



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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نکب تنجی جانے، قضاہ قدر کی برائی اور دشمنوں
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ایک میں نے بھلا دی تھی اور مجھے یاد نہیں کہ
دو ایک کون سی صفت ہے۔
(کنج بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6347)

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UN report warns only immediate action can prevent climate catastrophe

A new UN report warns record heat waves, deadly flooding and extreme weather signal a planet nearing dangerous temperature limits, though intensified climate action could still avert catastrophe. UN Secretary-General António Guterres cited recent wildfires, floods and heat as warnings, noting the world is failing to honor the 2015 Paris Agreement's 1.5°C target, per UNEP's findings.



Sajjad Haider Khan Takes Charge as Foreign Office Spokesperson

Sajjad Haider Khan has assumed charge as Pakistan's new Foreign Office spokesperson, replacing Tahir Hussain Andrabi. Currently Director General South Asia, he has served in diplomatic missions in Damascus, Budapest, Berlin and Jakarta. He was Pakistan's Ambassador to Belarus from 2020 to 2025 and speaks several languages, including Urdu, English, Arabic and Balti.

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BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan: President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Nurgozhoevich Japarov seeing off Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif upon his departure from on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz Sharif Concludes Kyrgyzstan Visit as President Japarov Personally Drives Him to Airport

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Kyrgyzstan concluded with an unprecedented gesture of hospitality, as Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov personally drove to see him off at the airport. Officials said the President taking the wheel himself reflected the warmth and depth of Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan ties and added a new dimension to the fraternal relationship between the two countries.

The send-off was termed a rare and meaningful diplomatic gesture. During his stay in Bishkek, PM Shehbaz Sharif held wide-ranging discussions with the Kyrgyz leadership to deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Officials said the visit further cemented the bonds of friendship and marked another milestone in strengthening the historic and brotherly relationship between Islamabad and Bishkek.

Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan Sign Bilateral Accords to Strengthen Multi-Sectoral Ties

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic signed multiple bilateral accords on Wednesday to enhance cooperation across trade, security, education, environment and technology. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov witnessed the ceremony, where representatives from both sides exchanged pre-signed documents and issued a joint statement outlining the goals of Sharif's three-day visit to attend the SCO Council of Heads of State meeting.



The two countries signed a diplomatic Programme of Cooperation for their foreign ministries covering 2026-2027, along with an MoU between the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad and Kyrgyzstan's National Institute for Strategic Initiatives for research collaboration. They finalized agreements on transit trade, science and technology cooperation, and an extradition treaty, alongside a draft agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.

Interior ministries signed an MoU to combat narcotics and precursor chemical trafficking. Health and education cooperation was formalized through separate MoUs — one between Kyrgyzstan's health ministry and the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, another between the two countries' education ministries. Environmental cooperation was addressed through an MoU between Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Natural Resources and Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change.

Additional agreements covered academic cooperation between the National Defence University Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's strategic institute, and virtual assets cooperation between regulatory bodies of both countries. Lahore and Osh city were declared sister cities. Postal and e-commerce cooperation was agreed between Kyrgyz Post and Pakistan Post, while the two countries' chambers of commerce signed an agreement to boost business ties.

India facing setbacks on military and diplomatic fronts: Kh Asif

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defense Minister Khawaja Asif has said that India has been facing continuous setbacks for the past one and a half years, both on the military and diplomatic fronts.

Speaking about the Indus Waters Treaty, Khawaja Asif said Pakistan had successfully maintained its position on the issue and stressed that the agreement could not be unilaterally altered without the consent of both parties.

He said the Indus Waters Treaty had remained in place for nearly 60 years and held significant importance among international agreements.

Khawaja Asif said Pakistan had inspected several

upstream projects in India on multiple occasions.

He stressed that it was necessary to closely monitor



any intention or action by India that could constitute a violation of the treaty. The defense minister said Pakistan's position on the fundamental principles of the Indus Waters Treaty remained clear.

Pakistan Urges India's Full IWT Compliance, Retains All Options: FO Spokesperson

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan welcomed the Permanent Court of Arbitration's (PCA) "clear and authoritative" ruling on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), affirming it retains all diplomatic and non-diplomatic options to protect its water rights, and urged India to return to full compliance. Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi called the unanimous award an important reaffirmation of the treaty's sanctity and the rule of international law, saying it vindicated Pakistan's position that Indus water disputes must be resolved within the treaty's framework.

He criticized India's rejection of the award, saying New Delhi



"cannot treat international law as a matter of convenience," warning this undermines treaty sanctity and international dispute mech-

anisms. Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to implementing the award in letter and spirit, urging India to reciprocate.

