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QUETTA VOICE

Iran says 'smart management' plan for Strait of Hormuz finalized in parliament commission

NEWS DESK:

A strategic proposal on the "smart management" of the Strait of Hormuz has reached its final stage in Iran's parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Commission and has been uploaded to parliament's system for review and approval, the commission's head said Wednesday.

Ebrahim Azizi said the proposal aims to use Iran's geographic position in the strategic waterway as a "power-generating leverage."

"The missile triad, the people and the Strait of Hormuz destroyed the product of 50 years of US efforts," Azizi said in comments carried by the state broadcaster IRIB.

He also praised public support during the recent conflict, saying the presence of people in streets and public squares "carried an important message."

The remarks came after Azizi previously said on April 10 that the proposal could allow the Iranian government to cooperate with Oman and expand control over the Strait of Hormuz, which became a major issue during the recent war launched by the United States and Israel against Iran.

Speaking at the time to IRIB, Azizi said the framework would become binding only after parliamentary approval.

He said the proposal could allow negotiations with Oman on a treaty related to certain aspects of the broader framework, while stressing that Muscat would not play a role in determining the future of the waterway.

Azizi also said the proposal would place the Strait of Hormuz under what he described as the "comprehensive and full control" of Iran's armed forces and security institutions if approved.



Regional tensions have escalated since the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran on Feb 28, triggering retaliation from Tehran against Israel as well as US allies in the Gulf, along with the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

A ceasefire took effect on April 8 through Pakistani mediation, but talks in Islamabad failed to produce a lasting agreement. US President Donald Trump later extended the truce without a set

deadline. On Sunday, Iran sent Pakistan its response to a US proposal for ending the war, but Trump dismissed it as "totally unacceptable." US demands, rhetoric, lack of good faith obstacles to diplomacy, Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi said that the US maximalist approach, provocative rhetoric, and lack of good faith and sincerity were the primary obstacles standing between the current state of conflict and any

prospects of a definitive end to the war and a potential agreement, according to Mehr News Agency. Araghchi made the remarks during a meeting with Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway, who travelled to Tehran for the talks. During the meeting, Araghchi confirmed that Iran, as a coastal state of the Strait of Hormuz, is currently in consultation to develop regulations governing arrangements for the strait

based on international law. The statement formalises what senior Iranian officials have clearly signalled in recent weeks — that Tehran intends to establish a new legal order for the waterway.

Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Kravik underscored the necessity of establishing durable peace and stability in the region and announced Norway's readiness to contribute in strengthening diplomacy, providing consultations on maritime safety, and supporting environmental protection efforts.

Iran rejects Kuwait's 'baseless claims' of IIRGC infiltration

The Iranian foreign ministry condemned the Kuwaiti government's detention of individuals who, according to the IRNA news agency, were performing their duties within the framework of a routine maritime patrol mission and had entered Kuwait's territorial waters due to a navigation system malfunction.

According to the IRNA, the ministry announced that it expected Kuwaiti authorities to refrain from hasty comments and baseless claims while pursuing the existing issues through official channels.

It also requested granting the Iranian embassy in Kuwait access to the detained Iranian nationals in accordance with international legal norms, as well as their immediate release. Saudi Arabia condemns IIRGC infiltration

Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry denounced what it termed "the infiltration carried out by an armed group from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of the Islamic Republic of Iran into Kuwait's Bubiyan Island."

"The Ministry stresses the Kingdom's categorical rejection of such hostilities that violate the sovereignty of the State of Kuwait."

Panjgur Attack Leaves Two Dead, Child Rescued Alive

NEWS DESK:

PANJGUR: Two people were found dead inside a bullet-riddled vehicle near the Al-Amara Hotel on the Panjgur bypass in Balochistan, police confirmed on Wednesday. A four-year-old child was also

sustained multiple gunshot wounds.

The bodies were shifted to a nearby hospital for identification and medico-legal formalities, while the child was taken into protective care.

In a separate incident reported in Bolan district, unidentified

armed men opened fire near the Dhadhar bypass area, killing one person identified as Ghulam Fareed, a resident of Dera Murad Jamali.

The recent incidents have once again raised concerns

over the security situation in parts of Balochistan, where cases of armed violence and targeted attacks continue to be reported.



recovered alive from the same vehicle during the rescue operation.

According to police officials, the unidentified victims

Balochistan CM Mir Sarfraz Bugti Emphasizes Political Harmony and Consultative Governance

STAFF REPORTER:

QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Wednesday received a series of meetings with prominent political and social figures

Abdul Malik Baloch, Provincial Assembly member Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman, former provincial ministers Nawab Ayaz Jozgezi and Abdul Rahim Ziarawal, along with Malik Ghaffar Nasif, Malik Mirza Khan, and Aqsa

Bugti stated that the Balochistan government firmly believes in promoting political harmony,

mutual consultation, and a culture of reconciliation across the province.

He emphasized that tak-



ing all political and social segments along and making joint efforts to resolve public problems remains the top priority of his government.

The Chief Minister reiterated his government's firm resolve to continue taking every possible step for the progress, stability, and prosperity of Balochistan.

At his office in Quetta, the meetings focused on the overall political situation in the province, matters of mutual interest, and issues related to public welfare and development.

Among those who called on the Chief Minister were National Party President and former Chief Minister Dr. Meerwani.

During the meetings, detailed discussions were held on promoting political harmony in the province, accelerating the pace of development, resolving public issues, and matters relating to various ongoing projects.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Trump's Peace Plan: Legitimising Israel's Occupation

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

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

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



but some government officials of Netanyahu intended to do so.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

provoked worldwide criticism.

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

Eighth, no recognition, no peace. Durable

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

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

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

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

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

Quetta has a better environment, rich culture, manageable population

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

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

We did establish universities but abandoned knowledge.

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

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

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

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

its true beauty and culture.

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

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

chambeli, bitakh, surkahi and places like hama, thandi Sarak, and associated culture and poetry. Masses of

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



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

Balochistan and Quetta need our attention

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

sick and looking toward her siblings for help and cure.

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

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

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

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

Balochistan facing a host of issues

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

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

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

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

Iran war costs soar past \$29bn as truce teeters

NEWS DESK: As prospects for peace in the Middle East diminished due to the rigid stances adopted by the US and Iran, the Pentagon on Tuesday said the conflict with Tehran had cost Washington more than \$29 billion since the start of hostilities in February, even as consumer inflation in the US hit a three-year high in April.

Jules Hurst, who is performing the duties of comptroller, told US lawmakers on Tuesday that the bill included updated repair and replacement of equipment and operational costs, Reuters reported.

"The joint staff team and the comptroller team are constantly looking at that estimate," Hurst said. He was speaking alongside Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dan Caine.

On April 29, the Pentagon said the war had cost \$25bn at that point.

The statement came hours before President Donald Trump took off aboard Air Force One bound for China, the first trip by a US leader to the rival power in nearly a decade. He is set to hold talks on Thursday and Friday with Chinese President Xi Jinping that will focus heavily on trade but also on potential friction points over Taiwan and Iran.

Earlier, the US had rejected an Iranian response bound for China, the first trip by a US leader to the rival power in nearly a decade.



Trump is set to hold talks on Thursday and Friday with Chinese President Xi Jinping that will focus heavily on trade but also on potential friction points over Taiwan and Iran.

Separately, in response to a question about if the US needed China's help to settle the dispute with Iran, President Trump responded, "No, I don't think we need any help with Iran. We'll win it one way or the other. We'll win it peacefully or otherwise," Trump told reporters at the White House.

He claimed that Iran told him that only the US and China had the expertise to retrieve the nuclear material from the "obliterated" sites.

