



641 Afghan combatants & Fitna Al Khawarij killed in operation Ghazab lil-Haq: Atta Tarar



British High Commissioner calls on Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif



Maryam Nawaz approves new law to eliminate illegal weapons in Punjab

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Finance minister stresses 'more balanced' system where capital markets complement banking sector

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday emphasised that Pakistan must gradually move toward a "more balanced financial system", in which capital markets would complement the banking sector in meeting the economy's financing needs.

The finance czar expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the Capital Market Development Council (CMDC), according to a press release issued by the finance ministry.

The meeting was convened to review the "progress on reforms aimed at strengthening Pakistan's capital markets, with particular focus on the development of the corporate debt market and expanding the role of capital markets in financing economic growth", the press

release said.

It added that in his opening remarks at the meeting, the finance minister underscored that a "strong and well-functioning capital market was vital for sustainable economic development" as it enabled corporations to access long-term financing while offering diversified investment opportunities to both institutional and retail investors.

"He emphasised that Pakistan must gradually move towards a more balanced financial system where capital markets complement the banking sector in meeting the financing needs of the economy," the press release said. The finance minister noted that the development of a vibrant corporate bond market would play a critical role in mobilising.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, meeting with a delegation of leading textile exporters and industry stakeholders led by Haroon Sharif, Chairman of the Pakistan Regional Economic Forum, at the Finance Division.

Drones fall near Dubai airport amid Iran crisis

PEAK POINT



ABU DHABI: Two drones came down in the vicinity of Dubai International Airport (DXB) on Wednesday, injuring four people, Dubai's media office said, as attacks on

infrastructure across the Gulf continued on the 12th day of the Iran crisis, which has caused widespread disruption to global air traffic.

"Authorities confirm that two drones fell in the vicinity of Dubai International Airport (DXB) a short while ago," the media office posted on X, adding that air traffic is operating as normal. The attack resulted in minor injuries to two Ghanaian nationals and one Bangladeshi national, as well as moderate injuries to one Indian national, it added.

The outbreak of the US-Israel war against Iran has led to flight cancellations, rescheduling and re-routing for airlines across the globe, as most airspaces in the Middle East, including Qatar, remain shut over missile and drone concerns. It has also led to an energy crisis that has led to a spike in fuel prices. UAE airlines like Dubai's Emirates and Abu Dhabi's.

Trump says Iran war will end 'soon' as there is 'practically nothing left to target'

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Wednesday again signaled there could be a swift ending to the US war on Iran, saying there is little left in the country for US forces to attack.

There is "practically nothing left to target" and the war will end "soon," Trump was quoted as saying in an interview with Axios. "Any time I want it to end, it will end."

Trump has given repeated mixed messages about the timing and aims of the war but on Monday he also said the ending could come "soon."

The US president faces negative domestic polls and fears over the

global economic disruption from the US-



Israeli operation against Iran. Accusations that the White House launched the war without preparing for consequences, including Iranian disruption of oil tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, are putting the 79-year-old Republican under political pressure.

Speculation is

mounting that Trump is ready to fight back.

The United States and Israel should "consider the possibility that they will be engaged in a long-term war of attrition that will destroy the entire American economy and the world economy, and will cause all of its military capabilities to be eroded to the point of destruction," Ali Fadaei, advisor to the commander-in-chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, told state television.

Just Wednesday, the Revolutionary Guards said they had struck a Liberia-flagged vessel and a Thai bulk carrier in the Hormuz maritime chokepoint.

Iran denies new supreme leader is injured

PEAK POINT

IRAN: Iran has dismissed reports claiming that its new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, was injured during the ongoing conflict. According to Al Jazeera, Yousef Pezeshkian — a government adviser and the son of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian — said Khamenei is "safe and sound." In a message shared on his Instagram Story, Pezeshkian said he had heard rumours that Khamenei had been wounded. After contacting people with relevant connections, he said he was told that Khamenei had not been harmed.

