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Iran's supreme leader says legal cases must be pursued against US, Israel over 'child killings, war crimes'



ANI

TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei said on Sunday that legal cases must be pursued against the US and Israel over "child killings and war crimes" in Iran. Mojtaba, who has not appeared publicly since being named as the supreme leader on March 8, made these remarks in his message on the death anniversary of then-Iranian judiciary chief Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti and several key political figures in a bomb blast in 1981. The mes-

sage was shared on his official X account and reported by the Iranian media. In his written message, Mojtaba stated: "One of the most important legal, judicial issues now affecting the Iranian nation is the pursuit and vindication of their rights that have been violated by the crimes of international criminals, global arrogant powers & aggressors, particularly in the years 1404 and 1405." The mention of the two wars is a reference to the 12-day Israel-Iran war in 2025 and another one that began with the launch of

US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February this year. He added that physical and psychological damages "inflicted on each individual of the Iranian nation in the 2nd and 3rd imposed wars, from child killings and war crimes in Minab and Lamerd to attacks on medical centres, is each a legal file that must be pursued in both domestic and international courts." He further stated that from the "murder" of newborns and the elderly to the assassination of his father and predecessor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, "each is a

file among thousands of major legal cases that must be earnestly pursued in domestic and international courts". "What is definite is that these criminals must be seized by the collar and brought to justice for their criminal deeds," he asserted. Mojtaba went on to say that the "confessions, and even brazen boasting, of some of the leaders of the US-Zionist enemy regarding these crimes, are indisputably an admission of crime, and these effectively pave the way for the vindication of the [Iranian] nation's rights that have been violated".

Rangers foil attack on Karachi camp, three soldiers martyred: ISPR



ANI

KARACHI: Three Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) personnel were martyred and four others were injured after security forces foiled a terrorist attack on a Rangers camp in Karachi, the military's media wing said on Sunday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the attack was carried out on Saturday by "Khawarij belonging to Indian proxy, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar". The military said, "the assailants, after a blast at the main gate of the Camp, attempted to breach the perimeter security". "However, their nefarious designs were decisively foiled by the vigilant and resolute response of Rangers troops, eliminating three Kharjis and capturing one Kharji, who was identified as an Afghan national, in injured condition," it added. "During fire exchange, three brave sons of soil rendered the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat in the line of duty, while four soldiers were injured," the ISPR said. The ISPR said sanitisation operations were underway to eliminate any other "Indian sponsored kharji" in the area. It said the Counter-Terrorism campaign under the vision of "Azam-e-Istehkam" by security forces and law enforcement agencies would continue "at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country".

"Pakistan shall undertake retribution operations against the perpetrators of this attack to avenge the Shahadat of its soldiers," the military said.

"Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir expressed his deepest condolences with the families of the brave soldiers. These sacrifices further reinforce our unwavering commitment to safeguarding our nation at all costs," the statement concluded.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised the Rangers personnel for thwarting what he described as a "cowardly" attack.

"The personnel of Pakistan Rangers once again demonstrated their professional competence, bravery, and devotion to duty by thwarting the nefarious designs of the terrorists," he said. He added that by killing three terrorists and capturing one alive, the security forces had "crushed the aggressive designs" of the militants.

"The entire nation salutes the martyrs who laid down their lives for the country during the operation. Their sacrifices will always be remembered," the prime minister said. He expressed condolences to the bereaved families, prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured personnel and vowed that "the blood of the martyrs will not go in vain" and that "every manifestation of terrorism will be eradicated with full force". "The nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its brave armed forces, Rangers and law enforcement agencies," he added.

President Asif Ali Zardari also condemned what he described as the terrorist attack by the Indian proxy Jamaat-ul-Ahrar on the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) camp in Karachi.

Security forces kill eight Indian proxy terrorists in Balochistan operations



ANI

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed eight Indian-sponsored terrorists in two separate high-tempo intelligence driven operations in Kharan and Mastung districts of Balochistan. The operations were conducted on 25 and 26 June 2026 as part of relentless counter terrorism campaign aimed at eliminating "Indian Proxies, Fitna Al Hindustan". "On 25 June 2026, on intelligence leads movement of a group of terrorists was picked up by the security forces in Kharan District of Balochistan." As a result of precise and skillful engagement, three terrorist belonging to Indian proxy were killed while several were injured. "In another engagement on 26 June 2026, a pre-emptive intelligence based operation was conducted in Mastung District of Balochistan against

the possible presence of Suicide Bomber. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the terrorist location and after an intense fire exchange, five terrorists including a suicide bomber were successfully neutralised," read the ISPR press release.

Weapons, ammunition, improvised explosive devices and motorbikes used by these terrorists were also recovered.

Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist found in the area.

"Relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azam e Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country."

PPP names 35 candidates for AJK elections



ANI

KARACHI: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on Sunday officially announced its candidates for the 2026 elections to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly, fielding nominees in 35 constituencies across the region. According to the party's list, candidates have been nominated for constituencies in Mirpur, Bhimber, Kotli, Bagh, Sudhnoti, Poonch, Neelum Valley, Muzaffarabad, Jammu refugee seats and Valley refugee constituencies. In the Mirpur Division, the PPP awarded tickets to Afsar Shahid (LA-1 Murpur-I), Qasim Majeed (LA-2 Mirpur-II/Chakswari), Yasser Sultan (LA-3 Mirpur City), Chaudhry Sohaib Arshad (LA-4 Khari Sharif) and Chaudhry Pervez Ashraf (LA-5 Bhimber-I/Barnala). For the Kotli Division, Malik Zafar

will contest from LA-8, Javed Iqbal Bhadharvi from LA-9, Chaudhry Yasin from both LA-10 and LA-12, and Chaudhry Akhlaq from LA-11. The party also named Sardar Qamar Zaman, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Sardar Amjad Yousaf, Sardar Saud Sadiq, Sardar Yaqoob, Sardar Muhammad Abid Khan and Sardar Faheem Akhtar Rabbani as its candidates for various constituencies in Bagh, Sudhnoti and Poonch. In Neelum Valley and Muzaffarabad, tickets were awarded to Mian Abdul Waheed, Sardar Javed Ayub, Syed Basil Naqvi, Sardar Mukhtar Ahmed Khan, Mubashir Munir Awan, Ashfaq Zafar and Dewan Ali Chughtai. For the Jammu refugee constituencies, the party nominated retired Colonel Qadeer Chauhan, Chaudhry Asif Gujar, Chaudhry Ahsan Ismail Gujar, Shaheen Kausar Dar, Raja Shahid Iqbal Advocate and Chaudhry Fakhar Zaman.

Meanwhile, Amir Abdul Ghaffar Lone, Ghulam Abbas Mir, Javed Butt, Muhammad Rashid Islam Butt and Abdul Majeed Khan were nominated for the Valley refugee seats. The party leadership directed all candidates to launch a vigorous election campaign and expressed confidence that the PPP would secure victory in the AJK elections with strong public support.

Pakistan calls for strict adherence to US-Iran ceasefire amid regional tensions

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has urged all parties involved in the Middle East conflict to fully observe the US-Iran ceasefire agreement, underscoring the importance of dialogue and diplomacy to preserve regional peace. The call was made by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar during a telephone conversation with European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, according to a statement issued by the Foreign Office on Sunday. During the discussion, the two leaders reviewed the evolving security situation in the Middle East and exchanged views on ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing further escalation.

