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PM Shehbaz vows to provide maximum possible facilitation to business community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday approved the establishment of a Trade Facilitation Board, which will be chaired by him personally, to streamline the country's trade processes and address non-tariff barriers to cross-border commerce.

Chairing an important meeting on trade facilitation, the prime minister said the proposed board would take decisions aimed at improving the entire trade supply chain and resolving issues relating to cross-border trade.

The board will prepare a roadmap for promotion of trade, formulate a Trade Facilitation Index and devise a mechanism to monitor progress, the meeting was informed.

The prime minister directed that work be undertaken on an emergency basis to enhance the capacity of the country's ports and ordered the establishment of various working groups for this purpose.

The working groups will focus on enhancing port capacity, improving coordination among relevant departments, ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework, facilitating pre-arrival clearance and promoting the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in international trade.

The prime minister also directed that transportation, clearance and other procedures for importers and exporters at ports be simplified, with maximum possible facilitation provided to the business community.

During the briefing, the meeting was informed that ongoing reforms had resulted in a reduction in port charges, leading to a significant improvement in port utilization. It was further apprised that the facility for submission of Goods Declarations prior to the arrival of vessels was being continuously expanded, which would help expedite clearance procedures. The meeting was attended by Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on Jinnah Medical Complex, Research Centre and Federal Government Polyclinic Phase 2/Extension.



QUETTA: Former Deputy Speaker Sardar Babar Khan Musakhail and sardar Muhammad Hanif Musakhail meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz bugti.

CM Bugti vows to ensure balanced; inclusive development in all parts of Balochistan

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said that the development of remote and underdeveloped regions remains a major priority of the provincial government, which is utilizing all available resources to address public concerns and ensure the timely completion of development projects.

He expressed these views during a meeting with former Deputy Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly Sardar Babar Khan Musakhel and tribal leader Sardar Muhammad Hanif Khan Musakhel.

The meeting reviewed the overall political and social situation in the province, ongoing and proposed development initiatives in Musakhel and other areas, issues faced by local communities and other matters of mutual interest.

Chief Minister Bugti said the provincial government was working to promote balanced and inclusive development across Balochistan, with particular emphasis on improving basic facilities and bringing remote regions into the mainstream development process.

He said the government was committed to ensuring that the benefits of development extended to every part of the province and that public issues were addressed effectively while development schemes were completed within the stipulated timeframe.

During the meeting, Sardar Babar Khan Musakhel and Sardar Muhammad Hanif Khan Musakhel apprised the chief minister of various problems, requirements and development needs of Musakhel.

Taking notice of the issues highlighted during the discussion, the chief minister directed the relevant authorities to take appropriate and necessary measures to address the concerns.

The meeting also exchanged views on maintaining peace and stability.



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Justice (R) Irfan Qadir, Consultant Legal Affairs, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Creating secure environment for women collective responsibility: Dr Rubaba

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Adviser to the Balochistan Chief Minister on Women Development Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi has called for a proactive and gender-sensitive institutional framework to protect women, stressing that authorities should not limit their role to responding after complaints are filed but ensure timely assistance and access to justice for victims.

She expressed these views during a meeting with AIG Police (Gender) Israr Ahmed Umrani, during which they discussed measures to safeguard women's rights, prevent gender-based violence and strengthen legal and institutional mechanisms across Balochistan.

The meeting reviewed challenges confronting women, the need to enhance gender sensitivity within the policing system and ways to improve coordination among relevant institutions for the prompt and effective handling of complaints involving women.

Dr Buledi said creating a safe, secure and dignified environment for women remained a key priority of the provincial government. She emphasized that effective enforcement of existing laws and stronger coordination between law enforcement agencies and other relevant institutions were essential to curbing violence, harassment and gender-based crimes. She said improving the gender-responsive capacity of police and other public institutions would strengthen women's confidence in the justice system and enable them to obtain assistance and legal remedies without unnecessary delays.

The adviser said the Women Development Department would continue collaborating with relevant institutions to promote women's protection, legal awareness, economic empowerment and fundamental rights. She emphasized that creating a secure environment for women was a collective responsibility and required sustained cooperation among government departments, law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations. AIG Israr Ahmed Umrani briefed the adviser on measures being undertaken by the police to enhance women's protection and respond to gender-based violence. He also agreed to further strengthen coordination with the Women Development Department. The meeting also considered awareness initiatives, institutional cooperation and potential areas of joint work aimed at strengthening mechanisms for women's protection across the province.

Pakistan advocates women's leadership in global peace initiatives

UNITED NATIONS (APP): At a High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, Pakistan has called for an expanded role for women in peace and security, emphasizing the theme of women's leadership. "Let's invest in women leadership, let's invest in peace, let's invest in future," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the forum held on Wednesday to commemorate the adoption of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 1999.

He also lauded Bangladesh for sponsoring the annual follow-up resolution adopted by the 80th session of the 193-member Assembly.

"This landmark document affirmed that peace does not merely lie in the silence of guns but, in fact, flows from the protection of human rights, celebration of plurality, and promotion of the rule of law," the Pakistani envoy said.

Retired PIA officer GM Baloch Passes away



QUETTA, (VoM Report): Retired PIA officer GM Baloch passed away on Thursday.

The deceased was the father-in-law of SSP Prisons Balochistan Khushal Mir and Assistant Director of the Directorate General of Public Relations Balochistan Manzoor Ahmed Magsi. He was also the brother-in-law of NADRA's Amjad Durrani and C&W's Shahzad Ahmed, and a relative by marriage of Syed Farooq Shah, Syed Manzoor Ahmed Shah and Hassanullah Maradanzai.

His funeral prayer will be offered tonight at Akhund Baba Graveyard on Sabzal Road, Quetta, followed by his burial.

Fateha for the departed soul will be held at Masjid Tayyaba, Wahdat Colony Second Staff, Brewery Road, Quetta.

Petroleum pricing committee deliberates on measures to make fuel pricing more transparent, predictable

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Committee on Petroleum Pricing, chaired by Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, met on Thursday to review the petroleum pricing framework and deliberate on measures to make fuel pricing more transparent and predictable while protecting consumers from undue price volatility. The committee agreed on a set of recommendations to strengthen the existing pricing mechanism and decided to submit its final report to the Prime Minister for consideration and approval soon, a news release said.

For diesel pricing, the committee approved guiding principles for possible rules-based intervention in emergencies, with clearly defined price-shock triggers and possible corrective measures.

The committee also reviewed recommendations for the petrol pricing formula while setting a likely target of June 2027 for petrol deregulation.

No compromise on Pakistan's sovereignty, security: CM Bugti

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has lauded the security forces for foiling an alleged militant infiltration attempt along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in North Waziristan, saying the operation reflected their professionalism, vigilance and unwavering commitment to safeguarding the country's frontiers.

In a statement, the chief minister paid tribute to the security personnel over the reported killing of 15 militants during the operation, which he said continued for approximately 36 hours.

