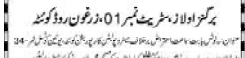
CEO Khalid Mandai speaking at a podium.

provide merit-based based on FA/FCe annual results (2023-2025), while higher semesters will consider relevant CGPA scores.

For Master's programs, semester-wise academic performance will be evaluated, and MS/MPhil candidates will also be assessed based on coursework and research performance.

Eligibility Criteria He stated that applicants must: Hold a domicile of Balochistan Be enrolled in a public sector or BEEF-approved private institution outside Balochistan Secure at least 60% marks or a minimum 3.0 GPA/CGPA. Be included in the merit list of their respective institution He clarified that students already receiving other scholarships, as well as those enrolled in 2-year BS,

bridging, or lateral entry programs, will not be eligible. Application Process Applicants are required to submit all necessary documents, including educational certificates, domicile, CNIC, and recent photographs. Applications must be submitted through their respective institutions rather than directly to the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund. Commitment to Educational Reform Mandai clarified that under the Chief Minister's vision, revolutionary steps are being taken in the education sector.



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Fuel hits Rs400 per litre as govt passes on global impact

NEWS DESK: The government on Thursday raised petrol and diesel prices while simultaneously extending fuel subsidies for motorcyclists and the transport sector, seeking to cushion the impact of rising global oil costs on vulnerable consumers.

With the concurrence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Shehbaz Sharif government has increased the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs6.51 and Rs19.39 per litre, respectively, with immediate effect for the week ending May 8.

During a virtual meeting on Thursday, the IMF was informed that Pakistan was well placed to achieve its petroleum levy target of Rs1.468 trillion, as collections over 10 months had already exceeded the target for 11 months.

The two sides agreed to keep the primary balance target on track and achieve it at all costs, even if further cuts in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) were required, informed sources said.

Payments to independent power producers would continue in line with agreed schedules to avoid any issues ahead of the IMF executive board meeting on May 8, which is expected to approve disbursement of more than \$1.2 billion under two ongoing programmes.

Unlike announcements made by the prime minister during price reductions, the latest increase was discreetly issued by the Petroleum



Division at midnight. The ex-depot price of high-speed diesel (HSD) was fixed at Rs399.58 per litre, up from Rs380.19, reflecting an increase of Rs19.39 or about five per cent.

Diesel had earlier declined from a peak of Rs203.35 on April 10 after a removal of the petroleum levy, but has since been rising again. HSD is considered highly inflationary mainly due to its use in freight transportation.

Similarly, the ex-depot price of petrol was set at Rs399.86 per litre, up from Rs393.35, showing an increase of Rs6.51 or 1.65pc. Petrol and

HSD remain major revenue generators, with combined monthly sales of 700,000 to 800,000 tonnes compared to about 10,000 tonnes of kerosene demand.

Although the ex-depot prices remain marginally below Rs400 per litre, the actual retail prices at petrol pumps,

after including dealer margins and other charges, have effectively crossed the Rs400 mark. Fuel subsidy

Separately, PM Shehbaz decided to extend the fuel subsidy for motorcyclists as well as public and goods transporters by one month.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the decision was aimed at continuing relief for economically vulnerable segments during the ongoing crisis. The prime minister also directed transporters not to increase fares and directed authorities to ensure effective monitoring of the relief measures.

"The people will not be left alone under any circumstances," the premier said, expressing hope that the regional situation would improve soon, allowing fuel prices to stabilise.

The subsidies were part of targeted relief measures announced earlier this month for bikers, farmers and transporters to offset the impact of rising global oil prices amid the US-Israel war on Iran. These included a subsidy of Rs100 per litre for two-wheeler users, capped at 20 litres per month for three months.

Additionally, trucks carrying 80-85pc of food items would receive Rs70,000 per month, large transport vehicles Rs80,000 per month, and inter-city public service vehicles Rs100,000 per month to help maintain stable fares.

The provinces have taken the lead in administering subsidised fuel quotas, pooling around Rs2,000bn for three months based on their National Finance Commission (NFC) shares — about Rs100bn from Punjab, Rs51.52bn from Sindh, Rs15.5bn from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Rs8.9bn from Balochistan.

