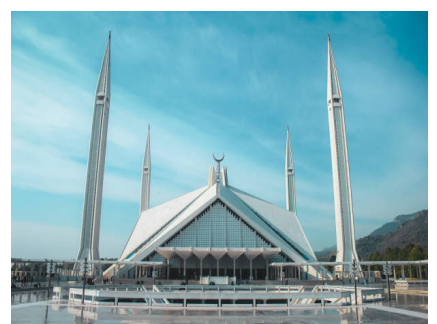




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Trump says Iran has told US no tolls being sought at Strait of Hormuz



ANI

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump claimed on Wednesday that Iran was offering significant concessions as negotiations between the two sides are set to continue next week. "The war is going very well. As you know, we're winning by a lot. Iran is making very big concessions. We'll see what happens — but it has been very, very, very powerful," Trump told reporters at the Capitol.

He earlier said Iran had told the US that no tolls were being sought from ships travelling through the Strait of Hormuz.

The two countries, which ended

a first round of negotiations in Switzerland on Monday, have offered conflicting accounts about financial incentives for Iran, control of the Strait of Hormuz and Israel's parallel war in Lebanon — all major aspects of their framework deal signed last week, aiming to end the war. Trump has faced criticism over the deal domestically, including from hardliners in his Republican Party. Meanwhile, Iranian Parliament Speaker and chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said that the deal between Iran and the United States to end the war is "America's declaration of defeat."

"The Islamabad understanding was not the result of pressure and

coercion, but rather the result of the resistance and authority of the brave Iranian nation," Ghalibaf said at a conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, on an Azerbaijani broadcast on Iranian television.

"That is why the Islamabad memorandum of understanding became a declaration of America's defeat," He added: "The brave resistance of the armed forces and the heroic resistance of the people in the streets caused Iran to impose heavy costs on the United States and the fake Israeli regime." Ghalibaf added that regional countries alone should determine the Middle East's security structure. "We consider the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the

region a strategic objective. We see the future of the region not in confrontation, but in interaction. [Military] bases of extra-regional forces in West Asia are a source of instability," he said.

Ghalibaf said Iran is ready to cooperate with nations in the Middle East based on "non-interference in internal affairs and respect for sovereignty". He reiterated Iran's stance that Israel must halt its attacks and occupation of southern Lebanon. "We have not abandoned our friends and strategic partners in the most difficult and complex conditions ... A ceasefire and an end to the war in Lebanon is just as important to us," Ghalibaf said.

Sanctions relief to pave way for stronger Pakistan-Iran economic ties: FO

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday expressed optimism over the ongoing high-level technical talks between Iran and the United States, saying that progress in trade and economic cooperation with Iran would be linked to the easing of international sanctions on Tehran. Addressing the weekly press briefing, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi said the pathway towards sanctions relief for Iran had already been initiated through talks held in Burgenstock, Switzerland. He described the process as a positive development and expressed hope that the negotiations would produce constructive results as they move forward. Responding to a question, the spokesperson said there had been a temporary pause in technical-level discussions between Iran and the United States, and the talks will be resumed next week. He said the continuation of dialogue between the two sides was itself an encouraging sign. "It is a very positive development that both parties are engaged in talks and remain at the negotiating table," he remarked. Commenting on the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, the spokesperson said tensions were likely to ease as diplomatic efforts progressed.

However, he noted that a complete return to normal operations in the strategically important waterway could take some time due to operational requirements.

On a question regarding control of the Strait of Hormuz, the spokesperson said Pakistan supported the initiatives of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and believed in regional ownership of regional issues.

He stressed the importance of respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states in the region.

Discussing the recent visit of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Pakistan, Andrabi said the two sides held extensive discussions on a range of issues, including expanding trade, investment and economic cooperation.

He noted that progress in bilateral economic projects and trade expansion would move forward alongside the lifting of sanctions imposed on Iran.

"The overall progress of economic projects and opening up of trade with Iran will



take place simultaneously with the lifting of sanctions by the United States," he said.

The spokesperson said one of the major outcomes of the Iranian President's visit was the reaffirmation by both countries of their commitment to peace, stability and stronger bilateral relations.

He added that the Iranian leadership had expressed confidence in Pakistan, a gesture for which Pakistan was grateful.

Andrabi, responding to a query regarding a proposed financing package of \$300 billion for Iran, said that the matter was expected to be discussed during the ongoing technical-level talks in Switzerland.

As regards the issue of Afghanistan, the spokesperson said Pakistan had implemented most of its commitments related to bilateral engagement with Afghanistan and that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar had personally monitored the process.

However, he said certain developments later created difficulties for Pakistan's diplomatic efforts.

He reiterated Pakistan's position that Afghan territory should not be used for terrorist activities against Pakistan.

"If diplomacy is to move forward, the starting point should be a clear assurance from Afghanistan that its soil will not be used for terrorism against Pakistan," he said.

The spokesperson emphasized that the people of Afghanistan were brothers of the Pakistani people and that deep people-to-people ties existed between the two countries.

Responding to another question, Andrabi acknowledged China's constructive role in facilitating understanding between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

He said Pakistan would continue to work closely with China to promote regional peace and cooperation.

Libyan armed forces deputy chief calls on COAS Asim Munir



ANI

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), HJ here on Wednesday at General Headquarters (GHQ).

Upon arrival, the visiting dignitary was presented a Guard of Honour by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent, said a news release issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During the meeting, matters of mutual

interest, regional security dynamics, defence cooperation and avenues for enhanced military-to-military collaboration were discussed.

Both sides underscored the importance of strengthening bilateral defence ties and expanding cooperation in areas of professional military training and security.

The Field Marshal highlighted Pakistan Army's commitment to promoting peace, stability and constructive engagement with friendly countries. The visiting dignitary appreciated the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their contributions towards regional peace and security.

