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Editor: Asim Khan.

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Email address: dquettavoice@gmail.com

Website: www.quettavoice.com

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QUETTA VOICE

CM Balochistan Condemns Mashkail Attack as Shahid Rind Confirms Five Punjab Workers Killed

NEWS DESK:

QUETTA: Balochistan government spokesperson Shahid Rind has confirmed that five laborers from Punjab were killed after unidentified armed men opened fire on shops in the Mashkail area of Washuk district on Sunday.

According to Shahid Rind, the victims were working at local shops in Mashkail when the attackers targeted them with indiscriminate gunfire. All five workers died at the scene before the assailants fled.

Deputy Commissioner Washuk Majid Sarparah said the deceased belonged to different districts of Punjab and had been employed in the area for work. Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti strongly condemned the attack, expressing deep sorrow over the loss of innocent lives. He extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and

The chief minister reaffirmed that the perpetrators would be brought to justice and that no effort would be spared to protect the lives of citizens and maintain peace in the province.

Police and security forces reached the scene shortly after the attack, shifted the bodies to a hospital, and launched a large-scale search operation to track down the attackers.

Following legal formalities and post-mortem examinations, the bodies were dispatched to their hometowns.

Officials said investigations are underway, with law enforcement agencies collecting forensic evidence and pursuing multiple leads to identify and apprehend those involved.

Security has also been tightened across the area as the search operation continues. The attack has once again highlighted security challenges in parts of Balochistan, where authorities say



directed law enforcement agencies to ensure the immediate arrest of those responsible.

counterterrorism operations will continue until those responsible are brought to justice.



Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Saturday visited Babri village in the Hanna Urak area to review the progress of Operation Shabaan

CM Balochistan Reviews Operation Shabaan in Hanna Urak

ALI HAMZA:

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Saturday visited Babri village in the Hanna Urak area to review the progress of Operation Shabaan, an ongoing counterterrorism operation aimed at eliminating terrorists and dismantling their support networks in the province.

During the visit, Mir Sarfraz Bugti met police officers and personnel actively participating in Operation Shabaan, commending their courage, professionalism, and unwavering dedication to protecting the people of

Balochistan. He praised the force for its resilience and commitment in the fight against terrorism.

The police personnel welcomed the chief minister's visit and chanted "Pakistan Zindabad," expressing their determination to continue defending the country's peace and sovereignty.

Speaking to the officers, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said the sacrifices made by Pakistan's security

forces in the war against terrorism are a source of pride for the entire nation.

He reiterated that operations against terrorists and their facilitators would continue

with full intensity until every militant threatening Balochistan's peace is eliminated.

"There will be no compromise on the writ of the state. Action against terrorists and their facilitators will continue until lasting peace is restored across Balochistan," the chief minister said.

Later, Mir Sarfraz Bugti visited the families of those martyred in the Hanna Urak terrorist attack, offered condolences, and assured them of the provincial government's full support.

He pledged that the fami-

lies of the martyrs would receive every possible assistance and official facilitation.

The chief minister emphasized that the sacrifices of the martyrs would never be forgotten and vowed that the campaign

against terrorism would continue without discrimination until sustainable peace is established throughout Balochistan.

He reaffirmed that the provincial government, together with law enforcement and security

agencies, remains fully committed to eradicating terrorism, protecting citizens, and ensuring long-term peace and stability across the province.

FC Balochistan Commanders Visit Families of Ziarat Police Martyrs, Reaffirm Unity Against Terrorism

QASEEM SHAH:

QUETTA: Senior commanders of the Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan (North) visited the homes of police personnel martyred in the recent Ziarat terrorist attack, reaffirming solidarity with the bereaved families and emphasizing the close coordination between Pakistan's security institutions in the fight against terrorism.

According to official sources, 27 police personnel were taken hostage during the assault. Despite captivity, they refused to compromise on national security or abandon their duty, ultimately embracing martyrdom. Their sacrifice has been hailed as an example of exceptional courage, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to Pakistan.

Officials said 18 policemen were taken hostage during the assault. Despite captivity, they refused to compromise on national security or abandon their duty, ultimately embracing martyrdom. Their sacrifice has been hailed as an example of exceptional courage, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to Pakistan.

As part of the outreach, the Commandant of FC Balochistan (North) and Wing Commanders visited the homes of the martyrs, met with their families, laid floral wreaths at their graves, offered Fatcha, and conveyed heartfelt condolences. The visits reflected the



Senior commanders of the Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan (North) visited the homes of police personnel martyred in the recent Ziarat

strong bond between Pakistan's police and paramilitary forces, reinforcing the message that all security institutions stand united in confronting terrorism and honoring

the sacrifices of fallen personnel.