On Afghanistan, Andrabi said Pakistan appreciated China's engagement but stressed that progress depends on the Taliban regime taking verifiable action against TTP, BLA and other militant groups. On the US-Iran conflict, he said Pakistan remains engaged and views escalation cycles as standard, with the Islamabad MoU still providing a framework for negotiations.

On Kashmir, he reaffirmed Pakistan's position remains anchored in UN resolutions and international law, noting the issue was raised during PM Shehbaz Sharif's Bishkek interactions with the UN Secretary-General.

Andrabi said the EU's GSP Monitoring Report, while acknowledging Pakistan's compliance, lacked balance. On counter-terrorism, he cited internal operations alongside external support from Afghanistan-based elements and India. He highlighted PM Shehbaz's SCO summit visit to Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan's incoming SCO chairmanship, and the inaugural Pakistan-Saudi-Türkiye Strategic Political and Defence Committee meeting in Istanbul under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement.

This was Andrabi's final briefing before becoming Pakistan's Permanent Representative to Geneva; Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan takes over as spokesperson.

Rain, Thundershowers Forecast for Upper Pakistan, Islamabad on Thursday

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast rain-

wind/thundershowers in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northeast Punjab, Pothohar region, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir on Thursday, with isolated

heavy rainfall expected during the evening and night. Hot and humid weather is likely to continue in other plain areas. PMD warned that heavy rains during



the night of September 3-4 could

Continued on Page 7

Pakistan Becomes World's Third-Largest Crypto Market: PVARA Chief

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has emerged as the world's third-largest cryptocurrency market, with around 40 million people holding crypto accounts, Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) Chairman Bilal bin Saqib told the Senate Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat.

Briefing the committee, Bilal highlighted the significant gap between cryptocurrency users and taxpayers, noting that Pakistan has only around six million active taxpayers. He said PVARA was established to regulate the rapidly expanding virtual assets sector and bring digital currency users into the formal tax system.

Bilal said PVARA was recruiting

permanent staff and had utilized only 8 percent of its government-allocated budget. He said Pakistan aimed to become a global leader in Islamic finance through digital assets and planned to facilitate overseas remittances through digital platforms. Several international companies have reportedly applied for no-objection certificates to operate in Pakistan's

digital assets sector.

He warned that banning cryptocurrency technology would restrict the country's digital development. PVARA would take action against illegal digital asset companies after September 5, he added.

The committee also discussed taxation on imported mobile phones. PTA officials said 35

companies were currently manufacturing smartphones in Pakistan, while Customs needed a proper mechanism to determine handset values. The committee recommended reducing mobile phone taxes and sought reports from the FBR and Tariff Commission. It also requested another briefing on developments in the digital assets sector.

PM Iftikhar Gilani Directs Bureaucracy to Implement 100-Day Reform Agenda

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Iftikhar Gilani chaired a meeting of government secretaries at the Prime Minister's Secretariat and directed the bureaucracy to immediately implement the government's 100-Day Reform Agenda.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary AJ&K Khushal Khan, senior administrative officers and secretaries of various departments. Addressing the officials, Prime Minister Gilani said meaningful reforms, public facilitation and creation of new opportunities were the government's top priorities.

He emphasized that the government's performance should be visible on the ground and called for teamwork, coordination and result-oriented functioning among departments. He said the active cooperation of the bureau-



cracy was essential for improving governance and addressing challenges facing the state.

The prime minister announced a Youth Engagement Programme and said demand-driven skills development initiatives would be introduced to tackle unemployment and improve

employment opportunities for young people.

He also directed the government to provide relief to citizens by improving transportation and healthcare facilities across AJ&K. Gilani stressed that the 100-Day Reform Agenda represented the priorities of ordinary citizens and

aimed at reducing public hardships and improving service delivery.

He reiterated the government's commitment to good governance, institutional reforms and public welfare, saying tangible improvements in people's lives would remain the administration's primary objective.

JKDFP Welcomes Indus Waters Treaty Ruling, Rejects Unilateral Actions

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: The Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) has welcomed the international Court of Arbitration's ruling concerning the Indus Waters Treaty, describing it as an important reaffirmation of international law, treaty obligations and the principle against unilateral actions.



JKDFP spokesperson Advocate Arshad Iqbal said the ruling had significance beyond water resources, emphasizing that parties to international agreements cannot unilaterally take measures that undermine treaty provisions or the legitimate rights of others.

He said the Indus Waters Treaty was closely linked to rivers and water resources originating in and passing through Jammu and Kashmir, giving the ruling wider implications for unilateral measures in the disputed territory.