MNAs' salaries cut by 25pc as National Assembly joins austerity drive

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Secretariat has implemented comprehensive austerity and fuel conservation measures aimed at ensuring prudent utilisation of public resources, reducing energy consumption, and supporting the government's national austerity drive. Under the measures, the salaries of MNAs has been cut by 25 per cent. According to a notification issued on Wednesday, only 20pc of staff will perform their duties in person, while the remaining 80pc will work virtually from home through.

Strict security in place in Karachi for Youm-i-Ali

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Several routes in the city, including the M.A. Jinnah Road, were closed for traffic as the main Youm-i-Ali procession set off from Nishtar Park on Wednesday. Strict security arrangements are in place as the country observes Youm-i-Ali to mark the martyrdom day of Hazrat Ali. As per a press release issued by the Karachi Traffic Police (KTP), the main procession will conclude at Imambargah Hussainia Iranian in Kharadar after passing through its dedicated route.

"Due to security reasons, M.A. Jinnah Road from Gurumandir to Tower and from Saddar Dawakhana, Empress Market to Regal Chowk will remain closed," it

added. In an update at



11:34am, the KTP said both sides of the M.A. Jinnah Road between Numaish and Tower were closed for traffic due to the main procession's route.

It further said that all turns and roads from Empress Market towards Regal Chowk were also shut for traffic. According to the press

release, in District Central, citizens coming from

(Martin Road). Vehicles heading to PP Chowranghi from Hassan Square could go from New Town to Kashmir Road, Society Light Signal (Shahrah-i-Quaideen) or could head to Nishtar Road by taking the Jail Flyover from Teen Hatti.

For District East, the KTP suggested commuters going from Sharea Faisal to Numaish to turn right at the Society Light Signal towards Kashmir Road and use the Jail Flyover.

Vehicles heading from Central Jail on Jamshed Road towards M.A. Jinnah Road were told to take the route from "Gurumandir towards Bahaduryar Jang Road Soldier Bazaar, Holy Family Hospital, Coast Guard".

Operation Ghazab lil-Haq: Pak Army targets Afghan Taliban posts in Zhob

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Army carried out a strong retaliatory action against militant positions in the Zhob sector along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, security sources said on Wednesday.

According to officials, Pakistani forces targeted Posts No. 2 and 3, used by Afghan Taliban in the Zhob District sector. The swift and forceful response forced the militants to flee their positions, abandoning their weapons and equipment. Security sources added that Pakistani troops seized Russian-made 73mm HGL-9 heavy grenade launchers from the positions held by the militants. Officials further stated that the ongoing operations are aimed at countering militant elements.



SPORTS



Tamasha smashes previous records with 33.5 million reach in T20 World Cup



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Tamasha, Pakistan's leading digital entertainment platform by JazzWorld, achieved an unprecedented milestone during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, reaching 33.5 million users across the tournament, the highest ever recorded by any OTT platform for a cricket event in Pakistan. The record-setting performance further cements Tamasha's position as the country's most popular digital destination for live sports, said a press release issued on Wednesday. The platform also secured an impressive 70 percent share of digital

viewership among competing OTT platforms, demonstrating overwhelming audience preference for Tamasha as the go-to platform for streaming live cricket. At the peak of the tournament, 12.7 million users tuned in to watch the highly anticipated Pakistan vs India clash on February 15, once again highlighting cricket's unmatched ability to unite fans across the country. A viewership analytics dashboard was also made available for advertising brands and agencies, providing continuous visibility into key audience insights and performance metrics. The dashboard can be

accessed here: <https://tamashaweb.com/analytics> Tamasha's popularity was reflected beyond live viewership as well. During the tournament, the platform emerged as the Top Free App on both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, while also generating over 12 million organic clicks through Google Search, indicating massive nationwide interest in accessing matches through Tamasha's digital ecosystem. Celebrating the achievement, Aamer Ejaz, Chief AI Officer at JazzWorld, said: "The milestone of reaching 33.5 million users during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup

is a testament to the accelerating shift of Pakistani audiences toward digital-first sports consumption. At Tamasha, we are proud to deliver a seamless and immersive viewing experience for millions of fans, ensuring that every defining moment of the game is accessible anytime, anywhere, and on any screen." Innovation stayed at the heart of Tamasha's tournament coverage. For the first time in an ICC event, viewers had the option to watch matches with Urdu commentary, giving viewers the option to enjoy matches in their native language.

