

Iran vows to make ‘no corner livable’ after fresh strike

In a chilling crescendo of defiance, Iran’s military has bluntly urged Israeli settlers to flee the occupied territories, igniting fears of a broader regional reckoning

News Desk

TEHRAN: Tensions in the Middle East have reached a dangerous crescendo, as Iran launched a second wave of missile attacks on Israel within hours on Sunday night, a dramatic escalation in a confrontation that has now grown into one of the most volatile episodes in recent regional history.

As sirens howled across Tel Aviv and occupied Jerusalem, residents scrambled for cover once again, clutching their children and crowding into underground shelters. The unsettling routine of alarm, panic, and waiting resumed under a sky lit by flashes of incoming rockets. Israeli media reported explosions in the country’s north, with at least one missile striking a building, though the extent of casualties or damage remains unclear.



unclear.

In an unflinching statement that has sent fresh tremors across the globe, Iran’s military issued a stark warning to Israeli settlers, urging them to evacuate the occupied territories without delay. “We will not leave a single corner of Israel fit for living,” the statement read—an unambiguous signal that Tehran has no intention of letting the crisis de-escalate soon.

Israel responded by grounding all air traffic and shuttering its airspace indefinitely, with public safety guidelines extended until at least 17 June. For now, the country remains in a state of high alert, with military units mobilized and emergency protocols triggered across major cities. This intensification comes in the wake of what Iranian officials describe as an unprovoked Israeli airstrike on a suspected

energy infrastructure site in Iran—a move that may have crossed an invisible red line.

In retaliation, not only has Tehran launched missiles, but it has also turned inward to brace for what might come next. In the capital, a new petrol rationing system—limiting vehicles to just 15 liters—was announced, a wartime measure that speaks volumes about Iran’s internal state of emergency.

Long queues of vehicles formed at filling stations, while northern districts of Tehran saw a steady exodus of worried residents, many unsure where safety might lie. The sense of foreboding is not confined to either country. The wider region—and indeed, the world—now looks on anxiously. The rhetoric has hardened, the missiles are flying, and the diplomatic silence has become deafening.

JUI-F leader denounces Israel’s actions as genocidal

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has launched a scathing attack on Israel, calling it a “cancer in the Islamic world” and denouncing its ongoing military operations in Gaza as genocide.

Speaking to reporters in Hyderabad, the veteran politician and religious leader described Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a “war criminal” who, despite an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC), continues to enjoy safe passage across the US and Europe. “The court has declared him a criminal, yet no



one dares act on it,” Fazlur Rehman said.

“Israel is not just a disease in the Arab world — it is a cancer in the entire Islamic world,” Maulana said. “God willing, Israel will be forced to lick its own blood.” He accused Israel of relentlessly bombing Gaza for the past year and a half, claiming more than 60,000 people had been martyred. “Which UN resolution allows for the mass killing of civilians like this?” he asked, accusing the United Nations of acting as a “handmaiden of the United States” and only taking decisions under Washington’s influence.

The JUI-F chief questioned the global silence over what he described as the massacre of humanity and a full-scale genocide. “If Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait warranted an all-out military response from the West and ended in his hanging, why is Netanyahu treated differently?” Fazlur Rehman warned that what is happening in Iran today could happen to Saudi Arabia or Pakistan tomorrow.

POL prices hiked as notification issued

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has announced yet another increase in the prices of petroleum products, dealing a fresh blow to already burdened consumers amid rising inflation. In a late-night move, the Ministry of Finance issued a notification confirming the revised prices.

According to the update, petrol will now cost Rs4.80 more per liter, while high-speed diesel has been increased by Rs7.95 per liter. The price hike is set to take effect from midnight tonight. The announcement comes at a time when the cost of living continues to surge across Pakistan, and transporters, traders and the public alike are bracing for a ripple effect on the prices of essential goods and services.

Trump vows to broker peace between Iran, Israel ‘soon’

“Just as I brokered peace between India and Pakistan, I will bring peace between Iran and Israel very soon,” Trump told reporters

News Desk

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has announced his intention to mediate peace between Iran and Israel, even as missiles fly and tensions deepen across the Middle East. Speaking from Washington, Trump struck a characteristically confident tone, drawing parallels between his ambition in the region and what he described as his earlier success in defusing conflict between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan.

“Just as I brokered peace between India and Pakistan, I will bring peace between Iran and Israel very soon,” Trump told reporters, appearing unfazed by the complexity of the current crisis. He spoke with characteristic flourish, recalling a moment from his presidency when, according to him, swift personal diplomacy halted military escalation in South Asia. “I spoke to two great leaders who could make swift decisions—and everything stopped,” he said, without offering specific details.

Trump’s comments come as Iran and Israel engage in one of the most dangerous confrontations in recent memory, with open hostilities threatening to spill over into neighboring countries. While neither Tehran nor Tel Aviv has responded officially to Trump’s offer, his remarks have nonetheless added another layer to a fast-evolving diplomatic landscape—one where every word, promise, or provocation is weighed carefully.

With tensions mounting across the Middle East, Trump sought to bolster his credentials by reminding the public of past foreign policy maneuvers he believes were underappreciated. Among them, he cited the deal between Serbia and Kosovo that was signed during his first term, and a quieter role in reducing friction between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Nile dam dispute—although in both cases, ana-



lysts remain divided over the long-term impact of his involvement.

Still, for Trump, the narrative is clear. He sees himself not just as a deal-maker but as a peace-maker overlooked by history.

“There will soon be peace between Iran and Israel. I do a lot, but I never get credit for it,” he said, offering no timeline but implying that behind-the-scenes efforts were already underway.

Whether his intervention leads to meaningful dialogue or is viewed as political theatre remains to be seen. For now, his words ripple through the headlines, offering a familiar voice amid the chaos—one that still believes diplomacy can be a matter of bold promises and swift phone calls.

Iran points to Mossad after deadly blasts in Tehran

News Desk

TEHRAN: A wave of car bomb explosions shook Tehran on Saturday, with Iranian media reporting at least five separate blasts across the capital. The attacks, believed to involve explosives planted in vehicles, triggered chaos and alarm in the city as emergency services rushed to the scenes.

Iranian authorities have pointed the finger squarely at Israel’s intelligence agency, Mossad, accusing it of orchestrating the coordinated attacks. Officials say the bombings are part of a broader pattern of covert operations aimed at destabilizing the country amid soaring regional tensions. In swift retaliation, Iranian state media reported that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had launched a barrage of 50 missiles at Israel.

The attack marks one of the most direct military responses from Iran in recent years. According to Lebanese media outlets, the missile strikes included an attempt to hit the residence of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Caesarea. While Israeli officials have not confirmed the damage, the report has intensified fears of further escalation.

Iran says IRGC intelligence chief killed in Israeli strike

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iranian state media has confirmed the deaths of Mohammad Kazemi, the head of intelligence for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and his deputy, following an Israeli attack on Tehran. The targeted strike marks a significant escalation in the ongoing shadow war between the two regional powers.

Earlier, Israeli PM Netanyahu had announced the killing of the two senior IRGC figures, claiming it as a decisive blow against what he described as threats to Israel’s existence. “We do what is necessary and will continue to do so,” Netanyahu said, brushing aside what he called “false reports” of negotiations.

The Israeli leader went on to emphasize that his government remains committed to dismantling what he sees as existential threats emanating from Tehran.

There are two dangers that must be removed — Iran’s nuclear ambitions and its ballistic missile capability,” he stated.

Iran warns of decisive retaliation if Israeli strikes persist

“The Iranian armed forces have so far delivered a firm and entirely justified response to the aggression,” declared President Pezeshkian

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has issued his most forceful warning yet, declaring that if Israeli airstrikes persist, Iran’s response will not only continue but will escalate in both severity and scale. His remarks, delivered to domestic media on Monday, came as a brutal wave of cross-border attacks pushed the Iran-Israel confrontation closer to the brink of a full-scale regional war.

