

Moscow Format backs united, peaceful Afghanistan

Delegates at the Moscow forum echoed Russia's call for stronger regional unity, urging swift and coordinated action to confront the growing menace of terrorism

MM Report

MOSCOW: Representatives attending the Moscow Format meeting on Afghanistan reaffirmed their collective commitment to a "free, united and peaceful" Afghanistan, as regional powers renewed diplomatic efforts to stabilize the country and address its deepening humanitarian crisis.

According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, delegates agreed on the urgent need to strengthen both bilateral and multilateral cooperation against terrorism, describing it as a shared regional threat. The participants condemned the establishment of any foreign military structures in Afghanistan as "unacceptable" and called on all relevant parties to honor their commitments toward the country's recovery and



long-term development.

The discussions placed strong emphasis on ensuring that Afghan soil is not used against any neighboring state, while participants voiced support for Afghanistan's integration into regional connectivity projects aimed at boosting trade, infrastructure and energy cooperation. Officials said the meeting also sought to expand economic and humanitarian engage-

ment, with particular focus on agriculture, healthcare, poverty reduction and disaster management.

Delegations from Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attended the session, while Belarus joined as a guest participant. Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi took part in the meeting for the first time in an official

capacity, marking a rare instance of engagement between the Taliban administration and regional stakeholders.

Russian officials said the conference concluded with a joint understanding to intensify coordination against terrorist networks, prevent the misuse of Afghan territory, and ensure that those responsible for the country's ongoing turmoil uphold their pledges to support reconstruction and sustainable development.

Analysts observed that while the Moscow Format has yet to yield a breakthrough on political recognition of the Taliban government, the latest round signaled a continued willingness among regional states to pursue pragmatic cooperation to prevent instability from spilling across borders.

Hamas calls for full Israeli withdrawal in Cairo talks

News Desk

CAIRO: The Cairo talks aimed at securing a lasting Gaza ceasefire entered a critical phase on Tuesday, as Hamas formally laid out its key demands under the US-backed peace framework proposed by President Donald Trump.

According to a report by Al Jazeera, Hamas presented a detailed list of conditions during the negotiations in Egypt, calling for a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire, the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all areas of Gaza, unrestricted delivery of humanitarian aid, the return of displaced families to their homes,



and the immediate launch of Gaza's reconstruction under a Palestinian national technocratic authority.

The group also insisted on a fair prisoner-exchange deal.

Hamas spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum said the movement's delegation was working "to remove all obstacles to reach an agreement that truly reflects the aspirations of the people of Gaza."

Barhoum accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of "trying to derail and sabotage the current phase of negotiations just as he deliberately undermined previous ones."

Despite "brutal military aggression, unlimited support and full American participation in the genocidal war on Gaza," he added, "Israel has failed to project any image of victory — and never will."

The latest round of indirect talks began on Monday in the Red Sea resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh, where delegations from Hamas and Israel met separately with Egyptian and Qatari mediators under tight security.

According to Al-Monitor, discussions focused on "creating conditions on the ground for the release of detainees and prisoners," in line with President Trump's ceasefire proposal.

PM receives honorary PhD in leadership from Malaysia's IIU

By our correspondent

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has said he has always served the public with sincerity and steadfastness, reaffirming his commitment to the people of Pakistan. Speaking at a ceremony where he was awarded an honorary PhD by the International Islamic University Malaysia, the Prime Minister described the recognition as a great honor.

"Being associated with one of the most respected centers of learning in the Muslim world is a privilege," he said.

"This university represents a hub of knowledge and wisdom, and I hope academic collaboration between Pakistan and the university grows even stronger."

Reflecting on his four decades of public service, Shahbaz Sharif said he had dedicated his life to the people of Punjab before assuming the office of Prime Minister.



ter. "By upholding our values and Islamic principles, nations can reclaim their lost stature in the world," he said. "Both Pakistan and Malaysia are blessed with a young population, and it is our duty to provide opportunities for them to serve humanity."

Shahbaz Sharif highlighted the pressing challenges facing the Muslim world today, including conflicts, poverty, and internal divisions, and expressed his hopes for the continued growth of the International Islamic University Malaysia and the enduring friendship

between Pakistan and Malaysia.

The ceremony was attended by the Queen of Pahang, Tengku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah, who presented the honorary degree. Praising the Prime Minister's leadership, she noted, "From leading Punjab to guiding the nation, Shahbaz Sharif has demonstrated that true leadership is defined not by power but by purpose. Initiatives such as the Punjab Education Endowment Fund have opened doors of higher education for thousands of students."

PM receives warm welcome in Malaysia

News Desk

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was personally welcomed and bid farewell by Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim during his official visit to Malaysia from October 5 to 7, 2025.

The unprecedented hospitality was hailed as a milestone in Pakistan-Malaysia relations, underscoring the deepening bond between the two nations.

The visit, marked by a series of high-level meetings, aimed to bolster cooperation in key areas such as trade, energy, agriculture, and cultural exchanges.

Prime Minister Sharif's arrival was met with a ceremonial guard of honor and a convoy accompanied by a helicopter, symbolizing the importance Malaysia placed on this partnership.

The farewell, equally grand, featured a red carpet and a heartfelt handshake, further cementing the goodwill between the two leaders.

Zardari asks Naqvi to ease Punjab-Sindh tensions

By our correspondent

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari has stepped in to defuse the growing tensions between the governments of Sindh and Punjab, instructing Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to play an active role in restoring political harmony between the two provinces.

According to sources, Mohsin Naqvi met President Zardari at Bilawal House in Karachi, where the two held detailed discussions on the evolving situation and the need to stabilize relations between provincial administrations.

The president directed the interior minister to "actively work to reduce political friction" and to ensure greater coordination at the federal level.

