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Gender-Responsive AI School**

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PM briefed on enhanced services for overseas Pakistanis, orders maximum facilitation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: On the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday briefed the prime minister on enhancing services at Pakistani embassies for overseas Pakistanis, digitizing the document attestation process, simplifying the complaints mechanism, and introducing digital systems for carrying out various tasks and payments in Pakistan from abroad. During the meeting chaired by the prime minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan's ambassadors posted in various countries, the Ministry of Interior, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the Ministry of Information Technology, and other senior officials briefed him on the

progress made. The prime minister said that overseas Pakistanis were the valuable assets, and providing them with every possible facility was the government's highest priority.

The briefing informed the prime minister that, for the convenience of overseas Pakistanis, a QR code had already been introduced to simplify the processes of Power of Attorney, property purchase and sale, and document attestation. The prime minister welcomed the digitization of the complaints registration system through the QR code and directed that it should be displayed prominently at Pakistani embassies to improve public access. A dedicated awareness campaign should be launched for overseas Pakistanis so that more people can register their complaints through this digital system, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review progress on revamping consular services by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Pakistan says 'doing utmost' to bring US, Iran back to Islamabad MoU

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) said on Thursday that Pakistan was doing its "utmost" to bring the United States and Iran back to the negotiating table under the Islamabad memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed last month. Addressing a weekly press briefing, FO spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Pakistan noted with concern that the security situation in the Middle East "remains precarious despite the relative calm of the past few days, which had rekindled hopes that this positive development, this calm, would consolidate into a durable and fully respected ceasefire and pave the way for dialogue". Andrabi reiterated Pakistan's support for dialogue and diplomacy, maintaining that it remained the "only viable path forward". "We welcome all efforts aimed at sustaining cessation of hostilities and resumption of dialogue between Iran and the US," he said, adding that Pakistan remained engaged and will continue to do so. "Let me add that the negotiations between parties are ongoing to normalise the situation, particularly the situation in the Strait of Hormuz."

US military carries out 'heavy wave' of retaliatory strikes on Iran for attack on bases

MAHPARA ZAMAN



WASHINGTON: The US military completed a "heavy wave of strikes" against Iran on Thursday in retaliation for Tehran targeting American bases in Jordan, as fighting intensified in the Middle East war after a nearly week-long pause. The reignited hostilities appear to have dashed hopes of a quick return to negotiations between the foes. US President Donald Trump had vowed to hit Iran "hard" after Tehran launched missiles at Jordan, its first regional strike in days. American forces "successfully completed a heavy wave of strikes against Iran", and struck dozens of Islamic Revolutionary Guard targets including military command centres, US Central Command (Centcom) said. "The strikes aimed to further diminish threats posed by Iran and its proxies to American forces, commercial shipping, and neighboring Gulf countries," it said. Iran's state news agency IRNA reported hits on several cities in the southwestern Khuzestan province, as well as on Qeshm island in the Gulf. Areas around the cities of Ahad, Shadegan, Arvandkenar and Ahvaz — all in Khuzestan — were struck, the agency said, citing provincial authorities. The attack on Qeshm island killed three people, including a two-year-old, the Fars news agency reported on Thursday. "A US attack on a residential home in the Chah Tangu neighbourhood of Qeshm. Killed three members of a family: the father, the mother, and their 2-year-old child," Fars reported citing the Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences, adding that two other children were injured.

Bilawal seeks to shield coalition from AJK poll rift

PEAK POINT



MUZAFFARABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday said his criticism of alleged irregularities in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections would not endanger the party's coalition with the PML-N at the Centre, but warned that the alleged rigging and what he described as the theft of the public mandate could have implications for the ruling alliance. Speaking to the media after meeting AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar and PPP workers at his residence here, the Bhutto scion said the PPP-PML-N coalition at the federal level remained intact. "My statements cannot put our coalition with the federal government in danger," Bilawal said, while cautioning that alleged manipulation of the AJK electoral process and denial of the public mandate could create difficulties for the alliance. The PPP chairman said alleged vote theft and what he called an assault on the people's mandate were "unacceptable" arguing that he could not remain silent when party workers were targeted.

At least 10 killed as three-storey building collapses in Lahore's Baghbanpura

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: At least 10 people were killed and six others injured after a three-storey building collapsed in Lahore's Baghbanpura area on Wednesday night, according to Lahore Rescue 1122. Lahore Rescue 1122 Spokesperson Farooq Ahmad said the emergency response team pulled out 16 people from the rubble; six were pronounced dead on site while the rest were shifted to the hospital for further treatment, adding that a search operation to recover other people trapped.