“The Iranian armed forces have so far given a strong and entirely appropriate response to the aggression,” Pezeshkian said. “But if these attacks persist, our reaction will be far more resolute.” His words struck a grim note of resolve, praising the military’s performance while making it unmistakably clear that Tehran is preparing for a longer, bloodier fight if provoked further.

The statement follows days of intense aerial warfare that have shaken both nations. According to Iranian reports, missile strikes launched by Iran have ignited fires in the southern



parts of the occupied Golan Heights. Iranian state media has confirmed that 128 people were killed in Israeli strikes on Friday and Saturday—figures that have not been independently verified but nonetheless have fueled national outrage.

As the attacks continued, Tehran moved swiftly to prepare for further bombardment. In a chilling sign of what authorities expect may come, mosques, sports gyms, and stadiums across the capital have been repurposed into emergency shelters. Residents of northern Tehran, already on edge, are now living under the hum of military aircraft overhead and the distant thud of detonations.

Tensions have been further stoked by the arrest of two individuals in Tehran ac-

cused of acting as Israeli agents, allegedly involved in sabotage activities. The news, reported by Iranian intelligence sources, adds another layer of intrigue and suspicion to a conflict already fueled by years of mistrust and shadow warfare.

Israel, for its part, has shown no signs of backing down. Its Home Front Command has instructed citizens to remain close to shelters, with officials warning that Iran could launch additional strikes at any moment. Fighter jets continue to fly missions deep into Iranian airspace, and missile impacts have been reported on Iranian soil. A blunt statement from Israel’s military declared: “Tehran is burning. Hezbollah has only seen the trailer — the full response is yet to come.”

Iran’s banned leftist Tudeh Party rejects Netanyahu’s call

News Desk

TEHRAN: The Tudeh Party of Iran, a banned leftist political group with historical roots in the country’s revolutionary movements, has strongly rejected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s recent appeal to the Iranian public to rise up against their government, accusing Israel of violating Iran’s sovereignty.

In a rare statement from the outlawed party, Tudeh warned that Iran’s national interests are under serious threat following the latest military escalation with Israel.

The party condemned Netanyahu’s attempt to sway Iranian public opinion, calling it a “trap” and urging citizens to remain united in the face of what it described as blatant violations of international law.

“The military aggression by Israel is a direct at-



tack on Iran’s sovereignty and against the rights, desires, and interests of the Iranian people,” the statement read. Tudeh, which has remained largely underground since it was banned in the 1980s, stressed that Israel’s actions pose a danger not only to Iran but to regional stability. The party urged all progressive and freedom-loving Iranians to stand together against the expansion of military conflict.

It added, “At a time when Iran is under foreign attack, unity against external aggression is imperative. Efforts must be made to prevent the spread of this war.”

Once a prominent force during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the Tudeh Party was sidelined and outlawed during political purges in the early years of the Islamic Republic. Despite its illegality, it occasionally releases statements on national issues through sympathetic channels.

Iran signals restraint but warns of wider war if provoked

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iran’s foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, has said Tehran does not seek to broaden its escalating conflict with Israel into a wider regional war—unless, he warned, such an expansion is “imposed” on the Islamic Republic.

Addressing a hall of foreign diplomats in Tehran on Monday, Araghchi sought to convey a measure of calm amid growing global anxiety, insisting that Iran’s recent missile retaliation was a legitimate act of self-defence in the face of Israeli aggression. “We do not seek to widen this conflict beyond its current scope unless it is imposed on



us,” he said. “Our response is a legitimate and firm act of defence.”

His remarks came just hours after a fresh volley of Iranian missiles targeted Israeli cities in response to what Tehran says was a pre-emptive Israeli airstrike on a sensitive site inside Iran. As the

missile trails still linger in the skies above the Middle East, both sides remain locked in a cycle of provocation and retribution, with no clear off ramp in sight.

Araghchi told the assembled ambassadors that Iran had been engaged in diplomatic talks over its nuclear program

and was not seeking confrontation.

“When the aggression stops, our response will stop too,” he said, casting Iran not as an aggressor but as a state forced into action by the decisions of others.

The message, delivered in diplomatic tones but with unmistakable firmness, seemed aimed at reassuring the international community that Tehran is not intent on lighting a wider fire. Israel, for its part, has dismissed the Iranian framing, accusing Tehran of fueling instability through its military operations and its support for armed non-state actors across the region.

Pakistan signals digital shift in talks with Bitcoin pioneer

“Pakistan aspires to set standards in inclusive growth and economic modernization through digital assets,” Finance Minister Aurangzeb said

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's top economic leadership signalled a bold turn towards digital finance over the week-end, as Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a landmark meeting with Bitcoin evangelist and MicroStrategy Executive Chairman, Michael Saylor.

The virtual gathering, also attended by Minister of State for Crypto and Blockchain, Bilal Bin Saqib, is being hailed as a pivotal moment in the country's journey toward embracing blockchain technology and digital asset innovation.

The meeting focused on an ambitious agenda — positioning Bitcoin not just as a speculative asset, but as a potential pillar of Pakistan's



financial future.

Discussions ranged from using Bitcoin as a sovereign reserve asset to building a more autonomous, resilient digital economy rooted in decentralized finance.

The talks come at a time when Pakistan is seeking new avenues for economic modernization and financial sovereignty, particularly as it navigates complex geopoliti-

cal realities and structural economic challenges.

“Pakistan aspires to set standards in inclusive growth and economic modernization through digital assets,” Finance Minister Aurangzeb said during the dialogue, echoing the country's intent to take a leadership role in the Global South's crypto evolution.

Michael Saylor, who has become one of the

most prominent voices in the crypto world, praised Pakistan's vision, describing the country as “rich in talent and ambition.”

Saylor's firm MicroStrategy holds the largest corporate Bitcoin reserve globally — more than 582,000 coins with a market value exceeding \$62 billion — a feat that has transformed the company from a niche software provider into a global financial disruptor.

“Bitcoin is the most powerful financial asset for long-term national strength,” Saylor told officials, offering insights from his experience steering MicroStrategy through its radical strategic pivot.

For Minister Bilal Bin Saqib, the meeting carried more than just symbolic

weight.

“Michael Saylor helped us understand how Bitcoin can serve as a sovereign asset,” he said. “If one individual can build a \$100 billion enterprise through strategic investment, there's no reason Pakistanis can't do the same on a national scale.”

The Ministry of Finance later described the discussion as a “critical milestone” in the country's digital finance roadmap. Officials noted that the dialogue is the first of its kind, placing Pakistan in active conversation with global crypto leaders at a time when other developing nations are cautiously watching — or in some cases, aggressively legislating against — decentralized financial instruments.

METRO MATTERS

Empress Market parking plan finalized for 400 vehicles

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Karachi's historic Empress Market is set to undergo a transformation that aims to blend heritage preservation with much-needed urban functionality, as Mayor Mur-taza Wahab on Sunday announced a feasibility plan to accommodate parking for 400 vehicles in the vicinity — a move set to ease long-standing congestion woes in one of the city's busiest quarters.

Speaking at the inauguration of the newly renovated meat section of Empress Market, Wahab framed the plan as part of a larger effort to revitalize Karachi's historical identity while tackling modern infrastructural demands. “We promised to solve Karachi's problems, and with the support of its people, we've been able to achieve a lot,” he said. “Our goal is to protect that legacy while making it functional for future generations.”

For decades, Empress Market has symbolized both the colonial legacy and the chaotic vibrancy of Karachi's Saddar district. While its British-era architecture remains iconic, the surrounding area has struggled under the weight of disorganized traffic, poor upkeep, and the slow creep of encroachments. Wahab said the parking proposal was crafted not just to serve immediate logistical needs, but to ensure the market remains accessible without damaging its character.

