



# AJK Information Minister tackles civic issues during Khoi Ratta and Kotli visit

City Desk

KHOI RATTA/KOTLI: Minister for Information, Religious Affairs and Endowments Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Rafique Nayyar, during his visit to Khoi Ratta and Kotli, attended various meetings and events, giving priority to administrative and public affairs.

Deputy Commissioner Raja Imran Shaheen met the Minister of Information at PWD Rest House Kotli. On this occasion, detailed discussions were held regarding administrative matters, civic issues and their solutions.

Earlier, the information minister, continuing his series of social events in Khoi Ratta, attended the wedding ceremony of the son of former Chairman Zakat Tehsil Khoi Ratta Raja Zafar and brother of Member Local Council Adeb Zafar and congratulated the family.

He went to the house of Raja Arshad Mahmood (deceased) and offered Fatcha on the death of his brother and expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the bereaved family, including Aamir Ahmed (UK), Owais Ahmed (UK) and Ali Ahmed (UK). Meanwhile, Information Minister



Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nayyar also visited the residence of Chaudhry Rashid Raza, where a lavish tea was organized in his honor.

During the meeting, regional affairs and matters of mutual interest were discussed. The information minister also attended a wedding ceremony held

at Al-Noor Marquee in Kotli, where he congratulated Riaz's daughter and Tauseef's sister and expressed his best wishes for them.

## NADRA under fire as voter numbers plummet instead of rising before 2026 polls

Bureau Report

KOTLI: As preparations continue for the upcoming general elections 2026 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, a concerning situation has emerged regarding voter registration. Alleged irregularities by NADRA in the voter registration process have led to a noticeable decline in the number of registered voters in several areas instead of an expected increase, raising fears that thousands of citizens may be deprived of their right to vote.

According to details, in Union Council Dhana, Khoi Ratta, the total number of registered voters during the 2021 elections was 9,056. However, in the ongoing registration process for the 2026 elections, this number has decreased by 2,144 votes instead of increasing, which is both unusual and alarming. Similarly, a decline in voter numbers has also been reported in other areas, including a reduction of 1,142 voters in Khour, 565 in Sarhana, and a decrease in Manjwal as well.

Sources indicate that one of the major reasons behind the reduction in voter numbers in certain union councils is the shifting of localities (mauzas) from one electoral constituency to another. For instance, some votes from Union Council Dhana have reportedly been removed and merged into Union Council Dhanwan, resulting in a significant discrepancy in local voter lists.

## PPP Azad Kashmir to Mark Zulfikar Bhutto Martyrdom Anniversary with Austerity



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir, on the instructions of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto, has announced to celebrate the 47th martyrdom anniversary of the founding chairman of the party and the first elected Prime Minister of the country, Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in their respective native areas with utmost devotion, respect and ideological enthusiasm in view of the country's situation and austerity policy. Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Secretary General Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore have issued instructions to the organizations for the preparations and arrangements to celebrate the anniversary celebrations in a dignified manner. The national celebrations of the anniversary will be attended by Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, former Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, Chaudhry Pervez Ashraf, ministers, advisors, party officials and its subsidiary organizations.

## Quadrilateral meeting in Islamabad marks first step toward US-Iran de-escalation

ISLAMABAD: Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, as well as former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has underscored that



the recently concluded quadrilateral meeting in Islamabad marks only the initial phase of a complex and sustained diplomatic effort aimed at de-escalating the ongoing conflict involving Iran and the United States.

Commenting on the duration and outcome of the meeting, Khan noted that the session—lasting over ninety minutes—was consistent with expectations for a preliminary consultation. He emphasized that the engagement was designed to establish a framework and build foundational consensus among participating countries, namely Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.

"This was a preparatory exercise," Khan stated, adding that while the principal actors—Tehran and Washington—were not physically present, the participating states are actively facilitating communication on their behalf. "They are paving the way for direct engagement between the two sides, having already exchanged sensitive proposals."

## Railways freight revenue rebounds after flood impact, reforms underway: NA told

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Railways Muhammad Usman Awaisi on Monday informed the National Assembly that Pakistan Railways' freight revenue had rebounded after a temporary decline caused by the 2022 floods, with consistent growth now being recorded.

Responding to a question during the Question Hour, he said the current fiscal year showed a steady increase, with freight revenue rising by approximately Rs3 million per month compared to last year, indicating improved performance of the sector.

Highlighting reform measures, the parliamentary secretary said Pakistan Railways had planned induction of 820 high-capacity freight wagons, out of which 538 had already been added, contributing to an estimated monthly revenue increase of Rs23 million. He added that passenger services were also being improved, with 230 passenger coaches are being inducted.

Muhammad Usman Awaisi said track maintenance work was underway on key sections, including Tando Adam-Rohri and Rohri-Khanpur, which would further enhance operational efficiency and ensure timely delivery of shipments.

He also highlighted the government's focus on regional connectivity, particularly linking Pakistan with Central Asia through Iran and Türkiye, which is expected to significantly boost freight operations and revenue generation.

Responding to supplementary questions, he said efforts were underway to retrieve encroached railway land in coordination with provincial authorities and law enforcement agencies, adding that significant progress had been made, particularly in Punjab.

He further informed the House that steps were being taken to modernize payment systems, including installation of point-of-sale (POS) facilities at railway stations.

He said the initiative was linked with ongoing efforts to improve internet connectivity under the Railways infrastructure development project, while passengers could already purchase tickets through digital platforms such as the "Rabta" mobile application.

## Tree fallen down

ISLAMABAD: A view a tree fallen down on the green belt of Constitution Avenue due to heavy rainfall in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Bashir Sultan

# Chief Election Commissioner AJK called on Chief Election Commissioner Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal called on Chief Election Commissioner Pakistan Sikandar Sultan Raja. Member Election Commission Syed Nazir-ul-Hasan Gilani, Secretary Election Commission Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Shakeel Khan and senior officials of the Election Commission of Pakistan were also present on the occasion.

When the Chief Election Commissioner Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Member Election Commission and Secretary Election Commission reached the office of Election Commission of Pakistan, they were welcomed by the officials. During the meeting,



Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal said that in conn my z so execution with

the upcoming elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the cooperation of the

Election Commission of Pakistan is required for the preparation of voter lists, establishment of polling stations and deployment of polling staff in the constituencies of the refugees residing in Pakistan so that the Legislative Assembly elections in the constituencies of the refugees can be held in a free, fair and transparent manner Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal further said that in this regard, close coordination will be maintained between the Election Commission office established in Poonch House and the Election Commission of Pakistan so that the administrative matters can be completed in a timely and effective manner and the electoral process in the constituencies of the refugees can be completed with all possible facilities.

# Punishment for freedom-loving Kashmiri women

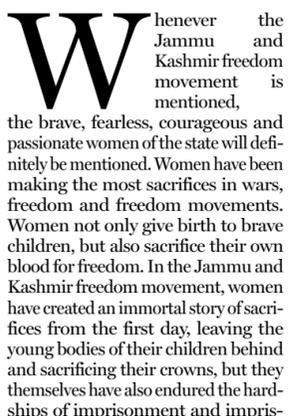
Whenever the brave, fearless, courageous and passionate women of the state will definitely be mentioned. Women have been making the most sacrifices in wars, freedom and freedom movements. Women not only give birth to brave children, but also sacrifice their own blood for freedom. In the Jammu and Kashmir freedom movement, women have created an immortal story of sacrifices from the first day, leaving the young bodies of their children behind and sacrificing their crowns, but they themselves have also endured the hardships of imprisonment and impris-

onment. During the recent freedom movement, the role of women, along with the Hurriyat leaders, has also been unforgettable. In the occupied areas, women are also fighting alongside men in the battlefield. The Indian judiciary has started a process of punishing women for uncommitted sins to end the freedom movement of Kashmiris. Asia Andrabi, Fahimda Sufi and Nasreen Nayed and other women are forced to endure the hardships of imprisonment in Indian jails under adverse conditions. After almost eight years, the Indian High Court has

sentenced these women to life imprisonment and thirty-three years each in cases based on baseless charges. These women have not committed any such crime apart from political struggle. But it is surprising that these women have been sentenced to such a harsh life sentence that the justice system itself has become convinced that life imprisonment and thirty-three years is almost a life sentence and if the court does not give any concession on this sentence and there is no other miracle, their lives will end but they will not be released.