Energy minister announces end of load management across the country

NEWS DESK: Energy Minister Awais Leghari on Friday announced the end of load management across the country following the arrival of liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes.

In a video message posted on the minister's account, Leghari recalled that around two weeks ago, consumers had faced load shedding due to a sharp decline in gas supply. On April 13 and 14, up to five hours of load shedding had to be carried out. However, there was no load management from April 17 to 19, while from April 19 to 29, load shedding was reduced to two to two-and-a-half hours.

He said the recent electricity shortfall and scheduled load shedding experienced earlier this month were not due to any technical failure or inability to generate power, but because of temporary fuel supply constraints.

"After six to seven years, when Nawaz Sharif's government ended load shedding, this is happening for the first time," he said.

He said the gas shortage was caused by disruptions in LNG supplies amid the ongoing US-Iran conflict, noting

that expensive alternative fuels such as diesel and furnace oil could have been used to eliminate load shedding, but this would have placed an additional financial burden on consumers.

He said the country had been forced to rely on expensive alternatives such as diesel and furnace oil to meet demand, warning that this would have increased electricity costs for consumers.

The minister said additional gas supplies, which were purchased on spot rates, had arrived. The minister

added that hydropower generation had increased significantly, rising from around 1,000 megawatt to 6,000MW, helping improve supply levels.

The minister said the government had to run furnace oil-based plants to overcome the shortfall, but efforts would continue to protect consumers from expensive electricity. "With timely measures, we are hopeful that the public will not face load shedding in the coming days," he added.

He also dismissed claims about installed capacity's total generation capacity was around 32,000MW, not 46,000MW as claimed by some critics. He added that hydropower output varied seasonally, affecting overall supply.

He said the government had to run furnace oil-based plants to overcome the shortfall, but efforts would continue to protect consumers from expensive electricity. "With timely measures, we are hopeful that the public will not face load shedding in the coming days," he added.



FBR's tax shortfall hits Rs683b

NEWS DESK: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has allowed Pakistan to pass on the impact of the remaining agreed Rs53-per-litre increase in petroleum levy in two phases, as the tax shortfall of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has further widened to Rs683 billion in this fiscal year.

According to an earlier understanding, the entire increase had to be recovered from consumers from May 1. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asked his economic team to seek any possible relaxation without compromising the approval of \$1.2 billion loan tranches on May 8.

With tax revenues going down, the pressure on the government to increase the levy has been on the rise, aimed at ensuring the primary budget surplus target agreed with the lender remains on track.

As a result of the new understanding reached with the IMF, the government on Thursday reintroduced a roughly Rs29-per-litre levy on diesel but cut the tax on petrol by roughly Rs4 per litre.



The new levy rate for petrol is Rs103.5 per litre. After these adjustments, the prices of both diesel and petrol were again increased.

According to an agreement with the IMF, Pakistan is required to impose Rs80-per-litre petroleum levy on both diesel and petrol. The government was already charging Rs107.4-per-litre levy.

Due to fluctuations in international market prices and the need to increase the levy, petrol and diesel prices are set to rise significantly.

The prices are already out of reach of

many Pakistanis and they face a double-edged sword of increase in rates as well as taxes. PM Sharif had asked the finance ministry to get whatever possible relief from the IMF.

The global lender has agreed to give only temporary relief by allowing the recovery of the remaining Rs53 per litre in two phases, said the officials. The remaining levy is likely to be increased next week, irrespective of whether global prices go down or not.

The government is facing huge challenges in meeting the FBR's targets whereas the levy collection is exceeding the annual target. During the first 10 months of this fiscal year, the levy collection amounted to over Rs1.330 trillion. The annual target is Rs1.468 trillion.

Compared to this, the FBR received Rs10.26 trillion in taxes for the July-April period of fiscal year 2025-26, facing a huge shortfall. There was a shortfall of about Rs683 billion compared to the downward revised target.

The IMF has already refused to further slash the annual target of Rs13.98 trillion.

SBP reserves jump \$730m on Eurobond

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) increased by \$730 million during the week ended April 24, 2026, supported primarily by Eurobond proceeds.

