



Parliamentary leaders get briefing on regional security situation; reaffirm unity, solidarity

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the parliamentary parties' leaders and representatives, chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Wednesday emphasized the need for national unity and solidarity in the current situation.

Parliamentary leaders get briefing on regional security situation; reaffirm unity, solidarity

The participants were given an in-camera briefing on Pakistan-Afghanistan situation, developments concerning Iran, conflict in the Middle East and the Gulf region and Pakistan's diplomatic efforts.

During the meeting, the parliamentary

leaders of the political parties expressed their views openly, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

They appreciated diplomatic efforts being made by Pakistan for the regional peace, and stressed the need to further intensify them, besides presented their suggestions for the future course of action.

All participants reaffirmed their strong resolve to eliminate terrorism from the country. They also appreciated the prime minister's initiative of taking all the political leadership into confidence in the broader national interests and thanked him.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman attend a meeting at PM House.

Operation Ghazab lil-Haq: Pak Army destroys 50 posts of Afghan Taliban, terrorists

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Army has carried out extensive operations at 50 locations along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border under Operation Ghazab-ul-Haq, targeting militant groups including the Afghan Taliban, Fitna al-Khawarij, and Fitna al-Hindustan, according to security sources. Officials said that during the night between March 3 and 4, Pakistani forces used heavy weaponry to strike and destroy multiple hideouts being used for cross-border terrorist activities.

The military reportedly conducted effective operations in several sectors, including Qila Saifullah, Chaman, Sambaza, Ghadwana, Jani, and Ghaznali. These areas, officials claimed, were being used as bases to plan and launch attacks from across the border. Security sources stated that the operations resulted in significant casualties and material losses among the targeted groups, though no specific figures were provided.

The Pakistan Army reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty.

Peace between Pakistan, Afghanistan depends on Taliban renouncing support for terrorists: CDF Munir

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir on Wednesday said that peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan could only prevail if the Taliban regime "renounced their support for terrorism and terrorist organisations".

According to a statement by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), CDF Munir made the remarks as he visited Wana in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's South Waziristan to review the prevailing security situation and operational preparedness along the Western border.

"He reiterated that peace could only prevail

between both sides if the Afghan

of Pakistan's security and resilience," it added.



renounced their support for terrorism and terrorist organisations," the statement said. It said that CDF Munir laid a floral wreath at the martyrs' monument to pay homage to those who had rendered supreme sacrifices in defence of the motherland.

"He offered fatiha and reaffirmed that the sacrifices of shuhada remain the cornerstone

During the visit, CDF Munir was given a comprehensive briefing on the security environment, ongoing intelligence-based operations and measures in place for border management, it said. "The Field Marshal was briefed in detail regarding the ongoing Operation Ghazab Lil Haq and developments along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border," it said.

US orders non-emergency consular staff to leave Pakistan

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: The US said on Wednesday it ordered non-emergency staff at two Pakistani consulates to leave the country, and granted permission for staff to leave missions in Saudi Arabia, Cyprus and Oman as Iran retaliates to US-Israeli raids. The US State Department ordered non-emergency US government employees and the family members of US government personnel from US consulates in Lahore and Karachi to leave Pakistan due to "safety risks", the US embassy in Pakistan said in a statement.

Fake pilot license scandal cost PIA Rs200 billion in five years, Senate told

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Senate was informed that due to the fake pilot license scandal, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) suffered an estimated revenue loss of nearly Rs200 billion from August 2020 to December 2024, spanning five years.

During the Question Hour session, the Ministry of Defence submitted a written reply stating that senators from Balochistan staged a protest over inactive airports and absence of flight operations in the province. It was revealed.

Iran says won't negotiate with US, can 'continue the war'

PEAK POINT

TEHRAN: A senior adviser to late Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday that Iran will not negotiate with the US and is ready to "continue the war". Iran has no intention of negotiating with the United States and can continue the Middle East war for as long as needed, Mohammad Mokhbar, a senior aide to the late supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has told state TV according to AFP.

He told AFP that Iran had "no trust in the Americans and we have no basis for any negotiations with them".

"We can continue the war as long as we want," he added.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says that US President Donald

Trump has "betrayed diplomacy and Americans who

republic, AFP reports.

