

QUINTA VOCA

Editor: Asim Khan

US, Iran genuinely want peace in the region: PM Shehbaz

MONITORING DESK:

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif while speaking to the press in Burgenstock, where US, Iranian, Qatari and Pakistani delegations gathered for peace talks on Sunday, praised the Iranian leadership's cool-headedness, dignity and attempts at de-escalation.

"I think they genuinely mean to promote peace in the region," PM Shehbaz said of the Iranian leadership, adding, "So does President Trump."

"I have no second thoughts about the fact that he is a man of peace — He has demonstrated that during the war between Pakistan and India," he said.

The premier was optimistic about the "renewed friendship" with the US, and hoped it would grow into a relationship of close coordination and cooperation between the two countries.

First round of talks Closed-door quadripartite negotiations between the US and Iran kicked off earlier today, with Qatar and Pakistan participating in a mediatory role.

As the talks began, US President Donald Trump in a post on Truth Social had threatened Iran over unrest in Lebanon, one of the key issues on the table during today's talks.

"Iran must immediately stop their very hard again, just like we did last week, only harder!" he said.

Separately in an interview with Fox News, the US president issued threats over the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, claiming that he maintains "a variety of options" at his disposal.

Roughly 80 minutes into the talks, Iranian media reported a pause, with delegations withdrawing to hold internal consultations.

Following the pause, Iran's chief negotiator Bagher Ghalibaf in a statement on X dismissed US threats, cautioning Washington to "be careful". He vowed that Tehran stood "ready to respond".



PM Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir and US Vice President JD Vance

"Peace requires give and take"

Addressing the opening ceremony ahead of the closed-door talks, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hoped for an outcome that would ensure peace, progress and prosperity globally.

PM Shehbaz said he was looking forward to productive talks, and expressed satisfaction that the joint efforts of everyone involved in the peace process had culminated in the meet in Burgenstock.

"I think here we are going to have wonderful discussions which will lead to, hopefully, very productive results in times to come," he said.

"I thank US President Trump and VP JD Vance for their leadership, and praised Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir for his consistent efforts, perseverance and patience during the mediation process.

US Vice President JD Vance told the press that "peace requires give and take".

"This is a historic meet. Never before have Iranian and American leadership met at such a high level outside of Islamabad," he said.

"What today really represents is the beginning of a technical negotiation that's not going to solve every disagreement, but is going to allow us to sit together as teams, for the first time really in history, to figure out what matters most to the respective parties,

or Iran has been a driver of regional instability? We see a future where everyone can work together to promote peace and prosperity for everyone."

Vance said Trump is committed to a "full rePM Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir and US Vice President JD Vance regional ceasefire", including Lebanon. These kinds of ceasefires are always "a

little bit messy", but they had seen progress over the last few days, he added.

Vance also shared appreciation for PM Shehbaz and CDF Munir, saying: "I have joked that I have two very, very important people in my life. An Indian and a Pakistani. The Indian is my wife, and the Pakistani is Field Marshal Munir," he said, adding that he had "probably talked to Field Marshal Munir more than anyone else over the last few months."

"If Iran is willing to give up nuclear weapon ambitions for the long term, the US is willing to transform relations with them," he said.

The president, he said, had urged him to "turn over a new leaf to transform our relationship with the people of Iran, and to extend an outstretched hand".

Qatar Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani also

speaking at the opening ceremony, thanked both the US and Iranian delegations for their efforts to make peace in the Middle East.

"I think that everyone of you has highlighted how important and historic this is, not only on the security of the region but also for the security of the world and for the global economy," the Qatari PM said.

"I would like to thank all of you for your leadership and determination that put us in this room. This is not really the main celebration, this is just the beginning and I wish everyone all the best," Al Thani said.

He added that Qatar would remain dedicated to the partnership to support mediation efforts until a solution is reached.

Before the start of their remarks, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi briefly walked into the room and embraced PM Shehbaz the White House Press Pool

Reports said in a statement released on X. "He was there just a short time before walking out again and did not during that time interacting with Vance, who was on the other side of the room," it added.

The media were ushered out of the meeting room as the talks began.

Technical groups to help negotiate MoU clauses, Qatar.

The "technical-level" talks today seek to iron out the details of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Tehran and Washington to cease hostilities and negotiate a framework to end the war.

Under the agreement, the US and Iran have agreed on a framework to end the war, lift the US blockade of Iran and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Also on the table will be discussions about the unfreezing of Iranian assets and sale of Iranian oil.

In a statement, the

Qatari foreign ministry announced "the launch of the Lucerne Lake Summit and the first high-level committee meeting" between the four sides, which it hoped would "lead to reaching a comprehensive and permanent agreement that addresses all aspects covered by the Memorandum of Understanding."

The Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Dr Majed bin Mohammed Al-Ansari stated that "technical and specialised groups have been formed to negotiate the implementation of clauses, which will cover all aspects of the Memorandum of Understanding."

"Additionally, follow-up groups have been established to oversee the implementation of the memorandum and track the progress achieved toward reaching the final agreement, reflecting the commitment of all parties to proceed in the negotiation process in good faith and with the goal of reaching a comprehensive and sustainable agreement."

He emphasized that the State of Qatar, as one of the mediating countries, will continue to work with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and all concerned parties to create a positive environment that enables the negotiations to achieve their goals, based on its firm belief that dialogue and diplomacy represent the optimal path for conflict resolution and dispute settlement.

The Qatari foreign ministry spokesperson also appreciated the "important role" played by Pakistan as a partner and mediator, praising Islamabad's "documented and continuous efforts in supporting the negotiation process".

He also expressed appreciation for Washington and Tehran's commitment to finding a diplomatic solution, and for the support provided by Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, as well as other friendly countries that "contributed to creating favorable conditions to walk this process forward."

Delegations meet ahead of talks

Balochistan's Historic Shift to Merit-Based Government Jobs: Ending Corruption and Empowering Youth

Editorial:

In a province long plagued by nepotism and job-selling scandals, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has taken a bold and welcome stand.

He has declared zero tolerance for corruption, favoritism, and the sale of government posts — and he is backing his words with action.

The announcement of filling 111 Finance Department vacancies through a fully online, paperless, and 100% merit-based recruitment process marks a genuine turning point for transparent governance in Balochistan. For the first time in the province's history, candidates will apply and be tested entirely online. Qualifications will be verified instantly, and successful applicants will receive appointment letters



within an hour. This fast, fair system elimi-

nates middlemen, backdoor deals, and

bribery — the very practices that have

robbed deserving young people of op-

portunities for decades. This merit-

based recruitment drive in Balochistan is more than administrative reform; it is a lifeline for the province's educated youth.

By ensuring government jobs go to qualified candidates rather than relatives or those who can pay, the initiative restores hope and dignity.

As Chief Minister Bugti has promised, the model will soon expand to all departments, creating a culture where talent, not connections, determines success.

The broader impact on Balochistan's development and stability could be profound.

Transparent hiring means better-qualified civil servants, leading to more efficient public services, reduced wastage of funds, and faster implementation of development projects.

When resources

reach the people instead of corrupt pockets, infrastructure, education, and health services improve, laying the foundation for sustained economic growth.

Equally important, fair job opportunities address a major source of youth frustration in the province. Giving young Baloch the chance to serve their homeland on merit can reduce alienation and contribute to lasting peace.

Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti's focus on merit, technology-driven transparency, and accountability offers real hope.

If these anti-corruption reforms in Balochistan are implemented with consistency, they can transform governance, unlock the potential of the province's youth, and set a powerful example for the rest of Pakistan.

At least 20 killed as Israel continues attacks in Lebanon

NEWS DESK: Israeli strikes in Lebanon killed at least 20 people on Saturday, Lebanon's state news agency said, one day after a ceasefire with Hezbollah took effect, underscoring the fragility of a truce aimed at halting months of escalating violence.

Lebanon's National News Agency reported that Israeli warplanes and drones struck multiple civilian and structural locations in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

Hezbollah accused Israel of committing hundreds of blatant ceasefire violations and warned that the continued Israeli aggression "will not pass without a response".

The group noted that responsibility for the dangerous escalation lay solely with Israel and urged the US to place intense pressure on the Israeli regime to implement diplomatic agreements and halt its devastating attacks.

The Israeli military remains an occupying force in parts of southern Lebanon.

Israeli broadcaster Channel 12 reported that the military had been instructed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz to hold fire, but leaders refused to



withdraw troops from the Lebanese areas they had captured.