Speaking during the visits, an official said the blood of the martyred policemen would never

be forgotten, adding that the nation and its security forces remain united in supporting the families of the fallen and continuing the fight against terrorism.

The initiative has been widely viewed as a powerful gesture of institutional solidarity, assuring the families of the Ziarat police martyrs that the sacrifices

of their loved ones will always be remembered and that efforts to eliminate terrorism in Balochistan will continue with renewed resolve.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan Recognised for Driving Governance Reforms in Balochistan

By Sheikh Abdul Raziq

QUETTA: The role of an efficient bureaucracy remains central to effective governance, particularly in provinces facing complex administrative and developmental challenges. In Balochistan, the recent recognition of Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, by the provincial cabinet and Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti during the provincial budget session has highlighted the significance of strong institutional leadership in advancing governance reforms.

Governance experts argue that while elected governments provide policy direction, successful implementation depends largely on a capable and professional civil service.

In Balochistan, where issues such as vast geography, infrastructure gaps, developmental disparities, and security concerns continue to pose challenges, an effective administrative framework is essential for sustainable progress.

Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, widely regarded as an experienced and competent civil servant, has played a pivotal role in enhancing interdepartmental coordination, strengthening administrative efficiency, and supporting the provincial government's reform agenda.

His tenure has co-



incided with renewed efforts by the Balochistan government to promote institutional reforms, fiscal discipline, transparency, and performance-based governance.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has consistently emphasized the importance of governance reforms, institu-

tional strengthening, and improved public service delivery.

Analysts believe that translating these policy objectives into tangible outcomes requires a bureaucracy capable of aligning administrative priorities with the government's development vision.

The formulation of

the provincial budget served as a key example of this collaborative governance model.

Modern budget-making extends beyond financial accounting and reflects a government's development priorities, fiscal management strategy, and long-term planning objectives.

Effective budget

preparation requires strong interdepartmental coordination, data-driven decision-making, and prudent allocation of resources.

The acknowledgment extended to Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan by both the provincial cabinet and the Chief Minister on the floor of the Balochistan

Assembly reflects a broader recognition of the critical role played by the civil service in ensuring policy implementation and institutional continuity.

Observers note that such recognition promotes a culture of merit, professionalism, and accountability within the public

sector, encouraging civil servants to maintain high standards of public service.

Balochistan's unique governance landscape demands administrative foresight, continuity, and strategic leadership.

Effective oversight of development projects, monitoring

mechanisms, departmental coordination, and accountability systems remains vital for achieving sustainable development goals across the province.

Experts maintain that institutional reforms are ultimately measured by their implementation. Strong institutions are built through consistent leadership.

professionalism, and efficient governance practices. Public officials who uphold these principles contribute significantly to strengthening government institutions and enhancing administrative performance.

The recognition accorded to Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan underscores the growing importance of a professional and responsive civil service in supporting Balochistan's development agenda.

It also sends a positive message throughout the bureaucracy that dedication, competence, and commitment to public service continue to be valued.

As Balochistan advances towards improved governance and sustainable development, the partnership between political leadership and an effective administrative structure will remain essential.

The province's long-term progress will depend not only on visionary policies but also on the institutional capacity required to implement them successfully.

Pakistan's Climate Vulnerability: A Governance Dilemma

Zia U'd Din:

Pakistan contributes less than one percent to global carbon emissions, yet it consistently ranks among the countries most exposed to climate-induced disasters. This imbalance is not merely an environmental concern; it reflects a governance dilemma rooted in a weak institutional coordination and limited adaptation planning.

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of the modern era, adversely affecting societies at multiple levels.

Rising temperatures, droughts, irregular weather patterns, sea-level rise, melting glaciers, floods, and water insecurity demonstrate its far-reaching global consequences.

Since these impacts transcend national borders, climate change is inherently a global challenge. Along with other developing nations, Pakistan remains highly vulnerable.

In 2024, Pakistan recorded its ninth warmest year in the last 64 years, with an average temperature of 23.5°C and rainfall levels 31 percent above the historical average. This highlights the urgency of collective international action.

For Pakistan, however, climate vulnerability is compounded by governance constraints. Fragmented institutional coordination, weak policy



implementation, and limited emphasis on adaptation have reduced the state's capacity to respond effectively. Consequently, the climate crisis in Pakistan reflects not only environmental stress but also persistent governance failures.