"We have destroyed



elections". "When complex nuclear negotiations are treated like a real estate transaction, and when big lies cloud realities, unrealistic expectations can never be met," Araghchi said in a post on X. Meanwhile Israeli military claims that Iran still has significant capacity to launch missiles at Israel, even as it continues to strike missile launchers in the Islamic

dozens of missile launchers that posed significant threats to the Israeli front," military spokesman Brigadier General Effie Defrin claimed in a televised briefing.

"We will continue to strike the missile launchers and reduce the firing, but the regime still has significant capacity, and I would like to remind you that our defence is not impenetra-

ble."

Qatar condemns Iranian strikes on its territory as 'unacceptable and unjustifiable'

Qatar's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari commented on Iran's attacks on Qatar, which he called "unacceptable and cannot be justified no matter what the target was on Qatari soil," reports TRT.

Iran's "targeting is not limited to military installations or American interests ... but rather, encompasses the entire Qatari territory," he said. Saudi Arabia intercepts drone attack targeting huge refinery Saudi Arabia intercepted a drone attack in targeting its massive Ras Tanura refinery, the defence ministry said, following an earlier hit on the complex along its Gulf coast this week.

Defense executives plan to meet at White House as strikes on Iran diminish stockpiles

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration plans to meet with executives from the biggest US defense contractors at the White House on Friday to discuss accelerating weapons production, as the Pentagon works to replenish supplies after strikes on Iran and several other recent military efforts. Five people familiar with the plan told Reuters. Companies including Lockheed Martin and Raytheon parent RTX along with other key suppliers, have been invited to attend the meeting, the people said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the discussions are private. The meeting underscores the urgency felt in Washington to shore up weapons stocks after the Iran operation drew heavily on munitions. Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

SPORTS



T20 World Cup: New Zealand set 170-run chase after restricting South Africa to 169 in semi-final

Pakistan drop Babar for Bangladesh ODI series



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan captain Babar Azam was dropped from the squad for a One-Day International series against Bangladesh, despite scoring a century in his last ODI series.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced a 15-man squad on Wednesday that excluded Babar who made an unbeaten 102 against Sri Lanka in November.

He endured a torrid time at the Twenty20 World Cup, however, managing just 91 runs across four innings as Pakistan exited at the Super Eight stage.

Left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi will captain the side for the three-match series starting next week in Dhaka. The PCB called up six uncapped players including Abdul Samad, Maaz Sadaqat, Saad Masood and Shamyil Hussain who played against the England Lions in Abu Dhabi before the series was called off due to the conflict in the Middle East. Pakistan squad: Shaheen Shah Afridi (captain), Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf, Hussain Talat, Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Rizwan (wicketkeeper), Mohammad Wasim Junior, Muhammad Ghazi Ghori (wicketkeeper), Saad Masood, Sahibzada Farhan, Salman Ali Agha and Shamyil Hussain.



PEAK POINT

KOLKATA: New Zealand need 170 runs to defeat South Africa in the first semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 at Eden Gardens on Wednesday.

The Blackcaps, led by Mitchell Santner, won the toss and elected to field in the high-stakes encounter.

South Africa's innings was anchored by a powerful unbeaten knock from Marco Jansen, who struck 55 off 30 balls, including five sixes and two fours. His late acceleration helped the Proteas recover from a stuttering middle

phase and push towards a competitive total.

The Proteas suffered early setbacks after being asked to bat. Captain Aiden Markram managed 18 off 20 deliveries before falling to Rachin Ravindra, while wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock contributed 10 from eight balls.

Ryan Rickelton was dismissed for a duck, leaving South Africa under pressure inside the power-play. Deward Brevis attempted to rebuild with an enterprising 34 off 27 balls, featuring three boundaries and two sixes, before being removed by James Neesham.

David Miller failed to make an impact, scoring six, as New Zealand maintained tight control through the middle overs.

Tristan Stubbs added useful momentum with 29 from 24 balls, striking two fours and a six, but Lockie Ferguson's breakthrough prevented South Africa from fully capitalising.

