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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

Mastung Highway Attack: Two Women Killed, Three Injured After Gunmen Target Family Vehicle

From Our Correspondent:

MASTUNG: In a heartbreaking incident along the Quetta-Karachi Highway, unidentified armed men opened fire on a passenger vehicle near the Khad Kocha area of Mastung district, leaving two women dead and three others, including children,



File photo of security personnel after terror attack somewhere in Balochistan

severely injured. According to initial reports and statements from survivors, the family was traveling from Karachi to Quetta with an ailing female relative who was being transported for medical care.

Sudden Attack and Driver Panic

Describing the harrowing ordeal, an injured survivor recounted that armed individuals stationed on the highway unexpectedly signaled for their vehicle to pull over. "As the driver attempted to slow down and stop the vehicle in panic, gunmen positioned on both sides of the road suddenly opened indiscriminate fire," the

survivor stated. The unexpected gunfire triggered intense panic, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle.

The sudden loss of control, compounded by the hail of bullets, resulted in the fatal crash.

Investigation and Response

Preliminary details reveal that the impacted family originated from the Zhob district of Balochistan. Local law enforcement authorities have cordoned off the area, initiated an investigation, and launched a search operation to trace the unidentified assailants responsible for the highway attack.

According to the report, 1,139 people lost their lives in terrorism-related incidents in Pakistan during 2025, representing an increase of nearly six percent compared to the previous year.

While the number of terrorism-related fatalities recorded across Pakistan, the report also highlights the passenger train hostage attack in Balochistan as one of the deadliest terrorist incidents of 2025.

Terrorists derailed a train and took hundreds of passengers



File photo of security personnel walking close to a Jaffar Express in the mountainous Bolan valley after a terrorist attack

Pakistan Ranked First as Most Terrorism-Affected Country in Global Terrorism Index 2026

Qaseem Shah:

Pakistan has been ranked as the world's most terrorism-affected country in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026, overtaking Burkina Faso, as the country continues its long-standing fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

The report identifies Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the provinces most affected by terrorism. Together, they accounted for more than 74 percent of all terrorist attacks and 67 percent of terrorism-related fatalities recorded across Pakistan.

The Global Terrorism Index 2026 states that terrorist groups continued to target civilians, public infrastructure, and security

forces, particularly in areas along Pakistan's western border. Among the terrorist outfits active in the country, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was identified as the deadliest group in 2026.

According to the report, the organization carried out 595 attacks, resulting in 637 deaths during the year.

The report also highlights the fight against terrorism remains a major national security priority, with authorities continuing operations aimed at dismantling militant networks, protecting civilians, and strengthening security across affected regions.

hostage, resulting in significant casualties before the situation was brought under control.

The Global Terrorism Index notes that Pakistan has faced the challenge of terrorism for more than two decades and continues to undertake extensive security and counterterrorism efforts to restore peace and stability.

The report underscores that the fight against terrorism remains a major national security priority, with authorities continuing operations aimed at dismantling militant networks, protecting civilians, and strengthening security across affected regions.

Terrorists derailed a train and took hundreds of passengers

Quetta Woman Gives Birth to Quintuplets, Mother and All Five Babies in Good Health



Quetta: Woman Gives Birth to Quintuplets, Mother and All Five Babies in Good Health

ALI HAMZA:

QUETTA: A woman in Quetta has safely given birth to quintuplets at a local hospital, with both the mother and all five newborns reported to be in good health, hospital officials confirmed.

According to the hospital administration, the woman delivered five babies at the same time, including three girls and two boys. Medical staff said the delivery was successfully managed, and both the mother and the newborns are in stable condition.

The hospital stated that the mother and the babies have been shifted to a specialized care unit, where they are receiving close medical monitoring and postnatal care.

The Quetta-based couple already had three children before the birth. With the arrival of the quintuplets, their family has now grown to eight children. Hospital officials described the birth as a rare and joyful occasion, adding that the medical team will continue to monitor the health of the mother and the newborns to ensure their well-being.