During the meeting, Naqvi briefed the president on the overall law and order situation across the country and updated him on inter-provincial communication channels. Sources said the two also discussed the lingering unease that has persisted since the caretaker government in Punjab, as well as the impact of recent political statements and administrative measures.

Pakistan joins US contract for AIM-120C-8 missiles

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development for regional security, the US Department of Defense has confirmed Pakistan's inclusion in a contract to acquire advanced AIM-120C-8 air-to-air missiles. The move is expected to boost the Pakistan Air Force's (PAF) capabilities, particularly its fleet of F-16 "Falcon" fighters, amid ongoing tensions with neighboring India.

The missile acquisition forms part of a broader effort to enhance the PAF's operational readiness. It includes plans to upgrade 18 F-16C/D Block-52 aircraft acquired under the Peace Drive program between 2006 and 2007. The development is particularly noteworthy given the PAF's previous use of AIM-120C-5 AMRAAM missiles during the 2019 engagements.

Defence analysts note that while the immediate effects of the contract may be limited to administrative work



and initial training, it signals Washington's willingness to equip Pakistan with more advanced technology. The deal could pave the way for larger agreements approved by the US State Department, further reinforcing Pakistan's air defence capabilities.

The timing of the upgrade is critical, coinciding with renewed regional friction and the continuing need for credible deterrence. The AIM-120C-8 missiles are expected to give the PAF a sharper strategic edge in any future confrontation, helping to maintain a balance of power in South Asia.

The announcement comes as memories of the 2019 Balakot airstrikes and subsequent aerial clashes continue to shape regional perceptions. Both countries have long disputed the outcomes of those encounters.

US President Donald Trump's earlier and often controversial claims of mediating a potential nuclear escalation between India and Pakistan through tariffs have since become a source of online humor, especially in Pakistan, where his muddled remarks were jokingly interpreted as a "7-0" victory for the country.

Kremlin cautions US over Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine

News Desk

MOSCOW: Russia warned on Tuesday that the possible supply of US-made Tomahawk cruise missiles to Ukraine could escalate the conflict into a "new and dangerous phase," urging Washington to clarify whether such transfers were being considered.

According to Reuters, the Kremlin's statement came a day after U.S. President Donald Trump said he wanted to understand what Ukraine intended to do with the Tomahawk missiles before making a final decision. Trump added that while he did not wish to see the war escalate, he had "somewhat made up" his mind on the matter.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow was awaiting clearer statements from Washington. "We believe we should wait for more definitive remarks, if



any are made," he told reporters, recalling that during Joe Biden's presidency, Washington would announce new arms deliveries to Kyiv only once the weapons had already been shipped. President Vladimir Putin had earlier warned that if the United States supplied long-range Tomahawks capable of striking deep inside Russian territory, it would "destroy relations between Moscow and Washington."

Peskov stressed that the

issue was particularly serious because the missiles were capable of carrying nuclear warheads. "This would mark a truly dangerous stage of escalation," he said. He added that using such weapons against Russia would be impossible without direct U.S. involvement. "If Ukraine were to use Tomahawk missiles against Russian targets, it would mean the war had entered an entirely new and qualitatively different phase," he warned.

News Desk

RIYADH: Pakistan's relations with Saudi Arabia have entered a new phase, marked by expanding cooperation not only in defence but also in economic and labor sectors. The two countries' recent defence agreement has further strengthened mutual confidence, paving the way for a surge in employment opportunities for Pakistani workers across the Kingdom.

According to government officials, Pakistan has now set an ambitious target to double its labor exports to Saudi Arabia — a move expected to significantly boost remittances and strengthen the national economy. As re-



ported by Arab News, the number of skilled Pakistani workers travelling to Saudi Arabia rose sharply in the first seven months of 2025.

Between January and July, 242,337 Pakistanis left for employment in the Kingdom — an average of nearly 40,000 per month — compared to around

37,000 per month in 2024. Saudi Arabia continues to be the largest destination for Pakistani expatriate workers and a major contributor to the country's foreign exchange reserves. In August alone, remittances from Saudi Arabia reached \$736.7 million, forming part of a total inflow of \$3.1 billion

that month.

Officials said the government is working closely with Saudi authorities to ensure the recruitment of trained and certified workers in key sectors such as construction, health care, information technology, and logistics.

The growing demand for Pakistani professionals and laborers is being seen as a sign of deepening economic interdependence between the two long-time allies.

Economists believe that if the current trend continues, Pakistan's remittance inflows from Saudi Arabia could reach record levels by mid-2026, providing a crucial buffer for the country's struggling balance of payments.

Bilateral ties boost Saudi work visas for Pakistanis

PSE slides as 167,000-point level fails to hold

By S.M. Inam

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued its downward trajectory on the second day of the trading week, with the benchmark KSE-100 index losing

1,578 points to close at 166,173.

During the session, the index fluctuated between an intraday high of 168,518 and a low of 165,997, reflecting persistent volatility in the market.

Analysts noted that the key 167,000-point threshold, which had briefly offered some stability, once again proved unsustainable.

Pakistan Stock Exchange Chief Executive Farukh Sabzwari highlighted the

growing interest of retail investors in the market.

Speaking at an event in Karachi, he noted that students could now participate in the exchange with as little as 5,000 rupees through the Shariah-compliant sukuk in-

vestments.

Sabzwari also announced rewards for winners of the "Battle of the Bulls" competition, held in celebration of Global Investor Day, emphasizing the importance of raising awareness about the

stock market among ordinary households.

He pointed out that over the past five years, the PSX had outperformed regional peers, demonstrating resilience amid challenging economic conditions.

For observers, the immediate effect has been a surge in political and media attention in both capitals. Opposition parties and commentators in Pakistan cited the army's statements as evidence of a successful defence, while in India the air chief's remarks were framed as confirmation of operational effectiveness. The differing accounts are expected to complicate diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions and fuel domestic debates about military performance.