He also said Iran would not be allowed to build a nuclear weapon. In a separate interaction, he appeared confident that Iran would not build a nuclear weapon.

His remarks came as Iranian parliamentary spokesman Ebrahim Rezaei said that the country could enrich uranium up to 90pc purity, a level considered weapons-grade, if Iran was attacked again.

UAE attacks on Iran The Wall Street Journal has reported that the United Arab Emirates carried out attacks on Iran early last month.

week air strike campaign. The US quietly welcomed the Emirati strikes and any other Gulf states that wanted to join the fight, the paper reported, citing one unnamed source.

WSJ did not specify a date or time. However, the morning of April 8, Iranian state broadcaster IRIB said "missile and drone attacks on the Emirates and Kuwait have taken place a few hours after the targeting of Lavan island oil facilities in Iran," AFP reported.

The refinery was Iran's 10th biggest refinery as of 2020, handling 60,000 barrels of crude per day, according to EIA figures.

Horzum deadlock On the other hand, Iran expanded its definition of the Strait of Hormuz into a "vast operational area" far wider than before the Iran war, according to a senior officer in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy.

The strait is no longer viewed as a narrow stretch around a handful of islands but instead has been greatly enlarged in scope and military significance, said Mohammad Akbarzadeh, deputy political director of the IRGC Navy, the state-affiliated Fars news agency reported on Tuesday.

EU top diplomat Kaja Kallas, however, said the bloc could expand a naval mission it has in the Red Sea to cover the Strait of Hormuz, once the Iran war ended.

1 Palestinian child killed every week in West Bank since January 2025: UNICEF

NEWS DESK: At least 70 Palestinian children have been killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since the beginning of 2025, averaging roughly one child per week, UNICEF said on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters in Geneva, James Elder, spokesperson for the UNICEF, said 92% of the children were killed by Israeli forces, while another 850 children

were injured, most by live ammunition. "Children are paying an intolerable price for escalating militarised operations" and Israeli occupier attacks across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Elder said.

He warned that the violence was not limited to direct attacks but also involved the "steady dismantling" of systems children depend on to survive and grow, including homes, schools, water infrastructure, and healthcare access.

According to UNICEF, more than 2,500 Palestinians, including 1,100 children, were displaced in the first four months of 2026 alone, exceeding the total displacement recorded during all of 2025.



Hantavirus outbreak renews painful memories for Patagonian village

NEWS DESK: Mailen Valle lost her father and two sisters during a hantavirus outbreak more than seven years ago in Epuyen, a village in Argentina's Patagonia region.

With the recent hantavirus outbreak on the MV Hondius cruise ship, hard memories have resurfaced for the 33-year-old.

"Losing my dad and my two sisters in less than a month," she told AFP.

Her voice broke and she laughed nervously, opting to read from a prepared statement because she knew it would be hard to speak.

"Nobody was prepared to see how, in a matter of days, a family table was left empty," she said.

While the Hondius outbreak has left three people dead, it has yet to surpass the Epuyen outbreak, which recorded 34 cases and 11 fatalities between December 2018 and March 2019 in the town of 2,400



residents, situated in a part of the Andes where hantavirus is endemic. Mailen's father, Aldo Valle, came down with it after attending a birthday party.

"The person with the virus was just sitting at the same table as my dad. And at that table there were several people who got infected, and people died," Mailen recalled.

The wake for Valle was another locus of infection, where all three of his daughters got sick. One sister died "within hours" of showing symptoms, while for the other, "we had to take her to the cemetery without a wake," Mailen said.

Pre-Covid isolation Chubut province's health department who worked on the Epuyen hantavirus outbreak, told AFP that "we knew very little about the disease" in 2018.

Russia, Ukraine resume strikes as truce expires

NEWS DESK: As a three-day truce expired on Tuesday, Russia and Ukraine resumed strikes, with Ukrainian authorities saying that the attack on Kyiv with drones killed one person in the eastern region of Dnipropetrovsk.

The Russian military, meanwhile, said it had shot down 27 Ukrainian drones after the ceasefire expired.

US President Donald Trump had announced the truce on Friday, hours before Russia's World War II victory celebrations, saying he hoped it would mark "the beginning of the end" of the four-year-old conflict.

But even before it expired, the two countries had traded accusations of attacks on civilians that violated the truce. Kremlin says too early to talk about "specifics" after Putin says war "heading to an end".

In a Telegram post, head of the Ukrainian capital military administration Tymur Tkachenko said, "Enemy UAVs are currently over Kyiv. Please stay safe until the alert is cleared."

The military administration told residents

to remain in shelters as its air defenses could be operating in the area. Russian strikes in eastern Ukraine killed one person and wounded at least four others, regional military authorities said.

The strikes killed a man and wounded a woman in the area of Synelnykove in the Dnipropetrovsk region, the head of the regional military administration Oleksandr Ganza said, adding that three others were wounded in strikes elsewhere in Dnipropetrovsk.

On the Russian side, "air defence duty assets intercepted and destroyed 27 Ukrainian fixed-wing UAVs" over the Belgorod, Voronezh and Rostov regions, Russia's defence ministry said. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky earlier said fighting with Russia was ongoing despite the truce.

"Today, there was no silence at the front, there was fighting. We have recorded all of this," he said in the final hours of the truce.

It was "clear that the war in Iran is now drawing the most attention from America," Zelensky added.

Afghanistan detains two TV journalists

NEWS DESK: Afghan authorities said on Tuesday they had arrested two Afghan journalists from leading private channel TOLO News, with media rights groups calling for their release.

TOLO News said in a post on X on Sunday that two of their journalists, Inran Danish and Mansoor Nazki, had been detained in Kabul.

"Security officials, in talks with TOLO News, have said that details on this matter will be shared after the relevant legal procedures," the media outlet said.

The information and culture ministry said that "a few days ago, two TOLO News journalists were arrested by security agencies".

"Their case is under investigation. The court has not ruled for their release," ministry spokesman Khobab Ghofran said in a statement, without specifying the reasons for their arrest.

Advocacy group the Committee to Protect Journalists, in an X post on Tuesday, called on Afghanistan's Taliban authorities to "immediately and unconditionally release the detained journalists and ensure the press can operate without interference".

"The arrest of Mr Danish and Mr Nazki demonstrates that there are no guarantees for the safety of journalists and media outlets," the group said.

"Even media organisations that attempt to adapt their activities to the current environment are still not safe from arbitrary arrests and pressure."

support Organisation, a local watchdog, expressed "deep concerns" over the arrests on a statement issued on Sunday, deploring the lack of "precise information regarding the reasons for their arrests or their whereabouts".

"The arrest of Mr Danish and Mr Nazki demonstrates that there are no guarantees for the safety of journalists and media outlets," the group said.

"Even media organisations that attempt to adapt their activities to the current environment are still not safe from arbitrary arrests and pressure."



Nurses play vital role in the healthcare system: Punjab CM

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday paid rich tribute to nurses on International Nurses Day, acknowledging their vital role in the healthcare system

and their dedicated services for humanity. In her special message issued on the occasion of International Nurses Day, the chief minister said nurses symbolized hope, courage and compassion for patients during times of illness, pain and helplessness. She remarked that nurses were the backbone of every hospital and healthcare system, as they remained

engaged day and night in the care and treatment of patients. CM Maryam Nawaz said nursing was not merely a profession but a sacred duty, adding that nurses were held in

high esteem in every society due to their commitment and humanitarian services. The chief minister reiterated the Punjab government's commitment to ensuring the

professional growth, dignity and self-respect of nurses in all public hospitals across the province. She said various initiatives, including language courses and specialised training

programmes, were being introduced in the nursing sector to improve the living standards and professional capabilities of nurses. She said the Punjab government had

launched an internship programme for BSN nursing degree holders under which interns were being provided stipends equivalent to the basic salary of a charge nurse.



