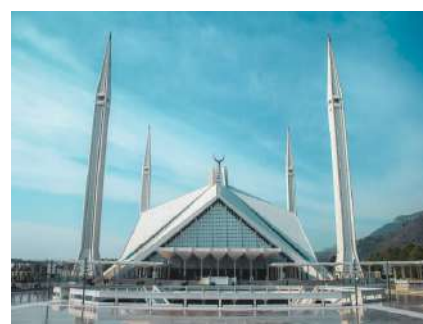


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PTI long march will not be allowed to enter Punjab, Islamabad: Muqam



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam on Monday said the long march planned by the PTI and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government would not be allowed to enter Punjab or Islamabad.

Addressing a press conference at the Kashmir Council alongside MNA Samar Haroon Bilour and Senator Zahid Khan, he urged the people of KP not to become "pawns" in what he termed the PTI's political agenda.

Muqam questioned the purpose of the long march, saying it was being organized for political and

personal gains rather than the welfare of the people of KP. He alleged that the PTI government in KP was using protest politics to divert attention from poor governance and corruption in the province. The minister said terrorism was a national issue and required a united response, adding that the situation in KP was deteriorating due to the lack of effective governance.

He criticized what he described as the KP government's soft attitude towards terrorists, saying terrorism could not be eliminated without taking a firm position against militants.

Muqam said the KP chief minister had not openly condemned acts of terrorism or visited the

families of security personnel martyred in the war against terrorism to offer condolences.

Referring to recent negotiations between the government and opposition, he said an agreement had been reached to issue a joint statement, but the process was disrupted after the KP chief minister announced continuation of the long march. He also questioned the recent provincial assembly resolution concerning the police, saying such measures could demoralize the force.

The minister said the people had already witnessed protests on May 9 and during the attempted siege of Islamabad, questioning what the proposed march would achieve

when its organizers knew they would not be allowed to enter Islamabad or Punjab.

He said the federal government would continue to protect the people of KP and work to rid the province of terrorism.

Muqam said the federal government had consistently supported KP on public issues and raised matters relating to PATA and FATA at the legislative and cabinet levels.

He urged the people not to become victims of protest politics, saying ordinary citizens suffered most from such activities. He also alleged that provincial government resources, including the official helicopter, were being used despite court orders to the contrary.

CM Afridi urges PTI workers to join long march as convoy enters Kohat

ANI

KOHAT: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Chief Minister Sohail Afridi urged PTI workers to join the long march as the convoy reached the Lachi tehsil of Kohat on Monday.

CM Afridi, while addressing the long march in Kohat, thanked the people of the city for their "magnificent welcome", adding that the "people of Kohat will completely change the atmosphere in Kohat tomorrow". Afridi further announced that the long march would resume its journey towards Peshawar from University Chowk at 3pm on Tuesday. "I am a soldier of Imran Khan. Even if the whole world comes together, it cannot put a price on me," Afridi said, adding that the combined power of the world could not frighten him. "Our struggle is a long one. We must not tire ourselves out. The T20 match will begin on October 8," he underlined. "We have to convey the message that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa belongs to Imran Khan, belonged to Imran Khan and will remain Imran's Khan's," he said. Earlier on Monday, Afridi led the PTI convoy towards Kohat after spending the night in Karak, as the party resumed its long march following the collapse of talks between the government and opposition.

The march began on Sunday from Lakki Marwat after government-opposition talks failed to resolve a dispute over the PTI's planned protest. The convoy later in the night reached Karak, where CM Afridi addressed participants at Khatam-e-Nabuwat Chowk on the Bannu-Karak border. Internet services were also suspended in Karak.

Addressing the gathering before moving towards Kohat, CM Afridi thanked the people of Karak for welcoming marchers from across southern K-P and said renewed violence in the province was the result of what he called a deliberate policy failure.

He sharply criticised the country's counterterrorism policy, saying Pakhtuns were again bearing the cost of what he described as flawed decisions. CM Afridi also responded to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who had described him as "immature" a day earlier.

"An establishment operative sits on tel-



evison and says that I am immature," CM Afridi said. "If standing with my people is immaturity, then I will commit this immaturity again and again."

"If loving the country is immaturity, then I will commit this immaturity again and again," he added. CM Afridi alleged that the country was being divided because of flawed policies and accused those in power of promoting provincial divisions and prejudice.

"Because of your wrong policies, the country is being divided. Those who have been imposed want to divide Pakistan and create prejudice in the country," he said. "I am Imran Khan's player. I have said 'absolutely not' to the powerful," he added. The chief minister also accused what he called a dominant "mindset" of treating K-P unfairly.

CM Afridi also referred to remarks attributed to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz regarding security threats, arguing that such statements risked deepening divisions between provinces.

"Our democratic demands will have to be accepted. The policy made in Pakistan will have to be in the interest of the people," he said. Turning to PTI's political campaign, Afridi reiterated his support for jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and portrayed the march as part of a wider struggle against the existing political system. "There is only one leader of the whole of Pakistan, and his name is Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi. Imran Khan is the heartbeat of our hearts. Ninety per cent of people want Imran Khan," he added. CM Afridi claimed only Imran could pull Pakistan out of its current difficulties and restore respect for state institutions.

PTI says future talks with govt impossible without Imran Khan's involvement



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Salmaan Akram Raja has said the party will not make any decision without its incarcerated founder Imran Khan, maintaining that reconciliation with the government cannot move forward without his involvement in the dialogue process. Addressing a press conference alongside PTI lawyers at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad, Raja said two rounds of negotiations with the government were held over the weekend but ended without a breakthrough. He said PTI had entered the talks with sincerity and was serious about resolving the issues through dialogue.

Raja said the party had two major demands, with the first being a meeting with Imran Khan. He stressed that PTI would not

make any decision without consulting its founder, saying the party had the right to seek his opinion but was not allowed to meet him.

"Only Imran has the capability to bridge the gulf that has developed between the state and the nation," Raja said, adding that Imran Khan was extremely important to the party and his opinion was required on all major issues.

He said PTI had demanded immediate access to Imran Khan for consultation and was even willing to set aside other demands for the purpose. According to Raja, the government had assured the party that if an agreement was reached, lawyers and Imran Khan's sisters would be allowed to meet him on Tuesday, while meetings would subsequently be restored. Raja said another major reason for the failure of negotiations was the disagreement over the strategy to eliminate terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said the PTI had demanded that the recommendations of a political jirga convened by the KP Assembly be considered, as political parties and other stakeholders had participated in it.

He said the jirga had proposed solutions to address terrorism and the PTI delegation had asked the government to consider the views of tribal leaders as well. Raja said the party had proposed that the agreement clearly state that a collective decision would be taken on counterterrorism measures.