9 cops martyred, 28 injured as police checkpoint comes under attack in KP's Hangu

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Nine cops, including a deputy superintendent of police (DSP), were martyred and 28 others were injured after terrorists attacked the Khazina Banda checkpoint in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hangu district late on Wednesday.

A statement issued by KP Inspector General (IG) Zulfiqar Hameed said that the checkpoint was attacked by Fina al Khawarij, a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), while police personnel were present.

He said that the police personnel responded bravely, while additional personnel were also dispatched. However, the terrorists ambushed the contingent, due to which an armoured

personnel carrier was damaged.



The IG said that despite these challenges, the personnel fought with bravery and professionalism.

"Fifteen kharij were killed while multiple others were injured due to the police's response," he said. The IG added that during the intense and long exchange of fire, nine cops, including DSP Diyar Khan, were martyred while 28 others were injured.

The IG asserted that KP

police's morale and resolve were strong, adding that the



battle to wipe out terrorists from every corner of the province would continue.

Speaking to Dawn, a senior police official also confirmed the number of casualties. He said that an exchange of fire broke out after the terrorists attacked the checkpoint.

Separately, a police checkpoint in the Adezai area, within the jurisdiction of Peshawar's Mattani police station, was also

attacked by terrorists late on Wednesday night.

"Terrorists fired at the post but cops responded, prompting the former to escape," a senior police official said, adding that all the cops remained unhurt.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the attack on the Khazina Banda checkpoint in Hangu. In a statement, the president expressed "deep grief" over the martyrdom of the personnel, terming their sacrifices "an asset for the nation". "The complete eradication from the homeland of terrorists and their facilitators operating with foreign backing will be ensured," he said. Praying for the martyrs' ranks and the recovery of the injured.

President Zardari commended KP Police for eliminating terrorists.

Pakistan airspace closure deepens Air India losses to \$2.3bn: report



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The closure of Pakistani airspace to Indian carriers has dealt a major financial blow to Air India, forcing the airline to operate longer and more expensive alternative routes, according to a report by aviation publication FlightGlobal.

Air India recorded a net loss of 222.4 billion Indian rupees, equivalent to approximately \$2.3 billion, for the financial year ending March 31, the report said. The loss was more than double the airline's 109 billion-rupee deficit in the previous financial year. The airline's financial difficulties were attributed to external pressures that disrupted its restructuring efforts, including the need to reroute flights because of restrictions on access.



SPORTS



Babar, Shan and Abbas climb ICC Test rankings despite Pakistan defeat



PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Pakistan's former captain Babar Azam, current Test skipper Shan Masood and experienced fast bowler Mohammad Abbas have made significant gains in the latest ICC Test rankings following their impressive performances in the opening Test against the West Indies, despite Pakistan's defeat in the two-match series opener.

Babar climbed four places to 15th in the ICC Test batting rankings with 686 rating points after registering a fighting half-century,

while Shan enjoyed the biggest rise among Pakistan's batters, jumping eight spots to 36th with 590 points after scoring a superb century in the first Test.

However, several Pakistan batters slipped in the latest rankings. Saud Shakeel dropped three places to 24th with 641 points, while wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan fell eight positions to 26th with 638 points. All-rounder Salman Ali Agha slipped four places to 32nd with 607 points.

Opener Imam-ul-Haq retained his 53rd position, Abdullah

Shafique slipped one place to 57th with 511 points, while all-rounder Aamer Jamal remained 100th. Australia's Travis Head continues to lead the ICC Test batting rankings ahead of England's Harry Brook and Joe Root.

Among the bowlers, Mohammad Abbas recorded Pakistan's biggest improvement, surging nine places to 17th with 690 rating points after an impressive outing in the series opener. Left-arm spinner Noman Ali retained his seventh position with 809 points to remain Pakistan's

highest-ranked Test bowler. Shaheen Shah Afridi dropped four places to 29th with 617 points, while off-spinner Sajid Khan slipped one place to 35th. Hasan Ali remained 38th, Khurram Shahzad fell to 52nd, Asif Afridi dropped to 87th, Mohammad Ali slipped to 93rd, while Salman Ali Agha moved down to 99th among Test bowlers. India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah continues to top the ICC Test bowling rankings, followed by New Zealand's Matt Henry in second and Australia's Mitchell Starc in third.

