Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

www.voiceofmillionsqta.com Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah Quetta

Rabi-ul-Awwal 05, 1448 AH Vol: XX No. 06 Wednesday August 19, 2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

Google's Pakistan office milestone in country's digital transformation journey, says PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday unveiled the foundation plaque of Google's Pakistan office, and described it as a significant milestone in the country's digital transformation journey.

Addressing the delegation here at the Prime Minister's Office, PM Shehbaz Sharif said it was the delegation's first visit to Pakistan, adding that he hoped it would be followed by many more in the times to come.

He said Google was a household name not only in Pakistan but across the world, and that there existed great scope for building a wonderful partnership with the company to enhance bilateral engagement in multiple areas.

The prime minister termed it an interesting coincidence that the visit was taking place at a time when Pakistan was undergoing a major digital transformation across various areas of governance, and noted that the country's youth bulge could be leveraged to turn around Pakistan's economic fortunes.

Vice President of Google, Wilson L. White, said it was a profound honour to be on his first visit to Pakistan, calling it a great milestone achieved on the day. He said the occasion marked the culmination of a long-standing commitment, as Google had been investing in and committed to Pakistan for over a decade, and that the opening of its local office was a very special moment.

He said the prime minister's ambition of making Pakistan a US$30-billion IT export hub was very much aligned with Google's own goals. He informed the meeting that over the past ten years, Google had contributed to more than Rs 3.9 trillion of economic activity for local Pakistani businesses and households, supporting over 960,000 jobs, adding that this was just the beginning.

The Google Vice President said the company was committing to Pakistan's IT export goals in three major ways: by investing in Pakistani people, in manufacturing and infrastructure around export hardware, and in local businesses. He said Pakistan's digital transformation was only possible through investment in its people, and that Google had already contributed to the upskilling of over one million Pakistanis through its career certificate programmes.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates the office of Google Pakistan



QUETTA: A delegation of All Pakistan Mines Labour Federation called on Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani.

DPM assures govt's commitment supporting provinces in ensuring stable prices, adequate wheat, essential commodities' supply

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday assured that the government remains committed to supporting the provinces in ensuring stable prices and an adequate supply of essential commodities, including wheat. The deputy prime minister chaired a meeting of the Steering Committee on the import of wheat and directed the relevant officials that the entire process be undertaken with full transparency and in close coordination with all provinces. The DPM/FM took stock of the requirements for wheat imports, which have been communicated by all provinces and the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) was tasked with initiating the necessary preparations for the import of one million metric tons of wheat.

SC orders Imran Khan's transfer to Shifa International Hospital for treatment

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday ordered that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan be shifted to Shifa International Hospital for treatment for the next few days and directed the government to arrange weekly meetings between him and his family. The hearing came after a medical board report and a report by the Adiala Jail Superintendent submitted to the SC on Monday recommended more frequent meetings between Imran and his immediate family and spouse to help manage his blood pressure and anxiety, highlighting concerns over the former premier's blood pressure (BP).

A three-member bench headed by Justice Shahid Waheed was hearing cases concerning Imran's access to his sisters and personal physicians, as well as his medical record.

The court further ordered that Imran's personal physician, Dr Faisal Sultan, be granted access to him and directed the formation of a medical board comprising an eye specialist, a general physician, and a cardiologist along with Dr Sultan.

His sister, Dr Uzma, will also be associated with the newly established medical board, according to the order. The SC directed that Imran's family bear the cost of his treatment at the hospital. The court also instructed Imran's family and lawyers not to share his medical report with the media, with Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan ordering that the report be kept completely confidential.

"We assure the court that the medical report will remain completely confidential," PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja said. The court further directed that no political activity, media talks or press conferences be held outside the hospital.

"Do not engage in politics outside the hospital," Justice Afghan said. "There are other patients in the hospital," he added, stressing that other patients should not be affected.

India backing BLA terrorists to fuel terrorism in Balochistan: Tariq

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Tuesday told the Senate that India was providing resources and support to BLA terrorists operating as its proxies in Balochistan, stressing that Pakistan would continue to confront and eliminate every terrorist threatening the country's peace and security. Responding to points of order, the minister said the government and security agencies had no desire to conduct operations in Balochistan, but the state could not remain indifferent when terrorists targeted its people and security personnel. He said security forces and police personnel were laying down their lives on a daily basis to protect the country and its citizens from terrorism.

Dr Tariq Fazal said it was well known that the BLA was acting as a proxy and India was investing in and providing resources to elements involved in terrorist activities in Balochistan.

He said preventing such activities and eliminating terrorists from Pakistani soil was a fundamental responsibility of the state.

Referring to the PTI founder's health, Dr Tariq Fazal assured the House that the government would implement the Supreme Court of Pakistan's decision concerning his health in letter and spirit. He said the government had consistently maintained that cases concerning the PTI founder, including matters related to his release and other relief, were pending before courts and could only be decided through the judicial process. The minister said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had no executive authority to overturn or alter decisions handed down by the courts.

He recalled that PML-N leaders, including Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Rana Sanaullah Khan, had also faced imprisonment and sought relief through courts.

Dr Tariq Fazal urged the opposition to maintain consistency in its approach towards the judiciary instead of praising judgments when they were favourable and criticising the courts when decisions went against it.

Turning to the opposition's announced protest for September 27, the minister acknowledged its constitutional right to peaceful protest but cautioned against demonstrations turning violent.

Effective accountability must be ensured in public procurement process, says Law Minister

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Law & Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that transparency, institutional independence and effective accountability must be ensured in the public procurement process, while public procurement reforms will further improve transparency and efficiency in the government purchasing system.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee for Disposal of Legislative Cases (CCLC) here on Tuesday.

The meeting of the Cabinet Committee for Disposal of Legislative Cases (CCLC) was held at the Cabinet Division and reviewed important legislative and regulatory matters relating to various sectors.

The meeting held detailed discussions on the proposed amendments to the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Ordinance, 2002, and the draft Public Procurement Rules, 2025.

The Federal Minister said that the existing legal framework for public procurement requires greater clarity, responsibility and effective accountability mechanisms. He emphasized the need for an effective mechanism for independent grievance redressal and prevention of conflicts of interest in the public procurement process. He said that transparency, accountability and effective oversight in the public procurement system must be further strengthened to improve institutional confidence and efficiency in government procurement.

The meeting reviewed various proposals concerning independent grievance redressal.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, addressing the concluding ceremony of the Overseas Summer Scholar Internship and YPDC Residential Fellowship in federal capital

Balochistan govt taking notable steps to counter anti-state propaganda: Tarar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said terrorists had no colour, race or religion and that imposing ideologies through violence was unacceptable under any circumstances.