According to the Foreign Office, Kallas acknowledged Pakistan's diplomatic engagement and appreciated its "sincere efforts" that led to the signing of the Islamabad Memorandum



of Understanding.

She also expressed concern over recent ceasefire violations, stressing that communication channels among all parties must remain open to avoid renewed hostilities. Dar briefed the EU's top diplomat on Pakistan's continued efforts to

promote a comprehensive framework for lasting peace and stability in the region.

He emphasised that all sides must honour the ceasefire agreement and avoid actions that could undermine regional security.

The diplomatic exchange comes amid renewed tensions following reports of Iranian missile and drone strikes targeting US military installations in Kuwait and Bahrain, shortly after US President Donald Trump warned Tehran against violating the interim ceasefire arrangement. Meanwhile, Israel said it carried out strikes against Hezbollah positions in Lebanon on Saturday, despite a newly agreed ceasefire intended to reduce cross-border hostilities.

Earlier, the US military also announced fresh strikes on Iran after an oil tanker was reportedly attacked in the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic global shipping route that has faced repeated disruptions during the conflict.

PTA warns users to update ID records or face SIM blockage

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) launched a public awareness campaign regarding mobile SIMs registered on invalid, cancelled or expired identity cards and directed users to update their documents in a timely manner.

According to PTA, mobile numbers that are linked to inactive, cancelled or expired computerised national identity cards of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) could be suspended or blocked under regulatory rules. The authority advised mobile users to renew their national identity cards before their expiry date so that there would be no disruption in mobile service. The PTA also clarified that after renewing the identity card, users should immediately update their information in the records of the relevant mobile company so that registration details are correct. According to the agency, only those SIMs would remain active that were registered on valid and verifiable identity documents, while users who do not renew on time may face suspension of mobile service.

Faisal Gilani, Khawaja Anees dissociate from banned Joint Action Committee

ANI

MUZAFFARABAD: Two senior members of the banned Joint Action Committee, Faisal Gilani and Khawaja Anees, announced on Sunday that they are severing ties with the organisation and urged young people in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to distance themselves from what they described as its campaign of unrest.

In separate video messages, the two former members appealed to Kashmiri youth not to become part

of the committee's activities.

Faisal Gilani, a central member of the committee, said the organisation had abandoned its original mission of advocating for public rights. He claimed he could no longer remain associated with a movement that, in his view, was allowing young people to be used against Pakistan at the behest of anti-state elements. He alleged that the banned committee was pursuing the agenda of external actors seeking to create instability in the country. Khawaja Anees, another central member from

Neelum Valley, said the movement, which had initially been launched in the name of public rights, had exceeded its limits by directing its activities against the state and national institutions.

He said statements against Pakistan and its state institutions were unacceptable and appealed to Kashmiri youth to stay away from the banned committee. Announcing his disassociation from the group, Anees said he no longer wished to be associated with what he described as an anti-state outfit.



Federal Minister for Investment Board Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh talks to media during a free medical camp organized under the supervision of Islamia Hospital at Chak no 134 Loony Wala

Experts call for emergency steps as forest fires, deforestation worsen climate change

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Environmental stakeholders, including students, social activists, lecturers, and lawyers, on Sunday called for urgent reforms to stop illegal forest fires and deforestation, warning of severe ecological damage amid rising climate change threats, including the loss of bird species and medicinal plants that are rapidly declining due to burning and tree cutting.

Amid the devastating effects of climate change, environmental stakeholders, including students, social activists, lecturers, and lawyers from AJK, made a strong and urgent appeal, calling for strict laws against illegal forest fires and tree cutting. While expressing serious concerns during their interaction with PTV News, they urged stronger enforcement, public awareness campaigns, inclusion of environmental education at the school level, and the

establishment of district forest protection committees.

They warned that unchecked deforestation is causing severe ecological damage, with forests, birds, and medicinal plants rapidly declining amid escalating climate change threats. Lecturer Umer Kiyani highlighted that forest fires are increasing day by day, warning that nearly 43% of land under forest cover is being severely damaged due to illegal burning and tree cutting practices, adding that such activities are accelerating environmental degradation and long-term ecological loss.

He urged the introduction of environmental education at the primary level, emphasizing the need to educate students early about forest conservation to secure the future, and adding reforms in the education system to strengthen awareness and build a culture of environmental responsibility. A student, Qasim Iftikhar from AJK,

expressed concern and stressed the need for strong awareness campaigns on social media to highlight forest conservation, adding that forests are precious natural assets and their loss is worsening climate change impacts. He urged youth to use digital platforms to promote awareness and support forest recovery and protection efforts. A retired forest officer, Ijaz from AJK, emphasized the need to form district-level forest protection committees to improve forest conservation and monitoring. He said plantation efforts must go beyond planting, stressing proper care and survival of trees to make them effective, adding strict punishments for individuals involved in setting forest fires or illegal tree cutting, stating that only strong legal action can help prevent continued environmental damage.

Lawyer Raja Imtiaz stated that although environmental laws exist and enforcement

mechanisms are in place, the real challenge lies in education, mindset change, and proper care of trees after plantation.

He emphasized that planting trees alone is not enough unless they are protected and nurtured to maturity, adding that there is a need for greater public awareness and responsibility to ensure effective environmental protection.

They concluded that forest conservation would not only help increase tourism but also strengthen the local economy and create new livelihood opportunities.

They emphasized that protecting and expanding forest cover is vital for climate stability, biodiversity protection, and a healthier environment. They further stated that tree plantation, combined with proper care and strict protection measures, is essential to secure a safe and sustainable future for the coming generations.

FIA offloads two passengers attempting to fly to Russia on multiple identities

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration, Islamabad Zone, offloaded two passengers attempting to travel to Russia after detecting multiple identities and suspicious travel documents during immigration clearance at Islamabad International Airport.

An official told APP on Sunday that the two passengers, travelling on Uzbekistan Airways flight HY466 to Russia on June 27, were stopped for secondary screening after immigration officials flagged their travel documents as suspicious.

The official said a detailed examination revealed discrepancies in the passengers' identities and travel documents. According to the official, forensic examination of their mobile phones led to the recovery of multiple Afghan passports, one Afghan Tazkira, one Pakistani Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) and one Russian document.

The official said several of the recovered documents carried the photograph of the same individual despite bearing different identities, raising strong suspicion that the suspects were using multiple identities to facilitate illegal immigration.

Preliminary investigation further revealed that one of the Afghan Tazkiras had been issued in the name of the second passenger. At the same time, the remaining documents were allegedly being used in an attempt to travel abroad through fraudulent means.

Renowned lawyer Imran Matta meets Engr Amir Muqam, announces joining PMLN

ANI

PESHAWAR: Former General Secretary of the Peshawar High Court Bar and renowned lawyer Advocate Imran Khan Matta met with Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam at his residence in Peshawar Cantonment. On this occasion, Advocate Imran Khan Matta formally joined the Pakistan Muslim League (N), along with his family and thousands of his supporters. Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam welcomed Advocate Imran Khan Matta into the party by presenting him with the party cap, congratulated him on joining the PML-N, and extended a warm welcome. Engineer Amir Muqam paid tribute to the legal community, stating that lawyers have always played a pivotal role in promoting the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law. Speaking on the occasion, Advocate Imran Khan Matta expressed his complete confidence in the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League (N).