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EDITOR: Ehtasham Anwar
Vol. No. 2
Issue. No. 291
Email: news@metro-morning.com
Rabi-us-Sani 14, 1447 A.H.



India’s talks of war

In recent weeks, the rhetoric emerging from New Delhi has grown increasingly belligerent, casting long shadows over an already fragile regional equilibrium. India’s talk of war is not just a diplomatic gambit; it is a test of patience, prudence, and resolve. Yet, for Pakistan, the true challenge lies not merely in responding to threats with matching bravado but in navigating a path that safeguards its people, institutions, and international standing while maintaining the moral compass that history demands. The temptation to respond with incendiary declarations, grandstanding speeches, or militaristic posturing is ever-present. However, in moments such as these, the worth of a nation is measured not by the volume of its threats, but by the depth of its restraint and the clarity of its purpose.

Pakistan’s narrative across the years has been one of endurance and resilience. From the trials of partition to the challenges of natural disasters and the pressures of geopolitics, our citizens have repeatedly demonstrated an ability to rise above division, to put aside internal differences, and to meet danger with unity and courage. This solidarity, quietly forged in the crucible of adversity, is a national treasure that must not be squandered on rhetoric alone. It is the human spirit that the willingness of neighbors to protect each other, and the resolve of ordinary citizens to preserve normalcy in extraordinary circumstances that define our true strength.

There is no question about the professionalism and preparedness of our armed forces. Their dedication, discipline, and readiness to defend the nation are among the most visible proofs of national resolve. Equally undeniable is the steadfastness of our citizens, whose daily lives continue against a backdrop of uncertainty, often at personal risk. These assets — the courage of soldiers and civilians alike — are not to be displayed as props in a theatre of posturing. They are responsibilities to be stewarded, exercised with wisdom and guided by a framework of law, strategy, and ethical conduct. Military strength, however impressive, is not a substitute for political clarity, prudent decision-making, or moral authority.

Force should always be a last resort, not a first response, and any action undertaken must serve a purpose beyond mere retaliation; it must aim to restore stability, protect life, and open pathways to lasting peace.

True patriotism, in this context, is a concept too often misunderstood. It is not the reckless readiness to fight at every provocation, nor is it the public display of anger or defiance. Rather, it is a commitment to safeguard life, to defend homes and communities, and to ensure that the next generation inherits a nation that is intact and capable of flourishing.

Patriotism is the courage to resist the seductive simplicity of triumphalist rhetoric, to insist on strategic foresight over emotional gratification, and to pursue dialogue even when the other side shows little interest.

It is in these quieter, less visible acts of responsibility that a nation truly proves its mettle. For Pakistanis, the current situation should serve as a sober reminder of shared obligations.

Our duty is not to indulge in public performances of anger, but to insist on governance that prioritizes the safety, dignity, and future of all citizens. Leaders at every level — political, military, and civil — are bound by the same contract: to act decisively but wisely, to temper courage with caution, and to place national interests above sectional, partisan, or personal ambitions. In a region as volatile as South Asia, where a single miscalculation can trigger consequences that reverberate for decades, prudence is not weakness; it is survival.

Pakistan’s engagement must also extend beyond its borders. Diplomacy, international mediation, and regional dialogue are not signs of capitulation; they are instruments of security and foresight. In an era where global opinion can influence outcomes as decisively as weapons, maintaining credible communication channels, keeping diplomatic avenues open, and presenting a coherent, principled stance on the world stage are vital.

The nation’s strength is magnified when restraint is combined with assertive diplomacy, when readiness to defend is paired with readiness to negotiate, and when a commitment to international norms and law underscores our national strategy.

At the same time, the message to potential aggressors must be unambiguous. Pakistan will defend its sovereignty and the territorial integrity of its land.

Any attempt to threaten or destabilize the nation will be met with a response that is proportionate, lawful, and strategic. The world must understand that Pakistan’s response is guided by principle, not by impulse, and that its objective is not escalation for its own sake but the protection of its people and the deterrence of unnecessary conflict.

Pakistan’s history offers lessons: courage, resilience, and solidarity have always been its pillars. Today, as tensions rise, these qualities remain as essential as ever. To protect sovereignty is to protect the people; to protect the people is to protect the future.

Every citizen has a stake in ensuring that our response is measured, our leadership sound, and our strategy grounded in foresight rather than rhetoric. In the theatre of international politics, the wisest displays of strength are often those that are unseen, exercised in strategy rooms and deliberation halls, guided by the twin principles of resolve and responsibility.

As India talks of war, Pakistan must indeed be prepared — but preparation is not equivalent to provocation. Strength must be exercised with care, courage with calculation, and patriotism with conscience.

The nation’s real power lies not in the noise of threats or the drama of mobilization but in the steadfast protection of its people, the resilience of its institutions, and the moral authority it sustains in the eyes of the world. In this precarious moment, that is the measure of a country truly ready to meet history: calm yet resolute, strong yet judicious, united in defence yet wise enough to seek peace.

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

By Uzma Ehtasham



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s recent two-day state visit to Malaysia unfolded with all the trappings of ceremonial grandeur: red carpets, honor guards, and meticulously choreographed protocol. Onlookers, both domestic and international, might have been struck by the fanfare, the carefully staged handshakes, and the aura of political warmth that accompanied each photograph. But beneath the optics, the more pressing question remains: does the visit signify substantive diplomatic progress, or is it simply another pageant of flags and formalities? State visits, for all their pomp, are valuable only when they translate into tangible outcomes that improve the lives of citizens back home. Without that translation, applause abroad risks being hollow, and photographs at Kuala Lumpur airport will fade faster than the policies they are meant to herald.