Bugti said the security forces demonstrated patience, courage and high professional competence while responding to the infiltration attempt and protecting the country's borders.

He said militant organizations continued to pose a threat to Pakistan's peace, stability and development, but stressed that the state institutions and the nation remained united in their resolve to counter terrorism.

Referring to the reported recovery of a substantial quantity of weapons and ammunition, the chief minister said the development highlighted the seriousness of the security threat and underscored the need for decisive action against what he described as foreign-backed terrorism.

Bugti said Pakistan had rendered enormous sacrifices in its long struggle against terrorism

15 India-sponsored terrorists killed, infiltration bid foiled along Pak-Afghan border: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): Security forces successfully foiled an infiltration attempt by Indian-sponsored Fitna al-Khwarij along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border opposite North Waziristan District, killing 15 Khwarij.

"Own troops responded professionally and with patience to engage them successfully. As a result of precise and skillful engagement that lasted for thirty six hours, fifteen khwarij belonging to Indian sponsored Fitna Al Khwarij were sent to hell," said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During the follow up sanitization operation, a significant quantity of weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed khwarij, which has further exposed the nefarious designs of Khwarij and their facilitators, seeking to disrupt peace and stability in the country, the news release further said.

"This incident along Pakistan-Afghanistan border once again vindicates Pakistan's persistent stance regarding the abject failure of the Afghan Taliban Regime to deny the use of Afghan soil by the terrorist organization, under their patronage, for cross-border terrorism.

The Afghan Taliban Regime has consistently failed to ensure effective border management and honor its international obligations," it further said.

The Security Forces of Pakistan remain resolute and unwavering in their commitment to defend the nation's frontiers. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored Kharji found in the area as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan was called on by Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel.

Modern highways network to unlock trade, employment opportunities in Balochistan: Governor

ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has emphasized that the development of a modern national highway network is vital for expanding trade, generating employment opportunities and attracting investment, particularly in a geographically vast province such as Balochistan.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan in Islamabad, where the two leaders reviewed major national highway projects in Balochistan and discussed measures to ensure their early completion. The chairman of the National Highway Authority and the federal communications secretary were also present at the meeting.

During the discussion, it was agreed to accelerate progress on the Quetta-Zhob-Dera Ismail Khan dual carriageway, while Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan reaffirmed his commitment to expediting work on the important highway project. Governor Mandokhail said the completion of the dual carriageway would significantly improve access between Balochistan and other parts of the country, enabling residents to travel more quickly, safely and conveniently while strengthening links with major commercial centers.

He said efficient road infrastructure was essential for facilitating the movement of people and goods and could play a major role in promoting commercial activity, investment and employment throughout the province.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, delivering the keynote address at the "High Level International Dialogue on Taxation for Fiscal Sustainability in Pakistan", organised by the Asian Development Bank.

Gwadar Port completes second commercial bunkering operation

GWADAR, (VoM Report): Gwadar Port has successfully completed its second commercial bunkering operation, marking another significant milestone in Pakistan's Blue Economy and in transforming Gwadar into a regional maritime hub.

During the operation, approximately 1,150 metric tons of Low Sulphur Fuel Oil (LSFO) were successfully supplied to the LNG carrier M.V. EXCELERATE SHENANDOAH (IMO No. 9321768) at Gwadar Port. The day-long bunkering operation was carried out in accordance with international safety, environmental, and operational standards.

For the operation, the bunker barge M.T. MARINE ISTA arrived at Gwadar from Karachi and supplied marine fuel to the vessel. The bunkering operation was completed through the coordinated efforts of the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), Pakistan Customs, and other relevant agencies.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Friday September 04, 2026

Muslim states must take joint steps against Israel's persistent use of violence

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has recently declared that he is determined to establish the greater Israel, which covers not only the whole Palestinian territories, but also a large part of the Arab world, including Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. With this theo-political statement, Netanyahu has threatened Arab national security, the Middle Eastern regional stability and international peace and security. Netanyahu, who considers himself "on a historic and spiritual mission," has declared that Israel aims to expand at the expense of the regional Arab states.

According to the reports, 31 Arab and Muslim states have "strongly condemned" Netanyahu's "greater Israel" vision and his expansionist policies. These states denounced illegal occupation activities as a breach of international law. This bloc of Arab and Muslim states has warned Israel to end its genocide in Gaza and rejected the Israeli plan for the displacement of the 2 million Palestinians. However, Israel and all its supporters know well that this condemnation, like all the previous statements made by the same group of states, will be thrown into the dustbin of history. Although there are some exceptions, such as King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in the Arab world, who took real measures to prevent Israeli expansionism, Arab leaders and Arab regimes largely remain indifferent to the Israeli atrocities and crimes against humanity in Palestine and the wider region.

When we look at the regional developments and the regional balance of power, it is relatively understandable that the Arab regimes that are largely dependent on Western countries are unable to intervene in the ongoing genocide. However, the position of Arab states seems quite complex. For example, it is not understandable that some Arab actors directly or indirectly support the genocide. Similarly, many Arab states allow Israel to use their airspace or naval routes. Many Arab states provide economic, political and military support for Tel Aviv. Within the context of the "greater Israel" vision, Israeli officials often blatantly claim that they will take over a large part of the Arab states. It is obvious that Israeli expansionism is not and will not be limited to the Gaza Strip. Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is just used as an excuse for the Israeli aggression. As soon as Israel fully controls Gaza, it will return to the West Bank, which is already under heavy and consistent Israeli attacks. Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that there are at least four phases in the Israeli regional expansionist plan.

In the first phase, the Zionist entity is determined to de-Palestinianize the Palestinian territories. It appears that the large Western countries have already given Israel the green light to proceed. In other words, it is a matter of time to initiate a second front of genocide in the West Bank. In the near future, we may hear news of mass killings, starvation and forced migration in the West Bank as well. The ultimate objective of Israel is not the control of the Gaza Strip or Palestine. In other words, the root cause of the problem is not Hamas, but the apartheid and expansionist regime established in Israel.