An Israeli military official stated that Hezbollah launched more than 50 projectiles at occupying forces entrenched in southern Lebanon.

The Israeli military claimed Hezbollah's self-defence operations con-

stituted repeated violations of the ceasefire. The military warned it would respond to any attacks, ignoring its own unprovoked continued presence on Lebanese soil.

Remaining firmly committed to the diplomatic ceasefire, Hezbollah emphasised it would respond to

any Israeli attempt to "seize territory or expand its occupation."

The resistance said Israeli forces aggressively

attempted overnight to infiltrate the Ali al-Tajer hill area in southern Lebanon.

Lebanese fighters engaged the invading troops, Hezbollah reported, after which Is-

rael carried out sweeping airstrikes both inside and outside its declared operational zone.

A senior Hezbollah official maintained that the group would never allow

"freedom of movement" in occupied Lebanese territory, asserting that re-

sistance remains legitimate as long as Israeli forces remain inside Lebanon.

The renewed Israeli violence casts serious doubt on the durability of the ceasefire. Among the deadliest attacks was an unprovoked Israeli strike that obliterated a three-story residential building in the

southern town of Barish in the Tyre district.

The strike killed a Lebanese father, a mother and their two young children, a local official said.

Furthermore, the Lebanese military confirmed that another Israeli strike assassinated a national soldier stationed on the

Kfar Rumman-Nabatieh road.

Highlighting the devastating human toll of the Israeli military assault, Lebanon's Health Ministry reported that 4,057 people have been tragically killed in Israeli attacks since March 2.

The number of casualties includes vital medical workers and children. Meanwhile, Israeli authorities reported at least 32 soldiers and four civilians have been killed.

Late on Saturday, an Israeli army official said the military had received orders from the country's political leadership to halt fighting in southern Lebanon.

"The IDF has received updated directives from the political echelon to cease fire," the official said in a statement.

The directive emerged as diplomats from several countries were meeting at a Swiss retreat over the weekend in a bid to maintain dialogue on a preliminary US-Iran deal to halt the Middle East war on Saturday.

The US-Iran understanding announced this week calls for an immediate and permanent halt to military operations by the parties and their allies across several fronts, including Lebanon.

PMSA begins repatriation, humanitarian assistance of 8 Iranian nationals rescued at sea

NEWS DESK: The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) has spearheaded the repatriation and humanitarian assistance of eight Iranian nationals who were rescued at sea by a British vessel, it said in a press release on Sunday.

The Iranian nationals had been rescued by the British vessel MMA Valour after their boat ran aground, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar had said on Wednesday.

The PMSA said that efforts for the "necessary reception, documentation, medical screening and coordination for onward repatriation" were undertaken under its lead coordination.

Representatives from the foreign ministry, Pakistan Navy, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Consulate General of Iran and relevant international stakeholders were also present during the process, the PMSA said.

The operation was conducted in close coordination with national and international stakeholders, reflecting Pakistan's commitment towards humanitarian assistance, safety of life at sea and regional maritime cooperation," the statement said.

PMSA noted that it was the only maritime law enforcement agency of Pakistan, and responsible for search and rescue operations in Pakistan's maritime zones.

It expressed that it remained "fully committed to safeguarding human life at sea and coordinating timely assistance during maritime emergencies".

In May, Pakistan — which is playing the role of mediator between the US and Iran amid the conflict in the Middle East — had facilitated the return of crew members from a US-seized Iranian vessel. The crew were part of a group of 22 people transferred to Pakistan following their release.

United Kingdom (UK) PM Starmer mulling 'political realities': senior minister

NEWS DESK: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer was reflecting this weekend on the "political realities" that he faces, a senior minister said on Sunday, amid media reports the premier would resign within days.

It follows veteran Labour politician and rival Andy Burnham's victory in a by-election on Friday, which paves the way for the 56-year-old to challenge the beleaguered Starmer to the party leader and prime minister.

Any Labour leadership candidate must be a member of parliament. If Starmer does leave office this year, Britain will get its seventh prime minister in a decade — an unprecedented rate of churn in its modern history.

US President Donald Trump shared his thoughts on Sunday in typically blunt fashion, writing on his Truth Social platform that "Keir Starmer will resign as Prime Minister of The United Kingdom".

"He failed badly on two very important subjects — IMMIGRATION AND ENERGY

(OPEN NORTH SEA OIL). I wish him well!" Burnham — Greater Manchester mayor since 2017 — has made clear he intends to bid to lead slumping centre-left Labour, warning in his by-election victory speech that the party had a "final chance to change".

He is expected to be sworn in as an MP on Monday.

If successful in ousting Starmer, he would become prime minister by default, given that ruling Labour has a huge parliamentary majority.

"Frank" talks Starmer, who is deeply unpopular with voters according to polling, has insisted he will fight any attempt to oust him.

But the emphatic nature of Burnham's win in the Makerfield constituency in northwest England — where he nearly doubled Labour's majority — has increased the internal pressure on Starmer to quit.

Business Secretary Peter Kyle said on Sunday that Starmer was "making time to reflect on the political realities, challenges and opportunities that he finds himself in".

"He has been engaging in conversations with a wide, wide range of people," Kyle told Sky News broadcaster after having what he said was a "frank" conversation with Starmer on Friday.

The Observer, The Guardian and The Sunday Telegraph newspapers all reported Starmer was preparing to resign as soon as Monday.

The Observer said he would "set out a timetable for his departure", noting he had been holding weekend talks from Chequers, the countryside retreat for prime ministers.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper was among the senior ministers telling her boss to stand down, Sky News reported.

Man charged over suspected anti-Muslim attacks in UK's Edinburgh

NEWS DESK: Scottish authorities said on Saturday they charged a man in connection with attacks in Edinburgh that wounded five people with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer saying the suspect "appears to be motivated by anti-Muslim hatred".

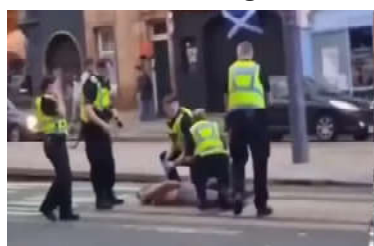
Police Scotland said officers had arrested a 36-year-old white Scottish man and there was "no further threat to the public".

"A 36-year-old man has been charged in connection with a number of incidents which took place in Edinburgh on Friday, June 19, 2026," police said late on Saturday.

"A report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal, and the individual will appear at court in due course."

Footage posted online showed a bare-chested man, believed to be the suspect, roaming the streets of the Scottish capital with a large weapon.

A police statement said they received multiple emergency calls late on Friday from people reporting "violent attacks including threats, robbery and vandalism across Edinburgh, with five men injured".



The victims, two aged 22, and others aged 24, 27, and 39, sustained various injuries, police said. Three were taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, the statement said, adding the incident is being investigated by the counter-terrorism unit and other police officers.

Politicians in London and Scotland condemned the incidents. "Absolutely appalling," Starmer said on X.

"The suspect appears to be motivated by anti-Muslim hatred. I will not tolerate this — he will face the full force of the law."

Scotland's First Minister John Swinney said he was "deeply concerned" in a post on X. "There is no place for violence, racism or intolerance in our country," he added. "Should concern everyone"

Both the Scottish Association of Mosques and the anti-Islamophobia non-profit Muslim Engagement and Development (Mend) said several of the victims were Muslims.

Mend noted the alleged footage of the arrested man circulating online also showed him shouting about "protecting the country" from Muslims, accompanied by explosive-filled language.

The organisation urged police to "treat this as what the evidence indicates: Islamophobic, far-right terror". The mosques association noted: "In recent days we have seen calls for anti-mis-

grant protests circulating online, alongside increasingly aggressive rhetoric directed at minority communities.

"These developments should concern everyone, regardless of faith or background."

The incident comes as immigration and diversity in the UK takes the spotlight, with claims that far-right agitators are fueling racist sentiment, after a number of reported high-profile incidents in the region.

The Northern Irish capital Belfast experienced two nights of disorder last week after a knife attack, allegedly perpetrated by a Sudanese refugee, was captured on camera and went viral online.

including the husband, wife and their two daughters, according to the civil defence agency, a rescue service that operates under Hamas authority.

It said the strike also injured 12 others. Apartment bombing leaves four family members dead

Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital confirmed receiving the bodies of four members of the Safadi family, including two children.