Iranian Interior Minister Meets Field Marshal Asim Munir at GHQ, Discusses Border Security and Regional Stability



Field Marshal and COAS General Syed Asim Munir receiving the Iranian Interior Minister: Photo ISPR

Rawalpindi: ISPR:

His Excellency Eskandar Monemi, Interior Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, met with Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief

of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces, at the General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional and bilateral security and effective border management

were discussed, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. The visiting Iranian dignitary appreciated Pakistan's consistent efforts and indispensable diplomatic role in easing regional tensions, encouraging de-escalation and serving

ing as an anchor for peace.

The meeting concluded on reaffirmation of resolve to maintain close coordination and cooperative mechanisms to safeguard regional security and mutual prosperity, the ISPR mentioned.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Fiscal Federalism and the Quest for Equity in Pakistan

Agha Sanaulah: Fiscal federalism forms the bedrock of governance in any federation, determining how financial resources are raised, shared, and spent to foster balanced development and social equity. In Pakistan, this relationship is constitutionally mediated through the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, a mechanism designed to rectify both vertical imbalances between the federal and provincial governments and horizontal disparities among the provinces themselves.

While the NFC Award represents a vital instrument for devolution and provincial autonomy, a critical examination reveals that its promise of equitable resource distribution is persistently undermined by deeper, systemic flaws in the country's fiscal governance.

The NFC Award has, over successive iterations, progressively increased the provincial share in national revenues, thereby strengthening fiscal decentralization. This shift has the potential to improve public service delivery by bringing resource distribution closer to the people.

However, the effectiveness of these transfers is contingent upon a healthy national fiscal environment—a condition Pakistan has rarely met.

The nation's fiscal narrative is characterized by structural weaknesses that choke the system at its source.

A chronically nar-



row tax base, heavy reliance on regressive indirect taxation, and inefficient revenue mobilization by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) mean that the total pool of resources available for distribution is perpetually insufficient.

Consequently, even a well-intentioned NFC Award framework operates within a system of scarcity, limiting its capacity to achieve genuine equity.

"Hidden Deficits" and Contingent Liabilities

Beyond revenue inadequacy, the expenditure side of the fiscal equation presents an equally formidable challenge.

A significant portion of the federal budget is consumed by non-development expenditure, most notably debt servicing and defense. This leaves limited fiscal space for development spending, which is crucial for long-term economic growth and for addressing regional in-

equalities. The paper notes that the fiscal year 2024–25 saw a nine-year low in the consolidated budget deficit, partly due to provincial surpluses.

However, this superficial stability masks the underlying reality that the cost of servicing past debt continues to crowd out investments in the human and physical infrastructure needed to level the playing field among provinces.

A major contribution of the research is its

identification of "hidden deficits" and contingent liabilities as critical yet often overlooked sources of fiscal stress. Beyond the conventional budget deficit, factors such as off-budget expenditures, subsidies to loss-making public sector enterprises, and implicit guarantees for future

Cycle of Short-Term Fixes Rather Than Long-Term Solutions obligations create a precarious financial reality. This lack of transpar-

ency in accounting for risks—from natural calamities to the collapse of state-owned corporations—exposes the federation to unpredictable fiscal shocks.

The failure to consolidate and disclose these contingent liabilities means that the true scale of fiscal vulnerability is rarely debated in parliament or understood by the public, perpetuating a cycle of short-term fixes rather than long-term solutions.

To break this cycle, the paper argues for a fundamental shift from one-dimensional, crisis-driven fiscal management to a multi-dimensional, institutionally anchored approach.

It recommends a suite of reforms that move beyond the NFC Award itself to strengthen the entire fiscal ecosystem.

Key among these are the establishment of an Independent Fiscal Council (IFC) to provide unbiased analysis of fis-

cal policy and budget assumptions, thus reducing political discretion and enhancing evidence-based decision-making.