Pakistan, US discuss expanding maritime cooperation, investment opportunities



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the maritime sector, focusing on investment, trade, port development and the blue economy. The discussion took place during a meeting between Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and United States Chargé d'Affaires Natalie A. Baker, who called on the minister at his office on Wednesday. Junaid Chaudhry highlighted the strategic importance of Pakistan's ports and coastal resources and invited US investors to explore opportunities in maritime infrastructure, shipping,

logistics and port-related services.

He added that Pakistan was creating a business-friendly environment for foreign investors and welcomed greater American participation in developing the country's blue economy. Discussions also covered strengthening port infrastructure, improving logistics networks and enhancing connectivity to support regional and international trade. Both sides exchanged views on boosting maritime commerce and unlocking investment tied to Pakistan's growing blue economy and agreed in principle to establish a joint working group to promote coordination and expand bilateral engagement in the sector.

Pakistan set to assume key roles in multilateral forums: Ishaq Dar

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said Pakistan is set to assume key roles in upcoming multilateral forums, including chair positions in regional organisations, reflecting growing international confidence in the country's diplomatic engagement. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said Pakistan's diplomatic standing is also reflected in its participation in regional and international platforms, including Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) meetings, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) forums, and ECO-related cooperation frameworks. He said Pakistan's growing diplomatic profile is evident in its increasing participation in high-level global forums and its role in hosting or co-chairing international events, including upcoming OIC women-related confer-



ences and SCO meetings. He added that Pakistan's leadership role in these organisations highlights its active engagement in global and Muslim world affairs. Referring to regional strategic developments, including defence and security understandings with friendly countries, he said

Pakistan's foreign policy is guided by cooperation, stability, and regional connectivity.

He said that Pakistan continues to pursue economic integration initiatives, including cross-border trade and market connectivity with neighbouring countries, particularly Iran.

Dar further said Pakistan has consistently advocated peaceful engagement in regional conflicts and supported dialogue-based solutions, adding that efforts are aimed at strengthening economic ties, expanding trade volumes, and enhancing regional stability through structured cooperation frameworks.

He said recent diplomatic achievements reflect sustained efforts by the government, the Foreign Office, and the country's leadership, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, adding that these developments demonstrate increasing international trust in Pakistan's constructive role in global affairs.

Bilawal, Aleem discuss GB govt affairs, political cooperation

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President of the Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party Abdul Aleem Khan on Wednesday discussed the political situation and government affairs of Gilgit-Baltistan during a meeting held at Parliament House. The meeting was attended by senior PPP leader and Member of the National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. Representing the Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party were Members of the National Assembly Aoun Chaudhry, Gul Asghar Baghor and Munazza Hassan, said a press release. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Abdul Aleem Khan exchanged views on the current political landscape in Gilgit-Baltistan and discussed matters related to the formation of the Government. It is noteworthy that the two leaders also exchanged goodwill and warm sentiments during the meeting. Leaders of both the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party agreed to further strengthen their ongoing political cooperation in Gilgit-Baltistan and to continue moving forward through mutual consultation.

PM hails economic team for delivering relief-oriented budget despite fiscal constraints

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday commended the government's economic team, particularly the Ministry of Finance, for formulating a relief-focused federal budget for the upcoming fiscal year aimed at supporting salaried individuals, the business community, and the general public. The prime minister lauded the efforts of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, the Finance Secretary, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and

the entire economic team for their contributions to the budget-making process, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the government had fulfilled its commitment to provide meaningful relief to the salaried class, businesses, and ordinary citizens through the budget.

He described the efforts of the economic team as commendable and appreciated their dedication in preparing a balanced financial plan under challenging economic circumstances.

"The benefits of improving economic indicators will be extended to every citizen of the country," the prime minister said, reiterating the government's commitment to ensuring that economic

recovery translates into tangible improvements in people's lives.

The economic team welcomed the prime minister's appreciation and noted that, despite limited fiscal space and financial resources, the government had successfully made every possible effort to maximize public relief in the budget. Members of the economic team also thanked the prime minister for his active engagement throughout the budget preparation process. They acknowledged his directives to prioritize public welfare, hold extensive consultations with stakeholders, and personally oversee discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to secure measures that would provide relief to the public.



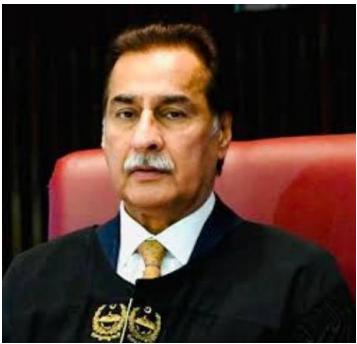
Prime Minister meets his economic team to appreciate their efforts in presenting a successful budget ,Islamabad

NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq Reaffirms Commitment to Constitutional Supremacy and Parliamentary Decorum

BY: Hurish Shah

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has reiterated his commitment to upholding the Constitution, parliamentary traditions, and democratic values during the Budget Session 2026-27. Responding to remarks by the opposition, he said all his rulings are guided strictly by the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly.

The Speaker emphasized the



importance of mutual respect among lawmakers, stating that political differences should not turn into personal hostility. He also highlighted that the opposition was given nearly twice its allocated time during the budget debate, with 67 opposition members participating. Reaffirming his impartiality, Ayaz Sadiq said he remains committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all members while preserving the dignity and effectiveness of Parliament.

PML-N Balochistan Leaders Briefed on Development Projects During Islamabad Meeting

BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD: Central leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) from Balochistan were invited to an important party meeting in Islamabad, where discussions were held on ongoing development projects and other key issues. MNA for Sibi Division and Parliamentary Secretary Mian Khan Bugti was also present on the occasion. During the meeting, he briefed party leadership on major public issues, infrastructure needs, and essential facilities across his district and the entire Sibi Division. The participants reviewed



development priorities and emphasized accelerating projects aimed at

improving public services and regional development.