Three terrorists killed in Dera Ismail Khan IBO: state media

ANI

KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHAWA: Security forces killed three terrorists during an Intelligence-Based Operation (IBO) in Dera Ismail Khan, Radio Pakistan reported on Monday, citing security sources.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif separately paid tribute to the security forces following the operation, which came a day after eight terrorists, including three key commanders, were killed in another IBO in the district. President Zardari said effective operations by security forces were playing an important role in dismantling terrorist networks and vowed that the designs of militant elements operating with external support would be thwarted. He said operations against Fitna al-Khawarij under the Azm-e-Istehkam framework would continue until ter-



rism was eliminated, according to remarks carried by state media. The term Fitna al-Khawarij is used by the state for terrorists affiliated with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). PM Shehbaz, meanwhile, said successful operations against Fitna al-Khawarij were deal-

ing a "heavy blow" to terrorist networks.

He said counterterrorism operations would continue until the menace was eradicated, adding that security forces remained determined to purge Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the rest of the country of terrorism. The prime minister reiterated that the state remained steadfast in its resolve to eliminate Fitna al-Khawarij. Dera Ismail Khan has witnessed repeated terrorist violence as well as counterterrorism operations in recent months. On September 26, a suicide bomber targeted a joint Customs, police and Excise checkpoint in the district's Darazinda tehsil, killing 13 people, including two women, a young girl and a Customs inspector. Twenty-six others were reported injured. Security forces have stepped up intelligence-based operations across K-P amid a resurgence in terrorist activity, particularly in districts bordering or close to Afghanistan.

Three remaining Pakistani MT Honour 25 crew members to arrive soon: DPM/FM Dar

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Monday, said that the three remaining Pakistani crew members of MT Honour 25 had been successfully rescued and flown to Addis Ababa, accompanied by a team from the Embassy of Pakistan in Djibouti. The three crew members (Imran Ali, Muhammad Yasin and Syed Husain Yousuf) would be received in Addis Ababa and depart for Pakistan on the first available Ethiopian Airlines flight to Karachi, expected on 7 October, the DPM/FM posted on X handle. Dar further said, "We are deeply grateful to the Government of Somalia and the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation Atalanta, present in the vicinity of MT Honour 25, for their assistance and cooperation in securing the release of the crew." https://x.com/MIshaqDar50/status/2107068549004964053 He said Pakistan remained firmly committed to strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation to combat maritime piracy.

US intends to 'live by' security pact with Saudi Arabia: Rubio

ANI

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Monday that the US intended to uphold its bilateral security commitments with Saudi Arabia amid renewed military confrontations involving Houthi forces in Yemen.

"The United States has a defence and security agreement with Saudi Arabia, and we intend to live by it," Rubio told reporters ahead of a European tour including Iceland, Greece, and Portugal, declining to elaborate on operational specifics. Rubio said that in the face of continuous Houthi attacks, Riyadh



had "a right to defend themselves," adding that Yemeni allied forces were trying to recover areas lost during previous clashes. Addressing control around the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Rubio said Saudi

and Yemeni troops opposed Houthi domination near the maritime corridor, describing local counter-offensives as an expected development. The remarks follow Monday's announcement by Rashad al-Alimi, the chair of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council, of the launch of a military operation to retake the capital Sanaa with the support of the country's "brothers and friends" and restore state institutions from the Houthis, who have controlled the city since 2014.

Yemeni army units reported securing the Dhuhab district and strategic positions along the strait.

Makkah defence pact committee meets in Riyadh today amid regional tensions



ANI

ISLAMABAD: An emergency meeting of the Strategic, Political and Defence Committee under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement will be held in Riyadh today. Officials from Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia will participate in the meeting. The meeting will be held in a 3+3 format, with the foreign ministers, defence ministers and chiefs of the armed forces of all three countries participating.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif and the Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Munir will attend the Meeting of the committee,

Foreign office spokesperson said in press release.

The meeting will discuss latest developments in the region and review ongoing cooperation under the framework of the Makkah Agreement. Pakistan's participation in the meeting signifies Pakistan's resolve to continue contributing towards regional peace and stability, MoFA spokesperson added.

The meeting has been convened as an emergency session because the regular meeting scheduled under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement is expected to be held at the end of October or the beginning of November. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar confirmed this during a press conference yesterday. He said that an emergency meeting was being convened in Riyadh primarily due to the current situation involving Saudi Arabia and the Houthis. The Pakistani foreign minister said the meeting was being called after 17 drone attacks were carried out against Saudi Arabia between September 21 and 22, with the aim of finding a way forward and addressing the situation.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Mr. Tomasz Siemoniak, Minister, Member of the Council of Ministers, and Coordinator of Special Services of the Republic of Poland in Islamabad.

Gilani Calls for Stronger Parliamentary Cooperation in Asia-Pacific Region

Report: ANI

ARUSHA -- Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani participated in a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Geopolitical Group on the sidelines of the 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Arusha, Tanzania.

The meeting discussed key regional issues, including vacancies, emergency items and nominations for the Drafting Committee. Chairman Gilani stressed the importance of stronger parliamentary coordination among Asia-Pacific countries to address shared challenges, particularly climate change and its socio-economic impact.

Participants also considered a proposal to include climate change and its effects as an emergency item and discussed matters relating to the ASEAN+3 Group and other Assembly proceedings.

The Pakistani parliamentary dele-



gation accompanying Chairman Senate included Senators Amir Waliuddin Chishti, Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur, Anusha Rahman Ahmad Khan and Agha Shazaib Durrani, and MNAs Sharmila Farooqui, Pir Syed Fazal

Senate Committee Expresses Concern Over Delays in N-45, Balochistan Road Projects



Report: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD -- The Senate Standing Committee on Communications, chaired by Senator Pervaiz Rashid, reviewed highway projects, funding, toll collection and road maintenance under the National Highway Authority.

The committee expressed concern over delays in the N-45 and Mastuj-Broghil road projects and directed the Communications Ministry and NHA to expedite work and address funding and jurisdictional issues.

Members also raised concerns over toll rates, M-Tag services, road conditions and encroachments. The

Senate Committee Raises Questions Over PIFD Vice Chancellor Appointment

Report: Ikram Ullah Joyia / ANI

ISLAMABAD -- The Senate Standing Committee raised concerns over alleged irregularities in the appointment of the Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD) and the procedure adopted by the Search Committee.

A committee member said she had approached the President of Pakistan regarding the matter, following which the President's

House directed that the issue be placed on the agenda and the Search Committee process be reconsidered.

She alleged inappropriate conduct by Search Committee Convener Deepak Perwani and said PIFD Vice Chancellor Hina Tayyaba had threatened legal action over her objections.

The member further alleged that the selection process was manipulated to benefit a particular candidate, including through changing

SSP Operations Islamabad Holds Open Court, Hears Citizens' Complaints

Report: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD -- SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza held an open court at his office, where a large number of citizens participated and presented their problems and complaints.