Furthermore, it calls for strengthening the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework by linking it to Public Service Agreements (PSAs) that tie resource allocation to measurable outcomes.

ensuring that provincial transfers under the NFC Award translate into tangible improvements in education, health, and infrastructure.

In conclusion, the National Finance Commission Award is an essential but insufficient instrument for achieving fiscal equity in Pakistan. Its effectiveness is inextricably linked to the overall health of the nation's public finances.

As the research paper demonstrates, persistent issues such as a narrow tax base, unsustainable debt service, and opaque contingent liabilities undermine the very resources that the NFC Award is meant to distribute equitably.

Moving forward, the focus must broaden from negotiating provincial shares to implementing deep-rooted institutional reforms.

By enhancing revenue mobilization, ensuring fiscal transparency, and prudently managing debt and liabilities, Pakistan can create an environment where the NFC Award can fulfill its constitutional promise—fostering a resilient, balanced, and truly equitable federation.

Pakistan's Climate Vulnerability: A Governance Dilemma

Zia Ud 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 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 faces high vulnerability.

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.

Quetta: 128 of 150 Non-Functional Schools Restored, Inquiry Launched Against 35 Absent Teachers

QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini chaired a meeting of the District Education Group to review key education issues across the district, including the restoration of non-functional schools, teacher availability, and the overall performance of government schools.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), District Education Officers (Male and Female), relevant Deputy District Officers (DDOs), the RTSM (Real-Time School Monitoring) team, and other concerned officials.

During the meeting, officials informed



participants that 128 out of 150 previously non-functional schools in Quetta district have been fully restored and are now operational.

Efforts are continuing to make the remaining schools functional at the earliest. A detailed report was also presented on schools facing

teacher shortages, highlighting the need for additional teaching staff to ensure uninterrupted educational activities.

The RTSM team presented its district-wide school monitoring report, revealing that departmental inquiries have been initiated against 35 teachers for persistent

absenteeism.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Mehrullah Badini directed education authorities to further strengthen teaching and learning activities in all government schools, ensure regular teacher attendance, and utilize all available

resources to provide quality education to students across the district.

He emphasized that improving school performance, addressing staffing gaps, and maintaining strict monitoring are essential steps toward enhancing the standard of public education in Quetta.

Loralai Municipal Committee Continues Citywide Cleanliness Drive to Improve Public Hygiene

LORALAI: Under the vision of the Balochistan government, and following the directives of Loralai Division Commissioner Wali Muhammad Bareeh and Municipal Committee Chief Officer Mohibullah Baloch, a special citywide cleanliness campaign is being carried

out across Loralai to provide residents with a cleaner, healthier, and more pleasant environment.

Municipal Committee teams are actively cleaning drains, streets, rainwater channels, and public areas in different parts of the city to ensure proper sanitation and an efficient drainage system. As part of the campaign, cleaning opera-



tions were conducted in several locations, including the rainwater drain near Mullah Khadar Neka Graveyard, Levies Line, Hareef Gali, Kamran Sahib Stop, SSP Office, Thanda Masjid, Dr. Saadat Hospital, Hanzala Masjid,

Ameeer Mohalla, A.Q.

Khan School, Chakal Gali, Jan Muhammad Gali, Kabari School, and the vicinity of the old NADRA office. In response to public complaints, sanitation teams also revisited certain areas to carry

out additional cleaning.

The operation utilized tractor-trolleys, Suzuki vehicles, and other municipal machinery to remove waste and clear blocked drains. Alongside the sanitation campaign, municipal staff regularly watered newly

planted trees across different parts of the city to support the ongoing tree plantation initiative.

to promote healthy plant growth, and enhance Loralai's green spaces. Chief Officer Mohibullah Baloch instructed the sanitation teams to further strengthen the cleanliness drive, maintain uninterrupted waste collection and drainage services, and ensure the prompt resolution of civic issues.