Finance Minister Presents Auditor-General's Reports in National Assembly

BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, presented the Government of Pakistan's Appropriation Accounts for FY 2024-25 and the Auditor-General's Audit Reports for Audit Year 2025-26 before the National Assembly in accordance with Article 171 of the Constitution.

The Finance Minister termed the development a major milestone in Pakistan's public financial management and accountability framework,

noting that for the first time in the country's history, audit reports have been presented to Parliament within the same financial year to which the audit cycle relates.

He said the timely submission of audit reports would strengthen transparency, accountability, and parliamentary oversight of public finances by enabling legislators to review audit observations while they remain relevant and actionable.

Senator Aurangzeb also praised the Auditor-General of Pakistan and his team for achieving the milestone, describing it as a significant step

toward improving the effectiveness and timeliness of public audits.

For the first time, the audit reports were also shared digitally with Parliament, providing members with simultaneous electronic access and supporting the transition to a modern, efficient, and paperless parliamentary system.

The minister said the timely presentation and digital dissemination of audit reports would further strengthen public financial accountability, improve governance, and reinforce Parliament's oversight role in managing public resources.

RPO Sargodha Honors Retired Police Officers at Farewell Ceremony

BY: ANI Correspondent:

SARGODHA--- A dignified farewell ceremony was held at the Regional Police Office (RPO) Sargodha in honor of retiring police personnel. The event was hosted by RPO Sargodha Range Muhammad Shehzad Asif Khan and attended by senior police officers, including SP RIB Azhar Yaqoob, DSP RIB Khalid Hussain Tarar, ADIG Muhammad Tariq Malik, DSP Legal Qasim Hayat, Assistant Director Asma Musa, and other officers and staff members.

During the ceremony, the RPO paid tribute to the exemplary services of retiring Sub-Inspectors Ahmad Khan and Akbar Saqlain. He praised their dedication, professionalism, and valuable contributions to the Police Department, extending his best wishes for their future lives.

As a gesture of appreciation, honorary shields were presented to both officers, and they were given a warm farewell by colleagues and department officials.



Speaking on the occasion, the RPO noted that both officers began their careers as constables and, through hard work, commitment, and professional excellence, progressed

through the ranks to become Sub-Inspectors. Their long-standing services and contributions to the department were highly appreciated and widely respected.

Future-Ready, Technologically Proficient Workforce Essential for Future Warfare' Naval Chief



BY: ANI Correspondent:

LAHORE--- Chief of the Naval Staff, , has emphasized that success in future warfare will depend not only on revisiting traditional warfighting concepts but also on developing a future-ready workforce equipped with advanced technological skills and intellectual capabilities.

The Naval Chief expressed these views during his visit to the , where he addressed participants of the 55th Pakistan Navy Staff Course.

Speaking on the occasion, Admiral Naveed Ashraf highlighted the evolving nature of modern warfare and emerging maritime security challenges. He stressed that conven-



tional military strategies must adapt to effectively address both traditional and non-traditional threats in an increasingly complex security environment.

Reaffirming the Pakistan Navy's commitment to modernization, indigenization, and jointness, the Naval Chief urged participants to further enhance their strategic vision and operational foresight to effectively tackle future challenges.

Discussing maritime security issues, he noted that the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) remains dynamic and contested, with shifting geopolitical alignments and ongoing power rivalries continuing to shape the regional security land-

scape. He emphasized that the effective execution of multidomain operations has become a cornerstone of contemporary warfare.

The Naval Chief also outlined various initiatives and development plans being pursued by the Pakistan Navy in line with his vision of transforming it into a formidable regional maritime force.

Concluding his address, Admiral Naveed Ashraf congratulated the participants on successfully completing the PN Staff Course and advised them to remain analytical, innovative, professionally competent, and committed to excellence in their future assignments.

Over 4,000 Police Personnel Deployed for Muharram Security in Gujranwala and Wazirabad



BY: Special Reporter ANI:

GUJRANWALA--- City Police Officer Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan has announced that comprehensive security arrangements have been finalized for the observance of 9th and 10th Muharram in Gujranwala and Wazirabad. A total of 227 Majalis and 192 mourning processions will be provided foolproof security.

According to the CPO, more than 4,000 police officers and personnel along with over 1,500 volunteers will perform security duties during

Muharram. He emphasized that maintaining peace, religious harmony, and protecting the lives and property of citizens remain the top priorities of the police.

Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan directed all police officers to remain on high alert, perform their duties diligently, and maintain close coordination with organizers of Majalis and processions. He also instructed officials to strengthen liaison with District Peace Committees, Conciliation Committees, Guard Committees, Mohalla Committees,

traders' representatives, and other social organizations.

The CPO further ordered full coordination with Civil Defence, Rescue 1122, the Health Department, telecommunication authorities, and district administration focal persons to ensure effective implementation of the security plan.

He warned that any violation of security protocols would not be tolerated and that anti-social elements would be dealt with firmly to maintain law and order during Muharram.

Punjab Government Distributes Financial Aid to Minority Families in Nankana Sahib

BY: ANI Reporter:

NANKANA SAHIB--- A ceremony was held at the District Council Hall where financial assistance checks of Rs15,000 each were distributed among 76 deserving men and women from minority communities. Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Maheen Fatima, President Pakistan Sikh Sewa Society Sardar Surjeet Singh Kanwal, and PML-N Minority Wing District Coordinator Zeeshan Gul Joyia participated in the distribution ceremony. Speakers said the Punjab government is taking practical steps for the welfare and economic empowerment of minorities, enabling them to celebrate their religious festivals with dignity. Community leaders praised the initiative and thanked Chief



Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, interfaith harmony and brotherhood.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf with Senior Officers of PN, Staff Course Members and Faculty of PN War College at Lahore



Rawalpindi:Malik Ejaz Hussain, Secretary General of Pakistan Awami Quwat Party, addressing a seminar titled "The Message of Kurbala and Our Responsibilities," organized by the Women's Wing of the Pakistan Awami Quwat Party.