Jansen then took charge in the closing overs, producing a clean-hitting display that lifted the scoring rate significantly. He remained unbeaten alongside Keshav Maharaj, who added one run at the end. South Africa were aided by 14

extras, including 12 wides, as they closed their innings at 169 for eight in 20 overs.

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner's decision to bowl first reflected confidence in his side's chasing ability at Eden Gardens. The two teams entered the semi-final with contrasting head-to-head numbers.

South Africa hold the overall advantage in T20 Internationals with 12 wins to New Zealand's seven from 19 meetings. In T20 World Cup history, the Proteas had maintained a perfect 5-0 record over the Blackcaps prior to this contest.

Pakistan down Austria 4-2, remain unbeaten in Hockey World Cup Qualifier Round



PEAK POINT

EGYPT: Pakistan continued their impressive run in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup Qualifier Round with a 4-2 victory over Austria in their third match of the tournament in Ismailia, Egypt, on Wednesday. The event, being held from March 1 to 7, serves as a crucial pathway to the 2026 FIH Hockey Men's World Cup.

According to Maximalin information made available here by Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), after a closely fought first half, Pakistan displayed resilience and attacking flair to overpower Austria in the latter stages of the match. Abu Bakar Mahmood starred for the Green Shirts, netting two crucial goals in the quick succession to swing momentum in his side's favour.

Following the victory, President of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani, along with Chairman of the Ad-hoc Governance and Management Committee Olympian Islahuddin Siddiqui and Olympian Hassan Sardar, and Chief Selector.

Peshawar to host National T20 Cup as venue changed for fourth time



MUMBAI: The Indian cricket team has postponed its training session due to a lunar eclipse as part of preparations for the semi-final against England in the ICC T20 World Cup.

India postpone training session due to lunar eclipse ahead of T20 World Cup semi-final

PEAK POINT

that after consultation between the team management and players, it was decided that a positive start was essential ahead of a crucial match like the semi-final.

Therefore, the practice session was postponed by approximately one hour. A source confirmed that it was deemed better to avoid any activity during the eclipse, and the training session would now commence after 6:40 pm.

Reports further stated that the Indian team has been

making special arrangements for religious rituals and prayers during the tournament, with players visiting temples in various cities before matches.

It is worth noting that India qualified for the semi-final after defeating the West Indies in the final Super Eight match.



They are set to face England in the semi-final on Thursday, while the first semi-final between New Zealand and South Africa will be played today.

ICC rankings: Sahibzada Farhan inches closer to becoming world's No 1 T20 batter



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan opener Sahibzada Farhan reg-

ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings.

A pair of centuries scored by Farhan in the ICC T20 World Cup helped him to jump to second spot with a career-high rating, replacing England's Phil Salt.

It's a similar story at the top of the rankings, with the lead for India spinner Varun Chakravathy now down to just 18 rating points heading into the knockout stages of the T20 World Cup. While Chakravathy now holds a slender advantage at the top of the rankings, it's Pakistan spinner Abrar Ahmed that closes in as he gains two places to move to third overall, ICC said in a blog. Furthermore, Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza retained the top spot on the rankings for T20I all-rounders, with India star Hardik Pandya now his closest challenger after he gained one place to surpass Pakistan's Saim Ayub and claim second spot.

NAFSA DG's absence sparks senate rebuke as Rs 20.5 billion food security projects come under review

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security & Research took serious notice of the absence of the Director General of the National Agri Trade and Food Safety Authority (NAFSA), directing him to explain his position in the next meeting, as lawmakers reviewed development projects worth more than Rs 20.5 billion proposed by the Ministry for the upcoming Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) cycle. The Committee met at Parliament House under the chairmanship of Senator Syed