Student unions: Pakistan’s missing leadership schools

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Every year, students across Pakistan contest elections, organize events, and represent their classmates through student councils. But these bodies are largely symbolic, lacking the authority once exercised by student unions that shaped generations of political and civic leaders. What remains is participation without power. As a result, an important pathway for democratic participation and leadership development has steadily weakened.

Education experts and students say the weakening of student unions, particularly after the 1984 ban imposed during General Zia-ul-Haq's rule, has left a lasting impact on student leadership and representation in educational institutions.

The student council has benefited the society primarily by outlining the structure by which the society will run, holding interviews for the heads and ensuring competency and drive," said Sumayyah Raees Khan, vice-president of the Drama Society, talking to APP. "In an abstract sense, our society assists in diversifying the strengths in the student body."

Beyond organizing activities, student councils teach practical leadership skills.

Members learn to conduct meetings, manage projects, resolve conflicts and communicate effectively while representing their fellow students.

The student council has organized events such as fundraising bake sales, school festivals, and have aided in annual events like Frolympics and FROMUN, which encourage student participation. These efforts create a more active and supportive school environment for students across all levels," said Zyna Hajra, an A-Level student , talking to this agency.

Another student and Drama Society president, Daniyal, said the student council played a key role in establishing the Drama Society, providing students with a platform for debates and discussions. Such experiences help students understand elections, representation and democratic decision-making.

However, students believe today's councils face several challenges that limit their effectiveness.

Many trace these challenges to the 1984 ban on student unions introduced during General Zia-ul-Haq's regime. While the decision was taken amid concerns over campus violence and political unrest, many education observers believe it marked a

turning point that weakened student representation. Over time, democratic student unions were replaced in many institutions by councils with limited authority, reducing opportunities for leadership and civic participation.

The history of student politics was also shaped by organizations such as the Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) and rival student groups. Supporters credit these organizations with promoting student welfare and activism, while critics accuse them of political interference and campus violence. The resulting polarization was among the reasons authorities cited while restricting student politics.

The consequences are still visible today. Student representatives often struggle to address their classmates' concerns because of administrative limitations, while ordinary students lose opportunities to participate in meaningful decision-making. Parents also feel disappointed when elections appear unfair or fail to reward merit. "Some setbacks, I believe, have been a lack of substantial planning, and the failure of collaboration among members, which can result in less efficient production that might speak badly upon the student body," Sumayyah Khan said.

Students also point to low participation, particularly among younger classes, which weakens councils and reduces their ability to organize activities or influence school policies.

"My child came home to me, crying, the other day, saying that he lost the election because he wasn't as 'popular' as his opponent," says Mrs. Saima, a parent. Students argue that elections sometimes become popularity contests instead of evaluating leadership ability, leaving capable candidates overlooked.

Experts believe responsibility does not lie with one individual or institution alone. While the 1984 restrictions changed the direction of student politics, schools, education authorities and administrators also determine how much space student representatives are given today. Limited funding, excessive administrative control and weak election procedures continue to restrict councils. Former Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Chaudhary Rashid Ahmad, believes institutional leadership has an important role.

"As long as the government takes into consideration all the aspects related to the students, this question is not that relevant to the policymakers.

Haroon Akhtar Calls SMEs the Driving Force of Pakistan’s Export-Led Growth



BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan has said that countries which empower entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and innovators ultimately emerge as global economic leaders, stressing that Pakistan's future prosperity depends on strengthening the SME sector.

He expressed these views while addressing the World MSME Day 2026 SME Networking Session organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (ICSTSI) in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). The event was chaired by ICSTSI President Muhammad Awais Satti and SMEDA Chief Executive Officer Nadia Jehangir Seth, and was attended by Federal Secretary for Industries Humaira Zia Mufti, Usman Saifullah, representatives of chambers of commerce, entrepreneurs, and SMEs from across the country.

Haroon Akhtar said the government is pursuing export-led economic growth through innovation, entrepreneurship, and SME development. He noted that SME financing had reached Rs584 billion by March 31, while 53 percent of businesses had received enhanced financial support, resulting in industrial expansion and employment generation.

He said the government has launched Rs30 billion worth of initia-

tives to promote SMEs, adding that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has prioritized easier access to finance, taxation reforms, land availability, improved ease of doing business, and resolution of issues related to the State Bank of Pakistan.

"Every great economy has a story of entrepreneurs. Those who create jobs are the true builders of nations," Haroon Akhtar said, paying tribute to Pakistan's entrepreneurs, innovators, and women business leaders for their growing contribution to economic development.

Highlighting the importance of SMEs, he said Pakistan has around seven million SMEs, contributing nearly 40 percent to GDP, around 30 percent of exports, and employing almost 80 percent of the non-agricultural workforce.

He said SMEDA is working to improve access to finance, promote business formalization, and enhance the competitiveness of SMEs in domestic and international markets. He emphasized that formal registration enables businesses to secure bank financing and benefit from government support programmes.

Haroon Akhtar further said the government is connecting Pakistani SMEs with global markets through digital platforms and has signed an MoU with Alibaba to facilitate e-commerce and online exports. He added that SMEs are being encouraged to participate in international trade exhibitions, while outreach programmes have been expanded to Gilgit-Baltistan,

Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to integrate regional industrial clusters with national and international markets.

Referring to Pakistan's export potential, he said handmade products, furniture, honey, sports goods from Sialkot, and other traditional industries possess significant value in global markets and deserve greater institutional support.

He announced that the government would continue providing SMEs with improved liquidity, easier financing, tax facilitation, land availability, and regulatory reforms to create a more business-friendly environment.

Speaking on the occasion, ICSTSI President Muhammad Awais Satti said SMEs contribute nearly 40 percent to Pakistan's GDP and around 35 percent of national exports, making them the backbone of the country's economy.

He called for reducing the cost of doing business, ensuring affordable energy prices, simplifying documentation procedures, resolving issues related to labour laws and the Capital Development Authority (CDA), improving access to finance, and maintaining interest rates at single digits to facilitate business expansion. Awais Satti also appreciated SMEDA's continued support for the SME sector and noted that the Islamabad Chamber was Pakistan's first dedicated SME Chamber, with similar chambers now established in around 20 cities across the country, reflecting the growing importance of SMEs in Pakistan's economic development.

Murree Development Plan Grand Operation Begins, 10 Hotels and Over 40 Shops Demolished as Historic Mall Road Undergoes Major Transformation

Report by Raja Usman Ali

MURREE --- Under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Murree, Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, the implementation of the Murree Development Plan has officially begun. The project aims to modernize the historic hill station while preserving and enhancing its commercial and tourism significance.

As part of the first phase, a large-scale operation is underway on the Hillside section of Mall Road. Heavy machinery is being used to demolish structures acquired under the land acquisition plan. According to sources, around 10 hotels and more than 40 shops have already been demolished. During the operation, Mall Road has been temporarily closed to tourists.

The demolition has left a significant portion of Mall Road covered in rubble, giving the area the appearance of an old ruin. However, the district administration says the operation is part of a long-term strategy to improve traffic management, widen pedestrian walkways, upgrade public facilities, and develop modern infrastructure.