Iqbal referred to India's August 5, 2019 measures, arguing that unilateral constitutional, administrative or legislative decisions could not determine the final status of a disputed territory. He maintained that the Kashmir dispute remained unresolved and should be addressed according to international law and the right to self-determination.

Acting President AJ&K Pays Tribute to Renowned Scholar Malik Muhammad Baz Khan

Bureau Report

BHIMBER: Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Speaker of the AJ&K Legislative Assembly, Choudhary Tariq Farooq, attended the funeral prayer of renowned scholar, educationist and literary figure Malik Muhammad Baz Khan, widely respected as a teacher and mentor.



The Acting President offered prayers for the deceased and expressed condolences to his bereaved family. He paid tribute to Malik Muhammad Baz Khan for his outstanding academic, literary, educational and social services.

Addressing the gathering, Choudhary Tariq Farooq said the late scholar had devoted his life to spreading knowledge, guiding young people and promoting literature. He emphasized that the bond between teacher and student extends beyond education and remains a lifelong relationship based on respect, affection and mentorship.

Recalling his personal association with the deceased as a student, he described his passing as a profound personal loss and said his memory would remain cherished.

NED University Students Plant Trees, Pledge Long-Term Care

News Desk

KARACHI: Students at NED University planted trees on campus on Monday as part of a sustainability initiative organized by Treow Carbon Solutions with support from Meezan Bank.

Unlike a one-day plantation drive, students pledged to care for and monitor the trees throughout their time at NED, tracking their growth until graduation.

"Planting a tree is only the beginning," said Mehboob Alam, Head of MEP-Engineering, Sustainability-CSR and HSE at Meezan Bank. "By involving students in continued care, we are encouraging ownership and environmental responsibility."

Treow Carbon Solutions worked with NED to plan the activity and set up a structured care system, focusing on species selection, soil preparation, correct planting, watering and regular monitoring.

"For the students, these trees are a lasting reminder of their time at NED," said Mudabbir Maajid, Co-founder of Treow Carbon Solutions.

The collaboration highlights how technical planning and shared responsibility can create greening initiatives that last beyond a single day.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan Meets JKPP Delegation in Rawalpindi



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: President of the Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, met with a Jammu Kashmir Peoples Party (JKPP) delegation led by Sardar Hassan Ibrahim at Mujahid Manzil, Rawalpindi.

The meeting included a detailed discussion on the recent elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the Poonch sit-in, the current political and law-and-order situation, the Kashmir dispute, and perceptions and concerns relating to AJ&K.

The JKPP delegation included Sardar Shehzad Anwar Advocate, Sardar Muhammad Nazir Khan, Member District Council, Syed Asif Gilani, and Sardar Raheem Ashraf.

Also present were Senior Lawyer Rawalpindi Bar Sardar Abdul Razzaq Khan Advocate, Sardar Mushtaq Nair, Sardar Abid Razzaq, Sardar Khurshid Abbasi, and Raja Zaki Jabbar Advocate.

Participants stressed the importance of constructive political engagement and continued dialogue on issues affecting the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Public Urged to Exercise Caution Amid Flash Flood Risk in Bhimber

Bureau Report

BHIMBER: Deputy Commissioner Bhimber Choudhary Muhammad Tariq has directed all concerned departments and agencies to remain on high alert during the ongoing monsoon season amid the possibility of heavy rainfall and flash flooding.

The Deputy Commissioner warned that heavy rains could cause sudden rises in water levels in streams, nullahs and seasonal waterways. He urged citizens, particularly those living near water channels, to exercise extreme caution and avoid approaching or crossing streams and flood-affected areas.

As a precautionary measure, the District Administration has imposed Section 144 to protect public life and property. Citizens have been advised to avoid unnecessary movement in vulnerable areas and strictly follow safety instructions issued by the administration.

Protest

LAHORE: Members of Sikh-Hindu Prabandhak (Management) Committee hold protest against the Sindh Evacuee Trust Properties (Management and Disposal) Act outside Lahore Press Club, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Attique, Farooq Haider Stress Dialogue to Resolve AJ&K Law and Order Challenges

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, held a detailed meeting with former AJ&K prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan at Mujahid Manzil.

The meeting, which continued for more than two hours, focused on the prevailing political and law-and-order situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the ongoing sit-in and developments in Poonch.

Both leaders expressed concern over the situation and emphasized that political and security-related challenges should be resolved through dialogue, negotiations and mutual understanding. They stressed that



every possible effort should be made to restore stability and that the use of force should be avoided.

The meeting concluded with a shared emphasis on political engagement, dialogue and mutual under-

standing as the most effective means of resolving differences and maintaining peace and stability in the region.