NCCIA Launches Inquiry into Alleged Misinformation Campaign Against Easypaisa

BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has initiated an inquiry into the alleged spread of false and misleading information targeting Easypaisa Bank Limited on social media and digital platforms. The complaint was filed by Naresh Kumar Aruwani, Head of Country Litigation at Easypaisa, seeking legal action against individuals accused of creating and promoting content aimed at undermining public confidence in the bank. According to the complaint, certain influencers and digital content creators circulated misleading claims regarding the bank's financial stability and operational continuity, allegedly encouraging customers to withdraw funds and creating unnecessary panic. NCCIA sources said the inquiry has been assigned to a senior officer, who has begun proceedings under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 to identify those involved in creating and disseminating the content. Easypaisa has strongly rejected the allegations, describing them as false and baseless. The bank maintained that its services remain fully operational, customer funds are secure, and any recent technical disruptions were temporary and did not affect deposits or financial stability. The bank urged customers to rely only on official communications and verified regulatory announcements while reaffirming its commitment to protecting customer interests and pursuing legal action against misinformation.



Islamabad: Nanbai Association President Janghri Abbasi congratulated Khurram Abbasi, the elected General Secretary of the Flour Dealers Association.

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Opinion

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Gulf countries can win the global talent war

ARNAB NEIL SENGUPTA

For decades, the world’s most ambitious young professionals have made a beeline for a familiar set of destinations: New York, London, Silicon Valley, Boston, Research Triangle Park in North Carolina and a handful of other global hubs. These places promised opportunity, job satisfaction and high-growth careers. Today, that promise is fading. A slowdown in white-collar hiring across the West, being felt most acutely by tech industry executives in the US, has opened a rare window of opportunity for Gulf Arab states. This is the moment the Gulf Cooperation Council can win the global talent war. Recent reports in The Wall Street Journal paint a grim picture. Even graduates from elite US business schools — the traditional providers of executives, consultants and financiers — are taking months to land job offers. At Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business, 21 percent of master’s graduates were still unemployed three months after graduation. At the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, the figure stood at 15 percent, compared with just 4 per-

cent in 2019. Georgetown University reported that fully a quarter of its MBA class was still searching for work after three months. These are sobering numbers for institutions that once served as launchpads for lucrative careers.

The reasons are manifold. Companies are cutting back on white-collar hiring amid economic uncertainty, geopolitical risk and the rapid adoption of generative artificial intelligence, which threatens to automate many entry- and mid-level professional tasks. Layoffs in technology, finance and consulting have flooded the US market with experienced candidates competing for a shrinking pool of jobs. As one Wall Street Journal report noted, the US added just 49,000 jobs per month in 2025 — the slowest pace in more than two decades outside major recessions — and most of those jobs were in healthcare, not business or technology.

This crisis for Western graduates represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the Gulf. At precisely the moment when hydrocarbon prices are softening and fiscal pressures are rising, countries hitherto reliant on

energy exports need fresh thinking, new business models and the best managerial capacity.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain all have strategies in place aimed at economic diversification. Significant investments are already flowing into AI, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, life sciences, logistics and fintech. But capital alone may not be enough to guarantee the anticipated return on such investments. That depends on skilled engineers, product designers, data scientists, business strategists, venture capital professionals and industrial managers.

Time is also of the essence. AI data centers, advanced manufacturing projects and tech ventures will take perhaps years to mature and produce stable returns, assuming all goes well. But Gulf states facing fiscal pressures from lower oil revenues do not have the luxury of sitting back and hoping for the best. One way to bridge this gap is to aggressively attract world-class human capital that can help create entirely new revenue streams and industries, while looking forward to seeing their investments in electronics, advanced

industrials, clean energy and AI pay off in the fullness of time.

To be sure, the Gulf already attracts a tremendous amount of talent. Since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, Riyadh and Dubai, for instance, have drawn tens of thousands of new expatriates every year. Their booming populations testify to their international appeal. However, a substantial part of this inflow ends up in real estate, hospitality, retail, basic services and mid-level corporate roles. What remains limited is the recruitment of innovation-driving talent from top business schools, engineering institutes, medical schools and research universities — the kind of graduates that powered the rise of Silicon Valley, Boston’s biotech ecosystem and London’s financial sector.

It is no secret that the US owes much of its technological leadership to generations of first-generation immigrants who arrived with talent and ambition. From Silicon Valley to Wall Street, foreign-born talent has powered the engines that drive entire sectors of the American economy. Fortunately, the GCC countries have the financial resources, infra-

structure, lifestyle advantages and geopolitical stability to bet on that strategy — provided they act decisively.

Several forces work in the regional bloc’s favor. First, world-class healthcare, international schools, modern housing, cultural openness and physical safety make cities like Riyadh, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha highly attractive to cosmopolitan professionals. Second, taxation levels here remain competitive, allowing professionals to retain far more of their income than in the West. Third, governments are increasingly generous when it comes to visas, work permits, property ownership and long-term residency — a crucial factor for young talents who prioritize families and careers. To attract the brightest minds, Gulf countries must offer something intellectually compelling: the chance to build new institutions, industries and ecosystems from the ground up. This is where the region holds a significant advantage over Western economies that are burdened with high-tax regimes, bureaucratic inertia, regulatory inflexibility and policy rigidity.

— Arab News

What Myanmar’s genocide defense reveals about global justice

DR. AZEEM IBRAHIM

Over the past several days, the hearings at the International Court of Justice in The Hague have revealed something far more consequential than a procedural dispute over jurisdiction or representation. They have exposed a deliberate and coherent legal strategy by Myanmar’s military rulers: the systematic erasure of the Rohingya as a people from the courtroom itself. Rather than grappling with the substance of the genocide allegations brought under the Genocide Convention, the junta’s lawyers retreated almost entirely into abstraction. Their submissions were dominated by arguments about standing, admissibility, timelines and who has the authority to speak for Myanmar. What was striking was not simply what was said but what was consistently avoided. The Rohingya were rarely named. Their identity, history and continued suffering were conspicuously absent from a case that exists solely because of crimes committed against them.