Pakistan had sacrificed 90,000 precious lives in the war against terrorism, while the Pakistani nation, armed forces and entire society were a strong shield between terrorists and the rest of the world, he said. Addressing a capacity-building workshop organised by the Sustainable Social Development Organisation (SSDO) for parliamentarians from Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh on the counter-terrorism framework and legislative responsibilities, the minister said effective measures had been taken to eliminate terrorism through joint efforts of state institutions, federal and provincial governments and the people. He said terrorism had been eliminated from the country to a large extent by 2017. At that time, he said, the state had introduced the National Action Plan in view of security challenges including the law-and-order situation in Karachi, terrorist activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a wave of terrorism in some areas of Balochistan and growing militancy from southern towards central Punjab. He said all relevant stakeholders responded to the National Action Plan and federal and provincial governments, armed forces and other institutions jointly worked against terrorism, resulting in its elimination to a large extent. An effective narrative also played an important role in the successful struggle against terrorism, he added. Tarar said the elimination of terrorism in 2017 improved the law-and-order situation from Karachi to Khyber and investment started in the country. However, he said, a subsequent policy change, including developing sympathy for terrorists and their facilitators and adopting a policy of resettling and negotiating with them, seriously undermined four years of national efforts against terrorism. He said political parties had not been taken into confidence over the decision to change the policy, although political consensus was necessary on important issues such as national security and terrorism.

At least nine terrorists killed in separate Balochistan IBOs

QUETTA, (Monitoring Desk): Security forces have killed more than nine terrorists in separate intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in parts of Balochistan, security sources said on Tuesday.

According to the security sources, the operations were conducted in Ziarat, Harnai and Surab districts under Operation Rad-ul-Fitna-3. The security sources said that a major IBO was carried out in the mountainous area between Ziarat and Harnai following a tip-off. The terrorists' hideout was surrounded during the operation, resulting in the killing of eight terrorists, while the hideout was also destroyed, they added.

In another operation in Hajika village in Soorab district, security forces killed one terrorist, according to security sources.

The operations were conducted after security forces traced terrorist movement between Dasht Katai and Hajika areas, sources said.

According to the security sources, ammunition, magazines, hand grenades, walkie-talkies, a motorcycle and other equipment were recovered from the killed terrorists.



Palestinian woman in the occupied West Bank unable to return home after leaving with her children to seek treatment for her two-year-old daughter amid a siege imposed by Israeli settlers

Gohar urges govt to engage in dialogue instead of taking "short steps"

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday welcomed the Supreme Court's order to transfer jailed party founder Imran Khan to Shifa International Hospital for medical assessment and treatment, urging party workers to avoid gathering outside the medical facility.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that the party would never politicise the health of its founder, adding that health-related reports would not be used for personal matters. Speaking to reporters outside the Parliament House, he said that his party was also not in favour of politically eliminating anyone, adding that compliance with the top court's order would pave the way forward.

Barrister Gohar also called for the resolution of former first lady Bushra Bibi's health issues, saying she also had the right to be shifted to a hospital and receive medical facilities.

The PTI chief said that the implementation of court orders would help lower the country's political temperature and urged the government to move towards dialogue instead of taking short steps.

"Measures should be taken to resolve political differences through dialogue," he said, adding that statements that could raise the political temperature should be avoided.

He said the safety of the army, police and Rangers was every Pakistani's foremost priority, adding that PTI did not want to expose the security institutions to any threat.

"There should be no compromise on terrorism," Barrister Gohar said, adding that terrorism was condemnable wherever it occurred. PTI Secretary-General Salman Akram Raja alleged that Khan was kept away from his personal physicians, saying his complete checkup would be conducted at Shifa International Hospital.

Qatar for full implementation of Gaza ceasefire plan

DOHA, (Monitoring Desk): Qatar said on Tuesday that it is pushing for the full implementation of the agreed ceasefire plan in the Gaza Strip despite Israeli "intransigence."

Qatar Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari told a news conference that Doha remains committed to moving forward with efforts to implement the Gaza ceasefire plan.

"What we are demanding is that both parties to the Gaza agreement fully implement the agreed plan," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected a 15-point Gaza ceasefire plan and insisted that Hamas disarm first, although the roadmap issued by US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace on July 31 calls for Hamas' disarmament and an Israeli withdrawal to proceed gradually and in parallel.

Cabinet body endorsed design of National Integrated Energy Plan 2027–2060

ISLAMABAD, (APP):The Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCoE) on Tuesday approved the high-level design of Pakistan's National Integrated Energy Plan (IEP) 2027–2060, marking an important milestone towards establishing a coordinated, long-term and cross-sectoral approach to energy planning in the country.

The high-level design was presented by the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) before the CCoE, said a press release.

The National Integrated Energy Plan shall provide a holistic framework for planning Pakistan's energy sector by moving beyond the traditional approach of planning individual energy subsectors in isolation. It will facilitate coordinated planning across different energy sectors and between federal and provincial institutions, enabling better optimization of energy resources, infrastructure and investments. The high-level design is based on four fundamental pillars—Energy, Economics, Equity and Environment. The Energy pillar focuses on a secure, reliable and resilient energy system. Economics emphasizes a competitive and financially sustainable energy sector. Equity focuses on ensuring an inclusive, accessible and just energy transition. Environment aims to achieve a sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient energy future. The IEP is expected to provide significant benefits to consumers and the economy. By promoting holistic planning among federal and provincial departments, it will help reduce fragmented decision-making and enable more efficient and optimized use of Pakistan's available energy resources.

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Wednesday August 19, 2026

Pakistan's significant role in US-Iran mediation process

On June 15, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced via the social media platform X that a peace deal between the US and Iran had been reached, following over two months of mediation by his country. Sharif expressed gratitude to Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye for their significant contributions, stating that the official signing ceremony would take place on June 19 in Switzerland. Following this announcement, a memorandum of understanding was signed electronically by US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance on the US side, and by Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on the Iranian side. The reported agreement is characterized as a framework peace deal aimed at ending the 2026 Israel/US-Iran war and transitioning the current ceasefire into a broader diplomatic process. Although the text of the agreement has not yet been published, key reported elements include immediate cessation of military operations, reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to international shipping, and a 60-day negotiation period to address unresolved issues, particularly Iran's nuclear program, alongside discussions on sanctions relief and access to frozen Iranian assets during follow-up negotiations. This agreement follows two significant developments. First, Israel conducted military strikes on Iranian targets in western and central Iran around a week ago, marking the first such actions since April. Explosions were reported in Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, and other cities in response to Iranian missile launches that were highly performative. Second, Trump warned that Iran would "pay the price" for what he described as slow progress in negotiations to end the conflict, indicating that the US could resume strikes against Iranian infrastructure.

Although the agreement does not necessarily mean that the root causes that prompted the war have fully disappeared, a few observations are worth mentioning and analyzing.