In the second phase, Israel will try to occupy the territories of other Arab states. Israeli officials claim that they will expand the territories of their state beyond Palestine. Recently, we have witnessed the new Israeli occupation attempts in Lebanon and Syria. Besides the long-time occupied Golan Heights, Israel now directly controls a large portion of the Syrian state. Furthermore, it tries to create an Israel-controlled political entity in the Druze-majority of the Suwayda region in Syria. Israel has severely curbed the power of the new Syrian government to pave the way for its further occupation and consolidate its occupation of the state. Similarly, Israel has been trying to control the Lebanese national politics after punishing the Hezbollah movement last year. Israel recently killed most of the movement's leadership cadres. Now, together with its Western supporters, it put pressure on the central government to force Hezbollah to disarm itself. Disarming Hezbollah will naturally decrease the Iranian influence in Lebanon, but at the same time, it will lead to an increase in the influence of Israel. In the third phase, Israel will turn to other Arab states after completing its plans in these two Arab states. It seems that Jordan, the majority of whose population is Palestinian, will be the next target of the expansionist Israel. Israel may question the existence of the Palestinians living in the country and use this factor as an excuse for its intervention into the Jordanian domestic political system. In the final phase, other countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq will become the next targets of the Israeli expansionism. Israel will try to prevent the establishment of regional peace and stability by any other political actor. Its ultimate goal is to establish the greater Israel and bring the whole region under its control. Tel Aviv's ultimate goal is to establish a regional hegemony by achieving the "greater Israel." In spite of the Israeli illegitimate plans, violations of international law, crimes against humanity in Palestine and attacks against Arab states, the Arab states cannot overcome the Israeli problem and threat simply by condemning Israel for all these atrocities. Arab states must take joint actions and measures against Israel's persistent use of violence and violations of international norms. Arab and non-Arab states of the region must unite their power, persuade the global powers and eventually deter Israel and its supporters. Regional states must meet on a common ground against the main threat of the region, the Israeli problem. They must take measures before it is too late. Otherwise, they have to wait for their tragic end – to be occupied by Israel.

Muslim collectivism

Ghulam Shabbir

Islam was a movement of moral initiative. The Holy Prophet's (PBUH) first address to his people reflected the entirety of the Quranic message as it had descended on his heart in an undifferentiated form, though the various verses 'unfolded' over the next 23 years. The following years of his life depict only differentiation of the nucleus of his message, the dilemmas confronted and the strategies devised to counter his opponents.

The movement was to rehabilitate the socio-economic equilibrium of society as mono-theism and socioeconomic justice were deemed the panacea to the twin malaise of polytheism and socioeconomic disequilibrium in Makkah.

The scale of social reforms required assumption of political power, so a protracted war with the Makkan oligarchy was a foregone conclusion.

The Quran equipped Muslims with positivism and collectivism to see their mission through. Positivism means scientific diagnosis and treatment of social malaises by the moral vectors of the Quran, and collectivism refers to the collective struggle of the community for the execution of the task since there is arguably no 'personal salvation' in Islam. The Quran offers only the idea of success (falah) or failure (khusran) in building a moral social order for which 'the people of the Book' are welcomed to share the burden. So, 'personal piety' oblivious to this obligation and Sufism neutral to social reality have no roots in the Quran.

At Madinah, the Quran established Muslims as a 'median community' against the rigid formalism of Judaism and the liquidity of Christianity. Thus, characterised as the 'best community', it was tasked to build an ethical sociopolitical order. The internal structure of the community was egalitarian and open, smacking of no elitism. Internal life of the community was based on goodwill and cooperation. Decision-making was premised on universal enfranchisement — every voice matters. The Quran tolerates neither elitism nor secret cliques of the influential.

With these arrangements in place, the Quran promulgated their task to establish a moral order in order to secure the socio-economic equilibrium of society, with the assurance that God is going to have mercy on them and help them build such an order (9:71). So bright was the light lit by the Quran that against all odds, the Prophet never lost hope.

To Shah Waliullah, 'The completion of favours', ie, political control of Arabia, was the fulfilment of the same promise.

After the Prophet, collectivism worked both in thought and practice of the early community. To them, Sunnah was an interpretive activity subject to revision and renewal, as was ijma, or consensus of the community. No ijma carried the status of finality; it could be substituted. Hence, Sunnah, ijma-ijtehad's ongoing democratic process worked well for three centuries. Then, the Hadith movement set in, and since then, the static view of Sunnah and the finality of ijma reign supreme.

So embedded in and accustomed to collectivism was the early community that, amidst early religio-political wars, they struggled under the banner of jama'a (community). Then, dictators crushed the practice of jama'a. This resulted in the expulsion of collectivism from the thought and practice of the community. With Ghazali's legitimation of 'personal salvation', religion took leave from public life. Ibn al-Arabi's explanation of the conflict of good and evil in terms of waves which arise from the sea, collide with each other and then fall back into the same sea appeared to render faith redundant.

Ibn Taimiyya's exhortation for Quranic positivism and collectivism fell on deaf ears. Later, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi stre-ngthened his thesis with mystic-intellectual fervour and deflated Ibn al-Arabi's monism. Shah Waliullah and Moha-mmad bin Abdul Wahab bro-ught fresh blood in the veins of the community. However, encounter with the imperial West stimulated Islamic reformers to judge their tradition by the normativity of the Quran to elevate the moral and intellectual standards of their community. It was a comprehensive venture to think of Islam in terms of the socioeconomic and political life of the community. The development rekindled hopes and led to freedom movements.

The positivistic and collectivistic approach of Indian Muslims established Pakistan to create an egalitarian order with equal participation of all without gender and class bias.

But many in the secular elite, in alliance with orthodoxy, seem to have defeated the purpose Pakistan was created for. To be a silent spectator is not a choice — the sins of omission are as bad as the sins of commission. Nations and civilisations, as per the Quran, are destroyed by natural political process rather than natural disasters. Are our moral and sociopolitical woes not inviting our collective political will for course correction?

Indo-Pak futures

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

As we approach 80 years since the sun set on the British Raj, leaving the two separate states of India and Pakistan in its wake, the imperative of charting a lasting peace in the world's most populous region is arguably more acute than ever. Yet under the influence of right-wing bigotry and militarism, the majority of people in both countries are instead baying for the proverbial other's blood.

On Aug 14-15 this year, the military exchange which took place in May is still fresh in the memory, as is the banter on both sides about 'winning the war'. There are, of course, many voices that resist the tide, but most young Indians and Pakistanis have little critical awareness about shared colonial legacies, let alone an imagination of a common future.

In the face of a renewed wave of state nationalism, let me suggest some potential futures for the almost 1.7 billion people who inhabit India and Pakistan, a figure which rises to almost 2bn if one includes Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

A race to the bottom: The most likely future is an extension of the present, whereby Hindutva, (militant) Islamism and other variants of xenophobic nationalism take hold of ever greater segments of youth. In India, this equates to the further entrenchment of the BJP, RSS, VHP in society at large and the unchallenged rule of hawkish elements in the permanent state apparatus.

In Pakistan, this means the reinforcement of khaki raj, complete surrender by the mainstream parties to the establishment, and a religious right ready and able to mobilise a critical mass outside the mainstream.

In both countries, anti-state militancy will intensify in brutalised peripheries. The state, in turn, will arrogate more and more power to itself in the name of fighting 'terrorism', and the politics of hate will become established as the only game in town. Respite for the liberal centre: The race to the bottom may be held up by a slightly resuscitated liberal centre. In India, this would see the Congress and small allied parliamentary forces taking governmental power, and pushing back against some aspects of majoritarianism. In Pakistan, this would take the form of a broad anti-establishment mobilisation against the now-ormalised 'hybrid' rule. However, the liberal centre remains unwilling to offer an alternative economic programme to the dominant development regime that is based on dispossession, ecocide and mindless consumption. A centrist pushback, then, will ultimately fail to stem the forces of reaction and create the conditions for militarist and far right ideologies to make deeper dents in the body politic.