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in global weather patterns and temperatures, primarily driven by human activities. According to United Nations findings, excessive

greenhouse gas emissions have intensified heat retention in the atmosphere. Gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide have thickened the atmospheric blanket, largely due to deforestation, fossil fuel consumption, and rapid industrialization.

One of the most visible consequences of climate change is rising global temperatures.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service reported that average global tempera-

tures in 2024 exceeded pre-industrial levels by 1.52°C. This warming has intensified heatwaves, prolonged droughts, and increased wildfire risks.

Rising temperatures have also disrupted weather systems, leading to irregular rainfall, intense storms, and stronger hurricanes.

Another major consequence is sea-level rise. Oceans absorb nearly 90 percent of excess heat caused by greenhouse gas emissions, leading to

thermal expansion. Simultaneously, melting glaciers and ice sheets contribute to rising sea levels.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, global sea levels have risen by approximately 21 to 25 centimeters since 1880, threatening coastal livelihoods and infrastructure.

Climate change has also intensified water scarcity, a growing global concern. Pakistan is already a water-stressed country, and climate variability has

further exacerbated this challenge.

A report by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics places Pakistan among the most water-risk-prone nations. Water scarcity places immense pressure on agriculture, industry, and households, undermining economic stability and food security.

Despite contributing minimally to global emissions, Pakistan bears a disproportionate share of climate-related losses. The

Global Climate Risk Index ranks Pakistan among the most vulnerable countries to climate change.

The 2022 floods alone caused an estimated economic loss of \$40 billion and claimed at least 1,700 lives. More recently, monsoon floods in 2025 resulted in over 1,000 deaths.

Given these realities, climate adaptation is no longer an academic debate but a strategic necessity. Mitigation remains essential to limit

future warming through reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower is critical.

Equally important is adaptation. Since climate impacts are already unavoidable, societies must strengthen resilience. Investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, improved urban planning, and effective water management is vital.

Global cooperation remains the third pillar of climate response. Climate change transcends borders and requires collective responsibility. Developed nations must honor climate finance commitments and support vulnerable countries in adaptation efforts.

For Pakistan, effective climate governance is central to resilience. Addressing financing constraints, strengthening legislation, improving federal-provincial coordination, and prioritizing adaptation over rhetoric are critical steps.

Climate change presents urgent challenges that demand immediate action. Without decisive reforms in climate governance and a strategic shift toward adaptation, Pakistan will continue to pay an unjust price for a crisis it did little to create.

The author can be reached at: dzinzaud19@gmail.com.

Balochistan Advertisement Policy 2026: Digital Publishers Forum Rejects 'Flawed' Policy, Warns of Corruption via Dummy Websites

NEWS DESK: QUETTA: The Balochistan Digital Publishers Forum (BDPF) has strongly rejected the newly implemented "Balochistan Advertisement Policy 2026," terming it ambiguous, incomplete, and a breeding ground for corruption. The forum warned that the policy, enforced by the Government of Balochistan on July 1 without stakeholder consultation, threatens the survival of the provincial print media and opens up new avenues for nepotism through "dummy websites."

"In an online consultative meeting chaired by Syed Ali Shah of Quetta Voice, digital and print media leaders demanded an immediate withdrawal of the controversial policy. They urged the provincial government to formulate a viable framework in alignment with federal and other provincial media guidelines after thorough consultation with all stakeholders."

Dummy Websites Handed Government Ads Within 10 Days. The forum expressed deep concern



over the implementation of the policy during its first ten days. According to the BDPF, government advertisements have already been issued to obscure, newly created websites with zero web traffic.

"While traditional newspapers must consistently publish for five long years to qualify for the Central Media List, this new policy lacks any clear criteria or aging bracket for digital media," the forum stated in a joint press release. "This loophole is being

exploited to facilitate cronyism, diverting public funds to dummy platforms that emerged only after the policy's announcement."

The meeting was attended by prominent media figures, including:

Jiand Sajidi (Daily Intekhab)

Sadiq Baloch (Daily Azadi)

Azmatullah Achakzai (Daily Qadart)

Sohail Baloch (Daily Al-Jazeera)

A Threat to the Survival of

Balochistan's Print Media

The BDPF highlighted that slashing the advertisement quota for print media is part of a "mindset" aimed at crippling authentic journalism in the province.

The forum criticized the restriction of government tenders and public notices to just two newspapers, calling it unprecedented across Pakistan.