First, a lot of narrative spinning is occurring publicly at the moment. While the main parties are trying to sell the agreement as a victory, there are factions within the broader regional camps (such as hardliners in both Iran and Israel) that oppose it. Critics in Iran have labeled the agreement a "humiliating capitulation," arguing that it involves unjustified concessions. Hardline opponents have publicly criticized the negotiating team, with Iranian MP Mahmoud Nabavian stating that the latest draft is "more damaging" than previous versions. Similarly, Israeli officials emphasized that Israel was not directly involved in negotiating the US–Iran deal and does not necessarily consider itself bound by its provisions. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz declared that Israel would not withdraw from territory seized in Lebanon and would continue to act against threats from Hezbollah and Iran if necessary. Second, the timing of the agreement suggests that Iran was running out of options. As the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) focused on messaging and performative measures, the gap between their narrative and reality widened, with Iran's ability to endure further pressure significantly diminishing. Trump's counter-blockade against Iran's restriction of the Strait of Hormuz imposed significant economic costs on Iran, leading to the decision to sign the agreement. It is estimated that the blockade could have cost Iran over $24 billion in just two months — almost equal to Iran's reported total reserves of foreign currency — leaving the regime with little choice but to agree to the terms or face economic collapse.

Third, despite the negative reactions from hardliners in both Iran and Israel, the agreement highlights Trump's genuine interest in reaching a resolution with Iran, especially following last year's swift 12-day war between Israel and Iran. However, radical elements in Israel seem intent on using procrastination, escalation, or military actions to sabotage meaningful attempts to achieve peace. Given that there is reportedly a 60-day negotiation period following the signing of the agreement, it is likely that these factions will continue to work against a comprehensive resolution. Fourth, while Pakistan played a significant role in the mediation process, Qatar's involvement was also crucial, as acknowledged by American, Pakistani, Saudi, and Turkish officials. Notably, neither the Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman nor the ministry itself reported any independent measures taken by Qatar, apart from endorsing Pakistan's mediation efforts. In fact, a Qatari spokesman denied any independent role in the mediation at this stage. Qatar's involvement appears to have been executed at the request of the United States and had several dimensions.

Primarily, Qatar facilitated technical issues between the US and Iran, such as enabling the transfer of Iranian funds without direct US involvement, thereby avoiding the perception of it being a US initiative or taxpayer-funded. Additionally, Qatar played a role in establishing a communication channel between the United Arab Emirates and Iran, which emerged later in the mediation process. Finally, Qatar aligned itself with Saudi Arabia's position, providing support for the Pakistani initiative. Fifth, two awkward positions regarding the agreement can be highlighted. Firstly, the Europeans have been largely inactive in resolving the crisis yet somehow managed to host the official signing ceremony between the Americans and Iranians. Instead of crediting Pakistan, Switzerland offered to host the ceremony, which can be seen as an act of opportunism. Secondly, Oman, historically a favored mediator between the US and Iran, has been notably absent from this current arrangement. Oman's position during this war was not popular in the Gulf Cooperation Council and beyond. According to a senior US administration official, Oman was removed from its mediation role in negotiations with Iran after the US concluded that Muscat had acted "very duplicitously" during the talks. Finally, we must approach the prospects of the agreement with caution. It is essential to recognize that this is not a comprehensive peace agreement but rather a transitional framework. The future of the agreement will largely depend on the outcomes of negotiations in the next 60 days. Given that several factions within Iran and Israel are opposed to the agreement, we should not dismiss the possibility of sabotage, particularly from Israel.

While Atlas stands

Aqdas Afzal

This is a story about a government that collects more money every year and yet can't build anything that works. Govern-ment schools are abandoned for private alternatives, while people only visit government hospitals when they have no choice. Meanwhile, the salaried class pays taxes with mathematical precision, while big land--lords, traders and property dealers con--tribute almost nothing. This is Pakis-t-a--n's story, where the salaried class has be--come the nation's Atlas, bearing the entire fiscal burden on its shoulders, while the elites walk free beneath it.

Will this budget finally say something honest? Consider what has happened to Pakistan's economy over the last two decades. Remittances, which stood at around $6 billion in 2007, have risen to over $38bn in FY25. This steep rise enabled Pakistan to reduce poverty on paper without transforming the structure of its economy. It did not build competitive industries. It did not develop an export base. For a while, this arrangement worked.

Then came the rupture. Inflation peaked at nearly 38 per cent in May 2023. Food prices rose 30-40pc. The rupee fell from 160 to above 280. Real incomes collapsed for the bottom half of the population. Pakistan today is not simply a poor country; it's an economically fragile country with millions hovering just above subsistence, one life shock away from falling back. This is the economy the budget must address.

Sadly, the government seems only focused on stabilisation and IMF compliance. We are told that the IMF programme is on track. Pakistan's external position is stable. Reserves rebuilding has exceeded projections. The current account is balanced and inflation has retreated from its peak. And yet the IMF's own documents acknowledge that poverty remains elevated and growth subdued. The Middle East conflict adds fresh risks in the shape of upward pressure on inflation and a weaker balance-of-payments. The fact is that stabilisation is not the same as recovery. A country's economy can stabilise, even as its middle class quietly disappears.

In FY2024-25, the salaried class paid Rs606bn in taxes, a 55pc increase in a single year. FBR collection rose from Rs4.7 trillion in FY21 to Rsl 1.7tr in FY25. Still, the tax-to-GDP ratio barely moved. More money is being collected from the same people. The tax base has not broadened. The burden has only deepened.

A salaried worker cannot hide income. Employers deduct taxes before the salary is credited. Each year, tax authorities return to the same well, not because it is the most productive well, but because it is the easiest one to find. The Rs600,000 annual tax-free threshold has become a symbol of this failure. Fifty thousand rupees a month in most urban centres in Pakistan is not prosperity. It is barely subsistence. When a salary increase is granted merely to keep pace with 30pc inflation, the tax system treats it as additional income. Taxing it is not a revenue policy. It is penalising people for remaining in the formal economy.

Meanwhile, the agricultural income of large landowners enjoys near-total protection. Speculative real-estate gains move largely outside the documented net. Informal wholesale and retail sectors operate in comfortable obscurity.

The im--balance is not incidental. It is structural.

Budget FY2026-27 has a narrow window to begin correction. Six things must happen.

First, the tax-free threshold must be raised substantially and indexed to inflation going forward — automatic ind-e-xing, not ann-ual po--litical discretion. Seco--nd, the tax base must be genuinely broadened to include agricultu-ral income, real-estate gains and the informal economy. Third, energy circular debt, now Rs5tr across the power, petroleum and gas sectors, must be subjected to an in--de--pend-ent audit as the current arran-gem-ent is fiscally uns-ustainable and po--litically protec-ted. Fourth, the fiscal de--ficit must be bro-ught to zero over three years through Rs3-4tr reductions in current expenditure, cabinet ratio-nalisation, pensio--ns reform and PSDP cleansing. Fifth, commercial bank lending to the government must be repriced away from Kibor-plus commercial rates.

Three crises, one silence

DR RAKHSHINDA PERVEEN

Suicide

May 18, 2026. The Federal Shariat Court restored Section 325 of the Pakistan Penal Code. No protests. No emergency session. No coalition demanding reversal. A law that criminalises surviving a suicide attempt came back with less noise than a routine budget notification and that quietness tells you everything about whose lives this country considers worth protecting.

