



MQM's Khalid Maqbool meets President Asif Ali Zardari



Gilani urges global action to combat Islamophobia



Islamophobia condemnable, Muslim countries should become symbol of unity: Maryam Nawaz

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PM Shehbaz directs formulation of strategy for exporting surplus food items to Gulf countries

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif issued directives on Sunday for the formulation of a strategy for exporting surplus food items to Gulf countries while making sure that Pakistan's nutritional needs were not affected.

The premier gave the instruction while chairing a meeting convened to review the "food situation" in the country and the export of commodities available in excess in view of the "changing regional situation", a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

The meeting was held against the backdrop of an ongoing war in the Middle East, which began with the US and Israel

launching deadly attacks on Iran on February 28. The conflict has widened since, with Iran carrying out retaliatory strikes in Gulf countries to target US assets and bases. The conflict has also resulted in a global fuel crunch, with the disruption of traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic maritime corridor through which nearly 25 per cent of the world's oil had been passing. Given the situation, the government has taken a series of austerity measures to curb fuel usage and reduce spending.

The PMO's statement said the prime minister directed that special attention should be given to providing the Gulf countries with the food items they require and ensuring their food security.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs over a meeting to review the "food situation" in the country and the export of commodities available in excess.

684 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 Sunday that the security forces have killed 684 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 252 posts of them had been destroyed, while 44 others were "captured and destroyed" during the operation. He said that over 912 Afghan operatives were injured during the Operation Ghazab lil-Haq (Righteous Fury). Around 229 tanks, armoured vehicles, and artillery guns have also been destroyed during the operation, he added. The minister noted that around 73 terrorists and terrorist support infrastructure locations across Afghanistan effectively targeted by air. On night March 14/15 Pakistan Armed Forces targeted military installations including terrorist hideouts of Afghan Taliban and Fitna al-Khawarij, he said, adding technical support infrastructure and equipment storage facility in Kandahar has been destroyed in these attacks.

FO rejects India's 'absurd and unwarranted' statement on Pakistan's cross-border actions in Afghanistan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Sunday rejected a statement made by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs criticising Pakistan's cross-border action in Afghanistan, stating that the statement was "absurd, unwarranted" and "shamefully hypocritical". The development comes as Pakistan continues with Operation Ghazab lil-Haq, which was launched in late February following unprovoked firing by the Afghan Taliban from across the border. A day earlier, the Indian MEA's spokesperson Shri Randhir Jaisal claimed that Pakistan's strikes in Afghanistan had led to "death of several civil-



ians", terming it an "act of aggression". In response, the FO spokesperson Tahir Andrabi rejected the claim, stating that the remarks against Pakistan's "legitimate, targeted and precise actions against terrorist hideouts and support bases inside Afghanistan are not only absurd and unwarranted but also shamefully hypocritical". The spokesperson maintained that India's "active support and sponsorship"

for terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil — Fitna-al-Khawarij and Fitna-al-Hindustan — remained "well-known". Fitna al Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, while Fitna al Hindustan is a term designated by the state for terrorist organisations in Balochistan. Under the above circumstances, he held that India's "frustration at the destruction of

its terrorist franchise in Afghanistan, as reflected in such statements, is quite understandable". "India, a serial violator of human rights and international law, continues to illegally occupy Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in violation of the United Nations Charter and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and has been responsible for perpetrating state terrorism in the occupied territory," the statement read. Andrabi maintained that under its "Hindutva extremist ideology," India continued to "systematically marginalise its minorities, spread Islamophobia, and has even weaponised water in contravention of its treaty obligations".

Another 60 Pakistanis return home from Iran amid Middle East tensions

PEAK POINT

QUETTA: Amid rising tensions between Iran and Israel, another 60 people stranded in Iran have returned to Pakistan, officials said. The repatriation of Pakistani nationals from Iran has continued for the 14th consecutive day following the outbreak of hostilities between the two countries. According to authorities, 13 individuals returned today through the Taftan border, bringing the total number of returnees through the crossing to 3,334 over the past 14 days.

Six terrorists killed in joint operation by CTD, police in KP's Kohat

PEAK POINT

KOHAT: Six terrorists were killed in a joint operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kohat district's Lachi tehsil by the Counter-terrorism Department (CTD) and Kohat police, the police said on Sunday. In a statement, Kohat District Police Officer Shahbaz Elahi said that the CTD and police carried out the operation after receiving intelligence that terrorists were planning to orchestrate a large-scale attack in Lachi. Subsequently, a large contingent of CTD personnel and police launched "a search and strike operation".