There is little doubt that Pakistan’s focus on Malaysia is a sensible strategic choice. The two nations share historical connections, cultural affinities, and overlapping economic interests. Trade, labor mobility, and collaborative diplomacy within the broader Muslim world provide a solid foundation for deepening bilateral engagement. The memoranda of understanding and agreements

signed during ministerial meetings carry the promise of cooperation, but promises alone are insufficient. Their worth will be judged by results: do they open new markets for Pakistani exports, make remittance flows easier for workers abroad, or create joint projects that strengthen climate resilience? Without implementation, ceremonial signatures risk becoming little more than symbolic gestures, raising questions about whether pomp has replaced purpose.

The visit also comes at a critical juncture in global affairs. Rising geopolitical tensions, accelerating climate threats, and persistent economic fragility mean that Pakistan’s external engagements must be strategic, sober, and results-oriented. Warm words of mutual appreciation, shared selfies, and declarations of friendship are welcome, but Pakistan needs partnerships that transfer tangible value—technology, finance, and capacity—to address the pressing challenges at home. If Malaysia, alongside other like-minded partners, can contribute to renewable energy infrastructure, vocational training, and stable investment flows, the benefits will be widely felt, durable, and transformative. Yet diplomacy abroad cannot be divorced from politics at home. Ceremonial success cannot substitute for accountable governance or policy coherence.

The apparent unity between civilian leadership and the military in projecting Pakistan’s strategic relevance should not obscure the necessity for transparency, parliamentary oversight, and clear policy

frameworks governing foreign commitments. Diplomacy based solely on personal rapport or episodic meetings risks unraveling in the absence of institutionalized processes. The people of Pakistan have a right to know not only what agreements are signed but also how they will be implemented, financed, and monitored. The Prime Minister’s high-profile engagements and the narrative of international recognition—whether for Pakistan’s role in Gaza or for broader regional stability—do confer status. Yet status, however flattering, without leverage is fleeting.

What Pakistan must secure from such goodwill are concrete advantages: preferential access to Malaysian and regional markets, educational and professional exchanges, debt-for-climate arrangements, and defence cooperation oriented towards training, disaster response, and interoperability rather than confrontation. Diplomacy that enriches symbolic capital but neglects strategic utility fails to serve its primary purpose: the betterment of the nation’s people. There is also a moral dimension that cannot be ignored. As climate shocks intensify, global inequalities widen, and the pressures on vulnerable populations mount, Pakistan’s diplomatic posture must foreground human security. Trade deals and defence pacts are critical, but so too are commitments to humanitarian diplomacy, post-conflict reconstruction, and regional frameworks that prioritize civilian protection.

If Pakistan uses its growing diplomatic

voice to champion these causes, it will earn not only international respect but also domestic legitimacy, fostering a sense that the state is responsive, principled, and attuned to the human stakes behind each agreement. Ultimately, the success of any state visit should be measured against tangible, quantifiable outcomes. Jobs created, investments mobilized, students exchanged, emissions reduced—these are the metrics that give statecraft meaning for ordinary people. Flags lining Kuala Lumpur’s avenues may be remembered in newsreels, but only those initiatives that tangibly improve lives will endure in collective memory.

Hospitals built, power projects launched, training programs initiated, and livelihoods strengthened are the real dividends of diplomacy. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s Malaysia trip has undoubtedly opened a door. The responsibility now is to walk through it with clarity, accountability, and determination to ensure that Pakistan’s engagement serves citizens rather than merely ceremonial optics. Diplomacy is at its most effective when it connects international goodwill to domestic gains, when lofty speeches in foreign capitals are matched by concrete initiatives in local towns, factories, and classrooms.

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Cautious optimism demands principled action

By S.M. Inam



The fragile calm descending on Gaza has, for the first time in months, inspired a tentative sense of hope. After years of conflict, siege, and repeated military escalations, even the smallest gestures toward stability are being closely watched by a world fatigued by violence. Yet hope, in this context, must be tempered by realism. History is replete with examples of agreements imposed from above—brokered by distant powers—that unravel quickly, leaving communities once again at the mercy of force. The challenge today is to ensure that optimism does not slip into complacency, and that any progress made is built upon genuine political foundations rather than the fleeting optics of diplomacy.

Recent developments suggest a modest, yet significant, shift. Reports from within Palestine indicate that a meaningful constituency is willing to engage with the framework proposed by former U.S. President Donald Trump. Unlike previous initiatives that largely sidelined local voices, this approach hints at solutions anchored in Palestinian agency, not merely external imposition. That distinction, subtle though it may seem, is essential: durable peace cannot be dictated from afar; it must resonate with the people whose lives it will reshape.

Pakistan, alongside other Muslim-majority countries, has sought to mediate carefully, emphasizing that no settlement should proceed without the explicit consent of Palestinians themselves. This approach, prioritizing dialogue and respect for self-determination, offers a glimmer of promise in an otherwise intractable conflict. Diplomacy in Gaza has often been reduced to statements, summits, and photo opportunities; today, the emphasis on Palestinian agency is a reminder that the legitimacy of any outcome rests on local endorsement as much

as international recognition.

A landmark development has been Hamas’s announcement that it is prepared to entrust Gaza’s administration to a technocratic interim Palestinian committee. The gesture has been welcomed by nine nations, including Jordan, the UAE, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt. Acting as intermediaries, these governments have portrayed the move as constructive, aligning it with broader regional efforts to halt hostilities. The proposals under discussion are complex: halting military operations, releasing hostages, and agreeing on operational mechanisms for a ceasefire demand not only political will but careful coordination and verification. The outcome will hinge on the capacity of all parties—particularly those historically resistant to oversight—to adhere to their commitments.