Comparing it with other provinces, the forum noted: "In Punjab, where

thousands of newspapers operate, new policies still ensure that tenders and official ads are distributed to at least 6 to 8 newspapers to maintain transparency. Restricting ads in Balochistan will trigger a wave of unemployment and force reputable, long-standing newspapers to shut down permanently."

Call for Transparent Criteria and Merit-Based Allocation

To combat corruption and ensure the judicial use of public funds, the Balochistan Digital Publishers Forum urged the government to establish a rigorous, transparent, and merit-based verification mechanism for digital media ads.

"The forum concluded with a unanimous demand for the Government of Balochistan to immediately retract the controversial Advertisement Policy 2026."

They called for a collaborative approach to design a comprehensive media policy that protects the existence of traditional newspapers while supporting authentic digital publishers in Balochistan.

Balochistan Irrigation Department Intensifies Crackdown on Water Theft Along Pat Feeder Canal

NASHIRABAD: The Balochistan Irrigation Department has intensified its campaign against illegal water theft from the Pat Feeder Canal,

main committed to ensuring that legitimate farmers receive their allocated water theft. However, despite peak Kharif season demand.

Reports (FIRs) have already been registered against those involved in water theft. However, officials believe that existing legal provisions



implementing a zero-tolerance policy under the directives of Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani and Irrigation Secretary Suhail Rehman Baloch.

To ensure strict enforcement of the government's directives, Chief Engineer Canals Qurban Ali Jatoi has been personally supervising irrigation operations in the field, overseeing the fair distribution of agricultural water to entitled farmers across the canal command area.

Officials said the Pat Feeder Canal irrigation administration re-

The department is continuously monitoring the nearly 200-kilometer-long Pat Feeder Canal, its distributaries, and watercourses with the support of field officers and operational staff.

However, authorities noted that some influential individuals continue to exploit remote locations, night-time conditions, and law and order challenges by using illegal pipelines, pumping machines, and other unauthorized methods to steal irrigation water.

According to the Irrigation Department, several First Information

carry weak penalties, allowing offenders to continue illegal activities with little deterrence.

As part of the ongoing anti-theft campaign, Chief Engineer Qurban Ali Jatoi, accompanied by Executive Engineer Pat Feeder Canal Fared Ahmed Pindrani, conducted inspections from RD-409 to RD-418 (Mir Hassan) and RD 505 (Bedar) to RD 558 (Manjho Shori).

The inspection was intended to send a clear message that irrigation officials remain vigilant and that illegal extraction of irrigation water will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Chief Engineer Reviews Sohbatpur Development Projects, Stresses Quality and Transparency

SOHBATPUR: Chief Engineer of the Communications and Works (C&W) Department, Nasirabad Zone, Bashir Nasir, has emphasized that high-quality construction and strict project monitoring are essential to ensuring that public development funds deliver tangible benefits to citizens.

Speaking during an inspection of ongoing development projects in Sohbatpur, Bashir Nasir said the provincial government is closely scrutinizing construction activities in line with the directives of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Provincial Minister for Communications and Works Mir Saleem Khan Khosa, and C&W Secretary Bahar Khan.

He said engineers must personally supervise development projects and ensure that all work is executed according to approved standards, warning that negligence would not be tolerated.

The delegation included General Secretary Bismillah Khan Kakar, Kashif Magi, Master Abdul Razzaq, Zafar Bazi, Muhammad Anwar, and Mushtaq Ahmed, Abdul Malik Nasir, and Abdul Ghafoor Langoo.

During the meeting, APCA President Ghulam Qadir Zehri presented the official notification of the newly elected APCA Irrigation Unit cabinet to the Secretary.

The inspection was attended by Superintending Engineers Fida Hussain Khosa and Arsalan Rand, along with other departmental officials. Executive Engineer (Roads) Jahangir Khosa briefed the Chief Engineer on the progress of ongoing development schemes.

During the visit, Bashir Nasir inspected several key infrastructure projects, including

further stated that, in accordance with Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti's development vision, strengthening infrastructure through modern roads, government buildings, and public welfare projects remains one of the provincial government's top priorities.

He added that continuous monitoring of development schemes would continue across



the Sohbatpur Bypass Road, the District Complex, and other public development schemes. He directed officials to ensure that all projects are completed within the stipulated timeframe while maintaining the highest standards of quality, transparency, and compliance with government regulations.

Development funds are a public trust, and every project must adhere to quality standards, transparency, and government Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), he said.

The Chief Engineer

the province and warned that any negligence, irregularities, or violations would result in legal action against responsible officials and contractors to ensure the proper utilization of public resources.