"Around 2 o'clock, my cousins were asleep when a missile struck them. They have no con-

Journalist among 11 killed in Israel's assault on Gaza

NEWS DESK: Gaza health officials said Israeli strikes on Saturday killed at least 11 people, including four members of the same family, in the latest violence to rock the Palestinian territory despite a ceasefire.

Hamas accuses Israel of perpetrating violations and the Gaza Strip continues to suffer severe bloodshed, with efforts to permanently halt the destructive assault on the enclave still at a standstill.

An overnight Israeli airstrike on an apartment building in the Sabra neighbourhood of Gaza City killed four members of the Al-Safadi family,

including the husband, wife and their two daughters, according to the civil defence agency, a rescue service that operates under Hamas authority.

It said the strike also injured 12 others. Apartment bombing leaves four family members dead

Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital confirmed receiving the bodies of four members of the Safadi family, including two children.



"By God, I still feel as though I'm in a dream — I never expected this to happen to us," Mohammad al-Safadi, who survived the strike, told AFP.

"I'm a civilian. I swear to God I've never carried a weapon or fired one. What do you want from me? Go after whoever you're after, what's my fault in this?"

AFP footage from the scene showed an exterior wall of the apartment blown off, exposing rubble, clothes, mattresses and other household belongings strewn across the shattered interior.

"Around 2 o'clock, my cousins were asleep when a missile struck them. They have no con-

nection to Hamas, nor are they involved in anything. They're just innocent children," said Nael al-Safadi, a relative.

AFP footage from the scene showed an exterior wall of the apartment blown off, exposing rubble, clothes, mattresses and other household belongings strewn across the shattered interior.

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Pakistan allocates funds for rail, industry and research under CPEC 2.0

ISLAMABAD (INP) — Pakistan has allocated funds for railway modernisation, industrial cooperation, policy research and academic exchanges under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for 2026-27, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

The allocations are part of Islamabad's push to move CPEC into a second phase focused on

industry, technology, investment and economic cooperation, after years of emphasis on energy and transport infrastructure.

PSDP sets aside Rs1 billion for "New Initiatives under CPEC 2.0", reflecting the government's stated aim to broaden the corridor beyond infrastructure projects.

In the transport sector, Rs1.056 billion has been allocated for preliminary design,

consultancy services and technical preparations for the Main Line-1 railway upgradation project and a dry port near Gwadar.

ML-1, one of CPEC's largest proposed connectivity projects, has faced repeated delays.

The government also allocated Rs50 million to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Support Project at the Ministry of Railways to support planning and

implementation of CPEC-related rail projects.

For industrial cooperation, Rs30 million has been earmarked for the Project Management Unit of the CPEC Industrial Cooperation Development Project, which is aimed at promoting investment and industrial collaboration between Pakistan and China.

The Centre of Excellence for CPEC, set up in collaboration with China's National Development



MULIAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani Attends the Annual Convocation 2026 Ceremony of the College to Tourism and Hotel Management (Cotm) South Punjab as the Chief Guest

Bilawal pays rich tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on 73rd birth anniversary

KARACHI, June 21 (INP) — Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid rich tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her 73rd birth anniversary, describing her as "Charon Soboon Ki Zanbeer" the enduring symbol of a united, democratic and progressive Pakistan.

He said that her vision of a strong federation, empowered federating units, constitutional rule, and a society founded on dignity, equality, and opportunity for all continues to guide the PPP.

He added that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's legacy remains a beacon for Pakistan that is secure in its defence, unwavering in the protection of its people's rights and steadfast in its support for the just struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chairman of PPP further said in his message that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was not merely the first elected woman Prime Minister of the Islamic world, adding that

Pakistani publishers eye broader copyright cooperation with China

BEDDING (INP) — China and Pakistan cooperate closely across all sectors, but there remains ample room to deepen bilateral publishing cooperation, as we have yet to carry out extensive joint work.

This was stated by Daniyal Salam, Director of Head Office, Sales, Marketing & Editorial of Pakistan's century-old publishing house Ferrozsons (Pvt.) Ltd., on the sidelines of the 32nd Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF), according to a report carried by China Economic Net on Sunday.

This year's BIBF has attracted more than 1,700 exhibitors from 82 countries and regions, including over 1,100 overseas participants such as Elsevier, Springer Nature, Cengage, Pearson and Wiley, creating a global platform for copyright negotiation and cultural industry communication.

Ferozsons is the sole Pakistani publisher in attendance this year.

While this marks the firm's debut at BIBF, it has already translated around 45 Chinese children's illustrated books into Urdu through partnerships with Chi-

she was the voice of the voiceless, the strength of the oppressed and the hope of those denied a place in the corridors of power.

"She transformed politics into a noble mission where every citizen—regardless of class, gender, faith or ethnicity—could live with dignity, opportunity and justice," he said.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that despite imprisonment, persecution and years of exile, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto never wavered in her struggle against dictatorship and her puppets. With extraordinary courage and unshakable resolve, she led historic movements for the restoration of democracy and the supremacy of the 1973 Constitution. "Her martyrdom silenced neither her message nor her mission. Her legacy lives on in every woman who dares to break barriers, every young person who dreams of a brighter tomorrow, and every citizen who stands for democracy."

nese publishers including CITIC Press Group.

"These short stories covering weather, seasons, food and Chinese culture are well received among Pakistani children," Salam noted.

He brought about fifty Pakistani titles to display at the fair, including a decades-old 10-volume Urdu classic bestseller newly translated into English, as he seeks potential copyright partners from China.

"I believe that if this series is introduced here, it could be comparable to iconic series such as Harry Potter," he said.

Salam identified insufficient exchanges between publishers of the two countries as the main obstacle to deeper cooperation, and called for government funding support for literary translation and reciprocal industry visits.

Beyond books for children, he is planning to bring more Chinese publications on politics and strategies to Pakistani readers within the next two to three years," he revealed.

Furthermore, he expressed interest in bringing China's,

NA approves 89 demands for grants worth Rs40.48 trillion for 29 ministries and divisions

ISLAMABAD (INP) — National Assembly approved the demands for grants submitted by various ministries and divisions through a majority vote paving the way for the allocation of funds under the federal budget.

The National Assembly session commenced under the chairmanship of Speaker Saadul Karizai, during which Finance Minister Muhammad Asif Ali Khan approved two demands for grants totaling more than Rs27.99 billion for the Interior Division and Rs140 million for the New Pakistan Housing Development Authority, Rs350 million for the communications sector, and another grant exceeding

Rs36 billion for communications-related expenditures. Lawmakers also approved Rs25 billion for the Pakistan Post Office Department, Rs17 billion for defence-related expenditures, Rs2.33 billion for the Climate Change Division, Rs68.17 billion for the Foreign Affairs Division, Rs22.31 billion for the Housing and Works Division, and more than Rs2.33 billion for the Human Rights Division.

The House also approved two demands for grants totaling more than Rs27.99 billion for the Interior Division and five grants worth over Rs125 billion for the Communications Division, Rs68.17 billion for the Defence and the Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Division.

Defence Production Division. In addition, two grants totaling over Rs15.01 billion were approved for the Economic Affairs Division, nine grants worth more than Rs121.26 billion for the Federal Education and Professional Training Division, three grants exceeding Rs27.57 billion for the Information and Broadcasting Division, and two grants totaling more than Rs42.07 billion for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The House also approved two grants worth over Rs45.04 billion for the Interior Division and five grants worth over Rs5.92 billion for the Inter-Provincial Coordination Division, two grants totaling more than Rs3.18 billion for the Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Division.

Pakistan, China celebrate diplomatic ties with renewed commitment to CPEC 2.0

ISLAMABAD (INP) — Pakistan and Chinese officials marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries at a ceremony in Karachi, reaffirming support for deeper economic and strategic cooperation, including the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The event was attended by senior political leaders, diplomats, business executives and military officials from both countries, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said the Pakistan-China relationship had remained resilient through regional and global challenges and described the two countries as "iron brothers."

Bilawal said the next phase of CPEC, commonly referred to as CPEC 2.0, would focus

Abraham Accords are "unacceptable as they come into collision with our fundamental ideology": Khawaja Asif

ISLAMABAD (INP) — Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that the Abraham Accords are "unacceptable, as they come into collision with our fundamental ideology".

Talking to a private television channel, defence minister denied any progress in this respect, "neither someone has said to us," he replied, while asked about the US State Department report on someone else has contacted for it. "Even our passport not carrying the name of Israel," he further said.