The incidents that took place in other areas of the occupied areas including Kannan, Poshpora, Srinagar, Baramulla, Sopore, Sarnakot, Bandipora, etc. The Kashmiri nation can never forget. We are proud of our mothers, sisters, daughters and girls that they sacrificed for a great cause and we will not let their spirit of freedom be forgotten. The sun of freedom, self-determination, justice and victory is rising in the state. Today, we once again demand from the International Court of Justice, the Security Council and the champions of human rights protection to take notice of the Indian judicial terrorism against innocent women and play your role in liberating women.

The writer is former deputy speaker AJK Assembly.



Analysis

Mehr-ul-Nisa

Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	4:34 am
Zohr	12:12 pm
Asr	4:40 pm
Maghrib	6:27 pm
Isha	7:51 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

**CBD Pulse Punjab's Strongest Signal to Global Investors**



**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: In today's competitive global economy where capital gravitates toward certainty, scalability and speed Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) is delivering a powerful message through CBD Pulse: Punjab is ready for investment, and the time to act is now.

CBD Pulse is not just another promotional campaign; it is a strategic investment signal aimed at attracting serious investors, visionary developers and international partners. It reflects real momentum driven by execution and showcases a pipeline of high-value urban assets positioned to generate strong, long-term returns.

At a time when investors prioritize transparency and stability, CBD Punjab distinguishes itself through structured planning, regulatory clarity and rapid on-ground development. CBD Pulse brings this ecosystem into focus, highlighting premium commercial districts, high-yield real estate opportunities and modern infrastructure built to meet global standards.

What sets CBD Pulse apart is simple it is grounded in visible progress, not future promises. From accelerated development across key corridors to the rollout of strategically located projects, CBD Punjab is turning ambition into tangible results. The approach is clear prioritize speed, ensure delivery and maximize value creation.

# CM Punjab urges public to pledge against plastic use on Zero Waste Day

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has called upon every citizen to pledge to eliminate the use of plastic, emphasizing collective responsibility for environmental protection on International Day of Zero Waste. In her

message, she stressed the need for practical steps at the public level to reduce waste and promote a cleaner, safer environment.

She highlighted that reducing waste, promoting recycling, and adopting sustainable consumption practices are essential to ensuring environmental preservation. She noted that unman-



aged waste contributes significantly to climate change, environmental degradation, and loss of biodiversity, making immediate action imperative.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif stated that under the Suthra Punjab Program, efforts are underway to transform every city in the province into a zero-waste

model. She added that waste heaps are being converted into green forests and solar parks, while modern electric vehicles and mechanized systems have been introduced to improve waste management across Punjab.

She further emphasized that banning plastic bags can significantly help achieve

zero-waste targets, while initiatives such as "waste-to-value" projects are being implemented to convert waste into energy and other valuable resources. The chief minister reaffirmed that making the planet pollution-free is a shared responsibility and urged citizens to actively contribute towards a sustainable future.

## Heavy rain in capital

ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclists take cover under the trees, full of red flowers during morning time rainfall in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Rubina Kausar emphasises to struggle for zero waste environment society

**Zafar Chishti**

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of the International Day of Zero Waste, Ms. Rubina Kausar, a distinguished scholar and an alumna of a prestigious South Korean university specializing in Public Administration, issued a powerful call for paradigm shifts in waste management and sustainable consumption.

In her formal communique, Ms. Kausar emphasized that the pursuit of a "Zero Waste" society is an ethical imperative rooted in human rights and public health safety. She highlighted that environmental degradation and inadequate sanitation disproportionately impact marginalized demographics, particularly women and children.



"Zero Waste transcends the conventional notions of recycling; it necessitates a comprehensive overhaul of our production and consumption life cycles," stated Ms. Kausar. "By minimizing our ecological footprint, we are safeguarding the fundamental right of future generations to inhabit a pristine and dignified environment."

Ms. Kausar further advocated for the integration of Circular Economy principles into national policy frameworks to foster long-term sustainability. She urged a synergetic collaboration between the public sector, civil society, and private enterprises to implement innovative waste-mitigation strategies, ensuring a resilient and "Green Pakistan".

# AIOU extends admission deadline until April 15, 2026

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) considering the convenience of students has extended the last date for admissions and enrollment in various Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs from Matric to Post-graduate level until April 15, 2026.

This decision has been made in light of requests received from across the country and due to students' engagements during Eid-ul-Fitr. According to the university administration, many students were unable to submit their admission forms on time, so this extension provides them with another opportunity.

The extension applies to Matric, Intermediate, Associate Degree, BS programs, Teacher Training programs, Postgraduate Diploma programs and various certifi-



cate courses.

Admission forms and prospectuses for all programs are available on the university's official website: www.aiou.edu.pk. Interested students are advised to ensure their admissions before the new deadline.

For further information, students may visit the website or contact their respective regional office.

## Bhutto Martyrdom Anniversary Marked by Quran Recitations Across South Punjab

**Quratulain Asim**

MULTAN: Under the Pakistan Peoples Party, Quran recitation ceremonies will be held in South Punjab on the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in line with the plans of all the districts of the country, Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Senior Vice President PPP South Punjab, announced.



On the instructions of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilal Bhutto Zardari, PPP South Punjab Senior Vice President Khawaja Rizwan Alam has said that this year, on April 4, the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto will be celebrated at the district level. In this regard, instructions have been issued to all district organizations, including public representatives and ticket holders, to organize Quran recitation in their respective districts in this regard and pay tribute to the leader of the people, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

## Commissioner Multan Division Conducts Surprise Visits to Exam Centres, Orders Strict Monitoring

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: A rigorous inspection of matriculation examination arrangements was carried out as commissioner Multan division and chairman board of intermediate and secondary education Multan Aamir Karim Khan visited multiple examination centres to review on-ground facilities, security, and overall management. The visits were aimed at ensuring a fair and transparent examination process across the division.

During the inspections, the Commissioner toured Government Comprehensive Girls School and other centres, where he examined seating arrangements, availability of basic facilities, and adherence to examination protocols. He stressed that no negligence would be tolerated in the conduct of exams.

He also visited the examination centre established at La Salle Higher Secondary School, expressing satisfaction over the arrangements while directing officials to maintain the same standards throughout the examination period.

Emphasizing transparency, the Commissioner instructed authorities to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and ensure strict vigilance at all centres. He reiterated a zero-tolerance policy against cheating, warning that any violation would be dealt with firmly.

## Shahbaz Sharif and Asim Munir's efforts to establish world peace are commendable, Ashraf Mitho

**Bureau Report**

FAISALABAD: Vice President of Anjuman Tajran City Registered Faisalabad Sika Group and President of Anjuman Tajran Kanbar Association Mian Ashraf Mitho has said that the efforts of Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir to establish world peace in the region are commendable. He said that Pakistan has proved its positive diplomacy by playing an important role in bringing the two countries to the negotiating table. He said that Pakistan has successfully tried to prevent the world from heading towards a major disaster through a responsible diplomatic strategy. Pakistan's defense and military institutions are playing a facilitating role in the contacts between the two countries so that lasting peace can be established in the region. He further said that Pakistan is an important ally of the United States in the region while it also has strong and stable relations with Iran. He said that Pakistan has played an important role in reducing tensions with all key partners by adopting a balanced and constructive foreign policy.



## CDA, district teams put on high alert amid heavy rain

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and district administration have placed field teams on high alert following heavy rainfall in the federal capital, officials said on Monday.

CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, directed joint teams comprising the CDA, Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), and emergency and disaster management departments to remain present in the field to ensure continuous monitoring of the situation.

According to the CDA, special focus has been placed on low-lying areas, with machinery and dewatering pumps deployed to prevent urban flooding. Authorities said clearance operations were carried out at underpasses, interchanges and major highways to maintain traffic flow during the downpour.

Officials added that drains and waterways are being cleared of obstructions to improve drainage and minimize water accumulation in vulnerable areas. Arrangements have also been made to ensure effective water disposal at key points across the city.

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# Iran vs U. S.: When Demands Collide, Can Peace Survive?

The Middle East today is not witnessing a single war, but a convergence of multiple battlefields—each feeding into the other and pushing the region toward a dangerous tipping point. What began as a confrontation between Iran, Israel, and the United States has now expanded into a multi-front conflict involving Lebanon, Yemen, the Gulf states, and beyond. The war is no longer linear; it is layered, interconnected, and increasingly uncontrollable. One of the most intense theaters of this conflict is southern Lebanon, where Israeli operations have escalated dramatically. Infrastructure—bridges, homes, businesses—has been systematically targeted under the justification of creating a “buffer zone” to prevent missile threats. The humanitarian cost has been devastating: over a thousand civilians killed and more than a million displaced, forced into survival conditions that resemble a humanitarian catastrophe.