The project has generated mixed reactions among local residents and the business community. While many



view it as a necessary step toward Murree's future development, affected traders have expressed concerns over the impact on their businesses. The district administration maintains that

once completed, the revamped Mall Road will be more organized, aesthetically appealing, and better equipped to attract both domestic and international tourists.

Punjab witnesses new era of urban progress as water, sewerage projects expand on large scale: PMDFC MD

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Under Chief Minister's directions and World Bank support, PMDFC MD Syed Zahid Aziz on Sunday noted that Punjab is seeing extensive development works on a large scale, including expansion of water and sewerage systems across districts and cities to improve infrastructure and services.

During an exclusive conversation with PTV News channel, he said the Punjab Inclusive Cities Program is a landmark initiative that aims to transform urban service delivery across the province. He noted that with World Bank support and funding, the program is being implemented to significantly improve sanitation systems, strengthen municipal infrastructure and ensure better living standards for citizens under the broader vision of a modern and sustainable Punjab.

He highlighted that the initiative is not limited to infrastructure upgrades alone but is also expected to deliver far-reaching social benefits.

Improved sanitation services, he

explained, will play a vital role in addressing serious public health challenges, including child stunting, waterborne diseases, and hygiene-related illnesses, ultimately contributing to healthier communities and stronger human development outcomes. He further praised the Chief Minister's vision, calling it a transformative road-map for development that is bringing large-scale projects across cities and districts. MD said these initiatives reflect a strong commitment to inclusive growth, better urban governance and improved public service delivery, ensuring that no community is left behind in the development process.

He added that through coordinated efforts under the Punjab Inclusive Cities Program, World Bank partnership and CM-led development initiatives, Punjab is moving towards a new era of urban transformation focused on sustainability, health and long-term prosperity.

He mentioned that around 16 cities have been selected under the Punjab Inclusive Cities Program, including Kasur and Chakwal, as

part of a broader strategy to expand improved urban services across the province. He explained that the program focuses on improving water supply, sanitation, sewerage systems, urban flooding management during monsoon seasons, solid waste management, and the provision of safe and quality drinking water to ensure healthier and more sustainable urban living conditions.

He further said that the broader Punjab development projects, including the Punjab Inclusive Cities Program, are designed to strengthen urban infrastructure, improve public service delivery, and ensure sustainable development across selected cities, aligning with the government's long-term vision for a modern and prosperous Punjab. He concluded by expressing gratitude to the World Bank for bringing together national and international experts to explore practical, scalable solutions to Pakistan's pressing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) challenges. MD Syed Zahid appreciated the collaborative approach, stating that such partnerships are vital for strengthening urban systems and ensuring sustainable development outcomes across the country.

Pakistan plans to deploy 1 million workers to Saudi Arabia by 2030

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has set a target of deploying one million workers to Saudi Arabia by 2030 under a long-term workforce development strategy aimed at strengthening labour mobility, human capital development and economic cooperation between the two countries. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the target forms part of the Human Resource Deployment Plan (2025-2039) developed under the Saudi-Pakistan Economic Cooperation Framework (SPECF), which institutionalizes labour cooperation between the two countries in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. The plan envisages increasing annual overseas deployments to 1.51 million workers by 2039 through a structured pipeline of skilled, semi-skilled and highly qualified manpower. The targeted sectors include construction, hospitality and tourism, health-

care, information technology, logistics, aviation and infrastructure development.

Saudi Arabia continues to be the leading destination for Pakistani workers. According to the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE), 762,499 Pakistani workers were registered for overseas employment during 2025, of whom 530,256, or 69.54%, moved to Saudi Arabia. More than 96% of Pakistani workers proceeding abroad through official channels were employed in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The documents note that Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has significantly expanded employment opportunities in the infrastructure, construction and services sectors, helping the Kingdom retain its position as the largest overseas labour market for Pakistani workers.

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Opinion

3

Power, Politics and Pakistan in a Changing World



BY: Muhammad Usman Awaisi
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The shock waves of two World Wars lasted for decades and moved the world towards a peaceful retreat, where countries relied on diplomacy to resolve their conflicts rather than the use of force. If one goes to think about the post-Cold War era, the world had moved towards a silent peace that lasted a few decades, where countries moved for arms-control agreements and nuclear non-proliferation instead of competing over who could build the most devastating weapons of mass destruction. Other than regional conflicts like the Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, Iran-Iraq War or even Arab-Israel conflicts, there was no such involvement of war from the powers of the world. But was this peace or a mere pause before the storm?

Things took a turn on September 11th, 2001, when the world's most hustling city, the city where dreams come true, was sent into chaos when its twin towers fell to the ground. It gave birth to a new era where Islamophobia was born, where the West got a reason to wage war against countries it thought posed a threat. If you ask me, it was the after-effects of the two World Wars that there was a need to justify waging a war against a country has to have a solid reason of defending oneself.

This thought brought the war to Afghanistan for finding Osama Bin Ladin - who was later not even found in Afghanistan, the war on Iraq to eradicate the weapons of mass destruction - that were never found in Iraq, and imposed sanctions on Iran - who was yet to build a nuclear weapon. This was the beginning of a new world order, where under the guise of protecting oneself, countries were annihilated. As long as there was a somewhat plausible reason that it posed a threat to us.

Over time, even the need to have justification began to erode; Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Israel's campaigns in Gaza and Lebanon, India's blatant attack on civilian locations of Pakistan, and now the United States of America kidnapping a sitting President of Venezuela, all signal a deeper shift. These are all signs that as the horrors of the World Wars are fading, the world is moving quickly towards

a new normal normal where power overrides principle.

It seems in times like these, having brute force can somehow justify your actions. Therefore, Pakistan's performance in retaliation to India's attack raised many eyebrows.

There was a time when diplomatic norms held less weight for Pakistan, when our top leadership struggled for recognition, where one ex-Prime Minister waited for a mere phone call from President Joe Biden which was never received, where an ex-Prime Minister was allegedly left at an airport to later be rescued by a private jet. From the times when foreign ministers received the Prime Minister rather than the heads of state. From the times when

Just like the world order is changing, so is that phase of Pakistan, as now the Saudi Air Force gives a ceremonial welcome to the Prime Minister. President Donald Trump publicly acknowledges Pakistan by giving the microphone to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Now Pakistan is not informed of the decisions rather involved in the decision making.

Pakistan was informed of the decisions, rather than being part of the decision making.

Just like the world order is changing, so is that phase of Pakistan, as now the Saudi Air Force gives a ceremonial welcome to the Prime Minister. President Donald Trump publicly acknowledges Pakistan by giving the microphone to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Now Pakistan is not informed of the decisions rather involved in the decision making.

How can one forget what was arguably Pakistan's biggest diplomatic success in recent years; The Islamabad Peace Talks? At time when tensions between the USA and Iran were spiraling into a full-scale regional war, Pakistan played a

critical role in achieving a ceasefire. Not only that but also ensuring that Saudi Arabia stays out of this conflict. Had the war prolonged, it wouldn't have just been Pakistan that would have suffered. The entire world economy would be facing soaring energy prices and widespread instability.

For decades Pakistan has been unfairly portrayed in the international community as the hub for terrorism. Yet during one of the region's most dangerous times, it was Pakistan that chose diplomacy and emerged as a credible voice for peace. On the other hand, India that portrayed itself as the natural leader of South Asia found itself struggling to make itself relevant in this peace process. The difference could not have been more obvious: one nation was helping build peace, while the other was left observing from the sidelines.