Masroor Ahsan, with Senators Rahat Jamali, Sardar Ali-Haj Muhammad Umar Gorgaji and Danesh Kumar in attendance. During the session, officials briefed members on fifteen development projects planned under the Ministry of National Food Security & Research for PSDP 2026-27, carrying a combined estimated cost exceeding Rs 20.5 billion. Among the major initiatives discussed was the Olive Value Chain Project. The Ministry informed the Committee that Phase-II of the project will conclude by June 2026, after which Phase-III will be launched. The next phase aims to establish

cluster based commercial olive orchards over 40,000 acres, graft 300,000 wild olive trees and provide extensive training to farmers. The Committee was also briefed on the establishment of a Digital and Precision Agriculture Mechanization Facility at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), designed to replace outdated manual systems with modern, technology-driven agricultural solutions. Livestock and horticulture development initiatives were also presented, including projects focused on improving indigenous livestock breeds and strengthening disease control mecha-

nisms. A major Rs 8 billion project for the development and export of camel milk powder is planned in Balochistan and Thar to promote value-added livestock products. Other proposed initiatives include strengthening the National Agri-Food Laboratory network with an investment of Rs 490 million, expanding cotton cultivation in potential districts of Balochistan at a cost of Rs 808.25 million, and developing reference genomes along with artificial intelligence-driven crop improvement systems costing Rs 786.816 million. Officials also outlined plans for establishing a Controlled Atmosphere stor-

age facility for fruits in Gilgit-Balistan under a public-private partnership model to reduce post-harvest losses and enhance export potential. Additional initiatives include the National Bio-Fertilizer and Composting Program, sustainable livestock development through grazing area rehabilitation, and the establishment of a Seed Potato Production and Supply Centre aimed at reducing reliance on imported seed by up to 80 percent. The Ministry also highlighted the National Crop Diversification and Import Substitution Program focused on increasing domestic edible oil produc-

tion. The Committee further discussed projects related to value-added livestock products from yaks in Gilgit-Balistan, the upgradation of the Date Palm Research Institute in Khairpur, and the establishment of a modern slaughterhouse and wholesale meat market in Islamabad, for which land has already been allocated in Sector I-11/4. During the meeting, the Committee also admitted the report on budgetary proposals for Balochistan under PSDP 2026-27 submitted by Senator Sardar Muhammad Umar Gorgaji.

Ramazan security in focus: IGP Rizvi chairs operational commanders conference at Safe City

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired an operational commanders conference at the Safe City Islamabad to review the overall security and law and order situation in the federal capital.

An official told APP on Wednesday that the conference was attended by all DIGs, AIGs and SSPs, where the IGP was briefed on the existing security arrange-

ments and operational measures across the city. IGP Rizvi directed officers to ensure special security arrangements at places of worship during the holy month of Ramazan and emphasized that foolproof security measures must remain fully effective during the second Ashra of the month. The official said additional police personnel have been deployed during Sehri, Iftar and Taraweeh hours to maintain security and facili-



tate citizens. The IGP Rizvi also directed officers to ensure strict checking at all entry and exit points of the city and further strengthen security at important installations, markets and commercial centers. He stressed that effective monitoring of the city should continue through Safe City cameras and that police patrolling teams must remain active across the capital. IGP Rizvi also directed officers to implement a spe-

cial traffic management plan during Sehri and Iftar timings and ensure the deployment of additional traffic personnel around major roads, markets and commercial areas. He said officers must remain active in guiding citizens and maintaining smooth traffic flow during Ramazan. IGP Rizvi reiterated that Islamabad Police remain fully committed to protecting the lives and property of citizens and ensuring peace across the federal capital.

Opinion & Editorial

Trump's no-win war

A Zahid Hussain
MERICA'S self-styled 'peace president' has unleashed a brutal war against a country that poses no direct threat to his own. The conflict marks Donald Trump's second military venture in less than six months, cementing his place among America's war presidents. The joint US-Israel aggression against Iran has come as no surprise. For weeks, Washington had been deploying massive naval fleets to the region even as it publicly engaged Tehran in nuclear negotiations. It marked the largest US military build-up in the Middle East since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

It was becoming increasingly evident that Trump was not genuinely pursuing a deal; the talks appeared to serve merely as a cover for military preparations. The offensive was initiated despite reports of a breakthrough in ongoing negotiations. Trump's decision to go to war and abandon diplomatic negotiations was reportedly driven by persistent pressure from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as by what Trump saw as his success in Venezuela.