This front is deeply linked with the broader Iran-Israel confrontation. Analysts like Scott Ritter argue—controversially—that Lebanon’s political leadership has failed to defend its sovereignty, enabling external aggression. While such claims remain debated, they reflect a growing perception of state fragility in the region. Ritter also warns that if Israel commits to a ground invasion, it risks repeating its past miscalculation, when Hezbollah forced Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. In that sense, Lebanon could become a strategic trap—just as Iraq and Afghanistan became prolonged quag-

mires for the United States. Against this volatile backdrop, Iran has articulated a five-point framework for negotiation. This proposal comes in direct response to what Tehran considers a “one-sided” and “maximalist” U. S. plan that demands strategic capitulation. The first Iranian demand is simple and fundamental: an immediate cessation of attacks by the United States and Israel. From Tehran’s perspective, no negotiation can take place under active bombardment.

The second demand, however, is the most critical—and the most transformative. It calls for binding guarantees that Iran will not be attacked again. On the surface, this appears reasonable. But its implicit meaning is far deeper and far more consequential. Iran is not asking for verbal assurances—it is demanding structural change. In essence, this demand implies that the United States must dismantle the very infrastructure that makes repeated attacks possible. This includes the network of U. S. military bases spread across the Middle East—particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and other regional states—that have historically been used to project power toward Iran.

From Tehran’s perspective, as long as these bases exist, any promise of peace is hollow. A missile launched from a distant continent is one thing; a missile launched from a nearby base is an immediate exist-

tential threat. Therefore, Iran’s logic is uncompromising: peace cannot coexist with a permanent war infrastructure positioned at its doorstep.

This makes the second demand the cornerstone of Iran’s entire proposal. It is not just about security—it is about redefining the regional balance of power. Accepting it would require the United States to rethink decades of military strategy in the Middle East, potentially withdrawing or significantly reducing its forward presence. For Washington, this is a strategic red line. Its military bases are not only about Iran but about securing energy routes, maintaining alliances, and projecting global influence. Removing them would reshape the geopolitical order of the region.

This is why this clause is likely to become the breaking point in negotiations. It is binary—either the infrastructure of threat is removed, or it remains. There is little room for compromise. And if it remains, Iran believes that history will repeat itself: negotiations will occur, promises will be made, and attacks will follow.

The third demand introduces an economic dimension. Iran seeks recognition of its rights over the Strait of Hormuz—one of the most critical energy corridors in the world. Tehran proposes imposing transit or security fees on ships passing through, arguing that such a mechanism would help it recover war-re-

lated losses and assert sovereign control.

The fourth demand focuses on reparations. Iran calls for compensation for civilian casualties and infrastructure destruction, proposing an international mechanism to assess damages and enforce payments. This reframes Iran not as an aggressor, but as a state seeking justice under international law.

The fifth demand expands the scope of peace. Iran insists that Israel must cease attacks not only on Iran but also on regional actors aligned with it—in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. This reflects Iran’s broader strategic vision: that regional peace cannot be achieved through isolated agreements but requires a comprehensive de-escalation.

When compared with the United States’ 15-point plan—which includes dismantling Iran’s nuclear program, restricting its missile capabilities, and ending its regional alliances—the gap becomes stark. The U. S. framework seeks to remove threats against it. Both sides are effectively boxed into opposing paradigms. For the United States, compromise risks weakening its strategic dominance. For Iran, compromise risks surrendering sovereignty and deterrence.

In this rigid standoff, any concession by either side would be perceived not as compromise but as capitulation. This is precisely why diplomacy has stalled and why the risk of escalation continues to intensify. This evolving reality also reflects a broader and more troubling pattern in U. S. strategic behavior.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Launch of Integrated OneImpact Community Platform

A high-level meeting chaired by Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Malik marked the official launch of Pakistan’s Integrated One Impact Community Platform, hosted by the Dopasi Foundation, aimed at strengthening community engagement and improving access to care across tuberculosis (TB), HIV, and malaria services.

Addressing representatives from national health programs, development partners, and civil society, the Minister of State underscored the significance of the platform as a transformative step toward a more inclusive, responsive, and people-centered health system. He highlighted that Pakistan continues to bear a substantial burden of communicable diseases, particularly tuberculosis, alongside ongoing challenges in HIV and malaria control. While the Government of Pakistan provides free-of-cost treatment for both drug-susceptible and drug-resistant TB through the public sector, he noted that gaps persist due to limited awareness, stigma, delayed care-seeking, and difficulties in navigating the healthcare system.

Dr. Malik emphasized that the OneImpact platform addresses these barriers by integrating health information, service navigation, and community feedback into a single digital interface. The platform enables patients to locate nearby health facilities, understand available services, and report challenges, thereby strengthening accountability and ensuring that patient voices are heard.

He further commended Pakistan’s move toward an integrated model combining TB, HIV, and malaria services, calling it a reflection of the country’s commitment to innovation and health system strengthening. He stressed the importance of patient interaction, enhanced awareness, inclusion of mental health components, and climate resilience within digital health solutions. Additionally, he emphasized the need for robust data integration and building upon existing health system infrastructures to maximize impact.

Highlighting the role of partnerships, the Minister acknowledged the contributions of the Stop TB Partnership for its global leadership and the Dopasi Foundation for advancing the platform in Pakistan. He also recognized the critical efforts of Provincial TB Control Programs in ensuring effective service delivery at the community level.

“Free medicines save lives only when people know where to go, how to access care, and whom to turn to when they face barriers,” he stated, expressing confidence that the OneImpact platform will help bridge these gaps and contribute to a healthier Pakistan. Also speaking at the event, Aslam Ghauri, Secretary Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSR&C), emphasized the importance of leveraging digital platforms to ensure equitable, community-level access to essential health services. He reaffirmed the Ministry’s commitment to strengthening outreach and ensuring that no individual is left behind.

The launch of the Integrated OneImpact Community Platform represents a significant step toward empowering communities, enhancing accountability, and ensuring timely access to quality healthcare services across Pakistan



Rasmi

Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

## The Last Witness of Stalingrad: Remembering Vasily Zinchenko

In an age scarred by strife and turmoil, where wars in the Middle East remind us of humanity’s recurring tragedies, the quiet passing of Vasily Zinchenko at 101 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, may have escaped wider notice. Yet his death closes a chapter in living history. Zinchenko was among the Soviet soldiers who, in January 1943, descended into the basement of a Stalingrad department store to capture Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus, commander of the German Sixth Army. That moment, frozen in time, symbolized not only the collapse of Hitler’s eastern ambitions but also the resilience of a nation that endured unimaginable suffering.

Zinchenko’s life was inseparable from the Soviet Union’s wartime ordeal. Born in the early decades of the twentieth century, he matured in a country still recovering from revolution and civil war. By the time the Wehrmacht advanced deep into Soviet territory in 1941, Zinchenko was already a seasoned soldier. His participation in the encirclement and eventual capture of Paulus placed him at the heart of a turning point that reshaped the trajectory of global conflict.

The symbolic weight of Zinchenko’s role cannot be overstated. In the annals of military history, the surrender at Stalingrad is often compared to the fall of Carthage or the collapse of Napoleon’s Grande Armée. Yet unlike those distant episodes, Stalingrad unfolded in living memory, shaping the consciousness of generations. Zinchenko’s longevity allowed him to serve as a living bridge between that epochal struggle and the present day. His death reminds us that the human link to those events is fading, leaving only archives, monuments, and collective memory.

Russian scholars have long emphasized the moral and civilizational dimensions of Stalin-

grad. The historian Vasily Grossman, who chronicled the battle as a war correspondent, described it as “the furnace in which the fate of mankind was decided.” More recently, academic Yuri Afanasyev reflected: “Stalingrad was not only a military victory; it was a moral triumph, a demonstration that even in the darkest hour, human dignity can prevail.” Zinchenko’s personal story thus becomes part of a larger framework of resilience and sacrifice.

The commemoration of figures like Zinchenko also raises questions about historical memory.

In Kazakhstan, where he spent his final years, his death was noted with respect but without the grandeur that might accompany such news in Russia. This contrast reflects the shifting geography of remembrance in the post-Soviet space. While Moscow continues to elevate Stalingrad as a cornerstone of national identity, peripheral republics often grapple with more complex legacies, balancing local narratives with the shared Soviet past.