According to data released on Thursday, the SBP's reserves climbed to \$15.83 billion, reflecting an improvement in the country's external liquidity position after recent pressure when the UAE withdrew its holdings amid shifting geopolitical alignments in the Middle East in the wake of Israel-US war on Iran. The overall liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at \$21.27 billion. In addition to the SBP's \$15.83 billion, the net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$5.44 billion.

Furthermore, the SBP's reserves edged up 0.01% to close at 278.77 against the US dollar in the inter-bank market on Thursday, gaining Rs0.03 from Wednesday's close at 278.80, while the dollar hovered near more than a two-week high.

Meanwhile, gold prices in Pakistan moved higher, tracking gains in the international market, as a softer US dollar and easing oil prices supported bullion, though lingering inflation con-

cerns tied to the Middle East conflict kept the metal on course for a second consecutive monthly decline. In the local market, the price of gold per tola surged by Rs4,400 to settle at Rs483,962.

According to data released on Thursday, the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association. Similarly, the price of 10-gram gold rose by Rs3,772 to Rs414,919.

The increase follows a sharp decline in the previous session, when gold per tola had dropped by Rs5,800 to close at Rs479,562, highlighting ongoing volatility in the bullion market. On Thursday, silver prices also edged higher, gaining Rs55 to reach

Rs7,821 per tola. In the international market, spot gold rose 1.6% to \$4,615.50 per ounce by midday trading, recovering from a one-month low hit a day earlier, as reported by Reuters. Market participants attributed the rebound to a weaker dollar, which typically makes gold more attractive for investors holding other currencies, alongside easing crude oil prices that helped temper inflation expectations.

Adnan Agar, Director at Interactive Commodities, noted that the market showed signs of recovery after testing lower levels. On Wednesday, gold touched a low of \$4,509.

On Thursday it rebounded to a high of \$4,646 and was later hovering around \$4,616, he said. He added that the market's near-term direction hinges on its ability to sustain levels above \$4,600. "If gold closes above \$4,600, it could maintain upward momentum. Otherwise, strong support exists around \$4,450, where the market may find a base and reverse," Agar explained.

Meanwhile, global financial institutions continue to flag mixed signals for bullion. The Bank of England has warned that the Iran conflict could exacerbate inflation risks, complicating the outlook for rate cuts.

Arif Habib creates PIA takeover vehicle



NEWS DESK: The Arif Habib-led consortium has established a special purpose vehicle, PIA Equity Ltd (PIAEL), to complete its acquisition of Pakistan International Airlines, Arif Habib Corporation Ltd (AHCL) announced on Thursday.

The consortium has submitted a standby letter of credit and a bank guarantee to the Privatisation Commission for the

acquisition of the remaining 25 per cent shares of PIA. The consortium has already acquired a 75pc stake in Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Ltd (PIACL) for Rs135 billion, while the remaining 25pc will cost Rs45bn.

The consortium is expected to assume full ownership within the next 12 months upon completion of payments.

PIA Equity Ltd's shareholding comprises Arif Habib Corporation Ltd, Fatima Fertiliser Company Ltd, Lake City Holdings, AKD Group, The City School Group, and Fauji Fertiliser Company Ltd.

PIAEL will act as the central platform for the acquisition and future management of PIA, bringing together institutional investors under a unified structure.

The management changes and full private control was expected by early next month, freeing the airline from government-appointed board members.

Thousands of workers of PIA could be problematic for the new management as there is resistance among the workers regarding complete privatisation as their jobs may be at stakes.

Arsenal, Atletico trade penalties in Champions League semi-final draw

NEWS DESK: Julian Alvarez's penalty secured Atletico Madrid a 1-1 draw against Arsenal in a nervy Champions League semi-final first leg clash on Wednesday.

Viktor Gyokeres sent the Premier League leaders ahead from the spot just before the interval after he was fouled, but Alvarez followed suit 10 minutes into the second half after Ben White's handball.

Arsenal were upset at a late penalty decision being overturned following a VAR review when David Hanco made contact with Eberechi Eze in the area.

"I'm incredibly fuming about it, how the hell the penalty on Ebs gets overturned."