This shift signals a broader change: Pakistan's renewed relevance is not rooted in historical sentiment or long-standing alliances, but in the demonstration of force at a time when force has once again become a central currency in the emerging world order.

Therefore, the need of a new centralized command under one Chief of Defense Forces in Pakistan was a strategic and timely move. If anyone had doubted the need of this new role, Field Marshal Asim Munir has demonstrated having a clear military stance towards stabilizing the country in times where force rules the world was the need of the hour. We still have a long way to go, but we are on the right track.

Yet the question remains: when will the masses reap the rewards of the affair between the riches of the world and Pakistan? For that, we have to head to the Musharraf era, when Pakistan was closely aligned with the United States and we saw economic relief in the shape of debt rescheduling, increased dollar influx, and greater flexibility by international financial institutions.

A similar opening may be emerging again. Pakistan today sits at the intersection of United States and China competition, sustained IMF engagement, renewed interest from the Gulf states and a non-sanctioned neighbor Iran. Though, the catch here is: without economic reforms, institutional stability, and investor confidence, strategic importance can vanish just as quickly as it came. Power can open doors, but only smart policy will determine whether Pakistan walks through those doors.

The road ahead is long and uncertain. But, for the first time in years, it feels like Pakistan is moving with history rather than against it.



BY: Dr Abdul Ghani
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The youth of any nation represent its greatest strength. Their health, education, and moral character determine the future of society. Unfortunately, Pakistan is witnessing the rapid spread of a dangerous trend that is gradually becoming part of youth culture: vaping. Originally introduced as an alternative for adult smokers, vaping has now become a fashion statement among teenagers and young adults. Attractive designs, fruity flavors, aggressive marketing, social media promotion, and peer pressure have transformed it from a smoking cessation product into a symbol of a modern lifestyle.

Even more concerning is that vaping is no longer confined to universities and colleges. It has now reached school classrooms, where children in their early teenage years are increasingly experimenting with disposable vapes and electronic cigarettes. Reports from teachers and parents suggest that some students even carry vape devices in their school bags and use them secretly during school hours. This growing trend should alarm every parent, educator, and policymaker because adolescence is a critical period for physical, mental, and emotional development.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has consistently warned that electronic cigarettes are harmful to children and adolescents. According to the WHO, nicotine exposure during adolescence can interfere with brain development, learning ability, memory, attention, and self-control. The organization has also highlighted that attractive flavors, colorful packaging, and sophisticated marketing strategies are particularly appealing to young people, increasing the risk of nicotine addiction at an early age. Public health experts have repeatedly emphasized that these products should never be

marketed to or used by children and adolescents.

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also reports that e-cigarettes remain the most commonly used tobacco-related products among young people in the United States. Although cigarette smoking has declined in many developed countries, vaping has emerged as a new public health challenge. International studies show that many young people begin vaping out of curiosity, peer influence, social media exposure, and the mistaken belief that it is completely harmless. Many later develop nicotine dependence, while some eventually transition to conventional cigarette smoking.

Scientific research published over the past decade has raised significant concerns regarding the health effects of vaping. Although researchers continue to study its long-term impact, existing evidence indicates that vaping exposes users to nicotine and other potentially harmful substances. Studies have linked vaping to respiratory irritation, reduced lung function in some users, nicotine addiction, and possible cardiovascular risks. Health experts therefore recommend a precautionary approach, particularly when it comes to protecting children and adolescents whose brains and bodies are still developing.

Pakistan is now facing many of the same warning signs that developed countries experienced several years ago. Vape products are widely available in many cities, often without strict age verification. They are promoted through social media platforms, online advertising, and peer networks that portray vaping as fashionable, harmless, and socially acceptable. Many young people mistakenly believe that because vaping does not produce the smell of traditional cigarettes, it carries little or no health risk. This misconception has contributed significantly to its increasing popularity among students.

Developed countries have responded to this challenge through stronger regulation. Australia has introduced some of the world's strictest controls on nicotine vaping products by significantly limiting access and strengthening reg-

ulatory oversight. The United Kingdom has announced measures to restrict disposable vapes and reduce youth access while continuing to support adult smoking cessation under medical supervision. Several European countries have tightened regulations on flavored products, advertising, packaging, and sales to minors. These actions demonstrate that governments across the developed world recognize youth vaping as a serious public health issue requiring decisive policy intervention.

Pakistan should learn from these international experiences before the problem becomes more severe. Strong enforcement of age restrictions, tighter regulation of advertising, effective monitoring of online sales, comprehensive public awareness campaigns, and educational programs in schools and universities are urgently needed. Parents should openly discuss the dangers of nicotine addiction with their children, while educational institutions should adopt clear anti-vaping policies and provide counseling for students who have already developed this habit.

The fight against vaping is not simply about restricting a product. It is about protecting the future of our children and preserving the health of the next generation. Every young person who becomes addicted to nicotine represents a loss of human potential. Schools, colleges, and universities should be places where young minds develop knowledge, creativity, discipline, and leadership—not environments where addictive habits become fashionable.

Pakistan's youth are the nation's greatest asset, and protecting them from nicotine addiction must become a national priority. The warnings issued by the World Health Organization, supported by international scientific research, should not be ignored. By strengthening legislation, enforcing regulations, promoting awareness, and encouraging healthy lifestyles, Pakistan can prevent vaping from becoming a larger public health crisis and ensure that its young generation grows into a healthier, more productive, and more responsible force for the nation's future.

So that what happened in Gaza never happens again

FAISAL J. ABBAS

By any measure, the recent developments in Gaza mark a pivotal moment in the region's long and painful history. And while cynics may scoff and skeptics may roll their eyes, it is time to acknowledge what must be said plainly: US President Donald Trump deserves credit for his bold and determined efforts to broker peace in Gaza.

Two years after countless failed initiatives, the current US-led push — chaired personally by the president as head of the newly formed Board of Peace — seems to be not just another diplomatic gesture with a fancy name. It has all the attributes of a serious, high-stakes undertaking that, if supported and sustained, could finally begin to reverse the devastation that has plagued the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian people.

Is the plan perfect? Far from it. Could it fail? There is definitely a high risk, given the many spoilers. With an extremist, trigger-happy Israeli government still in power, and a not-so-encouraging track record of Hamas, the road ahead is treacherous. But perfection is not the measure of progress. And repeating the same failed UN mechanisms while expecting different results is, as the famous quote says, the definition of insanity. I say this while fully and wholeheartedly wishing that the reality was otherwise. The reality is, unfortunately, that this is more a case of the Arabic proverb which says “and so cure it with what caused the illness to start with.” In other words, this is a matter of resorting to America precisely because President Trump is the deal-maker that he is, Washington has the leverage and the trust of Israel, and

that everything else has failed so far. My point is having a plan, with all its faults, is far better than allowing the killing to continue as a result of having no plan. Besides, pleasing everyone is an illusion and a recipe for failure in itself.

Even within the same political camps, reactions are and will continue to be divided. In Israel, some see the initiative as a lifeline for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — a way to climb down from a tree he has been perched on for far too long. Others argue it unjustly rewards Hamas, whose refusal to surrender has come at the expense of thousands of innocent lives and the near-total destruction of Gaza.