Arshad Nadeem reaches Commonwealth Games 2026 javelin throw final



PEAK POINT

GLASGOW: Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem qualified for the men's javelin throw final at the 2026 Commonwealth Games after finishing seventh in the qualification round with a best throw of 78.63 metres.

No athlete managed to achieve the automatic qualifying standard of 84 metres during the three-throw qualification round. The top 12 competitors based on their best throws advanced to the final.

Sri Lanka's Ramesh Tharanga topped the qualification standings with a throw of 82.84 metres, followed by Grenada's Anderson Peters with 81.29 metres and South Africa's Douw Smit with 80.64 metres.

England's Ben East was among the top five with a throw of 80.38 metres, while India's Neeraj Chopra finished fifth with 79.61 metres. Australia's MacEntyre placed sixth with 78.91 metres, ahead of Arshad Nadeem in seventh.

Pakistan's Yasir Sultan failed to qualify for the final after finishing 14th with a best throw of 74.36 metres. Arshad heads into the final as the defending champion after making history at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, where he won gold with a 90.18-metre throw. The effort set new national and Commonwealth Games records and made him the first South Asian athlete to surpass the 90-metre mark in the men's javelin throw.

Uefa countries to boycott World Cup over Fifa proposals



PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Uefa's member associations have unanimously voted to boycott the World Cup and other Fifa competitions in protest at Fifa's plan to sell stakes to external investors in a subsidiary that will run the global governing body's tournaments, European soccer governing body said following a virtual meeting on Thursday.

Uefa ruling body said on Tuesday it plans to create a \$20 billion subsidiary to run the World Cup and its other events and will offer stakes of up to 20% in it to external investors.

"No Uefa national teams will participate in any Fifa competition for so long as these proposals remain alive, unless these proposals have been abandoned in its entirety and binding every continent,"

Uefa added.

"No part of it should ever be surrendered to private investors. The World Cup is not for sale."

A spokesperson for the English FA backed the decision, saying the organisation "stands shoulder to shoulder with our European colleagues".

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and CONCACAF also strongly criticised Fifa earlier, saying they were not consulted in the process.

The Women's World Cup is set to be held in Brazil next year. Fifa is set to stage its inaugural Under-15 World Cup in Azerbaijan in October.

ICC unveils host venues for 2027 Men's Cricket World Cup



Pakistan defeat South Korea 3-1 in first test match of hockey series

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan hockey team started the four-match test series against South Korea on a winning note, defeating the visitors 3-1 in the opening match at Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium here on Thursday.

Pakistan dominated the contest with a strong attacking display and scored twice in the second quarter, while adding another goal in the third quarter to secure a comfortable victory.

Forward Sufyan Khan was the star performer for Pakistan, scoring two goals through penalty corners, while captain Abu Bakar Mahmood also contributed with a field goal. South Korea's lone goal came from Ji Hun Yang.

Pakistan defeat South Korea 3-1 in first test match of hockey series

Pakistan led 2-1 at half-



time after goals from Sufyan Khan and Abu Bakar.

Sufyan completed his brace in the third quarter through another penalty corner in the 36th minute.

The Korean side managed to reduce the deficit but Pakistan's defence remained firm in the final

quarter to seal the match.

The second match of the test series between Pakistan and South Korea will be played on Saturday at the same venue.

The series is part of Pakistan's preparations for upcoming international assignments.



Spectators enjoy the first match of Pakistan-South Korea men's field hockey test series at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium.



TWIN CITIES

Daily Peak Point, July 31, 2026



Senate raises alarm over daily petrol pricing, questions oil companies over missing data and accountability

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Petroleum has raised serious concerns over Pakistan's new daily petroleum price system, high fuel taxes, and the performance of state owned oil companies, demanding greater transparency and accountability in the petroleum sector. The committee questioned why the government shifted from the previous fortnightly fuel price system to daily price changes and asked whether the new mechanism was providing real relief to consumers. During the meeting chaired by Senator Umer Farooq, members reviewed the daily petroleum pricing system, appointment process of top officials in government petroleum companies, board