Negotiations in Cairo, involving Hamas, Israeli officials, and a Qatari delegation, represent the most consequential progress to date. According to reports, Hamas has agreed under international supervision to surrender certain weapons to Palestinian and Egyptian authorities, signaling a willingness to engage in good-faith implementation. Yet, Israel’s position—reinforced by U.S. support—remains conditional, framing concessions as prerequisites for compliance rather than reciprocal commitments. Statements from figures including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and former President Trump underline this asymmetry: expectations of Israeli withdrawal, prisoner exchanges, and the transfer of administrative control all depend on conditions that are far from guaranteed.

This imbalance highlights a structural challenge. Without a coordinated, principled stance from Muslim-majority states, the leverage required to secure a durable and just settlement remains weak. Diplomatic engagement risks being reduced to ceremonial gestures unless the international community—particularly governments with historical influence over the actors in question—assumes an assertive role in ensuring

compliance. Advocacy alone is insufficient; mediation must be coupled with accountability, monitoring, and the political courage to enforce agreements when necessary.

Hamas’s readiness to negotiate and entertain transitional governance arrangements demonstrates a pragmatic willingness to compromise. What remains uncertain, however, is the response of other actors whose intransigence could easily unravel months of painstaking diplomacy. The ultimate test will not be the signing of memoranda but the capacity of all parties—and their international interlocutors—to hold each other accountable. Muslim-majority countries have a critical responsibility here: to speak with unity, to act collectively where possible, and, when required, to leverage political or economic influence to ensure that agreements are more than symbolic. Without such cohesion, the cycle of conflict is likely to persist, undermining the hope that has cautiously begun to take root.

There is also a moral imperative embedded in this moment. Gaza’s civilians, who have borne the brunt of years of warfare, siege, and deprivation, must be placed at the center of any diplomatic calculus. Human security—the protection of life, dignity, and livelihoods—cannot be a peripheral concern. Trade agreements, defence pacts, and security arrangements are important, but they cannot replace the fundamental need for civilian protection, humanitarian aid, and infrastructure reconstruction. Diplomatic success must be measured not in headlines or press briefings, but in the restoration of essential services, the return of families to safe homes, and the resumption of education and healthcare for those affected by conflict.

The tentative calm offers an opportunity for constructive engagement, but it is fragile. Real progress will require more than negotiation tables and press releases; it will demand political courage, coherence among international partners, and an unwavering commitment to prioritizing the aspirations and protections of Palestinians themselves. Every decision, every concession, and every agreement must be evaluated against the tangible impact it has on those living under occupation, siege, or the constant threat of renewed violence.

Ultimately, the promise of peace in Gaza is contingent, not assured. The window for meaningful, rights-based resolution exists, but it will remain open only if the international community—led by states capable of exerting influence—acts with coordination, clarity, and principle. Agreements imposed without local buy-in will almost certainly falter; only those rooted in consent, accountability, and justice can endure.

The cautious optimism now emerging must be nurtured, not squandered. Hamas’s gestures, the willingness of neighboring states to mediate, and the tentative signals from Palestinian constituencies all represent potential turning points. Yet, as history teaches, fragility can quickly yield to violence if diplomacy is half-hearted or enforcement weak.

The task for Pakistan, alongside other regional partners, is to ensure that the dialogue in Cairo and beyond translates into concrete protections, sustained governance structures, and pathways to normalcy for ordinary Palestinians.

In Gaza, as elsewhere, hope must be married to action, words to enforcement, and promises to measurable outcomes. Only through principled, coordinated, and accountable diplomacy can the cycle of conflict be broken, and the region move closer to a settlement that is not only durable but just. The cautious calm should not be mistaken for resolution; it is, instead, an opportunity—a narrow, precious window—for the international community and regional actors to prove that peace is more than aspiration: it can be achieved through courage, coherence, and unflinching commitment to human dignity.

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

Tyson and the lesson of unconditional love

By Atiq Raja



In a world where human interaction is often veiled in layers of pretense, where people wear masks to conceal fear, ambition, or insecurity, animals remain a rare mirror of authenticity. They offer a window into existence unburdened by calculation, social expectation, or self-interest. Their love is instinctive, unshakable, and deeply spiritual, speaking in a language that requires no words yet reaches the most profound parts of our humanity. Humans tend to complicate love. We attach conditions to affection, weigh it against status, or measure it with a ledger of past grievances. We protect ourselves with emotional walls, evaluating, analyzing, and sometimes manipulating relationships. Animals, however, love differently. They love purely, without expectation. A dog, a cat, a bird—they

respond to the energy we radiate, the sincerity we embody. They feel our essence, not our curated appearances. In their eyes, the truth of a human heart is laid bare; their hearts recognize honesty faster than any intellect ever could.

Where we shield ourselves with emotional masks, animals move through life with authenticity. A dog’s wagging tail, a cat’s gentle purr, a bird’s fearless perch on your shoulder—these gestures are not performances but expressions of connection, untainted by ego or calculation. They demonstrate that love, at its most profound, is simple: a matter of presence, attention, and recognition. Consider Tyson, a stray dog whose story has left an indelible mark on my understanding of love. He arrived one day near my home: unkempt, wary, and hungry, carrying the visible scars of life on the street. Yet from the moment our eyes met, there was an unspoken understanding. I never formally adopted Tyson, and he had no formal claim to my household. And yet, over time, it became

clear that we had adopted each other—not through ownership or possession, but through mutual trust. Tyson’s presence is a quiet miracle. I travel frequently, sometimes away for weeks or months. During those absences, he disappears without a trace. But the instant I return, there he is, tail wagging, eyes gleaming, waiting as though he had known all along when I would arrive. There is no message, no hint, no intermediary. Just the certainty of connection, of recognition. He sits by the gate, content in the simple fact that we are reunited. He spends hours nearby, not demanding attention, not seeking reward—simply existing in the shared space of belonging. Even my children, who see life in the candid light of curiosity, are captivated by Tyson. They speak to him, touch him, and in return, his calm presence communicates everything a thousand words could not: “I know you are my people.” In Tyson’s company, one begins to understand that love does not require language, contracts, or promises.