According to media reports, the US and Israel had agreed to a war plan in December last year, which would target not only military installations but also senior Iranian leaders. The US-Israel assassination of Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei — the head of a sovereign state

— along with members of his family, underscores the hubris and brazenness of the rogue leader at the helm of the world's most powerful nation. The targeted attacks, according to Israel, killed more than 40 senior Iranian officials, including the commander of the Revolutionary Guards, the defence minister and the chief of staff of the armed forces. There are also reports of a large number of civilian victims, including 165 schoolgirls and staff, who were killed at a primary school by the strikes. Such actions are nothing short of a war crime.

Meanwhile, Trump has continued to shift the stated objectives of his military campaign. He is now openly seeking regime change in Iran. Initially, he predicted a swift end to the war. He now concedes that the conflict could drag on much longer. The massive air strikes have so far failed to eliminate Iran's missile capability, which continues to threaten targets deep inside Israel as well as US military bases across the Middle East.

Iranian missiles have reportedly broken through Israel's formidable air defence system, striking sensitive security installations. There have also been missile attacks targeting a US aircraft carrier, killing and wounding American troops. Iran has raised the stakes by launching missiles and drones striking targeting American military bases in Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. The US embassy in Riyadh has

also been hit by an Iranian drone strike.

Tehran has declared these facilities legitimate targets in response to American aggression. The situation has become extremely serious with some strikes hitting civilian installations, intensifying the conflict and potentially expanding it to the entire region. Meanwhile, Israel has extended the fighting to Lebanon, targeting the pro-Iran Hezbollah.

As the conflict widens and sucks in other countries, Trump has not ruled out the possibility of deploying ground troops. Any such US military misadventure would further inflame the situation. The US attack on Iran and the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was revered as a spiritual leader by millions of Shias across the world, has triggered widespread anti-US protests in many countries, threatening the stability of America's regional allies. Pakistan, Iraq and Bahrain, which have large Shia populations, have witnessed most of these violent protests. In fact, a wider section of the population has joined the protests, cutting across sectarian lines.

A prolonged American war with boots on the ground would further destabilise an already volatile regional situation. Despite its immense military power, the US cannot assume victory; Trump seems to have forgotten the lessons of America's two-decade war in Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Courtesy Dawn

Can a unity govt address our development challenges?

M Zeb Khan

Pakistan's development story is often narrated through cycles of hope and disappointment. Yet beneath the political noise lies a more stubborn reality: the country's challenges are deeply structural and institutional. For decades, Pakistan has demonstrated flashes of economic promise, only to relapse into fiscal stress, policy reversals and governance fatigue. The issue is not a lack of potential. It is the absence of sustained institutional coherence. At the core lies a narrow fiscal base, persistent policy volatility and uneven state capacity. Tax collection remains constrained by powerful exemptions and weak compliance. Energy sector inefficiencies continue to generate circular debt. Education expansion has improved access but not learning quality. Meanwhile, political polarisation and civil-military tensions have repeatedly disrupted policy continuity. The result is a familiar stop-go economic pattern that discourages long-term investment and limits structural transformation. Pakistan's bureaucracy still contains pockets of professionalism, and its private sector has shown resilience in difficult conditions, but these strengths have not translated into a durable national development trajectory. Investors respond not to isolated competence but to system-wide predictability. On that measure, Pakistan continues to struggle. A comparison within South Asia is instructive. India's development path has been far from smooth, but it has benefited from greater policy continuity since the early 1990s reforms. Despite political contestation, the broad direction of economic liberalisation has largely held. Early investments in higher education and technical capacity created a pipeline of skilled human capital that later powered the IT and services boom. India still faces infrastructure gaps, regulatory complexity and inequality pressures, yet its institutional momentum has been cumulative rather than repeatedly reset.

Courtesy Tribune

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Burning questions

By most accounts, the protest was not massive. Nor was it unexpected. And yet, it ended in gruesome bloodshed. The question is: why? Where were the security agencies? For context, around a dozen Karachiites were killed and scores others injured this Sunday when a protest outside the American consulate in Karachi took an ugly turn. The incident happened hours after the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was confirmed by Iranian media. By then, an outpouring of grief had snowballed into palpable anger against the US and Israel. It is worth pointing out that Ayatollah Khamenei's death had been announced by the US president much earlier, on Saturday night. This means the security agencies had ample time to plan for contingencies. They should have anticipated that the violent death of a widely revered figure could provoke a strong reaction, and cordons should have been placed hours before the first mourners took to the streets. Instead, we saw the security of one of the most impenetrable compounds in the city melt away before a group of understandably furious protesters. The subsequent carnage was recorded for the world to see. Diplomatic missions are sensitive sites, and host states bear a clear obligation under international law to protect them.