On the Palestinian side, the sentiment is understandably bitter. For many, this effort feels like “too little, too late.” After tens of thousands of deaths, widespread famine and what a UN agency has now labeled genocide, the scars are deep and trust is thin. Yet among Hamas ranks, the narrative is spun as a victory — proof that they have not capitulated. This, of course, ignores the staggering human toll of their obstinance.

But these debates, while important, must not distract from the larger truth: Trump is not just paying lip service, but is now fully invested as the chairperson of this peace initiative. That matters. It matters because it places real pressure on all parties, including Israel, to honor commitments. And it matters because it limits Netanyahu's ability to maneuver or escape accountability under the guise of security concerns.

Arab and Muslim nations have, to their credit, rallied behind the initiative. Their support is both morally necessary and strategically wise. But

let us not be lulled into premature celebration. The war is not over. The suffering is not over. And the peace is far from being won.

Labeling this effort as anything less than sincere and serious would be a disservice to the cause of peace. Yes, it is fresh. Yes, it is fragile. But that fragility demands our full support — not just in words, but in action. Humanitarian aid must flow freely. Food, shelter, and medical supplies must reach those in need before winter deepens the crisis. This is not the time for political posturing or ideological purity tests. It is the time for pragmatism, compassion, and rapid resolve.

If we are truly committed to ensuring that what happened in Gaza never happens again, then talk of a two-state solution must follow immediately. Not eventually. Not “when the time is right.” But now — as that is the only logical and just way to safeguard against another future atrocity.

The horrors of Oct. 7 and the Israeli genocide committed since must serve as a wake-up call. The region cannot afford another cycle of vengeance and victimhood. The international community must push for a viable, just, and enforceable resolution that guarantees security for Israelis and protection, statehood, and dignity for Palestinians. President Trump's initiative may not be perfect, but it is a start. And in a region where starts are rare and hope is often fleeting, that alone is worth applauding. The question now is whether Israel and Hamas will rise to meet this moment — or squander it, as they have so many times before. Let us hope, for the sake of Gaza and for the future of the region, that they choose wisely.

—Arab News

Banned JAAC: An Open Letter to UN



Abdul Basit Alvi
Published By: ANI

The international community must recognize that AJK's crisis is being dangerously misrepresented by the banned JAAC, which rejects electoral democracy and relies on mob rule rather than the ballot box. The government has already conceded thirty-five of thirty-eight demands, including subsidized electricity and flour, while the sole outstanding issue—twelve reserved seats for refugees from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)—is purely constitutional and cannot be settled by street pressure, yet JAAC refuses legal processes. Financially, AJK collects only 65 billion rupees against 350 billion in expenses, with Pakistan covering the entire deficit, making JAAC's claim that reserved seats consume local funds absurd; geographically, the river Jehlum originates in IIOJK and merely flows through AJK, yet JAAC wants its hydropower benefits while denying representation to those same refugees, exposing clear hypocrisy. The group's timber stick cultural claim is false, and their June 9th march, aimed at an armed attack on Muzaffarabad, was halted at Rawalakot to prevent bloodshed, while their threatened UN petition misrepresents the issue, as the actual violations stem from JAAC's own violent tactics.

Experts have proposed making AJK a full Pakistani province to permanently cancel the reserved seats and grant greater NFC benefits and national assembly representation—a democratic path JAAC rejects in favor of violence, which has severely harmed ordinary citizens by shutting down tourism and businesses, blocking students from schools, patients from hospitals, and laborers from earning, while internet blackouts and soaring grocery prices (higher than nearby Pakistani cities) have created a severe economic crisis—these are the genuine human rights abuses committed by JAAC. India and its media are celebrating this chaos, revealing JAAC's dubious allegiances, though common AJK residents are isolating from the group and yearning for normalcy. Pakistan entirely sustains AJK, which produces nothing on its own and would collapse without Pakistani supplies; despite this, JAAC leaders have disgracefully

insulted the martyrs from all Pakistani provinces who died for Kashmir and have even incited Kashmiri soldiers in the Pak Army to rebel—an act of treason. Nevertheless, the overwhelming love of Kashmiris for Pakistan and the Pak Army remains unbreakable, and analysts assert that this militant faction must be dealt with firmly for their betrayal and destruction.

The banned JAAC is treating both India and Pakistan with the same scale, which is completely unfair and unjust. The great and positive role of Pakistan for AJK and the atrocities of India in IIOJK are in front of the whole world. The ultimate destiny for Kashmiris is Pakistan, and they reject all those elements who want to make divisions between Pakistan and AJK. The banned JAAC is making a hole in the same plate in which it is eating, biting the hand that feeds it. The banned JAAC is sowing the seeds of division and hate into the minds of Kashmiris for Pakistan. People and analysts say that in the current financial crisis, it is extremely difficult for a person to move from one city to another as it costs too much, but the banned JAAC is mobilizing groups of people in AJK without any apparent financial issues. For people and experts, this clearly shows that they are getting foreign funding from our enemies and using this money to sabotage the peace of AJK. The actions of the banned JAAC have now converted into armed violence and open betrayal against the State and its institutions. Spreading hate, division, and negativity among the society is not the welfare of the society and is not a matter of human rights; it is a matter of national security and survival. It should also be noted that the situation in AJK is quite different from that of IIOJK. IIOJK is facing worse atrocities and human rights violations from the Indian government, while in AJK, the banned JAAC has created this artificial situation and is involved in human rights violations and betrayal just because of its unlawful and unrealistic demands.

The role of the State in the case of AJK has been remarkable, and it has shown remarkable patience and restraint in dealing with this group. The heinous actions of the banned JAAC are far away from people's rights. In simple words, the actions like burning Pakistani flags, chanting slogans against Pakistan and the Pak Army, asking Kashmiris serving in the Pak Army to do insurgency and fight against Pakistan, attacking civilian and government assets, attacking hospitals, cross-firing on law enforcement agencies, threats of throwing the law enforcement agencies and Pak Army personnel into

the Mangla Dam, threats of a mob attack on Muzaffarabad and Islamabad, and many other such acts are not people's rights. In simple words, these heinous actions are the worst form of terrorism, and such actions are strictly treated even anywhere in the world. The people of AJK are demanding the government to revive the State's writ and want to get rid of such violent protests which are badly violating human rights, destroying the historical and exemplary peace of AJK, and destroying the business and routine activities of the region. The internet is closed in AJK, and it is just because of the banned JAAC and their false propaganda against the State and its institutions. The banned JAAC has pushed AJK into ancient and stone times, halting all progress. The leaders and members of the banned JAAC sitting in a sit-in in Rawalakot are posing a great threat to the State and its writ. They are chanting and delivering speeches openly against the State, Pakistan, and the Pak Army. They are targeting law enforcement agencies and, in a desperate act, using children and women as human shields. According to security sources, they also have weapons. Just for the sake of legal and constitutional matters, they have disturbed and hijacked the entire state. The so-called movement which was started on the name of people's rights has now converted into an insurgency and armed movement against the State and its machinery. Also, drawing a resemblance of the Rawalakot sit-in with the tragedy of Karbala from a few elements is also wrong and does not match with the true spirit of Karbala. Here in the Rawalakot sit-in case, according to the teachings of Islam and civilized norms, it is very clear that the State is right and the protestors are wrong. The State has shown utmost tolerance and patience, but now people say that if the government decides to treat such riots strictly, then such a decision will be warmly welcomed by the people of AJK as it will be aimed to ensure peace in the state and restore the human rights and the writ of the state. The mature people of AJK are showing isolation from the banned JAAC because of its violent and anti-state actions. The people of AJK demand the government to get rid of the lives of the people from the dirty actions of the banned JAAC. The people of AJK also demand the UN and the world to take serious notice of the human rights violations of the banned JAAC in AJK and appeals to the UN and the world to label the banned JAAC as an internationally banned terrorist group. This is the only way to ensure peace and stability in the region.