It demands only sincerity, attentiveness,

and presence. Animals interpret our emotions—our kindness, fear, sadness, joy—in ways humans sometimes fail to perceive. They respond not to words but to energy, intention, and consistency. There is a profound lesson in Tyson’s loyalty: love is not possession; it is recognition. His devotion is silent yet resolute. He does not need my assurance or my accolades; he needs only that my presence matches the energy he has learned to trust. And he responds in kind, offering devotion that is unbreakable by betrayal, unshaken by circumstance. In his gaze, there is no judgment, no demand, no hidden agenda. There is only recognition of connection, of the bond formed beyond utility or social expectation. The lessons animals impart extend far beyond the domestic sphere: love does not need perfection—it needs presence.

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Kashmir’s tale of two realities

By Syed Shamim Akhtar



The ongoing tensions surrounding Azad Jammu and Kashmir underscore a familiar but urgent truth: the narrative of the region continues to be contested, and international law remains an essential reference point for justice and accountability. Pakistan has once again rejected India’s repeated attempts to manipulate this narrative, calling on New Delhi to adhere to both international law and United Nations resolutions. In a statement from the Foreign Office, the spokesperson emphasized that instead of levelling unfounded accusations, India should acknowledge its responsibilities under the UN Charter, respect the rights of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and refrain from interfering in Pakistan’s internal affairs.

Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to

protecting the dignity, political and civil rights, and social and economic development of Azad Kashmir’s residents—an approach markedly different from the methods employed by Indian authorities in the region it administers. The contrast between Azad Kashmir and Indian-administered Kashmir could not be starker. Pakistan highlights the democratic participation of Azad Kashmir’s residents, where elected representatives exercise political agency within the framework of lawful governance. In India-administered Kashmir, however, the reality is far more troubling. Civil liberties are tightly curtailed, political dissent is met with repression, and the use of force against civilians has become commonplace.

A recent and deeply troubling example occurred in Srinagar, where Indian authorities seized the home of the late Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Geelani. Geelani, who passed away under house arrest in September 2021, was a prominent voice in the Kashmiri struggle for autonomy. His widow,

now in her eighties, was still residing in the property when it was taken, exemplifying a continuing pattern of intimidation and harassment directed at those connected to Kashmir’s political history. Such actions are emblematic of a broader strategy of repression, including forced disappearances, curbs on free expression, and systematic violations of human rights targeting ordinary citizens.

India’s persistent efforts to malign Pakistan on the international stage have been a recurring feature of its foreign policy approach. From attacks like Pulwama and Pathankot to more sensational claims reminiscent of Mumbai-style false-flag operations, India has sought to divert global attention from its own transgressions in Kashmir. Its recent rhetoric concerning Azad Kashmir appears to follow the same pattern: projecting an image of Pakistan as destabilizing while ignoring its own role in perpetuating violence and repression. Yet, Pakistan has consistently acted with responsibility and restraint. The government’s swift response to

protests in Azad Kashmir, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directing a joint action committee to engage demonstrators and address their concerns, illustrates a commitment to peaceful resolution and participatory governance.

Unlike India, which often responds with brute force, Pakistan’s approach demonstrates that addressing grievances through dialogue and institutional mechanisms is both possible and effective. The hypocrisy in India’s position is glaring. While accusing Pakistan of interference, India continues to enforce a regime of state-sponsored violence in its administered territories. The use of coercion, curtailment of civil liberties, and targeted suppression of political activists has become a defining characteristic of governance in the Valley. The house seizure of Geelani’s widow, arbitrary detentions, and the frequent use of security forces to quell dissent reflect a system in which the exercise of basic rights is not tolerated, and the voices of ordinary citizens are systematically silenced.

The writer has diverse in knowledge and has a good omen in politics, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com



Chinese investors seek joint projects with Sindh govt

The visiting delegation signaled readiness to co-finance key urban renewal and infrastructure projects, pledging major investment in Karachi's transport, housing, and civic development

By Sajjad Shah

KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Local Government, Housing, and Town Planning, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, met a delegation of Chinese investors in Karachi to explore potential investment opportunities across Sindh.

The visiting delegation expressed strong interest in jointly funding a range of development projects, with a focus on improving infrastructure, transport, housing, and urban facilities in Karachi and other parts of the province. Welcoming the investors, Minister Shah highlighted the rapid pace of development under the vision of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and the guidance of Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah. CM Murad reaffirmed the



government's commitment to supporting investors working for the progress and prosperity of Sindh and its people. The Chinese team, led by Hao Juejiao, voiced its intent to collaborate on diverse initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life through better infrastructure and modern urban planning. "Sindh is fertile ground for investment across various sectors, and we welcome every opportunity that contributes to our people's well-

fare and the province's growth," Minister Shah said.

A key point of discussion was the proposal to revive and expand the Karachi-Rohri train service, in line with ongoing extensions of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into regional transport networks. The initiative is seen as an important step towards greater connectivity and economic integration within Pakistan. The meeting was also attended by senior officials,

including Secretary Local Government Waseem Shamshad, Ali Mandviwala, Azhar Elahi, and Muhammad Danish, who held detailed discussions on mutual interests and future collaborations. Supporters and political analysts have praised the meeting as a sign of growing confidence among foreign investors in Sindh's economic potential, crediting it to the strategic direction of the PPP leadership.

The engagement is viewed as a major boost to Sindh's development agenda amid increasing competition for provincial investment in Pakistan. As Sindh continues to position itself as a key hub for foreign investment, the partnership with Chinese investors marks a significant milestone in the province's journey towards sustainable growth and prosperity.