This was not an oversight. It was a strategy.

Genocide, under international law, begins with the targeting of a protected group. The crime is not only about mass killing, it is about the destruction of a people as such. In Myanmar, that process unfolded over decades through the denial of citizenship, restrictions on movement, exclusion from education and the systematic delegitimization of Rohingya identity. By the time the military launched its 2016-2017 “clearance operations,” the Rohingya had already been rendered legally and politically invisible within the state. What the recent hearings at the world court demonstrate is that this logic of erasure has now migrated from the battlefield and bureaucracy into the courtroom. The junta’s legal approach seeks to strip the case of its human core and reframe it as a technical dispute between states. By doing so, it avoids confronting the central question before the court: whether specific people were targeted for destruction because of who they are.

This matters because genocide law cannot function in the abstract. The Genocide Convention was drafted in the shadow of the Holocaust precisely to prevent legal formalism from shielding perpetrators. It requires courts to identify victims, name protected groups and assess intent. When

a respondent state refuses even to acknowledge the existence of the group at the center of the case, it is not mounting a defense in good faith; it is attempting to hollow out the law itself.

The danger is that proceduralism becomes complicity.

International courts are, by design, cautious institutions. They prize jurisdictional clarity, procedural fairness and state consent. But when those instincts dominate to the exclusion of substance, they can be exploited by regimes that understand how to weaponize the legal process. The junta’s approach at The Hague reflects a broader pattern seen in other atrocity cases: delay justice long enough, bury facts under procedure and eventually the political urgency dissipates. For the Rohingya, time is not neutral. Nearly 1 million remain in refugee camps in Bangladesh. Conditions in Rakhine State have deteriorated further, with new rounds of violence, restrictions on humanitarian access and deepening food insecurity. Each year of legal delay entrenches displacement and normalizes a reality in which return, citizenship and justice drift further out of reach.

If the International Court of Justice allows the case to be reduced to questions of representation and standing without insisting on engagement with the underlying crimes, it risks setting a dangerous precedent. Other regimes accused of mass atrocities will learn the lesson quickly: you do not need to refute the facts if you can avoid discussing them altogether. This is not simply a problem for Myanmar or the Rohingya. It goes to the heart of whether genocide law remains fit for purpose in an era of fragmented states, contested sovereignty and authoritarian resilience. Many contemporary conflicts involve regimes that lack full territorial control or popular legitimacy. If such actors are nonetheless able to use procedural shields to evade scrutiny, the deterrent value of international justice will erode rapidly.

The world court does not need to abandon legal rigor to avoid this outcome. But it does need to recognize that silence can be as consequential as speech. When a respondent refuses to name the victims of alleged genocide, the court should treat that refusal as legally and morally significant.

— Arab News



Greenlanders’ fever dream over but nightmares continue

NIC ROBERTSON

On Sunday, after two and a half weeks’ reporting from Nuuk, Greenland, my team and I finally boarded a plane and said goodbye. Leaving is hard. Greenland has me in its thrall, in rapture of its raw beauty and seduced by its quiet Inuit culture. But it’s a good thing to exit. Tonnes of journalists and equipment, clearing out, making space for Greenlanders to reflect on what just happened. As our producer, Ben, sagely observed, their fever dream has broken. Residents of this giant, icebound Arctic island could be forgiven for thinking they might awaken back to a simpler time, before the trauma of President Donald Trump’s ratcheting up of demands to own Greenland just a few weeks ago. But they are not where they began and they know it. Instead, they are awakening to an uneasy new reality. Trump’s capricious claims over their sovereignty are not over and his apparently flimsy grasp of basic facts about their homeland does not appear to have improved.

White House tweets make that abundantly clear. Were it not for his declaration at Davos last week, forswearing a military invasion of Greenland, an image posted of the president trudging across a snow field toward a Greenland flag, hand in wing with a penguin, would be triggering a renewed fever for its residents.

The apparent trolling is hard to fathom, much less take seriously. For a start, penguins — as everyone knows — live exclusively at the South Pole. Greenland is at the opposite end of the planet. But such incontrovertible truths seem to have become eclipsed by expansionist ambitions. Trump says he must own Greenland for the US’ “national security,” so he feels “psychologically” empowered to take it for his soon-to-be-built Golden Dome missile protective shield for the US. He might deny that he covets the minerals and rare earths buried below its ice sheets, but many are skeptical. What’s more, both objectives are already within his grasp. As Denmark, of which Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory, has made repeatedly clear to Trump’s diplomats, the 1951 defense agreement between these two sovereign nations grants sweeping rights for the US to base missiles and troops, as well as mine minerals and rare earths, to its heart’s content. What I learned during my all-too-brief time in Greenland is that nature and its preservation are at the heart of Inuit culture. Locals told me they believed that Trump

would have no regard for their most precious commodity, which is inextricably linked to their identity. Instead, the White House’s messaging seems to indicate they are either planning to introduce an alien species to Greenland or simply do not understand what it is they covet.

Greenlanders, on the other hand, know exactly what they fear and why. They do not trust Trump. The president’s apparent about-face at Davos, rescinding threats of military action and announcing, after meeting NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, that an “agreement” had been hatched, giving him everything he wanted, carries no water — or ice for that matter — in Greenland. For Greenlanders, Trump is an open book, each new chapter strewn with the same falsehoods and self-aggrandizement. They also saw what he did in Venezuela, a leader plucked from a country with air defenses and an army, of which Greenland has neither. Instead, it relies on Denmark and, by extension NATO — and America, to defend it. The night before we left, the power abruptly went out across Nuuk, its 20,000 residents plunged into darkness. A few hours later, the internet also throttled back. Plenty of well-educated and rational Nuummioqs (as the capital’s residents are known) fretted they were about to experience a Venezuela redux. Relief came just before daybreak and the slow, late morning sunrise. Power lines that had come down in the strong and unusual easterly winds were repaired. In the extremes of Greenland, uncertainty is an ever-present state of being. Flights are often canceled at the last minute. In fact, several were before our bumpy, wind-jerked aircraft took off. But Trump has injected a fresh layer of nervousness that Greenlanders see as entirely unnecessary. Now he is back where he started, apparently reengaging in a dialogue that Denmark and Greenland’s foreign ministers thought they had already concluded with Vice President J.D. Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the White House two weeks ago.