Section 325 was never Islamic in origin. It was lifted from British colonial legislation in 1860, inherited at Partition, and never examined because the people it harms have never been a constituency worth fighting for – those in psychiatric crisis, women with nowhere to go, transgender persons surviving without documents or shelter, men undone by debt. The court said decriminalisation was against the Quran and Sunnah. Classical Islamic jurisprudence says otherwise: legal responsibility requires sound intellect, severe mental illness suspends accountability, and preservation of life is a foundational obligation of the law. None of that was apparently the point.

The law does not fall on everyone the same way. Women facing domestic violence and/or workplace harassment and torture, transgender people with no institutional safety net, men without social capital or legal recourse – all they meet this law at their most exposed. For a woman already running from her home, surviving now carries a criminal charge. That is not protection. That is the state deciding her crisis is her fault.

Femicide

We are not short of coverage. Femicide appears on Instagram, in television segments that run the story for two days and move on, in donor reports that circulate at hotel conferences and then get filed. What it almost never appears in is a parliamentary debate where someone actually has to answer for the numbers, or a meeting of lawyers and judges asking why conviction rates are so low that most perpetrators walk free, or a civil society campaign that does not shut down the moment the donor money runs out. Femicide in Pakistan is not hidden. It is managed. Women and girls are disproportionately its victims. The attention spikes when a case is upsetting enough to hold an audience and evaporates when it is not. The institutional response in between is silence the kind that gets called normalcy.

Filicide

This is where the failure is most complete and most invisible because we have not even built the language for it. A parent kills a child. Our vocabulary gives us qatl, gives us saffak in a headline, gives us a moral verdict applied almost exclusively to mothers, and stops there. The word filicide, as used in psychiatry and law, demands a different set of questions: what broke down, and when, and who was supposed to notice and did not?

Pakistan has no postpartum mental health screening system. The Thinking Healthy Programme – developed and clinically tested here, endorsed by the World Health Organization as part of its global mental health programme, proven to achieve remission in three out of four women with perinatal depression – is not systematically implemented in the country that produced it. Women in postpartum psychosis, women ground down by domestic violence and economic dependence, women with no shelter bed and no helpline that answers they become the headline. Saffak. The headline does not ask what came before. Neither does the planning commission. Neither does the funded project that will close regardless of what the data is still showing.

We built a programme the world adopted and did not use it ourselves. That is not an oversight. That is a decision about whose suffering counts.

I have worked on these three issues for over thirty years. Most of that work has been done outside funded projects, outside donor priority lists, outside the rooms where decisions get made. I am not saying this for sympathy. I am saying it because the pattern matters. All three crises share the same mechanism of neglect. Attention arrives when there is a project behind it. The project has a three-to-five year life. When it ends, data collection stops, coalitions disperse, recommendations sit in reports no ministry requested. The problem continues on its own schedule. So here is what needs to happen, and none of it requires a new idea. Lawmakers need to stand on the floor of the National Assembly and name femicide as a legislative emergency not in a press release, on the floor, with conviction data demanded from the relevant ministries. Benches and Bars need to publicly examine why perpetrators of gender-based violence routinely avoid punishment. Section 325 needs to be repealed and replaced with mandatory psychiatric evaluation and care for anyone who survives a crisis, regardless of gender. Postpartum mental health screening needs to be mandated through the lady health worker network that already reaches rural communities. A national database on femicide, filicide and suicide - disaggregated by sex, gender identity, relationship to the perpetrator and province - must exist, be publicly accessible, and be updated annually.

These are not proposals. They are the minimum. The question is not whether anyone in a position of power knows they are needed. The question is whether anyone in that position will act when there is no grant cycle, no donor delegation, no conference deadline making it temporarily convenient to care.

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Regulation and deregulation

ISHRAT HUSAIN

Time has shown that the ideological debate between regulation and deregulation is largely misplaced. Governments and regulators have different roles under varying market structures and circumstances. In some areas, they regulate more actively; in others, they oversee operation of market forces. Evidence and outcomes, not ideology, should determine the state's role. In Pakistan, the formal sector is often overregulated and burdened by procedures and discretionary powers that discourage innovation, investment and technological adoption. Regulatory enforcement is weak. Quacks, unsafe buildings, counterfeit drugs, etc, escape oversight.

Excessive regulation in the formal sector and lax enforcement elsewhere encourages informality. Hence, thousands of enterprises prefer to remain outside the documented economy. Had they not had to face needless constraints, many could have grown into medium-sized firms, increasing output, employment, tax revenues and efficiency, while reducing the informal economy.

Why is regulation required? In a mixed public-private economy, regulation is essential to ensure fair competition and protect consumers.

Until the early 2000s, the same ministry made policies, owned enterprises and regulated the sector in which those enterprises operated. Recognising the inherent conflict of interest, the government initiated reforms to separate the functions. Ministries were assigned responsibility for policy formulation, SOEs for commercial operations and independent regulators for oversight and consumer protection.

The logic was simple. A private firm can't compete fairly with an SOE if the regulating ministry also owns one of the competitors. The ministry can alter policies, provide subsidies, absorb losses, grant tax concessions or create barriers that disadvantage private firms. Hence independent regulators were set up to create a level playing field and encourage competition. Have the aims of reform been achieved 25 years later?

Take the energy sector. Though it has specialised regulators, we still face high energy tariffs, unaffordable electricity, poor service delivery and a circular debt running into trillions. One reason is that ministries and bureaucracies never fully accepted the transfer of authority to regulators and SOEs; conflicts between ministries and regulators weakened regulatory autonomy. The regulators' governance structures, too, have been problematic.

Appointments to bodies such as ene-rgy sector regulators Nepra and Ogra have often been influenced by considerations of loyalty and post-retirement accommodation, instead of exper-tise. Many positions are occupied by retired bur-e-aucrats, instead of specialists in economics, fin-a-n--ce, engineering, law or energy markets. Ro--l-es and responsibilities are blurred. Regulators make po--licy and regulatory decisions while exercising ope--rational oversight over management, thus weaa--kening accountability and creating confusion. Experience of over two decades suggests that Nepra and Ogra need significant restructuring.

Removing direct price determination from their mandates is the first step. The SBP provides a model. It regulates the banking system and enforces prudential standards but doesn't directly determine banking services prices. Similarly, petroleum and gas prices should gradually be deregulated and determined through market competition. Ogra should evolve into a modern supply-chain regulator, ensuring efficient utilisation of refineries, storage facilities, pipelines, terminals, etc. It should facilitate investment across the value chain, support development of strategic reserves and promote digitalisation of the fuel supply ecosystem. Ogra needs strong legal powers to act against hoarding, cartelisation, collusion, market manipulation and non-compliant OMCs, which requires a clearer demarcation of responsibilities between Ogra and the CCP.