Iran marks "International Quds Day" with strong criticism of Israel, western support

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran has issued a statement marking "International Quds Day", reiterating Tehran's support for Palestinians and strongly criticizing Israel and its Western allies.

International Quds Day, observed on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, was established by the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ruhollah Khomeini, as a global day of solidarity with Palestinians and opposition to Israeli control over Jerusalem and Palestinian territories. In its statement, Iran's Foreign Ministry described the day as a symbol of global protest against what it called the "occupa-



tion of the historical land of Palestine" and a demonstration of international support for the Palestinian people's right to determine their own future, said a release issued here on Saturday. The ministry accused Israel, often referred to by Iranian officials as the "Zionist regime," of committing severe crimes in Palestinian territories with the backing of enemy countries.

According to the statement, recent violence in the "Gaza Strip" and the West Bank represents the latest stage in what Iran characterized as a long-standing policy aimed at eliminating Palestinian presence in the region since the establishment of Israel in 1948. Iran also alleged that Israel and its allies have carried out a coordinated media campaign to distort events and shift

international perceptions of the conflict.

The statement further claimed that Israel and the United States had carried out military aggression against Iran, describing it as evidence of what Tehran called "hegemonic and inhumane policies." Iranian officials argued that such actions threaten not only Iran but the broader Middle East and Islamic world. Iranian authorities also criticized what they described as inaction by the "United Nations" and the international community in holding Israel accountable. Reaffirming Iran's long-standing policy, the Foreign Ministry said Tehran would continue supporting what it described as the "legitimate struggle" of the Palestinian people.

Dar notes 'alarming rise' in Islamophobia, warns it worsens existing tensions and conflicts



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday noted the "alarming rise" in Islamophobia and warned that it exacerbates existing tensions and conflicts, threatening world peace.

He made the remarks in a statement issued on International Day to Combat Islamophobia, which is observed on March 15.

"In recent years, the alarming rise in Islamophobia has manifested in deeply troubling incidents across many parts of the world, including the desecration of the Holy Quran, attacks on women for wearing the hijab, vandalism of mosques, religious profiling, and the open expression of anti-Muslim hatred in public discourse and media," Dar noted.



SPORTS



Bangladesh clinch ODI series with 11-run win over Pakistan

Australia become first team to qualify for FIFA Women's WC 2027



PEAK POINT

PEAK POINT Bangladesh clinched a three-match series against Pakistan 2-1 as the Green Shirts faced a narrow defeat in the third one-day international (ODI) match at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Sunday.

Chasing a total of 291 runs, Pakistan's batters fell short by 11 runs as a fighting 106-run knock by Salman Agha went in vain.

Green Shirts lost early wickets

as openers Sahizada Farhaan and Maaz Sadaqat went back to the pavilion after scoring just six runs each. Debutant Saad Masood scored 38 runs, while captain Shaheen Afridi added 37 runs to the scoreboard.

Bangladesh's Taskin Ahmed's heroic 4-wicket haul was impressive as he also took the key wicket of Salman Agha, who was looking unwavering to outdo the winning mark.

Mustafizur Rehman also

grabbed three wickets, while Nahid Rana managed to secure two.

Winning the toss, the visitors decided to bowl first in the series decider.

Bangladesh's openers provided a sturdy start to the innings with Tanzid Hasan scoring his maiden ODI century, which also earned him the man of the match award.

Towhid Hridoy and Litton Das added 48 and 41 runs, respectively, for Bangladesh, which helped

the tally to reach the 290-run mark at the end of 50 overs at a loss of five wickets.

Haris Rauf took three wickets for Pakistan while Afridi and Abrar Ahmed claimed one wicket each.

Green Shirts had made a comeback in the series by defeating the hosts in the second ODI match after a hammering eight-wicket loss in the series opener, in which Pakistan's batting lineup was bundled up at a total of just 114 runs.