JS Rehbar Committee Announces Protest March in Nawabshah on Sept 20

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Jeay Sindh Rehbar Committee has announced a protest march in Nawabshah on September 20 against the proposed administrative division of Sindh, new provinces, divisions, administrative units, and water projects including dams and canals.

The decision was taken at a meeting in Hyderabad chaired by Committee convener and Jeay Sindh Mahaz chairman Riaz Ali Chandio. Leaders including JSQM Chairman Dr Niaz Kalani, Jeay Sindh Qaumi Party Chairman Nawaz Khan Zaor, and Jeay Sindh Tehreek Chairman Shabbir Ahmed



Jamali attended.

Committee leaders declared Sindh a historic and indivisible entity, rejecting any proposal to create new provinces, divisions, or units. They also opposed dividing Karachi into more divisions, calling it a step toward Sindh's administrative division.

The meeting rejected the Kalabagh Dam, link canals, and new dams, and expressed concern over Sindh's water, natural resources, coastal belt, and land. Issues related to Ketri Bandar and Dhabeji Industrial Zone will also be raised.

The Committee urged workers and people to join the Nawabshah march.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:16 am
Zohr 12:08 pm
Asr 4:43 pm
Maghrib 6:32 pm
Isha 7:59 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Global CIO Summit & Awards Roadshow to Gather 800+ Tech & Cybersecurity Leaders in Karachi

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan will host one of its largest technology gatherings on September 12, 2026 as the _World CIO 200 Summit & Awards 2026 - Pakistan Edition_ brings together 800+ technology executives, cybersecurity professionals, and business leaders, including 100+ senior Pakistani tech leaders based overseas.

Part of the global _World CIO 200 Roadshow 2026_ spanning 60+ countries, the Karachi event is powered by Global CIO Forum and organised by ITCN Asia. It marks the 4th consecutive year the platform is held in Pakistan.

The summit will focus on enterprise technology, AI, cybersecurity, digital transformation, and organisational resilience. Key themes include responsible adoption of emerging tech, data protection, cyber resilience, and the evolving role of CIOs and CISOs in driving business value.

The event will be inaugurated by Dr. Erdal Ozkaya, President of Global CISO Forum, and Zarrar Hasham Khan, Federal Secretary, Ministry of IT & Telecom. Confirmed speakers include leaders from Meezan Bank, Trend Micro, Kaspersky, Raqami Digital, and others.

CM orders priority resolution of drainage and sewerage issues in villages; directs beautification and paving of village streets

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a special meeting to review the Model Village Project and received a detailed briefing on the initiative and ongoing projects.

The meeting was informed that sewerage, drainage and brick-paved streets projects were progressing rapidly in more than 3,500 villages across Punjab.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif approved the introduction of community-based organisations for the Model Village Project. A principle decision was also taken to involve assistant commissioners, community health mobilisers, Union Council secretaries, headmasters and other relevant stakeholders in rural development projects.

The meeting also agreed to assign members of the provincial assembly the responsibility of monitoring rural development projects.

The chief minister directed that drainage and sewerage problems in villages across Punjab be resolved on a priority basis and ordered that village streets be paved and beautified.

“I cannot see people suffering from broken streets and stagnant, dirty water,” she said.

“Providing drainage, sewerage and paved streets in every village is the government’s responsibility. People living in rural areas also have an equal right to public resources,” she added.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said the Model Village Project was very close to her heart and expressed her resolve to transform the condition of every village.



Call on

ISLAMABAD: The Vice President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mr. Yingming Yang, calls on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema in Islamabad on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

NAB Multan Holds Awareness Session on Role of Public Servants in Corruption-Free Society

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Multan, in collaboration with Commissioner Dera Ghazi Khan Ashfaq Ahmed Chaudhry, organized an interactive awareness session on “Role of Public Servants in Fostering a Corruption-Free Society.” The session aimed to promote transparency, account-

ability, integrity, and ethical governance in public institutions. Advisor to the Chairman NAB, Mr. Ahmed Ali Zafar, attended as Chief Guest. Senior NAB Multan officers including Director Rafiullah, Additional Director Tauseef Hanif, and Assistant Director Ali Arsalan Haider also participated. Key officials present included: Ashfaq Ahmed Chaudhry, Commissioner

Dera Ghazi Khan Muhammad Azhar Akram, RPO Dera Ghazi Khan Asif Ali Dogar, DC Layyah Imran Hussain Ranjha, DC Rajanpur Syed Ghazanfar Ali Shah, DPO Muzaffargarh Mansoor Qamar, DPO Kot Addu Commissioner Ashfaq Ahmed Chaudhry and RPO Muhammad Azhar Akram delivered lectures on promoting integrity and responsible governance. Speakers stressed

that honest leadership by public officers can boost institutional transparency and public trust. Mr. Ahmed Ali Zafar highlighted NAB’s initiatives under the current Chairman and called for collective efforts to eliminate corruption at individual and institutional levels. The session concluded with remarks by Director NAB Multan Rafiullah, who thanked all guests and participants.