The Directorate General Petroleum Concessions' regulatory functions should also be separated. Contract administration and compliance with concession agreements may remain with the concessionaire authority, while regulatory oversight should be transferred to Ogra. The Department of Explosives should also be integrated into Ogra. Power sector reform must begin with dismantling the single-buyer model and implementing the CTBCM, allowing multiple buyers and sellers to participate in electricity markets. The government would continue to own the transmission network and recover wheeling charges, while suppliers compete for customers.

At an appropriate stage, Pakistan should gradually replace the uniform national tariff with targeted subsidies for remote, disadvantaged reg-ions. Such a system would improve efficiency, re--duce leakages and manipulation, lower end-user prices, encourage higher consumption and reduce capacity charges.

Privatising Discos should not merely replace public monopolies with private monopolies. The underlying assets, including surplus land, should remain publicly owned and be leased to competitively selected operators. This would promote competition and safeguard public assets.

Under this framework, Nepra's role would shift from price setting to market surveillance, consumer protection, prevention of anti-competitive behaviour, enforcement of grid neutrality and promotion of transparent governance. It would focus on reliability, loss reduction, digitisation and service quality rather than tariff determination. The National Grid Company must also expedite investment in transmission infrastructure, especially removing bottlenecks between southern generation centres and northern demand hubs. Governance structures needed corresponding changes. Provincial representation should continue, but board members must focus on oversight, policy, transparency, audit, accountability and approval of plans and budgets. Once they become members, they can't take directives implicitly or explicitly from the centre or provincial government to preserve neutrality and objective decision-making. Operational management should report to a professional CEO rather than directly to board members. Board composition should be broadened to include independent experts in energy, law, economics, finance, technology and information systems. Finally, recruitment and promotion within the regulators must be merit-based. Professional staff should be selected through open competition, while advancement should depend on performance. Continuous training and exposure to international regulatory best practices should be an integral part of capacity building.

Pakistan's real challenge is not to choose between regulation and deregulation, but to regulate intelligently, promote competition and enforce rules impartially. Strong, independent and professionally managed regulators are essential for attracting investment, protecting consumers and ensuring affordable, reliable energy supplies. Only then can regulation become an instrument of economic efficiency, instead of remaining an obstacle to growth.

Pak-Russia relations entering new phase of pragmatic cooperation: Leghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Tuesday said that Pakistan-Russia relations had witnessed a highly positive and pragmatic trajectory over the past two decades, transforming the two countries into trusted partners amid a rapidly evolving global order.

Delivering a keynote address at a webinar titled "Pakistan-Russia Bilateral Relationship at the Cusp of Shifting Global Order," the minister said the residual distrust from the Soviet era had faded, elevating the partnership from an "unfriendly country" to a "trusted friend" across sectors including trade, energy, defense, and technology, said a press release release.

He said this diplomatic momentum is driven by high-level leadership, underscored by four recent meetings between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

As Co-Chairman of the Russia-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), the Minister emphasized regular engagements with his counterpart, Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilev, describing the IGC as the foundation of their multi-faceted ties. Bilateral cooperation has expanded through structured frameworks, including consultations on security, strategic stability, and counter-terrorism, alongside mutual alignment at the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to advocate for an inclusive, multipolar international order. A key focus of the address was regional connectivity, with Pakistan signaling its intent to join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The minister welcomed the statement by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk regarding connecting the INSTC with Pakistan's Gwadar Port, which would bridge a crucial link in China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Awais leghari also highlighted that Russian leadership has praised Pakistan's recent diplomatic role in mitigating conflicts between Iran and the United States, further validating President Putin's acknowledgement of Pakistan as a genuine global stakeholder. To unlock the substantial potential for bilateral trade and address structural hurdles like payment mechanisms, both nations have agreed to sign the Program of Economic Cooperation between the Russian Federation and Pakistan for the Period until 2030. Furthermore, the recent signing of the long-pending Russia-Pakistan Readmission Agreement in Bishkek will ease visa regimes, facilitating business travel and people-to-people exchanges.



As the war between Russia and Ukraine continues, Russian forces launched an attack on the Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk. The attack caused extensive damage to residential areas in the region.

Governor, SAPM discuss industrial development in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday held a meeting with Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan to discuss industrial development, investment promotion and economic growth in the province.

Pakistan Peoples Party Central Secretary Information Nadeem Afzal Chan and Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Farzand Ali Wazir were also present during the meeting.

The two sides exchanged views on ongoing and proposed industrial projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), promotion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), creation of employment opportunities and modernization of local industries.

Governor Kundi said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa possessed immense investment potential due to its rich natural resources, mineral reserves, agricultural output and strategic geographical location. He emphasized the need to accelerate industrial development projects, strengthen special economic zones and improve business facilitation measures to create new employment opportunities for the youth. He stressed that the early establishment of an industrial zone near the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route in Dera Ismail Khan was essential and would benefit the entire region.



Protesters push as they clash with police officers during a rally to protest government policies, one day after Indonesia's Independence Day celebration, in Jakarta, Indonesia

Irish Envoy visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Ireland Ambassador to Pakistan Mary O'Neill, on Tuesday visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) and met the local business community and discussed the ways to increase bilateral trade. SCCI President Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Senior Vice President Mohammad Murad Arshad and Vice President Salman Sheikh welcomed the distinguished guest.Briefing the Ambassador, the SCCI President said that trade between the two countries had reached 700 million euros. He proposed setting up direct business-to-business (B2B) links, exchanging trade delegations, and signing an agreement with an Irish chamber to help Sialkot export more sports goods, surgical instruments, textiles, and leather products. Ambassador Mary O'Neill, praised Sialkot's famous self-help industry. She highlighted that many traditional Irish sports items (like hurling balls.

FBR establishes PRAL's front desk at LTO Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has established and operationalized a PRAL's Front Desk at the Large Taxpayers Office (LTO), Karachi on June 5, 2026 headed by the dedicated Chief (Inland Revenue Operations).

The desk set up in line with the directives of the Prime Minister and in response to requests from the business community of Karachi, said a news release.

The office, supported by a specialized team from Pakistan Revenue Automation Ltd. (PRAL) and equipped with the requisite IT infrastructure, will serve as a dedicated facilitation Centre for the Karachi-based business community, providing on-site technical assistance and ensuring the timely resolution of issues relating to IRIS, e-filing, registration, online tax payments, Sales Tax returns, refunds, and other digital tax services.

CDNS exceeds Islamic finance target, mobilizes Rs60 billion in 'Shariah-Compliant Investments'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Islamic finance sector continues its impressive growth trajectory as the Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has mobilized Rs60 billion through Islamic investment products during the first eleven months of fiscal year 2025-26 (July 1, 2025, to June 8, 2026), surpassing its annual target of Rs55 billion ahead of schedule.

According to official sources, the achievement reflects growing public confidence in Shariah-compliant financial instruments and underscores the expanding role of Islamic finance in Pakistan's economic landscape.