AUSTRALIA: Australia have become the first nation to secure qualification for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup 2027, marking their ninth consecutive appearance at the global tournament after a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Korea DPR in the semi-final race of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026. The win ensured the Australia women's national soccer team, widely known as the Matildas, booked their place at the next global showpiece after advancing to the Asian Cup semi-finals. The continental tournament, currently being hosted by Australia, doubles as the main qualification pathway for Asian teams targeting the 2027 World Cup. The upcoming FIFA Women's World Cup 2027—the tenth edition of the tournament—will feature 32 teams and is scheduled to be staged in Brazil from 24 June to 25 July. Reacting to the milestone, Jill Ellis, FIFA's Chief Football Officer, praised the achievement and the growing momentum of the women's game. "There's nothing like the FIFA Women's World Cup. Only 32 teams earn the chance to step onto the biggest stage in women's sport, and that moment represents years of belief, sacrifice and hard work. These players wore the Australia shirt with such pride – this is the realisation of a dream – this moment belongs to them," she said.

Pakistan team selection a joint process, not one person's decision: Selectors



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Members of the national selection committee have clarified that the selection of Pakistan cricket team is a collective process involving consultation between selectors, the head coach and the captain, rather than the decision of any single individual. Addressing a joint

press conference at the Gaddafi Stadium, members of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) selection committee, Aaqib Javed, Misbah-ul-Haq, Sarfaraz Ahmed, and Asad Shafiq, emphasised that while selectors recommend squads, the final decision regarding the playing XI for any match should rest with the ICC Cricket team management on the management should

ideally have full authority over the final team selection for matches.

Reflecting on Pakistan's performance in the tournament, Aaqib acknowledged that expectations from the national side were high, but the team fell short of the anticipated results. He said there was strong hope that Pakistan would at least reach the semi-final stage, but that goal could not be achieved.

The selector noted that Pakistan lost only one match in the Super Eight stage, while another match was washed out due to rain. As a result, the team was eventually eliminated from the tournament on the net run rate.



LAHORE: Chairman, Pakistan Cricket Board, Mohsin Naqvi presenting an honorary souvenir to former skipper Sarfaraz Ahmad on retirement from International cricket here on Sunday.

All stakeholders need to accept responsibility for T20 World Cup flop, says Aaqib

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: All stakeholders, including captain and head coach, should accept the responsibility for Pakistan's failure in the recently-held ICC T20 World Cup, national selector Aaqib Javed.

"I as a member of the [national] selection committee picked 15 players [for the T20 World Cup], while finalising the playing XI was the responsibility of the captain and the head coach. Therefore, everyone should accept the responsibility [for Pakistan's poor show in the event]," Aaqib said in Lahore at a media conference which was the first appearance of a PCB official after Pakistan's yet another dismal show in an ICC event. Aaqib, who is also director of the National Cricket Academy (NCA), at the presser was flanked by selectors Misbah-ul-Haq, Sarfaraz Ahmed and Asad Shafiq.

Former captains Misbah and Sarfaraz were added to the national selection committee recently.

Led by Salman Ali Agha, the Pakistan side flopped at the 20-team global event held during February-March in Sri Lanka.



India and Sri Lanka, crashing out in the Super Eights stage. While recording victories against relatively weaker opponents including the Netherlands, United States and Namibia in the group stage, the Green-shirts suffered a 61-run loss in the highly-anticipated group match against arch-rivals India.

After losing the Super Eights match to England by two wickets, Pakistan's chances to qualify for the semis dwindled and eventually ended after their narrow five-run victory over Sri Lanka.

Answering a question about Babar Azam's selection for the World Cup, Aaqib said picking the batter was not his sole decision citing a six-member panel, including four selectors, captain and head coach, discussed the matter before naming the 31-year-old in the squad. "In the last Asia Cup we dropped Babar but then we realised that the team needed a technically sound batter for Sri Lankan pitches [in the World Cup]. Therefore, he was selected," Aaqib said.

"However, it was up to the captain [Salman] and the head coach [Mike Hesson] to include or exclude him [Babar] for a particular match."