The SSP Operations listened to the citizens' grievances and directed the relevant officers to take necessary measures on the spot for their prompt resolution.



NCHD Tharparkar Marks World Teachers' Day in Mithi

Report: ANI Correspondent:

MITHI -- National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Tharparkar organized a ceremony in Mithi to mark World Teachers' Day, attended by education officials, teachers and NCHD representatives.

District Education Officer (Literacy) Arjun Sothar and NCHD Tharparkar Deputy Director Ashok Kumar attended the event as chief guests. Speakers highlighted teachers' vital role in promoting education and shaping a better future for children. NCHD Tharparkar also presented Best Teacher Award certificates to educators in recognition of their outstanding services.



Six Arrested Over Multi-Million-Rupee Theft at Nawab of Bahawalpur Residence

Report: Hurish Shah FT:

ISLAMABAD --Margalla Police in the federal capital successfully traced a major theft worth millions of rupees at the residence of the Nawab of Bahawalpur in Sector F-8/3 and arrested six members of the gang. A major portion of the stolen valuables was also recovered from their possession. According to an Islamabad Police spokesperson, the police traced the incident and arrested the suspects using

modern technology, the Safe City camera network and human intelligence. SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza briefed the media about the operation and said police teams worked day and night to trace the suspects.

He said around 70 to 80 percent of the highly valuable items stolen from the Nawab of Bahawalpur family's residence had been recovered, including historical artefacts and precious heritage items. The SSP Operations said the scope of the investigation had been fur-

ther expanded to bring other absconding suspects involved in the incident to justice and recover the remaining stolen property. Qazi Ali Raza reiterated that strict and indiscriminate action against criminal elements involved in looting citizens' lives, property and valuable assets would continue without interruption. Legal proceedings against all arrested suspects would be completed at the earliest and challans submitted to the court so that they could face due punishment.

PTI Deliberately Sabotaged Talks Despite Government's Sincere Efforts: Danyal Chaudhry

Report: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD-- Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry has said the government believes in reconciliation and made serious efforts to resolve political issues through dialogue, but PTI deliberately sabotaged the negotiation process.

Addressing a press conference alongside Prime Minister's Coordinator Ikhtiar Wali Khan, he said the government remained ready to engage all political forces and resolve differences through democratic means.

Danyal Chaudhry alleged that certain elements were promoting politics of hatred and division, adding that the government would con-



tinue consultations with all parties in the national interest.

Speaking about the situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he raised concerns over governance, law and order and terrorism, saying more than 2,000 terrorism incidents had occurred in the province and over 72 personnel had lost their lives in attacks.

He said national unity and joint efforts were essential to counter terrorism and ensure peace and stability, reiterating the government's commitment to dialogue and political consultation.

Rawalpindi Officials Review Revenue Matters, Pending Cases

Report: Kiran Shehzadi/ANI

RAWALPINDI -- A review meeting on revenue matters was held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Captain (R) Tayyab Sami Khan, where various revenue issues and pending cases were discussed.

The meeting reviewed progress on the Revenue Courts Management System (RCMS), Green Property Certificates (GPC), Land Acquisition Cases (LAC), revenue recoveries and Divisional Settlement Commission (DSC) cases.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue directed officials to dispose of cases within the stipulated timeframe, achieve recovery targets and expedite the



issuance of Green Property Certificates to provide timely relief to citizens.

Deputy Director PLRA, Assistant Commissioners, Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, ADLRs, Computer Centre in-charges and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Visits Thar Coal Projects in Islamkot

Report: Nareender Kumar / ANI

ISLAMKOT -- Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah arrived at Mai Bakhtawar Airport in Islamkot to visit various Thar coal projects.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari inaugurated Pakistan's first coal-drying unit at Thar Coal Block-I and visited the Thar Foundation Hospital, where he received a briefing on healthcare facilities being provided to patients. He also visited Thar Coal Block-II and was briefed on the third phase of the mine expansion project, following which he unveiled the project plan.

During the visit, Bilawal inspected various stalls and interacted with students, women



employees and local workers. Employees briefed him on employment opportunities generated through the Thar coal projects.

The PPP chairman also met students from Tharparkar and appreciated them for their outstanding

PRBC Delegation meets ambassador, explores trade and investment opportunities in Bucharest

ANI

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Pakistan-Romania Business Council (PRBC), comprising around 30 business representatives from different sectors of Pakistan, attended a working luncheon and business-to-business (B2B) networking session hosted by Pakistan's Ambassador to Romania, Ilyas Mehmood Nizami, at the Embassy of Pakistan in Bucharest. The delegation was led by Atif Farooqi, Head of Delegation and Honorary Consul Designate of Romania in Sindh. It also included Sohail Shamim Firpo, Deputy Head of Delegation and Chairman of the Pakistan-Romania Business Council, and Dr. Kaiser Rafiq, Special Representative of the Delegation, Chief Executive Officer

of Discover Pakistan TV, and Proposed Honorary Consul of Romania in Punjab, said a PRBC press release received here.

During the luncheon, Ambassador Ilyas Mehmood Nizami acknowledged the efforts of Atif Farooqi in leading the delegation and working



to strengthen economic, commercial, and people-to-people relations between Pakistan and Romania. He appreciated the initiative of bringing together Pakistani business leaders to explore opportunities for trade, investment, partnerships, and access to Romanian markets.

China's vaccine assistance strengthens Pakistan's livestock disease-control efforts

ANI

ISLAMABAD: China's provision of 300,000 veterinary vaccine doses to Pakistan has strengthened efforts to protect livestock from disease, while highlighting the need to build a sustained system of surveillance, vaccination and veterinary coverage to safeguard rural incomes and animal productivity.

The vaccines are intended to support the control of lumpy skin disease (LSD) and Brucella melitensis.

The intervention is economically significant because livestock is Pakistan's largest agricultural subsector. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2025-26, livestock contributed 62.45% of agricultural value addition and 14.64% of GDP, while the subsector grew 3.75% during the year.

Pakistan's Agricultural Census 2024 counted 55.86 million cattle, 47.74 million buffaloes, 44.59 million sheep and 95.83 million goats, illustrating the scale of household and rural assets exposed to livestock disease.



Globally, animal-health authorities increasingly view disease prevention as an economic, food-security and public-health issue.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) says vaccination, early detection, biosecurity and movement controls are central to managing lumpy skin disease, while brucellosis is a zoonotic disease with significant economic consequences for livestock producers.

Speaking to Wealth Pakistan, Sher Ahmed, former Chief of the Mountain Agricultural Research Centre at the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, said the economic value of vaccination extended beyond preventing animal deaths.