In a video message, the Chinese ambassador to Pakistan described to Pakistan as "all-weather strategic cooperative partners" and said the second phase of CPEC would place greater emphasis on industrialization, advanced manufacturing and economic modernization.

on industrial cooperation, technology transfer, innovation and special economic zones.

He also highlighted the role of Sindh and Karachi in future trade, investment and connectivity projects involving China.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said the relationship between Islamabad and Beijing remained one of Pakistan's strongest diplomatic partnerships and noted ongoing Chinese investment in transport, energy, industrial and infrastructure projects in Sindh.

talks have become successful," US President Donald Trump said on Monday that he asked Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt and Jordan to join the Abraham Accords en masse to normalize relations with Israel as he tries to negotiate an agreement to end the war with Iran. Pakistan rejected the proposal. None of the other countries has so far publicly responded to Trump's demand and a positive response was unlikely when the public mistrust of Israel in these Muslim nations remains high over the scale of its military offensive in Gaza.

Trump said he spoke on Saturday to leaders of those countries, as well as the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which have already signed the accords, a set of agreements to normalize relations with Israel.

Kashmiris sacrificing lives for freedom from Indian occupation: APHC

SRINAGAR (INP) — In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference has said that the Kashmiris' steadfastness and the sacrifices of youth are aimed at ending the age-old Indian slavery and securing the right to self-determination.

According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas, in a statement in Srinagar, reiterated Kashmiris' resolve to take the ongoing freedom movement to its logical conclusion at all costs.

"We will never allow anybody to barter the precious blood of martyrs. We are duty-bound to safeguard our martyrs' sacrifices and must desist from activities that can be detrimental to our movement," he said.

The APHC said that the Indian BJP government's brutal acts and tactics cannot deter the Kashmiri people from pursuing their mission.

"Even if macadamizes our roads with gold or silver, we will still not accept its supremacy," it added.

The APHC said that over the past 78 years, Kashmiris have rendered unparalleled sacrifices, with thousands of people detained and brutalized, properties

worth billions razed to the ground and looted, and sexual assault and rape used as a weapon of war.

Expressing serious concern over the continued illegal detention of Hurriyat leaders and activists, and cordon-and-search operations by Indian forces, the APHC said: "We are receiving reports that in some areas even young girls, are being summoned by forces' personnel in the Valley and Jammu region, mostly in Rajouri, Poonch, Doda and Kishtwar. This is extremely humiliating, degrading and unacceptable."

Urging people to stand for their just cause and unity, the APHC said supporting Hindutva, RSS, BJP and its allied parties is tantamount to treason against the blood of martyrs. "Indian authorities are misleading by portraying people's participation in so-called 'New Delhi LG's' official programmes as a verdict in their favour. It is a prerequisite to convey a strong message to the world community that we pursue a cherished mission of freedom and in no way justify, defend or favour these sponsored events and rallies," it added.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Economic Affairs, Muhammad Humair Karim, and Asian Development Bank (ADB) Deputy Country Director, Hussain Haider, sign the USD 700 million Policy-Based Loan for the Insurance Transformation Program.

Next 24 hours critical as storms, flood risks loom over Pakistan: NDMA

ISLAMABAD (INP) — Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a nationwide weather alert, warning that strong winds, dust storms, thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, urban flooding and glacier related flood risks could affect regional parts of the country over the next 12 to 24 hours, with vulnerable mountainous regions facing an elevated threat of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).

The alert was issued by the NDMA's National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), which said the prevailing weather pattern was consistent with the seasonal forecast released three to four months earlier.

The authority said it had already shared advance warnings with all relevant federal, provincial and district level institutions to ensure preparedness and timely response to any emergency situation.

According to the advisory, widespread rain accompanied by strong winds, dust storms and thunderstorms is expected in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and several districts of Punjab, including Murree, Attock, Chakwal, Talang,

Mandi Bahaudind, Sargodha, Gujrat, Jhelum, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Lahore, Faisalabad, Khushab, Jhang, Mianwali, Dera Ghazi Khan, Kasur, Okara, Sahiwal, Multan, Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan.

Authorities have also warned of possible urban flooding in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and other parts of the Potohar region, dust storms in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, rain and thunderstorms are forecast in Gilgit, Skardu, Diamer, Hunza, Chitral, Ghanche, Mirpur and Bhimber.

The NDMA separately warned of a heightened risk of GLOFs and flash floods in northern regions due to rapidly melting glaciers and rising temperatures. Areas identified as particularly vulnerable include Hunza, Nagar, Ghanche, Skardu, Chitral, Diamer and Dera Ghazi Khan.

The authority said



CHINA: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Masood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with founder of Tang Chinese Education.

Qila Saifullah Assault Case: Main Suspects Arrested Within 24 Hours Following Balochistan CM's Orders

NEWS DESK: The main suspects involved in the alleged sexual assault and torture of a young man in Qila Saifullah have been arrested within 24 hours after the Chief Minister of Balochistan ordered immediate action against those responsible.

The development was confirmed by Shahid Rind, spokesperson for the Balochistan government, who said the provincial administration took swift notice of the incident and directed law enforcement agencies to apprehend the accused without delay.

"The Chief Minister ordered the arrest of the culprits within 24 hours after taking notice of the assault and torture incident.



Acting on these directives, the principal suspects have now been taken into custody," Rind said.

He emphasized that the provincial government is committed to ensuring justice for the victim and his family. "Those involved in such a heinous crime will be brought to justice."

There will be no leniency for individuals accused of crimes involving sexual violence and abuse," he added. Expressing solidarity with the affected family, Rind stated that the Government of Balochistan shares their grief and stands

CM Sarfraz Bugti outlines education, healthcare, governance and security reforms after the approval of the Balochistan Budget 2026-27

Qasem Shah, Ali Hamze: QUETTA: Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Sunday said the approval of the Balochistan Budget 2026-27 reflects the provincial government's commitment to improving education, healthcare, governance and public services while continuing efforts to strengthen security across the province.

Addressing the concluding session of the Balochistan Assembly, Bugti said his government had focused on restoring public confidence through merit-based recruitment, institutional reforms and improved service delivery.

The chief minister said nearly 15,000 of the province's 15,370 schools are now operational, while over 14,000 teachers have been recruited on merit. He added that more than 3,200 schools have been rehabilitated and around



720,000 children enrolled. According to Bugti, the number of out-of-school children has declined by 14%, youth literacy has increased from 49% to 60%, and school dropout rates have also improved. Highlighting developments in the health sector, he said more than 2,800 healthcare workers were recruited and 519 doctors promoted. He added that 164 Basic

Health Units have become fully functional, while medicine availability has increased significantly. Bugti also said no new polio case has been reported in Balochistan since November 2024 and vaccination coverage has improved. On governance reforms, the chief minister said attendance in government offices has increased substantially,

the average time to process official files has fallen from 92 days to 13 days, and development spending reached full utilization during the fiscal year. Looking ahead, Bugti announced several projects under the Balochistan Budget 2026-27, including the proposed Quetta People's Train connecting Sarlah and Kuchlak, expansion of fibre-optic



connectivity, solar energy projects for remote areas, new Union Council offices and wider telemedicine services. He also announced a scholarship programme for girls from Balochistan will begin on July 1. Speaking on security, Bugti said the government remains open to dialogue with political groups that accept the Constitution of Pakistan but ruled out negotiations with militant organisations.

He also announced higher compensation packages for the families of martyred security personnel and civilian victims, along with a 10% increase for personnel serving in specialised counter-terrorism units. The chief minister said the government's priority remains sustainable development, improved governance and lasting peace across Balochistan.

Irrigation Officials Review Water Distribution in Naseerabad, Direct Fair Supply to Tail-End Farmers

NASEERABAD: Superintendent Engineer Irrigation Circle Naseerabad Mudassar Zafar Khoso conducted an extensive inspection of Temple Branch Canal and several associated minors, including RD-73, RD-64, RD-54, and RD-34, to review the ongoing agricultural water distribution process and ensure equitable supply to farmers.