Pro-people forces unite within and without: The most unlikely scenario — lasting peace and shared prosperity — can become reality only if pro-people forces, representing the working masses, brutalised peripheries, women and future generations, come together both within and across states. This is not easy, especially given the sorry state of South Asia's left-progressives. But we must engage in an exercise of imagination rather than become resigned to the status quo.

A pro-people programme requires an economic vision that privileges the needs of working masses over the profiteering of speculative investors, multinational capital and entrenched landed/ business interests. As important is ecological regeneration across mountainous areas, plains and coastal deltas. The fact that environmental landscapes across the subcontinent are being ravaged to no end is arguably the most obvious trigger for an alternative politics to transcend the regressive logics of colonial statecraft. Such a politics demands that the traditional forces of the left — that speak the language of class and anti-imperialism — make common cause with the mass movements of the ethnic peripheries, else the critical mass necessary to displace both the far right and liberal centre cannot be generated. In India, this requires a dissolution of the hegemony of the Hindi-speaking belt, an acknowledgement of the historical oppression of Kashmiris, Nagas, tribal populations and many more, and more space for progressive leaders from the south. In Pakistan, this requires that the Baloch, Pakhtun, Gilgit-Baltistani, Kashmiri, Sindhi and Seraiki national questions are articulated alongside a class politics in Punjab and other metropolitan regions. Finally, a regional common sense must be crafted whereby the interests of ordinary people everywhere — including Ladakh and Baltistan, both Kashmirs, Sindh and Rajasthan, both Punjabs, Pakhtuns across both sides of the Durand Line, as well as the most oppressed people like the Baloch and Nagas — are seen as one and the same. Only in such unity can imperialism in all of its guises be confined to the dustbin of history.

Floods and politics

Khurram Husain

There is no room left now to turn rain-related catastrophes into a political whipping spectacle.

This summer, three provinces controlled by the three major political parties have borne the brunt of a major rain-related emergency, and none is in a position to accuse the other of not having done enough to prepare their province for the calamity.

The clear fact is that Pakistan is facing accelerating climate change impacts and needs to think outside of conventional frameworks in order to build resilience and preparedness. The monsoon is intensifying, glaciers are melting, near catastrophic heatwaves are becoming more and more frequent. This is not political theatre. It is a dire and urgent new reality opening up before us with rising ferocity. The first thing to shed is the reflex to politicise these catastrophes, because that literally does nothing to help.

The three governments — in KP, Punjab and Sindh — have just faced unusually strong rain events. But notice how turning these calamities into opportunities for political point-scoring has backfired spectacularly. When Punjab was inundated in July, for instance, the PTI lawmakers in the provincial assembly held what they called a 'people's assembly' outside the building in protest against the suspension of their colleagues. So far so good. Politics and theatre are cousins after all.

But some among them took the opportunity to skewer the provincial government for the rain-related devastation in the province. Three among them were named in a report carried by this newspaper, and their criticism of the government of Maryam Nawaz took aim at the floods caused by the rains. Crops and farmland were destroyed, they shouted, homes caved in, and "development projects" showcased by the Punjab government were "washed away". Yet the government "remains indifferent", according to the report.

The need and desire of the opposition to protest stridently in Punjab is understandable, given the suspensions that their colleagues have been served. Those that kept the focus on the politics of suppression their party is facing had a clear message. But those that veered and tried to use a natural calamity for political point-scoring were in for a nasty surprise only a few days later when the province run by their own party — KP — was hit by an even larger rain-related calamity.

All the criticism they had levelled at the Punjab government was now washed away as the devastation in KP was larger by order of magnitude to what Punjab had seen. If we keep only a political lens when viewing these disasters, who do we blame for the devastation in KP? Pretty soon, officials from both provinces were bickering over the meaning of the word 'cloudburst'. Both provinces had ascribed their devastation to a 'cloudburst'. In Punjab, they pointed to Chakwal, and in KP, they said Buner had seen a 'cloudburst'. Then the Met Office weighed in, reminding both that the word 'cloudburst' refers to a very specific event and no such event had been seen in Chakwal or Buner, and urged them both to refrain from using this word to describe the cause of their respective devastation.

Why this insistence on 'cloudburst'? Because cloudbursts are nearly impossible to forecast, and attributing rain disaster to them gets officialdom off the hook for having been unprepared. This is why it is now almost routine for provincial governments to use this word when explaining rain-related calamities in their province. At the time of writing, Karachi is bracing for a second round of intense rain; the first left the city flooded on Tuesday, following more than 200mm of rain in a 12-hour period. The flooding was bad, but the drainage was better. I'm old enough to remember when smaller rain events in 1991 or 2006 left the city flooded for days on end. This time, as in 2020 or 2022, they cleared it within hours. So far, so good. But the question remains: what prevents faster real-time drainage to keep flooding from become as dire as it does in the first place? The foremost expert on the disaster that is Karachi's urban planning, Arif Hasan, has a good interview with that intrepid podcaster Shehzad Ghias in which he explains how overdevelopment on three main drainage channels is a major contributor to the flooding. There is much that each provincial government needs to do to increase preparedness for these disasters that are hitting the country with growing intensity and frequency. And it all begins with superior weather forecasting capabilities. Without this, we are flying blind into a storm.

A former chief meteorologist of the country has an important contribution here. In a report in this paper, he is quoted as saying that Pakistan has 85 automatic weather stations around the country to cover more than 700,000 square kilometres of its land mass. According to the World Meteorological Organisation guidelines, there should be one for every 100 square kilometres of flat terrain, and 50 sq km of hilly terrain. This means we are short by factors of thousands in terms of our ability to monitor threats emanating from the weather.

With this critical weakness we will forever fumble in the dark as the weather turns increasingly hostile. And the resultant calamities will forever be sublimated only through political blaming and point-scoring, getting us nowhere.

A warning sign came around a decade ago when Pakistan experienced five massive floods in five years. Once more, nature is warning that politics alone will not save us.

Three floods in one summer in three provinces controlled by each major political party is a clear enough sign that scoring political points in the middle of natural calamities is the lowest form of politics in the country today. Those who engage in this behaviour are the same as those who in years past tried to score political points via fuel price hikes or ex--change rate adjustments. It is time to grow up.

Chickens coming home

FAISAL BARI

There have been some recent posts on social media claiming that admission numbers in many colleges and universities across Punjab have gone down by as much as 25-30 per cent this year. This is a large number but not surprising: it is some of the chickens coming home to roost.

Here are some changes that Pakistan has seen in the higher education sector lately. The number of universities has risen significantly. We have 270-odd universities now, with 160 or so in the public sector. There are several foreign and online programmes that have also entered the sector. And the expansion drive continues. Existing universities have been expanding enrolments and programmes as well.

Higher education funding has either remained static or decreased, even in nominal terms. It has definitely gone down in real terms. Inflation has hit every person in recent years, but fee increases have also been going up in the higher education sector.