"Livestock diseases translate directly into losses in farm income, productivity and food security," he said.

"Lumpy skin disease reduces milk production, affects fertility and damages hides, while brucellosis causes reproductive losses and can also infect humans."

Daily

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Opinion

3

Africa pays a high price for dollar dependence

HAFED AL-GHWELL

Governments across Africa are rightfully questioning the wisdom of anchoring their countries’ futures to the US dollar. The instinct grows from patterns that have shaped the continent’s financial stability, trade resilience, and growth prospects for decades.

A currency that once promised predictability now functions as a vehicle for volatility that African policymakers never signed up for. Each Federal Reserve rate hike, for instance, tightens African credit conditions as if Washington were running monetary policy for Nairobi, Accra, and Lusaka.

Dedollarization — reducing reliance on the US dollar for trade, reserves, and financial transactions — speaks to a desire for insulation, bargaining power, and policy autonomy in an era where external shocks arrive with unprecedented regularity.

While talk of dedollarization is not exactly new, it has gained traction in recent years, after several African currencies lost nearly half of their value against the dollar. Such depreciations erode tax bases, inflate debt

burdens, and push countries toward International Monetary Fund programs that come with significant political costs.

Moreover, roughly 70 percent of Africa’s external debt is dollar-denominated. As the dollar strengthens, debt service costs balloon without any new borrowing. In one year alone, African governments paid more than \$60 billion in interest on external debt, and a third of that stemmed from dollar appreciation rather than fundamentals.

A continent seeking structural transformation cannot tolerate a global monetary system that amplifies domestic vulnerabilities. Naturally, leaders see a mismatch: African economies are diversifying, yet currency arrangements still resemble the 1980s. The dollar’s dominance magnifies inflation pass-through because the region’s import dependence makes exchange rate shocks automatically inflationary even where fiscal discipline is relatively decent. Food imports alone cost Africa more than \$35 billion annually, so a stronger dollar can quickly turn a food security issue into a macroeconomic crisis.

Thus, the heightening pursuit of dedollari-

zation is an attempt to negotiate from a position of less fragility rather than an outright rejection of global markets. Consider this: When Kenya pays for imported crude in Kenyan shillings or when Nigeria explores yuan settlements for infrastructure deals, the goal is strategic hedging. Policymakers want to reduce single-currency exposure in the same way investors diversify portfolios. Russia’s removal from dollar-based clearing systems, for example, demonstrated how geopolitical tremors can easily spill into Africa’s trade channels even when the continent is not a party to any conflict. Some African governments are also reading the room. Global south partners, from Brazil to Indonesia, are experimenting with local currency settlement mechanisms. BRICS expansion invited African countries into a club openly discussing non-dollar settlement infrastructure.

Moreover, China accounts for more than a fifth of Africa’s trade, and yuan-denominated transactions are rising from a small baseline. The share is still marginal, yet the direction signals Africa’s turn toward a multipolar currency environment before one emerges fully

without them.

The Africa Continental Free Trade Area adds another layer. A continent-wide free trade area needs frictionless payment channels to make intra-African commerce more attractive than sourcing from Europe or Asia. To date, roughly 15 percent of Africa’s trade is intracontinental. One reason is the cost and complexity of using a third currency for African-to-African trade. A Ghanaian processing firm buying Kenyan tea, for instance, often settles in dollars, even though neither economy uses the currency domestically. That situation makes African trade more expensive by an estimated \$5 billion annually in transaction and hedging costs.

The Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, or PAPSS, launched with AfCFTA support, attempts to rewrite this by enabling instant cross-border settlements in local currencies. Dedollarization gives PAPSS a fighting chance. Without efforts to reduce dependence on the dollar, AfCFTA risks importing the very structural weaknesses it aims to correct. After all, regional supply chains cannot gain traction if currency swings routinely

erase profit margins. Clearing trade in local currencies might not be a silver bullet, but it is a meaningful step toward normalizing African-to-African transactions. However, skeptics point out that African currencies lack depth, stability, and convertibility, making rapid dedollarization risky. The statement is valid, but incomplete. African policymakers are not proposing to replace the dollar with a patchwork of volatile currencies overnight. Instead, they are reducing exposure in incremental steps: expanding swap lines, piloting common payment platforms, and signing bilateral agreements that allow settlement in mutually accepted currencies. Some argue that dedollarization could also alienate the US. However, a more resilient Africa ultimately aligns with US interests. Fragile currencies reduce Africa’s capacity to buy American goods, service American-held debt or collaborate in security partnerships. A region forever one shock away from default cannot be a reliable counterweight to growing external influence or as a steady partner in global governance.

— Arab news

Tripoli deserves better than its current leaders

DR. DANIA KOLEILAT KHATIB

A building collapse in Tripoli, Lebanon, last week killed 14 people. The building was in Bab Al-Tabbaneh, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Tripoli, which is in turn one of the poorest cities in Lebanon and even in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The fall of the building makes us ask the question: Why did this happen to these people? Many do not know the rich history of the precious city. Tripoli was once a capital of trade, culture, and art in the Ottoman Empire. Why this degeneration? And who is responsible?

The building collapse in Tripoli was not an accident, nor was it the first tragedy this year to take innocent lives. It was the predictable outcome of years of neglect by local authorities and successive governments. The dangers posed by these buildings are widely known, yet no preventive action has been taken. Lebanon has a proven record of corruption. Lebanese officials have always acted with impunity. Relying on the blind allegiance of their constituencies, the welfare of the people has never been their primary concern.

According to Raymond Mitri, an activist who heads Lebanon’s anticorruption task force: “The justice system also bears primary responsibility, as those in power have grown accustomed to acting with impunity.” He added: “This culture of no accountability has enabled repeated failures and avoidable deaths.” It is time for the prosecutor general to open a thorough investigation and hold the heads of the relevant authorities accountable for this week’s tragic incident. Without real consequences, this tragic pattern will continue and more lives will be lost.

The collapse of the building in Tripoli is the result of decades of negligence. It is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the city’s problems. I went to Tripoli a few years ago and I was shocked by the poverty, lack of infrastructure, and lack of employment. The city’s inhabitants face huge health risks because of unregulated trash dumps that also pollute the Mediterranean Sea. Tripoli mirrors the problems of Lebanon. In Tripoli, however, they are more concentrated and more severe. Historically, the city has not been lucky with its leadership. In fact, Lebanon as a whole has not been lucky with its political class, but Tripoli has suffered particularly badly. During the civil war,

various Islamist factions coalesced and created Harakat Al-Tawhid (the Islamic Unity Movement), which controlled the city. The state has been barely present. Each neighborhood has a “kabaday” (strongman) running the show. There is no real law enforcement in the city.