ISLAMABAD: MNA Abdul Qadir Gilani calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Katchery Chowk was opened for traffic

RAWALPINDI (INP): Maarka-e-Haq Square, formerly known as Katchery Chowk was opened for traffic on Tuesday after completion of a major remodelling project aimed at easing congestion at one of the busiest intersections. The project, completed within six months, included the construction of three overpasses and three flyovers to facilitate uninterrupted traffic flow. In a statement, Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Farhan Aslam said more than 200,000 vehicles would now be able to pass through the intersection daily without disruption.

He said traffic had remained diverted to alternative routes during the construction work under a complex, intensive traffic management plan. The CTO said keeping more than 200,000 vehicles moving on alternate routes throughout the project was a significant challenge, adding that effective planning and strategy helped avert major traffic problems across the city. Farhan Aslam said over 750 traffic police officers and personnel performed round-the-clock duties to ensure smooth vehicular movement during the remodelling work. He said citizens were informed about the traffic situation through social and other media platforms.

The CTO appreciated the efforts of traffic police personnel and thanked citizens for their cooperation and patience despite temporary road closures and diversions. He said the Rawalpindi Traffic Police would continue efforts to provide best traffic facilities to the road users.

PM hails citizen martyred while foiling suicide attack in Jand

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday paid tribute to the brave civilian, Liaqat, who embraced martyrdom while thwarting a major terrorist attack near Khushal Garh Bridge in the interprovincial area between Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a statement, the prime minister said Liaqat acted responsibly by stopping a suspicious individual and asking for identification near Jand and Khushal Garh Bridge in Kohat district. During the encounter, the suspected terrorist detonated himself, resulting in Liaqat's martyrdom. Shehbaz Sharif said the timely courage and bravery shown by the martyr prevented a large-scale loss of life. He added that Liaqat's supreme sacrifice and patriotism would al-

ways be remembered by the entire nation. The premier said such fearless and courageous citizens are a true symbol of the nation's resolve against terrorism, adding that Liaqat's sacrifice would remain a beacon of inspiration for every Pakistani. He reiterated that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the country's security forces and law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism. The prime minister said the people of Pakistan had always defeated the malicious designs of enemies and would continue to overcome terrorism through national unity and solidarity. Shehbaz Sharif also praised for the elevation of the martyr's ranks and expressed condolences to the bereaved family.

Govt has launched comprehensive campaign to address issue of out-of-school children, NA told

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), Basic Education Community Schools, and several non-governmental organizations. Wajiha Qamar informed the House that a door-to-door survey had been initiated in March to identify educational gaps. She said NCHD had been affected by migration, climate-related disruptions, poverty, and lack of access to schools. She said 36 union councils had been identified, of which surveys in 30 had already been completed, leading to the identification of around 17,000 to 18,000 out-of-school children. The minister said separate plans had been devised for children aged five to nine years and those aged nine to 16 years, considering

the different reasons behind school dropouts and non-enrollment in both age groups. She said accelerated learning programmes, technical education pathways including Middle Tech and Matric Tech, and recognition of prior learning initiatives were being introduced to equip children with both education and employable skills. The minister added that NCHD had also initiated pilot accelerated learning programmes in seminars, which would be expanded further. Highlighting additional measures, she said school meal programmes, digital learning initiatives, and connected classrooms through interactive boards were also being introduced to improve student retention and educational access. Wajiha Qamar informed the House that the matter had also been



QUETTA: MPA Khair Jan Baloch addressing on Provincial Consultative Workshops Research Study on review of RTSM system and exploring its Scalability in Balochistan. Provincial Secretary Education Lal Jan Jaffer and others also present.

Sharjeel inaugurates two new routes of Peoples Bus Service in Khairpur

SUKKUR (INP): Senior Sindh Minister for Information, Transport & Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon on Tuesday inaugurated two new routes of the Peoples Bus Service in Khairpur, saying the initiative would provide affordable travel facilities to the people of the district. Addressing the ceremony, he congratulated the elected representatives and residents of Khairpur Mirs on the launch of the low cost transport service. He said that the record development work has been carried out in every district of Sindh. "Khairpur is home to Pakistan's only hospital offering

free lung treatment. Mehran University, Khairpur Medical College Campus, Cadet College Khairpur and campuses of other colleges have also been established here," he added. The Senior Minister said development projects were not limited to Khairpur alone, but were being executed across the province. "Under the leadership of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, besides building 2.1 million houses, the Peoples Bus Service has been launched in the province," he added.

He said the Sindh government would bear a portion of the fare for every passenger. He urged citizens to take care of Peoples Bus Service buses, said that they are for all of you, protect them. Today we are launching two new routes of the Peoples Bus Service, he said and added that Fuel prices have risen globally and in Pakistan as well. If the people of Khairpur get AC buses at low fares, what could be better. He said the Sindh government was providing a subsidy for every passenger. Buses for Khairpur are also included in the new scheme, he added.

He said work was under way on water schemes and road projects in Sindh. He said the Sindh government would bear a portion of the fare for every passenger. He urged citizens to take care of Peoples Bus Service buses, said that they are for all of you, protect them. Today we are launching two new routes of the Peoples Bus Service, he said and added that Fuel prices have risen globally and in Pakistan as well. If the people of Khairpur get AC buses at low fares, what could be better. He said the Sindh government was providing a subsidy for every passenger. Buses for Khairpur are also included in the new scheme, he added.

Daycare facility at Islamabad airport to support female employees launched

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) has launched a daycare facility at Jinnah International Airport to support female employees working in shifts at the airport. Separately, the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) decided to introduce an electric cart service across the country's airports to enhance passenger convenience. In the first phase, the service would be launched at airports in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Multan. The authority had invited tenders for the provision of electric passenger mobility cart services. The facility would accommodate employees working in shifts at the airport.

The facility would be available for the children of all working mothers employed at the airport. The facility will initially cater to children aged between three months and three years and will operate from 9am to 5pm during the first phase. The authority added that plans are under consideration to expand the daycare centre into a 24-hour facility in the near future to better

Hunan Agricultural Machinery makes debut at Agri Asia exhibition

LAHORE (INP): A milestone in Sino-Pakistani agricultural cooperation was achieved during the 19th International Agriculture Exhibition and Conference 2026 as Hunan officially launched its agricultural machinery into the Pakistan market with a dedicated launch and debut ceremony in Lahore. The "Hunan and Pakistan Together Empowering Agriculture with Machinery - Building Pakistan's Agricultural Modernization" Hunan Agricultural Machinery Pakistan Cooperation Matchmaking Conference and Shuangfeng Agricultural Machinery Lahore Debut Exhibition Ceremony" took place during the three-day exhibition. Known as the "Hometown of Rice Mill Machinery in China" and "China's Agricultural Machinery Hometown," Shuangfeng produces products known for their strong applicability to local farming conditions.

The agreement lays the groundwork for establishing communication channels and deepening commercial ties while also ensuring support for the promotion and market entry of Hunan agricultural machinery in Pakistan. Punjab is currently accelerating its drive for agricultural modernization and has demonstrated an urgent need for small and medium-sized agricultural machinery. Shuangfeng County in Loudi holds a distinct advantage in the agricultural machinery industry. Known as the "Hometown of Rice Mill Machinery in China" and "China's Agricultural Machinery Hometown," Shuangfeng produces products known for their strong applicability to local farming conditions.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb holding a meeting today with Mr. S. Paul Kapur, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, United States, at the Finance Division. Mr. Kapur was accompanied by U.S. Charge d'Affaires Ms. Natalie A. Baker.