During the visit, the superintendent engineer instructed concerned officials to guarantee that farmers located at the tail-end of the Temple Branch receive their allocated share of irrigation water without discrimination. He emphasized that any negligence or delay in water delivery would not be tolerated. The inspection team received a detailed briefing on water flow

conditions and distribution mechanisms from Sub-Divisional Officer Syed Amjad Shah and engineers Intiaz Ali Khoso and Waseem Ahmed Behrani, who outlined the current status of irrigation operations across the command area. Speaking on the occasion, Mudassar Zafar

Khoso stressed that all engineers and field staff must perform their duties with honesty, dedication, and a strong sense of responsibility. He directed officials to further strengthen monitoring mechanisms to ensure fair and transparent water distribution from the head of the canal system to its tail-end reaches. He noted that effective supervision is essential to prevent shortages and ensure that farmers do not face difficulties during the irrigation season. The irrigation department, he added, remains committed to promoting water management practices, strengthen oversight, and ensure the fair distribution of water resources throughout Naseerabad's agricultural zones.

Superintendent Engineer Mudassar Zafar Khoso inspects Temple Branch Canal and associated minors. He directed that effective supervision is essential to prevent shortages and ensure that farmers do not face difficulties during the irrigation season. The irrigation department, he added, remains committed to promoting water management practices, strengthen oversight, and ensure the fair distribution of water resources throughout Naseerabad's agricultural zones.

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Balochistan Seeks Fair Water Share from Indus River as Irrigation Officials Review Sukkur Barrage Operations

SUKKUR: Superintendent Engineer of the Irrigation Circle Naseerabad, Mudassar Zafar Khoso, accompanied by Executive Engineer Kirrithar Canal Ghulam Muhammad Badini, visited Sukkur Barrage to review water

distribution and ongoing development projects related to irrigation infrastructure. During the visit, SE Irrigation Sindh Iftikhar Ahmed Lango briefed the delegation on agricultural water distribution, canal operations, and development activities currently underway at the barrage.

Senior officials from the Sindh Irrigation Department were also present on the occasion. Speaking to officials during the visit, in Usta Muhammad, Jaffarabad, and several other agricultural regions, while some areas are also facing difficulties in accessing drinking water. The irrigation official noted that the visit was conducted on the directives of Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Muhammad Saqib Umrani and Secretary Irrigation Saha Idris Rehman Baloch to assess water availability in Sindh's canal network and review water distribution mechanisms.

According to Khoso, water is currently flowing through Sindh's irrigation system; however, the quantity reaching Balochistan from the Indus River remains insufficient. He remarked that the water being supplied to the province is far below its actual requirements, "creating serious challenges for agriculture and local communities."

He urged Sindh irrigation authorities to ensure the immediate release of 2,400 cusecs of water into the Kirrithar Canal and called for the timely completion of development work at Sukkur Barrage to improve water delivery to downstream regions.



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Sibi Municipal Committee Accelerates Rainwater Drainage Operations Across City Following Heavy Rainfall

SIBI: Following recent rainfall in the city, the Municipal Committee Sibi has launched an extensive rainwater drainage operation across various neighborhoods and major roads to restore normal conditions and facilitate smooth public movement.

The operation is being carried out under the special directives of Commissioner Sibi Division, Ghulam Faiz and Deputy Commissioner Sibi Major (R) Ilyas Kabzai, with instructions from Chairman Municipal Committee Sardar Muhammad Khan Khajak and supervision of the Municipal Committee Sibi. The objective of the operation is to ensure the rapid removal of stagnant water, minimize inconvenience for residents, and maintain the smooth flow of traffic throughout the city. According to officials, the drainage campaign is aimed at addressing post-rainfall challenges, preventing prolonged water logging, and restoring normal civic activities as quickly as possible. District administration and municipal authorities are continuously monitoring the progress of the operation to ensure effective drainage in all affected areas. Officials stated that every available resource is being utilized to ensure the rapid removal of stagnant water and to provide maximum relief to citizens. Authorities emphasized that public convenience remains a top priority and assured residents that rainwater drainage efforts will continue until all affected roads, streets, and low-lying areas are cleared.

District Administration Barkhan Launches Anti-Encroachment Drive, Demolishes Illegal Structures on Government Land

BARKHAN: Acting on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Saeed-ur-Rehman Kakar, the district administration carried out a major anti-encroachment operation in Barkhan, targeting illegal structures built on government land. The operation was supervised by Assistant Commissioner Barkhan Ehsanuddin Kakar and Naib Tehsildar Rakhi Karim Baksh. During the action, several illegally constructed shops and residential buildings occupying state-owned land were demolished. The administration further stated that its campaign to protect public assets, eliminate encroachments, and uphold the rule of law will continue without interruption to ensure the proper use and preservation of government land.

Officials warned that strict legal action will be taken against anyone found violating land and property regulations in the future. The operation was supervised by Assistant Commissioner Barkhan Ehsanuddin Kakar and Naib Tehsildar Rakhi Karim Baksh. During the action, several illegally constructed shops and residential buildings occupying state-owned land were demolished. The administration further stated that its campaign to protect public assets, eliminate encroachments, and uphold the rule of law will continue without interruption to ensure the proper use and preservation of government land.

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KESCO and FIA Crack Down on Power Theft in Quetta, Illegal Transformer Recovered During Midnight Operation

QUETTA: In a major operation against electricity theft, teams from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Task Force and Quetta Electric Supply Company (KESCO) conducted a joint raid in the Western Bypass Khali area of Quetta, uncovering a sophisticated power theft network linked to a private water supply scheme.

The operation was carried out at approximately 1.00 a.m. on the special directives of KESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shaoukat Ali Jogezei. The raid was conducted jointly by the FIA Task Force and teams

from KESCO's Sariab Operation Division under the jurisdiction of KESCO CEO Engineer Shaoukat Ali Jogezei. According to officials, a private water supply scheme was found illegally drawing electricity directly from 11 kV jumpers to operate a water bore without authorization. Further investigation revealed that another bore was also receiving power through 50 kVA transformer that had been secretly buried underground to avoid detection. During the operation, the joint teams carried out excavation work at site and successfully recovered the concealed transformer. Authorities confirmed that the illegal setup was being used to obtain electricity unlawfully and bypass official metering and billing systems. A suspect involved in the electricity theft operation was arrested on the spot and handed over to the FIA for further legal proceedings. Commenting on the successful action, KESCO CEO Engineer Shaoukat Ali Jogezei praised the efforts of the FIA Task Force and the Sariab Operation Division teams. He stated that anti-power theft operations would continue without interruption until electricity theft is completely eliminated. He directed all KESCO operation circles to work closely with FIA Task Force teams and carry out indiscriminate actions against power thieves in their respective jurisdictions. The objective, he said, is to ensure strict legal action against offenders while improving the overall performance and financial stability of the power utility. Engineer Jogezei affirmed KESCO's commitment to protecting national resources and eradicating electricity theft, emphasizing that all available measures will continue to be utilized to curb power losses and strengthen the power distribution system. FIA Task Force and KESCO conduct joint anti-power theft raid in Quetta. Illegal electricity supply detected at a private water supply scheme. Power allegedly stolen directly from 11 kV jumpers. Hidden 50 kVA transformer recovered during excavation. Suspect arrested and handed over to FIA for legal action. KESCO CEO Shaoukat Ali Jogezei orders continued crackdown on power theft. Authorities pledge strict action to protect national resources and reduce power losses.

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ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TESTS. All candidates who have submitted their applications against vacant post under KESCO Basis for a period of Six (06) Months in CWP/PAH Department advertised in News Paper vide PRO No. 512518-05-2025 are hereby informed that the shortlisted candidates name & Roll number has been displayed on the noticeboard of Chief Engineer CWP/PAH Department, Hassanabad Zone CWP/PAH complex Mir Jaffer Khan Jassak road near Ayub Stadium Quetta. All candidates are directed to check their name and serial number on the noticeboard against the following posts, written words will be held at CWP/PAH Complex (12th Floor) Mir Jaffer Khan Jassak road near Ayub Stadium Quetta.

S.No	Non-reservation of Posts	Time	Test Date
1	CAO Operator BPS-18	02:00 PM	29-06-2026
Non-reservation of Posts & BPS			
S.No	Non-reservation of Posts & BPS	Time	Test Date
1	Assistant Engineer Structures BPS-18		
2	Land Surveyor BPS-15		
3	Quantity Surveyor BPS-15	04:00 PM	29-06-2026
4	Topographic Surveyor BPS-11		

Note: All the shortlisted candidates are directed to: Bring your original CNIC. Reach the venue at least 30 minutes before the test time. Late candidates are not allowed to test. Mobile phones, electronic devices, and unauthorized gadgets are strictly prohibited. Only shortlisted candidates are allowed to written test.