For contemporary readers, Zinchenko’s story offers more than nostalgia. It invites reflection on the fragility of peace and the costs of war. The ruins of Stalingrad, rebuilt as Volgograd, stand as a testament to resilience, but they also warn against complacency. Zinchenko’s generation endured famine, bombardment, and the loss of millions. Their victory was purchased at a price that defies comprehension.

In the age of digital memory, where tweets and fleeting posts announce the passing of veterans, the challenge lies in preserving depth. Zinchenko’s death was noted on social media, accompanied by brief tributes and corrections of place names. Yet the brevity of such platforms risks reducing monumental lives to mere headlines. Newspapers, by contrast, retain the capacity to weave narrative,

context, and reflection—ensuring that the story of a soldier who helped capture Paulus is not lost in the scroll of timelines.

The legacy of Zinchenko also intersects with broader debates about the Second World War’s meaning in the twenty-first century. In Russia, the “Great Patriotic War” remains a sacred touchstone, invoked in political rhetoric and cultural production. In the West, interpretations vary, often emphasizing the Holocaust, the Normandy landings, or the atomic bombings. Zinchenko’s role reminds us that the Eastern Front was the decisive theatre, where the bulk of German forces were destroyed and the war’s outcome determined.

As historians continue to reassess the war, the voices of veterans like Zinchenko provide invaluable testimony. Their recollections, though inevitably shaped by time and memory, anchor abstract analysis in lived experience. Zinchenko’s capture of Paulus was not a strategic abstraction; it was a moment of human confrontation, where exhausted soldiers faced one another in the ruins of a city.

The passing of Zinchenko thus closes a chapter. He was not a general, nor a statesman, but a front-line soldier whose actions reverberated across continents. His life exemplifies the countless individuals whose courage and endurance shaped history, even if their names rarely appear in textbooks. In remembering him, we honour not only a man but an entire generation that bore the weight of catastrophe and emerged victorious.

As the world marks his death, one is reminded of the words of Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev: “History is not only the record of events, but the drama of human spirit confronting destiny.” Zinchenko’s century-long journey embodies that drama. His capture of Paulus was a moment when destiny bent under the weight of human will, and his passing reminds us that history lives not only in archives but in the fragile lives of those who carried it forward.

## Ten Messages and Achievements of Iran in the Ramadan War

More than three weeks have passed since the beginning of the aggression of the Zionist regime and the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

An aggression that, like the previous one, occurred nine months ago when the Islamic Republic of Iran was trying to reach a balanced agreement for a lasting peace in the West Asian region, in order to secure its legal rights and save the region and the world from being involved in a costly war.

This benevolent effort, however, failed with the attack on a girls’ school and the martyrdom of 169 innocent children, simultaneously with the attack on the home and office of the highest political and religious official of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the martyr Ayatollah Khamenei and marked the beginning of a series of developments and events whose end is not very clear.

But what has happened so far can be examined and re-examined from several angles:

First: With this action, America and the Zionist regime have violated all international rules and laws and sent the message to the world that they do not adhere to any international treaties. This message will be a very dangerous message for world peace and stability.

Second: Despite the misconceptions and mistakes of those who initiated the war, Islamic Republic of Iran not only stood firm

against the aggressors, but has also taught the aggressors unforgettable lessons.

Third: With the start of this war, the global economy has been affected and energy prices are increasing uncontrollably. There is no doubt that the increase in oil prices in the world will soon show its effects on the global economy and will cause irreparable damage. This is while Iran has not yet taken any military action to close the Strait of Hormuz, and the price of oil has nearly doubled due to the decrease in traffic through this waterway.

Fourth: According to the assessment of American experts, tens of billions of dollars of American financial resources have been spent in the past two weeks to start and continue this war, while the United States and the Zionist regime have not achieved any of their goals.

Fifth: The growing trend of opposition to the war in America has even reached those close to the US President, and yesterday we witnessed the resignation of the head of the US Counter-Terrorism Commission, who is considered a close confidant of Trump. This opposition is growing increasingly among the American people.

Sixth: The return of the Resistance Front to the operational arenas is considered one of the other achievements of this war. The return of Hezbollah in Lebanon to the battle against the Zionist regime and the return of Iraqi resistance groups to military operations against America are considered a part of the revival of the Resistance Front.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Majid Meshki

# Bakhtawari Stresses Private Sector Partnership for Stronger, Stable Pakistani Economy

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Member Central Core Committee of UBG and former President of ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, has urged the government to consult the business community and other stakeholders before making key economic decisions so that policies beneficial for business, industry, and the overall economy can be formulated. In his statement, he said that Paki-

stan urgently needs clear, effective, and long-term economic and industrial policies to restore investor confidence and pave the way for the establishment of new industries.

Bakhtawari stated that despite the increase in global oil prices, Pakistan continues to receive a steady supply of oil; therefore, pricing decisions should take into account the interests of both the business community and the general public. He emphasized that

economic stability requires policies that promote industry, trade, and domestic commerce so that business activities can continue without disruption.

He further said that decisions regarding market timings, lockdowns, or other economic restrictions must involve the business community, as traders contribute significantly to the national tax revenue and play a key role in sustaining economic activity. He added that providing a con-



ducive environment to traders would create new employment opportunities, increase industrial production, and boost exports.

Bakhtawari noted that Pakistan is emerging as a safe country on the global stage, and despite challenging regional conditions, the international community is willing to enhance economic cooperation with Pakistan. He said that Pakistan's strategy during global challenges and conflict situations has highlighted the country's positive image and strengthened international confidence. He pointed out that the safe move-

ment of Pakistani-flagged vessels through key global trade routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, reflects Pakistan's growing importance and effective diplomacy, demonstrating its role in global trade.

He stressed the need for the government to formulate a comprehensive long-term industrial and commerce policy to provide clear direction to investors and encourage the establishment of new industries. He also called for a review of unnecessary restrictions, particularly those related to market timings, to further promote economic activity.

Bakhtawari said that criticism of the business community is unjustified, as it serves as a backbone of the national economy and contributes significantly to tax revenue. He assured that the business community will continue to fully cooperate with the government for the country's development, as their future is tied to Pakistan.

He concluded by expressing the commitment that the government and private sector should work together to develop policies that enhance investment, industry, trade, and employment opportunities, ultimately making Pakistan economically strong and stable.

# ISSI hosted a Roundtable discussion 'Remembering Ambassador Sarvar Azimov'

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), through its Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Islamabad, hosted a roundtable discussion titled "Remembering Ambassador Sarvar Azimov: Diplomacy and Pakistan-Soviet Relations (1974-1980)." The event brought together senior diplomats, scholars, and members of the policy community to reflect on a formative phase in Pakistan-Soviet relations and the enduring legacy of Ambassador Sarvar Azimov.

Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP, in her introductory remarks highlighted the importance of revisiting diplomatic legacies amid global instability and declining trust. She noted that reflecting on history can provide insights for sustaining dialogue and cooperation in complex international contexts.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman Board of Governors ISSI, in his welcome remarks, framed the roundtable as both a commemorative exercise and an analytical reflection. He noted that Ambassador Azimov served during a period marked by Cold War tensions, regional realignments, and strategic uncertainty,

requiring diplomacy characterised by patience, nuance, and a deep understanding of national interests.

Russian Federation Ambassador Albert P. Khorev highlighted late Ambassador Sarvar Azimov's unique combination of intellectual depth and diplomatic skill. He recalled his pivotal role in strengthening Pakistan-Soviet relations during the 1970s as Pakistan, under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, diversified its foreign policy. He pointed to major Soviet-supported initiatives—such as Karachi Steel Mills and key thermal power plants—as crucial to Pakistan's industrial growth and economic self-reliance, reflecting a broader strategic alignment despite Cold War tensions.

Ambassador Khorev also emphasised Ambassador Azimov's role in maintaining continuity in bilateral ties amid regional and political challenges, with trade expanding significantly between 1973 and 1980. Highlighting people-to-people and institutional cooperation, including Soviet technical assistance and training for Pakistani engineers, Ambassador Khorev stressed that these efforts built lasting foundations for collaboration and mutual understanding, and expressed hope for continued recognition of such diplomatic legacies.