With details of the new post-Davos agreement as scarce as penguins at the North Pole, no Greenlander is confident Trump will not up the ante again — and many are convinced that the mercurial president may do exactly that sooner rather than later. But what Greenlanders feel most acutely is that Trump’s at times relentless rhetoric has shown no regard to their beliefs and feelings. Never once, they say, has he even tried to assuage their misgivings in his bellicose speeches.

— Arab News

Letters to the Editor

Road sense

Wrong parking is a major issue in Pakistan. It frequently causes the obstruction of traffic flow, pedestrian pathways and accessibility channels for persons with disabilities. This often causes accidents which can sometimes even prove to be fatal. Many drivers in Pakistan are not even aware of parking rules and regulations, which leads them to these errors. The government must take action and ensure that drivers are aware of both their responsibilities and rights. In this country, there are no rules. Causing obstruction is a safety risk for other people. A car or bus parked on the sidewalk is an example of wrong parking, as it blocks the pedestrians’ path. The citizens must pay heed to these issues.

Sanita Nazeer
Hub City

Doomscrolling

Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat and numerous other social media platforms are often the first source for spreading negativity. Content creators are chang-

ing their niche to making memes and roasting others. However, every child on these platforms is watching these reels. Their minds are being filled with garbage instead of educational and knowledgeable things. Additionally, watching reels, especially memes, creates an empty mind and harms both our physical and mental health. If our children are already addicted to reels, we should check their feeds and change them accordingly. In place of meme creators, we should follow educational content creators. What our children end up watching is up to us. Taking positive actions is our responsibility for the physical and mental health of our families. We need to focus on positivity for healthier futures.

Mahrang Naseer
Hub

Unity, faith, discipline

The national emblem of Pakistan is a familiar sight for everyone, yet its deeper meaning remains largely overlooked. Beyond its visual identity, the emblem embodies profound symbolism: the crescent and star represent progress and enlightenment, while the four

crops, cotton, wheat, tea and jute; signify agricultural strength and economic self-reliance. The emblem features a shield encircled by a floral wreath of Jasminum officinale, Pakistan’s national flower, symbolising purity and reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the Mughal era. The Urdu motto ‘ittihad, iman, tanzim’ encapsulates the nation’s ideological foundations of unity, faith and discipline. Almost everyone is unaware of this, which highlights a need for stronger civic education. Such a disconnect not only reduces national symbols to ceremonial imagery, but it also contributes to a weakening of national consciousness, particularly among younger generations. Including the historical, ideological and symbolic significance of the national emblem into educational curriculum, public awareness campaigns and media discourse can help build real patriotism based on knowledge rather than mere symbolism. At a time when Pakistan faces political, social and moral challenges, helping citizens connect with the values represented in the national emblem is a vital need.

Khizr Rashad

How developing countries can make the most of AI

SHAMIKA SIRIMANNE AND
TAFFERE TESFACHEW

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, industrial policy has crept back into respectable economic discourse after decades of being derided as misguided interventionism, particularly for developing countries. But its renaissance is being led by the advanced economies that once rejected it, with the push into artificial intelligence and renewable energy hastening the shift.

For developing countries, this revival presents new opportunities, provided they can manage three major constraints: a weak enabling environment (a lack of infrastructure and other necessary inputs), limited autonomy in policymaking, and fiscal constraints. Industrial policy is often understood in terms of subsidies and tax breaks, but for many developing economies far more than these instruments must be put in place. Without reliable digital connectivity, dependable power supplies, trusted data protection regimes and a skilled workforce, ambitions for AI-led growth will amount to little more than rhetoric.

Developing countries’ policy options are also constrained because World Trade Organization rules limit the use of instruments — export-contingent subsidies, local content rules and technology transfer requirements — that once underpinned industrialization success stories, namely in East Asia. At the same time, major economies continue to march to their own drummer, with the US, the EU and China deploying industrial policy at scale, often bending or breaking the very rules that others are expected to observe. The asymmetry is obvious: of more than 2,500 industrial policy measures introduced globally in 2023, these three economies accounted for almost half.

For developing countries, the sensible approach to AI is to deploy the sophisti-

cated frontier models that are already available

Shamika Sirimanne and Taffere Tesfachew

Finally, fiscal limits are biting hard. In many developing economies, up to 80 percent of public spending goes to wages and debt service, leaving little for the long-term investments that industrialization requires. Unlike the US or the EU, poorer countries cannot summon vast subsidy packages or bankroll multibillion-dollar technology programs.

And while technology parks and incubators have multiplied across Africa and Asia, few have delivered meaningful results. As UN Trade and Development observes, such zones succeed only when anchored in established supply chains. Without that grounding, they risk becoming costly white elephants — impressive on paper but inert in practice.

For developing countries, the sensible approach to AI is to deploy the sophisticated frontier models that are already available. Unburdened by legacy infrastructure, developing countries can leapfrog directly into emerging technologies, as many did when they skipped over landlines and went straight to mobile telephony. Deploying AI costs a fraction of what it takes to build it. Anyone can use tools like ChatGPT without erecting data centers or assembling elite engineering teams.