The mayor also laid out a broader vision, announcing plans to restore six more historical markets across the city within the next year. “Empress Market is not just a place of business — it is a living monument of our collective memory,” he said. “Our goal is to protect that legacy while making it functional for future generations.”

In a pointed rebuke of past administrations, Wahab accused previous officials of succumbing to pressure from what he described as entrenched mafias. “We are confronting them head-on — and every time we act, they hide behind court stays and accusations,” he said, vowing to press forward with anti-encroachment and civic improvement drives regardless of resistance.

PDP leader condemns Israel's ‘flagrant violation’ of law

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Chairman of the Pasban Democratic Party (PDP), Altaf Shakoor, has denounced the recent Israeli attack on Iran, describing it as a direct assault on the Muslim Ummah and calling for unity among Muslim nations in response. In a strongly worded statement issued on Sunday, Shakoor condemned what he called the “worst aggression” and a “flagrant violation of international law” by Israel.

Shakoor said the United States' unwavering support for Israel reflected a longstanding bias against Muslims, warning that tolerating such actions could set a dangerous precedent, emboldening states to strike their adversaries under similar pretexts. “The Pakistani nation stands firmly with our brothers and sisters in Palestine and Iran,” he said. “The pain of the Palestinian and Iranian Muslims is felt across the Ummah.”

Shakoor called on the international community to ensure immediate humanitarian assistance reaches the people of Gaza and urged countries maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel to sever those ties as a gesture of solidarity with Muslim nations. “Iran is being punished simply for being a Muslim country,” he claimed. He also criticized internal disunity among Muslim countries, warning of “traitors in our own ranks” and urging Muslims to confront these elements.

Stressing the importance of technological advancement and education, he said that without mastering modern science, economics and finance, Muslim nations would continue to fall behind. He proposed establishing at least one university in every town to develop expertise in science, technology, economics, finance and banking. “We must eradicate corruption and illiteracy,” he added.

Karachi experiences light rain with thunder in parts of city

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Several areas of Karachi, including Surjani Town, Baldia Town, and Orangi Town, received light rainfall accompanied by thunder and dust-laden winds on Sunday, offering brief respite from the city's humid conditions.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), drizzle was observed in the early hours amid partly cloudy skies, with thunder heard across some localities. While the showers were light, they temporarily cooled down the weather in areas that had been experiencing intense humidity throughout the day.

The Met Office had earlier forecast warm and humid conditions for Karachi, with a possibility of partly cloudy skies over the next 24 hours. The department also warned of potential rainfall in the city on Monday and Tuesday, suggesting that some areas could witness thunderstorms and gusty winds.

Rainfall is expected to remain light to moderate in intensity, but authorities have advised residents to stay cautious, especially in low-lying areas where water accumulation is possible even after short spells.

Despite the brief rain, Karachi continues to face the broader challenges of an unreliable drainage system and extreme weather patterns due to climate change, issues that become particularly pronounced during the monsoon season.

Light rain, thunder roll over Karachi

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Parts of Karachi received light rain accompanied by thunder and dust-laden winds on Sunday, offering a brief but welcome break from the city's humid conditions.

Residents in Surjani Town reported light drizzle with thunder during the afternoon, while similar weather was recorded in Baldia Town, Orangi Town, and surrounding areas. The change in weather brought temporary relief from the stifling heat, though many areas remained warm and sticky.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the city's skies are expected to remain partly cloudy over the next 24 hours, with more rain likely in the coming days. Monday could bring isolated showers, possibly with thunderstorms and gusty winds.

Forecasters say the rainfall will range from light to moderate intensity. While the showers may be scattered, they could bring much-needed moisture to the parched urban landscape — and a bit of a breather for Karachiites weary of the June heat.

With more showers expected early in the week, authorities have advised citizens to remain cautious, particularly in areas prone to waterlogging.

Another escaped inmate returns to Malir Jail

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Another prisoner who escaped from Karachi's Malir Jail during the recent earthquake has voluntarily returned, jail authorities confirmed on Sunday.

The inmate, identified as Sadiq, reportedly told officials that he fled in panic during the tremors as others around him were running. “Everyone was fleeing in fear when the quake hit — I just ran with them,” he said, according to prison sources.

On 3 June, a moderate earthquake caused widespread panic inside the jail, resulting in the escape of 225 prisoners. Since then, a major recovery operation has been underway.

Authorities say 171 of the escaped inmates have been apprehended so far, while efforts to locate the remaining 54 continue. Tragically, one of the escapees was killed in a shootout, and another reportedly took his own life. Officials have not ruled out further voluntary returns as the crackdown and manhunt intensify.

SEPCO records stolen from 15 computers during Eid

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: In what is being described as one of the most serious internal scandals in recent memory, critical records were stolen from 15 computers at the Sukkur Electric Power Company's (SEPCO) central IT department during the Eid holidays. The breach occurred shortly after the appointment of a new head of the computer department, who had begun reviewing and correcting official records.

According to SEPCO insiders, the stolen data included sensitive documents from the finance department related to bogus payments, as well as contract records from the Project Management Unit (PMU), Civil Works Department, PD Construction Larkana, GSC and the Matriculation Management Department. These records reportedly involve transactions worth billions of rupees.

In a suspicious move two months before the breach, all DCTV surveillance cameras in the computer office were removed and posted security guards were recalled to SEPCO headquarters — effectively leaving the department exposed. Sources within the company claim this was a calculated step to enable the theft without leaving behind evidence.

A case has been registered with local police and an investigation is under way. However, allegations are mounting that the breach was an inside job, aimed at concealing financial irregularities and deep-rooted corruption within the company. “No outsider has anything to do with this theft. The theft was orchestrated from within to cover up their own corruption,” said one SEPCO official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Five killed in Pune bridge collapse, dozens swept away

News Desk

PUNE, INDIA: At least five people have lost their lives following the sudden collapse of a bridge over a river in Pune, one of India's bustling cities, raising fears that the death toll could rise as rescue teams continue to search for dozens still missing. The tragedy unfolded when the bridge, overwhelmed by the weight of a large crowd, gave way amid rising water levels that had drawn hundreds of onlookers.

According to local reports, between 100 and 120 people were on the bridge at the time, many drawn to the site to witness the swollen river in the aftermath of heavy rains. Witnesses describe scenes of panic as the structure suddenly crumbled, sending terrified individuals plunging into the fast-moving waters below. Authorities fear that around 15 to 20 people may have been



swept away by the powerful current, while as many as 20 to 25 remain trapped beneath the rubble.

Emergency response teams have been working tirelessly since the collapse, braving hazardous conditions to pull survivors from the water and debris. Rescue workers have cordoned off the area and deployed heavy machinery to aid in the painstaking effort to clear the wreckage, with the hope of reaching those still trapped. Local hospitals have reported receiving

dozens of injured victims, some in critical condition.

This incident has once again cast a spotlight on the vulnerability of ageing infrastructure in many parts of India, especially in regions prone to seasonal flooding. Experts and officials alike have expressed concern that bridges and other critical structures face immense strain from both natural forces and heavy foot traffic, highlighting the urgent need for maintenance and investment in safer public infrastructure.



KARACHI: Consul General of United Arab Emirates in Karachi Bakheet Atiq Al-Remeithi visiting a stall at an exhibition showcasing Pakistan's craftsmanship, hosted by the Pakistan Gems and Jewellery Development Company, here on Sunday.—Photo by Muhammad Nouman

Acceleration program finale honors women entrepreneurs

By Zahid Karani

KARACHI: A gathering of entrepreneurs, tech professionals, business leaders and motivational speakers came together at Florentine Café in DHA Karachi to celebrate the culmination of the Womenpreneur Pakistan Acceleration Program, held under the banner SHE_ROSE_ANYWAY_HERSTORY.