Finance Minister reaffirms Pak-Netherlands economic cooperation



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said Pakistan attaches high importance to strengthening economic cooperation with the Netherlands, emphasizing that long-standing partnerships with reputable international investors play a vital role in supporting the country's economic development, promoting trade and investment, and enhancing confidence within the global business community. He said this during a meeting with Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Pakistan, Robert Jan

Sigert who called on him along with a delegation from Engro Corporation and Engro Vopak Terminal Limited (EVTL).

The delegation included Ahsan Zafar Syed, President Engro Corporation; Ammar Shah, CEO EVTL; and Mr. Yasir Ali, Vice President and Chief Government Relations Officer, Engro Corporation.

The Finance Minister appreciated the delegation's briefing and acknowledged the importance of ensuring that investments contributing to Pakistan's industrial ecosystem continue to operate within a transparent and efficient framework.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to facilitating a supportive environment for credible foreign investment and assured the delegation of the government's cooperation in addressing matters relating to ongoing economic partnerships.

On the occasion, the Dutch Ambassador reaffirmed the Netherlands' commitment to further expanding bilateral economic ties.

He highlighted the presence of Dutch enterprises in Pakistan and emphasized that successful partnerships between Pakistani and Dutch companies demonstrate the potential for deeper economic collaboration between the two countries.

During the meeting, the Engro team briefed the Finance Minister on the operations of Engro Vopak Terminal Limited, a joint venture between Royal Vopak of the Netherlands and Engro Corporation.

The delegation noted that the terminal has been operating at Port Qasim since 1996 and plays an important role in Pakistan's industrial and energy supply chains by handling key chemical imports used by downstream industries, as well as a significant share of marine LPG supporting household energy needs.

The delegation also shared perspectives regarding the future operating arrangements of the terminal and the importance of maintaining continuity in specialized infrastructure that supports industrial production.

President administers oath to Naveed Kamran as 9th Federal Ombudsman



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday administered the oath of office to Naveed Kamran Baloch as the 9th Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) of Pakistan at a ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Mr. Baloch will hold office for a four-year term.

Naveed Kamran Baloch has held various executive positions, including Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federal Secretary, and Principal Secretary

to the Chief Minister of Sindh, bringing extensive experience in administrative and executive affairs.

Following the oath taking ceremony, Wafaqi Mohtasib called on the President. The president asked Naveed Kamran Baloch to prioritise enhancing access to justice for citizens, improving the efficiency of case disposal, and strengthening mechanisms for timely grievance redressal across federal institutions.

KP Governor visits Iranian Embassy, condoles death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran here along with former federal minister Sajid Hussain Turi to express condolences over the reported martyrdom of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The Governor recorded his remarks in the visitors' book at the Iranian Embassy and offered heartfelt sympathies on behalf of himself and the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

During the visit, Governor Kundi also met Iranian Ambassador Dr Reza Amir-Moghaddam and conveyed his deep sorrow over the demise of Ayatollah Khamenei and his companions. He also offered Fataha for the departed souls, including other Iranians who lost their lives in the reported Israeli attack. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said he had come to express solidarity and condolences on behalf of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that the people of the province, as well as the entire country, were deeply grieved over the martyr-

dom of the Iranian Supreme Leader.

He termed the death of Ayatollah Khamenei a great loss for the Muslim Ummah and said that Iran and its people were not alone in this hour of grief. He maintained that every eye in Pakistan was tearful and saddened over the tragic incident.

The Governor paid tribute to the unity and resolve of the Iranian government and people for safeguarding their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

He said that Iran was a brotherly Islamic country and Pakistan stood by the Iranian people in times of sorrow and happiness alike. On the occasion, Ambassador Reza Amir-Moghaddam thanked the Governor for visiting the embassy and expressing solidarity with the Iranian people.