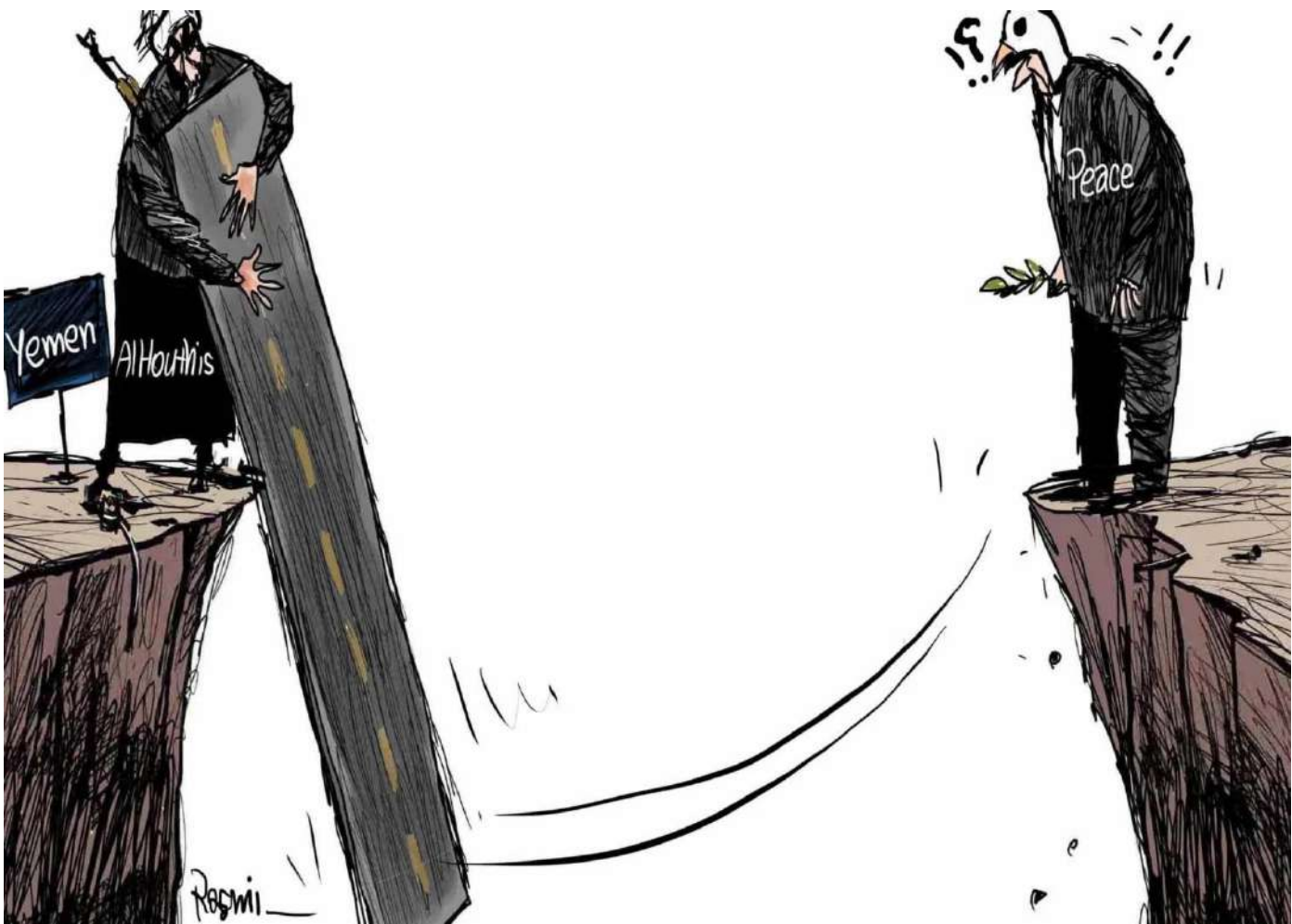
According to a lawyer friend of mine, the city is run by mafia-like organizations. The most important people are those who control the power generators. The generators’ owners divide the areas among themselves. Citizens of each neighborhood are thus compelled to buy electricity from the designated generator owner for that specific area. It is sad to see this historic city languishing. It is sad to see its historic monuments unattended. It is sad to see the kind, generous, and skilled people of Tripoli struggle with poverty and a lack of opportunity.

The irony is that Tripoli is home to some of the wealthiest people in Lebanon and even the entire Arab world. The political class is rich and prosperous and it surrounds itself with fences to protect itself from the ire of the people that it controls. According to Amine Bashir, a lawyer and political activist from Tripoli, members of the city’s traditional political class do not care about the people. On the contrary, it is in their interest to keep the people poor. The poorer they are, the cheaper it will be to buy their vote on election day. They use the people as an “election reservoir.”

At the end of the day, it is not only Tripoli in this situation. Unfortunately, the Lebanese political elite looks at the people as a means to control the country and its resources. The people are a ladder that will allow them to reach the summit of power. Following last week’s building collapse, the state sent the army to Tripoli to protect the politicians from the wrath of the people. This situation made me ask myself: When will the state use its capabilities to protect the people from the corruption of the political class?

Tripoli has suffered from negligence and impunity — this week’s tragedy is a warning that this needs to stop. The people in power need to be held accountable. The people of Tripoli deserve that. They need to rise and the system governing the city needs to fall. If the system does not fall, more buildings like the one in Bab Al-Tabbaneh will do so instead.

— Arab news



Jordan’s growing role in Turkish foreign policy

DR. SINEM CENGİZ

Turkiye and Jordan were significantly affected by the Syrian civil war that lasted more than a decade. Now, with the collapse of the Bashar Assad regime in December 2024, a new dynamic has emerged along Türkiye’s southern and Jordan’s northern borders — one that calls for closer coordination between the two states.

Jordan, a relatively small state known for its neutral regional policy, has not traditionally occupied a prominent place in Turkish foreign policy. But its geopolitical importance is far too significant to neglect. It has crucial potential when it comes to countering shared regional security challenges. Recent high-level meetings between Ankara and Amman, therefore, merit a closer look to better understand the possibility for Turkish-Jordanian cooperation.

Jordan’s King Abdullah paid an official visit to Türkiye last week at the invitation of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who received him at the Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul. King Abdullah’s last visit to Türkiye took place in February 2019. Back then, the regional picture looked very different. Now, the region has been reshaped by a series of major events — from the Oct. 7 attacks to the Iran-Israel war and the fall of the Assad regime — that have fundamentally shifted the political and security dynamics surrounding these two countries.