PPP will achieve decisive victory in Azad Kashmir as well: Sumblina Hassan
Congratulations to Chairman PPP and central leadership on big victory in Gilgit-Baltistan
Voters trusted in the public vision of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto

BY:Special Correspondent ANI

ISLAMABAD/UK--- Senior PPP leader, former secretary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, Sumblina Hassan congratulated PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the party's central leadership and the successful candidates on the party's clear victory in the Gilgit-Baltistan elections. Sumblina Hassan said that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan have reaffirmed their trust by supporting the



PPP's politics of public service, democratic values and protection of public rights. She expressed her confidence that the PPP will achieve decisive victory in the upcoming elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir as well. She said that the Kashmiri people will continue to trust in the vision of the leadership of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Punjab Police Strengthen Security for Sunday Church Services Across the Province

BY: ANI CORRESPONDENT:

GUJRANWALA--- Punjab Police remained on high alert and ensured comprehensive security arrangements during Sunday worship and prayer services held in churches across Lahore and other districts of the province.

Inspector General of Police Punjab Abdul Kareem had earlier directed all Regional Police Officers (RPOs), District Police Officers (DPOs), and senior police officials to enhance security measures at churches. He instructed supervisory officers to personally inspect security arrangements at churches and other important and sensitive locations.

Following the directives, additional



police personnel and snipers were deployed at sensitive churches, while the Dolphin Squad, Police Response

Unit (PRU), and Elite Force carried out effective patrolling around places of worship to ensure the safety of worshippers.

IG Punjab Abdul Kareem also ordered deployed police officers and personnel to remain highly vigilant and maintain close surveillance on suspicious and miscreant elements. Search and sweep operations were conducted in and around churches, Christian neighborhoods, and other sensitive areas. Emphasizing the importance of communal harmony, the IG Punjab urged religious scholars, members of the Christian community, and Peace Committee representatives to continue promoting interfaith harmony and cooperation across the province.

AJK Information Minister Urges Public to Ignore Fake Social Media Propaganda, Trust Only Official PID Statements

BY: ANI Correspondent;

MUZAFFARABAD--- Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Minister for Information Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nayyar has urged the public to remain vigilant against the wave of misinformation circulating on social media, warning that fake flyers and fabricated posters are being widely shared through bogus accounts.

He said the ongoing propaganda campaign is based on falsehoods and alleged that India's intelligence agency, RAW, is also involved in spreading disinformation during the current situation.

The minister clarified that any official statement, flyer, or poster attributed to the Prime Minister, Chief



Secretary, or Inspector General of Police (IGP) of Azad Kashmir is issued exclusively by the Press Information

Department (PID) and is published only on its official social media platforms.

He appealed to the public to rely solely on these official sources for authentic information and to refrain from becoming part of malicious propaganda spread by anti-state elements.

Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nayyar further stated that the IGP of Azad Kashmir is a highly professional and patriotic officer who is being targeted through a baseless propaganda campaign. He added that the government is fully united regarding measures taken against the proscribed Action Committee and emphasized that the misconceptions being spread on the matter are entirely unfounded and have no basis in fact.

Traders Demand Immediate End to Lockdown, Warn of Serious Economic Consequences

BY: Hurish Shah:

ISLAMABAD---- President of the All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran and Traders Action Committee Islamabad Ajmal Baloch, Secretary and Chairman of the Traders and Market Development Committee, ICCI Khalid Chaudhry, along with office-bearers of various markets, have urged the government to immediately lift the lockdown across the country, warning that continued restrictions are severely damaging Pakistan's economy.

In a joint statement, Ajmal Baloch said, "Failure to end the lockdown will be disastrous for the national economy." Khalid Chaudhry stressed that "Traders should be allowed to conduct business without unnecessary restrictions."

F-10 Markaz President Ahmed Khan and Sitara Market President Syed Altaf

Hussain Shah said businesses have been badly affected due to restricted operating hours, making it difficult even to meet daily operating expenses.

Simly Road President Raja Zahid Dhanyal and G-10 Markaz President Kamran Kakakhel said soaring electricity and gas prices have shrunk business activity, while IESCO's extension of peak-hour timings has further increased traders' financial burden.

The statement was also endorsed by Blue Area President Yousaf Rajput, Jinnah Super Market President Asad Aziz, Super Market President Shehzad Abbasi, G-11 Markaz President Naeem Awan, F-8 Markaz General Secretary Ismail Khan, G-9 Karachi Company President Raja Zulfqar, General Secretary Shahid Abbasi, I-8 Markaz President Chaudhry Waheed Cheema, General Secretary Rana Bilal, I-9 Markaz President Safdar Abbasi,

General Secretary Waleed Khalid, Bhara Kahu Moti Bazaar President Qamar Abbasi, General Secretary Umar Khayam Abbasi, and Aabpara Market General Secretary Akhtar Abbasi.

The traders said the government has significantly increased the tax target for the next fiscal year despite the severe slowdown in business activity, questioning how the business community would be able to meet these tax obligations under the current circumstances. They further stated that even countries facing war have lifted lockdown restrictions, whereas Pakistan has continued to tighten them. The traders appealed to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir to immediately end the lockdown nationwide to revive business activity and protect the country's economy.

Pakistan Awami Quwat Women's Wing Launches Mass Contact Campaign

BY: Special Reporter ANI

ISLAMABAD---- The Women's Wing of the Pakistan Awami Quwat Party has formally launched a public mass contact campaign under the special directives of the party's Chairman, Khaqan Waheed Khwaja, who is also Chairman of Rawal General & Dental Hospital and the Rawal Foundation.

As part of the campaign, a well-attended corner meeting of the Women's Wing was held in Dhoke Matala village, Union Council Kirpa, NA-48. The meeting was hosted at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Shafiq-ur-Rehman, close associates of Chairman Khaqan Waheed Khwaja, and was attended by a large number of local women.

The party delegation included Syeda Firdous, Central President of the Women's Wing and Advisor to the Chairman, Farzana Malik, General Secretary of the Women's Wing, Parveen Siddique Khwaja, Information Secretary, and Ishrat Bibi, Joint Secretary of the Pakistan Awami Quwat Party.

Addressing the gathering, Syeda Firdous highlighted Chairman Khaqan Waheed Khwaja's vision and the mission of the Pakistan Awami Quwat



Party and the Rawal Foundation. She announced that, following the Chairman's directives, the Women's Wing has officially launched its public outreach campaign and will accelerate its door-to-door mobilization drive across the constituency.