PRO No. 56092-06-2026

CHEF ENGINEER CWP/PAH DEPARTMENT, HASSANABAD ZONE

BUDGET 2026-27 : NA panel questions climate levy

NEWS DESK: A parliamentary committee on Saturday raised concerns over the proposed carbon levy amid growing climate challenges, warned that reduced duties on scrap could create environmental risks and approved an increase in Islamabad's token tax that is likely to affect middle-class vehicle owners.

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue reviewed the National Tariff Policy 2025-30 in detail, focusing on the phased reduction in import duties. Lawmakers asked tax authorities to redraft the proposed climate levy, stressing that it must be backed by a clear and defined objective.

Commerce Secretary Jawad Paul briefed the committee, while Commerce Minister Iftikhar Kamal remained absent. Since last year, the committee, chaired by MNA Naveed Qamar, has undertaken a clause-by-clause review of the Finance Bill. Last year, it held 12 meetings to review the legislation. The committee took up the petroleum levy and the newly introduced climate support levy amid concerns over Pakistan's commitments



under the IMF's climate resilience framework. Members debated collection of the carbon support levy from citizens while criticising the absence of concrete climate projects. Finance Secretary Imdad Ullah Bosal informed the committee

that an agreement had been signed with the IMF on climate resilience. Committee chairman Mr Qamar, however, criticised the government for collecting levies without initiating any concrete projects, warning that such prac-

tices would damage Pakistan's image. "You take money from the IMF, impose levies, but start no projects," he remarked. Officials briefed the committee on measures taken under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility programme.

Mr Qamar countered that he had gradually lost the government's approach amounted to "lip service" on climate, with policies running contrary to stated commitments. "It is not acceptable that money comes from the IMF and is simply

consumed without projects. This is a complete failure," he said, pressing officials to present at least one climate-related initiative. PPP lawmaker Hina Rabbani Khar recalled that Pakistan was once recognised globally as a

leader in climate support but had gradually lost that position. She urged the government to reclaim that standing, stressing that Pakistan remained among the countries most vulnerable to environmental impacts. The committee fur-

ther scrutinised the proposed amendments to the Petroleum Products (Petroleum Levy Ordinance, 1961, with particular focus on strengthening enforcement against defaulting oil marketing companies.

Mr Qamar observed that oil marketing companies merely acted as collection agents for government levies and, therefore, could not be permitted to retain public funds.

Expressing serious concern over delays in the recovery of petroleum levies,

he directed the government to introduce a strict inbuilt enforcement mechanism providing for suspension of product supplies to any defaulting oil marketing company after 30 days of non-payment,

while eliminating discretionary extensions or instalment facilities that weakened compliance.

The chairman directed the Petroleum Division to redraft the proposed legislative amendments to explicitly eliminate instalment powers for defaulting oil marketing companies and institute immediate supply suspensions.

Middle East conflict fails to deter Gulf job exodus

NEWS DESK: Despite the war in the Gulf region, Pakistani workers continued to leave for jobs in countries directly affected by the conflict, particularly during March.

Official data showed that during January-May, over 300,000 Pakistanis found employment in Middle Eastern states led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The largest number of Pakistani workers left for Saudi Arabia, with around 50,000 emigrated to the UAE, one of the countries most affected by the war.

According to data released by the Bureau of Emigration and Over-

seas Employment, 143,586 Pakistanis left for Saudi Arabia during the five-month period, the highest number for any single destination country. Saudi Arabia was also drawn into the conflict and reportedly faced multiple attacks by Iran targeting American facilities in the kingdom.

Although the war, which began on Feb 28, ended after about a month following a ceasefire, intermittent strikes by the US and Israel, as well as retaliatory attacks by Iran, continued to fuel uncertainty across the region.

Concerns were further heightened by disruptions to shipping through the Strait of

Hormuz and heightened maritime tensions.

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Despite these developments, Pakistanis continued to seek employment opportunities in Gulf countries.

The UAE remained a key destination. Dubai, which was considered among the potential targets during the conflict, received thousands of Pakistani workers during the first five months of 2026. Total emigration to the UAE during the period stood at around 50,000. During the conflict in March, hundreds of Pakistanis were also

seen queuing outside the Dubai consulate in Karachi to obtain visas.

Bahrain and Qatar, which were also considered vulnerable during the conflict, continued to attract Pakistani workers.

The data showed that about 25,500 Pakistanis left for Qatar, while 10,129 migrated to Bahrain during January-May.

The continued outflow of workers may have helped sustain remittance inflows, which had earlier been expected to weaken. Remittances reached a record \$4.2 billion in May, while total inflows by the end of FY26 are expected to exceed the \$40bn target.

Climate action takes a backseat in federal budget FY27

NEWS DESK: Climate allocations in the next fiscal year's federal budget again fall short of putting Pakistan on a path towards a climate-smart future and inclusive growth despite the immediate risks it poses to the country.

Except for disaster management finance, allocations in almost all climate categories have decreased compared to the outgoing financial year. The mitigation funds have been slashed from Rs124 billion, while adaptation money has been slashed from Rs85bn to Rs70bn.

The "green component" of subsidies also experienced budget cuts, with the energy sector's allocation declining to Rs423 billion from Rs529 billion. Similarly, the food, industry, transport, and agriculture sectors also faced cuts in the proposed budget presented by the government on June 12.

Giovanni Maurice Pradina, who is a policy adviser at global NGO Germa-nwatch, questioned this approach.

"Given the country's exposure to floods and heat waves, adaptation and resilience should receive at least as much attention as mitigation," he said, adding it was equally

important to prepare developing countries' budgets and fiscal space for climate action, as it was to push for multilateral (global) solutions.

Overall, the climate budget for the next year has shrunk except for the disaster spending. In addition to the newly introduced disaster tagging, the government earmarked Rs1.9bn under the head of reconstruction, while re-covery and rehabilitation funds decreased from Rs603 billion to Rs124 billion, while adaptation money has been slashed from Rs85bn to Rs70bn.

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ports should have been reflected in the fiscal allocations, but there seems to be a general disregard for this looming disaster. The one good thing that came out of this budget is no new taxes on renewables, but energy expert Dr Khalid Waleed told Dawn that pre-budget speculations that the government would tax solar and batteries bumped the prices up nonetheless.

Increase in revenue The climate spending has decreased, but revenues are on the rise. The government aims to collect Rs20bn in the FY adoption levy, a 10pc increase, and Rs50bn in the Climate Support Levy to control emissions.



'Exploitative' telecom bill deferred

NEWS DESK: The much-touted bill aimed at advancing fibreisation across the country has run into trouble after the Senate Standing Committee on IT and Telecom deferred it, while criticism on social media has targeted the IT minister and sections of the telecom sector over what critics describe as an "exploitative law". Concerns about the bill have intensified due to the timing of the government's attempt to secure its passage through both houses of parliament.

The bill was approved by the National Assembly on June 11, a day before the presentation of the federal budget 2026-27, and was presented in the Senate on June 15.

Following objections from PTI senators who demanded that the proposed legislation be referred to the relevant standing committee, Senate Standing Committee on IT and

Telecom Chairperson Senator Palwasha Khan convened a meeting the next day, June 16.

Lawmakers reject clause letting telcos use public land without fee, flag Rs50m penalty on state agencies. Sherry Rehman assured the house that the bill would be returned by the committee within two days.

No PTI senator attended the meeting, while PPP's senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhatti and PML-N senators Dr Afhan Ullah Khan and Sadia Abbasi were present. IT Minister Shaza Fatima and IT Secretary Zahir Khan told the committee that the amendments were intended to accelerate fibre penetration and support the expansion of internet infrastructure across the country.

However, after objections from PTI senators from the PPP and PML-N deferred the measure, questioning why "telco towers and related equipment" had been included when the pro-

posal primarily concerned the right of way (ROW) for fibreisation.

Talking to Dawn, Senator Palwasha Khan said the amendment would allow telcos to install towers on public land free of charge. She said that if a land-owning agency disallowed a company from erecting a tower to a public park or green belt, it could face a fine of up to Rs50 million.

"We will amend the bill at the last delete the word 'towers' from it. The bill will go to the Senate and after that it will be moved to the National Assembly again," she said. "We have to protect the rights of the general public."