Bashir Nasir, Sohbatpur development projects, Communications and Works Department.

C&W Balochistan, Sohbatpur Bypass Road, District Complex Sohbatpur, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Bahar Khan, infrastructure development, Balochistan road projects, public infrastructure, Sohbatpur news.

APCA Irrigation Unit Meets Balochistan Irrigation Secretary, Seeks Staff Housing Project Approval

QUETTA: Adelegation of the newly elected cabinet of the All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA) Irrigation Unit, led by President Ghulam Qadir Zehri, met with Balochistan Secretary Irrigation Suhail Rehman Baloch at his office to discuss employees' welfare and departmental issues.

The delegation included General Secretary Bismillah Khan Kakar, Kashif Magi, Master Abdul Razzaq, Zafar Bazi, Muhammad Anwar, and Mushtaq Ahmed, Abdul Malik Nasir, and Abdul Ghafoor Langoo.

During the meeting, APCA President Ghulam Qadir Zehri presented the official notification of the newly elected APCA Irrigation Unit cabinet to the Secretary.

Congratulating the newly elected office-bearers, Secretary Suhail Rehman Baloch expressed hope that the association would play a constructive role in promoting employee welfare and contributing to the improvement of the Irrigation Department.

Highlighting the concerns of departmental staff, Ghulam Qadir Zehri stated that the lack of government residential quarters remains one of the biggest challenges facing Irrigation Department employees. He urged the Secretary to expedite the proposed housing project for employees and requested that it be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

President Ghulam Qadir Zehri, General Secretary Bismillah Khan

Kakar, and Vice President Kashif Magi also submitted a detailed proposal regarding the construction of residential quarters for departmental staff.

Responding to the proposal, Secretary Irrigation Suhail Rehman Baloch assured the delegation that every possible effort would be made to secure approval for the housing project from the Finance Department, enabling the initiative to move forward without unnecessary delay.

He further assured the delegation that practical steps would also be taken to address other issues faced by Irrigation Department employees. "Concluding the meeting, APCA President Ghulam Qadir Zehri thanked

Quetta Sit-In Talks Enter Crucial Stage as Government, Protest Committee Remain Deadlocked Over Ziarat Tragedy

Ali Hamza, Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: Efforts to end the prolonged sit-in in Quetta remained unsuccessful on Saturday as negotiations between the Balochistan government committee and representatives of the protest committee continued for more than four hours, with both sides still struggling to break the deadlock.

The government delegation, led by Home Minister Balochistan Mir Ziaullah Langove and Provincial Minister Bakht Muhammad

Kakar, held detailed discussions with members of the Quetta sit-in committee, families of the martyred police personnel, and representatives of political parties and civil society.



The talks aimed at addressing the demands of protesters who have been staging a demonstration at Quetta's main protest venue following the tragic Ziarat incident.

However, sources said no major breakthrough has been reached so far, as both sides remain firm on their respective positions.

Political leaders, civil society members,

and relatives of the deceased police personnel have been participating in the protest, demanding justice, accountability, and a transparent response to the incident.

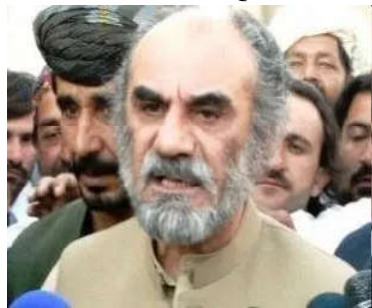
Government officials expressed hope that negotiations would lead to a resolution, while protest representatives insisted that their concerns must be addressed before ending the sit-in.

The talks are expected to continue as efforts remain underway to find common ground and resolve the standoff.

Former Balochistan CM Nawab Aslam Raisani Condemns Decision to Shift Mastung from Kalat Division to Quetta Division

News Desk: QUETTA: Former Balochistan Chief Minister Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani has strongly condemned the provincial government's decision to remove Mastung district from Kalat Division and merge it into Quetta Division, calling the move unilateral and contrary to the wishes of the local people.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, Raisani said the decision was taken without consulting local stakeholders or elected representatives, making it inconsistent with the aspirations of the people of Mastung.



He maintained that Mastung has deep historical, geographical, and administrative ties with

Kalat Division and argued that changing its divisional status without public consultation is unacceptable.

Raisani announced that he and

his supporters would pursue every peaceful, democratic, and constitutional avenue to restore Mastung's position within Kalat Division.

He also urged the provincial government to review its decision and engage with local communities, political representatives, and other stakeholders before making administrative changes that directly affect the region.