Mohsin Naqvi announces employment, medical support for national hockey players



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has announced employment opportunities for national hockey players.

Naqvi made the announcement during a meeting with members of the Pakistan hockey team, where he congratulated them on qualifying for the FIH Hockey World Cup after an eight-year gap.

Praising the team's strong performance in the World Cup qualifying tournament, Naqvi said the PCB would also cover medical treatment for injured hockey players.

He added that the board would extend support to players in terms of fitness and medical facilities.

Naqvi further stated that the PCB would continue to cooperate with hockey players as it had done in the past and would play its role in providing them with as many facilities as possible.

On the occasion, national team head coach Khawaja Junaid thanked Naqvi for his support, saying it had greatly boosted the morale of the players.

"You supported the players during difficult times, which has been a great encouragement for them," he said.

Nahid Rana takes 5 wickets as Bangladesh crush Pakistan in ODI opener



PEAK POINT

BANGLADESH: Bangladesh pace sensation Nahid Rana claimed his first five-wicket haul in one-day internationals to lead his team to a crushing eight-wicket win over Pakistan in their opening match on Wednesday.

Rana returned figures of 5-24 to skittle out Pakistan for 114, while a total Bangladesh overhauled in 15.1

overs of the 50-over contest in Mirpur to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Opener Tanzid Hasan hammered an unbeaten 67 off 42 balls and put on a second-wicket partnership of 82 with Najmul Hossain Shanto, who made 27, in a statement win. Saif Hassan fell early for four, while Litton Das remained unbeaten on three

Mustafizur Rahman took one wicket each. Number eight Faheem Ashraf offered brief resistance with his 37 before being dismissed by Mustafizur as Pakistan were eventually bowled out in 30.4 overs.

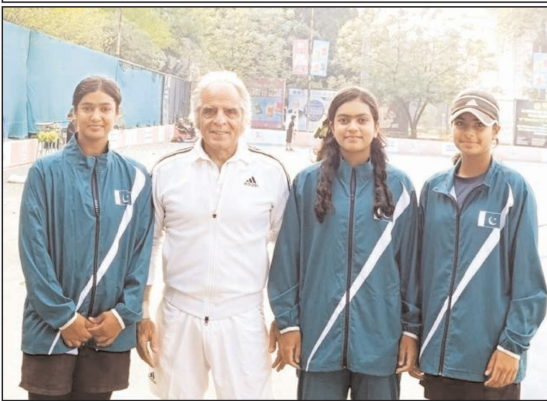
The performance marked a breakthrough in Nahid's young ODI career since his debut in 2024. He had taken only five wickets in his first five matches before producing the five-wicket haul in his sixth appearance. Nahid is now only the second Bangladeshi bowler to take a five-wicket haul against Pakistan in ODIs after Mustafizur's 5-75 during the 2019 World Cup.

He was ably supported by captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who took 3-29 with his off-spin. Senior quicks Taskin Ahmed and

Mustafizur Rahman took one wicket each. Number eight Faheem Ashraf offered brief resistance with his 37 before being dismissed by Mustafizur as Pakistan were eventually bowled out in 30.4 overs.

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Pakistan girls finish in top 8 at ITF World Juniors Pre-Qualifiers



Tapmad secures exclusive PSL 11 streaming rights, expands global digital reach

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital streaming platform tapmad has secured exclusive Subscription Video-on-Demand (SVOD) rights in Pakistan for Pakistan Super League Season 11, along with exclusive global Video-on-Demand (VOD) rights for PSL highlights and clips.

The rights were obtained through a strategic partnership with Walee, which holds the official media rights for the upcoming PSL season. Through this collaboration, tapmad aims to bring a premium digital viewing experience to millions of cricket fans in Pakistan and across the world.