The regulator's focus has been on expansion, encouraging universities to introduce more Master's and doctoral programmes and faculty to produce more (not necessarily of higher quality) publications.

Some of the consequences, intended and unintended, should have been expected. Generally, the quality of education delivered by most undergraduate programmes across Pakistan has never been very good. Expansion, with little planning for faculty availability, has exacerbated the problem.

The regulators' focus on the Master's and doctoral levels has hurt the quality of undergraduate programmes even more. Undergraduate programmes are seen by many universities and colleges as just a way of earning revenue. The pressure to expand programmes has meant that every university, whether or not it is ready for it, has launched every faculty and programme it could think of. Fewer resources and rising costs have worsened matters.

The pressure to publish and increase the number of publications has also shifted the focus from teaching in general and undergraduate teaching in particular. It has also led to increased gaming, fraud and plagiarism. More significantly for us, it has led to the neglect of undergraduate teaching, with most faculty wanting to teach graduate programmes, supervise theses and publish with their students to make research numbers impressive.

It should not come as a surprise then that parents do not want their children to enrol in programmes where perceived and real rates of return to undergraduate studies are low. The students themselves don't want to enrol. If you were a student, would you do something different? If you were a parent, would you not suggest something different?

Do bear in mind that there is plenty of evidence that universities, private and public, that offer good quality undergraduate education, have not seen any decline in the number of admissions or applications. Similarly, majors that are perceived to be in high demand in the job market have not seen any decline either.

There are issues that should be kept in mind though. There is a massive increase in demand for computer science, IT, data analytics and similar programmes. People feel, and rightly so, that job prospects in these areas are very bright. The buzz around AI makes this perception even stronger. So, it is not surprising that parents are asking students to enter these fields and many students are also shifting their sights to them. Most universities with relevant departments are expanding enrolments. Others are scrambling to start relevant departments and programmes. But there is a limit to how much expansion can take place in these programmes. And there should be too.

Globally, there is a fair bit of conversation going around the four-year undergraduate programmes. Is four years too long? Some argue that if people can do a few six-month or so courses, especially in computer- and IT-related fields, and enter the job market and get decent returns, why should they spend a lot of money on four-year degrees. Others say that with online education becoming more accessible, undergraduate can move online. Others talk of micro-credentialing and argue that selected courses, rather than a four-year degree, which makes the student go through a broader curriculum and more diverse courses, is the need of the day. There is some merit to many of these arguments, though the four-year undergraduate programme has a lot going for it too. Different routes will be better for different people. Education has time and money costs, and quality education tends to be quite expensive.

University education is not recognised as a right anywhere, though states might have functional reasons — human resource development, social and economic mobility, growth — to subsidise undergraduate and graduate education for a part of the population. Students will have to make careful choices about what suits them, what is possible for them and their families, and what is the best way forward. The state has to carefully assess what it has been doing as well.



Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan (left), Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani (center), and Palestinian Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian (right) attended the Global Alliance for Two-State Solution meeting held at the Italian Foreign Ministry in Rome.

Chairman senate supports US-Pak partnership to end bonded labour through brick kiln modernization

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Senator Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani Tuesday expressed his support for a pioneering US-Pakistan initiative aimed at eradicating bonded labour through the modernization of Pakistan's brick kiln industry.

The commitment came during a meeting with a high-level delegation led by Mike Brickley, Silicon Valley entrepreneur and CEO of Families Set Free (FSF), said a news release.

The delegation included Naveed Aamir Jeeva, MNA; Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti; Ashraf J. Mall, CEO of Pakistan Partnership Initiative (PPI); Ryan Andrew Brickley; Mathew Ryan Brickley; Maqsood Ali; Dr. Waheed Yousaf; and Col. Muhammad Akhtar Iqbal.

Brickley briefed the Chairman Senate on the joint efforts of FSF and PPI, in collaboration with the Government of Punjab, to mechanize brick kilns and create sustainable employment opportunities for vulnerable communities.

He noted that the initiative combines business investment with social impact to replace exploitative labour practices with skilled employment and economic empowerment.

Ashraf J. Mall shared that PPI has helped rescue and rehabilitate more than 15,000 families affected by bonded labour through livelihood support, youth skills development, and school enrollment for children. He added that a delegation of 25 American business leaders visited Pakistan earlier this year to explore investments in brick kiln modernization and employment generation.

Naveed Aamir Jeeva highlighted the Pakistan Peoples Party's commitment to the welfare of women, minorities, and marginalized communities. He noted that the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan's largest social protection initiative offers significant opportunities for collaboration in supporting families transitioning out of bonded labour.

Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti informed the Chairman Senate that the initiative has received recognition. She noted that three brick kilns have already been mechanized, while six more are being modernized in Faisalabad, Sargodha, and Sheikhupura.

Pakistan, Uzbekistan reaffirm commitment to Railway cooperation rgional Connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Uzbekistan have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in the railway sector and advancing regional connectivity during a meeting between Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev.

During the meeting, both sides discussed a range of issues of mutual interest, with particular emphasis on enhancing collaboration in railway infrastructure development, freight



transportation, logistics and the exchange of technical expertise. They also agreed to further strengthen institutional ties between their respective railway authorities to ensure long-term and sustainable cooperation. Speaking on the occasion, Hanif Abbasi said the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway Corridor as a landmark project that would play a pivotal role in promoting regional trade, economic integration and connectivity.

He said the initiative represents a historic step toward linking Central Asian countries with Pakistan's seaports, creating new opportunities for commerce, investment and economic growth across the region. The minister reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the timely completion of the UAP Railway Corridor, saying that the project would significantly enhance transportation networks and facilitate greater economic cooperation among participating nations.

Dr Kabir unveils ambitious reform agenda to expand investor base, deepen capital markets

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu unveiled an ambitious reform agenda aimed at expanding Pakistan's investor base, strengthening financial literacy, and accelerating the development of the country's capital markets during his first official visit to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Addressing the Gong Ceremony after ringing the trading bell to mark the commencement of trading, Dr. Sidhu said SECP is targeting a significant increase in the number of investors, with a long-term objective of expanding the investor base to 2.5 million investors.

He emphasized that broadening investor participation, particularly among young Pakistanis, is essential for promoting savings, wealth creation, and inclusive economic growth.

"Financial literacy is one of the most powerful tools for expanding participation in capital markets. We want to create opportunities for young Pakistanis to learn, invest, and participate in wealth creation through accessible education and simplified investment processes," said Dr. Sidhu.

The SECP Chairman outlined the Commission's reform agenda built around People, Processes and Technology.



In Hardelot-Plage, a coastal area in northern France, irregular migrants attempting to cross the English Channel in an inflatable boat were rescued from the sea as water levels rose. Search and rescue operations were conducted in the area for the migrants.

BIOI Minster calls for investment, innovation, export-led growth at brand of "Year Awards 2026"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI), Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh has emphasized the need to strengthen Pakistan's economy through enhanced investment, innovation, and export-led growth, urging the business community to play a leading role in driving sustainable development.