Punjab launches massive solid waste program

By Faizan Khan

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif inaugurated what she described as the world's largest solid waste management program, aimed at serving the province's 150 million residents.

The launch event included the provision of 700 state-of-the-art vehicles and machinery to districts across Punjab to support the initiative. During the ceremony, Maryam Nawaz also unveiled the Clean Punjab Book and launched its accompanying website.

In a symbolic gesture, she donned a sanitation worker's jacket and participated in the event alongside the workers, who greeted her with enthusiastic slogans and cheers. The program is expected to modernize waste collection and management across Punjab, improve urban cleanliness, and create more opportunities for sanitation workers, according to officials involved in the project.

Trump expected to attend ASEAN Summit

News Desk

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is reportedly set to participate in the upcoming ASEAN summit in Malaysia, scheduled to take place from 26 to 28 October.

According to US news outlet Politico, the White House has requested that Trump be given the honour of presiding over a ceremony marking a peace agreement between Thailand and Cambodia. Reports indicate that the White House also sought to exclude Chinese officials from the event.

Officials reportedly told Malaysian hosts that the full credit for the peace accord should go to President Trump, asserting that the agreement between Thailand and Cambodia resulted from his efforts and that China played no role in the negotiations.

If confirmed, Trump's presence would mark a significant moment in his ongoing diplomatic engagements in Southeast Asia, highlighting the US administration's focus on regional influence and leadership in peace initiatives.

Kim Jong Un affirms solidarity with Russia

News Desk

PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reaffirmed his country's unwavering support for Russia, saying Pyongyang would stand "shoulder to shoulder" with Moscow in its efforts to safeguard national development and security.

Kim hailed the "eternal friendship" and "alliance-based ties" between the two nations, emphasizing that relations between Pyongyang and Moscow had reached "unprecedented heights."

Officials said he had been secretly growing cannabis at his home and distributing it in various areas, particularly near educational institutions.

During the operation, authorities seized 45 cannabis plants, 42 grams of prepared weed, and 30 grams of seeds.

The total weight of the confiscated plants was estimated at around 10 to 12 kilograms, with an international market value approaching PKR 60 million.

Deputy Director Zahoor Elahi Mazari said the suspect admitted to adopting this method after observing the high-profile Ar-maghan case.

A case has been registered against him, and further investigations are underway to trace the distribution network.

India failed to down a single jet in 'Operation Haq', says DG ISPR

By ISPR

ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif, Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), said India had failed to shoot down a single Pakistani aircraft during the recent "Operation Marka-e-Haq," describing the operation as a clear demonstration of Pakistan's technological capability and strategic discipline.

In an interview with Bloomberg, General Sharif stressed that Pakistan had never "manipulated or concealed figures," and that its defence policy was rooted in the pursuit of reliability, cost-efficiency, and technological effectiveness. "We are prepared to acquire technology from all sources—whether local, Eastern, or Western," he said, adding that recent Chinese defence platforms had shown "exceptional performance" in operational tests.

He confirmed that seven Indian aircraft had been destroyed during the confronta-



tion—matching the number cited by the US President in his address last week. "These are verifiable facts," he said, underscoring Islamabad's commitment to transparency in military reporting.

The army spokesman dismissed suggestions of a regional arms race, saying Pakistan was not engaged in a military competition with India. "Our defence budget is far smaller than India's, and we do not have unlimited resources," he remarked. "What we focus on is readiness, precision, and innovation, not numerical parity."

General Sharif also highlighted Pakistan's balanced

procurement strategy, noting that the country sources defence equipment from both China and Western nations, reflecting an approach driven by practical needs rather than political alignment.

Analysts said his remarks appeared aimed at reinforcing confidence in Pakistan's defence readiness while countering Indian claims surrounding the recent escalation. The statement, they added, underscored Islamabad's broader message—that strategic restraint, coupled with credible capability, remains central to its security doctrine.

Wanted suspect 'Adam' killed in Peshawar

By our correspondent

PESHAWAR: Peshawar police killed a wanted suspect, identified as Adam, along with three of his associates during an encounter in Wah Cantt's Kohistan Colony.

Authorities said Adam had been wanted in 13 cases involving terrorism, murder, and extortion. He was notorious for posting threatening audio and video messages on social media. Police noted that Adam had previously fired at an engine oil warehouse in Pash-takhra, filming the attack and sharing it online.

Officials confirmed that Adam, who was killed during the Kohistan Colony encounter, was an Afghan national who had obtained fake Pakistani citizenship documents.

The operation underlined the continuing efforts by law enforcement in Peshawar to target organized crime and terrorism networks, and police warned that operations against such high-profile criminals would continue.

US vetran warns Tomahawk brigs world war

MM Report

WASHINGTON: In a startling interview that has rippled through international diplomatic circles, retired US Colonel Douglas Macgregor has warned of the potential for a third world war if Ukraine uses American-supplied Tomahawk missiles against Russian targets.

Macgregor, a former senior adviser to the Trump administration's defence secretary, said such a move could draw the United States into direct conflict with Russia within hours.

His warning comes amid rising tensions, as Ukraine continues to press Western allies for more advanced weaponry to counter Russian advances.

CM Maryam says critics envy Punjab's progress

By Faizan Khan

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that those who criticize her for talking about Punjab's development are "jealous" of the province's progress. "It angers them when I speak about Punjab," she told a crowd in Lahore on Tuesday. "If I don't talk about Punjab, then who will?"

The chief minister was speaking at a ceremony to inaugurate a new sanitation fleet under the Suthra Punjab (Clean Punjab) program. Wearing the program's bright uniform, she praised sanitation workers as "heroes" and said their efforts had transformed the province's towns and villages.

"I salute the heroes of Suthra Punjab," she said. "It is an honor for me to take part in this program. If I can wear a police uniform, why



not this one? These workers are part of my team — part of my family. They have cleaned every corner of Punjab and made our cities shine. My head is held high with pride."