Gov to release employees' salaries, pensions in advance ahead of Eid-ul-Adha

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan government has decided to release salaries and pensions of federal employees in advance ahead of Eid-ul-Adha 2026. According to sources, the Ministry of Finance has prepared arrangements for the early disbursement of salaries and pensions for May 2026. In view of the upcoming Eid-ul-Adha 2026 holidays, payments to government employees and pensioners are expected

to be made on 22 May, sources added. Officials said the payments will be processed under the Federal Government Receipts and Payments Rules 2025. The Controller General of Accounts has reportedly been instructed to ensure timely disbursement of salaries and pensions. The Ministry of Finance has also directed all relevant departments to ensure immediate implementation of the decision. It is to be noted that the Pakistan Space and Upper At-

mosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) is expected to be approximately 18 hours and 30 minutes, which is generally considered sufficient for the visibility to the naked eye. SUPARCO further noted that in Pakistan's coastal areas, the time difference between sunset and moonset on May 17 will be around 60 minutes, increasing the likelihood of crescent visibility. For clear moon sighting, the moon's age typically needs to be close to 20 hours, the agency added.

Governor Balochistan Distributes Presidential Civil Awards at Prestigious Ceremony in Quetta

QUETTA: A prestigious ceremony for the distribution of Presidential Civil Awards in connection with Pakistan Day was held at the Governor House Quetta on Tuesday.

On behalf of the President of Pakistan, Khan Mandokhail presented civil awards, including the Sitara-e-Shujaat and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, to distinguished personalities from different fields in recognition of their outstanding services to the province and the country.



Asim Kurd Gello, Mir Muhammad Khan Lehari, Haji Barkat Rind, Kulsoom Niaz Baloch, senior government officials, respected guests, individuals from various sectors, and family members of the award recipients. Those who received the Presidential Civil Awards included Shaheed Ghulam Fareed, Director Agriculture Dr. Syed Habibullah Shah, Muhammad Karim Saqib, Sultan Javed Jamal, Noor Muhammad Baloch, Shahzaib Khan, Shaheed Muzaffar Hussain Jamali, founding Vice Chancellor of Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences Professor Dr. Nazeem Ahmad, Dr. Nazeem Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of BUTEMS Dr. Khalid Hafeez, renowned artist A.D. Baloch, and Fazal May 13.

Deputy Commissioner Nasirabad Chairs District Health Committee Meeting, Orders Action Against Absent Medical Staff

NASIRABAD: An important meeting of the District Health Committee was held under the chairmanship of Captain (Retd) Zulfiqar Ali Karar to review healthcare services and administrative matters across the district.

The meeting was attended by District Health Officer Dr. Ayaz Jamali, Medical Superintendent Dr. Habib

medical staff, availability of medicines, challenges faced by healthcare centers, and implementation of government directives in the health sector. Officials briefed the deputy commissioner on existing health issues, service delivery, and difficulties faced by the public in accessing medical treatment. Addressing the



Participants reviewed in detail the medical facilities being provided to the public, the performance of government hospitals, action against absent doctors and paramedical staff. He ordered authorities to take immediate legal action against violators to eliminate risks to human lives. He further stated that the directives of the Chief Minister of Balochistan and the Chief Secretary are being implemented in letter and spirit, while reforms in the health sector remain under any circumstances. He warned that

Quetta Administration Steps Up Cleanliness, Traffic Management and Anti-Encroachment Drive

QUETTA: On the directives of Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti, a high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Mehruallah Badmi to review sanitation systems, traffic management, anti-encroachment operations, and overall urban service delivery in Quetta city.



The meeting was attended by all Assistant Commissioners, officials from the Metropolitan Corporation Quetta, Traffic Police, QDA.

Deputy Commissioner Sohbatpur Chairs District Health Committee Meeting, Orders Crackdown on Fake Medicines and Quack Doctors

SOHBATPUR: An important meeting of the District Health Committee was held under the chairmanship of Faraeda Tareen to review ongoing public health initiatives and improve medical facilities across the district. The meeting was attended by all committee members and representatives of relevant departments. The primary objective of the session was to evaluate healthcare programs and ensure better delivery of medical services to the public.



Participants discussed in detail the overall health situation in the district, facilities available at Basic Health Units (BHUs), Rural Health Centers (RHCs), and the District Headquarters Hospital, as well as staff performance and the system of medicine supply. Various proposals were presented to improve healthcare services and public welfare, while participants emphasized adopting a joint strategy for effective implementation. Special attention was given to the serious issue of illegal sale of fake and expired medicines in the district. In this regard, authorities directed concerned regular inspections of markets, medical stores, and private clinics, and to take strict legal action against violators. The meeting also

Deputy Commissioner Jaffarabad Chairs District Health Committee Meeting to Improve Medical Services

JAFFARABAD: An important meeting of the District Health Committee was held under the chairmanship of Khalid Khan to review healthcare services and public health facilities across the district. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Huzoor Bakhshe Bugti, the District Health Officer, Medical Superintendent, representatives of PPHI, and other officials from the health department. During the session, participants conducted a detailed review of medical facilities being provided to the public, the performance of doctors and paramedical staff, vaccination programs, maternal and child healthcare, anti-polio campaigns, and improvements in healthcare services in rural areas.

Relevant officials briefed the deputy commissioner on ongoing healthcare services at hospitals, BHUs, and rural health centers, highlighting existing challenges and future plans aimed at improving medical facilities for the public. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan stated that the health sector is a fundamental pillar of public service and that providing quality healthcare facilities to citizens remains the district administration's top priority. He directed authorities to ensure the availability of doctors, medical staff, and medicines in all government hospitals and health centers so that people do not face difficulties in obtaining medical treatment. The deputy commissioner also emphasized

the need to pay special attention to healthcare facilities in remote and rural areas and to take effective measures for the immediate resolution of public health complaints. Khalid Khan urged health department officials to perform their duties with honesty and dedication, warning that negligence or carelessness in providing healthcare services would not be tolerated. He further stated that in line with government directives, efforts should be intensified to improve the health sector, sanitation conditions, vaccination programs, and emergency medical services to ensure better healthcare for the people of Jaffarabad.

Development Projects in Killi Badini Sariab Gain Momentum Under MPA Funds of PPP Leader Haji Ali Madad Jatak

QUETTA: Development work in Killi Badini Sariab is progressing rapidly under the MPA development funds of Haji Ali Madad Jatak, a central leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party, provincial minister, and elected public representative. The ongoing projects are being seen as the beginning of a new era of development and prosperity in the area.

The development initiatives include construction and repair of roads, improvement of drainage systems, paving of streets, and provision of other basic public facilities. Residents of the area have welcomed the pace of the development work, stating that the completion of these projects will not only resolve long-standing civic issues but also significantly improve daily life. According to locals, the lack of basic infrastructure in the past had caused severe difficulties, but the current development efforts are bringing visible positive changes to the area. Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jatak said that serving the public and resolving their problems remain his top priorities.

TENDER NOTICE. The Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Division Dera Bugti invites Sealed Bids from the Bidders for the following work approved in PSEP-2025-26. Tender Fee 1000/- and Bid security 2% for each work. Time limit three months. SE NAME OF WORK Qty APP COST. 1. CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR BARRIERS... 2. CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR BARRIERS... 3. Supply of Pipe for KHAHAI Zil Khan... 4. CONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURE... RESTORATION OF MINORITY WORSHIP PLACE AT ZHOBI TSE-252601047463. The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules, 2014 amended up to date. BASIC ELIGIBILITY: The Firm/ Contractors must have valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council who also has deposited case for renewal (2025-26) in relevant Category. Firm (Single Entity) having completed work in Pakistan Engineering Council in the Category C-4 or above and the relevant Specialized code. The firm must register in Balochistan Revenue Authority and presence in active tax payer list (ATL) Valid Registration with Income Tax & Presence in Active Tax Payer List in FBR (ATL) Turnover at least of last three years. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Cash Deposit or Bank Guarantee of 4 % specified above in the name of the under signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the undersigned 1:00 PM issuance of tender Documents. From the date of publication of NT to 02 June, 2026 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The tenders must be submitted by 02 June, 2026 at 11:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at 12:00 PM Address: Brewery Road Near CASAB Quetta. Phone no: 0912131474 Fax no: 0819213147 Email: engneer4501@gmail.com. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Urban Planning & Development Zhoabi Division. PRO No. 5026/13-05-2026

Finance minister discusses budget preparations with visiting IMF mission

NEWS DESK: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday discussed preparations for the upcoming federal budget and the country's broader reform agenda with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) visiting Islamabad, the finance ministry said.