Addressing the 17th Edition of the Brand of the Year Awards 2026 as the chief guest, the minister said the event provided an important platform to recognize and encourage the valuable contributions of Pakistan's business sector, said a release issued here on Tuesday.

"Coming from a family with a long history in business, I firmly believe that entrepreneurs are the backbone of economic development. We must promote Pakistan globally as a competitive destination for business and investment," he said.

Highlighting the country's economic challenges, the minister stressed the importance of creating sustainable business opportunities and generating employment to uplift living standards.

"With a significant segment of the population living below the poverty line, our focus should be on expanding economic opportunities, creating jobs, and equipping our youth with quality education, particularly in technology and modern skills," he remarked.

Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh underscored the need to boost exports and improve the ease of doing business, saying the government was undertaking reforms aimed at removing unnecessary barriers and facilitating investment.

He noted that incentives available under Special Economic Zones (SEZs), including tax concessions and industrial facilitation measures, were designed to expand industrial activity and create new avenues for economic growth.

The minister expressed confidence in Pakistan's entrepreneurial talent and workforce, describing them as key drivers of national progress.

"Pakistan possesses a capable business community and a competitive workforce that can make a significant contribution to the country's economic development," he said.

During the ceremony, the minister distributed awards among winning brands in recognition of their excellence and consumer trust.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Brands Foundation Pakistan, Shaikh Rashid Alam, presented a commemorative shield to the chief guest.

Organized annually by the Brands Foundation Pakistan, the Brand of the Year Awards are regarded as one of the country's most prestigious recognitions, honoring leading brands on the basis of consumer preference and expert evaluation.

The Board of Investment remains committed to promoting Pakistan as a preferred destination for local and foreign investment through investor facilitation, policy reforms, and initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth.



Daily life continues as London experiences warm weather during a heatwave in London, United Kingdom

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Hansa Europe, MSC Vida X, Meghna Venus and Kouros Diamond carrying Containers and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, HFP&S Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

Twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Hansa Europe, Lebrethan, Corona and Ginga Courage left the port on Tuesday morning while two more ships, MSC Vida X and Khairpur are expected to sail on Tuesday.

NTC, PSW inks digitalization pact to boost trade facilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): In pursuant to the Prime Minister's, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's vision to transform the National Tariff Commission by way of making it a credible robust and responsive organization by way of digitalization, an agreement signing ceremony took place between the National Tariff Commission (NTC) and the Pakistan Single Window (PSW).

This 'Agreement for Automation and Digitization' of NTC's Processes was signed by Dr. Jawwad Uwais Agha, Chairman NTC and Syed Aftab Haider, CEO PSW.

TENDER NOTICE

The Provincial Library Balochistan invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. **TSE-2627091185671 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. 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.** Tender Fee Not Required

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Furniture & Fixtures (Total Item(s) Count: 11)	2 %

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 6,000,000 in Previous 3 Years Turn over of at least 6,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan JV is not permissible Submission of the required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gob.pk **Issuance of tender Documents:** Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gob.pk **Last Date of bid submission:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 18 September, 2026till 11:00 AM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:00 PM on EPPS System Address: Quetta Phone no: 0819201146Fax no: 0812826515 Email: qa4157@gmail.com

Senior librarian Provincial Library Balochistan Quetta

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PPRAs, MDBs join hands to formulate Pakistan National Procurement Strategy 2026-30

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (FPPRA), in collaboration with the World Bank on Tuesday convened a consultative session on the Draft National Procurement Strategy (NPS) 2026–2030 .

The session brought together representatives of the Federal, Provincial and Gilgit-Baltistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authorities (PPRAs), as well as representatives of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), said a news release.

Addressing the session, Hasnat Ahmed Qureshi, Managing Director, Federal PPRA, emphasized the strategic importance of public procurement as a cornerstone of public financial management and national development, aligned with the Federal Government's reform and governance agenda.

He noted that public procurement accounts for an estimated 19–20 percent of Pakistan's GDP, underscoring the need for a coherent national reform strategy to promote more transparent, accountable, competitive, and efficient public procurement systems across the country.

Hr acknowledged the World Bank's continued technical assistance in the development of the National Procurement Strategy and appreciated the collaborative efforts of the federal and provincial PPRAs through the Advisory Group on Public Procurement.

The formulation of the National Procurement Strategy is an initiative of the Federal Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, which builds upon the achievements of Pakistan's first National Procurement Strategy (2013–2016).



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres holds a press conference after his meeting with Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) President Tufan Erhurman and Greek Cypriot Leader Nikos Christodoulides at the UN buffer zone compound in Lefkosia, TRNC

Ahsan directs review of degree programmes for Industry 4.0, 5.0 readiness

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday directed the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to undertake an immediate and comprehensive review of all university degree programmes and curricula across the country to align higher education with the evolving demands of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the emerging Industrial Revolution 5.0.

In a policy directive, the minister said Pakistan's future competitiveness depends on equipping youth with the knowledge, skills and competencies required in a rapidly technology-driven global economy.

He noted that advances in artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, biotechnology, quantum computing, advanced manufacturing and digital technologies are reshaping global labour markets, rendering several traditional occupations obsolete while creating new ones.

"The world is changing faster than ever before. Universities can no longer prepare students for yesterday's jobs. Our institutions must prepare them for tomorrow," he said, adding that degrees must lead to employability, innovation, entrepreneurship and national competitiveness.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan cannot afford a mismatch between university output and labour market needs, stressing that curricula must be aligned with emerging economic demands.

Under the directive, HEC has been asked to assess degree programmes on employability, industry relevance, national priorities, technological disruption risks and future global demand. Outdated or low-relevance programmes will be identified for restructuring, modernisation, consolidation or phase-out.

He also called for a high-level Future Skills and Curriculum Transformation Task Force comprising academia, industry leaders, technology experts and policymakers to recommend reforms for future readiness.

The review will prioritise emerging fields including artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, cybersecurity, robotics, automation, quantum computing, bioinformatics, precision agriculture, renewable energy, climate science.

Punjab govt boosting business confidence

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Tuesday congratulated Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on presenting a pro-poor, development-oriented and tax-free budget for the fiscal year 2026-27. Reacting to the Punjab budget, he said its tax-free nature would ease the financial burden on common citizens and strengthen business confidence, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Govt plans to enhance meat exports through transformation strategy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has initiated a comprehensive transformation strategy aimed at unlocking the potential of the country's halal meat exports and promoting the development of the local livestock sector, with a target to increase meat exports to $700 million by 2028.

The initiative is designed to enhance Pakistan's presence in international halal meat markets while strengthening the livestock industry through value addition, improved standards and greater export competitiveness, said an official in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

Talking to APP here on Tuesday, he said that strategy forms part of the government's broader efforts to expand export earnings and support sustainable growth in the agriculture and livestock sectors. Under the transformation strategy, the meat sector is targeted to grow at around 6 percent annually, while exports are projected to rise from approximately $500 million to nearly $700 million by 2028, he added.