Maryam said she felt especially proud visiting flood-hit areas where sanitation workers had "worked tirelessly" to restore basic services. "The dream I saw a year ago has now become reality," she added. "When Shehbaz Sharif's government ended, Punjab's sanitation system had collapsed. During the era of Gogi and Pinky, there was destruction everywhere. The so-called champions of change left behind piles of garbage."

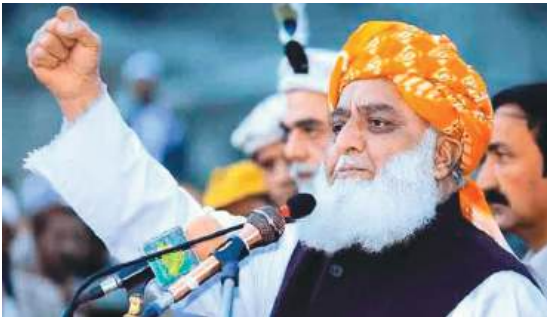
She announced that the Suthra Punjab initiative now had a force of 150,000 workers and modern, state-of-the-art machinery deployed in every city. The program, she said, had expanded beyond major urban centers to small towns and villages where sanitation services had long been neglected.

Fazl demands KP chief minister quit over PTI turmoil

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has demanded the immediate resignation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, accusing him of mismanagement and the "ruination" of the province.

His remarks followed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) decision to appoint Mahmood Khan Achakzai and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas as opposition leaders in the National Assembly and Senate, respectively. Speaking to reporters, Rehman expressed disbelief at PTI's choices, suggesting the party either lacks confidence in its own members or considers them unfit for leadership roles.



"They have appointed outsiders as opposition leaders, which shows they do not trust their own people," he said, claiming Gandapur's governance had brought devastation to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The JUI-F leader's comments have reignited tensions between the two parties, with PTI already facing scrutiny over its recent political maneuvers. Sources

within PTI confirmed the appointments, saying the decisions were aimed at strengthening the opposition's stance against the government.

Rehman's demand for Gandapur's resignation has added fuel to the debate over PTI's governance and leadership, particularly in KP, where Gandapur has faced growing criticism for his handling of provincial affairs.

Israel frees ex-senator Mushtaq Ahmed from Samood Flotilla

News Desk

AMMAN, JORDAN: Israeli authorities released former Jamaat-e-Islami senator Mushtaq Ahmed, who had been detained after joining the Samood Flotilla — a humanitarian mission bound for Gaza. The flotilla had attempted to deliver aid to Palestinians living under blockade when it was intercepted by Israeli forces in the Mediterranean.

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, confirmed the news in a post on X, saying he was "pleased to



announce" that Ahmed was now safe and in the care of the Pakistani embassy in Amman. Dar added that the embassy stood ready to facilitate the former senator's return to Pakistan "in accor-

dance with his convenience and wishes."

The foreign minister also extended his gratitude to what he described as "friendly nations" that had assisted Pakistan's Ministry

of Foreign Affairs in securing Ahmed's release. While Dar did not name the countries involved, diplomatic sources suggested that regional partners and international humanitarian organizations had quietly coordinated efforts to ensure the safe passage of flotilla participants.

According to Jordan's official news agency, a total of 131 members of the Samood Flotilla had arrived safely in Jordan following their release. Many of them were international volunteers, aid workers, and activists who had joined the

convoy to draw global attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The episode once again underscored the heightened sensitivities surrounding maritime aid missions to Gaza, which Israel has long described as attempts to breach its security perimeter. For Islamabad, the safe return of Mushtaq Ahmed also marked a small diplomatic success amid broader efforts to highlight the plight of Palestinians and support international calls for unrestricted humanitarian access to the besieged territory.

Karachi housing society linked to weed farming

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Karachi authorities uncovered a secret weed cultivation operation inside a private residential society near North Nazimabad.

The Sindh Excise and Narcotics Control Department carried out the raid, arresting a suspect identified as Muhammad Salman Sardar.

Officials said he had been secretly growing cannabis at his home and distributing it in various areas, particularly near educational institutions.

During the operation, authorities seized 45 cannabis plants, 42 grams of prepared weed, and 30 grams of seeds.

The total weight of the confiscated plants was estimated at around 10 to 12 kilograms, with an international market value approaching PKR 60 million.

Deputy Director Zahoor Elahi Mazari said the suspect admitted to adopting this method after observing the high-profile Ar-maghan case.

A case has been registered against him, and further investigations are underway to trace the distribution network.

Militant attack on Mastung bank sparks security concerns

MM Report

MASTUNG: A brazen armed robbery at an Allied Bank branch in Mastung's central market on Tuesday has once again thrust Balochistan's fragile security situation into the spotlight. Militants, reportedly linked to separatist groups, escaped with 1.56 million rupees (around \$5,600) after a brief exchange with security forces, who claimed the attackers abandoned their weapons as they fled.

Footage from the scene showed police and paramilitary personnel cordoning off the area while market ac-

resident, echoing frustration among community members who question the effectiveness of the security operation.

The robbery comes amid a rise in militant attacks across Balochistan, where groups such as the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) have intensified strikes on security installations and economic targets, including those linked to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The province, rich in resources yet scarred by decades of insurgency, continues to struggle with instability amid long-standing demands for greater



tivity continued nearby. Local officials described the incident as a failed attempt by militants to spread fear, though the successful theft of cash has drawn criticism that the response was more symbolic than effective.

"They took the money and ran; that's not a defeat for them," said one local

autonomy and control over local wealth. Security experts believe the Mastung robbery reflects a shift in militant tactics, with insurgents increasingly targeting financial institutions to fund their operations amid reported shortages of external financing.