He also appealed to residents to cooperate with the Municipal Committee by disposing of waste at designated locations and playing an active role in keeping Loralai clean, green, and environmentally friendly.

Gwadar Open Court Addresses Public Grievances, Focuses on Students and Fishermen's Issues

GWADAR: The district administration organized an Open Court (Khuli Kachehri) under the chairmanship of Assistant Commissioner Gwadar Romail Naeem Khan to hear public complaints and ensure the timely resolution of civic issues.

The session was attended by a large number of residents, along

with Director Fisheries Ahmed Nadeem, Municipal Corporation Chairman Majid Johar, and heads and representatives of various government departments. Held under the government's vision of responsive governance and effective public service, the open forum provided citizens with an opportunity to directly present their individual and community concerns before the relevant authorities.

During the meeting, the Assistant Commissioner, Director Fisheries, Municipal Corporation Chairman, and other officials instructed concerned departments to address public complaints promptly, strengthening interdepartmental coordination, and

ensure measurable progress within the prescribed timeframe. A wide range of public issues were discussed, including water supply, electricity, border trade, law and order, healthcare, education, revenue matters, policing, sanitation, municipal services, civic facilities, and the New Town Housing Scheme.

Students raised concerns regarding educational scholarships, prompting the Assistant Commissioner to direct the relevant institutions to immediately coordinate on resolving the issues and ensure that deserving students receive the necessary support.

He also emphasized the importance of expanding technical and vocational training programs to empower local youth. Members of the fishing community highlighted issues related to the fisheries sector, including the fishing and marketing of beach fish.

He noted that open courts play a vital role in ensuring timely grievance redressal, promoting transparency and accountability, and strengthening public confidence in government institutions.

He added that, in line with government directives, the district administration will continue organizing such public outreach programs regularly to improve public welfare, enhance the delivery of essential services, and make governance more responsive to citizens' needs.



with Director Fisheries Ahmed Nadeem, Municipal Corporation Chairman Majid Johar, and heads and representatives of various government departments.

Relevant officials issued on-the-spot decisions and assured participants that practical measures would be taken to resolve the highlighted issues.

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Chaman Reviews Development Projects, Accelerates Implementation of Phase III Schemes

CHAMAN: Deputy Commissioner Chaman Habib Ahmed Bangulzai chaired an important meeting of the District Development Committee (DDC) at the Deputy Commissioner's Office to review the progress of ongoing and completed development projects and discuss the implementation strategy for upcoming schemes.

The meeting was attended by officials from relevant government departments, representatives of security agencies, Executive Engineers (XENS), and engineers from the Balochistan Spatial Data Infrastructure (BSDI).

During the meeting, participants conducted a detailed review of completed and ongoing development projects under Phase I and Phase II, while also discussing

the timely and effective execution of Phase III development schemes.

Relevant departments presented PC-I documents, GPS coordinates, site photographs, and progress reports to provide a comprehensive update on the status of each project.

Deputy Commissioner Habib Ahmed Bangulzai directed all concerned departments to ensure that development projects are completed within the stipulated timelines while maintaining high standards of quality, transparency, and accountability so that the public can benefit from them as early as possible.

He emphasized that all projects would remain under continuous monitoring and warned that unnecessary delays, negligence, or poor performance would not be tolerated.

The Deputy Commissioner stated that the ongoing initiatives are being implemented in accordance with the special directives of the Government of Balochistan and the Chief Secretary of Balochistan, aimed at completing development projects in Chaman with greater speed, transparency, and quality.

He reaffirmed that the district administration is working in close coordination with all relevant departments to promote public welfare, improve basic infrastructure and services, and ensure the sustainable development of Chaman through regular monitoring and effective project management.

He also stressed that all relevant agencies must remain fully prepared to respond effectively to any emergency situation.