Ramadan Weekend Junior Tennis Championship commences





SIFC reviews exit of multinational firms, Government outlines measures to stabilize foreign investment

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: The operations of multinational companies in Pakistan and fluctuations in foreign direct investment were discussed during the Question and Answer session in the National Assembly, where the government outlined measures taken through the Special Investment Facilitation Council to improve the investment climate and address investor concerns. Responding to questions about multinational companies scaling down or leaving Pakistan, the government informed lawmakers

that the SIFC Division, in coordination with federal ministries and provincial governments, is monitoring developments involving several international firms. Officials said these decisions are influenced by global corporate restructuring as well as domestic economic pressures such as inflation, exchange rate volatility, energy costs, regulatory requirements, and shifts in global supply chains. The government acknowledged that corporate restructuring can create short term employment challenges but said consumer access to global products continues through local part-

nerships, franchising, and third-party distribution arrangements. Officials also highlighted reforms being implemented through the Special Investment Facilitation Council to strengthen the investment environment. These include a single-window facilitation system, improved coordination between federal and provincial authorities, and faster resolution of investor grievances. Digitization and regulatory reforms are also being introduced to improve ease of doing business. Lawmakers were informed that the council is prioritizing investment in key

sectors including energy, information technology, agriculture, minerals, manufacturing, and logistics. Policy incentives and facilitation for profit repatriation are also being considered to encourage multinational companies to maintain and expand their presence in Pakistan. Responding to another question regarding foreign direct investment volatility, officials said fluctuations often occur because profit repatriation, dividend payments, and repayments of inter-company loans offset gross inflows. Foreign investment in Pakistan remains concentrated in

capital-intensive sectors such as energy, telecommunications, and financial services. To diversify investment, the government said the SIFC is focusing on export-oriented sectors including agriculture and food processing, digital services, mining, energy transition, logistics infrastructure, and manufacturing value chains. International outreach efforts are also underway to attract investors from the Gulf region, East Asia, Europe, and North America. The government further informed the National Assembly that no laws or rules were relaxed or

amended under the Special Investment Facilitation Council during the financial year. Officials also confirmed that the SIFC Division has been formally established within the Cabinet Secretariat through amendments to the Rules of Business. The division is responsible for coordinating investment facilitation, implementing council decisions, and strengthening coordination between federal and provincial governments to promote foreign and domestic investment in Pakistan.

Government sets three-month target to enroll 25,000 out-of-school children in Islamabad

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has set a target to enroll 25,000 out-of-school children in Islamabad within the next three months under its three-year rolling plan aimed at bringing all out-of-school children into the education system. To facilitate the initiative, the government also plans to establish new community schools near identified "hotspots" where large numbers of out-of-school children are present. Speaking

at the launch of the comprehensive enrollment drive, Federal Secretary for Education and Professional Training Nadeem Mahbub said the initiative follows the recently announced "No Child Left Behind" campaign by Federal Minister for Education Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui. Field teams from the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), Basic Education Community (BECS), and the National Education Foundation (NEF)



have been mobilized across the federal capital to support the campaign. The federal secretary explained that both the formal and non-formal education wings are imple-

menting a "carpet coverage plan" at the union council level. Under this strategy, teams are conducting door-to-door surveys to identify out-of-school children and

ensure their immediate enrollment. To strengthen the campaign, the ministry has introduced several collaborative measures. University students have been engaged as volunteers to help identify and enroll children within their communities. International non-governmental organizations and local civil society groups are also partnering with the ministry to maximize outreach at the grassroots level. In addition, new community schools will be established near students' homes to provide accessible learning opportu-

nities and address their specific educational needs. Federal Secretary Nadeem Mahbub emphasized that progress will be reviewed on a weekly basis to ensure strict adherence to the timeline and effective implementation of the plan. He reaffirmed the government's commitment that no child will be deprived of the right to education, adding that the target of enrolling 25,000 children within three months reflects the government's determination to achieve this goal.

Opinion & Editorial



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TB drugs shortage

CRIMINAL negligence is the phrase that jumps to mind when one considers the disturbing consequences of the government's failure to ensure availability of lifesaving tuberculosis drugs for children. The Pakistan Medical Association this Friday flagged the severe shortage of essential paediatric TB medications across the country, warning that this may lead to a "catastrophic surge" in drug-resistant TB in affected children. Unavailability or interrupted availability of critical medicines allows TB to survive and possibly mutate into multi-drug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant variants, the PMA notes, warning that mortality rates of extensively drug-resistant TB are as high as 31pc. The Association adds the chilling note: "Children are uniquely susceptible. Without consistent medication, the risk of disseminated TB — where the infection spreads to the brain or blood — increases exponentially. If first-line drugs fail, children are forced onto second-line regimens lasting up to 24 months, associated with liver toxicity, anaemia and permanent hearing loss." This is the cost of negligence that our children are expected to bear. Children's health and even lives have been put at stake due to poor policymaking. The PMA notes that TB drugs for children stopped being produced as it became economically unviable for pharmaceuticals to do so because of government-imposed price caps.