The statement is expected to add momentum to the ongoing political debate surrounding the government's decision to reorganize administrative boundaries in Balochistan.

Dr. Buledi added that Pakistan would showcase its progress and achievements in women's development during the conference, help advance the OIC's agenda on women's development and strengthen cooperation among member states through the Islamabad Declaration, paving the way for new strategies to improve women's welfare across the Islamic world.

Balochistan Adviser Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi Welcomes 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women in Pakistan

QUETTA: Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on (iled) said the participation of representatives from the 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) demonstrates the collective commitment of member countries to advancing the welfare, rights, and development of women through a unified international platform.

She noted that the conference would pro-

vide an opportunity to discuss key issues affecting women, including social and economic empowerment, education, healthcare, and greater participation in decision-making, adding that the deliberations are expected to produce positive outcomes for the future.

Highlighting Pakistan's growing leadership role, Dr. Buledi said the transfer of the conference presidency

from Egypt to Pakistan marks a significant milestone.

She expressed confidence that Pakistan's two-year tenure would help advance the OIC's agenda on women's development and strengthen cooperation among member states through the Islamabad Declaration, paving the way for new strategies to improve women's welfare across the Islamic world.

JI to form Kashmir peace jirga to facilitate dialogue between govt, JAAC

NEWS DESK: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) on Sunday decided to establish a "grand" Kashmir peace jirga to facilitate dialogue between the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government and the banned Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) in an effort to restore stability and normalcy in the region.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the party's central Majlis-i-Shura chaired by JI Emir Hafiz Naeem Rehman at Mansoorah, Lahore.

According to a press release, the jirga will engage both the government and the JAAC, with the restoration of peace and the resolution of issues in AJK identified as its top priorities.

To oversee the initiative, Rehman constituted a committee headed by JI Deputy Emir Liaqat Baloch. The committee included JI AJK Emir Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Khan and the party's former regional chiefs Abdul Rashid Turabi and Dr. Khalid Mahmood.

The JI chief also indicated that the committee would be expanded to include former civil bureaucrats, retired judges, ex-military officials and members of civil society from AJK.

The Shura expressed "deep concern" over the prevailing situation in AJK, warning that continued unrest could adversely affect the broader Kashmir



JI chief Hafiz Naeem Rehman (center) addressing the meeting.

cause. "No compromise can be made on the Kashmir issue," the statement asserted, adding that countless Pakistanis and Kashmiris had sacrificed their lives for the cause.

Addressing the meeting, the JI chief urged the federal government to initiate negotiations without delay to restore normalcy in the region.

"Dialogue is the only viable way to resolve the ongoing crisis and prevent further deterioration of the situation," Rehman was quoted as saying.

He described Kashmir as Pakistan's "caring guardian by embracing aggrieved citizens instead of allowing tensions to escalate".

Referring to the security challenges in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he cautioned that Pakistan

could not afford another internal conflict in AJK. He announced that the expanded committee would soon visit Rawalakot to meet JAAC leaders and make every possible effort to bring the situation under control through dialogue.

Commenting on the controversy surrounding the 12 reserved seats in the AJK Legislative Assembly, Rehman said some concerns of the protesters were legitimate.

However, he stressed that the "representation of refugees from Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the occupied territory itself in the assembly could not be abolished".

He said the issue of the reserved seats should be resolved through negotiations and expressed confidence that a workable solution could be found. "No one is bigger or smaller. The government

should set aside stubbornness and ego and engage in meaningful dialogue," he said, adding that JI had no political interest in the dispute and was acting solely to protect peace and safeguard the Kashmiri cause.

The JI chief also emphasised that further violence must be prevented at all costs.

The regional administration and the JAAC remain at odds over various issues, most notably the demand to abolish the 12 seats in the region's Legislative Assembly that are reserved for refugees from Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir who settled in mainland Pakistan after 1947.

On June 5, following the announcement of the JAAC's June 9 strike, the AJK government declared the body a proscribed organisation. A day later, authorities launched a crackdown on the

Dar urges restraint, diplomacy in call with Iranian counterpart

NEWS DESK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held a telephone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi on Sunday during which the two leaders discussed the evolving regional situation and stressed the need for de-escalation, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

According to MoFA's post on X, both leaders exchanged views on the evolving regional situation.

The ministry said Dar stressed upon the parties "to follow the path of de-escalation and show restraint, as agreed in the Islamabad MoU in June 2026".