Officials attributed the strong performance to an increasing preference among investors for interest-free financial products that comply with Islamic principles while offering secure and competitive returns. The rising popularity of Shariah-compliant savings schemes.



In the Bureij Refugee Camp in the central Gaza Strip, roofs and sections of buildings severely damaged and at risk of collapse due to Israeli attacks are being removed by the Ministry of Public Works and the Bureij Municipality, in cooperation with the Qatar Committee



Rescue and evacuation efforts continue in Sarapiquí, a region of Heredia province in Costa Rica, for those affected by flooding.

Govt to support NTUF-KOICA partnership to strengthen textile innovation, research: Rana

FAISALABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister (PM) for Trade Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan said on Tuesday the government was committed to supporting international academic and technological partnerships.

He also emphasized the importance of strengthening collaboration between the National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to boost innovation, research and capacity-building in Pakistan's textile sector. The PM's Coordinator expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation from National Textile University Faisalabad led by its Vice Chancellor/Rector Prof Dr. Rashid Masood.

The delegation also included NTUF Registrar Salman Saif, Project Coordinator Dr. Qamar Khan and representatives of Korea International Cooperation Agency. The meeting reviewed the ongoing cooperation between NTUF and KOICA and discussed future avenues for collaboration aimed at enhancing educational excellence, technological advancement and industrial competitiveness.

During the briefing, the NTUF delegation apprised Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan of the current status of projects being implemented with KOICA's support and highlighted progress made in various academic and technical initiatives.

The participants also exchanged views on strategies to further strengthen institutional cooperation and maximize the benefits of international partnerships.

Adviser says:

Govt focusing on agriculture, exports to strengthen economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Finance Minister Khurram Shehzad on Tuesday said the government is prioritizing the promotion of agriculture and enhancement of exports to further strengthen the national economy.

Speaking to a private television channel, he said the farming community is being provided with loan facilities to support agricultural growth and improve productivity.

He said financial assistance is being extended to small and medium-scale farmers under the "Zarkhizi" programme.

Responding to a question, he said the manufacturing sector is also playing a significant role in supporting economic growth and strengthening the country's financial outlook.

Commenting on the federal budget, he said extensive consultations were held with all relevant institutions and stakeholders before its preparation to ensure a comprehensive and balanced fiscal plan.

Gold prices increase by Rs 2,830 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The prices of gold registered an increase in the local market on Tuesday, with 24 karat gold per tola gaining Rs 2,830 to settle at Rs 455,063 compared to Rs 452,233 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 2,547 to Rs 389,534 from Rs 386,987, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs 2,306 to Rs 357,225 against Rs 354,919.



Children take part in a ballet class at the 'Step Up Academy' established by 23-year-old ballet and pilates instructor Sara Naum in Aleppo, Syria

CM reviews wheat situation, decides to procure 1m tonnes from PASSCO

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday approved the procurement of one million metric tonnes of wheat from Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) to help stabilize wheat and flour prices across the province. Chairing a special video-link meeting to review the wheat and flour situation, the chief minister approved the purchase plan under which wheat would be obtained from PASSCO and supplied to flour mills at Rs 3,300 per maund to ensure the availability of affordable flour and bread for consumers. The meeting also reviewed concerns regarding reports of restrictions on the supply of wheat from Punjab to other provinces, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. A detailed report presented during the meeting stated that claims about restrictions on wheat movement from Punjab to any province were not supported by facts. Officials further informed the participants that no complaint had been received regarding the suspension of wheat supplies to Sindh. During the briefing, officials said the process of wheat stock declaration was continuing across the province and comprehensive data collection was underway to assess and meet Punjab's food requirements. They added that grain size of the current wheat crop was comparatively smaller than usual. The meeting decided that after fulfilling its own food requirements, Punjab would continue to discharge its responsibility of supplying wheat to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz directed the relevant authorities to maintain close monitoring of the wheat situation and ensure effective.

Rain, Wind, and Thunderstorms Expected in Upper and Central Parts of the Country

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast rain, strong winds and thunderstorms in Islamabad, the Potohar region, upper Punjab, Kashmir, upper and central Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan on Wednesday, with isolated heavy rainfall expected in some areas.

The Met Office said hot and humid weather would continue in most other parts of the country. Heavy rainfall from Tuesday night through August 20 could cause urban flooding in low-lying areas of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mardan, Swabi, Peshawar, Nowshera, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot and Lahore. Flash flooding and landslides are also possible in vulnerable areas of Kashmir, Murree, Galiyat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad-Rawalpindi.

Rain and thunderstorms are expected across several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, while isolated heavy rainfall is forecast in parts of the Potohar region and northeastern Punjab. Similar conditions are expected in Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Sindh and most parts of Balochistan are likely to remain hot and humid, although partly cloudy conditions may develop in some areas.

PM directs to accelerate privatisation process of power DISCOs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to accelerate the privatisation process of electricity distribution companies (DISCOs), reiterating that offloading loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) was a priority for the government.

Chairing a high-level review meeting here, the prime minister instructed officials to ensure complete transparency throughout the privatisation process and establish a robust regulatory framework immediately following the transition of the DISCOs to the private sector. During the briefing on the progress regarding the privatisation of DISCOs, it was told that in the first phase, Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO), and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) would be privatised as the Expression of Interest (EOI) for the purpose had already been published in national and international newspapers.

It was told that the Cabinet Committee on Privatization had approved the transaction structure regarding the privatisation of the said three DISCOs.

The international roadshows are being organized starting this month to attract investors from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and China. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar, Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, and Sardar Awais Leghari, Adviser to the Prime Minister Muhammad Ali, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, and relevant senior government officials.



A woman poses at the driver's seat of a pink bus as Pink Bus Service launched to provide safer and more comfortable public transportation for women in Tejgaon, Dhaka, Bangladesh

CPEC can accelerate blue economy growth: PCJCCI

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Commercial Ambassador Adeel Munawar said on Tuesday that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can accelerate blue economy growth and regional economic transformation.

Sharing his views in a think-tank session here at PCJCCI Secretariat, he added that maritime stability and regional peace are fundamental prerequisites for the growth of the blue economy. He emphasized, the CPEC as the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), possesses all the characteristics necessary to drive regional economic transformation and sustainable development.

Adeel Munawar remarked that the future of global prosperity lies in cooperation and peace rather than confrontation. He noted that Pakistan is actively advancing initiatives related to the blue economy to enhance livelihoods, create new economic opportunities, and ensure the sustainable management of marine resources while preserving the health of coastal and marine ecosystems.