He briefed the delegation on the country's macroeconomic outlook, fiscal strategy, reform priorities, and the government's ongoing efforts to ensure sustainable economic stability and long-term growth.

The ministry said that the discussions focused on the country's "macroeconomic stabilisation efforts, preparations for the upcoming federal budget, and the broader reform agenda aimed at strengthening fiscal and external sustainability while fostering sustainable economic growth."

"Both sides exchanged views on maintaining reform momentum, preserving macroeconomic stability, and advancing structural reforms to promote investment, productivity, and export-led growth within a balanced and forward-looking policy framework," the ministry said.

Welcoming the IMF

delegation to Islamabad, the finance minister "appreciated the Fund's continued engagement and constructive dialogue" with the government, it said, adding Aurangzeb particularly acknowledged the productive discussions initiated during the spring meetings held in Washington earlier this year.

The ministry added that Aurangzeb shared encouraging developments regarding the country's external sector, highlighting positive trends in remittances and export performance.

"He noted that recent data indicated improvement in exports on both a month-on-month and a year-on-year basis, reflecting growing resilience in the economy and a gradual strengthening of macroeconomic fundamentals," it said.

Further, the finance minister emphasised that while economic stabilisation efforts had produced encouraging results, the government remained fully mindful of the structural challenges confronting the economy, particularly external liabilities and the need to accelerate sustainable, export-led growth, it said.

Aurangzeb also reiterated the government's commitment to deepening re-



forms aimed at strengthening macroeconomic stability without compromising long-term growth prospects.

"In this regard, he underscored the importance of moving Pakistan away from recurring boom-and-bust cycles through structural reforms, productivity enhancement, and improved export competitiveness," it said.

Aurangzeb further

stated that the government's reform agenda had been carefully calibrated in consultation with international experts and economists. He emphasised that the ongoing policy measures were not driven by short-term considerations, but formed part of a broader and technically grounded economic transformation strategy endorsed at the highest level, the ministry added.

The finance minister also briefed the mission on the country's continued engagement with international development partners, including ongoing economic cooperation initiatives with China and efforts aimed at mobilising long-term investment aligned with the country's strategic economic priorities.

According to the ministry, the visiting IMF mission, led by Iva Petrova, acknowledged the "positive progress made by Pakistan in maintaining macroeconomic stability despite a challenging global and regional environment."

"The mission appreciated the government's continued commitment to prudent economic management and reform implementation," the ministry said.

"The IMF team emphasised the impor-

continued engagement and constructive cooperation with the government of Pakistan in support of the country's economic reform programme and long-term economic resilience," the ministry concluded.

Last week, the international money lender had approved a new disbursement for Pakistan of about \$1.3 billion, acknowledging the nation's resilience in maintaining economic stability while warning that continued reforms are essential to manage growing risks from the war in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the government is considering reducing the income tax burden on salaried individuals while refraining from increasing salaries and pensions in the upcoming budget, aiming to provide equitable fiscal relief to both public and private sector employees.

Informed sources have told Dawn that Aurangzeb has expressed a desire to lower tax rates and, if possible, raise the taxable income threshold for the salaried class in recognition of their significant contribution to revenue generation compared to retailers, wholesalers, exporters and real estate players.

India hikes gold, silver duties to protect sliding rupee

NEWS DESK: India has boosted its import tariffs on gold and silver in an effort to shore up the sagging value of the rupee against the dollar has worsened during the Iran war in the Middle East.

Gold imports are financed through dollars, which means buyers have to spend down foreign reserves or convert rupees to make purchases.

Prime Minister

Narendra Modi has already appealed days ago to the public to avoid buying gold for a year as the rupee's year-long slide against the dollar has worsened during the Iran war. The government more than doubled import taxes on gold and silver to about 15 per cent from the existing 6pc, according to two official orders issued late Tuesday.

The energy supply crisis caused by the

Mideast war's closure of the Strait of Hormuz — through which a fifth of the world's crude passed — has hit India hard.

India is the world's third-largest oil importer and the spiking cost of petroleum has hit its foreign currency reserves.

Elevated crude oil prices have increased India's import bill, putting additional strain on the country's balance of payments and

foreign exchange reserves.

Modi on Sunday urged the people of India to cut down on petrol and diesel consumption in response to the supply disruptions due to the Middle East war.

Gold, seen as a symbol of wealth and prosperity and widely used during weddings as well as festivals, ranks second among India's imports, after crude oil.



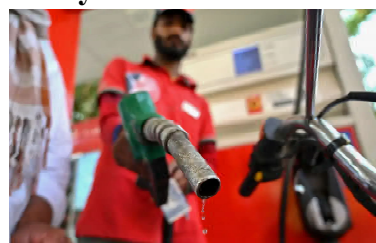
Fuel levy yields lowest fiscal deficit in nearly three decades

NEWS DESK: Supported by higher-than-targeted provincial contributions, strong petroleum levy collections and lower interest payments during the first three quarters of the current fiscal year, Pakistan recorded its lowest fiscal deficit in at least 27 years at 0.7 per cent of GDP, despite a decline in revenue ratios and increases in most expenditure heads except debt servicing.

According to official fiscal operations data released by the Ministry of Finance for July-March, the historically low fiscal deficit was achieved after a gradual reversal of the Rs2.1 trillion surplus, equivalent to 1.6pc of GDP, recorded in the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year.

The budget surplus had narrowed to Rs542 billion (0.4pc of GDP) by the end of the first half and eventually turned into a fiscal deficit of Rs878bn by the end of the third quarter.

The data showed that petroleum levy remained the government's largest



revenue source, surging by 45pc to Rs1.205tr despite mounting public suffering caused by higher fuel prices and the US-Israel war on Iran.

The collection appears set to surpass the annual target of Rs1.468tr by a wide margin. During the same period last year, petroleum levy collection stood at less than Rs835bn.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) also continued to post healthy profits thanks to a lagged impact of historically high interest rates. However, the larg-

est contribution came from the provinces, which exceeded their annual target by a big margin under the IMF's \$7bn Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

The four provinces collectively posted a cash surplus of Rs1.636tr during the first nine months of the fiscal year, surpassing the full-year target of Rs1.464tr by Rs172bn.

With its larger fiscal muscle, Punjab contributed the highest provincial surplus of Rs824bn during July-March, followed by Sindh with Rs441bn.

Auto sales double on cheap financing

NEWS DESK: Barring the tractor segment, sales of cars, vans, pickups and sport utility vehicles recorded robust year-on-year growth of 107 per cent and a month-on-month rise of 42pc to 22,015 units in April, taking the 10MFY26 cumulative sales to 166,044 units, up by 49 per cent YoY.

Myesha Sohai of Topline Securities said the impressive year-on-year growth was driven by new market entrants, new product launches, relatively lower inflation in previous months, and a surge in auto financing.

Auto financing reached a 42-month high in March, up 34pc YoY and 3pc MoM.