structures and progress on previous committee recommendations. Federal Minister for Petroleum informed the committee that the pricing process had been made independent by giving the responsibility of price determination to the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA). He said the move was aimed at removing political influence from petroleum pricing decisions. OGRA Chairman briefed the committee that petroleum prices are now calculated through a seven day average of international Platts market rates. He explained that the daily pricing system is designed to reduce sudden price increases by spreading international market changes over several days. Officials said the new system would also help con-

trol speculative activities where some people try to earn illegal profits by creating artificial shortages or price uncertainty. However, senators raised questions about the impact of daily price changes on ordinary citizens and fuel dealers. Members expressed concern over the heavy tax burden on petroleum products and said frequent price changes were creating difficulties for businesses and consumers. Representatives of the Petroleum Dealers Association told the committee that regular price adjustments were causing operational challenges for fuel dealers. The committee directed OGRA to consult all stakeholders, including petroleum dealers, and prepare practical recommendations to solve their con-

cerns. Senators also stressed the need to introduce stronger digital monitoring systems in the petroleum supply chain to control fuel adulteration, smuggling and illegal storage. The committee said technology should be used to track fuel movement and improve transparency from supply points to consumers. The meeting also saw strong criticism over the absence of the Managing Director of Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL). The committee expressed anger that the head of a state owned company did not attend the meeting and that required information was not provided. Members considered initiating privilege proceedings against the PRL Managing Director over the failure to cooperate with the parliamentary committee. The Petroleum Division

was directed to provide complete details about the boards of directors and senior management of all government owned petroleum companies. The committee also reviewed the performance of Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and expressed dissatisfaction over the company's failure to implement previous committee directions. Members said SSGC had not provided required information about its board and had not submitted a formal apology over remarks that discouraged discussion of certain issues before the Senate committee. The committee considered moving privilege proceedings against SSGC as well. The Petroleum Division was also directed to review the appointment periods of board members who have remained in positions

beyond the approved tenure and submit a detailed report. The committee further raised concerns over the absence of performance audits of oil rigs. Authorities were directed to provide the audit report within seven days. The committee also reviewed issues related to LPG quotas and licensing. OGRA was directed to hold meetings with all relevant stakeholders and submit a detailed report regarding the matter. Senator Umer Farooq said transparency, accountability and consumer protection must remain the priority in the petroleum sector. The committee stressed that government owned petroleum companies must improve their performance and follow parliamentary directions to ensure public confidence.

COMSTECH, Tajikistan discuss launching joint programme to boost scientific cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator General of OIC-COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary during his visit to the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Thursday held talks with Yusuf Sharifzoda on expanding bilateral cooperation in science, technology, artificial intelligence, higher education, innovation and research.

Prof. Choudhary, accompanied by a COMSTECH delegation, was warmly received by Ambassador Sharifzoda. During the meeting, both sides expressed keen interest in launching a dedicated COMSTECH-Tajikistan Programme aimed at strengthening institutional partnerships and scientific collaboration between Tajikistan and OIC-COM-

STECH.

The Coordinator General reaffirmed COMSTECH's commitment to promoting academic and scientific cooperation among Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states through joint research, capacity-building initiatives, academic mobility and science diplomacy.

He proposed exchange visits of students, young

innovators, researchers and university faculty members, along with partnerships between leading universities and scientific institutions of Pakistan and Tajikistan.

He also proposed organising joint scientific exhibitions, innovation forums and cultural exchange programmes to promote engagement among young scientists and students of both countries. Prof.

Choudhary further invited the leadership of Tajik universities to visit Pakistan to explore long-term institutional collaboration under the COMSTECH platform.

Ambassador Yusuf Sharifzoda appreciated COMSTECH's leading role in advancing scientific cooperation across the Muslim world and welcomed the proposed initiatives. He reaffirmed Tajikistan's com-

mitment to working closely with COMSTECH to transform the proposals into practical programmes benefiting universities, researchers and students of both countries.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to further strengthening COMSTECH-Pakistan-Tajikistan cooperation through education, research, innovation and science diplomacy.

Opinion & Editorial

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Gearing up for August 5

After a long hiatus, the PTI has apparently decided to flex its muscles and kickstart a mass-contact campaign. Its decision to stage a public rally on August 5 at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi, coincides with the third anniversary of former PM Imran Khan's incarceration. Thus, the party's 'Imran Khan Rehavi Aman Movement' is likely to create ripples in the country's otherwise opposition-less political canvas. The Catch-22, however, is whether the party will be given permission to rally or will once again be denied its due political space. All of the PTI's previous requests to hold public meetings were denied, and the party has been struggling to make its presence felt. The party's own indecisiveness and fragmentation are also responsible for this mundane state of affairs, as it has not been able to assert itself as a proactive political entity on the floor of the House or within legal and political parameters. The government would be well-advised to let the PTI go ahead with the rally. This will serve as an opportunity to not only allow the party to exercise its constitutional and democratic right to freedom of association, but also enable the government to engage the opposition for broad-based interaction in the future. The current policy of cracking down on dissent and pushing opposition voices to the wall is proving detrimental to national interests.