The event marked 14 years of the organization's mission to empower Pakistani women and men through digital and financial literacy. Irum Fawad, President of Womenpreneur Pakistan, opened the event by reflecting on the organization's journey of over a decade. “For 14 years, we have worked to empower fellow entrepreneurs, especially women, through skill-building, education and community development,” she said.

“We have partnered with both the Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments to advance our mission, and we continue to train men and women across Pakistan to become confident and financially independent.” Vice President of Womenpreneur Organization

(WPO), Shireen Khan, also addressed the gathering, highlighting the strategic direction of the group.

Faraz Hussain Buriro, AI engineer and Director of WE@Tech (WPO), gave an insightful talk on the potential of artificial intelligence in entrepreneurship. He announced that certified AI courses would soon be available through the organization to further equip Pak-



istani entrepreneurs with modern tools for success.

The event attracted a diverse mix of attendees, including leaders from the corporate sector, business owners, motivational speakers and a strong contingent of mompreneurs — women who balance motherhood with business leadership. Their stories formed the heart of HERSTORY, showcasing real-world examples of resilience, innovation and transformation.

Irum emphasized the power of honoring mompreneurs. “When a woman becomes strong, the whole home becomes strong. Recognizing mothers who have built businesses from scratch honors not only their entrepreneurial spirit but also their role as nurturers and community builders.”

Modi under fire for abstaining from Gaza resolution vote

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is facing sharp criticism from opposition parties after India abstained from voting on a United Nations resolution calling for humanitarian aid access in Gaza.

Senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi slammed the Modi government's decision, calling it “shameful” given the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe. “After the killing of 60,000 Palestinians, including children and women, not voting in favor of humanitarian aid is a moral failure,” she said in a statement.

Priyanka accused the Modi administration of betraying India's long-standing anti-colonial and pro-justice

foreign policy stance.

“Benjamin Netanyahu is attempting to erase an entire nation, and the Modi government appears to be celebrating this,” she added.

The Congress leader also criticized India's response to Israel's attacks on Iran and the assassination of its military leadership, saying that cheering such aggression runs counter to India's foundational values and international standing.

Her remarks highlight growing discomfort within Indian civil society and opposition over the Modi government's increasingly overt alignment with Israel, even as global outrage intensifies over civilian deaths and the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Al- Syed Makki Madni
Travels & Tours Pvt Ltd.

السید مکمل مدنی
تورز اور ٹریولز

20 دن
مکمل عمرہ پیک

Umrah Package

20 اسپیٹل مجسمہ / صفحہ عظیمی گروپ پیج

198500

مفت زیارت

پیدل کارا تہ ویلنگ ڈسٹنس

زیارت مکہ مکرمہ

زیارت بدر

زیارت طائف

زیارت مدینہ منورہ

گروپ روٹری: 30 مخرم، 5 مخرم، 10 مخرم

گروپ روٹری: 30 مخرم، 5 مخرم، 10 مخرم

Contact: Abdul Ghaflar Gaba

Cell No. 0335-1305662

UAN 111 786 800

alsyedgroupasg

alsyedgroup

alsyedgroups.com

Shop No.1, Plot # C1-56, Sector II-E, Chowringhi No. 5, Orangi Town, Karachi, Pakistan.

EDITOR: Ehtasham Anwar
Vol. No. 2
Issue. No. 178
Email: news@metro-morning.com
Zilhaj 19, 1446 A.H.



All-consuming conflict

The Middle East stands perilously close to a catastrophe that could engulf not only the region but the entire world in an unprecedented wave of violence and instability. The latest surge of conflict, marked by Israel's brazen airstrike on Iran, has shattered fragile hopes for peace and reignited fears of a devastating war whose consequences could be felt far beyond the deserts and cities of the Middle East. This crisis did not emerge overnight but has been a slow, simmering tinderbox fueled by decades of mistrust, oppression, and geopolitical brinkmanship. For nearly two years, Israel's Zionist government has carried out a campaign of brutal repression in Gaza that many international observers have rightly described as state terrorism. The human toll in Gaza has been devastating: countless lives lost, entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble, and a population living under siege and fear. This prolonged violence has created a cycle of retaliation and vengeance, with no clear end in sight.

The recent airstrike on Iran, however, represents a dangerous new chapter — a strike that was not only reckless but flagrantly illegal under international law, striking at the heart of diplomatic efforts aimed at curbing nuclear proliferation. Just days before nuclear talks brokered by the United States were scheduled to begin, Israel's assault tore apart the fragile thread of diplomacy. The timing was not accidental. The attack killed the chief architect of the potential ceasefire and obliterated any chance of the negotiations proceeding in good faith. It was a calculated act designed to provoke and to derail, sending a clear message that Israel was prepared to escalate the conflict rather than pursue peace. The consequences were swift and brutal. Iran, asserting its sovereign right to self-defence, launched a massive retaliatory strike. Over 200 missiles were fired at Israel, targeting critical infrastructure, including nuclear research facilities.

The bombardment reached major population centers like Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, inflicting casualties and widespread destruction. Reports from Tehran claim that the retaliation succeeded in downing two Israeli aircraft and capturing an Israeli pilot, further escalating tensions. The operation, named "Wada Sadiq III," marks an alarming intensification in a conflict that was already dangerously unstable. On the Israeli side, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has responded with stark warnings, promising a protracted campaign that could last weeks. His stated goal is to dismantle Iran's military capabilities completely — an ambition that hints at a prolonged and devastating war. This escalation comes at a time when the global community is already grappling with multiple crises, from climate change to economic instability, and yet the threat of a major Middle Eastern war threatens to overshadow and worsen these challenges.

What makes this situation particularly alarming is the apparent acquiescence, if not encouragement, from the United States under President Donald Trump. His administration's tacit support for Israeli aggression sends a dangerous signal that military action and confrontation are preferred over dialogue and diplomacy. In contrast, voices of reason and restraint have emerged, most notably from American Senator Bernie Sanders. His condemnation of Israel's strike as illegal and reckless stands out amid the cacophony of belligerence. Sanders' warning against dragging the United States into another costly war is a timely reminder of the human and political toll such conflicts take. He rightly pointed out that Netanyahu's attack sabotaged critical negotiations and endangered thousands of civilian lives on both sides. His call for de-escalation and renewed diplomatic efforts must not be ignored.

The international response has been mixed but telling. At an emergency United Nations Security Council meeting convened to address the crisis, China and Russia were outspoken in their condemnation of Israel's actions, viewing them as violations of international law and dangerous provocations. Pakistan also voiced support for Iran's right to defend itself. Yet the American envoy conspicuously refrained from condemning Israeli aggression, openly admitting prior knowledge of the attack and reaffirming unconditional support for Israel's defence. Such a stance risks further polarizing the already fragile international order and could hasten the slide towards a broader and more destructive conflict. The stakes could not be higher. The world has witnessed the devastating aftermath of wars born out of misunderstanding, aggression, and power struggles. Another conflagration in the Middle East could unravel decades of fragile progress and destabilize an already volatile region.

The humanitarian cost would be staggering, with millions caught in the crossfire, forced to flee their homes or suffer unimaginable hardships. Economically, the impact would ripple across global markets, exacerbating poverty and inequality worldwide. It is incumbent upon the 57 Muslim-majority nations and the wider international community to urgently step forward. Effective, coordinated action is needed to mediate peace, enforce ceasefires, and de-escalate tensions before they spiral beyond control. The key challenge lies in persuading the Trump administration—and indeed all global powers—to abandon aggressive posturing in favor of genuine diplomacy. The world cannot afford to be held hostage by narrow political interests that jeopardize the future of millions. History has repeatedly shown us the cost of inaction in the face of rising aggression. The lessons of the past must guide current leaders towards restraint, dialogue, and a collective commitment to peace.