Ambassador Anvar S. Azimov, a distinguished Russian diplomat



and son of late Ambassador Sarvar Azimov, delivered deeply reflective remarks that combined personal insight with strategic perspective.

Ambassador Anvar Azimov highlighted the Soviet Union's early recognition of Pakistan and its role in facilitating dialogue during the 1965-66 India-Pakistan conflict, particularly through the Tashkent process, which

reflected Moscow's commitment to regional stability.

Concluding on a forward-looking note, Ambassador Azimov stressed that while bilateral relations remain positive, there is considerable scope for further strengthening cooperation, guided by shared interests and mutual respect.

In the subsequent discussion

session, scholars offered diverse perspectives on the legacy of Ambassador Sarvar Azimov and the broader trajectory of Pakistan-Soviet relations. The participants highlighted the evolution of Pakistan-Russia relations from Cold War-era constraints to contemporary engagement, noting the expanding scope of cooperation in areas such as energy, connectivity,

and regional multilateral frameworks. Participants emphasised that historical reflection is not merely commemorative but can serve as a guide for navigating present and future challenges in bilateral and regional relations. The event concluded with a vote of thanks and the presentation of mementos to the distinguished speakers.

# Spotify introduces artist profile protection giving artists more control over what shows up under their name

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: For the first time on any music streaming service, Spotify is giving artists the ability to review, approve, or decline releases with the launch of Artist Profile Protection, an optional feature within Spotify for Artists, now in limited beta, offering a solution to a problem that has affected streaming for years.

In the streaming age, and with the

rise of AI-generated tracks, instances of music appearing on incorrect artist pages have increased across streaming services. In some cases, this may happen due to metadata errors, duplicate artist names, or deliberate misuse. When that happens, it can impact an artists' catalog, stats, and how fans discover their music.

On Spotify, protecting artist identity has become a top priority, and Artist Profile Protection takes care of that. It

adds a review step before releases go live on an artist's profile, helping artists stay in control of what music lists them as an artist on Spotify. Only the releases approved will appear on the artist's profile, contribute to their stats, and show up in recommendations to their listeners. The feature is particularly beneficial in cases of repeated incorrect releases, common artist names, or when artists want greater control over what appears on their profile.

# Swift Response by PSCA's Virtual Blood Bank Saves Cancer Patient's Life

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority's Virtual Blood Bank (VBB) achieved another remarkable success by ensuring timely provision of A+ blood to a 59-year-old cancer patient, Fatima Bibi, thereby saving her precious life.

According to details, the patient's son, whose mother was under treatment at Shaukat Khanum Hospital Lahore, called Emergency Helpline 15 requesting urgent blood assistance. The caller informed that

his mother was suffering from cancer and was in dire need of A+ blood. Safe City's officer responded promptly upon receiving the alert and, through Virtual Blood Bank database, identified a suitable donor. Owing to efficient and coordinated system of PSCA, the donor timely donated blood making it possible to save the patient's precious life. The family expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Safe City's Virtual Blood Bank team and termed the effort a true precedent of humanitarian service.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, citizens can call Emergency Helpline 15 and press 4 for immediate blood assistance in any medical emergency. He further added that Safe City's Virtual Blood Bank is operational 24/7 to serve citizens and remains fully committed to provide them timely help in all emergency situations. The Punjab Safe Cities Authority remains committed to delivering prompt and effective services through modern technology and deems protection of precious human lives its foremost priority.

# ISSI-PAIDAR Commemorate Tunisia's Independence Day

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR), organized an event to commemorate Tunisia's Independence Day. The proceedings which began with the national anthems of Pakistan and Tunisia, were moderated by Dr. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. Speakers included Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG ISSI; the Chief Guest on the occasion was Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, President PAIDAR. Ms. Dorsaf Maaroufi, Charge d'Affairs of Tunisia to Pakistan; Javed Ahmed Umrani, Ambassador of Pakistan to Tunisia,

Mr. Ammad Rasheed, Honorary Consul General for Tunisia, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Mr. Mohammad Hameed, Honorary Consul General, Punjab also spoke on the occasion.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, in his opening remarks highlighted that the 70th anniversary of Tunisia's independence reflects the resilience and determination of the Tunisian people. He noted that Pakistan and Tunisia share a historic bond rooted in Pakistan's support for Tunisia's self-determination, which has evolved into growing economic and commercial cooperation since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1957.

Dr. Amina Khan said that the 70th Independence Day of Tunisia is a moment that celebrates the resilience, determination, and forward-looking spirit

of the Tunisian people in shaping their sovereign future. Tunisia's journey is not only one of political independence, but also of continuous economic transformation and development.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, while speaking on the occasion stated that Tunisia plays a leading role in African politics and Pakistan was one of the first countries to support Tunisia's independence. The PLO was given sanctuary in Tunisia in the 1990s and like Pakistan, Tunisia is also a strong supporter of Palestine.

Tunisian Charge d'Affaires Ms. Dorsaf Maaroufi, while speaking on the occasion highlighted that there are strong historical ties between Tunisia and Pakistan, especially Pakistan's support for Tunisia at the United Nations. She noted that this celebration

reflects continued commitment to stronger relations. She emphasized boosting trade through the Preferential Trade Agreement, expanding cultural and tourism links, and strengthening people to people connections.

Ambassador Javed Umrani said that Pakistan and Tunisia continue to strengthen their bilateral relations, with trade showing a positive upward trajectory. Business communities and chambers of commerce on both sides have been actively engaged in fostering closer economic ties, including a 17-member delegation that visited Tunisia last year, where productive meetings were held with counterparts and several MoUs were signed.

Mr. Ammad Rasheed, while expressing his views said that we are actively working to further deepen these ties, particularly in



the fields of trade, tourism and cultural exchange. Over the past few years, efforts in Peshawar and across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have focused on building bridges connecting business communities and creating awareness about

Tunisia as a gateway to Europe and Africa.

Mr. Mohammad Hameed, stated that Tunisia and Pakistan have a great relationship and it must be taken forward in areas like textiles and there-

fore it is important that the trade agreement gets through as it will provide more opportunities for cooperation. Similarly, technology transfer regarding olive oil trade can also reap benefits for Pakistan.

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
146,842.97	151,707.51
Day's High	Day's Low
151,813.61	144,656.97
Index Value	Change
26,029,019,840	-4864.54
Percentage	Time
-3.21%	30 Mar, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,127.96	+160.61
Percentage	Time
+1.61%	30 Mar, 4:40 pm GMT
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
45,315.50	+148.86
Percentage	Time
+0.33%	30 Mar, 1:20 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
51,885.85	-1,487.22
Percentage	Time
-2.79%	30 Mar, 3:45 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	189.60	194.25
Bahrain Dinar	732	743.15
Canadian Dollar	198.38	204.15
China Yuan	36.65	37.6
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	321.03	327.53
Hong Kong Dollar	35	36
Indian Rupee	2.05	2.31
Japanese Yen	1.7210	1.8199
Kuwaiti Dinar	889.50	901.35
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.45
New Zealand \$	157.75	164.57
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	719.15	730.55
Qatari Riyal	73.33	74.3
Saudi Riyal	74.30	75.45
Singapore Dollar	213.87	221.83
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	370.17	377.47
US Dollar	279.50	280.2

# Pakistan lists of first PKR-denominated Green Bond on PSX

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan today marked a milestone in its sustainable finance landscape with the listing of the country's first PKR denominated Green Bond on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX). Developed with technical assistance from the UK Government's MOBILIST programme, the Parwaaz Financial Services Limited (PFSL) Green Bond is designed to mobilise private capital for climate-aligned investments across renewable energy, clean agriculture, and green transportation.

Speaking at the occasion British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: "The UK is proud to have helped facilitate the Parwaaz Green Bond. This initiative demonstrates how innovative development finance can support local markets in mobilising private capital for investment in climate action and sustainable development."

Khurram Schehzad, Adviser to the Federal Minister of Finance, highlighted that the Social Impact Framework by the Social Impact Financing Committee, established in 2024, supports initiatives like the green bond issuance. He emphasized that public financing alone cannot meet Pakistan's development and climate needs, and mobilizing private capital is crucial to achieving meaningful impact while strengthening capital markets and advancing social impact financing.

Syed Salim Raza, Chairperson of the Karandaaz Pakistan Board, affirmed: "This listing reflects the continued development



of Pakistan's sustainable finance ecosystem.