Drowning the future

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh
THE floods are visiting us again. The death toll will be counted within days. The damage to roads, bridges and embankments will be tallied within weeks and translated into a dollar figure. Expect this assessment to dominate the coverage. It is legitimate but a wrong ledger regardless. The real casualty of this flood, and the one before it, is not standing in the rubble. It is sitting in a classroom that no longer exists, or should be sitting there and is not.

Pakistan is a country where 40 per cent of the population is under 15, where 93 million children are of school age, where the state has for years spent less than one per cent of GDP on health and less than 2pc on education despite disasters. When the water recedes, the roads get rebuilt. The child who missed seven weeks of school, who was screened for severe acute malnutrition at a flood clinic, who caught malaria from a collapsed WASH system, does not get rebuilt on the same timeline. Evidence from the 2005 earthquake shows four weeks of closure can cost a child one and a half years of learning four years later. Pakistan has just handed its children five years of near continuous disruption: Covid, the 2022 floods, the 2024 heatwaves, the 2025 floods. Each calamity more severe than the last.

Before the 2022 floods, 26.2m children were already

out of school, the second highest figure in the world. The floods destroyed or damaged 27,000 schools, converted 5,000 more into relief camps, and locked 3.5m children out of learning in a single season. By January 2023, only 200,000 had received any education intervention. The provincial numbers show that the out-of-school share jumped from 32 to 80pc in Khairpur Mirs and from 46 to 86pc in Jacobabad. Entire districts where enrolment simply stopped. The pattern held: 1,300 more schools damaged in 2024, 230,000 children in Sindh losing access, nearly 30,000 schools damaged in Punjab in 2025, affecting 700,000 more. Each cycle adds to the base rather than starting from zero. Displaced teachers, especially women, do not return to classrooms that no longer exist. The system absorbs the loss quietly, without a ledger.

Girls absorb this collapse first and hardest. Even before 2022, the out-of-school rate for girls aged five to 16 stood at 59pc in Balochistan and 51pc in Sindh. When a flood or a drought strips a household of income, a daughter's schooling is usually the first expense cut, and marriage becomes a coping strategy. The 2022 floods alone are linked to an 18pc rise in child marriage prevalence — five years of progress erased in a single monsoon. The term now in the literature is 'monsoon brides'. Researchers have traced the chain across South Asia: economic shock

triggers withdrawal from school, withdrawal triggers marriage, and marriage closes the door on everything meant to follow. This is a girl absent from every flood damage assessment. The floodwaters recede but they leave monsoon brides behind. Pakistan has handed its children five years of near continuous disruption. The harm does not stop at school gates or wedding registers. After the 2022 floods, half of the 3.4m children needing assistance showed signs of psychological distress, and seven in 10 Sindh parents reported depressive symptoms in their children. Pakistan has no framework to recognise this as loss, no methodology to measure it, no mechanism to compensate for it. The same demographic pressure that turns a flood into a generational event turns a heatwave into one too. Global tracking shows infants and children under five now experience more heatwave days per year than any other age group, a fourfold increase over two decades, and Pakistan's heatwaves already exceed 50 degrees Celsius. In 2024, that exposure alone shuttered classrooms for roughly half of all school-age children. Unicef's 2026 Children's Climate Risk Report has found that 1.1 billion of the world's children are now exposed to three or more climate hazards simultaneously, and named Pakistan among the countries most severely affected.

Courtesy Dawn

The business of institutions

Hammad Rohila

Before the National Gemstone Policy reached its present form, an international investor submitted a legal and commercial paper to the government questioning its direction. Having previously advocated a customs-based National Warranty Office, he framed the organisation of regulatory responsibilities as a commercial question rather than merely an administrative one.

The observation deserves attention. The debate is ultimately about how public institutions responsible for mining regulation, customs administration, foreign exchange and international trade relate to one another. The question is not whether the sector needs further institutional support, but whether those responsibilities are organised coherently.