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Barkhan Reviews Security Situation, Orders Enhanced Safety Measures on N-70 Highway

BARKHAN: In line with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti's vision for peace, public safety, and effective governance, Deputy Commissioner Saeed ur Rehman Kakar chaired the monthly meetings of the District Coordination Committee (DCC) and the District Intelligence Coordination Committee (DICC).

The meetings were attended by the Superintendent of Police (SP), representatives of intelligence agencies, law enforcement officials, and heads of various district departments.

Participants conducted a comprehensive review of the district's overall law and order situation, security arrangements, inter-agency coordination, intelligence sharing, and



other matters related to public safety and governance. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Saeed ur Rehman Kakar directed all relevant institutions to further strengthen coordination and institutional collaboration to maintain peace and security across the district.

He specifically or-

dered tighter security measures along the N-70 National Highway, instructing authorities to increase joint patrols, enhance security screening and checkpoint operations, and maintain strict surveillance of suspicious individuals and activities to ensure a safe and secure environment for

commuters. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that protecting the lives and property of citizens and maintaining lasting peace in the district is a shared responsibility of all concerned institutions.

He reaffirmed that the district administration, police, law enforcement agencies, and intel-

ligence organizations will continue to work in close coordination, adopting a professional approach and taking timely measures to preserve law and order.

He also stressed that all relevant agencies must remain fully prepared to respond effectively to any emergency situation.

Kech Health Committee Reviews Healthcare Services, Cracks Down on Illegal Medicines



TURBAT: Deputy Commissioner Kech Yasir Iqbal Dashti chaired an important meeting of the District Health Committee at the Deputy Commissioner's Office in Turbat to review the overall healthcare situation, medical service delivery, and key challenges facing the health sector across the district.

The meeting was attended by Director Health Makran Dr.

Mohibullah Baloch, Medical Superintendent of Teaching Hospital Turbat Dr. Waheed Balesdi, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative Dr. Anisul, PPHI District Support Manager Dr. Murtaza Baloch, Drug Inspector Akram Baloch, District Accounts Officer (Treasury) Saddam Baloch, and other relevant officials.

Participants held

detailed discussions on improving the delivery of quality and timely healthcare services, the performance of government hospitals, the availability of medicines, and challenges faced by medical staff, and measures to strengthen the district's healthcare system.

During the meeting, MS Teaching Hospital Turbat Dr. Waheed Baloch outlined ongoing enforcement actions against illegal, substan-

highlighting medical services.

He emphasized the need for patient care, staff residential quarters, and administrative matters, including electricity, water supply, security, and other operational issues. He also presented recommendations to address existing challenges.

Drug Inspector Muhammad Akram Baloch outlined ongoing enforcement actions against illegal, substan-

dard, and unregistered medicines across Kech district and shared the department's future strategy to intensify regulatory measures.

He also presented updates on their respective healthcare programs, institutional performance, and ongoing efforts in providing public health services in the district.

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rather than a final destination.

Addressing the participants, the Governor underscored the constitutional and administrative importance of the University Senate, explaining that it holds the same status within a university as a cabinet does within a government.

He said the Senate is the university's highest statutory decision-making body, and once it reaches a decision after due deliberation, that decision becomes final and must be implemented. According to the Governor, this institutional framework promotes transparency, accountability, continuity, and respect for the rule of law within higher education institutions.

In a special message to the students of the University of Turbat, Governor Mandokhail encouraged them to cultivate a lifelong passion for learning and reading.

He also stressed that all relevant agencies must remain fully prepared to respond effectively to any emergency situation.

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Iranian interior minister meets Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz in Islamabad

NEWS DESK: Iran's interior minister, Eskandar Momeni, held a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House in Islamabad on Tuesday.

According to an X post by the PM's Office (PMO), the meeting between the two was commenced. The statement did not elaborate any further on the meeting.

Momeni arrived in Pakistan on an official visit on Monday night and was received by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad. He is accompanied by a high-level delegation.

State-run Pakistan TV reported that he would also meet Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir during the visit.