With the SVOD rights for PSL 11 in Pakistan, tapmad subscribers will be able to watch match content through the platform's premium subscription service.

The service promises uninterrupted, ad-free streaming in high-definition quality, allowing fans to enjoy PSL matches and related content anytime and anywhere.

The SVOD model is designed to enhance the user



experience by eliminating commercial breaks and ensuring smooth streaming across devices. This development reflects the growing shift toward digital sports consumption, where viewers increasingly prefer flexible, on-demand access rather than traditional broadcast schedules.

Beyond Pakistan, tapmad has also secured exclusive global digital VOD rights for PSL highlights, clips and related digital content derived from the official broadcast feed. This means the platform will distribute match highlights and key moments worldwide through its digital channels, making PSL content accessible to international cricket audiences.

The move is expected to significantly expand the global digital footprint of the Pakistan Super League by ensuring that fans outside Pakistan can quickly access match highlights and important clips from anywhere in the world.

Babar Azam takes 'temporary break' from cricket, skips National T20 Cup



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan star batsman Babar Azam has reportedly decided to take a short break from cricket following guidance from the

national team management. During this period, Reports said Babar has begun individual net sessions with personal coaches to work on improving his batting. He is preparing with the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) in mind, where he will open for Peshawar Zalmi.

his unavailability. During this period, Babar has begun individual net sessions with personal coaches to work on improving his batting. He is preparing with the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) in mind, where he will open for Peshawar Zalmi.



Pakistan targets 50% emission reduction by 2035 under climate plan requiring \$565.7 billion investment

NADEEM TANOLIS

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has announced an ambitious plan to reduce its projected greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2035, a goal expected to require \$565.7 billion in climate-related investment, according to details shared with parliament by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination. The commitment forms part of Pakistan's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in September 2025, outlining the country's updated strategy to combat climate change while transitioning toward a low carbon econo-

my. Officials informed lawmakers that the emission reduction target will be achieved through a combination of domestic measures and international financial support. Out of the total target, 17 percent of emission reductions will be achieved through Pakistan's own resources, while the remaining 33 percent will depend on international climate financing, technology transfer and global cooperation. The government has also set a target to generate 62 percent of electricity from renewable and hydropower sources by 2035, signaling a major shift in the country's energy mix away from fossil fuels. Authorities further clarified that no new imported coal-based power plants will be established

in Pakistan after 2025, as part of efforts to curb carbon emissions and reduce reliance on high-emission energy sources. The climate plan also outlines broader reforms in sectors including energy, agriculture, water management, urban planning and disaster risk reduction. Officials said climate considerations are being integrated into national development planning through the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) as well as provincial development plans. Pakistan's climate strategy also involves strengthening adaptation and resilience measures through initiatives such as climate-smart agriculture, ecosystem restoration, early warning systems and nature-based solu-

tions to address the impacts of climate change. Officials noted that Pakistan remains one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change despite contributing a relatively small share to global greenhouse gas emissions. The government therefore views international financial support as essential for achieving its climate targets. In addition to emission reduction goals, the country has ratified multiple global environmental treaties aimed at controlling pollution and protecting ecosystems. These include the Basel Convention on hazardous waste, the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on hazardous chemicals and the

Minamata Convention on mercury. Pakistan is also a signatory to the Paris Agreement, under which countries are required to periodically submit updated climate commitments and strategies to limit global temperature rise. Officials further informed parliament that Pakistan ratified the Kigali Amendment in 2025, committing to gradually phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), with reduction targets of 10 percent by 2032 and up to 85 percent by 2047. The country has already achieved a 67.5 percent reduction in hydrochlorofluorocarbon consumption by 2025, demonstrating progress in controlling ozone depleting substances. Environmental regulations have also been tightened in

other sectors, including a ban on pre-blended polyol containing R-141b effective January 31, 2025, and strict limits on mercury levels in cosmetic products such as skin creams. Officials emphasized that achieving the emission reduction target will require sustained policy reforms, investment in renewable energy, improvements in energy efficiency and stronger environmental governance across industrial and urban sectors. Lawmakers noted that while the targets are ambitious, the success of the plan will depend heavily on international climate financing and effective implementation of environmental policies at both federal and provincial levels.