She expects positive momentum in auto sales to continue, supported by lower interest rates and new hybrid and plug-in hybrid models.

Sazgar Engineering reported sales of 2,225 units in April, up 505pc

YoY and 28pc MoM. This includes 16 units of the new TANK variant, which started deliveries in April.

The company sold 14,855 units in 10MFY26, up 73pc YoY. Myesha Sohai of Topline Securities posted a 175pc YoY and 76pc MoM surge to 11,012 units in April, driven mainly by sales of Suzuki Alto and Swift.

The company sold 76,718 units in 10MFY26, a 42pc YoY rise.

Honda Atlas Cars Ltd recorded a rise of 59pc YoY and 17pc MoM to 2,716 units in April, while cumulative 10MFY26 sales surged 58pc to 22,813 units.

Indus Motor Company (IMC) recorded 33pc YoY and 12pc MoM growth to 4,330 units in April, while July-April FY26 sales rose 51pc YoY to 37,643 units.

Hyundai Nisbat Motors recorded an 11pc YoY and 8pc MoM increase to 1,002 units in April, largely driven by the Tucson model, while

10MFY26 sales rose to 10,684 units, up 30pc YoY.

Bike/rickshaws Myesha said two- and three-wheeler sales increased by 40pc YoY and 14pc MoM to 190,340 units in April, marking an all-time-high value.

This took cumulative 10MFY26 sales to 1.6m units, up 32pc YoY.

She said Atlas Honda recorded an increase of 41pc YoY and 14pc MoM, with sales reaching 163,000 units, marking yet another all-time-high for the company.

Truck and bus sales surged 58pc YoY and 46pc MoM to 824 units in April, while 10MFY26 sales rose by 72pc to 6,686 units YoY.

Used car imports surged 58pc YoY and 46pc MoM to 824 units in April, while 10MFY26 sales rose by 72pc to 6,686 units YoY.

Used car imports



Petroleum levy jumps 45% to Rs1.2tr

NEWS DESK: The government reported on Tuesday that petroleum levy collection jumped by Rs71 billion, or 45%, during the first nine months of this fiscal year, as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects that Pakistan's fiscal performance will be even better than in the pre-war period.

The federal government's nine month petroleum levy collection amounted to Rs1.205 trillion, nearly equal to the total collected during the last fiscal year.

A petrol consumer is now paying Rs117.5 per litre in levy to fill the government's coffers.

Abnormally high petroleum levy rates, a steep reduction in interest expenses due to a 50% cut in interest rates,

and record provincial cash surpluses have placed Pakistan in a comfortable position ahead of the IMF budget talks.

The IMF budget mission begins discussions today (Wednesday), but sources said the scope of the mission will go far beyond budget discussions.

The mission will review progress on legal amendments to cut the state's footprint in the public sector and liberalise the sugar sector.

The mission will set next fiscal year's revenue and expenditure targets and review progress on amending laws.

It will also hold a meeting to discuss the fate of commercial banks after interest based lending ends in 2028, as re-

quired by the constitution, according to government sources.

The lender will seek a progress report on opening the sugar sector, which remains heavily controlled to the benefit of millers.

The budget that the IMF endorses will then be presented to the National Assembly next month for approval.

Discussions will also be held with the provinces to ensure they generate Rs1.64 trillion in cash surpluses in the next fiscal year and deliver nearly Rs1.78 trillion in tax collection, said the sources.

The IMF's latest public disclosure shows that Pakistan's fiscal performance will be even better than the target set before the war began in June last year.

units in 9MFY26.

Used car imports recorded a significant decline in March 2026 to 793 units versus 3,785 units in February 2026, amid a strict import policy, she said.

However, Myesha Sohai said that US-Iran war had also impacted imports of used cars in March.

In FY25, used-car imports totalled 42,122 units.

Tractor Tractor sales grew by 76pc YoY, but plunged 6pc MoM to 824 units in April 2026. Total tractor sales in 10MFY26 fell 7pc YoY to 23,116 units.

Milat Tractors Ltd (MTL) on Tuesday informed the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) that its subsidiary company has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a leading electric bike manufacturer of China for the assembly, manufacturing and marketing of e-bikes in Pakistan.

Used car imports surged 58pc YoY and 46pc MoM to 824 units in April, while 10MFY26 sales rose by 72pc to 6,686 units YoY.

Used car imports



This indicates that the country's finances have not been significantly impacted by the Middle East conflict, as the government recovered both international oil prices and higher taxes on petroleum products.

The government had set an overall budget deficit target of 3.9% of GDP (just over Rs1 trillion) in the last budget. The IMF's report shows the deficit could remain as low as 3.2% of GDP, which is about Rs900 billion better than the budget estimates.

This suggests that federal and provincial governments had fiscal space to provide relief instead of charging higher taxes, though the space is largely in the hands of cash rich provinces.

Rana stars as Bangladesh down Pakistan in 1st Test thriller

NEWS DESK: Pace bowler Nahid Rana claimed five wickets as Bangladesh trumped Pakistan by 104 runs in a rain-hit first Test on Tuesday after a thrilling fifth day of batting collapses.

Chasing 268 for victory in Dhaka, Pakistan were 119-3 before they fell to 163 all out in the final session with debutant Abdullah Fazal scoring a valiant 66.

Bangladesh now hold a 1-0 lead in the two-match home series.

The Test win was Bangladesh's first against Pakistan on home soil and their third overall.

The 23-year-old Fazal put on 51 runs with Salman Agha, who made 26, to raise Pakistan's hopes of victory before Rana rattled the opposition with career-best figures of 5-40.

Rana, 23, made an impact with his pace and reverse swing and his final spell of 4.5 overs got him four wickets for just 10 runs to turn the match on its head.

"Very happy — proud of all the guys,



the way we played," Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said.

"We have been working hard the last few months and slowly we are getting better at Test cricket — that's one thing we have always wanted to do."

The victory also

saw Shanto equal Mushfiqur Rahim's record of seven Test wins as Bangladesh and Pakistan at the Sher-i-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Bangladesh on May 12, 2026. — AFP

Shanto's batting brilliance Bangladesh came into the final day with

a lead of 179 runs at 152-3 but a clutch of wickets made them falter despite Shanto's 87.

Bangladesh declared their second innings on 240-9 to hand Pakistan a competitive target and a chance for their bowlers to make use of the deteriorating pitch.

Taskin Ahmed took down opener Inam-ul-Haq for two and Mehidy Hasan Miraz bowled debutant and first-innings centurion Azan Awaiz for 15.

Rana removed Pakistan captain Shan Masood for two before Fazal and Agha counter-attacked in

their fourth-wicket partnership, but Bangladesh bowlers proved their mettle on home turf to secure victory in the final session of the day.

Rana delivered the decisive blows. He caught behind before producing the ball of the match — a thunder-

ous 147 kmph (91.3 mph) in-swinging yorker that bowled Mohammad Rizwan for 15.

Rana was on a roll as he trapped Noman Ali Ibw and then bounced out Shaheen Shah Afridi, with Mahmudul Hasan Joy taking a simple catch to complete a famous victory.

Pakistan captain Masood proffered no excuses for his side's failure to seize the key moments in the match.

"In the first innings, with bat and ball, we needed to do better," he said. "When you have the game in your hands you have to push the opposition away, but we failed to do that."

Shanto stood out for his batting brilliance as he made 101 in the first innings to guide Bangladesh to 413.

Pakistan responded with 386 in their first innings but conceded a slender lead after off-spinner Mehidy returned figures of 5-102.

Rain played spoilsport on the third and fourth days of the Test with a few overs lost due to interruptions.