Chaudhry Inam Zafar Pays Tribute on Defence Day, Calls for Creation of New Provinces

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Awaam Pakistan Central Vice President Chaudhry Inam Zafar said Defence Day, September 6, is an occasion to honor the sacrifices, courage, and professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces. He added that the leadership and defence strategy of Field Marshal General Asim Munir are playing an important role in strengthening the country’s defence.

In a statement, he said the martyrs and veterans of the 1965 war created a glorious chapter in history that the nation will always remember with respect. He noted that the Armed Forces continue to safeguard Pakistan’s security and sovereignty, and the nation stands firmly with them.

Chaudhry Inam Zafar said Defence Day conveys a message of national unity, solidarity, and patriotism, stressing that Pakistan’s strength requires the nation to rise above differences.

He also called the creation of new provinces imperative due to population growth. Citing a rise from 40 million at independence to over 250 million today, he demanded 11 new provinces, or at least an increase to nine, urging all political parties to build consensus on the issue.



Sain Ijaz Malik: Defence Day Symbolises Sacrifice, Bravery and National Unity

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: President of the All Rawalpindi Restaurants Association and District Peace Committee member Sain Muhammad Ijaz Malik said that September 6, Defence Day of Pakistan, reminds the nation of the unparalleled sacrifices, bravery, and determination of the Pakistan Armed Forces and the people in defending the homeland.

He said that in the 1965 war, the Armed Forces foiled the enemy’s designs and set an enduring example of courage. The sacrifices of martyrs and veterans remain a source of inspiration and their services will always be remembered.

Sain Muhammad Ijaz Malik added that defending Pakistan is not limited to securing borders. National unity, peace, stability, and development are also essential to the defence of the homeland. He stressed the need today to rise above differences and stay united for Pakistan’s security, sovereignty, and prosperity.

He concluded that Defence Day conveys the message that nations grow stronger through unity, discipline, and sacrifice, and the nation renews its resolve to contribute to Pakistan’s development, peace, and security.



IBA Karachi Launches Annual Publication on Pakistan’s Economic Outlook

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The IBA Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) has launched its flagship annual publication, “The State of Pakistan’s Economy 2026–27: Stagnation to Sustainability,” at the IBA Main Campus.

The launch brought together policymakers, academics, business leaders, development practitioners and students to discuss Pakistan’s economic challenges and possible pathways towards sustainable and inclusive growth.

The publication was reviewed by Zafar Masud, President and CEO of Bank of Punjab, and Nadia Seth, CEO of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), who shared their views on the report and the country’s economic outlook.

Zafar Masud stressed that macroeco-



nomic stability should translate into improved living standards, employment opportunities, stronger human capital and poverty reduction. He highlighted the importance of effective implementation, innovative financing, public-private partnerships and productivity-driven economic growth. He described the IBA publi-

cation as an important contribution to Pakistan’s policy debate.

Nadia Seth emphasized the need to enhance SME productivity through modernization, greater formalization and improved access to finance. She also stressed the importance of reliable and updated enterprise data for evidence-based policymaking.

The event concluded with a shared emphasis on converting economic stability into sustainable, inclusive and productivity-led growth. CBER reaffirmed its role in strengthening policy dialogue by bringing together research, evidence and perspectives from academia, industry and the public sector.

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Pakistan Seeks UNESCO’s Support for World Heritage Nominations of Rani Ghat, Banbhore

Pakistan on Wednesday formally requested UNESCO’s assistance in advancing the inclusion of two significant heritage sites — Rani Ghat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Port of Banbhore in Sindh — on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The request was made during a meeting between UNESCO Representative in Pakistan Fuad Pashayev and Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi. Both sites already feature on Pakistan’s Tentative List, which currently comprises 37 properties. It was also revealed that a World Heritage Committee-related visit to Banbhore is scheduled for September 6-11, 2026, with Secretary National Heritage and Culture Asad Rehman Gilani invited to join the delegation.

Khichi urged UNESCO to provide special technical support for Pakistan’s heritage nominations and conservation efforts, noting that several archaeological and cultural sites required greater international attention. Pashayev assured the Minister of UNESCO’s continued commitment, stating that heritage preservation would remain a key priority for its Pakistan office.