Such targeted applications can be transformative. In healthcare, AI-assisted diagnostics can rationalize the use of scarce clinical capacity. In education, digital platforms can compensate for chronic shortages of teachers. In agriculture, predictive analytics can support farmers navigating climate volatility. These uses may not dazzle those on the technological cutting edge, but they can deliver real-world returns where they matter most.

They also represent industrial policy at its most effective — meaning pragmatic, experimental and oriented around



UK:Chaudhry Muhammad Manzoor (Former Senior Vice President Pakistan Peoples Party UK), Chaudhry Abdul Majeed (Former General Secretary Pakistan Peoples Party Midland UK), Chaudhry Muhammad Amin (Member Federal Council Pakistan Peoples Party UK), Chaudhry Muhammad Malik (Senior Leader Pakistan Peoples Party UK) cutting the cake on the 73rd birthday of the Leader of Democracy, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Sahiba.

University of Kamalia Hosts Community and Media Forum 2026

BY: ANI Correspondent:

TOBA TEK SINGH--- The University of Kamalia organized the “Building Future Together Community and Media Forum 2026,” bringing together community leaders, media representatives, and social personalities to strengthen collaboration and promote educational initiatives.

Addressing the forum, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Yasir Nawab reaffirmed the university’s commitment to providing free, quality education to talented and deserving students, regardless of their financial circumstances. Speakers highlighted the university’s growing role in education, social development, and community engagement.

Participants pledged their support for the university’s efforts to become a model educational institution and stressed the importance of strong cooperation between educational institutions, the community, and the media for regional development.



University of Haripur Scholar Successfully Defends PhD Thesis on Public Health Emergency Preparedness

BY: ANI Reporter:

HARIPUR--- Majid Ali Tahir, a PhD scholar from the Department of Public Health & Nutrition, University of Haripur, successfully defended his doctoral thesis titled “A Comprehensive Assessment of Preparedness and Readiness of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Manage Public Health Emergencies” during a public defense ceremony.

The research provides valuable evidence for strengthening health security, emergency preparedness, and response systems in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study identifies key strengths, highlights critical gaps, and proposes a practical framework to enhance the province’s capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies.



The scholar acknowledged the contributions of external examiners Prof. Dr. Saira Afzal and Prof. Dr. Rubeena Zakar, as well as internal examiner Dr. Abbas Khan, for their expert guidance. He also expressed

gratitude to Supervisor Dr. Ijaz Ul Haq, Co-Supervisor Dr. Shahbaz Ahmad Zakki, and the University of Haripur administration for their continued support throughout the research journey.

Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari Reviews Muharram Security Arrangements in Kamalia

BY:Special Correspondent ANI:

KAMALIA--- Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari visited Kamalia to review security and administrative arrangements for the A-category central Shabeeh Zuljanah procession on the 8th of Muharram. Adviser to the Chief Minister Punjab Malik Zeeshan, RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, Commissioner Faisalabad Musarrat Jabeen, and other senior officials accompanied her during the visit.

Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh, District Police Officer (DPO), Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Erum Shahzadi, officers of municipal bodies, and representatives of relevant departments were also present. The delegation inspected the procession route and reviewed security measures, sanitation arrangements, lighting, traffic management, medical facilities, rescue services, and control room operations.

Speaking on the occasion, Azma Bukhari said maintaining peace and ensuring the best possible facilities for mourners during Muharram-ul-Haram remained the Punjab government’s top priority under the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.



She directed all departments to remain vigilant and fully prepared to handle any emergency situation until the conclusion of the procession.

Adviser to the Chief Minister Malik Zeeshan said that the district administration, police, Rescue 1122, health department, and municipal institutions were working in close coordination to facilitate mourners. RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera stated that extensive security arrangements had been put in place, including the deployment of a large number of police personnel and continuous monitoring through CCTV cameras, walkthrough gates,

metal detectors, and other surveillance systems.

Commissioner Faisalabad Musarrat Jabeen also reviewed the performance of various departments and directed officials to ensure cleanliness, the provision of safe drinking water, temporary medical camps, and other essential public services.

The senior officials expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and emphasized the need for continued coordination among all departments to ensure that Muharram processions and gatherings conclude peacefully, safely, and with due religious respect.

Gilani Reaffirms Commitment to Transparency, Accountability and Strong Parliamentary Oversight

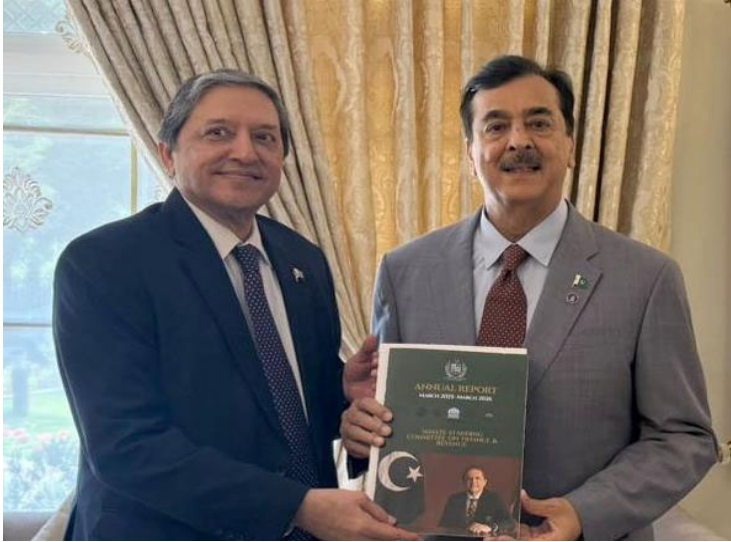
BY: Naseem Hassan:

ISLAMABAD---- Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, has reaffirmed the Senate’s commitment to transparency, accountability and robust parliamentary processes to ensure good governance and sustainable economic development in the country.

The remarks were made during a meeting in which Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, Saleem Mandviwalla, presented the Committee’s Annual Report covering the period from March 2025 to March 2026.