An interim ceasefire agreement signed between Washington and Tehran — under the mediation of Pakistan — was intended to provide a 60-day window for negotiations on a permanent agreement, but indirect talks in Qatar

ended last week with no sign of headway, and the US military unleashed a new wave of strikes against Iran on Tuesday. Iran subsequently said it had targeted US military sites in Bahrain and Kuwait and that it had shot down an Iranian aircraft attempting to interfere in the operation Bahrain's army "later said it had thwarted Iranian attacks."

He further underscored that "dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path to resolving disputes and

achieving lasting peace and stability in the region."

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held separate telephonic conversations with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

During his conversation with the Iranian

president, the prime minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to promoting regional peace and assured President Pezeshkian that Pakistan would continue to extend all possible support in playing "a sincere and constructive role" in restoring and maintaining regional peace and stability.

The premier urged Iran and all other relevant parties to exercise restraint and refrain from taking any steps that could undermine the peace gains made over

the past few months. President Pezeshkian thanked PM Shehbaz, FM Dar, Chief of Defence Forces, and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, and Pakistan's other senior leadership for attending the funeral prayers and burial of the late Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei.

In a separate telephone conversation with Qatar's Emir, PM Shehbaz expressed deep concern over the recent regional tensions and reaffirmed Pakistan's complete solidarity with the people of Qatar in the wake of the recent attacks.

The two leaders agreed that continued diplomatic engagement and meaningful dialogue were essential for peace, and that all parties should implement the commitments made under the peace memorandum.

The renewed violence casts further doubt on the future of an interim US-Iranian agreement signed last month that aimed to reopen the strait and end the war after a further 60 days of negotiations.

In the past week, US President Donald Trump has said he considered ceasefire over, while leaving the "door open to more talks."

The war that began with US and Israeli strikes against Iran on February 28 has destabilised the Gulf, while Iran's effective blockade of the strait has driven energy prices higher, fuelling global inflation.

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2-day OIC moot on women empowerment begins in Islamabad with technical-level meetings

NEWS DESK: The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) 9th Ministerial Conference on Women, hosted by Pakistan, began in Islamabad on Sunday with technical-level meetings.

The two-day conference, with the theme "Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of Women in the OIC Countries: Challenges and Way Forward", is being organised by the human rights ministry at the Jinnah Convention Centre.

According to state media, the conference has brought together around 190 delegates, including ministers, senior government officials and representatives from the OIC's 57 member states, to discuss ways to enhance women's social, economic and political participation and strengthen cooperation among member countries.

It is focused on expanding women's access to education, healthcare, employment,

entrepreneurship, financial services, technology and digital opportunities.

On Sunday, technical experts and senior officials held preparatory talks to finalise recommendations for the ministerial session, which will meet on Monday.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to inaugurate the ministerial session on Monday.

Law and Human Rights Minister Azam Nazeer Tahir will chair the conference on behalf of Pakistan.

Ahead of Sunday's session, he addressed a press conference in Islamabad, where he said hosting the conference was an honour for Pakistan.

According to state broadcaster Radio Pakistan, he said Pakistan would "utilise this high-level forum to highlight the government's initiatives aimed at women's empowerment and building an inclusive society."

Punjab Chief Minister

ter Maryam Nawaz and IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja would also attend the conference, he said, adding that the moot would conclude with the adoption of an "Islamabad Declaration", which outlined a common framework for advancing women's empowerment and promoting inclusive and sustainable development across OIC member states.

He further announced that Pakistan would formally assume the chairmanship of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Women from Egypt for the next two years.

The Islamabad meeting builds on the outcomes of the previous ministerial conference held in Cairo in 2021 and is expected to provide fresh momentum for greater collaboration among OIC countries to expand opportunities for women and strengthen their role in social, economic and political development, the Radio Pakistan report said.

Pakistan expresses 'deep concern' over escalating ME tensions, urges parties to exercise restraint

NEWS DESK: Pakistan on Sunday expressed deep concern over the recent escalation in regional tensions, urging all sides to exercise restraint, take immediate steps towards de-escalation and honour their commitments under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The interim ceasefire agreement signed between Washington and Tehran — under the mediation of Pakistan — was intended to provide a 60-day window for negotiations on a permanent agreement, but indirect talks in Qatar ended last week with no sign of headway.

US and Iranian forces have exchanged heavy missile and drone assaults, "with Tehran targeting US facilities in states across the Gulf on Sunday and saying it had again closed the vital Strait of Hormuz."