Eight Months without salaries: Senate questions ministries over Pak PWD staff payments

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works expressed serious concern after it was revealed that Pakistan Public Works Department (Pak PWD) maintenance staff transferred to various ministries have not received their salaries and arrears for the past eight months, despite a Federal Cabinet decision issued on 6 September 2024 directing immediate transfer and payment of dues. The issue was discussed in a meeting of the committee chaired by Senator

Nasir Mehmood at Parliament Lodges, where ministries were asked to explain delays in implementing the cabinet directive regarding the absorption of Pak PWD maintenance employees. According to the briefing presented by the Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works, several departments have begun complying with the decision, while others are still awaiting financial approvals from the Finance Division. The committee was informed that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Intelligence Bureau (IB), and

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) have already complied with the directives. The Intelligence Bureau accepted eight employees, issued appointment orders after approval by the Director General, and dispatched appointment letters. Officials stated that salary bills will be processed shortly, while one case remains pending because the employee is currently posted in Karachi instead of Balochistan. The pension process for a deceased employee has also been initiated. Officials further informed

the committee that the Auditor General of Pakistan forwarded a list of 20 employees to the Ministry through the Director General Pak PWD on 9 March 2026. Once the Finance Division releases funds, salary bills will be generated and payments are expected to begin within two days. Representatives of the Ministry of Defence told the committee that seven employees fall under their jurisdiction, and the matter has been referred to the Finance Division for allocation of budgetary resources. The Cabinet

Division has also approached the Finance Division for funds required to process salary payments. Meanwhile, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) informed the committee that it received the staff list only recently. Officials stated that the initial communication mentioned 21 employees, but the revised list contains 49 employees, requiring additional time for internal verification and administrative processing. The committee was also told that several other departments have started receiving staff lists and have initiated

compliance with the federal cabinet decision. Chairman Committee Senator Nasir Mehmood reviewed the status of each ministry individually and directed all departments to expedite the process, stressing that delays in salary payments must be resolved immediately. He emphasized that the committee would continue strict monitoring of the matter to ensure that all transferred Pak PWD maintenance employees receive their pending salaries and arrears without further delay.

Opinion & Editorial



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Fluid frontiers

Aisha Khan
THE world's water systems are changing before our eyes. Glaciers are retreating, monsoons are growing erratic, floods are more intense, and droughts more prolonged. These shifts are not simply environmental; they are profoundly political. As the hydrological cycle becomes unstable, the politics of water are hardening. The question is no longer about who controls land, but who controls flow.

In the 21st century, new theatres of conflict will emerge around river basins, glacier-fed watersheds and aquifers. Headwaters and dam infrastructure will carry strategic weight comparable to ports or oil pipelines. Water management, once the domain of engineers and irrigation departments, is already moving into the realm of national security thinking and military planning. Water scarcity and uncertainty will be increasingly leveraged for control.

Nowhere is this dynamic as stark as in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya, Asia's great "water tower". Its glaciers and snowfields feed 10 major river systems, including the Indus, sustaining nearly two billion people downstream. The fragility of the HKH manifested by accelerated glacier melt, increase in the number of hazardous glacial lakes and extreme rainfall events are intensifying risks. In such a landscape, even minor dis-

ruptions can cascade into humanitarian and ecological crises. The rivers here are not mere channels of water; they are also sacred geographies and civilisational lifelines that define culture, faith and identity.

However, in recent times, the imbalance between supply and demand of water has increased riparian tensions escalating conflict potential. In the 21st century, new theatres of conflict will emerge around river basins, glacier-fed watersheds and aquifers.