Failure to seize this moment risks plunging humanity into one of its darkest chapters—an era marked by devastating wars, widespread suffering, and the erosion of international norms that protect sovereign nations and civilians alike. In these fraught times, hope lies with those who advocate for peace, justice, and coexistence. The voices calling for dialogue and mutual understanding must be amplified against the din of war drums. The path forward is fraught with difficulty, but it is not impossible. What is required now is political courage, genuine leadership, and a willingness by all parties to put the future of their peoples above narrow interests and ideological divides.

The Middle East's fate is not sealed, but the window to prevent a catastrophic escalation is rapidly closing. The international community must act decisively, demanding an end to aggression and a return to negotiations. Only then can the region begin the slow, arduous process of healing and rebuilding. Without such urgent intervention, the world edges ever closer to a conflagration that no one can afford—and no one should wish for.

Metro Morning and its policy not necessarily consensus with any writer's thoughts

Reko Diq project poised for economic growth

By S.M. Inam



The recent revelation that the Reko Diq project is set to generate nearly two billion dollars in gross value added annually—amounting to almost one percent of Pakistan's GDP—is a beacon of hope for a nation eager to unlock its vast economic potential. This ambitious mining venture, poised to tap into some of the world's richest copper and gold reserves, represents far more than just the extraction of precious minerals. It carries with it the promise of economic revitalization, social uplift, and environmental stewardship, all of which are desperately needed in Balochistan, a province that has for decades borne the weight of neglect and underdevelopment. At the heart of this project lies a partnership that blends foreign expertise with local involvement. Canada's Barrick Gold Corporation commands a 50 percent stake, working alongside three Pakistani companies that collectively hold 25 percent.

This joint venture exemplifies a collaborative spirit that could redefine how large-scale natural resource projects operate in Pakistan—where foreign investment aligns with local aspirations and participation. It is a formula that, if managed well, has the potential to rewrite the development narrative of a region too often marginalized in national discourse. Government projections suggest that Reko Diq will produce between 200,000

and 250,000 tons of copper annually during the mine's operational period, with gold reserves adding considerable value to the economic equation. Beyond the sheer scale of mineral wealth extraction, the project's capacity to create approximately 10,000 jobs is perhaps its most significant promise. For Balochistan's population—hardworking and resilient despite decades of socio-economic challenges—this is more than employment; it is a chance for dignity, stability, and a pathway out of poverty.

Already, signs of responsible investment in local infrastructure are emerging. An initial \$2.5 million has been earmarked for education, healthcare, clean water, and food security programs—areas that have historically suffered from chronic underfunding in the province. Additionally, the allocation of one percent of construction costs and 0.4 percent of annual revenues to community development projects signals a commitment to ensuring that the benefits of mining reach beyond corporate balance sheets to the people whose lives intersect daily with the land being mined. This emphasis on sustainable and inclusive growth is crucial. It reflects a shift from the extractive industries' often criticized reputation as engines of environmental degradation and social displacement. Reko Diq's commitment to exploring additional mineral resources and encouraging broader local investment indicates an understanding that mining must be a driver of comprehensive regional development, not just a source of short-term profits.

Such a holistic approach is especially necessary in Balochistan, where resource

wealth has too often translated into conflict, environmental harm, and economic disparity rather than shared prosperity. Yet the shadow of history looms large. For seventy-seven years since Pakistan's independence, the mineral riches of Balochistan have remained tantalizingly out of reach for the people who live there. Despite being the country's largest province by landmass and one of the richest in resources, Balochistan has been sidelined—its potential overlooked by federal and provincial governments alike. This neglect has bred frustration, deepened economic inequalities, and in some cases, fueled unrest. The challenge now is not merely to extract minerals but to ensure that the fruits of Reko Diq translate into tangible, lasting improvements for the local population. The rhetoric of mineral wealth must give way to meaningful policy and action. That means investing in infrastructure that connects communities, improving education and healthcare services, and fostering economic opportunities that extend beyond mining.

It also requires transparent governance and accountable management of revenues to prevent the kind of corruption and mismanagement that have too often stymied development efforts in the past. Reko Diq presents a critical opportunity—a moment when history could be rewritten. The project's scale and potential impact mean it could serve as a catalyst for transformation not just in Balochistan but for Pakistan as a whole. If handled with foresight and a genuine commitment to equity, it could help reduce regional disparities and contribute sig-

nificantly to national economic growth. The benefits of resource wealth, long concentrated in the hands of a few, could finally be shared more broadly. Yet this future is not guaranteed. It requires sustained political will, careful environmental management, and meaningful engagement with the communities most affected by mining operations. The voices of local people must be heard and respected in shaping how the project unfolds.

Development cannot be imposed from above; it must be a collaborative effort that acknowledges the region's unique social and cultural fabric. As Pakistan charts its course forward, the story of Reko Diq must be more than a tale of mineral extraction. It must become a narrative of hope, resilience, and inclusive progress. The country's leaders have a responsibility to ensure that the wealth beneath Balochistan's soil becomes a foundation for social justice and economic opportunity, not another chapter of missed potential. For the people of Balochistan, the stakes are profound. They deserve more than promises; they deserve results. The nation's future, and the integrity of its social fabric, depend on transforming this opportunity into a force for genuine, sustainable change. In doing so, Pakistan can demonstrate that its natural wealth is not a curse but a blessing—one that, if harnessed wisely, can power the dreams of generations to come.

The writer is a former government officer and a senior analyst on national and international affairs, can be reached at inam@metro-morning.com

Echoes of Pahlavi's fall still shape Iran

By Uzma Ehtasham



The era of Shah Reza Pahlavi's rule in Iran might feel like a distant chapter in history, yet its echoes remain vivid and influential even today. The Iranian Revolution of 1979, which dramatically reshaped the nation's political and social landscape, was ignited by the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini from his refuge in France. It was not merely a sudden upheaval but the eruption of decades-long frustrations against an autocratic regime known for its ruthless suppression. Under the Shah's rule, the state resorted to extreme violence, deploying tanks and artillery against unarmed civilians. This brutal crackdown, far from quelling dissent, only fanned the flames of rebellion and ignited a movement so powerful it dismantled a monarchy that had endured for centuries, forcing the Shah to flee into exile.

What followed was a transformation that took the world by surprise. Initially, Western powers such as the United States and European nations had viewed the Shah's regime as a reliable ally—an anchor of stability and a bulwark against Soviet influence during the Cold War. They had hoped that Iran would remain a pliable partner under the monarchy. But the revolution's aftermath defied these expectations in a way that reshaped geopolitical dynamics for decades. The revolution did not give way to a more democratic or Western-friendly government.

Instead, it birthed a theocratic state under the firm control of clerics, with Ayatollah Khomeini emerging as the supreme leader. Central to this new order was the creation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), a militia of fervent young volunteers who operated alongside, and often superseded, the official military. This force quickly became the backbone of the new regime's power, enforcing ideological conformity and stamping out dissent with an iron fist. Many of the Shah's former generals were executed or sidelined, symbolizing the ruthless consolidation of power by a regime intent on redefining Iranian identity and governance through strict religious principles. The Western world, which had once supported the Shah, found itself confronted with a new and hostile reality. The United States and Europe scrambled to undermine this theocratic regime, employing covert operations and diplomatic pressure, all of which failed to shake the revolution's foundations.