Balochistan govt working to improve health system at every level: Bakht Kakar

QUETTA (ANN): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) central leader and Balochistan Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar has emphasized the need for effective democratic governance, sound policymaking and wider public participation to address the province's longstanding social and economic challenges.

Talking to different delegations, Kakar said sustained and practical measures were required to accelerate development, safeguard the rights of marginalized communities and improve access to essential services throughout Balochistan.

He said the province had continued to face complex challenges over the years and required consistent efforts to strengthen its contribution to the country's economic and social development.

The minister said the PPP was seeking to further integrate Balochistan into the national political and development framework while working to ensure that citizens received their due rights and essential public services.

Kakar said reforms were being pursued in key sectors, particularly health, education and employment. He said the government was focusing on improving public hospitals, ensuring the availability of doctors in distant areas and expanding laboratory services to communities that remained underserved.

Health services, he said, remained among the government's major priorities, with plans to equip hospitals with modern medical technology, improve ambulance facilities and introduce an e-health system at major government healthcare institutions.

He said the proposed measures were aimed at strengthening diagnostic and treatment facilities, improving emergency response and making public healthcare more accessible and efficient.

Acknowledging the difficulties involved in delivering healthcare across Balochistan's vast and sparsely populated areas, Kakar said the government was working to improve the health system at every level, from basic healthcare facilities to major public hospitals.

Responding to criticism from political opponents, the PPP leader said political debate was part of democratic politics, but maintained that his party believed its performance should ultimately be assessed through tangible public service and results.

He said development initiatives would be prioritized on the basis of their direct benefits to citizens, with the objective of creating conditions conducive to long-term growth and prosperity in Balochistan.

Kakar called upon citizens to support efforts aimed at strengthening development, stability and public welfare, saying meaningful participation from the people was necessary to improve governance and collectively address the province's challenges.

Geopolitics must be linked with geo-economics: Ahsan Iqbal

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Thursday that Pakistan's path to development lies through education, research, innovation and technology, stressing the need to empower the country's youth and transform its human resources into economic strength.
Addressing a conference on "The Makkah Pact & the New Geometry of Power" at the University of Lahore, where he was the chief guest, the minister said Pakistan must move towards a knowledge-based and production-oriented economy by strengthening linkages between universities and industry. The conference was attended by political and former military officials, bureaucrats, journalists and members of the business community.
Ahsan Iqbal said the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement should not be viewed merely as a military arrangement but as a broader framework encompassing universities, laboratories, technology, investment, connectivity and economic cooperation. He said the changing global landscape had enhanced the significance of the agreement signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye in Makkah on August 7, 2026.Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed the agreement, he added.
The minister said its basic principle was that an attack on one member would be considered an attack on all, adding that the pact should not be seen as a challenge to the global system but as a step towards a more stable regional and international order. He said Saudi Arabia had vast economic resources, energy strength, financial capacity and growing ambitions in technology, while Turkiye possessed a strong industrial base, an advanced defence industry and an important geographical position linking Europe, Asia and the Middle East.
Pakistan, he said, had a large young population, significant defence capabilities and strategic geographical importance, connecting South Asia, Central Asia, China, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf. "The real importance of the Makkah Pact does not lie only in combining the military capabilities of three countries," he said. , adding that it could provide a foundation for cooperation in joint defence production, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, space technology, energy, food security and critical minerals.
Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia should strengthen partnerships in research, investment and regional connectivity, adding that combining Pakistani human capital, Turkish technology and Saudi investment could bring about significant transformation.
He stressed that geopolitics must be linked with geo-economics and said Pakistan's objective should be strategic autonomy, not strategic isolation.
"Pakistan's strategic thinking is based on friendship with all and dependence on none," he said, adding that Islamabad wanted peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with all neighbouring countries, as well as stronger partnerships with China, the United States, Europe and the Muslim world.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal meets with Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice President Yingming Yang to discuss Pakistan's development priorities and ADB's continued support.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Dummar vows to transform Ziarat into more developed tourist-friendly destination

QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Commodity Management and Chairman Balochistan Food Authority Haji Noor Muhammad Dummar has said the government will continue taking practical measures to transform Ziarat into a more developed and tourist-friendly destination, with emphasis on modern infrastructure, preservation of its natural environment and improved facilities for residents and visitors. He expressed these views while presiding over the third meeting of the Governing Body of the Ziarat Valley Development Authority (ZVDA) at the committee room of the Planning and Development Department in Quetta. Members of the governing body and relevant officials attended the meeting, which reviewed a range of issues related to Ziarat's development, tourism promotion, infrastructure improvement and provision of civic facilities.

Ayaz for closer cooperation between Parliament and legal community

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the lawyer community has always played a proactive and constructive role in ensuring the supremacy of law and strengthening of the democratic norms and principles.
He said that a Legislative Drafting Council has been established in the National Assembly, in which experienced individuals have been recruited on merit to further strengthen and improve the quality of legislative drafting.
He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the Executive Committee of the High Court Bar Association Hyderabad at the Parliament House, Islamabad, today. Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai was also present on the occasion.
During the meeting, the delegation apprised the Speaker National Assembly of the issues and challenges faced by members of the legal fraternity in the discharge of their professional responsibilities. Matters pertaining to the professional development, welfare, and overall interests of the legal community were also discussed.
Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that lawyers have made significant contributions to the strengthening of democratic institutions and in upholding the rule of law.
He further stressed the need for closer cooperation between Parliament and the legal community.
Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that the Legislative Drafting Council of the National Assembly has played an effective role in strengthening the legislative process.

Makkah Pact can transform Pak-Saudi-Turkiye collaboration into force for unity of Muslim Ummah

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Coordinator of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Thursday said the evolving strategic partnership between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye could play a historic role in promoting unity, peace and collective security across the Muslim world.
Addressing a high-level strategic policy forum titled "The Makkah Pact and the New Geometry of Power: Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Turkiye Shaping an Emerging Regional Order", Ashrafi said the restraint demonstrated by Saudi Arabia during the recent regional crisis was critical in preventing the situation from escalating into a wider conflict among Muslim countries.
Ashrafi said the rapid escalation following Israel's attack on Iran could have triggered a dangerous chain reaction in the region.
He said Saudi Arabia had made clear that neither its territory nor its airspace would be used against Iran, emphasizing that Riyadh's policy of restraint helped prevent the conflict from developing into an Arab-Iranian confrontation.
He said such a confrontation would ultimately have had grave consequences for the wider Muslim world.
Ashrafi particularly highlighted the role of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, saying his engagement with the Saudi leadership reflected a strategic understanding of the need to prevent the crisis from becoming a conflict between Arab and Muslim states.
He recalled that Field Marshal Asim Munir travelled to Saudi Arabia and met Saudi Minister of Defence Prince Khalid bin Salman, where the importance of preventing a broader confrontation was discussed. Ashrafi said subsequent high-level engagement involving Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman reflected a shared strategic vision to ensure that the regional conflict did not turn into a war among Muslims.
He said Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye had subsequently emerged as important pillars of a broader effort for preserving regional stability, Muslim unity and collective security.
The Pakistan Ulema Council chairman also emphasized the importance of religious unity within Pakistan, saying the country had demonstrated an unprecedented level of Shia-Sunni solidarity during the crisis. He said scholars from different schools of thought had collectively condemned attacks on Iran, expressed solidarity over the loss of lives and worked to maintain peace and unity inside Pakistan.
Ashrafi said the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee had provided an important platform for bringing scholars and religious communities together, demonstrating that sectarian differences could be overcome in the larger interest of national unity and peace.