With the fall of the Assad regime, Jordan has emerged as a key partner in Türkiye’s regional policy, particularly regarding Syria and Gaza. For Türkiye, Jordan represents both a stabilizing actor on its southern periphery and a practical partner in managing the post-Assad regional order. Amman and Ankara have found themselves on the same page in regard to regional crises. Jordan therefore became part of a regional cooperation mechanism established between Türkiye, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, which is aimed at coordinating responses to shared security challenges. Amman has hosted high-level regional security meetings led by Türkiye, bringing together foreign ministers, defense ministers and intelligence chiefs to discuss counterterrorism efforts and broader regional threats. It was through Jordanian-Turkish cooperation that a joint mission to support Syria’s fight against terrorist organizations, particularly Daesh, was established. At the request of the new leadership in Syria, this joint mission was set up to operate in Damascus,

marking a concrete step toward institutionalized regional security cooperation. Jordan and Türkiye are also part of US President Donald Trump’s Board of Peace, further highlighting their shared role in the Gaza peace process. In their joint statement, King Abdullah and Erdogan underscored the importance of preserving the territorial integrity, sovereignty and national unity of all regional states. This emphasis reflects a shared outlook. Jordan has long pursued a status quo-oriented foreign policy, prioritizing stability along its borders. Türkiye’s support for a centralized and territorially unified Syria closely aligns with Jordanian interests in this regard. Both countries view fragmentation and instability in Syria as a direct threat to their security, making their policy convergence not only strategic but also necessary.

Jordan was also chosen to host NATO’s first liaison office in the Middle East. This opened last September, underscoring the country’s geopolitical importance. Jordan has been a member of NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue since 1995. As a NATO partner, Türkiye views the alliance’s cooperation with Amman as increasingly significant, as its presence in the country will help strengthen the regional security architecture. Amman not only occupies a key position in terms of security cooperation, but also in economic coordination. Jordan and Türkiye, along with Syria, are working on a joint initiative to restore the historic Hejaz railway, focusing on the segment linking the three countries as part of efforts to rebuild regional transport and trade networks disrupted by years of conflict and border closures. Officials from the three countries have agreed on preliminary terms to draft a memorandum of understanding covering the restoration of damaged railway lines.

At one time, the railway was referred to as the “Iron Silk Road” due to its economic, social and political importance. The railway is “a relic of the bygone dream of regional unity before wars, borders and more advanced modes of transportation rendered its services obsolete.” Today, the three nations see its revival as both symbolic and strategic to restore regional connectivity, boost trade and contribute to postwar reconstruction. Another key cooperation between Ankara and Amman involves boosting the overland freight route from Jordan’s Aqaba Port to Türkiye and onward to Eastern Europe through trilateral cooperation agreements.

— Arab news

Starmer is learning the lessons of politics the hard way

YOSSI MEKELBERG

Few could have foreseen that merely 17 months after Keir Starmer led the Labour Party to victory in the UK general election, winning a 174-seat majority in Parliament, that he would find himself fighting for his job.

While the British prime minister must take much of the blame for being in this situation — and in his defense, he does admit responsibility — the underlying difficulties of UK politics and society go far beyond one leader’s shortcomings. The country has had six prime ministers in the past decade, which is hardly a sign of a functioning political system. Part of the predicament that Starmer finds himself in is how he sees his role; part of it has to do with the way British politics is conducted; and, more generally, the unforgiving nature of modern politics, which in an age of instant communication, constant scrutiny, and unbearable impatience, means that governments can be judged too harshly and too quickly.

The latest storm that threatens to unseat the current British prime minister is not unjustified, as his decision to appoint Peter Mandelson as ambassador in Washington was a total lapse of judgment. There was never any doubt that Mandelson’s political skills and wealth of experience in government, including on the international stage, would stand him in good stead in dealing with a major and challenging ally. Yet this was also someone who was nicknamed the “Prince of Darkness.” He was also one of the original spin doctors in British politics, and was twice forced to resign from government for failing to live up to the ethical standards of public life.

For a prime minister whose election campaign relied heavily on a promise to rid the country of years of Conservative sleaze, appointing Mandelson was extremely unwise. The resignation of Starmer’s chief of staff, Morgan McSweeney, the mastermind behind Mandelson’s appointment, has given the

prime minister breathing space. Yet, in the fast-paced world of modern politics, he still might be only a misstep or two away from losing his job. With Labour lagging far behind Reform in the polls and only just edging the even less popular Conservatives, and the prime minister’s approval ratings plummeting, he has his work cut out to convince the electorate that they should still trust him as leader. In the short term, he must convince those Labour MPs who can decide his future almost instantly.

It is a truism that nothing genuinely prepares a person for the most powerful job in the country, a position that depends on learning extremely fast, a strong sense of direction and values, and healthy political instincts. Winning an unassailable election victory should have given Starmer the self-belief and confidence to go against his cautious nature.

For many Labour MPs, more than half of whom have been elected for the first time, the impressive showing at the ballot box created the expectation of a radical Labour agenda — not unreasonable in light of voters comprehensively rejecting the legacy of the Conservatives’ 14 years in power. Moreover, for the more left leaning of the Labour Party, Starmer and his policies were too middle-of-the-road to begin with, and he was not their first choice to lead the party, let alone the country. However, Labour’s decisive victory left them with little ammunition to criticize those who masterminded it, including their ideological arch-nemesis McSweeney. Yet they still held high expectations for a new, radical agenda, only to be disappointed or, possibly, to have their suspicions confirmed.

To be sure, successive Conservative governments left a difficult legacy, with deep divisions over Brexit and immigration, underinvestment in public services, and a rocketing cost of living. For the new government and its leader it has not been enough to blame their predecessors for all the country’s ills; they needed to make an immediate impact while incorporating

Letters to the Editor

ECE classrooms

The School Education & Literacy Department, Sindh, issued comprehensive directions regarding the functioning of Early Childhood Education (ECE) classes in government schools. The circular clearly mandates well-equipped ECE classrooms with essential facilities and a strict regulatory structure. But in many schools, ECE classrooms are neither properly equipped nor child friendly. Basic facilities such as learning corners, age-appropriate furniture, play materials, storybooks, floor mats and visual aids are either missing or inadequate. In several cases, ECE sections are functioning in shared or overcrowded rooms. The prescribed age limit of 3-5 years is also not being strictly observed, undermining developmentally appropriate learning. Similarly, the notified class strength of 25-30 students is frequently exceeded, affecting individual attention. The circular further emphasises that ECE classes should ideally have two teachers (a teacher and an assistant), yet many schools operate with a single teacher, placing undue burden on staff and compromising quality. Moreover, despite clear instructions, ECE teachers are often assigned duties in higher classes, which directly violates the policy framework. The provision allowing dedicated preparation time for ECE teachers and strict adherence to the approved

timetable and syllabus also appears neglected in practice. Issuance of progressive circulars is commendable but without effective monitoring, physical inspections by higher authorities and accountability mechanisms, these policies remain confined to official documents. The government must ensure strict enforcement of its own directives to strengthen early childhood education in Sindh.