"If you have to watch it 13 times... That's a goal that can change the course of the season. This cannot happen."

Atletico had the better for long periods but Arsenal's solid defending helped them leave the Spanish capital in a good position to return to the Champions League final 20 years after their last appearance.

"Here, you have to suffer," Arteta told Movistar. "Many teams have suffered here, including some of the best



in the world. We had some good moments in the match and moments where we had to suffer. The margins are very slim."

Atletico captain Koke said his side could be proud of how they fared in the second half.

"We were the team we have to be — if we can win at this level we can win," Koke told Movistar.

"From my point of view they didn't create much danger against us... the team defended well and they just had that penalty."

What the game lacked in the dizzying goal rush of Paris Saint-Germain's 5-4 win over Bayern Munich in the other semi-final the night before, it replaced with tension and a desperation not to fall behind.

Toilet paper rained down from the stands of the Metropolitan stadium minutes before kick-off.

In a striking — if wasteful — display, which invited cynical jokes from some quarters about the calibre of the spectacle ahead.

In a tussle between arguably the continent's two biggest teams never to lay a finger on the trophy neither wanted to

blink first. Atletico still have an old-style defensive reputation but pinned Arsenal's miserly Arsenal back in the early stages, with David Raya tipping Alvarez's shot around the post.

The Gunners, a long way from Arteta's eye-of-the-game demand they dominate proceedings, looked to smash and grab.

Noni Madueke, starting on Arsenal's right flank with Bukayo Saka only fit for the bench, hammered just wide as last year's beaten semi-finalists sporadically emerged from their half.

The next time they did, Gyokeres won a penalty. The Swedish striker, who might not have started if Kai Havertz had been fit, exchanged passes with Martin Zubimendi and Hanco

clumsily showed him in the back from behind. Arsenal's Viktor Gyokeres (L) celebrates with team-mates after scoring against Atletico Madrid.

—AFP Diego Simeone and Atletico veteran Antoine Griezmann begged for the decision to be reviewed but VAR saw no reason to intervene. Gyokeres took the spot-kick himself, wal-

loping it past Jan Oblak, who dived the right way but stood no chance of keeping it out.

A T L E T I C O BATTLE BACK

Three-time runners-up Atletico, back in the semi-finals for the first time in nine years, came out guns blazing in the second half.

Raya saved Ademola Lookman's drive with Gabriel blocking Griezmann's follow-up.

The hosts pulled level from the penalty spot after White handled Marcos Llorente's shot, the ball bouncing up and hitting his arm, which was away from his body.

Alvarez took it, and having missed in Atletico's Copa del Rey final shoot-out defeat earlier in April, this time made no mistake with an unforgiving blast rivaling Gyokeres's first-half effort.

M L S - b o u n d Griezmann looped a shot off the crossbar and then sent the rebound off target as Atletico turned the screw in pursuit of an advantage to take into next Tuesday's second leg.

"This is what we have to do in the away game," said Griezmann. "The second half was much better in terms of intensity."

"Whether you're at home or at the ground, it'll be a nail-biter but that's the beauty of foot-

Afghan women footballers celebrate 'historic moment'

NEWS DESK: FIFA rule change allowing Afghanistan's women footballers to compete in official matches is a "historic moment" and "basic human right", Afghan captain Khalida Popal told AFP on Thursday.

Afghanistan will in future be eligible to compete for the Women's World Cup and the Olympics, something Popal said was the culmination of a "long fight".

"I woke up this morning imagining a young Afghan girl opening her eyes and saying, 'I've got the right to play. This is a basic human right,'" Popal said from Copenhagen.

She added: "It's fantastic news, it's a historic moment we are trying to absorb."

The Afghanistan Women's National Team was founded by Popal and other players in 2007 in Kabul.

After the Taliban authorities retook power in 2021, about 100 players and family were evacuated to Melbourne in Australia.

with team members also relocating to Europe, Britain and the United States.

Women in Afghanistan are banned from participating in sport, and the Taliban authorities have shut down clandestine exercise groups held behind closed doors.

A team of Afghan refereed players was formed between Europe and Australia, playing their first international matches at the FIFA U20 Women's Series

last year in Morocco. The team could not play official competitions because FIFA rules previously required the approval of the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan Football Federation.