From a capital markets perspective, the listing reinforces the role of PSX as a platform for innovative and sustainable financial instruments. Mr Ruhail Muhammad, Chairman

of Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited, stated: "The Pakistan Stock Exchange is committed to supporting innovative financial instruments that contribute to sustainable economic growth."

Speaking on behalf of the issuer, Mr Javed Iqbal, CEO of Parwaaz Financial Services Limited, said: "The PFSL Green Bond highlights capital markets' role in supporting sustainable investments."

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for and Revenue, Senator Muhammad holding a with VEON Group CEO Mr. Kaan and the Jazz at the Finance Division Monday.



Photo: PID

## CCP Holds Awareness Session on Competition Law at LCCI

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) held an awareness session at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) on the evolution and the substantive provisions of competition law. The session aimed to enhance understanding of core areas, including abuse of dominant position, prohibited agreements (cartelization), deceptive marketing practices, and mergers and acquisitions while promoting a culture of compliance within the business community.

Chairman CCP, Farid Ahmad Tarar, led the CCP delegation, while the session was attended by LCCI President Faheem ur Rehman Saigol, members of the senior management, the Executive Committee, and a large number of general body members.

Addressing the participants, the Chairman emphasized that distortion of competition harms both businesses and consumers, and underscored the importance of fostering a culture of compliance. He highlighted CCP's ongoing efforts to modernize its enforcement framework, including the automation of complaint handling mechanisms and



the development of guidelines, particularly in emerging areas such as e-commerce.

Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Faheem ur Rehman Saigol appreciated CCP's outreach efforts and emphasized the need to strengthen linkages with the business community.

Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmad Sheikh and Vice President Khurram

Lodhi, Senior CCP officials, including Director General Dr. Ikram ul Haq, Director and Secretary to the Commission Maryum Pervaiz, and Director Maliha Quddus, delivered detailed presentations on key provisions of the Competition Act, including abuse of dominant position, prohibited agreements, deceptive marketing practices, and mergers and acquisitions.

## FPCCI hails export relief for Iran, Central Asia, seeks raw material imports

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Chairman BMP-Progressive and Senior Vice President Federation Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), has welcomed the federal government's decision to grant a temporary exemption from bank guarantees and letters of credit (LCs) for exports to Iran and Central Asian states, calling it a timely move to facilitate trade and support exporters.

In a statement, Saquib Fayyaz Magoon described the relaxation as a "positive and pragmatic step" that would ease financial constraints and help revive cross-border trade through land routes.

Under the new arrangement, exporters will be allowed to ship goods via



Iran to destinations including Azerbaijan and Central Asian countries without the previously mandatory financial documentation, a move expected to streamline export procedures and reduce transaction delays.

Mr. Magoon expressed appreciation for Commerce Minister Jam Kamal, noting that the decision would not only simplify export mechanisms but also strengthen regional trade connectivity and generate broader economic benefits.

## SECP launches surveys to drive reforms in corporate debt market

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: In order to initiate reforms in Pakistan's corporate debt market and gather stakeholder feedback, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has launched three targeted surveys. The initiative aims to collect input from market participants to improve regulatory processes and support the development of a more active and efficient debt market.

The surveys are designed to understand the current level of awareness about debt instruments, gather feedback on practical challenges faced during debt issuance and listing, and assess the effectiveness of the credit rating process. Through this exercise, the SECP seeks to identify key issues and areas for improvement in the market.

The surveys include an Awareness Survey to assess

the market's understanding of debt instruments, an Experience Survey to gather feedback on past experiences with debt issuance and listing, and a Credit Rating Survey to evaluate the credit rating process.

The surveys will engage listed companies, industry participants, and credit rating agencies. The feedback received will help the SECP enhance market liquidity, improve access to corporate financing, and make debt instruments more attractive for issuers and investors.

This initiative reflects the SECP's commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and continuous improvement. The insights gathered will support the development of a more responsive, practical, and data-driven regulatory framework.

All stakeholders are encouraged to participate and share their views.

## OPPO A6s Pro Pre-Orders Open Nationwide

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: OPPO, a global leader in smartphone innovation, today announced the launch and pre-order availability of the OPPO A6s Pro (8GB + 256GB), priced under PKR 100,000, a feature-packed smartphone engineered to deliver excep-

tional endurance, advanced AI-powered selfie capabilities, and industry-recognized smooth performance in the upper mid-range segment.

Elevating the front camera experience, the OPPO A6s Pro introduces a 50MP Ultra-Wide AI Zoom Selfie Camera, setting a new benchmark in the PKR 100,000 segment.

Equipped with auto focus and a wide 100° field of view, it captures detailed, high-quality selfies and group shots with ease, while AI Portrait Glow intelligently enhances lighting and skin tones for natural, refined results. The camera also allows users to switch between 1x and 0.6x zoom, enabling sharper selfies and wider



group shots with clarity and precision in every frame.

group shots with clarity and precision in every frame.

## Sarfaraz Mughal Hails Sharif's Leadership: Pakistan Now Regional Powerhouse

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Prominent social leader Sarfaraz Mughal says that thanks to the inspiring leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, today Pakistan has become the most important country in the region. Sarfaraz Mughal said while talking to the journalists yesterday that he is getting these ideas

Pakistan army and government are on the same platform, our forces have made immense sacrifices, Modi made Israel his father and Arab countries have also appreciated the foreign policy and are praising the policies of our government.

## PFA Seizes 126 kg of Unhygienic Meat in Attack, Three Arrested

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOC: A joint operation conducted by the Punjab Food Authority, Highway Police, and Livestock Department resulted in the seizure and destruction of 126 kilograms of substandard meat near Khushal Garh Check Post, officials said.

According to the authorities, the meat was being transported in a vehicle from Rawalpindi to Karak and was concealed on the roof of the vehicle in unhygienic conditions.

A veterinary doctor examined the meat on the spot and declared it unfit for human consumption, after which it was confiscated and destroyed.

Police took the vehicle into custody and arrested the driver, while a case has been registered against three individuals. Further investigation is underway, officials added.

# Pak coach, captain confident ahead of football clash against Myanmar

## Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan head coach Nolberto Solano has expressed confidence in his team's preparation and long-term vision ahead of their crucial 2027 AFC Asian Cup Qualifier against Myanmar, stressing that the national side is steadily laying the foundation for future success.

Addressing the media during the official pre-match press conference, Solano highlighted both the immediate challenge posed by Myanmar and the broader developmental strategy guiding Pakistan football.

Solano said, "It is always exciting when matches like this come around. We know it will be a difficult game. Myanmar are a strong side and have shown their quality recently. But we are prepared, and the players are looking forward to the challenge."

The fixture comes at a significant stage for Pakistan, with the coaching staff using the current international window not only to compete but also to evaluate emerging talent, particularly from the domestic circuit.

Solano reaffirmed that 2026 is a key year in building a competitive squad capable of progressing in continental football. "We have a clear plan for this

year," he explained.

"That is why you see many local players in the squad. They deserve the chance to represent the country and show what they can do. There is real quality here, and this is an opportunity for them to step up."

Pakistan captain Alamgir Ghazi echoed his coach's optimism, underlining the squad's determination and unity heading into the match. "The boys are motivated and ready," Ghazi said.

"We will fight until the last whistle. Everyone understands the importance of this game, and we are prepared to give our best."

Solano also addressed recent injury concerns, revealing that a number of players had been forced out after picking up knocks during training. He emphasized that the physical demands of international football require players to adapt quickly to higher intensity levels. "At this level, the intensity is completely different," he noted. "Some players were training very well but unfortunately suffered injuries. It is part of the game. What matters is that we continue building depth and giving opportunities to others."

A key talking point from the press conference was the limited presence of overseas-based players in the current squad. Solano clarified that the decision

to prioritise locally based footballers was intentional.

"This camp is about giving local players a real opportunity," he said.

"I am familiar with many of the diaspora players and what they can bring, but these boys also need exposure at international level. It is important for their development."

Beyond tactics and personnel, Solano emphasised the importance of developing a strong team identity, something he believes is crucial for Pakistan's progress. "We want to be organised and difficult to beat," he said. "But more importantly, we need to build a strong mentality. Teams should not come here expecting easy points. That mindset has to change."

He added that creating cohesion within a national team setup presents challenges, given the limited time players spend together, but insisted that unity and discipline can serve as the foundation for success. "The goal is to build a team that fights for each other, a strong unit that represents Pakistan with pride," he said.