The Minister also sought UNESCO’s support for including four Pakistani food traditions in the Intangible Cultural Heritage framework, with Pashayev requesting a formal list for review. Separately, Pashayev raised the possibility of research into an ancient trade route linking the Indus Valley Civilization with regions across present-day Iran, Syria and Mesopotamia, citing similarities in archaeological artefacts. Khichi said Pakistan would consider hosting a conference of historians and archaeologists to explore this connection further.

Pashayev also commended Pakistan’s efforts toward joint multinational nominations, including cultural elements such as Rubab and Sitar. On capacity building, the Minister proposed that UNESCO’s technical workshops, currently held at specific archaeological sites, also be conducted in Islamabad to benefit officials from the federal government and all provinces.

The Minister announced that Pakistan would formally invite UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay to attend “Lok Mela,” the country’s major cultural festival. Secretary Gilani added that Pakistan would host multiple cultural activities in the coming year under its leadership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), with Lahore designated as the centre for SCO cultural events.

Khichi further invited Pashayev to visit the Shah Allah Ditta Caves and Mai Qamro Mosque, noting the caves are being developed for cultural tourism and are expected to open to visitors in the second week of October.

Pashayev reaffirmed UNESCO’s commitment to supporting Pakistan through advocacy, technical engagement, and capacity building, emphasizing that greater visibility could help draw international attention to the country’s heritage sites. The meeting concluded with discussions on deepening cooperation in heritage conservation and cultural diplomacy.

Beyond the ‘Technocrat’ Label: Iftikhar Gillani, AJK’s New Government and the Politics of His Selection

Azad Jammu and Kashmir’s political landscape has gained renewed attention following the unprecedented recent elections, formation of a new government, and selection of Barrister Syed Iftikhar Ali Gillani as Prime Minister. His selection has sparked controversy because he was elected on a technocrat/reserved seat rather than a general seat, but such criticism is considered constitutionally unfounded because AJK law allows any member of the Legislative Assembly to become Prime Minister and does not distinguish between members elected on general or reserved seats for technocrats and other professionals. All assembly members have equal legislative and constitutional status, and membership of the Assembly is the primary qualification for becoming Prime Minister; therefore, the focus should be on Gillani’s vision, ability, and commitment rather than the category of his seat. His defeat from a general seat in the latest election does not erase his political experience: he was first elected in 2011, retained his seat in 2016, and served as a minister. His election to the Assembly through the technocrat seat gave him a legitimate mandate from those who voted for him, while the subsequent selection of Prime Minister is a separate constitutional process in which the Assembly

chooses its leader through majority confidence. Thus, claims that his selection violates “respect for the vote” overlook the distinction between an individual member’s electoral mandate and the Assembly’s collective authority to choose its Prime Minister. His elevation reflects the confidence placed in him by the party leadership and Assembly majority and carries broader strategic, constitutional, and political significance for AJK’s future governance and development.