Investors routinely adapt to regulation through legal advice, compliance and pricing regulatory risk. Far less common is an investor proposing how public regulatory institutions should be organised. Readers may differ on its recommendations. The more interesting question is why regulatory design had become part of the investment conversation at all.

Pakistan's gemstone sector has never lacked promise. Successive governments have recognised its potential for value addition, exports and downstream industries. The latest policy continues that ambition. In that sense, the debate is not about whether the sector deserves attention. It plainly does.

The more interesting question is how that attention should be organised. Pakistan has experimented with specialised gemstone institutions before. The Auditor General's review of the Pakistan Gems and Jewellery Development Company found weaknesses in implementation, planning, governance and commercial outcomes rather than a lack of institutions. That experience suggests designing regulatory institutions deserves as much attention as creating them.

Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan, Turkiye express concern over Israeli actions in Gaza, Al-Aqsa Mosque violations



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan on Thursday expressed deep concern over Israeli military actions in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank, as well as repeated violations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, during a telephone conversation.

"Both foreign ministers expressed deep concern over the continued Israeli

West Bank.

A day earlier, fourteen Arab and Palestinian institutions and organisations also issued an urgent appeal calling for collective action to protect occupied Jerusalem amid what they described as escalating Israeli violations targeting Al-Aqsa Mosque and the city's historic identity.

The appeal warned of an unprecedented Israeli escalation targeting Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalemites, and the city's Arab, Islamic and Christian identity, saying the measures seek to create new realities on the ground and consolidate control by force. A statement by MoFo said that FM Dar, in talks with his Turkish counterpart, exchanged views on recent regional and international developments, with particular focus on the conflict in Palestine.

"They reaffirmed their

unwavering support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and discussed Jordan's proposal to convene a meeting of Arab and Islamic countries to coordinate diplomatic efforts in support of the Palestinian people," it said. A day earlier, FM Dar held similar discussions with Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty, with the two expressing "grave concern" over the situation in the Palestinian territories.

Both condemned continued Israeli military operations in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, stressed the need for an "immediate cessation of hostilities" and unhindered humanitarian assistance, and also discussed Jordan's proposal to convene a meeting of Arab and Islamic countries to coordinate diplomatic efforts in support of the Palestinian people.

Pakistan reaffirms zero-tolerance policy against human trafficking: Mohsin Naqvi

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Marking the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to eradicating human trafficking and migrant smuggling, describing the crime as a grave violation of human rights and a serious transnational offense that demands coordinated national and international action.

In his message, the minister said the government was implementing a strict zero-tolerance policy against human trafficking and illegal transportation of people, with all relevant institutions working in close coordination to dismantle trafficking networks and bring those responsible to justice.

Highlighting progress made over the past year, Naqvi said Pakistan's cooperation with



European countries had produced encouraging results in combating human trafficking. He noted that the rate of human trafficking toward Europe had declined by 47 percent within a year, attributing the improvement to enhanced enforcement measures and stronger international collaboration.

The interior minister said the European Union had commended the Ministry of Interior's initiatives to curb human trafficking, reflecting growing international confidence in Pakistan's efforts to address the challenge.

MoITT, UN women, KOICA partner to launch Pakistan's first Gender-Responsive AI School

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), together with UN Women Pakistan and with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), have launched the UN Women Gender-Responsive AI School Pakistan, marking a major step towards advancing inclusive, ethical, and gender-responsive artificial intelligence (AI) in Pakistan. Gender-Responsive AI School aimed to strengthen national capacity by equipping policymakers, government institutions, parliamentarians, the United Nations system, academia, civil society, the private sector, and community leaders with the knowledge and practical skills to harness AI responsibly and



ensure women and girls are equal participants in Pakistan's digital transformation. Welcoming participants, Jamshed M. Kazi, Country Representative, UN Women Pakistan, said, "Pakistan is setting a new benchmark for the Asia-Pacific region through the UN Women Gender-Responsive AI School; the first initiative in the region to deliver a national Training of Trainers programme with tailored learning pathways for the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, as well as civil society and the private sector.

Gilani seeks stronger Pakistan-South Korea cooperation in biotechnology, AI and healthcare

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday said Pakistan is keen to expand cooperation with South Korea in biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), healthcare, pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing and information technology. He expressed these views during a meeting with a high-level South Korean delegation led by KOA-Bio Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Cho, accompanied by representatives of KOA Corporation, Scale Sniper and other leading South Korean companies.