Earlier reports had suggested that Momeni was likely to engage with Pakistani officials who previously mediated a now-collapsed interim ceasefire between the US and Iran.

Prior to his meeting with PM Shehbaz, a parade was held by police in Momeni's honour in Islamabad, a post on the interior ministry's X account said. He was accompanied by Minister of State for Interior Faisal Chaudhry on the occasion.

Chaudhry also accompanied Momeni to the Pakistan Monument in Islamabad, where the Federal Constabulary contingent presented a guard of honour to the



visiting dignitary.

Momeni's visit comes as mediator Pakistan continues its diplomatic efforts to rescue the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed last month between the US and Iran, intended to end the war between the two sides that began with US-Israeli attacks on Iran in late February.

But hostilities resumed soon, with the US carrying out strikes in Iran for the 10th consecutive day late on Monday, following which Iran targeted US radar and air defence installations in the Gulf on Tuesday.

After US President Donald Trump's remarks earlier this month that the ceasefire between Washington and Tehran was "over", his Iranian counterpart, Masoud Pezeshkian also said on Monday that they were fighting a "full-scale war". Tehran has blamed the US for breaching

the MoU. Despite the latest attacks, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghai has said diplomatic exchanges with the US via mediators are ongoing.

Meanwhile, as its truce with the US collapsed, Tehran reimposed its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, while Washington hit back by again blockading Iran's ports.

Yemen's Houthi rebels entered the fray on Monday, announcing an immediate maritime embargo on Saudi Arabia, opening a new front in the conflict.

Saudi's foreign ministry condemned the Houthi maritime blockade and asserted Riyadh's backing for Yemen's Aden-based government.

\$10bn trade target Islamabad has assumed an increasingly prominent diplomatic role in the US-Iran crisis, hosting talks, relaying

messages between the parties and helping broker a temporary understanding earlier this year.

Beyond diplomacy, Pakistan and Iran have sought to deepen economic cooperation through higher bilateral trade, greater connectivity between Pakistani ports and Iran, and renewed discussion of the long-delayed Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline.

After his arrival in Islamabad on Monday night, Momeni spoke to the media in Persian. An English translation of his conversation, carried by Iran's Mehr news agency, stated that he highlighted the need for

Pakistan and Iran to expand their relations, and that he highlighted the need for Pakistan and Iran to expand their relations, and that he highlighted the need for Pakistan and Iran to expand their relations.

He said that both countries aim to triple annual bilateral trade from \$3bn to \$10bn and that the visit was aimed at "developing relations".

A total of four ani-

Monsoon rains kill 12 in KP in past 3 days; nationwide flood warning issued

NEWS DESK: The on-going torrential rainfall in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has killed 12 people in three days, while 18 people have been injured, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said on Tuesday.

Power supply has been disrupted in several regions of the province due to the weather conditions, Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) said. Furthermore, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) issued a nationwide alert warning of flash floods, urban flooding and landslides from July 21 to 24.

The PDMA report, detailing losses and damages for the Sunday to Tuesday period, showed that five men, two women and five children had been killed by the heavy rains.

Half of the deaths were reported from Khyber district where a vehicle carrying Afghan families was swept away in a flash flood on Monday.

Two children lost their lives in Mardan and a man died in Peshawar over the past three days.

Furthermore, 10 men, four women and many children were injured during the same period.

Khyber accounted for half of those wounded, followed by Mardan where five were hurt in rain-related incidents, and four injured in Torghar.

The spokesperson added that power supply in Peshawar's Gulberg, University Town, Cantt, Warsak and Shahdadar

areas was also disrupted, adding that rain was hampering power restoration efforts.

"Pesco staff worked through the night and have restored power to 42 feeders," the statement said.

Pesco Chief Executive Officer Akhtar Hamid Khan directed operational teams to remain on high alert, and all nec-

essary measures in vulnerable areas amid forecasts of heavy monsoon rains.

The NDMA warned of flash floods in rivers, local streams and mountain waterways in KP, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Punjab and north eastern Balochistan.