The situation has also placed the NA Standing Committee on IT in an embarrassing position, as it approved the legislation on Feb 12, with social media users alleging massive kickbacks to accommodate telco tower companies.

PPP MNA Sharmila Farooqui told Dawn she had strong reservations

about earlier versions of the bill.

She recalled that during a committee meeting on Jan 19, she argued that the PPP's legislative committee should be taken on board regarding the draft and suggested that it be discussed with Syed Naveed Qamar.

Responding to Dawar's questions, committee chairman Syed Aminul Haque said the bill had been deferred three times before amendments were incorporated. He said it was eventually approved after a consensus between members of the PML-N and PPP.

He acknowledged that the intention of 'towers' alongside provisions relating to optical fibre had been overlooked by members during the final sitting.

Telecom infrastructure In recent years, telcos have made a strategic shift towards infrastructures sharing following the implementation of the Passive Telecom Infrastructure Policy.

Auto financing hits record Rs369b

NEWS DESK: The auto sector in Pakistan is quickly returning to its previous upward trend as financing surged to an all-time high of Rs369 billion in May 2026, surpassing the previous record of Rs368 billion reached in June 2022, as lower borrowing costs, aggressive promotional offers by assemblers and banker demand continued to fuel vehicle purchases.

According to data from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), outstanding automobile loans rose to Rs369.12 billion at the end of May, registering a 36% year-on-year increase and a 3% rise from April's Rs359.5 billion. The milestone marks the 18th consecutive month of growth in auto financing, highlighting the sector's sustained recovery after several years of weak demand.

Research house Tomte Securities said the recovery after several years of weak demand. Research house Tomte Securities said the recovery after several years of weak demand.



finance. The trend is expected to continue supporting passenger car sales, particularly in higher-priced segments where financing plays a crucial role. The sharp rise in financing comes despite a 100-basis-point increase in the SBP policy rate to 11.5% in April. Market participants said buyers remain comfortable with prevailing lending rates, as they have seen worse rates in recent past, especially compared with the exceptionally high

borrowing costs over the past two years. Auto trader Sagar Shaikh said a significant backlog of replacement demand had accumulated over the last five to six years as consumers delayed upgrading vehicles amid economic uncertainty, high inflation and elevated financing costs.

"People were holding on to their existing vehicles for longer periods. Normally, many consumers replace their cars every two to three

years, but that cycle was disrupted after Covid-19 and the subsequent economic slowdown," he said. According to Shaikh, the release of this pent-up demand has coincided with lower mark-up rates and an increasing number of financing incentives offered by assemblers and banks. These include free registration, complimentary first-year insurance, tracking devices and other promotional packages aimed at attracting customers.

New Zealand eye series-levelling win against England

NEWS DESK: Kyle Root and Harry Brook (58) kept New Zealand at bay before New Zealand first-innings bowling hero Matt Henry ended the Yorkshire duo's entertaining stand of 97. Jameson returned to have James Rew, one of three England debutants at the Oval, lbw on review shortly before stumps as he ended the day with fine figures of 3-37 in 14 overs.

The situation was tailor-made for the kind of counter-attacking innings associated with regular England captain Ben Stokes.

But all-rounder Stokes, who made 95 for county side Durham on Saturday, is missing from this match after being dropped for breaking a team's curfew following England's 115-run win in the first Test at Lord's a fortnight ago.

Stokes will reportedly return for next week's series finale at Trent Bridge but Root will have debutant Jordan Cox for company at the start of



Sunday's play in south London as England try to stop New Zealand from levelling this three-match series at 1-1. The fourth over of England's chase saw Emilio Gay (11) clip Jameson to midwicket and four balls later the

paceman had No 3 Jacob Bethell plumb lbw for a duck. Root, the England captain before Stokes took over four years ago, needed just two runs to join Tendulkar in an exclusive club and a quick single off

Henry took him to 14,000 Test runs. The 35-year-old, somewhat shyly given he was two not out, raised his bat as the Oval crowd applauded his achievement. Tendulkar's 15,921 runs from 200

Smith for a superb legside six and went down the pitch to drive Jameson for four during a 33-ball fifty featuring 46 runs -- 10 fours and a six -- in boundaries.

Brook, however, could only manage seven more runs from his next 21 deliveries as the Black Caps regained control in the field and he eventually edged Henry, who had taken five wickets in England's first innings, to slip.

Root, who over-turned being given out lbw on 44, went to his fifty by elegantly guiding Jameson to the third man rope for an eighth four in 81 balls faced.

Earlier New Zealand were dismissed for 362 in their second innings after resuming on 252-3. Henry Nicholls, in for Zealand great Kane Williamson, added just two runs to his overnight 119, but Daryl Mitchell kept the runs coming with 68 after being dropped off Saturday's first ball.

Yamal scores on injury return as Spain thrash Saudi Arabia

NEWS DESK: Lamine Yamal's return sparked Spain's World Cup into life as the European champions ran riot to beat Saudi Arabia 4-0 in Atlanta.

Making his first start in two months after a hamstring injury, Yamal ended La Roja's long wait for a World Cup goal just 10 minutes in.

Mikel Oyarzabal then struck twice to put Luis de la Fuente's men 3-0 up inside 24 minutes.

De la Fuente's careful management of the net and fittingly Yamal made the breakthrough.

Oyarzabal found space in behind the Saudi defence and his low cross picked out the 18-year-old to slot in at the back post.

The Saudis held Uruguay 1-1 in their opening game but there was little evidence to raise the level of their

domestic league has aided the national team. Coach Georgios Donis looked particularly irked that two of Spain's goals came from corners.

Oyarzabal pounced on Aymeric Laporte's flick on to give the 2010 winners the breathing space they craved.

Just three minutes later, the Real Sociedad forward volleyed home from Dani Olmo's header for his 14th international goal in his last 13 caps.

Oyarzabal was inches away from a first half hat-trick when his audacious effort with the outside of his foot from a narrow angle came back off the crossbar.

But with the job done by half-time, De la Fuente could afford the

Krishna, Jaiswal power India to ODI sweep against Afghanistan

NEWS DESK: Pace bowler Prasidh Krishna's 5-23 and an unbeaten 110 by Yashasvi Jaiswal powered India to a nine-wicket win over Afghanistan in the third One-day International and sweep the series 3-0 on Saturday.

Krishna registered his first five-wicket haul in ODI cricket to help bowl out Afghanistan for 218 in 44.2 overs despite skipper Hasmatullah Shahidi's 102 in Chennai.

The left-handed Jaiswal and Rohit Sharma then put on 170 for the first wicket and the hosts romped home in 28.4 overs.

Jaiswal raised his second ODI ton with a six and put another one over the fence to take India to victory after senior partner Rohit departed on 79 off 69 balls.

The series — the first bilateral ODI fixture between the two nations — kickedstart the road to the 2027

ODI World Cup in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Rohit Darwishi Rasooli was next out for one before Shahidi and Azmatullah Omarzai, who made 50, put on 105 for the fifth wicket to thwart the opposition bowling. It was only temporary, though, as Prince Yadav broke through to reach his hundred after the batters' ninth ODI half-century.

Mohammad Nabi made 21 in another stand with Shahidi before wickets tumbled.

Shahidi suffered cramps in hot and humid Chennai and limped towards the back end of his innings but reached his hundred with a four off Washington Sundar.

The captain soon fell to Krishna, who took his fifth to wrap up the innings.

Jaiswal and Rohit came out and hit regular boundaries to pummel the opposition attack and put India on course.



Germany reach World Cup last 32

NEWS DESK: Germany reached the World Cup knockout phase for the first time since 2014 with a dramatic come-from-behind 2-1 victory over Ivory Coast on Saturday.

Substitute Deniz Undav scored twice, including the crucial goal four minutes into injury time, triggering a massive roar from the overwhelmingly pro-German crowd of 43,000 in Toronto.

Germany had not advanced from the group stage since winning the 2014 tournament in Brazil, and coach Julian Nagelsmann had been under huge pressure to make that breakthrough.

A first-half goal by Frank Kessie gave the Ivorians a 30th-minute lead.

Kessie turned in from close range following strong work by teenage Ivorian phenomenon Yan Diomande, who is in the sights of some of Europe's top clubs, including Liverpool.



The Germans thought they had found the net twice in the first half.

Nathaniel Brown's corner in the 21st minute was knocked into the goal by Aleksandar Pavlovic, but Paraguayan referee Juan Gabriel Benitez immediately called it back -- charging Pavlovic with fouling Ivorian goalkeeper Yahia Fofana.