He highlighted that Pakistan offers the shortest and most efficient trade route for China and the Central Asian Republics through Gwadar Port, strengthening regional connectivity and trade integration. He observed that Pakistan's Indus Delta region holds significant untapped potential in terms of hydrocarbon reserves, presenting promising opportunities for future investment and energy security. Adeel Munawar noted that a joint expedition conducted by Pakistan Navy's Hydrographical Department and the China Geological Survey in 2019 revealed highly encouraging prospects within Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), indicating the presence of substantial oil and gas reserves in the Indus Delta region. He added that the third survey is expected to be conducted this year, which could facilitate future drilling activities and the eventual extraction of hydrocarbon resources.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-2627081167443 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Balochistan Land Revenue Management Information System invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee PKR and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	Office Renovation and Interior Works – Hub & Turbat Offices	5,900,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over of at least 4,130,000 PKR Amount in2 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Must have completed at least 1 project involving design, interior renovation of Citizen facilitation centre for Government Sector (Nadra Registration Centre, e-Khidmat centre etc)) **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Gurantee,Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed **Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication of NIT to 03 September, 2026during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 03 September, 2026till 11:00 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 11:15 AM Address: Board of Revenue Ground Floor Block # 14- Romm 109, Civil Secretariat Balochistan Quetta. Phone no: 0819204411 Email: javeen143@hotmail.com

DPRQ/PRQNo.883/18-8-2026

Assistant Secretary (Admn:) Board of Revenue

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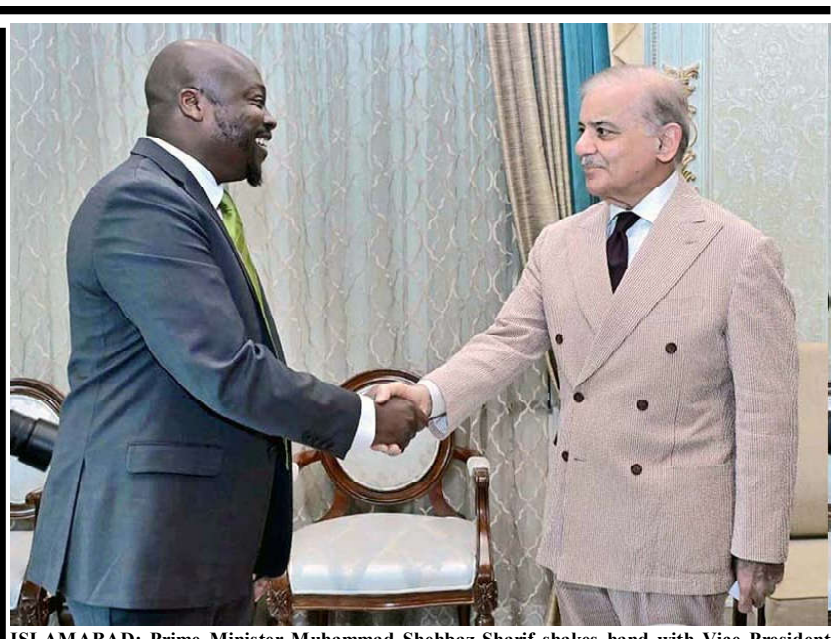
PM Shehbaz directs to ensure transparent, merit-based appointments of Hajj assistants

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday approved Pakistan's first-ever four-year Hajj Policy and Plan (2027-2030), directing authorities to ensure transparent, merit-based appointments of Hajj assistants and third-party validation of both government and private Hajj operations to improve services for pilgrims. The prime minister while chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet here, endorsed the long-term Hajj framework aimed at improving planning, operational efficiency and facilities for intending pilgrims. The cabinet also commended Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf and his team for what it described as the successful management of Hajj arrangements this year, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The cabinet was informed that, unlike previous annual policies, the new framework provides a four-year roadmap to facilitate long-termplanning. Standard operating procedures and other regulations will be developed for its implementation, while amendments will be made whenever necessary to ensure compatibility with Saudi laws and regulations. Under the approved policy, intending pilgrims will be able to register once for any Hajj season up to 2030 instead of undergoing annual registration, enabling the preparation of a priority waiting list. A Shariah-compliant Hajj savings scheme will also be introduced to help citizens plan financially for future pilgrimages.

The prime minister was informed that the entire Hajj management system, including payments, complaints handling and monitoring, would be digitised to enhance transparency and efficiency. The policy also provides separate quotas for government and private Hajj schemes, introduces both long and short Hajj packages, and includes mandatory pilgrim training, Takaful coverage and emergency response arrangements. During the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed that the appointment of Hajj assistants be carried out through a transparent and strictly merit-based process. He also instructed authorities to ensure independent third-party validation of services provided under both the public and private Hajj schemes.

The cabinet also approved a policy for outsourcing the services of the Isolation Hospital and Infectious Treatment Centre (IHITC) and the Regional Blood Centre (RBC) in Islamabad to improve the delivery of quality healthcare services. The Ministry of National Health Services was directed to complete the outsourcing process in accordance with the prescribed rules and regulations.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif shakes hand with Vice President Government Affairs and Public Policy of Google Mr. Wilson White



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Imran Nadeem Shigri called on Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani

PPP believes in public service, democratic values: Gilani

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Imran Nadeem Shigri on Tuesday discussed the prevailing political situation in the country, regional developments, the newly elected Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, and key issues confronting the region.

During a meeting, Gilani congratulated the Speaker on his election as Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly and expressed his best wishes to him and all newly elected members of the assembly.

The Senate chairman said the people of Gilgit-Baltistan had reposed their trust in the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

He said the PPP believed in public service, democratic values and politics focused on the welfare and well-being of the people.

He expressed confidence that all possible measures would be taken to meet the expectations of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Complete elimination of terrorists essential to ensure lasting peace in Balochistan: NA Speaker

Ayaz hails security forces for killing over nine terrorists in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday paid tribute to the security forces for successfully eliminating more than nine terrorists during operations in Ziarat, Harnai and Sohrab areas of Balochistan.

The Speaker commended the security forces for their successful operations against terrorists, saying that the forces had foiled the nefarious designs of the terrorists.

He said the unwavering resolve of the nation and security forces to completely eradicate terrorism was highly commendable.

Ayaz Sadiq said the nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the security forces in the fight against terrorism, adding that the sacrifices rendered by the security forces for peace and stability in Balochistan were unforgettable.

He termed the successes of the security forces in the war against terrorism encouraging and said the complete elimination of terrorists was essential for ensuring lasting peace in Balochistan.

Govt working to remove illegal; fraudulent identities from national records: Talal

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhary told the National Assembly on Tuesday that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had arrested more than 100 agents in operations over the past month.

Responding to points of order raised by lawmakers, he said the government had adopted a customer-focused approach to improve passport services. He said passport security features had also been improved. The government was working with the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) to provide passport services at all its centres, he added.

"This will help reduce queues at passport offices and make the process easier for citizens," he said.

He said criminal cases had also been registered against officials found facilitating passport agents.

He said action would be taken against any official or passport office found treating citizens improperly.

The minister invited lawmakers to provide details of specific cases or identify passport offices where citizens were facing problems.

He said the passport system had been reformed and online application and appointment facilities had been introduced to facilitate applicants.

Responding to allegations that passports of people from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were being deliberately delayed or withheld, he rejected the claim.

He said he was ready to examine every case and provide details about the reasons for any delay.