The Indus basin embodies the geopolitics of hydrology and mounting strain between riparian relations. The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), signed in 1960 with World Bank support, divided the six rivers of the Indus system between India and Pakistan with certain rights preserved for both sides. Despite wars and prolonged hostility, the treaty survived. It was long cited as proof that water could remain insulated from politics.

Today, however, the strain is visible. Disputes over Indian hydroelectric projects such as the Baglihar and Kishanganga dams have triggered arbitration and neutral expert proceedings under the treaty's dispute-resolution mechanisms. Pakistan has raised concerns about design features that could potentially allow upstream control of timing and flows. India maintains that these are run-of-the-river projects consistent with

treaty provisions. Legally, these disagreements fall within the treaty framework. Politically, however, they feed deeper anxieties in a climate-stressed basin. For Pakistan, the Indus is existential. Nearly 90 per cent of its agriculture depends on the system, and its population (over 240 million) relies on its waters for food, energy, and daily survival. Any upstream infrastructure that alters the timing or volume of flows, particularly during critical sowing seasons, carries economic and social implications. In a country already facing groundwater depletion and catastrophic floods, such as those of 2022, hydrological uncertainty magnifies national insecurity. A more troubling trend is the linkage of water cooperation to allegations of cross-border terrorism. When political rhetoric in India suggests revisiting or suspending treaty cooperation in response to security incidents, it conflates two separate domains governed by distinct legal frameworks into one punitive narrative. This is a dangerous precedent. Weaponising water, or even threatening to do so, erodes the normative firewall that has normally insulated the IWT from broader hostility. In a nuclear-armed region, actions perceived as threatening survival, risk becoming red lines. Escalation dynamics in such contexts are unpredictable and perilous.

Courtesy Dawn

A biased report

Omair Aimen

In conflict zones, the first casualty is often clarity. When, recently, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan expressed concern over alleged civilian casualties along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, it performed a duty intrinsic to its humanitarian mandate. Protecting non-combatants is not optional; it is foundational to international law and moral responsibility. Yet concern divorced from context can harden into selective outrage. A statement that measures impact without examining cause risks presenting a fragmented portrait of a deeply layered conflict. The tragedy of civilian harm must be acknowledged without hesitation, but so too must the chain of events that produces it. Civilian protection cannot be meaningfully defended if the forces that endanger civilians are left unnamed or unexamined. For more than a decade, Pakistan has confronted a relentless insurgency spearheaded by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan. These assaults are not abstract security incidents; they are funerals in Peshawar, grieving households in Quetta, and shuttered markets in Bannu. Police officers, soldiers, teachers, labourers and children have fallen victim to bombings and targeted killings that seek to fracture the social fabric. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace in its Global Terrorism Index 2025, more than one thousand lives were lost to terrorism in Pakistan in 2024, with the TTP responsible for over half of those fatalities. The Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies has similarly documented hundreds of attacks annually, underscoring that this is not episodic violence but a sustained campaign. Behind every statistic lies a family permanently altered, a community forced to absorb another shock. What complicates this security landscape is the persistence of cross-border sanctuaries. Various United Nations assessments have acknowledged that Afghanistan's de facto authorities preside over an environment in which TTP elements operate with relative freedom, maintaining fighters, financial channels, training facilities and logistical bases in provinces such as Kunar, Nangarhar, Khost and Paktika.

Courtesy Tribune

Lebanon on fire

WHILE the entire Gulf region has become an active warzone, repercussions of this conflict have spread to the Mediterranean too, as Israel has stepped up its brutal campaign against Lebanon, particularly the Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah. Though the latest round of violence in Lebanon was sparked after Hezbollah targeted Israel following the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, it should be remembered that Israel had violated the ceasefire reached in November 2024 thousands of times, killing over 100 civilians. Therefore, it seemed only a matter of time before hostilities resumed. The fresh Israeli aggression has had a devastating effect on Lebanon; some 700,000 people are displaced and living in "cold and overcrowded shelters", according to Unicef. Moreover, Human Rights Watch has said Tel Aviv used white phosphorus to target civilians in Lebanon, which is considered illegal by many scholars of war. The Israeli brutality has even caught the EU's foreign policy chief off guard; while Western states often take a lenient view of Tel Aviv's monstrous violence, Kaja Kullias has termed the Zionist response in Lebanon "heavy-handed". Though the Lebanese president has criticised Hezbollah's involvement in attacks targeting Israel, the fact is that the Arab nation's army is unable to defend its borders against an ever-expansionist Israel.