The FIFA amendment this week allows the official recognition of the Afghanistan team through agreement between FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation.

It will also apply to other teams in exceptional circumstances that may be unable to register a national team.

"It has been a long fight but we are so grateful this history is made not only for the women of Afghanistan," said Popal.

"No team, if they face a situation like us, will suffer what we have sacrificed and suffered."

Afghanistan's women footballers hope to build an internationally competitive team drawing from players scattered across the globe, she said.



Saudi wealth fund to cut LIV golf funding after 2026 season

NEWS DESK: Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is cutting funding for the breakaway LIV Golf league after the 2026 season, a spokesperson from the fund told AFP on Thursday.

The announcement came hours after LIV Golf, founded in 2021 as a rival to the PGA Tour, said it was seeking to secure "long-term financial partners".

It has reportedly cost PIF over \$5 billion so far to operate the series after signing many of the world's top players including Major winners Bryson DeChambeau and Spaniard Jon Rahm.

Saudi's powerful wealth fund, however, said funding for the project would be axed as PIF looked to pare back a string of projects in the kingdom with the war in the Middle East raising fresh speculation about investment priorities moving forward.

"PIF has made the decision to fund LIV Golf only for the remainder of the 2026 season," a spokesperson for the fund said in a statement provided to AFP.

"The substantial investment required by LIV Golf over a longer term is no longer consistent with the current phase of PIF's investment strategy."

The spokesman went on to say the decision had been made in light of "PIF's investment priorities and current macro dynamics".

LIV said earlier on Thursday it was searching for new financial backers. The golf league said it was looking to secure "long-term financial partners to support

its transition from a foundational launch phase to a diversified multi-partner investment model."

There was also no mention in the LIV statement of PIF governor Yasir Al-Rumayyan, who co-founded the dissenting league.

The statement simply mentioned two board members, Gene Davis and Jon Zimman, had joined.

LIV Golf described the duo as "seasoned experts with proven track records of navigat-

ing complex situations and unlocking value for global organizations, to guide the league through its next phase."

The PIF statement confirmed rumours, which had circulated for several weeks, that the breakaway tour was on the verge of collapse due to the possible withdrawal of the Saudi financing.

LIV's deep-pocketed backers in Riyadh were rumoured to have cooled on the extravagantly expensive project.



Antonelli bids for F1 hat-trick

NEWS DESK: Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli, the youngest championship leader in F1 history, will seek to complete a hat-trick of early season victories this weekend as Formula One returns after a month's enforced absence due to the Middle East war.

The 19-year-old Mercedes driver, triumphant in China and Japan, leads team-mate George Russell, who won the season-opening Australian race, by nine points ahead of what is effectively the start of another season, complete with revised rules and widespread car upgrades, at the Miami Grand Prix.

"After a month without any racing, we are ready to get back on track," said Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff. "We've used this break to analyse the opening races, address our weaknesses and raise our level."

"We've started the season well, but that counts for very little if you stand still.

We know our competitors will have used this time to improve and build a deeper understanding of their cars so



we expect the field to be closer in Miami.

"That's the reality of F1 — it's a challenge we must rise to."

Antonelli's early triumphs made him the first Italian driver since Alberto Ascari in 1953 to win two consecutive races. Ascari completed his treble that season.

Wolff also addressed the tweaks to the regulations to be introduced in Miami, aimed at making the cars and the spectacle more natural

with reduced battery re-charging in qualifying and increased super-clipping power to re-

duce dangerous speed differentials. He said the revised rules would "respect the DNA of our sport" and deliver an improved spectacle without any significant reduction to Mercedes' early-season performance advantage.

or Mercedes, this Sunday's race is an opportunity for a first win in Florida since the event was launched five years ago.

It has been won twice by four-time champion Max Verstappen for Red Bull and twice by McLaren, with a win apiece for world champion Lando Norris and

team-mate Oscar Piastri. "Completely new car" They will harbour hopes of claiming points too with success in Saturday's sprint race.

He won last year by Norris, but Ferrari are widely expected to be strong contenders too as they arrive in Miami, like McLaren, who are bringing an almost "completely new car", with a heavily revised package.