Ali Hussain
Karachi

School under construction

As a citizen of Turbat, I have observed that the Sheikhani Bazar School has a building under construction that has been left incomplete since 2013. This long delay has created serious concerns among students. Students are forced to study in overcrowded classrooms, and their studies are disrupted due to lack of space. This incomplete structure portrays a negative image of the school and the education system overall as well. Moreover, it limits the school’s ability to introduce new classrooms and facilities such as laboratories and a library. Education is the foundation of any nation, and such delays directly affect the future of students. It is deeply disappointing that a project meant to improve an educational facility has instead become a symbol of neglect and delay. Therefore, I strongly request the concerned authorities to take immedi-

ate action and complete the construction work as soon as possible. The future of our students depends on proper educational facilities.

Zeebjan Akther
Chasar, Turbat

Inexperienced invigilators

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa’s examination boards, beginning with BISE Swat, have decided to appoint fresh graduates for invigilation and marking — a move presented as reform. While the intent to engage youth is commendable, the policy raises serious concerns about examination credibility. Invigilation is not a routine clerical task; it requires authority, classroom control and the experience to enforce rules under pressure. Expecting new graduates to manage crowded halls overlooks the reality of organised cheating networks. Even senior teachers, backed by institutional authority, often face intimidation. It is unrealistic to assume temporary appointees can withstand such pressure without similar safeguards. Moreover, temporary staff operate without a clear legal framework to ensure accountability in cases of malpractice. If K-P boards wish to involve young professionals, they should adopt a hybrid model — pairing them with seasoned invigilators.

Manzar Hassan

Jinnah’s Political Thought, Pakistan’s Ideological Foundations Discussed

Report: ANI Correspondent:

KARACHI -- The Quaid-e-Azam House Museum (QAHM) hosted a discussion on competing interpretations of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s political thought and Pakistan’s ideological foundations. Historian and LUMS Professor Dr Ali Usman Qasmi delivered a presentation titled “Whose Jinnah? Which Ideology? Debating Pakistan’s Foundational Ideas,” examining the evolution of Pakistan’s historiography, state ideology and changing interpretations of the country’s identity. Dr Qasmi discussed how Pakistan’s historical and ideological narratives evolved over the decades, particularly after the separation of



East Pakistan in 1971. He also explored contemporary interpretations of the Indus Valley Civilisation as part of Pakistan’s historical heritage. The presentation was followed by

a question-and-answer session focusing on Jinnah’s political legacy, historiography, ideology and Pakistan’s national identity. The event was attended by academics, media professionals and civil society representatives, including Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner Sakib Sadakat, Shahnaz Wazir Ali, former PSO chief Khalid Rahman, IBA Dean Dr Yaqoob Bangash and Publishing Director of Lightstone Publishers Nadia Ghani. The programme was welcomed by QAHM Board Secretary General Commodore (retd) Sadeed Malik, while Ameena Saiyid, S.I., introduced Dr Qasmi and delivered the closing remarks.

Zikria Akbar Zia Vows Result-Oriented ICCI Advocacy for Business Community

Report: Hurish shah FT

ISLAMABAD -- President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia chaired an orientation meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee, focusing on the Chamber’s organizational structure, responsibilities, working procedures and priorities for the new term. Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia said ICCI would pursue a proactive and inclusive advocacy agenda, with immediate focus on improving the ease of doing business, resolving taxation and regulatory issues, reducing energy costs, addressing infrastructure challenges, facilitating SMEs and promoting trade, exports and investment. Senior Vice President Mohammad Asghar Hussain Chatah said the new leadership was committed to making ICCI a more responsive and effective platform for the business



community, while Vice President Mohammad Waqas Khan emphasized stronger engagement with SMEs, young entrepreneurs and emerging sectors. Secretary General ICCI Ghulam Murtaza briefed participants on the Chamber’s organizational structure, ongoing activities, administrative procedures and the working mechanism of the Executive Committee. Executive Committee members

shared their views and agreed to strengthen coordination, ensure regular committee meetings and enhance engagement with government departments, diplomatic missions, foreign chambers and international business partners. The meeting concluded with a commitment to work with unity, discipline and responsibility to make ICCI a more effective, responsive and results-driven institution.

Makkah Alliance Committee Endorses Nauman Mahmood as First Secretary-General



Report: ANI Correspondent:

RIYADH-- Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, and Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir attended the emergency meeting of the Strategic Political and Defence Committee (S-PDC) of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in Riyadh. The meeting endorsed the nomi-

nation of Lieutenant General (Retd) Nauman Mahmood, Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military), as the first Secretary-General of the Makkah Alliance for Defence. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye have been moving ahead with institutional arrangements under the defence agreement. The participants strongly condemned the attempted targeting of the Holy Cities of Makkah and Madinah and continued attacks against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The three countries exchanged views on the latest regional developments and reaffirmed their resolve to work closely for regional peace and stability. Pakistan expressed unwavering solidarity with Saudi Arabia and reiterated its full support for the Kingdom’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. Pakistan also reaffirmed its continued commitment to making every effort for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Will Play Full Role for Peace, Development and Prosperity in Balochistan, Carrying Forward Nawaz Sharif’s Vision, Jamal Shah Kakar



Report: ANI Correspondent:

QUETTA-- The central office of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) Balochistan was formally inaugurated in Quetta today. Parliamentary members, party office-bearers and workers attended the ceremony in large numbers. The inauguration fulfilled a long-standing demand of party workers. PML parliamentary leader Saleem Khosa played a personal role in completing the initiative, for which

workers expressed their gratitude. Addressing the ceremony, PML Balochistan Secretary General Jamal Shah Kakar said the party would carry forward the vision and political thinking of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and play its full role for peace, development and prosperity in Balochistan. He said it was the responsibility of party members to take Nawaz Sharif’s vision to the people. He added that the party’s real strength lies in its sincere workers and that

the new central office was the result of their hard work and sacrifices. Jamal Shah Kakar assured workers that their problems and difficulties would be addressed, saying the central office would provide them with a platform to present their concerns and help organize party activities more effectively. The ceremony concluded with a special prayer for the strength of the party, development of Balochistan and prosperity of the country.