The upcoming match will be played behind closed doors, a decision that Solano described as unfortunate but understandable. "Football without fans is always disappointing. The supporters



bring energy that lifts the players. But we respect the decision. Hopefully, we can have fans back in the stadium soon," he said.

Alamgir Ghazi praised the team's preparations, noting that several players entered the camp in good physical condition following recent domestic and

regional competitions. "The preparation has been strong," he said. "Many of the players were already match-fit, which helped us a lot. The training sessions have been intense, and the team is fully focused."

As Pakistan prepare to face Myanmar, the message from the camp is clear, while

results remain important, the larger objective is sustainable growth and long-term competitiveness.

"These players have ambition. They want to show what Pakistan can achieve. We are building step by step, and this is just the beginning of something bigger," Solano concluded.

## 'No mystery, just clarity': Adam Zampa reveals reason behind his success

LAHORE: Karachi Kings spinner Adam Zampa delivered a match-winning performance to guide his side to a thrilling four-wicket victory over Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Zampa was named Player of the Match for his outstanding spell of 2-11 in four overs, including a maiden, playing a key role in restricting Lahore Qalandars to a modest total.

Reflecting on his performance, Adam Zampa emphasized the importance of reading conditions and adapting accordingly.

"I guess just summing up the wicket today. I think it was a pretty used wicket, lowish, slowish, with a little bit of spin. So I tried to use my strengths as much as possible, hit the stumps, and get the ball to slide on here and there as well. So it suited me."

The experienced leg-spinner highlighted how understanding conditions plays a vital role in modern T20 bowling.



"I think it's part of becoming a universal bowler — summing up the conditions. I've played here plenty of times, and you know when it's used. After a couple of balls, you can kind of sum up the best way to go about it. You tend to keep things pretty simple."

Adam Zampa also credited clarity and experience as key

factors behind his effectiveness, particularly when it comes to deceiving batters.

"I guess it's just using experience now. I know what I'm doing when I get out there. I've got a lot of clarity in my mind. There's not really a mystery to my bowling, but I think it's more about knowing what works in different situations."

## "We Did It the Hard Way": David Warner Reflects on Gritty Win Over Lahore Qalandars



LAHORE: Karachi Kings captain David Warner praised his side's resilience after they secured a hard-fought four-wicket victory over Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 clash at the Gaddafi Stadium on Sunday.

Speaking at the post-match presentation, Warner admitted the win did not come easily but highlighted the importance of grinding out results in tight contests.

"We did it the hard way. As you just said, Shaheen Shah Afridi bowled absolutely outstanding. A great spell, four wickets. But look, it was a bit tighter than I would like. But it's good to have two wins from two," Warner said.

Reflecting on the high-intensity contest between the two rivals, Warner described it as a perfect showcase for the tournament.

"It's a great game for the tournament, actually, Lahore versus Karachi on a Sunday night. We absolutely loved it," he stated.

The Karachi Kings skipper also credited his bowling unit for setting up the victory, particularly highlighting the combined effort of the spin and pace departments.

## Zimbabwe allrounder Ryan Burl has joined the Lahore Qalandars squad



Zimbabwe allrounder Ryan Burl has joined the Lahore Qalandars squad in Lahore and will be available for selection in the upcoming matches. He landed early morning. The Qalandars began their campaign with a win over Hyderabad Kingsmen and will next face Karachi Kings this evening at Gaddafi Stadium.

Burl arrives as an experienced left-handed all-rounder with an impressive T20 résumé. Having played over 200 matches in the format, he has scored around 3,750 runs with his aggressive middle-order batting, while also contributing 97 wickets through his effective leg-spin, adding valuable balance to the side.

Among the overseas players who have joined the squad are Ruben Hermann, Daniel Sams from Australia, Mustafizur Rahman & Parvez Hossain Emon from Bangladesh, and Dunith Wellalage from Sri Lanka.

## Iran vs U. S.: When Demands Collide, Can Peace Survive?

### Continued from Page 4

From the prolonged engagement in the Vietnam War, to nearly a decade of conflict following the Iraq War, and two decades of entanglement in the War in Afghanistan, the United States has repeatedly found itself embedded in extended conflicts. Now, with Afghanistan no longer serving as a theater of engagement, a new front appears to be taking shape—one that risks drawing Washington into another prolonged and complex confrontation. This raises a critical question: whether sustained geopolitical engagement

through conflict has become an embedded feature of U. S. strategic doctrine, where controlled instability in key regions is perceived as serving long-term national interests, even if those interests are not always clearly articulated.

At this critical juncture, what is required is not conventional diplomacy, but a deliberate, sincere, and strategically articulated effort to bring both parties out of their entrenched positions. A meaningful resolution will not emerge from forcing one side to surrender, but from crafting a mutually acceptable, win-win framework—one that preserves

sovereignty while addressing security concerns.

Without this shift, the trajectory is clear. The war will expand, new fronts will open, and the region will descend deeper into instability. The pattern is not new. From Vietnam to Iraq to Afghanistan, history has shown that war was born out of strategic rigidity often evolve into prolonged quagmires. The danger now is that the Middle East is on the verge of becoming the next chapter in that pattern.

And while states negotiate, calculate, and posture, it is the civilians—from

Lebanon to Iran and beyond—who continue to pay the price.

In the end, this is not just a war of missiles and military might. It is a war of narratives, perceptions, and strategic visions. And unless those visions can be reconciled through genuine diplomacy, the region risks remaining trapped in a cycle of conflict with no clear end.

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## Cabinet Committee Reviews Fuel Stocks

### Continued from Page 8

The Committee was informed that international oil markets remain highly volatile and tight, with notable increases in benchmark prices and cargo premiums in recent days. Members noted that prevailing market conditions reflect supply-side uncertainties linked to regional developments, resulting in elevated premiums for both diesel and petrol cargoes.

The Committee also reviewed procurement strategies and noted ongoing efforts to secure favourable supply arrangements under existing contracts, including government-backed engagements that offer comparatively lower costs than prevailing spot market rates. At the same time, members emphasized the importance of prudent procurement decisions in view of variations in pricing across suppliers and tightening market conditions.

Operational aspects of fuel imports

were also discussed, including shipping arrangements, insurance considerations, and logistical coordination. The Committee considered proposals relating to the use of national shipping capacity and agreed that all such arrangements will be guided by commercial prudence, transparency, and the imperative of ensuring uninterrupted supply.

The Committee reviewed demand patterns in the domestic market and noted an increase in offtake in recent weeks. Members emphasized the need for close monitoring to discourage speculative stockholding and ensure smooth distribution across the country. Provincial administrations and regulatory authorities have been directed to intensify oversight and enforcement measures to maintain market discipline.

The Committee also reviewed progress on strengthening monitoring mechanisms across the petroleum supply chain. Particular emphasis was placed on improving real-time data

visibility, including at the retail level, through the development of a digital dashboard. Relevant authorities were directed to ensure timely sharing and integration of data to support informed and responsive decision-making.

In addition, the Committee took note of a proposal relating to fuel specification and pricing optimization aimed at enhancing efficiency in domestic consumption patterns and supporting local refining capacity. It was decided that the proposal will be examined further in consultation with stakeholders, including refineries and oil marketing companies, before being brought back for consideration.

The Committee further noted the need to initiate work on a strategic petroleum reserves framework as a parallel workstream, in line with directions received from the Prime Minister. The Petroleum Division was tasked with developing a structured framework for consideration in upcoming meetings.

Chairing the meeting, the Finance

Minister reiterated that the Government's foremost priority remains ensuring uninterrupted availability of petroleum products across the country while minimizing the impact of global price volatility on the public. He emphasized that, despite challenging international market conditions, proactive planning and coordinated efforts have helped maintain a stable domestic supply position.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Petroleum Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Masood Malik, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Mr. Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry (virtually), and Federal Minister for Commerce Mr. Jam Kamal Khan (virtually), along with federal secretaries and senior officials from the relevant ministries, divisions, and regulatory authorities.

## Mideast crisis

### Continued from Page 1

A briefing informed participants that despite global uncertainties, Pakistan's fuel supply remains stable, with sufficient oil and gas reserves available and contingency planning underway for future needs.

Ishaq Dar also briefed the meeting on diplomatic engagements, including contacts with the leadership of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and his upcoming visit to Beijing.

The meeting further directed authorities to launch a public awareness campaign aimed at reducing fuel consumption and promoting the use of public transport.

Participants concluded by reaffirming the need for a unified policy approach to safeguard

Pakistan's economic stability and security amid shifting regional dynamics.