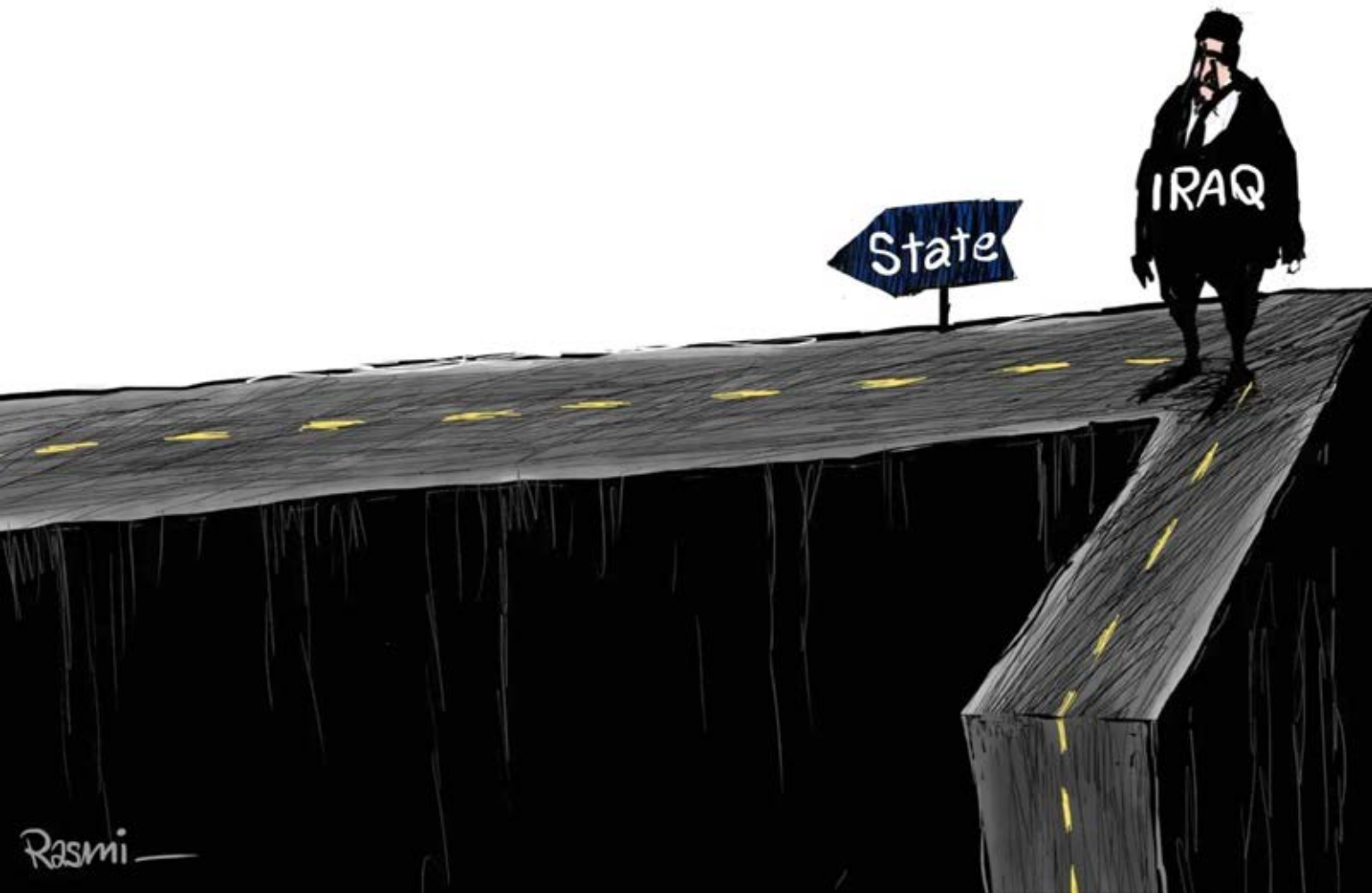
The new government’s smooth formation and development-focused approach have generated optimism, particularly because Gillani represents younger and more energetic leadership backed by the PML-N central government and the guidance of Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. Her close connection to Kashmir and her declaration of herself as a “daughter of Kashmir,” along with her announced comprehensive development package for AJK, have raised expectations that successful Punjab welfare and governance initiatives could be extended to the territory. These include the Kisan Card, Rashan Card, Suthra Punjab campaign,

housing schemes, scholarships, laptops and tablets, and modern transport such as electric buses for Muzaffarabad and Mirpur. Gillani’s commitments to transparency, youth employment, economic digitization, and improvements in education and healthcare align with this wider development agenda, creating hopes for greater resources, expertise, prosperity, and improved quality of life. The recent elections themselves were widely considered among AJK’s fairest and most transparent, with professional and impartial multi-phase polling, no participation by hate elements, peaceful and issue-based campaigning, and no political party, group, or independent candidate being prevented from contesting. This inclusive process strengthened democratic confidence and gave the successful parties a credible mandate. The new cabinet also combines youthful, energetic members with experience, emphasizing new faces, merit, competence, fresh perspectives, and results-oriented governance. Its effectiveness in collectively implementing the ambitious development agenda will be crucial, while the combination of youth and experience is seen as a strong formula for addressing AJK’s

challenges, advancing reforms, and sustaining progress.

Consequently, the people of AJK are hopeful that this government, under the remarkable leadership of its Prime Minister Iftikhar Gillani, will open new doors of development and prosperity for the territory. The public has shown a significant degree of optimism, largely driven by the promises of the PML-N and the perceived capability of the new leadership to deliver on these promises. The extensive development agenda, which includes improvements in infrastructure, healthcare, education, and the economy, has resonated deeply with the public. The emphasis on merit-based recruitment and anti-corruption measures has also helped to build trust in the new administration. People are tired of the old ways of governance and are looking for a fresh start that can bring tangible improvements to their lives and secure a better future for their children. The focus on youth employment through interest-free loans and other schemes has also generated a great deal of hope among the younger generation, who see the new government as a vehicle for their empowerment. The fact that the government has started working immediately and has taken initial steps to address public grievances has further reinforced this sense of optimism.

Continued on Page 7



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Azmat)

PIMS Incident: Institutional Accountability and Crisis Governance — A Way Forward!