The strikes were the latest in a "cycle of attacks and counter-attacks as Iran seeks to

assert control over shipping through the strait, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all brotherly countries in the region, and urges all sides to exercise restraint, take immediate steps towards de-escalation and uphold respective commitments

under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)," the

ministry said. The ministry said Pakistan remained committed to supporting efforts aimed at achieving lasting peace and stability through dialogue and diplomacy.

"On its part, Pakistan remains committed to providing all support

towards achieving lasting peace and stability in the region through

dialogue and diplomacy, the statement added. The strikes extended to Qatar, a mediator in ceasefire talks that had come under attack since April, while the United Arab Emirates, which had not been targeted since early May, said its air defences had engaged missiles and drones from Iran.

The renewed violence casts further doubt on the future of an interim US-Iranian agreement signed last month that aimed to reopen the strait and end the war after a further 60 days of negotiations.

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Pakistan, Turkiye sign MoU on family affairs and social protection

NEWS DESK: Pakistan and Turkiye signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in family affairs, social services, and social protection during a meeting between Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tahir and his Turkish counterpart, Mahirun Göktas, on Sunday.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women, where the two ministers discussed women's rights, the family system, and social protection.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Human Rights, the two countries also agreed to strengthen cooperation on women's and children's rights, as well as the protection of the family system in the digital space.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to promoting family welfare, enhancing social protection, and exchanging experiences in social protection joint initiatives.

Pakistan and Turkiye also agreed to further strengthen cooperation on women's rights, social welfare, and institutional collaboration.

Earlier, Tahir, addressing a press conference in Islamabad, said that hosting the two-day 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women is a distinct honor for Pakistan.

light the government's initiatives aimed at women's empowerment and building an inclusive society.

Tahir said Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Information Technology Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and a large number of women will also participate in the conference.

The conference titled "Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of Women in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Countries: Challenges and Way

Forward" may bring together around 190 delegates from the next two OIC member states, including ministers, senior government officials, and prominent women leaders. The law minister announced that the conference is underway today, while the central ministerial meeting will be held tomorrow. Tahir expressed the government's resolve to further advance the agenda of protecting women's rights.

The foreign delegations were received at the Islamabad International Airport by Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik.

The Islamabad Declaration will be adopted at the conclusion of the conference. Tahir highlighted that it is a

matter of great pride that Pakistan will hold the chair of the conference for the next two years. He said Pakistan is fully prepared to fulfill its obligations. He said the representatives of 57 OIC member countries are participating in the conference, while various technical working groups are also part of the conference.

He said technical sessions of the conference are underway today, while the central ministerial meeting will be held tomorrow. Tahir expressed the government's resolve to further advance the agenda of protecting women's rights.

The foreign delegations were received at the Islamabad International Airport by Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik.

All Parties Hurriyat Conference calls Kashmir movement 'red line', plans rally tomorrow

NEWS DESK: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) on Saturday announced a public rally in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) capital, Baramulla, on Sunday to mark Kashmir Martyrs' Day, urging people to participate in large numbers to counter India's propaganda that the people of the liberated territory had become detached from the Kashmir freedom movement.

The announcement was made by APHC Convener Ghulam Mohammad Safi while addressing a press conference.

He was accompanied by Muzaffarabad Mayor Sikandar Nisar Gilani, Refugees Representative Forum leader Ghulam Hassan Butt, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell Director Dr Raja Sajad Latif, APHC General Secretary Advocate Pervez Ahmed Shah and several other leaders.

Mr Safi said July 13, 1931, marked the beginning of the present-day Kashmir freedom movement, when 22 Kashmiri Muslims were killed in a massacre outside Srinagar Central Jail, while completing the call to prayer (Azaan), demonstrating their resolve not to live under slavery.

He said the public gathering at Upper Adda in Muzaffarabad would reaffirm that the Kashmir freedom movement remained the "red line" for Kashmiris.

He added that it would also reaffirm that irrespective of internal political differences, people on both sides of the Line of Control were united in their commitment to securing freedom from India's illegal occupation.

Responding to a question about the presence of the Indian military in occupied Kashmir, he said the Indian

possible role, within its limitations, to help resolve the crisis through peaceful means.

"At the very outset, the APHC issued a statement urging the governments in Muzaffarabad and Islamabad, as well as the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), to engage in dialogue and resolve the issue through negotiations. We anticipated that the longer the matter continued, the greater the loss of human lives. More importantly, there was a serious danger that the international focus, which until then had remained on India-held Kashmir, would shift towards Azad Kashmir," he said.

Referring to the Kashmiri diaspora, he said "Our people abroad, who until recently stood outside Indian missions condemning India for its actions in occupied Kashmir, are now standing outside

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