It was one of our best tracks for pure pace compared to others, last year," said Norris. "It's a different track and it may still suit us a little more than others."

Sawe receives hero's welcome in Kenya

NEWS DESK: There was a hero's welcome for marathon world record-breaker Sebastian Sawe as he returned to Kenya and was lauded by President William Ruto on Thursday.

Sawe made history in London on Sunday by becoming the first athlete to run a sub-two-hour marathon in race conditions.

Receiving Sawe at State House in Nairobi, Ruto said it was "a defining moment in the story of human endurance."

He compared it to milestones in human history including the first four-minute mile by Roger Bannister in 1954 and even the moon landing.

"Future generations will look back on 26 April, 2026, as the day a man broke through a physical and psychological barrier I long thought insurmountable; and the name forever attached to that moment will be Sebastian Sawe," Ruto



said in a speech.

Sawe clocked 1hr 59min 30sec in a tight battle with Ethiopia's Yemf Kejelcha, who also came in under two hours.

Sawe was mobbed at Nairobi's International Airport when he landed late Wednesday.

"It is such a beautiful day. I'm glad you have joined me in celebrating, and that you have shown a spirit I never expected could be like this. I'm very grate-

ful," he told the crowd. "I didn't do it just for myself. I did it for all of us. And I would like us all to enjoy it and to stand as a record for all of us," he added.

Kenya has dominated long-distance running, and its runners are superstars in the country.

The pressure to break into the elite means doping is a major problem in Kenya.

Two former Kenyan winners of the men's race at the London Marathon — Wilson Kipsang, the victor in 2012 and 2014, and 2017 winner Daniel Wanjiru — are among those to have been subsequently banned.

In a bid to allay such suspicions about his own performances, Sawe has voluntarily subjected himself to extra drug testing, even paying \$50,000 to be tested 25 times in the year by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) before last year's Berlin race.

President Zardari, PM Shehbaz call for protection of workers' dignity on Labour Day

NEWS DESK: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday called upon all stakeholders, including the business community and industrialists, to uphold the dignity and protection of the country's labour force, Radio Pakistan reported.

In their separate messages on International Labour Day, they said that a nation that protects its workers protects its future, adding that labour empowerment is the pathway to lasting national strength.

President Zardari said Pakistan remains committed to maintaining international labour

standards and promoting fundamental rights at work, including fair wages, social protection, the elimination of forced and child labour, and non-discrimination.

In his message,



PM Shehbaz said Pakistan's labour force, both at home and abroad, reflects the country's national capability, industrious-

ness, and professional excellence.

He said national institutions, including the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution and the Workers

Welfare Fund, continue to strive for the welfare of workers and their families by providing pensions, housing, education, and other essential ser-

VICES. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chair-

man Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said workers are the nation's real strength and Labour

Day honours their sacrifices.

He stressed that a just Pakistan requires empowering workers, protecting their rights and ensuring welfare.

reaffirming the PPP's commitment to labour rights.

PPP Women's Wing President Faryal Talpur paid tribute to workers, calling their sacrifices the foundation of national development.

She said workers' rights and dignity must be protected, adding the PPP remains committed to fair wages, social protection and empowerment under its leadership.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said the government is improving workers' living standards through pro-labour policies and legal protections.

He stressed the strict implementation of minimum wage laws and reaffirmed his commitment to workers' welfare.

Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah said workers are the

backbone of development and their welfare is a top priority.

He highlighted increased minimum wages, enforcement of labour laws and provision of health and financial support.

Senior Sindh Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said workers are the backbone of society and deserve recognition for their sacrifices.

He highlighted government measures, including higher wages.

Labour law enforcement and welfare initiatives for workers and farmers.

PPP central spokesperson Shariza Marri said workers are the true drivers of progress and must be empowered for a just society.

She reiterated that the PPP stands for economic justice, equal opportunities and continued support for labour rights.

Pakistan sees decline in militant violence for 2nd straight month: PICSS

NEWS DESK: Pakistan recorded a second consecutive month of improving security in April 2026, with militant attacks and related casualties declining markedly, according to a report released by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS).