Iran's asymmetric warfare

Abbas Nasir
ISRAEL and, in this case, its proxy the US launched their war on Iran two weeks ago. Despite President Donald Trump claiming victory multiple times, no end to the hostilities is in sight because of Tehran's asymmetric response. The stated objectives of the illegal war were the destruction of Iran's nuclear programme (which, last year, Trump claimed his B2 bombers had decimated during the '12-day war'), the degradation of its missile production and launch capability and regime change. All Tehran needed to do was survive to claim the upper hand in the conflict. Yes, just survive. It seems to have done better than merely survive. At least so far. It hit back, and continues to do so, despite the strikes that took out its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several key military and IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) figures. And its retaliation commenced within hours of the Israel-US attack. Its decentralisation of command and assets with their strike target lists seems to have delivered after the decapitation attack. Bombs from planes and missiles have been slamming into Iran in their thousands. Yet, Iran retains its capacity to retaliate and, surprisingly retains, despite having no air cover, its command and control coherence. Statements have by and large been from the same page, implying its

communications network has survived the massive aerial assault. Experts point out that Iran is larger than the combined landmass of France, Germany, Spain and the UK. Quite a lot of its terrain is rocky and mountainous. Therefore, even an air force the size of the US operating from UK bases on the mainland and Diego Garcia and Israeli bases and aircraft carriers have so far failed to attain the main military aims of silencing Iran's missile launchers. It was clear to Iran's astute military planners that a strategy was needed to cope with this challenge. There is a reason for that, as many experts have pointed out. They say that Iran observed the 2003 Gulf War with great interest. The US air superiority meant that within a matter of weeks Iraq's military infrastructure and equipment from airports, air force, radars, tanks and missile launchers and artillery were degraded to the point where they had zero impact on the war. All this happened before the land invasion. It was clear to Iran's astute military planners that a strategy was needed to cope with this challenge as crippling international sanctions meant they would not be able to have an air force that could provide them air cover and protection from far superior (numerically and technologically) enemy air forces. The nearly decade-long

Western-backed war that began with Iraq's attack on Iran and ingress into it taught the Iranians how to defend themselves against a better-equipped enemy in a ground war and also withstand air attacks. That war saw the rise to eminence of the IRGC as a military fighting force, not just a paramilitary force to protect the aims of the 1979 Revolution. The main lesson learnt from the 2003 Gulf war was not to repeat Iraq's folly. Iran would not have the assets/resources to protect its military assets on the ground as they'd be sitting ducks for the Israeli-US joint aerial attack. They took a leaf out of the North Vietnamese playbook. They took their entire warfare capacity underground, often buried in tunnels hundreds of metres under mountains of granite or similar hard rocky formations where, some experts, including those formerly of the US military, believe they were out of reach of even the massive ordnance penetrators or 'bunker-buster' bombs. Side by side, these tunnels are said to have many concealed openings which are covered by sand to enable missile launches. Missiles and drones are produced in underground units. Also, Iran has so far prosecuted a multi-pronged war on those attacking it or those it believes are complicit in the aggression by attacking with its effective drones and missiles, economic targets in the Gulf. Courtesy Dawn

Our own one battle after another

Fahd Husain
We are all in battle mode. Ask Donald Trump. Ask Masood Pezeshkian. Ask Leonardo DiCaprio. And ask Pakistanis braving loitering munitions, rising prices and growing uncertainty engulfing every aspect of their lives. War in the season of Oscars could well be a movie title itself. Today the Hollywood's best and the brightest gather in Los Angeles for the 98th Oscar award ceremony, taking place under the shadow of a Trump/Netanyahu imposed war on Iran whose script has gone awry. As Sinners fights One Battle After Another for the best picture Oscar, never before have titles of the two leading contender films more reflected roles being played by American and Israeli leaders on the geo-political screen. Life often imitates art in the most grotesque manner. X Life has also acquired the nasty habit of throwing informational curve balls on our digital timelines. With the Gulf war dominating global and local news cycles at the expense of literally every other issue (including our very own war), the insatiable appetite for information is growing by the minute. To satiate this craving — and make money via audience engagement — content generators have gone into overdrive to disseminate content regardless of how much it weighs on the Truth-o-Meter. It is such a struggle; this stress-inducing losing battle to make sense of the ballooning chaos around us. In a world seemingly spinning out of control, how does one excavate sense from a growing reservoir of senselessness? Those familiar support structures we all used to depend on, they are all slowly withering away in a digital storm that shows all signs of growing stronger and wilder in times ahead. When a genocidal maniac like Netanyahu gets to ignite wars and unleash mayhem at whim, what can make sense anymore? Courtesy Tribune

'Post of responsibility': Newly appointed Governor Nehal Hashmi vows better education, jobs for Sindh's youth



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Newly appointed Sindh Governor Nehal Hashmi on Sunday vowed that the federal government would bring more job opportunities and improve education for youth across the province.