In GB, districts of



several districts of KP due to heavy rain, Pesco said on Tuesday.

According to a statement by a Pesco spokesperson, rain had continued for 12 hours across Peshawar, Khyber, Mardan, Swabi and Swat.

Among the affected feeders, 71 were in Peshawar Circle, 22 in Mardan, 33 in Khyber, 10 in Swabi and 10 in Swat Circle.

The spokesperson added that power supply in Peshawar's Gulberg, University Town, Cantt, Warsak and Shahdadar

essential equipment has been provided to operational teams to expedite power restoration, the spokesperson said.

Countrywide alert for urban, river flooding and landslides. The NDMA also issued a nationwide alert warning of flash floods, urban flooding, landslides and rising river flows across several parts of Pakistan from July 21 to 24 (Tuesday to Friday).

It directed provincial and district authorities to remain on high alert, deploy emergency teams and ensure pre-

vention measures in vulnerable areas amid forecasts of heavy monsoon rains.

the IHC has been scheduled for hearing on July 24, while Justice Siddiqui argued that the case was scheduled due to the hearing in the SC.

The couple's lawyer pointed out that the court remarked that such an adjournment would be tantamount to monitoring the IHC's proceedings.

The SC, while adjourning the hearing, ruled that if an emergency arises the lawyers can file a petition for an early hearing.

After the hearing, Advocate Siddiqui, accompanied by former minister and Imaan's mother Shireen Mazari, cut a chocolate cake on the occasion of Imaan's birthday.

Rights activists Afrasiab Khattak, Farhatullah Babar and Tahir Abdullah, and several other lawyers were also present.

The controversy at the centre of the case stems from a complaint filed under Peca on Aug 12, 2025 by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency's (NCCIA) Islamabad assistant director (investigating officer).

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JI to block highways nationwide on Aug 7 over inflation, rising fuel prices

NEWS DESK: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Chief Hafiz Naeem Rehman on Tuesday announced a nationwide blockade of major highways on August 7 as part of the party's campaign against inflation, petroleum levy and rising fuel prices, warning that any attempt by the government to stop the peaceful protest could push the movement towards an anti-government campaign.

Amid volatility in global oil rates on the back of renewed hostilities in the Middle East, the government decided to switch to a daily fuel price review mechanism on Friday.

He alleged that the government had empowered the OGRA to determine petroleum prices on a daily basis, despite the fact that the petroleum levy had no legal linkage with the regulator. According to him, the government was collecting

to pass. Criticising the increase in petroleum prices, the JI chief said the government was using the war as a pretext to raise fuel prices, even though the petroleum levy and other taxes were unrelated to the conflict. He claimed that if the petroleum levy and other taxes were abolished, the price of petrol should not exceed Rs250 per litre.

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Expressing concern over the security situation in Balochistan, he said the government could not evade responsibility by simply blaming foreign elements. If external actors were involved, he added, it was the state's responsibility to stop them. He said the Balochistan issue re-

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SC adjourns hearing on Imaan, Hadi's plea against IHC decision on sentence suspension

NEWS DESK: As the Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday adjourned the hearing in the controversial social media posts case against Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazri and her husband Hadi Ali Chhatra, senior lawyers and well-wishers celebrated incarcerated Imaan's birthday outside court premises.

On January 24, rights lawyers Imaan and Hadi were sentenced by an Islamabad sessions court to a total of 17 years in jail on multiple charges under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca).

Imaan and Hadi last month sought an early hearing of their challenge to a February 19 Islamabad High Court (IHC) decision in the social media posts case. In that order, the court had denied their plea for the suspension of their

sentences while issuing notices on it.

After the SC on July 6 issued notices on the couple's pleas for an early hearing, a three-judge SC bench led by Justice Muhammad Ali

bench responded that there was a difference between regulating and issuing orders.

During the hearing, the additional attorney general told the bench that the case in

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