Taramri Chowk Encroachments, Illegal Parking Disrupt Traffic Flow



Report: ANI Reporter :

ISLAMABAD -- Growing complaints of alleged encroachments and unregulated roadside parking around Taramri Chowk and adjoining areas have caused increasing difficulties for pedestrians, motorists and public transport users, according to local residents. Residents said vegetable and fruit carts, kiosks, roadside commercial activities and vehicles parked along the road have reduced traffic capacity at several points within the jurisdiction of Shehzad Town Police Station. They claimed that what initially began with a few roadside carts had gradually developed into permanent kiosks and shop-like structures at some locations. According to citizens, the situation has also affected the bus stop near Taramri Chowk, where roadside encroachments and parking allegedly prevent public transport vehicles from stopping at suitable locations. Passengers are consequently forced to board or leave vehicles on the road, creating addi-

tional safety concerns. Residents further complained that roadside commercial activities and parking from Taramri Chowk towards Old Bank Stop and Satra Meel have narrowed portions of the road and footpaths. They said vehicles parked near private institutions and hospitals, including HBS, further contribute to congestion and could potentially obstruct the movement of ambulances during emergencies. Citizens questioned the legal status of permanent kiosks and structures established along public roads and footpaths. They demanded that authorities clarify whether such activities have been formally permitted and, if not, take action in accordance with the law. Residents said anti-encroachment operations carried out periodically provide only temporary relief, as carts and kiosks allegedly reappear after a short period. They called for a permanent monitoring mechanism rather than one-time operations. They urged the CDA Enforcement Department, District Administration, Islamabad Traffic

Police, municipal authorities and Shehzad Town Police Station administration to conduct a joint inspection of the road from Taramri Chowk to Old Bank Stop and Satra Meel, identify temporary and permanent encroachments, address illegal parking and ensure clear pedestrian and traffic routes. Citizens also called for a comprehensive traffic management plan covering bus stops, pedestrian pathways, parking areas, shops, vendors and emergency vehicle routes. They suggested that designated spaces for vegetable and fruit vendors could help protect livelihoods while keeping the main road clear. Residents stressed that action should be uniform and non-discriminatory, with the same rules applied to permanent shopkeepers, temporary vendors and vehicle owners obstructing public pathways. They appealed to the relevant authorities to take immediate notice of the situation and ensure sustained enforcement so that roads, footpaths and bus stops remain accessible to the public and emergency services.

Sardar Yousaf, Senator Talha Mahmood Address Large Gathering in Haripur

Report: Mateen Syed :

HARIPUR --Federal Minister Sardar Muhammad Yousaf and Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood addressed a large gathering in Haripur in connection with the Suba Hazara Movement. The leaders spoke to a large number of participants and highlighted matters concerning the Hazara region and its people.



Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Daniyal Chowdhury, Punjab Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture Shazia Rizwan and CEO Education Yasin Khan Baloch are presenting awards to teachers at a ceremony held at Government Girls High School No. 1, Bagh Sardaran, on the occasion of Teacher’s Day.

Report Ahmed Shamsur Rehman/ ANI

Islamabad: A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges was held today at Parliament House, Islamabad, under the Chairmanship of Senator Syed Waqar Mehdi. Senators Sadia Abbasi, Jan Muhammad, Hafiz Abdul Karim, Dost Ali Jaisar, Asad Qasim and Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan, Bushra Anjum Butt, and Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto, attended the meeting. The Committee deferred consideration of the privilege motion moved by Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan on December 24, 2025, against Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan due to his absence from the meeting. The Committee considered the Privilege Motion moved by Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto against Deputy Commissioner Kemari District, Karachi, Abdul Sattar Hakro, regarding his alleged failure to meet the Senator at the appointed time. The Deputy Commissioner acknowledged the lapse. Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto stated that his political office was barely two minutes away from the Deputy Commissioner’s office and that he had sought a meeting to discuss a matter of public interest. However, the Deputy Commissioner was unavailable. He further stated that his telephone calls remained unanswered for more than a month and that no explanation was provided for the failure to arrange the meeting. The Deputy Commissioner explained that his Personal Assistant was away for Umrah and had failed to convey the Senator’s call to him. The Committee Chairman observed that administrative officers should extend full cooperation to Members of Parliament and respond appropriately to their requests and queries. The DC also submitted a written apology before the Committee. The Chairman directed the Parliamentary Affairs Division to write to the Establishment Division for issuing appropriate instructions to DMG officers regarding cooperation with Members of Parliament. With the

consent of Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto and approval of the Committee, the written apology submitted by the Deputy Commissioner Kemari was accepted and the matter was disposed of. The Committee also considered a privilege motion moved by Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan against Director/Chief Clinical Coordinator, PIMS, Islamabad, Dr. Sharjeel Zaheer, regarding alleged derogatory remarks against a Member of Parliament. Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan stated that she had posted a message on social media concerning the deaths of 14 children at PIMS. According to her, a video relating to the incident was subsequently shared, following which an officer allegedly made mocking remarks. After hearing the matter, the Committee decided to summon the concerned officer at its next meeting for further clarification. The Committee also considered a privilege motion moved by Senator Hasna Bano against Deputy Commissioner Hub, Balochistan, Jamdad Khan Mandokhail, regarding alleged inappropriate behaviour and his refusal to sign a demand notice for an arms license without justification. The Chairman informed the Committee that the Member had conveyed that the matter with the concerned officer had been resolved. Accordingly, with the consent of the Member, it was decided to withdraw the privilege motion. The Committee then considered a privilege motion moved by Senator Bushra Anjum Butt against Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD), Ms. Hina Tayyaba Khalil, concerning her alleged failure or refusal to appear before a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training. Senator Bushra Anjum Butt stated that the contractual tenure of the incumbent Vice Chancellor had expired in December 2025, but she continued to perform her duties thereafter. She further stated that during a meeting in which the Vice Chancellor was personally present, she had asked her to leave the meeting as the agenda under discussion related to her. According to the

Senator, Fashion designer, model, and television/film actor. Deepak Perwani supported the Vice Chancellor’s position, following which an exchange of harsh words took place and the Senator left the meeting. She further alleged that the Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training had been supporting the incumbent Vice Chancellor for several years. Representatives of PIFD also briefed the Committee on their position. Senator Bushra Anjum Butt stated that it was her responsibility to protect the rights of individuals who approached her office seeking justice, assistance and fair treatment. The Committee Chairman expressed serious displeasure over the failure of PIFD’s Deepak Perwani and Ms. Sehar Saigal to attend the Committee meeting through video link despite being directed to do so. He termed their non-attendance as a matter of serious concern and stated that the concerned officials would be required to ensure their personal attendance at the next meeting. The Chairman expressed serious reservations regarding various matters at PIFD and stated that the Committee would soon apprise the President of Pakistan of the situation. A formal letter would also be written to the Secretary to the President in this regard. The Chairman observed that PIFD is an important institution, but alleged nepotism and appointments and promotions based on personal preferences were adversely affecting its performance. He stated that all such matters would be examined in detail and that the Committee would take decisions strictly in accordance with merit. The Chairman further directed the concerned Ministry to place before the Committee at its next meeting all relevant documents pertaining to the appointment of the Vice Chancellor of PIFD and any subsequent extension granted to her contractual tenure. The next meeting of the Committee will also be attended by the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, the Minister for Federal Education, relevant officials of the Ministry and representatives of the Higher Education Commission (HEC).