Addressing his maiden press conference after his oath-taking ceremony in Karachi, Hashmi said: "It is of immense joy that we will bring the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) to Sindh as well, with cooperation."

The governor recalled that he conveyed to PMYP Sindh Coordinator Fahad Shafiq that the "employment, education and training opportunities provided to Pakistan's youth will also be extended here [in Sindh]".

Hashmi further said there would not just be "youth programme and computer training, but an entire comprehensive subject and chapter on education".

He assured that certifications would be completed on their set time and degrees would be awarded in a timely manner.

Hashmi announced that free of cost Sehri and Iftar will be provided at Governor House to the deserving from Monday onwards. "This is not a party's caravan but should be of Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif's philosophy is Pakistan first, then party," he remarked.

He urged the public not to make him into an "entertainer" and let him remain a "political worker", recalling

that someone had mentioned a TikTok video to him.

At the outset of his media talk, the PML-N leader stressed that as his responsibility as the governor, he represented "each and every person and child" of Sindh's villages and districts.

"This is not a privileged post; this is a post of responsibility," he remarked, praying that may God help him fulfil his role with honesty and justice.

The governor stated he would have audits carried out of "everything" being implemented. "You can pick up the budget book and compare how much money is allocated to me, and how much I waste." Hashmi went on to quip, "Please do not be considerate at all of my name and popularity. I really like those who criticise me." He encouraged the public to criticise him but also highlight if "positive work" was done at the Governor's House.

World Muslim Congress warns of "Cultural Genocide" in IIOJK, demands urgent UN intervention at Human Rights Council

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Delivering a statement with "grave alarm" at the 61st Session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Chairman KIIR Altaf Hussain Wani has called for immediate international intervention in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), describing the territory as an "open-air prison" where occupation has metastasized into systematic cultural genocide and political erasure.

Speaking on behalf of the World Muslim Congress under Agenda Item 3 during the General Debate, Altaf Wani detailed a catastrophic human rights situation characterized by the complete suppression of fundamental freedoms. "India has transformed Kashmir into an open-air prison," Wani stated, highlighting the



crushing of free expression and peaceful assembly under draconian laws, alongside a suffocating digital siege and pervasive social media surveillance that criminalizes dissent and isolates the population from the world, said a press release received here on Sunday.

The statement elaborated relentless harassment against human rights defenders, who face arbitrary detention and extrajudicial violence, while thousands of political prisoners languish in jails for years without trial. Wani specifically condemned Delhi's "Seven Pillars" security doctrine.

Islamophobia condemnable, Muslim countries should become symbol of unity: Maryam Nawaz

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Sunday that Islamophobia is condemnable and Muslim countries should stand united and serve as a symbol of solidarity. In her message on the occasion of the International Day Against Islamophobia, CM Punjab stated that discrimination and unfair treatment against Muslims have increased due to Islamophobia. She added that Muslims in regions such as Palestine and Kashmir are facing oppression and injustice. Maryam Nawaz emphasized that Islam is a religion of peace, and Muslims believe in harmony and coexistence. She said that Islam has guaranteed fundamental human rights and highlighted the importance of presenting Islamic values



in a positive way to counter Islamophobia. CM further stressed that Muslim nations should overcome internal differences and promote unity. According to her, adherence to Islamic principles and positive individual conduct can play a significant role in addressing and defeating Islamophobia. The chief minister also called for patience, tolerance, and mutual respect, urging greater international efforts to eliminate Islamophobia worldwide.

Gilani urges global action to combat Islamophobia

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has called upon the global community to take collective measures to counter the growing manifestations of hatred, prejudice, and discrimination directed against Muslims across the world.