The Islamabad-based think tank documented 85 verified militant attacks in April, down from 146 in March, a 42 per cent decrease. As per the data, fatalities resulting from militant attacks fell from 106 in March to 60 in April, continuing a downward trend that began the previous month, when overall combat-related deaths dropped by 35pc.

The report said that the improvement follows Pakistan's cross-border military campaign targeting militant groups and Taliban positions between February 26 and March 18, which concluded with a suspension and subsequent talks in Urumqi, China.

Pakistan had launched Operation Ghazab li-Haq on the night of February 26, following unprovoked firing by the Afghan Taliban from across the border.

According to the PICSS report, total combat-related deaths — including those from militant attacks and security forces operations — stood at 291 in April. Militants accounted for 224 of these deaths, rep-

resenting 77pc of the total. The remaining casualties included 28 security forces personnel, 37 civilians, and two members of pro-government peace committees.

It said that the losses among security forces personnel also declined significantly, falling from 59 in March to 28 in April, which was a 53pc reduction. It said that civilian fatalities remained relatively stable, with 37 deaths recorded in April compared to 39 in March.

The data also showed a notable decline in injuries. Overall injuries dropped from 210 in March to 131 in April, a 38pc decrease. Civilian injuries fell from 98 to 54.

While militant injuries declined from 57 to 31, injuries among security forces personnel decreased slightly from 48 to 46, and no injuries were reported among pro-government peace committee members in April.

The report said that 85 militant attacks recorded during the month were largely low-intensity incidents, with a few exceptions.

These included two suicide attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district and a high-profile assault on a mining facility operated in Balochistan's Chagai district.

The report noted that despite the drop in attacks, operations conducted by security forces remained robust.

It said that 224 militants were killed in March, compared to 228 in April. In total, security forces killed 988 militants during the first four months of 2026, the report said.

Regionally, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continued to record the highest number of militant attacks, followed by Balochistan. The PICSS report said that in mainland KP, attacks declined slightly, from 51 in March to 45 in April, while fatalities remained unchanged at 34.

It said that the most significant improvement was observed in KP's tribal districts, where militant attacks dropped by 40pc, from 35 in March to 21 in April. Deaths from these attacks fell sharply to six, an 82pc decline.

At the same time, security forces intensified operations in the region, killing 120 militants — up from 24 in March — accounting for more than half of all militant fatalities nationwide in April, the report said.

According to the data, Balochistan also experienced a notable improvement, with militant attacks falling from 59 in March to 18 in April, a 69pc reduction.

These attacks resulted in 17 deaths, including 10 linked to the attack on the mining facility in Chagai. Security forces killed 66 militants in the province during April, although this figure was lower than the 145 militants killed in March, the data showed.

Pakistan, China sign MoUs on machinery, vaccines, medical technology

NEWS DESK: Pakistan and China on Friday signed two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and a joint venture agreement in Sanya, covering construction machinery, animal vaccines, and medical technology, thereby supporting cooperation between the two countries in key sectors, according to an official statement shared by the presidency.

President Asif Ali Zardari attended the signing ceremony, where a documentary highlighting 75 years of Pakistan-China friendship was also screened.

The ceremony was also attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar, Sindh Chief Secretary Ali Hassan Brohi, and Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalid Hashmi.

According to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), an MoU was signed between Al-Hassan Trade Establishment, Sany

international Development, and Henan Jialong International Technology.

The agreement is expected to promote the supply of construction machinery and equipment linked to CPEC projects.

The three sides will also explore investment opportunities for establishing manufacturing facilities in Pakistan. Signatories included Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Vice President of

Sany Group Li Chen, and Chairman Hao Jiaolong.

A separate agreement was signed for a joint venture agreement between the Sindh Livestock & Fisheries Department and China's Luoyang Modern Biology Group.

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon and Chairman of Luoyang Modern Biology Group Wang Shanpu signed the agreement.

According to PPP, the collaboration aims to strengthen cooperation in the livestock and fisheries sector, with a focus on improving animal health services and modern biological solutions.