Tanveer reaffirms commitment to transform agriculture research system



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to transform Pakistan's agricultural research system into a globally competitive, efficient and innovation-driven network, ensuring that scientific research delivers tangible solutions for farmers, industry and the nation's food security agenda.

The minister emphasized the urgent need to modernize and restructure research institutions across the

country to meet international standards, boost productivity, and strengthen food security and export competitiveness.

The minister chaired a high-level meeting with Dr. Syed Murtaza Hassan Andrabi, Chairman of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and discussed a comprehensive reform of Pakistan's national agricultural research system.

The minister reiterated that the reform aims to reposition Pakistan's agricultural research system as a strategic enabler, moving away from

budget-driven accountability to an impact-focused model that measures performance based on productivity, adoption of technology, commercialization, and export growth.

He stressed the need for robust coordination between all research bodies, systematic international partnerships, and merit-based human capital development to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and scientific excellence.

Under the reform, Pakistan will establish Centers of Excellence focusing on climate-resilient crops, livestock improvement, advanced food processing, AI and precision agriculture, and sustainable land, water, and energy management, he added.

He said that these centers are designed to encourage innovation, accelerate the commercialization of research, and position Pakistan as a regional leader in agricultural science and technology.

The minister also highlighted that overlapping mandates between federal and provincial research

Lahore-Sialkot Motorway approved from 2 to 3 lanes

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan presided over a high-level National Highway Authority (NHA) meeting on Wednesday, where several landmark decisions regarding the country's Motorway network were approved. During the meeting, it was formally decided to commence work on expanding the Lahore-Sialkot Motorway from 2 lanes to a 3-lane facility. Similarly, the Federal Minister issued directives to accelerate construction on the Sialkot-Kharian and Islamabad Motorway, confirming that these routes will also be developed as 3-lane dual carriageways. Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized a new policy standard, stating that no future Motorway project will be constructed with fewer than 3 lanes on each side, totaling a 6-lane configuration. He underscored that infrastructure planning must proactively address the nation's future travel requirements rather than just current demand. The minister further instructed the NHA to expedite work on the Sialkot-Rawalpindi Motorway in collaboration with the Frontier Works Organization (FWO). He noted that the completion of this vital link

would significantly reduce the traffic burden on the M-2 and drastically improve the travel experience between Lahore and Islamabad.

By providing a more direct route, the distance between the two major cities will be reduced by approximately 100 kilometers, saving commuters at least one hour of travel time, he added. In a move to bolster religious tourism, the meeting also reviewed plans to link Kartarpur and Nankana Sahib directly to the Motorway network. These new highways will also feature 3 lanes and high-standard safety fencing to ensure secure and efficient transit for pilgrims.

Highlighting the economic potential of religious tourism, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan remarked that these initiatives would encourage a large influx of the Sikh Community from Europe, North America, and beyond.

To accommodate these visitors, the Government envisions the development of 3, 4, and 5-star hotels alongside modern shopping malls near these holy sites.

He pointed out that such infrastructure presents a massive opportunity for foreign investment in the hospitality sector. Consequently, he directed the NHA.



ISLAMABAD: A high level meeting of National Highway Authority chaired by Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan.