The iconic moment when the American embassy in Tehran was seized and diplomats taken hostage marked a profound rupture in relations. To Khomeini and his followers, the US was no longer an ally but the "Great Satan," the principal enemy of Iran's sovereignty and Islamic values. This designation cemented a bitter animosity that has since characterized Iran's relations with the West, especially the United States and Israel, feeding into a cycle of conflict, sanctions, and mistrust. While the revolution was initially driven by youthful zeal and revolutionary fervor, the passage of time has seen

those same young volunteers of the IRGC mature into some of the most powerful and influential figures within Iranian society. The cultural transformation that swept through Iran was no less remarkable.

Once a nation where many were drawn to liberal, Western lifestyles and ideals, Iran experienced a profound societal shift. Women were mandated to wear the hijab widely, and men took on beards as an outward sign of religious devotion—changes that represented a profound realignment of social norms and individual identities. This cultural overhaul was, in many ways, unprecedented, reshaping the fabric of Iranian life in ways that some have called a modern miracle. However, the initial enthusiasm with which many accepted religious edicts gradually gave way to unease and resistance. Over time, the government's increasing coercion and the rise of clerical extremism began to alienate many citizens who felt their personal freedoms were being infringed upon. This growing tension has manifested in periodic public dissent and political shifts. The election of more moderate leaders in recent years reflects a broader popular desire for a more balanced governance—one that acknowledges religious traditions but also respects individual liberties and pragmatic engagement with the wider world. The current presidency of Masoud Pezeshkian, a figure seen as moderate and reformist, backed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, offers a fragile but hopeful glimmer. This cautious tilt towards moderation could, if sustained, help steer Iranian society away from the extrem-

ism that has long dogged its politics. There is genuine optimism among many Iranians and international observers alike that a future Iran guided by moderate Islamic governance could eventually overcome the hardships wrought by decades of conflict, economic sanctions, and diplomatic isolation imposed largely by the US and Israel.

At its core, this evolving dynamic underscores a fundamental truth: Islam, in its truest form, cannot and should not tolerate extremism. The challenge facing Iran today is to reconcile its rich religious heritage with the demands of a modern, pluralistic society. The nation's future will depend on its ability to nurture moderation, tolerance, and inclusivity within its governance and culture—principles that resonate with the aspirations of the majority of its people. In reflecting on the journey from the autocratic days of the Shah to the theocratic regime of Khomeini and beyond, it is clear that Iran's history is one of tumultuous change, resilience, and complex identity. The Iranian Revolution was not just a political event; it was a profound societal transformation whose consequences continue to ripple across the Middle East and the world. As Iran cautiously navigates its future, the hope remains that it will find a path toward stability, justice, and peace—one that honors its past without being shackled by it.

The writer is a public health professional, journalist, and possesses expertise in health communication, having keen interest in national and international affairs, can be reached at uzma@metro-morning.com

Game theory

By Atiq Raja



In a world brimming with choices, uncertainties, and relentless competition, the decisions made by individuals, corporations, and nations hold profound consequences—often shaping the lives of millions. How do these actors navigate such complexity? The answer lies in a captivating and increasingly vital field known as game theory. Though it may evoke images of chess matches or high-stakes boardrooms, game theory is a mathematical framework that unpacks the intricate dance of strategic interactions—where the outcome for one player depends crucially on the choices made by others. Far from being confined to academic circles, game theory quietly informs much of our daily reality. It underpins the strategies of businesses vying for market supremacy, guides the delicate negotiations of diplomats balancing global peace, and even influences how public health policies are crafted during crises.

When two companies contemplate price cuts or two political factions negotiate legislation, game theory's principles are at work behind the scenes, shaping decisions with profound ripple effects. At its essence, game theory studies how rational players make decisions in settings where outcomes are interdependent. It assumes that each participant is logical, aiming to maximize their own advantage while mitigating losses. To illustrate, the classic example of the Prisoner's Dilemma offers a striking insight.

Imagine two suspects arrested and interrogated separately: each must choose whether to betray the other or stay silent. If one betrays and the other stays quiet, the betrayer goes free while the other faces a harsh sentence. If both stay silent, they receive moderate sentences; if both betray, they both suffer severe penalties.

The paradox lies in how rational self-interest leads both to betrayal, resulting in a worse outcome for all—a lesson resonating far beyond prisons into politics, economics, and social trust. This simple yet profound scenario helps explain why nations continue costly arms races despite the risks, why companies engage in damaging price wars, and why trust is a fragile commodity in competitive arenas. It reveals that acting solely on short-term individual gain can produce collective losses, underscoring the need for cooperation and strategic foresight. In international relations, game theory's impact is perhaps most visible. The Cold War era exemplified this, with the United States and the Soviet Union locked in a tense standoff governed by the doctrine of mutually assured destruction. Both sides possessed enough nuclear weapons to annihilate each other, which paradoxically preserved peace through deterrence—a grim but effective strategic balance. Today, whether negotiating climate accords or forming regional alliances, governments apply game theory to anticipate rivals' moves, weigh risks, and seek mutually beneficial outcomes amid global uncertainty. Business strategy, too, is

steeped in game-theoretic thinking. When airlines debate fare cuts or retailers plan discounts, they carefully consider how competitors will respond. Auction designs for government asset sales—from radio spectrum to mineral rights—rely on game theory to ensure transparency and optimal revenue. Beyond competition, it helps companies identify when collaboration may yield better results, balancing rivalry with partnership in complex markets.

Public policy, particularly in health crises, has embraced game theory's insights with growing urgency. The COVID-19 pandemic starkly illustrated this when governments faced decisions about allocating scarce vaccines. Models accounting for public behavior, risk profiles, and equity guided strategies to maximize impact. Understanding how individuals respond to incentives, compliance, or misinformation proved crucial for crafting policies that saved lives. The digital age, propelled by artificial intelligence, adds another dimension. Algorithms powered by game theory decide how ads are targeted, how online platforms moderate interactions, and how autonomous vehicles negotiate shared spaces. As machines increasingly mimic human decision-making, game theory provides a vital logic for programming cooperation, competition, and conflict resolution among intelligent agents.

Why should Pakistan, a country grappling with multifaceted developmental challenges, care deeply about game theory? The answer is that this framework offers po-

tent tools to navigate the complex terrain of governance, economy, and social cohesion. In politics, it can illuminate coalition dynamics and electoral tactics. In trade and industry, it guides firms on balancing competition and collaboration to foster growth. In education, integrating strategic thinking nurtures problem-solving and ethical awareness among students, preparing future leaders for a fast-changing world. As Pakistan aspires to revive its economy, enhance governance, and build social harmony, adopting the mindset of game theory—thinking several moves ahead, anticipating others' choices, and valuing cooperation over conflict—becomes not a luxury but a necessity.

It invites citizens, entrepreneurs, and policymakers alike to shift from reactive decision-making to proactive, strategic engagement. Perhaps the most profound takeaway from game theory is a simple yet transformative idea: the best outcomes often emerge not from ruthless competition but from cooperation and trust. In a world too often divided by self-interest and suspicion, learning to understand others' perspectives, predict their actions, and foster mutual respect can turn zero-sum battles into collective wins. For Pakistan, standing at the crossroads of the 21st century, embracing this strategic ethos offers a path not just to play the game better but to change its very rules—crafting a future that is fairer, more inclusive, and brighter for all. The game is on; it is time to play it wisely.

The writer is a rights activist and CEO of AR Trainings and Consultancy, with degrees in Political Science and English Literature, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com

Beyond ten billion trees

By Barrister Dr Mohd Ali Saif

In a pioneering effort to combat climate change, preserve biodiversity and improve livelihoods, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has emerged as a key player in Pakistan's green transformation.

Through an array of ground-breaking initiatives, including the successful completion of the Billion Tree Afforestation Project, significant contributions to the national 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Programme (10BTTP) and several complementary environmental projects, the KP government is spearheading a large-scale ecological revival while simultaneously empowering communities across the province.