Sinner sets up derby with Pellegrino

NEWS DESK: Jannik Sinner set up a David v Goliath clash with countryman Andrea Pellegrino in the last 16 of the Italian Open after demolishing Alexei Popyrin in straight sets 6-2, 6-0 on centre court on Monday.

The world number one easily won his 25th straight match, taking just over an hour to see off Australia's Popyrin and give qualifier Pellegrino his moment on the big stage on Tuesday afternoon.

Pellegrino, 29, who beat 20th seed Frances Tiafoe 7-6 (10/8), 6-1, is ranked 155 in the world and before this week had never played in the man draw of a Masters 1000 tournament.

"It's fun to play a derby in Italy, he's having an incredible tournament with a lot of victories against some really good opponents," Sinner told reporters.

"We've played each other a long time ago (in 2019 in an ITF tournament), but he was a different player, and I was a different player."

Sinner meanwhile is trying to extend his own record-breaking run of overall victories in the ATP's top-ranked events after having won his last five.

The 24-year-old joins Novak Djokovic as the only player to win a year's first 25 Master 1000 matches, with the Serbian tennis icon's record run stretching to

31 matches in 2011. Popyrin was suffocated by Sinner and made 23 unforced errors on his way to a comprehensive defeat.

The world number 60 only got 48 percent of first serves into play and that allowed Sinner to break five times and close out a match which was barely a contest.

Former Rome champion Daniil Medvedev gets his tournament underway by winning an entertaining match with Pablo Llamas Ruiz 3-6, 6-4, 6-2, setting up a clash with Thiago Agustín Tirantó who beat 10th seed and Rome native Flavio Cobolli 6-3, 6-4.

Swiatek back to best? Iga Swiatek will face Jessica Pegula on the quarter-finals of the women's tournament after making short work of Naomi Osaka, beating the Japan star 6-2, 6-1 and looking more like the player that won four French Open titles.

Pole Swiatek hasn't won a clay court tournament since claiming her most recent title at Roland Garros two years ago, with personal problems a factor in her poor performances on her favoured surface.

But she looked back to her old self on Monday, giving Osaka nowhere to turn as she scurried around the court and finished off the match in just one hour and 22 minutes.



Ton-up Ayesha dazzles as Pakistan rout Zimbabwe in first T20

NEWS DESK: A dazzling century by Ayesha Zafar and a fiery spell from captain Fatima Sana powered Pakistan to a crushing 153-run victory over Zimbabwe in the opening fixture of the three-match women's Twenty20 International series at the National Bank Stadium here on Tuesday night.

After being asked to bat, Pakistan piled up an imposing 237-5 — their highest total in women's T20s — before bowling Zimbabwe out for 84 in 18.2 overs to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Ayesha led the charge with a sensational unbeaten 102 off only 47 balls, smashing 15 fours and two sixes in a completely dominated the visitors' attack.

It was the opener's maiden T20 century and came at a blistering strike rate of over 211.



support from Aliya Riaz, who hammered 48 off 23 deliveries with four fours and four sixes, while Gull Feroza gave Pakistan early momentum through a rapid 37 off 19 balls.

Pakistan raced to 68-3 inside six overs despite losing wickets regularly in the powerplay.

Ayesha then rebuilt the innings before launching an assault alongside Aliya in a fifth-wicket stand worth 67 runs.

Captain Fatima added late impetus with an unbeaten 21 off 13 balls as Pakistan plundered 70 runs in the final five overs.

Zimbabwe's bowlers struggled throughout, with skipper Nomwele Sibanda conceding 59 runs in her four overs despite claiming two wickets.

The chase never gathered momentum as Fatima ripped through the top order with figures of 3-7 in three overs. Zimbabwe slumped to 16-5 inside five overs, effectively ending the contest.

'Don't understand it, but it looks fun': Cricket bowls Japan over

NEWS DESK: Curious spectators clutching rulebooks watch as a batsman smacks a six into the sand and weeds surrounding Japan's brand-new cricket ground, four months before it hosts matches at the Asian Games.

Japanese fans will be familiar with many of the events at the Olympic-like multi-sport competition when it is held in Nagoya from September 19 to October 4, but most are likely to be stumped by cricket.

That won't stop them from taking an interest though, and now they have a purpose-built ground to welcome a T20 match as India and Pakistan.

Korogi Sports Park, a converted baseball field that still has a pitcher's mound just beyond the boundary, is about a 40-minute train ride from central Nagoya.

It is currently warming up for the Asian Games by hosting its first cricket event, the

East Asia-Pacific qualifiers for the 2028 men's T20 World Cup.

The qualifiers feature Japan and fellow cricket minnows Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, the Cook Islands and South Korea.

Local resident Yuya Okamura, who watched Japan play Vanuatu with his wife and two young children, told AFP that they had only heard of cricket because his daughter watched the Australian cartoon "Bluey".

In this photo taken on May 9, 2026, a spectator watches the game during the ICC T20 World Cup East Asia-Pacific Qualifier match between Japan and Vanuatu at Korogi Sports Park in Nishin, Aichi Prefecture. — AFP

The game is a mix of the rules I'm watching the game because I don't understand it, but it looks fun," said the 34-year-old, who was at-

tending his first cricket match.

Bouncy pitch About 300 people turned up to watch Japan's opening game on a windy weekend morning.

Most sitting on deck chairs within earshot of a commentator guiding them through the basics of the game.

Temporary stands will be in place at the Asian Games, taking the capacity up to around 2,000.

While the continent's star players may be used to grander surroundings, they are unlikely to be disappointed by the quality of the pitch.

That is the responsibility of Asitha Wijayasinghe, who also curates the pitch at the 35,000-capacity Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Sri Lanka.

Adam Birss, Korogi Sports Park's Asian Games operations manager, says the pitch is likely to be "bouncy,"

players in celebration at full-time, said he had "never" felt so much love in a stadium as on this day.

The coach said his team were still hoping to match the record of 100 points in a La Liga season in their final three league matches, and their big goal for next season was to end their 11-year wait for the Champions League.

Spanish media have reported Flick will extend his contract, which expires in 2027, by a year.

"I'm feeling in the right place, at the right time, and I think we all want to continue, and we want to give more for this club," added Flick.

I'll never forget this day, says Barca's Flick after La Liga triumph

NEWS DESK: Hours after the death of his father, Barcelona coach Hansi Flick led the Catalan giants to a second straight La Liga title with a Clasico win over rivals Real Madrid on Sunday and said it was a day he would "never" forget.

Flick's Barca side earned a 2-0 win over Los Blancos and the coach said he was grateful to his team for their support and commitment.

Barcelona turned the Clasico into a coronation at a roaring Camp Nou to claim their 29th La Liga title.

Flick's side moved to an unassailable 91 points, 14 clear of second-placed Real with three games remaining.

The triumph capped a dominant campaign in which they lost only four league matches. Villarreal are third on 69 points.

Real arrived needing victory to keep their water-hin title hopes alive, but Marcus Rashford crushed those aspirations just nine minutes into the game.

Antonio Rudiger fouled Ferran Torres just outside the box and Rashford bent a superb free kick into Thibaut Courtois' top-left corner.

giving Barcelona the early lead and sending the home crowd into raptures.

Nine minutes later, Barcelona doubled the lead. Ferrn Lopez crossed into the area and Dani Olmo produced a clever backheel that sent the ball into the path of Torres, who rifled a fierce strike into the top corner.

"I'm proud. I'll never forget this day. Never. I'm happy about this (triumph) and the atmosphere in this stadium is unbelievable," Flick told reporters.

The German coach said his mother called him in the morning to tell him that his father had

died.

"This morning my mum called me and she said that my father passed away. And so I thought about (whether) I should hide or, or should I speak with my team? Because for me it's like a family," explained Flick.