Rising energy costs threaten to industry, say experts- call to shift from gas to electricity and renewable energy

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Experts at a webinar called for gradual shift from gas to electricity and renewable energy to safeguard long-term industrial competitiveness, as Pakistan's industrial sector is under severe pressure due to rising energy prices at global level, structural inefficiencies, and policy constraints. The webinar, titled: "Rising Energy Costs and the Future of Sustainable Industry in Pakistan" was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). Dr

Sajid Amin Javed, SDPI Deputy Executive Director, said there is an uncertainty about oil prices fluctuation and availability. Markets now anticipate three possible trajectories: a 50% probability of prices reaching USD 130-150/bbl in the near term, a 10-20% chance that they will maintain this level for 6-8 months, and a 30-40% likelihood of stabilizing around USD 110-120/bbl (with most likely USD 110 as the expected average). For Pakistan, he said, this could cause 10-12% inflation, increase in import bill by

roughly USD 6 billion, and slowdown in GDP growth to 2.5-2.8%, while prolonged LNG disruptions, particularly given reliance on Qatari supply, would place additional pressure on energy-intensive industries. Engr. Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, Head of Energy Unit at SDPI, said there are three waves of impact: first, a structural sickness as rising energy costs and IMF-mandated reforms disrupted industries reliant on self-generation and shifted energy toward non-productive uses; second, a "relief that wasn't," where a

February 2026 tariff cut of nearly Rs 4 per unit was largely offset by a Fuel Charges Adjustment (FCA) of Rs 1.78, compounded by a Rs 1,243 per MMBtu levy on off-grid captive power, prompting formal protests from textile exporters over competitiveness; and third, the ongoing geopolitical shockwave, with WTI crude swinging from approximately USD 75 to USD 110 per barrel before settling at USD 84-90, signaling structural uncertainty. He called for an urgent need for policy reforms, industrial electrification, and renewable energy

adoption. Ms Saleha Qureshi, Lead of the Pakistan Industrial Decarbonization Programme at SDPI, noted that LNG prices have surged to \$15.77 per mmbtu and Pakistan imports approximately 80 per cent of liquid fuels and 20 per cent of its power mix, increasing the system's vulnerability. Rising petrol prices, with the recent hike of around Rs55 per litre, have already pushed logistics costs up by 12 per cent, creating a "triple shock" for industries from electricity tariffs, gas prices, and feed-

stock costs. Syed Mohammed Osama Rizvi, Global Market and Product Strategist at Primary Vision, said the country's refining configuration is misaligned with demand. Most refineries still operate on outdated hydro-skimming technology, producing furnace oil rather than high-demand fuels such as high-speed diesel, leaving the economy reliant on imports for 40-45 per cent of refined products. Sheikh Mohammed Iqbal, former CEO of Pakistan Textile Council, said rising energy costs coupled with taxes.

641 Afghan combatants & Fitna Al Khawarij killed in operation Ghazab lil-Haq: Atta Tarar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday that the security forces have killed 641 combatants of the Afghan Taliban regime as well as the Fitna Al Khawarij during Operation Ghazab lil-Haq. Providing a summary of Afghan Taliban regime and Fitna Al Khawarij's losses at 16:00 hours, the minister said as many as 243 posts of them had been destroyed, while 42 others were "captured and destroyed".

He said that over 855 Afghan operatives were injured during the Operation Ghazab lil-Haq



(Righteous Fury). Around 219 tanks, armoured vehicles, and artillery guns have also been destroyed during the operation, he added. The minister noted that around 65 terrorists and terror support locations across Afghanistan were also targeted by air, effectively.

British High Commissioner calls on Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott, called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Wednesday.

Both sides expressed desire to further deepen bilateral relations between the two countries, said a press release.

The meeting provided an

opportunity to exchange views on matters of mutual interest including regional security situation and collaboration in the fields of defence and aviation.

The meeting concluded with a shared understanding to continue constructive engagement and further solidify the longstanding partnership between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Governor Kundi meets Maulana Fazlur Rehman, discusses political situation, law and order in KP



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has called on Maulana Fazlur Rehman, chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), at his residence in Islamabad.

During the meeting, the two leaders held a one-on-one discussion and exchanged views on the overall political situation in the country and other matters of mutual interest.

They also expressed serious concern over the prevailing law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The leaders termed the deteriorating security situation as a result of the provincial government's lack of attention towards the affairs of the province.

Both leaders emphasized the need for effective measures to restore peace and stability in the province.