Gilani said Pakistan highly values its longstanding friendship with South Korea and highlighted the country's growing research and innovation ecosystem.

He invited South Korean companies to

explore joint ventures, technology transfer, research partnerships, medical device manufacturing and AI-powered healthcare solutions in Pakistan. He also highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in attracting strategic investment through its single-window mechanism.

The Senate chairman said stronger parliamentary engagement, along with closer collaboration between academia, researchers and the private sector, would further strengthen bilateral ties.

The South Korean delegation thanked Gilani for the warm welcome appreciated Pakistan's investment potential and scientific capabilities, and expressed interest in expanding cooperation in biotechnology, healthcare innovation, artificial intelligence and research.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Korean delegation led by Dr. Yang along with Mr. Cho, CEO of KOA-Bio and the CEO and cod of scale company at Parliament House.

Aleem Khan orders zero-tolerance policy against overloaded vehicles

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday directed authorities to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against vehicle overloading, ordering strict enforcement of axle load regulations across the country to protect road infrastructure and improve highway safety. Chaired a high-level meeting here at the Ministry of Communications, the minister reviewed progress on the implementation of axle load management and received a detailed briefing on enforcement measures, said a press release. Inspector General National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP), Sultan Ahmad Chaudhry briefed the minister that axle load management on motorways was comparatively satisfactory but required further reinforcement across national highways assessments regarding infrastructure damage caused by vehicle overloading were also presented.

Wildlife Rangers in Lahore recovered a live leopard

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: In a major operation, Wildlife Rangers in Lahore recovered a live leopard that was illegally kept. The operation was carried out on the basis of a tip-off and a court search warrant, while a case was also registered against the accused. On the instructions of ACWR Lahore Muhammad Waseem, Wildlife Rangers raided a breeding farm in Suay Asal area of Tehsil Model Town with a court search warrant after receiving a tip-off. During the operation, an illegally kept



leopard was recovered. Later, with the help of the Safari Zoo's veterinary team, the leopard was safely shifted to the Safari Zoo. A case has been registered against the accused at Kahna Police Station, while according to wildlife officials, further legal action is underway.

Pakistan to position itself as global hub of gandhara heritage, Buddhist tourism: Khichi

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Thursday said Pakistan would position itself as a leading global destination for Buddhist heritage tourism by preserving and promoting the Gandhara civilisation through a comprehensive national strategy being implemented under the direct oversight of Prime Minister. Chairing the inaugural meeting of the Task Force on the Gandhara - Cradle of Buddhism (GCOB) Strategy, the minister said the Prime Minister had taken a special interest in safeguarding Pakistan's Gandhara heritage

and would personally review the progress of the strategy on monthly basis to ensure its effective implementation. The task force, constituted with the approval of the Prime Minister, discussed a comprehensive roadmap to project Pakistan as the true guardian and custodian of the Gandhara civilisation while promoting the country's rich Buddhist heritage and expanding cultural and religious tourism.

The meeting was attended by Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Asad Rehman Gilani, representatives of the Ministries of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Foreign Affairs and Interior, Pakistan Tourism



Development Corporation (PTDC), provincial culture and heritage departments, the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Gandhara Task Force Coordinator Imran Shaukat and other members. Khichi called upon all federal and provincial stakehold-

ers to work in close coordination to achieve the objectives of the initiative, particularly urging Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the heartland of the Gandhara civilisation, to continue their cooperation in preserving and promoting the country's Buddhist heritage.

He emphasized the need to establish specialized task forces to focus on different aspects of the Gandhara Strategy and said Pakistan must effectively communicate to the international community that it is the rightful guardian and custodian of the Gandhara civilisation.

The minister directed the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony to complete its assigned responsibilities, saying several components of the strategy would be developed in light of its recommendations.

He also instructed all stakeholders to complete their respective assignments before the next meeting.

Coordinator of the Gandhara Task Force, Imran Shaukat said he had been working on the Gandhara Project for nearly eight years and stressed that its objective was not only to preserve one of the world's greatest civilisations but also to highlight Pakistan's rightful role as its custodian.

He said Buddhist monks from countries including Canada, Sri Lanka, Australia and Vietnam had shown interest in visiting Pakistan and stressed the need to provide better facilities for pilgrims.

He also proposed preparing a Buddhist religious calendar to facilitate arrangements for important religious events.