During the visit, Raja Faisal, son of the late Subedar Mazhar Hussain, along with his family members, invited the Women's Wing delegation to his residence in Dhoke Matala for a special meeting regarding the party and its leadership. A Gyarvi Sharif prayer gathering was also held on the occasion. Another Gyarvi Sharif prayer gathering was organized at the residence of Raja Sajid,

Raja Qasid, and Raja Khalil in Darbari Mohalla, Union Council Kirpa, where the Women's Wing participated in prayers and interacted with local residents.

The delegation met with women from the area and briefed them on the party's manifesto and future plans. Raja Aadeeb and Tanveer Ahmed Khan also attended the gathering and conveyed Chairman Khaqan Waheed Khwaja's message to the participants.

The local women warmly welcomed the Women's Wing delegation and appreciated the launch of the public contact campaign, expressing support for the party's grassroots outreach initiative.

Sargodha Chamber and SMEDA Stress MSME Growth to Strengthen Pakistan's Economy

BY: ANI Correspondent:

SARGODHA--- Business activities, institutional development, innovation, and the creation of employment opportunities are essential for strengthening Pakistan's economy. These views were expressed by Khawaja Yasir Qayyum, President of the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), while addressing a seminar organized in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to mark the International MSME Day.

Khawaja Yasir Qayyum said that close collaboration between the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) could play a vital role in expanding business opportunities in the region. He emphasized that all stakeholders must work together to promote innovation, generate employment opportunities, and achieve inclusive economic growth to help strengthen Pakistan's economy.

He added that while SMEDA's contribution to national economic development is widely recognized, the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry is equally committed to working alongside SMEDA to facilitate business growth and create new opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Speaking on the occasion, Ghulam Haider, Regional Operations Manager of SMEDA, said that under the Ministry of Industries and Production, SMEDA continues to support the business community through business development services, advisory support, policy assistance, access to finance, cluster development, export promotion, and capacity-building programs.

He stated that Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises are the backbone of Pakistan's economy, playing a crucial role in employment generation, innovation, and sustainable



economic growth. He further noted that SMEDA is strengthening these sectors by promoting close cooperation between the public and private sectors and providing an effective platform for dialogue and support to the business community.

The seminar was also addressed by former SCCI President Mirza Fazal-ur-Rehman, Khawaja Abid Rafique, Mirza Mukhtar Ahmed, and Standing Committee Chairman Hassan Goga, along with other speakers. They appreciated SMEDA's efforts, stating that such seminars provide valuable guidance to entrepreneurs and contribute significantly to strengthening the local business ecosystem.

During the interactive session, participants highlighted several key challenges faced by businesses in the district, including limited access to financial facilities, business registration and documentation issues, export promotion, regulatory challenges, digitalization, and other local concerns. Participants were also given the opportunity to present recommendations aimed at improving the business environment and enhancing the competitiveness of local enterprises.

The speakers noted that International MSME Day is observed

annually under a United Nations resolution to recognize the significant contribution of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises to sustainable development and economic progress.

At the conclusion of the seminar, SMEDA Regional Operations Manager Ghulam Haider presented commemorative shields to the President of the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other distinguished participants. Office-bearers and members of the Women Chamber of Commerce also attended the event.

In his closing remarks, Mian Muhammad Imran, Senior Vice President of the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry, thanked the visiting SMEDA officials and members of the business community. He reaffirmed that the Chamber would continue to collaborate with SMEDA and all relevant organizations committed to promoting business and economic development in Sargodha.

Following the seminar, office-bearers of the Chamber and members of the business community also shared their views, acknowledging and appreciating SMEDA's valuable role in supporting entrepreneurship and business development.

Chairman Senate Gilani Secures Approval for Multan-Lodhran Dual Carriageway Project Funds Released Construction to Begin Within a Month

BY: ANI Correspondent:

MULTAN/ISLAMABAD-- In a major boost to infrastructure development in South Punjab, Chairman Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has secured approval for the long-awaited Multan-Lodhran Dual Carriageway Project. Funds for the project have also been released, with construction expected to commence within the next month. The approval was granted by Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan following a request by Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani. The project will be financed through the Road Maintenance Account (RMA) Fund.

The 62-kilometre dual carriageway

project is estimated to cost Rs. 4.6 billion and is scheduled for completion within one year. As part of the scheme, 44.8 kilometres of the existing road will also be elevated to ensure uniformity between both carriageways, improving road safety and traffic flow.

The Multan-Lodhran Road has remained in poor condition for years, creating difficulties for commuters, transporters, and local residents. Upon completion, the project is expected to reduce travel time, improve road safety, ease traffic congestion, and provide modern transportation facilities to the public.

Expressing satisfaction over the approval, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said another prom-

ise made to the people of Multan and Lodhran was now being fulfilled.

"An important commitment to the people of Multan and Lodhran is becoming a reality. The reconstruction and dualization of this vital highway will provide safer, more efficient, and high-quality travel facilities. My priority is to resolve the longstanding issues of South Punjab through sustainable development, and I am confident the project will be completed within the stipulated timeframe," he said.

Chairman Senate Gilani reiterated his commitment to promoting infrastructure development and improving public services across South Punjab to support economic growth and enhance the quality of life of the people

New Taxes on Auto Sector in Federal Budget Will Severely Hurt Business: Ajab Khan

BY: Hurish Shah:

ISLAMABAD---- President of G-8 Markaz and Islamabad Car Dealers Association, Ajab Khan, has expressed serious concern over the new taxes and duties imposed on the automobile sector in the federal budget, saying the measures will increase vehicle prices and negatively affect buying and selling activities.

He said the government's decision to raise Federal Excise Duty (FED) and other taxes on large-engine and luxury



imported vehicles would place an additional financial burden on the automobile industry. Although certain tax incentives for locally manufactured electric vehicles have been retained, he warned that the overall tax measures could create uncertainty in the market.

Ajab Khan urged the government to review its tax policy in consultation with stakeholders from the auto sector to restore business confidence, encourage investment, and ensure the sustainable growth of Pakistan's automobile industry.

DPO Kamran Amir Khan Honours DSP Muhammad Amir Shaheen Gondal for Outstanding Performance

BY: Special Correspondent

MANDI BAHAUDDIN--- District Police Officer (DPO) Kamran Amir Khan awarded DSP CIA Police Mandi Bahauddin Muhammad Amir Shaheen Gondal with a certificate of appreciation and a cash prize in recognition of his outstanding performance in crime prevention, maintaining law and order, and professional policing.

A special ceremony was held at the DPO Office, where the award was presented. Speaking on the occasion, DPO Kamran Amir Khan said that encouraging hardworking and dedicated officers is a long-standing tradition of the police department. He described officers who perform their duties with honesty, professionalism, and commitment as valuable assets of the force.

The DPO congratulated DSP Muhammad Amir Shaheen Gondal and expressed confidence that he would continue serving the public with the same dedication while con-



tributing to crime control and strengthening the rule of law.

Meanwhile, Chairman Civil Society District Mandi Bahauddin, Haji Raja Muhammad Ayub Khan, congratulated DSP Muhammad Amir Shaheen Gondal on receiving the certificate of appreciation and cash prize, praising his exemplary service and

wishing him continued success.

It is worth mentioning that DSP Muhammad Amir Shaheen Gondal has received five certificates of appreciation and cash prizes from the DPO during the month of June in recognition of his exceptional performance, reflecting his consistent commitment to professional excellence.