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Deputy Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Malik Kifayatur Rehman at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Women palying vital role in Balochistan's advancement, says Home Minister

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove has said that genuine social progress cannot be achieved without ensuring women's education, development and empowerment, emphasizing that women have demonstrated their potential in diverse fields and continue to make significant contributions to the province's advancement. He expressed these views while speaking with leaders of the women's wing of the Balochistan Awami Party.
Langove said Baloch women represented an important pillar of the province's cultural heritage, educational values and social fabric, noting that they had historically played a vital role in raising and educating younger generations, preserving traditions and promoting values of dignity, respect and social harmony.
He said women were not only a source of strength and stability for their families but also played an essential role in shaping a prosperous and promising future for Balochistan.
The home minister said women throughout the province had established their abilities and potential in a wide range of fields, adding that their role in Balochistan's development deserved greater recognition, encouragement and support. He said the provincial government was taking various steps to empower women.



Head of Asia Pacific, GSMA, Julian Gorman presenting the Digital Pakistan 2030 report

Dhoraya academy provides free education, skills training to needy children

GWADAR: Dhoraya Academy has been providing free education and vocational training to underprivileged and deserving children for the past 21 years, with sustained financial support from the Kalmat family, Deputy Director Social Welfare Gwadar Essa Baloch said.
He made the remarks while speaking at a ceremony organized to acknowledge the 21-year educational and social services of Dhoraya Academy Director Hassan Ali Musa. Baloch also paid tribute to the late Mir Abdul Ghafoor Kalmat for his contribution to education, community welfare and support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. He said the academy was offering children opportunities to learn English, computer skills, the Balochi language, religious studies, arts and crafts, as well as sewing and embroidery.

Pakistan competing with other ambitious economies in region for int'l investment

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan has laid stronger foundations for digital transformation through reforms in spectrum policy, progress in women's digital inclusion, and improved digital governance, said Head of Asia Pacific, GSMA, Julian Gorman.
However, he was of the view that sustained investment, trusted digital infrastructure, and coordinated implementation will be essential to achieve the vision of Digital Pakistan 2030.
Presenting the Digital Pakistan 2030 report, Gorman said digital technologies had become key drivers of national productivity and competitiveness.
He added that Pakistan now had an opportunity to convert recent momentum into long-term economic growth through investment certainty, digital trust, future-ready infrastructure, and collaboration among government, industry, and development partners.
Referring to a new GSMA report, Gorman said the study highlighted Pakistan's recent digital progress, outlined what success could look like by 2030, and identified five strategic priorities to transform current momentum into measurable outcomes.
Highlighting the country's recent achievements, he said Pakistan had strengthened its investment environment by completing the 5G spectrum auction with improved terms, more balanced spectrum pricing, flexible payment mechanisms, and payments denominated in Pakistani rupees, creating greater certainty for future investment in digital infrastructure and 5G deployment.

Commissioner directs to ensure timely completion of Naseerabad Medical College

NASEERABAD, (VoM Report): Commissioner Naseerabad Division Salahuddin Noorzai has directed the relevant authorities to ensure the timely and high-quality completion of the under-construction Naseerabad Medical College, warning that negligence or avoidable delays in the project would not be tolerated.
He issued the directives while chairing a review meeting on the progress of the medical college project. The meeting examined funding constraints and other obstacles affecting construction, with the commissioner instructing officials to approach the relevant authorities for their early resolution.
Deputy Commissioner Naseerabad Varender Lal, Engineer Mir Muhammad Mengal and other concerned officials attended the meeting. Project Director Engineer Amir Aziz Magsi briefed the participants on the progress of the project, explaining that the medical college was being developed in three phases, including construction of the main building and other related components. He pointed out that funding limitations and other outstanding issues required prompt attention to avoid disruptions to construction activities. Commissioner Noorzai said the medical college was a significant development initiative for the entire Naseerabad Division.

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House in the federal capital

Women's inclusion in digital economy essential for Pakistan's future: Shaza

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the government had accelerated digital transformation through policy reforms, the expansion of fibre infrastructure, spectrum reforms and nationwide collaboration, expressing confidence that these measures would strengthen connectivity, attract investment and contribute billions of dollars to the economy in the coming years.
Speaking at the GSMA Digital Nation Pakistan event, the minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had demonstrated a strong commitment to technology even during his tenure as Chief Minister of Punjab by introducing e-facilitation centres, e-libraries, e-employment centres and free public Wi-Fi hotspots.
She said he also used teleconferencing to conduct meetings with officials in South Punjab, reflecting his early focus on technology-driven governance.
Shaza Fatima said that after assuming office, one of the government's first priorities was to accelerate digital transformation and improve nationwide connectivity.
She said the Prime Minister extended full support to the government's fibreisation programme and spectrum reforms, while Pakistan also landed new submarine fibre-optic cables and introduced Sea-WE fibre-related licences to strengthen international connectivity.
Shaza Fatima said the spectrum auction generated $509 million in revenue while securing 480 MHz of spectrum, which she described as the largest spectrum auction in the world.
She said the government's pricing strategy, policy framework and rollout obligations would produce long-term dividends by improving digital connectivity across the country.
The minister said the telecom industry had already begun the rollout following the auction, enabling the introduction of 5G services in Pakistan for the first time.
She said the success of the spectrum auction reflected a whole-of-government approach involving the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), regulators, the Spectrum Auction Committee, the Prime Minister, the Chief of Defence Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and other stakeholders.

Eradication of polio collective national responsibility

BARKHAN: Deputy Commissioner Barkhan Saeed-ur-Rehman Kakar has directed health authorities to ensure that every child under the age of five receives polio drops during the upcoming vaccination campaign scheduled for Sept 21 to 24, stressing the need for effective field supervision, coordination and security arrangements. He issued the directives while chairing a meeting of the District Polio Eradication Committee (DPEC), which reviewed preparations and arrangements for the upcoming anti-polio drive across the district. The meeting was attended by the District Health Officer (DHO), District Support Officer (DSO), Deputy District Health Officer (DDHO), Union Council Medical Officers (UCMOs) and other concerned officials.

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Portugal in Pakistan, Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues meeting with Acting Managing Director of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) Sabeen Usman Khattak at APPC Headquarters.

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