Building on the success of the Billion Tree Afforestation Project (BTAP) in KP, the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Project (10BTTP) was launched in 2019 as a national flagship initia-

tive focused on restoring degraded forest ecosystems and enhancing forest cover. The programme has yielded impressive outcomes including reforestation on 68,000 hectares, establishing 6,130 assisted natural regeneration sites, and direct sowing over 7,185 hectares. Soil conservation interventions span 2,728 hectares, and over 152 million free seedlings have been distributed to encourage private planting.

The programme contributes to biodiversity conservation and improved watershed management while simultaneously generating sustainable employment for thousands, including rural women, youth, and daily wage labourers. It also engages schools, civil society and partner organisations to build environmental awareness and promote stewardship. In addition to contributing to climate resilience and improved biodiversity, the 10BTTP supports sustainable livelihoods,

strengthens community-based resource management, and enhances the socio-economic well-being of forest-dependent populations.

The 10BTTP builds upon the impressive legacy of its predecessor, the Billion Tree Afforestation Project (BTAP), whose impacts extended far beyond increasing forest cover. By creating over 13,000 private nurseries and engaging rural communities, particularly women and youth, the BTAP has generated thousands of green jobs. Local incomes have grown, skills have improved, and environmental awareness has deepened.

These public-private partnerships have become a cornerstone of KP's reforestation success, linking ecological restoration with economic opportunity. BTAP successfully restored and replanted trees over 350,000 hectares of degraded forest landscapes, surpassing its Bonn Challenge commitment.

This large-scale afforestation has contributed to carbon sequestration, improved biodiversity, and reinforced riparian embankments in critical catchment areas like the Indus, Kunhar and Swat rivers.

In recognition of these achievements, Inger Andersen, then director-general of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), remarked in 2017: "IUCN congratulates the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on reaching this momentous milestone. The BTAP initiative is a true conservation success story, one that further demonstrates Pakistan's leadership role in the international restoration effort and continued commitment to the Bonn Challenge."

One striking example of environmental transformation is Heroshah in Malakand, where barren hills have been turned into lush forests. In 2015–16, around 16,000 labourers reforested over 800 hectares, improving the area's natural beauty, controlling erosion, reducing flood risks, increasing rainfall and offering economic benefits by reducing dependence on firewood.

Massacre of Palestinians draws parallels to the Holocaust

“The destruction was sudden and complete,” said one resident in central Gaza, their voice trembling with disbelief as they surveyed the shattered remains of what once was home

MM Special Report

GAZA: Even as Israel sharpens its confrontation with Iran, it has continued its deadly campaign in Gaza leading to Gaza ‘Holocaust’, where new airstrikes on Sunday claimed the lives of at least 41 Palestinians, according to health officials in the blockaded enclave. The bombardment, which struck densely populated residential areas, pushed an already devastated population further into despair, with local authorities reporting more than 50 people wounded.

The latest round of attacks came early in the day, catching many still asleep. Residents described being jolted awake by thunderous blasts as missiles slammed into homes and buildings that had already served as makeshift shelters for families fleeing previous assaults.



The Gaza health ministry confirmed that many of the casualties were women and children—some of them killed while huddled together in the hope that numbers might bring safety.

“The destruction was sudden and complete,” said one resident in central Gaza, who asked not to be named. “We didn’t even have time to scream. Just dust and silence—and then, screaming.” While Israel’s military has framed its campaign in Gaza as a strategic effort to

eliminate Hamas infrastructure, the impact on civilians remains catastrophic. The violence in the enclave continues unabated, even as Israeli operations widen to include strikes on Iranian targets in what has now become a multi-front conflict.

But for Palestinians in Gaza, the Iranian dimension feels distant. What matters is survival under a sky that has become synonymous with danger. The humanitarian crisis gripping Gaza has deepened with each passing

day. Infrastructure lies in ruins. Hospitals are overwhelmed. Clean water, electricity, and even basic medical supplies are scarce. And with international ceasefire negotiations stalled, hope is in dangerously short supply. Aid agencies operating in the territory have once again issued urgent appeals, warning that the enclave is on the brink of collapse.

“The needs are overwhelming, and we simply can’t meet them,” said a spokesperson for a major international relief organization. “Without an immediate ceasefire and guaranteed access, this will get worse—much worse.” Yet despite repeated calls from the United Nations and humanitarian groups for a halt to the bombing, the airstrikes continue. Each day adds to the toll, not only of bodies but of trauma, fear, and displacement.

Erdoğan, Trump discuss Iran-Israel conflict

News Desk

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and US President Donald Trump held a telephone conversation to discuss the escalating crisis between Iran and Israel, according to reports from Ankara.

The two leaders exchanged views on the growing tensions in the region, with President Erdoğan warning of the grave consequences if the conflict continues unchecked. He urged Trump to take swift and decisive steps to prevent the region from plunging further into chaos.

Erdoğan also expressed Turkey’s willingness to play an active role in mediation efforts, offering to do “whatever it takes” to defuse the situation and restore stability. The call comes amid rising fears that the Iran-Israel confrontation could spiral into a broader regional war, drawing in more players and causing deeper instability across the Middle East.

UK may back Israel as conflict with Iran deepens

News Desk

LONDON: British Chancellor Rachel Reeves has signaled that the UK could potentially support Israel in its ongoing conflict with Iran, marking a significant shift in tone as tensions in the Middle East escalate.

Speaking to the media, Reeves explained that the recent deployment of additional British fighter jets to the region was primarily a precautionary move aimed at protecting British personnel and assets. “This was a security strategy,” she said, adding, “We have previously supported Israel in responding to missile attacks.”

Reeves confirmed that the UK is positioning military resources that could be used to support both its own forces and allies in the region, if necessary. “We’re sending military equipment for potential support — both for ourselves and our partners,” she stated.

The Chancellor also revealed that the UK Foreign Office has updated its travel guidance, formally advising British citizens against travelling to Israel. The warning comes just days after an earlier alert issued on Friday that urged citizens to avoid travel to the region due to heightened security risks.

Couple killed in Mardan after 17 years love marriage

By our correspondent

MARDAN: A couple who married for love 17 years ago were shot dead in Mardan, in what police believe to be a case of revenge rooted in family honor.

According to authorities, the victims had been living in Faisalabad since their marriage, which took place against the wishes of the woman’s family. The couple had returned to their native village a day earlier to visit relatives, unaware of the danger that awaited them.

Pakistan avoids FATF grey list as Asif hails ‘diplomatic win’

“This is not just a procedural victory — it is a geopolitical one,” Asif said, claiming that the decision vindicates Pakistan’s long-contested stance

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has narrowly avoided being placed back on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list, in what Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif described as a significant diplomatic triumph against what he called a sustained campaign by India and Israel to malign the country’s international standing.

Speaking after a critical meeting of the FATF’s International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG), Asif confirmed that Pakistan would not be subjected to increased monitoring under the global watchdog’s grey-listing mechanism — a designation that flags countries with strategic deficiencies in combating money laundering and terror financing.

“This is not just a procedural victory — it is a geopolitical one,” Asif said, adding that the decision validates Pakistan’s longstanding position that it has met all FATF requirements. “Realistically speaking, Pakistan has fulfilled all the conditions. There is no justification left for putting us on any list,” he said in a statement released late Sunday.

The minister credited the



outcome to strong backing from international allies, with particular praise for China’s “firm and clear” support during the deliberations. Turkey aligned itself with Beijing, while Japan, which currently serves as co-chair of the Asia-Pacific Group, also voiced support for Pakistan’s case. Their collective endorsement appeared to play a key role in swaying the ICRG’s stance in Islamabad’s favor.