In his message on the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, Gilani observed that the persistence of Islamophobia in various societies undermines the fundamental principles of equality, human dignity, and religious freedom enshrined in international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

He expressed concern that incidents of hate speech, discrimination, and attacks against Muslim individuals and places of worship continue to occur in different regions, posing a serious challenge to peaceful coexistence and social harmony.

He said that Islam is a religion rooted in peace, compassion, and justice, and any attempt to associate it with extremism or

violence reflects a deliberate distortion of its true teachings. The Chairman of the Senate underscored that promoting tolerance and mutual respect among civilisations and religions is essential for global stability and harmony.

He urged governments, parliaments, international organisations, and civil society to strengthen legislative, policy, and institutional measures aimed at combating religious intolerance and safeguarding the rights and freedoms of all communities.

Gilani reaffirmed Pakistan's principled commitment to advancing interfaith harmony, respect for all religions, and the protection of minority rights.

He further stressed that combating Islamophobia is a shared global responsibility and called on the international community to work collectively to promote understanding, inclusivity, and respect for diversity in order to build a more peaceful and just world.

MQM's Khalid Maqbool meets President Asif Ali Zardari

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: MQM Chairman and Federal Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui called on President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday, according to sources.

Sources close to the development said Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, Sindh Interior Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar and others were present in the meeting.

The leaders discussed relations between the PPP and the MQM. Earlier, the MQM said the federal government did not take the party into confidence to change the governor.

It should be noted that the federal government removed Kamran Tessori and replaced him with PML-N leader Nehal Hashmi as Sindh Governor.

A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sent the summary to the President of Pakistan for the approval.



KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari meeting Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi and Chairman MQM-Pakistan Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

Candidates of GDA submitted nomination papers for DBA polls

ABDUL SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: In connection with the annual elections of the District Bar Association Bannu, the unanimous candidates of the Grand Democratic Alliance have submitted their nomination papers. According to details, the agreed candidates of the Grand Democratic Alliance submitted their nomination papers to Election Commissioner Najam-ul-Saqib for the upcoming elections. On this occasion, the panel of the Grand Democratic Alliance submitted nominations for various seats: Akbar Ullah Advocate for President, Alamgir Khan Advocate for General Secretary, Aman Ullah Khan for Vice President, Asif



Ullah Shah for Finance Secretary, Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Advocate for Joint Secretary, and Wassem Manzoor Shah for the seat of Librarian. A large number of lawyers were also present at the occasion and announced their support for the candidates. During the submission of the nomination papers, leaders of the Grand Democratic Alliance including Javed Hayat Khan Advocate.

Punjab govt to take legal action against those involved in 'malicious campaign' against purchase of jet

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Sunday that the provincial government has decided to take legal action against those involved in a "malicious campaign" targeting it over the purchase of a luxury jet. Last month, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz faced severe criticism from the opposition and some journalists regarding the government's purchase of the aircraft. The Gulfstream 19-seater jet is estimated to be worth between \$38 million and

\$42m (over Rs10bn) and was acquired for the CM's use. In a post on X, the senior minister took note of a "deliberate malicious campaign of lies and fabricated stories about the use of the official plane of the Punjab government", which she said was being run by "known pathological liars and peddlers of fake news".

The minister shared that the government had decided to take legal action against "every individual and platform" involved under the Defamation Law 2024.

"Disinformation will no longer go unanswered," she



added. Aurangzeb warned that "those who think they can malign institutions and mislead the public without consequence should prepare to face the law". She said that the provincial government

will aim to "seek recourse to the maximum penalty under the law to ensure a clear and unequivocal message". The minister held that fake news was not "real journalism" but rather defamation.

"Pathological lying lunatics will not be tolerated; enough is enough," she stressed. The senior minister has previously accused PTI activists and others of running a vilification campaign against CM Maryam over the decision to acquire the luxury jet. The PTI-led opposition has maintained that "spending billions on a VIP aircraft is unjustifiable when a large portion of the population lives below the poverty line". Similarly, Jamaat-i-Islami Emir Hafiz Naemur Rehman had also assailed the provincial government, saying that while

the prime minister celebrated the sale of the national carrier Pakistan International Airlines, his niece, CM Maryam, went ahead and purchased a luxury aircraft for "elite" travel. The Punjab administration had remained tight-lipped about the acquisition initially, but later claimed that it was part of a proposed airline project. When questions arose about the absence of a roadmap for the airline, the government later stated that the previous plane used by CM Maryam had become old and needed to be replaced with a "safe new jet".