The agreement also includes provisions for future cooperation on the implementation of animal traceability systems. In the medical technology sector, an MoU was signed be-

tween Ziauddin Hospital and Shenzhen Weibang Technology. The agreement aims to promote the use of advanced artificial intelligence-based medical robots in clinical medicine.

It was signed by Dr Anoop Kumar Dawani of Ziauddin Hospital and Deputy General Manager of Shenzhen Weibang Technology, Deng Haitao.

This is the second set of MoUs Pakistan signed with China this week.

The two countries signed three MoUs in Changsha, covering water desalination in Karachi, agricultural technology, and cooperation in the tea sector.

The president, who is on a week-long visit to China's Hunan and Hainan provinces for engagements related to economic and trade cooperation, said Pakistan attached high importance to expanding collaboration with China in key industrial sectors.



Tribal chiefs lack legal authority to attest documents, Federal Constitutional Court rules

NEWS DESK: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) has ruled that the customary practice of nominating or recognizing a chieftain/sardar by members of a tribe does not vest such an individual with the legal authority to attest local certificates, domicile certificates, or Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) applications.

The observations came while rejecting a petition filed by a self-proclaimed tribal chieftain seeking his recognition as the "sardar" of the Kharoti tribe.

A two-judge bench consisting of Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Riaz Khan Barrech rejected the petition of Ghulam Ali Khan, noting that the sardari system stood abolished under the law and that no individual could claim customary authority requirements.

The petitioner, claiming to be the chieftain of the Kharoti tribe in Balochistan, had approached the interior ministry, seeking acceptance of his attestation for the issuance of local certificates, domicile cer-

tificates, CNICs, and passports for his tribesmen. He asserted that his fellow tribesmen rigorously interrogated for procuring these documents.

Following the refusal of his request by the interior ministry, he filed a writ petition before his fellow tribesmen High Court (BHC), which also dismissed the plea on July 31, 2024. Consequently, he approached the FCC.

Authorised by Justice Barrech, a 12-page judgement explained that the authority to issue attestations could

only be exercised where it was expressly conferred or recognised under specific statutory provisions or duly framed administrative rules.

Therefore, even if the petitioner claims recognition as a tribal sardar under customary law, such recognition, in the absence of express statutory backing and administrative rules, does not ipso facto (by that fact) confer legal authority or binding effect upon public authorities to issue official documents solely because of his attestation.

Thus, any declaration sought must be consistent with constitutional principles of equality, the rule of law, and the supremacy of statutory governance over customary assertions, the judgement said.

Any claim by a chieftain/sardar to demand royalties, or other monetary or material benefits from tribesmen, government authorities, or private entities, merely based on practices of customary status and title of sardar and if lacked legal sanctity unless supported by a clear

statutory framework, the judgement emphasised.

In a constitutional dispensation governed by the rule of law, no individual can assume fiscal or administrative authority without express authorisation under law and administrative rules, it said.

Justice Barrech observed that any such demand, if not traceable to a valid legal instrument, statute or administrative command, would be devoid of lawful justification and could not be enforced through judicial process.

It is noteworthy, Justice Barrech said, that the institution of a constitutional principles of equality had been abolished through the promulgation of the System of Sardari (Abolition) Ordinance, 1976, published on April 8, 1976.

Section 3 of the ordinance unequivocally abolishes the sardari system and terminates the legal recognition of such status and privileges, it said.

Therefore, the petitioner's attempt to invoke Article 28 for the recognition of a sardar status is misconceived,



Elsewhere, an isolated attack in Gilgit-Baltistan's Chilas district resulted in the deaths of three police personnel.

The PICSS report said that no militant attacks were reported in Punjab, Sindh, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, or Islamabad during the month of April.

However, intelligence-based operations

conducted by security forces in these regions led to the arrest of eight suspects — five in Sindh, two in Punjab and one in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Cumulatively, during the first four months of 2026, the PICSS recorded 401 militant attacks across Pakistan.

These attacks resulted in the deaths of 190 civilians, 158 secu-

rity forces personnel, and seven members of pro-government peace committees, it said.

Injuries during the same period included 469 civilians, 167 security personnel, and seven peace committee members.

Meanwhile, security forces killed 988 militants and arrested 121 suspects nationwide, it stated.