"And I said, okay, I want to get the information to the players. And what they did (then) was unbelievable. I will never forget this moment."

"I'm really happy and really proud about everyone. Every player in the team. My staff around as well, and the club."

Flick, who was tossed into the air by his



Punjab CM Office denies RTI requests seeking details of Maryam's tours and vehicles, luxury jet acquired by govt

NEWS DESK: The Punjab chief minister's office has refused a lawyer's requests, made under the right to information law, for details of vehicles in incumbent provincial chief executive Maryam Nawaz's use, her foreign visits and a luxury plane acquired by the Punjab government.

The right to information (RTI) in Pakistan is enshrined as a fundamental right under Article 19-A of the Constitution, designed to empower citizens with access to government-held information.

Lawyer Abdullah Malik had submitted two applications with the Public Information Commission (PIC) in July last year and in February this year.

In his letter in July 2024, he sought the following details:

Expenditure under the heads of fuel, maintenance of vehicles and tours, including international visits
Total number of vehicles and their make, model and cost
Expenditure on helicopter or aircraft used



by the CM and its total mileage of travel
Total number of social media team members at the CM House, along with their salaries
Whether the CM

got the approval for her foreign tours from the Ministry of Finance and how many officials were with her on her Japan tour, as well as the expenses incurred on that

visit
Separately, in a letter in February, the lawyer sought details about a G500 jet.

The Gulfstream 19-seater jet is estimated to be worth between \$38 million and \$42m, and Maryam has faced severe criticism regarding her government's purchase of the aircraft.

The Punjab administration had initially remained tight-lipped about the acquisition of the aircraft, but later claimed that it was part of a proposed airline project.

The lawyer received replies to both his letters earlier this month. Both responses are dated April 28. On his July request, the CM Office's public information officer (PIO) said: "The desired information is not held by this office."

It also cited "legitimate exception" as a reason for not sharing the information, stating: "The information sought is excepted under section 13(1)(e) of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act, 2013."

Section 13(1)(e) of the Act reads: "A public information officer may refuse an application for access to information where disclosure of the information shall or is likely to cause harm to the life, health or safety of any person."

The record of the proceedings before the PIC, available with Dawn, shows that the PIO consistently sought adjournments regarding the July request until the commission on April 13 gave a strict warning of penal consequences in case of failure to respond.

On Malik's request for information regarding the luxury jet, the PIO responded: "It is informed that desired information is not held by this office."

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Jail rejects daughter's plea to meet Bushra

NEWS DESK: The superintendent of Adiala Jail has opposed a request submitted by the former prime minister Inran Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, and her family members as well as access to a personal physician, arguing that such interactions were being used for political messaging outside the prison.

In a written report submitted to the Islamabad High Court (IHC), the jail superintendent stated that family meetings were followed by public political statements and social media activity.

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Baig appeared before the court during the proceedings. The report submitted by the jail authorities specifically referred to social media posts attributed to Bushra Bibi's sister, Maryam Riaz Wattoo, claiming that tweets were shared after family meetings with the former first lady.

The administration argued that such conduct raised concerns regarding prison management and security arrangements.

Advocate General Malik informed the court that the superintendent had already decided the representation regarding prison meetings and had declined to allow immediate access.

However, he clarified that the restriction was not permanent and could be reviewed later. Counsel for the petitioner, Salman Akram Raja, challenged the grounds cited by the jail authorities and argued that the denial was based on alleged political discussions taking place outside the prison.

He contended that Maryam Riaz Wattoo had never visited Adiala Jail and currently resided abroad. Her social media activity could be used as justification to stop a daughter from meeting her mother.

At this point, Justice Arbab Muhammad Fahir directed the advocate general to obtain an affidavit from the relevant individual regarding the matter. The advocate general reiterated that the prison administration had not imposed a blanket ban and was acting in line with prison management requirements.

During the hearing, Superintendent Sajid Baig informed the court that Adiala Jail currently housed around 7,200 inmates and that meeting schedules were arranged separately according to the nature of prisoners' offences.

He said meetings were conducted six days a week, from Monday to Saturday, under the jail manual and the Prison Management Information System.

Justice Tahir observed that the system appeared organised and said the court wanted to fully understand the procedure before passing any order.

He stressed that the jail administration must strictly follow the jail manual and ensure fairness to all parties. The court said it would hear the matter in detail before issuing a final ruling and directed authorities to facilitate a meeting between Bushra Bibi and her daughter Nawaz, if possible in the meantime.

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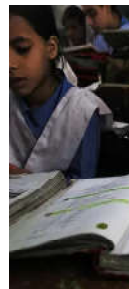
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Sindh announces summer vacation for schools from June 1-July 31



NEWS DESK: The Sindh government announced on Wednesday that the summer vacation for schools in the province would begin on June 1 and continue till July 31.

"In pursuance of the decision taken in the meeting of steering committee on education, held on February 12, 2026, the summer vacation for all public and private educational institutions under the administrative control of School Edu-

cation and Literacy Department, government of Sindh shall be observed with effect from June 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026 for the academic session 2026-27," a notification issued by the Sindh education department said.

At the start of this week, Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat announced a three-month-long summer vacation for schools in his province.

Last month, schools in Punjab were advised to alter working hours or declare early summer holidays due to excessive heat, which has prevailed over parts of the country over the past few weeks.

The Punjab Disaster Management Authority had issued urgent directives to educational institutions and district administrations agreed to everything but later refused to give guarantees," he said, adding that Kabul was willing to

Pakistan will do to Kabul what it did to Delhi: Khawaja Asif

NEWS DESK: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Wednesday warned Afghanistan that if Kabul failed to stop harbouring terrorists, Pakistan would respond in the same way it had against India last year.

Addressing the National Assembly, Asif said: "If they are not ready, then what we did with Delhi, we will do the same with Kabul." The minister asserted that Afghanistan had effectively become an instrument of Indian policy.

"At this time, Afghanistan has become India's proxy," he said, adding: "Kabul is fighting a Hinduwa against us," and that "there is no difference between Delhi and Kabul at this time," although Pakistan sincerely wished otherwise.

Asif said Pakistan has repeatedly attempted to engage Afghanistan through diplomatic channels, including via Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, but those efforts had failed to yield results. "In negotiations in Qatar, Afghanistan agreed to everything but later refused to give guarantees," he said, adding that Kabul was willing to



agree verbally but not in writing. He said Pakistan's primary demand was a written commitment from Kabul ensuring that Afghanistan territory would not be used to launch attacks against Pakistan and that terrorists operating there would be expelled.

"The Kabul government is not willing to guarantee that its territory will not be used for attacks against Pakistan," he said, adding that following India's defeat last year, New Delhi was now acting through Afghanistan.

On the diplomatic front, Asif said

backchannel efforts through a third country were still ongoing, though he declined to provide further details. "Talks are still ongoing through a third country, but I cannot say much at this stage," he said.

Pakistan remains embroiled in ongoing clashes with Afghanistan since February 2026. Operation Ghazab Lili Haq was launched following clashes along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, after Afghan Taliban forces fired on multiple locations, prompting swift military

action by Pakistan. The neighbouring countries have been engaged in escalating hostilities along the frontier since then. The clashes intensified after Afghanistan launched a border offensive in response to Pakistani air strikes targeting terrorist positions.

A temporary pause in the operation was assumed in deference to Eidul Fitr and resuming from Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey. The pause, effective from midnight on March 18-19, 2026, ran until March 23-24, 2026.

However, the operation then resumed in March and since then, the Pakistan Army has continued to respond to unprovoked aggression by the Taliban and Fina al-Khawarij, a term used for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The defence minister also struck a cautiously optimistic note regarding domestic political alignment, saying the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government, which had previously been uncooperative, was now on board.