Pakistan’s successful navigation of the FATF review process comes despite renewed scrutiny from some member states, notably India, which has repeatedly accused its neighbor of falling short in cracking down on terror financing networks. Asif dismissed these efforts as part of a broader campaign to isolate Pakistan on the global stage, asserting that the strategy had failed.

“This is a major diplomatic win,” he said. “The conspiracy to downgrade Pakistan in the eyes of the world has once again been defeated.” Pakistan was officially removed from the FATF grey list in October 2022 after a prolonged period of international monitoring and regulatory reforms. However, like all former grey-listed countries, it continues to face periodic reviews under FATF protocols.

In recent years, Pakistan has introduced a raft of legal and institutional reforms to address FATF concerns, including tighter banking regulations, anti-money laundering legislation, and efforts to clamp down on proscribed groups. Despite these steps, critics have argued that enforcement remains uneven and politically selective — a charge the government strongly denies.

Miftah raises alarm over FBR’s new arrest powers

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Former finance minister Miftah Ismail has expressed concern over the new legal authority granted to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), revealing that the tax body now has the power to arrest individuals.

Speaking during a post-budget discussion, Ismail criticized the government’s approach to taxation and economic reform, saying, “FBR officials now have the power to arrest, yet they can’t even collect 1 percent of dues from the notices they issue.” He



also suggested that the government uses the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a shield to justify controversial measures: “Whatever the government wants to do, it just blames the IMF — but that’s not how things actually work.”

Meanwhile, prominent industrialists voiced their own concerns. Business magnate Mohammad Ali Tabba stressed that Pakistan’s economic future hinges on exports. “Unless we change our mindset, business cannot grow. The current budget does not contain measures that would visibly support export-led growth,” he said.

Echoing this, investor Arif Habib warned that there is no space for new investments in the current economic environment. “If it were up to us, we would give a three-year tax reform plan instead of short-term fixes,” he said.

The discussion reflected growing unease within Pakistan’s business and policy circles, with repeated calls for long-term strategy, export reform, and an overhaul of the country’s tax governance — rather than empowering tax authorities with punitive tools.

Iran warns Israeli citizens to evacuate targeted areas

News Desk

TEHRAN: Tensions escalated sharply in the Middle East as Iranian authorities issued a chilling message in Hebrew, warning Israeli civilians to leave the country immediately to save their lives. The threat follows a series of Israeli airstrikes and Tehran’s vow to respond with force.

According to Israeli media reports, the message from Iran read: “Leave your country. A powerful missile strike is incoming. This is the only way to save your life.” The warning was delivered in stark terms, targeting Israelis near what Iran described as “weapon manufacturing plants, military-supporting institutions, refineries, nuclear facilities, and military research centers.”



Tehran’s message marks a rare and provocative move — not only threatening military installations but directly addressing the civilian population. The move came after Israel itself had earlier sent a message in Persian, urging Iranian citizens to stay away from nuclear and military sites, suggesting an attack could be imminent. Iran’s communication is part of an increasingly psychological war being waged alongside

the physical conflict.

By warning civilians in Hebrew, Iran is seeking to sow fear and amplify pressure on the Israeli government. As both countries continue to trade threats — and missiles — fears of a wider regional conflict are growing, with little sign of diplomatic off-ramps. The international community has urged restraint, but on the ground, the rhetoric is only getting more apocalyptic.

Russia offers to mediate as Iran-Israel tensions rise

News Desk

MOSCOW: Russia has stepped forward with an offer to mediate in the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel, signaling growing international concern over the possibility of a wider regional war. In a recent interview, US President Donald Trump indicated that he is open to Moscow taking on a mediating role.

“The United States is not currently part of the Iran-Israel tension,” Trump said, “but it’s possible we might become involved.” The former US president’s remarks come at a time when the situation in the Middle East appears to be teetering on the edge. Airstrikes, threats, and diplomatic warnings have left much of the world watching with unease.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan spoke with Trump by phone to dis-



cuss the crisis. According to sources familiar with the call, Erdoğan urged the US to act swiftly to prevent further escalation. He warned that the region is on the brink and must be pulled back from disaster. The idea of Russia as a mediator is already stirring global debate.

While some see it as a pragmatic move given Moscow’s ties with Tehran

and presence in the region, others remain wary of giving the Kremlin a central role in such a delicate crisis. But with tensions between Iran and Israel showing no signs of easing, and with diplomatic channels growing more frantic by the day, all eyes are now on whether a Russian-brokered initiative could offer a path to de-escalation.

MQM-P urges stronger laws on missing persons

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Khawaja Izhar chaired a session under the directive of MQM Pakistan Chairman Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, calling for a stronger legal focus on missing persons, the quota system, and public grievances.

KARACHI — Following instructions from Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, a joint meeting of the party’s Legal Aid Committee and Lawyers’ Forum took place at the MQM Pakistan headquarters in Bahadurabad, with senior leader Khawaja Izharul Hassan presiding



over the session.

Addressing the assembled legal professionals, Khawaja Izhar emphasized that MQM’s political role must remain firmly within the bounds of the Constitution

and the law. “Our duty is to reform politics and other sectors, not to take to the streets,” he said, urging the legal wings to develop practical and constructive strategies through collaboration.

He urged the legal community to priorities key issues, including cases of the party’s jailed and missing workers, challenges to the controversial quota system and fake domiciles, job-related complaints, and the outstanding dues of retired Karachi Municipal Corporation employees. “These matters demand legal attention and strategic action,” he said.

Khawaja Izhar also called on the committee to file legal petitions on public concerns daily and to engage young people in spreading MQM Pakistan’s message within the legal

community.

The meeting saw strong attendance from senior party leaders and lawyers, including Muhammad Jeevani of the Legal Aid Committee, Lawyers’ Forum in-charge Saeed Akhtar, senior leaders Kaif-ul-Wara and Rizwan Babar, alongside central committee members, office bearers, and party workers.

The session highlighted the importance of proactive legal engagement and institutional reform through lawful means, signaling MQM Pakistan’s shift towards a political approach more firmly rooted in constitutional principles.

Russia begins evacuating citizens from Iran, Israel

News Desk

TEHRAN/TEL AVIV: Russia has begun the evacuation of its citizens from Iran as tensions between Tehran and Tel Aviv continue to escalate, sparking concerns of a wider regional conflict.

In a statement issued from Moscow, the Russian embassy in Azerbaijan confirmed that it is facilitating the exit of Russian nationals from Iran using a land corridor through Azerbaijan.

The move comes amid growing fears over the safety of foreign nationals in Iran, as Israel and Iran remain locked in an intensifying conflict that has already drawn concern from several governments.

Multiple countries have started pulling their citizens out of Iran in recent days, either through direct flights or by using neighboring states as transit points. Russia’s decision to use the Azerbaijan route reflects both its geographical leverage and its diplomatic calculus in a volatile region.

The Hague sees mass protest over Gaza crisis

News Desk

THE HAGUE: A massive protest was held at the Malieveld field in The Hague as people from across the Netherlands gathered to express solidarity with the people of Gaza and denounce Israeli violence. The demonstration drew an estimated crowd of more than 150,000 people, marking one of the largest public displays of support for Palestinians in the country in recent years.



Amnesty International, human rights groups, organizations representing various Muslim countries, and a wide cross-section of the local Dutch community all joined forces at the rally. The protest was as diverse as it was powerful — with people of all ages and backgrounds

standing shoulder to shoulder, many holding placards calling for an end to the war and protection of civilian lives.

Voices from the protest urged international bodies and governments to take immediate action, stressing that children in Gaza were suffering on an unimaginable scale. “This isn’t just politics — these are lives,” said one speaker, addressing a silent crowd. “The world cannot keep watching as children

are buried under rubble.”

Among the demonstrators were a significant number of white Dutch citizens, standing in unity with the victims of the conflict. The Pakistani community also turned out in large numbers, waving flags and calling for justice and peace.