He said the Muslim Ummah was deeply anguished over the martyrdom of the Supreme Leader and termed the incident a grave crime that had caused immense loss to the Islamic world. He appreciated the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan for once again demonstrating unwavering support and affection.

Ahsan visits Energy China Pakistan HQs, reviews CPEC energy projects

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday visited the headquarters of Energy China Pakistan, where he was warmly received by the company's leadership and project teams. During the visit, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening strategic partnership and deepening cooperation under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "During the visit, I toured the Exhibition Hall and reviewed key energy milestones achieved under CPEC," the minister wrote in a post on X. He was briefed on ongoing initiatives, progress on various projects, and future strategies aimed at enhancing energy security and promoting sustainable development. Later, a meeting was held with the leadership of China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC) and project teams, where detailed discussions were held on the progress of major hydropower projects, including the Suki Kinari Hydropower Project.

Pakistan sets up first Quran recycling plant to preserve sacred pages

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousef has directed authorities to make operational Pakistan's first state-of-the-art Quran recycling plant established in Islamabad to ensure the respectful disposal and preservation of worn-out sacred pages.

During a visit to the facility, the minister said the project aims to safely manage and recycle damaged or worn copies of the Holy Quran and other sacred pages in accordance with Islamic principles. Speaking to APP, Yousef said there had long been a shortage of appropriate facilities for the storage and respectful handling of worn-out or damaged



sacred texts across the country, which sometimes raised concerns about possible desecration.

"The establishment of this plant was an important need of the time," he said, adding that formal religious rulings had been obtained from leading scholars before launching the project to ensure that the entire recycling process complies with Sharia requirements. The minister said sacred pages and worn-out copies of the Quran from across Pakistan would be brought.

Govt to launch SMEs training in AJK after Eid: SAPM Haroon

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Wednesday announced that the government will launch technical skills programmes in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) after Eid, along with introducing a home-stay model to empower women and boost small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for economic growth. He made these remarks while chairing a high-level meeting with the Chief Secretary of AJK to discuss measures aimed at promoting economic growth and strengthening the SME sector in the region, said a news release.



The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Industries and Production, Asad Islam Mahni; representatives of the Mirpur Chamber of Commerce; and Chief Executive Officer of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), Nadia J Seth. The special assistant said that the prime minister has placed special focus.



ISLAMABAD: Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi offers Fataha & condolence with Ambassador of Iran Dr Reza Amir Moghaddam during his visit to Embassy of Iran.

Mukhtar Malik calls for urgent national action amid growing obesity crisis

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Malik called for urgent and coordinated national action to tackle the growing obesity crisis, posing serious health and economic challenges for the country. He made these remarks, while chairing a joint event as Chief Guest on World Obesity Day 2026, organized by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MONHSRC)

in collaboration with Novo Nordisk, to highlight the urgent need for coordinated national action against obesity in Pakistan. Addressing participants, the Minister noted that nearly 38 million Pakistanis, approximately one in three individuals, are living with obesity, terming the situation alarming. He observed that women and urban populations are disproportionately affected, while childhood obesity is steadily increasing. Dr. Malik emphasized that obesity is a major modifiable risk factor for non-communicable diseases,



including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and certain cancers, placing growing pressure on the country's health system. Stressing prevention, he underscored the need to improve lifestyles, promote balanced diets, discourage excessive fast food consumption, and increase physical activity.

He reiterated that obesity prevention has been integrated into national health planning, including under the Prime Minister's Programme for Prevention and Control of Diabetes Mellitus (2024-2029), aimed at addressing the obesity, diabetes continuum through awareness, behaviour change, and early screening. Secretary MONHSRC, Hamed Yaqoob, stated that obesity is a complex, chronic disease influenced by biological, environmental, and social factors, reaffirming the Ministry's commitment to improving understanding,

reducing stigma, and expanding access to person-centred care. Danish Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Maja Mortensen, welcomed the constructive dialogue and emphasized that partnerships promoting knowledge-sharing and innovation are essential for sustainable, evidence-based health solutions. The event concluded with a renewed commitment to strengthen prevention strategies, enhance policy measures, and foster multi-sectoral collaboration to combat obesity and safeguard public health in Pakistan.