The Minister assured the House that action would be taken against any official found discriminating against citizens on the basis of their province or region.

He said the government was committed to further improving passport services and making the process easier for applicants.

The minister also said the government was working to remove illegal and fraudulent identities from national records.

Responding to complaints about the suspension of computerised national identity cards (CNICs) in Balochistan, he said no CNIC was suspended or blocked merely because of a person's provincial identity.

He said Nadra had identified cases in which Afghan nationals and other foreigners had obtained Pakistani identity documents through fraudulent family trees and other means. Some officials involved in manipulating records were facing criminal cases, while others had been dismissed, he added. Giving an example, he said 55,000 Pakistani passports held by Afghan citizens had been surrendered in Saudi Arabia alone.

He said foreign nationals possessing Pakistani documents could create serious problems if they became involved in terrorism or other crimes abroad. In such cases, they were treated as Pakistani citizens, he added. He urged elected representatives to take specific cases to the Interior Committee if they believed their complaints were not being addressed.

He said action would be taken against any passport official found involved in wrongdoing or providing preferential treatment to agents.



ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Dr. Noor Amna Malik presents shield to Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Wajiha Qamar during the opening ceremony of the 'Strategic Planning and Leadership Excellence Programme' for Vice Chancellors and Pro-Vice Chancellors at NIBAF

We moved in right direction, but there's a long, long way to go: Aurangzeb

KARACHI, (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that the current account performance remains strong due to record remittance flows.

"We do expect our overall remittances for this year to close anywhere between $41 to $42 billion."

Addressing the second edition of Pakistan Banking Summit 2026 at a local hotel here, he said that the last fiscal year was closed on a strong note across all matrices, starting with the fiscal side, a primary surplus, an all-time low fiscal deficit, debt-to-GDP ratio well below 70 percent, GDP growth closing at 3.7 percent on the back of strong rebound in LSM.

The Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said we talk about the dip in exports and indeed from the good side there is a dip but that dip is concentrated on the food side and value added especially on the textile side has continued to register year-on-year. He believed that the Foreign Exchange reserves will close at about $18.4 billion for this fiscal year, which is higher than the estimates that had earlier.

Aurangzeb said we started with the Eurobond and the most significant trade has been the Panda Bond because we have been at it at least for the last seven to eight years and not tapping the second largest, second deepest capital market in the world, has been a miss on our part.

Speaking about the Pakistan Stock Exchange, he said that the activity drivers are more important than the PSX numbers.



QUETTA: Special Secretary Finance Arif Achakzai called on Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani.

Minister for comprehensive rehabilitation plan for residents of informal settlements

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary said on Tuesday that the government was working to resolve problems faced by Pakistani medical students studying at foreign universities, particularly in Central Asia. Responding to points raised by lawmakers in the National Assembly, he said the government would seek further information from the Ministry of National Health Services and the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC). The information would then be shared with the public, he added.

Dr Tariq said most complaints had come from students studying in Central Asian countries, particularly Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

He said the PMDC was not responsible for the problems because the affected medical colleges had initially met the required criteria and were recognised by the relevant authorities.

However, policy changes by the governments of those countries later led to some colleges being delisted, he added.

WPC demands stronger laws to curb honour killings, gender based violence

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) on Tuesday called for stronger laws and effective prosecution to curb honour killings and gender based violence, while urging the government to establish safe and affordable hostels for girls and working women, during the 13th meeting of its General Assembly held at Parliament House, Islamabad, where members reviewed the legal and policy framework on femicide and violence against women.

The meeting was briefed by the Ministry of Human Rights on the alarming incidence of honour killings, gender based violence, femicide and premeditated murders in the country.

The ministry stressed that there could be no justification for killing a person in the name of social or tribal prestige.

WPC Secretary Dr Shahida Rehmani, MNA, welcomed the participants and appreciated the Ministry of Human Rights for briefing members on the sensitive issue. She also congratulated Parliamentary Secretary for Human Rights Saba Sadiq, MNA, on the successful hosting of the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women in Islamabad on July 12 and 13.

The conference was organised in partnership with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Ministry of Human Rights.

Dr Rehmani said the conference provided an important platform for dialogue, cooperation and exchange of experiences on women's empowerment, bringing together ministers, senior officials and delegations from OIC member states. Members expressed serious concern over the continued killings committed under the pretext of "honour" and called for a comprehensive review of existing laws to identify gaps in legislation, implementation, prosecution and protection mechanisms. They also recommended reconsidering the term "honour killing", arguing that it could inadvertently create an impression that such crimes have some form of legitimacy.

Arid university, PPAF ink MoU for climate-smart agriculture

RAWALPINDI, (APP): Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote climate-smart agriculture, strengthen the peanut value chain and improve rural livelihoods.

The signing ceremony was held at the university, where Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan was the chief guest, and Chief Executive Officer of PPAF Nadir Gul Barech attended as the guest of honor, said a press release issued by the university. Addressing the ceremony, Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan said that the government was establishing Digital Youth Hubs across the country to provide modern training and enhance entrepreneurship. Highlighting his recent visit to China, he announced that strategic initiatives for agricultural development and technology transfer between leading Chinese agricultural universities and PMAS-AAUR would be launched soon. The Chairman also paid tribute to Pakistan's Armed Forces.



RAWALPINDI: Vehicles drive through flooded streets after heavy rainfall in the Rahimabad area

TikTok removes 184 mln videos globally, 22.5 mln in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): TikTok removed more than 184 million videos worldwide between January and March 2026 for violating its Community Guidelines, while over 22.5 million videos were taken down in Pakistan during the same period, according to the platform's Q1 2026 Community Guidelines Enforcement Report. According to the report, TikTok removed 184,012,576 videos globally during the first quarter of 2026, representing approximately 0.5% of all content uploaded to the platform.

Of the total, 178,014,154 videos were detected and removed using automated detection technologies, while 8,838,710 videos were reinstated following further review.

Mustafa Kamal for strong local govt system to address challenges at grassroots level

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Mustafa Kamal visited the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Cardiac Center following the completion of the first phase of its upgradation, emphasizing that the introduction of modern technology would enable patients to receive advanced treatment free of charge, leading to faster recovery. Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the minister described the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) as the largest hospital in the federal capital.

Minister also focused on the progress to make 28 basic health centers (BHUs) of the federal capital active to reduce burden on big hospitals.

He stressed that most challenges could be overcome if every member of society realized and fulfilled their responsibilities. He also underlined the importance of a strong local government system to address challenges at the grassroots level before they escalate into major burdens.



LORALAI: Commissioner Loralai Division Wali Muhammad Barrech presenting traditional shawls to lady doctors and turban to doctors.



KALAT: Newly appointed Deputy Commissioner Engineer Ayesha Zehri assumes the charge of her office.

Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah printed at Shah Printing Press, Quetta and Published from Al-Syed Building M.A. Jinnah Road Quetta Ph. 2843190 E.mail: dailyvomqta@gmail.com.