Then, in the 38th minute, German forward Kai Havertz had the ball in

NEWS DESK: Nahida Akter led Shornakker inspired Bangladesh to a remarkable 23-run victory against Pakistan in their ICC Women's T20 World Cup Group 1 match here at The Rose Bowl on Saturday.

Shorna scored an unbeaten 39 off 22 balls, lifting Bangladesh from 48-4 to 123-6.

In the chase, Pakistan's 49-0 courtesy Muneeba Ali (25) and Gull Feroza (23) — in a dramatic collapse became 84-8 by the time Nahida finished her spell of three wickets for 18.

Nahida's team-mate Shanida Akter Meghla bagged three wickets for 21.

Pakistan were eventually restricted to 100-8, slipping to their third loss in as many outings in the global event. Earlier, Fatima Sana led side lost their tournament opener to arch-rivals India by 64 runs in Birmingham and then suffered a two-wicket defeat at the hands of South Africa at the same venue.

Bangladesh, meanwhile, boosted their semi-final hopes as they moved up to the top spot with two wins in

three games, achieving two victories in a single T20 World Cup for the first time since the 2014 edition.

THIRD CONSECUTIVE WIN FOR AUSTRALIA

Earlier on Saturday, Australia earned a third convincing win at the event when they crushed the Netherlands by 98 runs at the same venue.

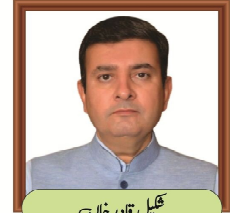
Australia reached 200 in the World Cup for the first time and equalled the highest-ever tournament total, 219-6. The Netherlands in the chase were restricted to 121-3.

Australian opener Beth Mooney retired on 74 off 42 balls with a stiff back but recovered later to go on to chase down 220 with 28 balls for the opening wicket with Georgia Voll (17) and 101 off 55 with Ash Gardner (58), who returned from an ankle sprain Georgia Wareham swept Australia past 200 with 41 off 18.

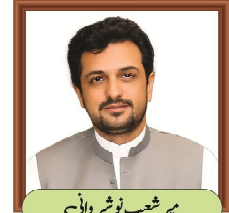
The Netherlands, appearing in their first World Cup, were never going to chase down 220 but captain Babette de Leede and Sterre Kalis combined for 96 from 91 balls from the fourth over to the 19th. Kalis, over to the 19th, Kalis, dropped on 21 and 40,



عوام دوست بجٹ 2026-27
خوشحال بلوچستان ... عزم عالیہ
وزیر اعلیٰ بلوچستان میر سرفراز بگٹی کی قیادت میں
مالی شفافیت، عوامی خدمت اور ترقی کے ثمرات پر بھرپور توجہ دینے کا عزم



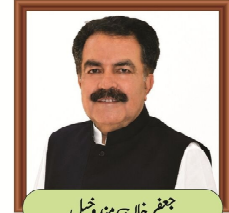
کھلیں قادر خاں
چیف سیکریٹری بلوچستان



میر شعیب نوشیر وانی
وزیر خزانہ بلوچستان



میر سرفراز بگٹی
وزیر اعلیٰ بلوچستان



جعفر خان مندھیل
گورنر بلوچستان

کوئٹہ، 22 جون (پریس ریلی)۔ وزیر اعلیٰ بلوچستان میر سرفراز بگٹی نے اپنے دور حکومت کے سب سے بڑے کاموں میں سے ایک کے طور پر بجٹ 2026-27 کی منظوری سے خوشی کا اظہار کیا ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ یہ بجٹ بلوچستان کے عوام کی بہبود اور ترقی کے لیے تیار کیا گیا ہے۔

بجٹ 2026-27 کی منظوری کے موقع پر وزیر خزانہ بلوچستان میر شعیب نوشیر وانی نے کہا کہ یہ بجٹ بلوچستان کے عوام کی بہبود اور ترقی کے لیے تیار کیا گیا ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ یہ بجٹ بلوچستان کے عوام کی بہبود اور ترقی کے لیے تیار کیا گیا ہے۔

بجٹ 2026-27 کی منظوری کے موقع پر وزیر اعلیٰ بلوچستان میر سرفراز بگٹی نے کہا کہ یہ بجٹ بلوچستان کے عوام کی بہبود اور ترقی کے لیے تیار کیا گیا ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ یہ بجٹ بلوچستان کے عوام کی بہبود اور ترقی کے لیے تیار کیا گیا ہے۔

بجٹ 2026-27 کی منظوری کے موقع پر گورنر بلوچستان جعفر خان مندھیل نے کہا کہ یہ بجٹ بلوچستان کے عوام کی بہبود اور ترقی کے لیے تیار کیا گیا ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ یہ بجٹ بلوچستان کے عوام کی بہبود اور ترقی کے لیے تیار کیا گیا ہے۔

بلوچستان بجٹ 2026-27
ترقی، مالی نظم و ضبط اور عوامی خوشحالی کی جانب ایک میٹھی اور ترقی دہانہ

رہنما: میر سرفراز بگٹی

BUDGET AT A GLANCE 2026-27		(Rs in Million)	
Particulars	Budget Estimates 2025-26	Revised Estimates 2025-26	Budget Estimates 2026-27
A. REVENUE RECEIPTS	932,089,486	876,423,653	1,019,063,081
RECEIPTS FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	801,665,848	786,210,343	834,446,887
Divisible Pool	713,621,874	713,621,874	771,390,094
Straight Transfers	29,543,974	22,297,199	23,743,440
Non-Development Grants	18,000,000	13,000,000	5,000,000
Development Grants	40,500,000	37,291,270	34,313,353
PROVINCIAL OWN RECEIPTS	124,879,288	82,468,201	170,993,266
Provincial Tax Receipts	55,843,894	48,734,091	72,410,000
Provincial Non Tax Receipts	44,435,394	33,366,421	63,083,266
Provincial Non Tax Receipts (Lease Extension Bloats)	24,600,000	367,688	34,000,000
FOREIGN PROJECT ASSISTANCE (FPA) - GRANTS	5,514,350	7,745,109	14,492,928
B. CAPITAL RECEIPTS	66,013,277	10,301,741	85,284,208
Recoveries of Loans, Advances/Investments	33,736,277	32,200	38,750,406
Foreign Project Assistance - Loan	32,277,000	10,269,541	16,533,802
Projects Financing	0.000	0.000	30,000,000
C. STATE TRADING - FOOD	4,205,401	0.000	0.000
State Trading (Revenue & Capital)	4,205,401	0.000	0.000
D. CURRENT REVENUE EXPENDITURE	614,156,765	607,652,859	771,426,719
General Public Service	155,148,706	132,865,820	270,531,502
Public Order and Safety Affairs	113,500,275	98,559,021	107,992,025
Economic Affairs	65,998,854	92,841,789	81,832,604
Environment Protection	862,087	699,156	1,018,282
Housing and Community Amenities	54,304,283	52,160,600	55,057,767
Health	59,732,694	65,739,232	73,991,994
Recreation, Culture and Religion	8,282,649	10,508,319	8,548,002
Education Affairs and Services	137,547,034	125,152,590	157,288,592
Social Protection	18,780,182	29,106,332	15,135,950
E. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - NON FOOD	22,522,864	22,326,811	22,617,116
Loans and Advances	9,522,864	9,261,811	9,217,116
Principal Repayment of Debt	9,522,864	9,261,811	9,217,116
Investments	13,000,000	13,065,000	13,400,000
Pension & Others	3,196,500	0.000	3,765,000
State Trading (Food)	3,196,500	0.000	3,765,000
TOTAL NON-DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE	639,876,129	629,959,670	797,808,835
G. DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE	336,576,045	352,601,053	291,550,187
Public Sector Development Program	249,450,290	287,321,174	206,609,290
Foreign Project Assistance	30,148,868	17,924,473	40,383,600
Federal Funded Projects (outside PSDP)	56,976,887	47,355,406	44,557,297
TOTAL (D + E + F + G)	976,452,174	982,560,723	1,089,359,022
TOTAL (A+B+C)	1,002,278,163	886,725,394	1,104,317,289
Cash Carry Over (Projects under Federal Grants)	26,000,000		30,610,000
Total Receipts & Cash Carry Over	1,028,278,163		1,134,927,289
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	51,825,990		45,568,267