The report highlights the Committee’s legislative, oversight and policy initiatives aimed at promoting fiscal transparency, financial accountability, effective governance and oversight of matters related to the national economy and revenue generation.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Senate Gilani underscored the importance of parliamentary oversight in strengthening democratic institutions and enhancing



transparency in public affairs. He appreciated the Committee’s proactive role in reviewing key financial and revenue-related issues and acknowledged its contribution to improving governance and public confidence in democratic processes.

Gilani also commended Senator Mandviwalla and Committee members for their dedication, stating that effective parliamentary committees play a vital role in safeguarding public interests and strengthening institutional performance.

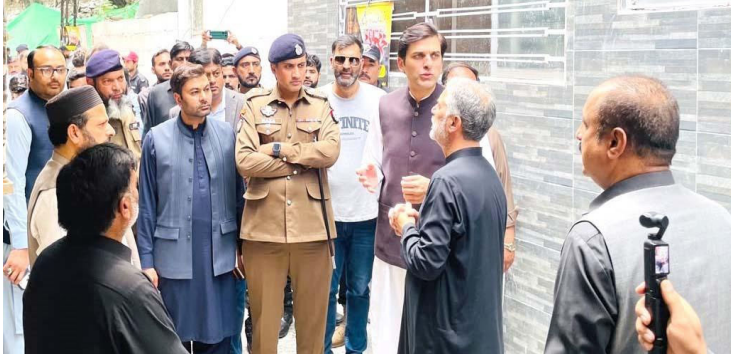
Malik Sohaib Bharth Reviews Muharram Security in Murree, Orders Foolproof Arrangements

BY: ANI Correspondent:

RAWALPINDI---- Punjab Minister for Communications and Works Malik Sohaib Ahmad Bharth visited Murree to review security arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram and directed all departments to ensure foolproof security, particularly for Ashura processions.

Chairing a meeting at Jinnah Hall Murree, the minister was briefed by district administration and police officials on security measures, procession routes, emergency response plans, and surveillance arrangements. Officials informed him that procession routes would be monitored through CCTV cameras and that all relevant departments would remain on high alert during Muharram.

Malik Sohaib Ahmad Bharth



stressed the need for close coordination among all institutions to maintain law and order and prevent any untoward incidents. He said no one would be allowed to spread hateful material and that social media was being closely monitored.

The minister later inspected pro-

cession routes, including Mall Road and Lower Mall Road, and visited Qadimi Imambargah and Qasr-i-Al-Imran. He expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and directed authorities to ensure the provision of clean drinking water for mourners and participants.

FGEHA Accelerates Development of F-14, F-15; Moves Against Defaulters

BY: Hurish Shah:

ISLAMABAD--- The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) has intensified efforts to ensure the timely completion of Islamabad’s Sectors F-14 and F-15 while reinforcing transparency and good governance in project administration.

According to a statement, the initiative is being pursued under the leadership of Federal Minister for Housing and Works Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Secretary Housing and Works Capt. (Retd.) Muhammad Mehmood, and Director General FGEHA Capt. (Retd.) Zafar Iqbal. Authorities are focusing on accelerating development work, addressing allottees’ concerns, and ensuring the provision of essential infrastructure and services.

FGEHA said the sectors are being developed as environmentally sustainable, climate-resilient, and modern residential communities in line with contemporary urban planning standards. The authority reiterated



that timely completion of the project and early possession of plots for allottees remain top priorities.

The authority also announced action against chronic defaulters, stating that a special committee constituted on the directions of the Executive Board reviewed cases of allottees who had failed to clear outstanding dues since 2016. Based on the committee’s recommendations, allotments of six plots have been cancelled in accordance with appli-

cable laws.

FGEHA further warned that cancellation proceedings would also be initiated against other defaulters with outstanding dues, emphasizing that the move aims to protect the interests of compliant allottees and support the project’s financial sustainability.

The authority reaffirmed its commitment to transparency, merit, rule of law, and the expeditious completion of Sectors F-14 and F-15.

*IPP Eyes ‘Big Surprise’ in AJK Polls, Vows Infrastructure and Tourism Revolution: Gul Asghar

BY: ANI Reporter:

ISLAMABAD---- Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Communications and IPP North Punjab President Engineer Gul Asghar Khan Baghoor has said that the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) is set to deliver a major surprise in the upcoming Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections.

Speaking to media outside Parliament House, he said the party will contest the polls with a development-focused manifesto centered on



motorway linking Muzaffarabad and Mirpur and the dualization of the road connecting the Murree Expressway to AJK.

modern healthcare, quality education, infrastructure expansion, and tourism promotion. He announced plans for a

Baghoor said tourism, hydro-power development, and public welfare projects are key priorities of the party. He also maintained that AJK elections will be held on schedule and stressed that constitutional issues, including reserved seats, must be resolved through legal and judicial mechanisms.

Expressing confidence in the party’s prospects, he said the people of AJK would support IPP’s vision for economic growth, development, and regional stability.

Traders Demand Compensation After Sunday Market Fire, Question Repeated Incidents

BY: Hurish Shah:

ISLAMABAD---- President of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran and Traders Action Committee Islamabad, Ajmal Baloch, along with other trader leaders, has demanded immediate compensation for hundreds of vendors affected by the fire that broke out at the H-9 Sunday Market near Peshawar Mor on Tuesday night.

In a joint statement, the traders expressed concern over the recurring

fire incidents at the weekly market and questioned why such accidents continue to occur every year. They claimed that traders suffered losses worth millions of rupees and urged the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to provide financial relief to the affected vendors.

The trader representatives also criticized the performance of the disaster management and fire services, alleging that the responding fire brigade vehicle had technical faults and that

the regular driver was absent. They called for an inquiry into the deployment of non-professional staff in disaster management operations and demanded the modernization of Islamabad’s fire brigade system. The traders appealed to CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf and other concerned officials to conduct a transparent investigation, fix responsibility, and implement permanent measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.