This meeting followed a high-level consultative meeting chaired by President Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr last week, which was also attended by Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and federal ministers.

According to officials, the leadership has agreed that economic management, energy planning, food security, and broader security considerations must remain closely aligned to effectively respond to current challenges.

The meeting concluded with participants reaffirming the need for a unified policy approach to safeguard Pakistan's security and economic stability amid regional uncertainties.

## Ten Messages and Achievements of Iran in the Ramadan War

### Continued from Page 4

Seventh: Another unexpected achievement of this war is the demonstration of Iran's power throughout the West Asian region and the Persian Gulf, which if its initiators had a correct picture of, it is unlikely that they would have taken such an unwise action.

Eighth: The fact that America is alone in building a coalition and involving other countries in this war is another clear message. The US President, by inviting heads of state to join the US in opening the Strait of Hormuz, tried to bring a coalition of countries with him, but they met with a negative response, and this incident is considered the beginning of the end of American authoritarianism in the world.

Ninth: Political, social, and economic stability, along with the exemplary resistance, bravery, and steadfastness of the Iranian Muslim people, along with the donation of pure blood to water the seedlings of Islam, were other unique events of the imposed

Ramadan War, which undoubtedly added another golden chapter to the long history of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Tenth: Iran, while sending a message of friendship to neighboring countries before and during the war, repeatedly asked them not to allow foreigners to use their land against the territory and territorial integrity of Iran. This warning was unfortunately not taken seriously by some of Iran's southern neighboring governments, forcing Iran's defense forces to target the aggressors' bases inside the territory of neighboring countries in order to protect the peace and security of the region and Iran. This was never and is not the desire and desire of Islamic Republic of Iran. It is hoped that neighboring countries will observe good neighborliness more than ever and not play on the playground of the common enemy of the Islamic world, namely the Zionist regime.

*The writer is Cultural Consul of the Islamic Republic of Iran-Isfahabad*

## Meeting

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting of the Committee to Monitor Petrol Prices to review national fuel stocks and global market developments at the Finance Division Monday.



Photo: Online

## PM vows not to abandon needy masses as efforts underway for further public relief

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the government was making every effort to provide further relief to the poor and middle-income class, and vowed not to abandon them in this challenging time.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the impact of the Middle East situation on petroleum products, availability of current stocks, and public relief measures, said that by using digital systems, public relief would be delivered directly to the common man.

He said that government expenditures and the development budget had been slashed, and 60 percent of official vehicles had been grounded to initiate austerity within.

The prime minister said that the proposals to hike fuel prices had been repeatedly rejected, and the funds saved through austerity measures were being utilized for public relief.

He said that owing to the timely decisions, the disruption in the supply of fuel had been averted despite the global crisis.

He told the participants of



the meeting that Pakistan was making vigorous diplomatic efforts to restore regional peace.

An Intelligence Bureau audit report was also

presented to the meeting regarding the implementation of the prime minister's fuel-saving and austerity campaign.

The meeting was attended

by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahsan Iqbal, Dr. Musadik Malik, Ahad Khan Cheema, Syed Mustafa Kamal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Ali Pervez Malik, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Rana Mubashir Iqbal, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Advisor to PM Rana Sanaulah, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kiani, special assistants Tariq Fatemi and Talha Burki, MNAs Engineer Qamar-ul-Islam, Riaz-ul-Haq and Hafiz Muhammad Numan, and other senior officials.

## Gas pipeline blown up near Quetta, supply disrupted in several areas

## Bureau Report

QUETTA: A gas pipeline was blown up in an apparent act of sabotage near Akhtarabad on the outskirts of Quetta on Monday, triggering a fire and disrupting gas supply to multiple areas, officials said.

According to initial reports, the explosion struck a section of the pipeline near the Western Bypass, igniting flames that were visible from a distance. The blast caused significant damage to the infrastructure, forcing authorities to suspend gas supply to adjoining localities.

Police and security personnel rushed to the site shortly after the explosion, cordoning off the area and



launching an initial investigation. Gas company officials were also called in to assess the damage and begin repair work.

Authorities confirmed that gas supply to parts of the Western Bypass and nearby neighborhoods has been halted as a precautionary measure. Efforts are underway to control the fire and restore the affected pipeline.

No casualties have been reported so far, and the cause of the explosion is yet to be officially confirmed. However, such incidents in Balochistan have previously been linked to sabotage targeting energy infrastructure.

Further details are expected as the investigation progresses.

## PMA Lahore rejects action against doctors, demands fair probe in Lady Willingdon Hospital incident

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Lahore has expressed serious concern over the circulation of a viral video showing a surgical procedure at Lady Willingdon Hospital.

In an emergent meeting of PMA Lahore held at PMA House Lahore today, chaired by PMA Lahore President Prof Dr Shahid Malik, however, the participants observed that media trials and one-sided punitive action against doctors in such cases were deeply unfair.

The meeting was attended by senior members of the body, including Prof Dr Ashraf Nizami, Dr Iram Shahzadi, Dr Wajid Ali, Dr Bushra Haq, Dr Izhar Chaudhry, Dr Kamran Saeed, Dr Kamran Ahmed, Dr Tanveer Anwar, Dr Nadir Khan, Dr Ahmed Naeem Akhtar,



and Dr Maryam Fatima.

The meeting held that any inquiry into the incident should focus not only on the viral footage but also on

the patients' postoperative condition, including whether the surgeries were successful and whether any complications arose.

It said that if complications occurred, the matter should be reviewed by senior specialists from the relevant medical field, and any disciplinary action against the doctors should be based on the recommendations of those experts.

However, the association said that if the surgeries were successful and the patients were recovering without complications, the procedures should be viewed as a reflection of the surgeons' professional competence, noting that surgical technique and operating speed can vary from one doctor to another.

PMA Lahore also called for a separate investigation into how the footage was recorded and later circulated, arguing that the surgeons were occupied with the operation at the time and could not have been responsible for filming or disseminating the video.

## Cabinet Committee Reviews Fuel Stocks, Notes Stable Supply Amid Global Volatility

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Cabinet Committee to Monitor Petrol Prices was held today under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, as part of the Committee's ongoing daily review of petroleum stocks and developments in the energy sector amid evolving geopolitical conditions.

The Committee undertook a comprehensive review of petroleum product stocks, supply arrangements, and import plans. It was noted that the current supply position remains stable, with diesel stocks providing approximately 23-24 days of cover, while petrol availability continues to

remain comfortable. The Committee was informed that crude oil stocks currently provide around 11 days of cover, with additional cargoes in transit and committed volumes expected to sustain refinery operations and product availability through April.

The Petroleum Division briefed the Committee that import plans for April are being actively managed, with significant volumes already secured through commercial and government-to-government engagements. Refinery operations are being maintained at optimal levels, with efforts underway to maximize throughput and ensure conversion of crude into refined products to support domestic demand.

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## Dar to visit China Tuesday for in-depth discussions on regional developments



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar is scheduled to visit to China on Tuesday, at the invitation of the Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi.

Pakistan and China enjoy an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, characterized by close coordination and regular consultations on regional and international issues, according to a Foreign Office

statement.

In this context, the upcoming visit will provide an opportunity for both sides to hold in-depth discussions on regional developments, as well as bilateral and global issues of mutual interest.

The deputy prime minister's visit to China, despite medical advice to rest following his hairline shoulder fracture on Monday, is evidence of the importance placed by Pakistan on its relationship with China.

## Oman port hit by drone to reopen from Tuesday



## AFP

Danish shipping firm Maersk announced Monday that Oman's port of Salalah, which was hit by a drone at the weekend, would start to reopen from Tuesday.

The Oman authorities said one worker was injured and minor damage caused by the strike on the port, which is run by Maersk subsid-

ary APM Terminals and is one of the key shipping facilities in the Gulf state.

Maersk said the area damaged was "limited" and that the port's management would take "necessary measures" to progressively build up to full capacity.

Some "constraints" would remain but additional safety and "preventive" measures had been taken because of the strike, it added.

## President, PM review national security, regional situation

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, discussed in detail the overall national security situation.

During a meeting held here, the evolving regional situation and its impacts upon Pakistan were also reviewed, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, former

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi were present during the meeting.

National Security Adviser Lieutenant General Asim Malik also attended the meeting.

They also held consultations on economic, energy and security challenges while emphasis was laid upon a coordinated national strategy and institutional harmony.