On August 26, a fire tore through the neonatal nursery at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in Islamabad. Fourteen newborns died.

They were not statistics. They were babies who came to a major public hospital for care, and whose parents left with grief no compensation can undo. The government has announced Rs 5 million for each family, ordered suspensions, and launched criminal investigations.

These are necessary steps. But they are not enough.

The real test is whether our institutions will learn. Because this was not an accident. It was a failure of systems that were supposed to protect the most vulnerable.

What Went Wrong

Preliminary findings point to basic failures: alarms that did not work, sprinklers that were non-functional, no emergency protocol, and no staff training. Most damning, there was no supervisory staff in the nursery when the fire broke out.

In a neonatal ward, this is unforgivable. Newborns on ventilators cannot cry for help. They cannot run. They depend entirely on the building, the equipment, and the people around them.

This was also not the first warning. Fire safety concerns at PIMS had been flagged before. When institutions ignore such warnings, negligence stops being about one person. It becomes a collective failure to act.

A hospital should learn from every near-miss. After any fire risk, there should be audits, drills, equipment checks, and repairs. If these happen only on paper, then the hospital remains dangerous.

Beyond Individual Blame

Those on duty who abandoned their posts must

face legal consequences. That is clear.

But accountability cannot stop there. We have to ask harder questions.

Who was responsible for testing the fire alarms? Who checked the air conditioning units and wiring? Who ensured oxygen lines were secure and exit doors were accessible? Who trained the nurses? Who certified the building? And when previous safety issues were reported, who failed to act?

This is the chain of responsibility. It runs from the ward to the maintenance office to the hospital administration.

Parliament is right to demand more. Both the National Assembly and Senate Health Committees have questioned the initial reports and asked for full records on maintenance budgets, procurement, oxygen installations, and staff training.

We need independent technical investigation, not quick blame. We need to know exactly how the fire started, why it spread, and why every safety layer failed.

Ending the Cycle of Reaction

Pakistan has a predictable pattern after every disaster: This is not governance. It is managing crises after they happen.

Real governance means preventing them. In a hospital, especially a tertiary care center like PIMS, risk management must be continuous. Fire systems should be tested before there is smoke. Exits should be open before people need them. Drills should be real, not filed away. Every hospital must have verified fire equipment, working smoke detectors, clear signs, accessible exits, safe oxygen lines, and staff who know exactly what to do.

Training is critical. In the first five minutes of a fire, panic kills. Every staff member must know who raises the alarm, who calls emergency services, who shuts off oxygen, and who leads evacuation.

In a NICU, evacuation is even more complex.

Babies on life support cannot be carried out like other patients. It requires special transport, trained teams, and practiced procedures.

We should acknowledge the doctors and nurses who risked their lives to save others that night. Their courage matters. But a health system should never rely on heroism to make up for missing systems. Good design and training allow ordinary people to respond well under pressure.

A National Audit, Not Just PIMS

PIMS is not an isolated case. If our premier federal hospital in the capital lacks basic fire safety, what about district hospitals, private clinics, and rural centers?

The federal and provincial governments must immediately order a nationwide safety audit of all healthcare facilities. Priority should be ICUs, operating theaters, and neonatal units.

The findings must be public. Hospitals should be given strict deadlines to fix gaps. And operating licenses should be tied directly to meeting verified safety standards. No compliance, no license.

Transparency is non-negotiable. Families deserve the full truth. Parliament deserves complete records. Citizens deserve to see that real changes have been made, not just announcements.

The Way Forward

Fourteen lives cannot be brought back by money or suspensions. But Pakistan can decide what comes next. We can choose to move from reactive damage control to proactive accountability.

That means building systems where safety is routine, not a response to tragedy. Where audits are regular, not after a fire. Where staff are trained, not just hired. Where responsibility is tracked, not scattered.

The babies at PIMS deserved that. Every patient who walks into a public hospital deserves that.

The writer is Executive Director, Excellence Consultants Policy Institute. He holds an MBA, Ph. D. and Post-Doc, and writes on international and national issues.

The Kashmir Information War: Who Gets to Tell the Story?

On August 19, a sentence spoken in Srinagar travelled far beyond the Valley. During his first visit to Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor described the region as “an important part of India.” Pakistan promptly protested, while Indian officials and media largely welcomed the remarks. But perhaps the more important question is not what Ambassador Gor meant. It is why the words of a foreign diplomat became another chapter in the long-running diplomatic contest over Kashmir. The answer lies partly in an overlooked dimension of the Kashmir conflict: the information war.

Kashmir is not only contested on the ground. It is contested in newsrooms, diplomatic statements, social media feeds and international forums. India presents a narrative of integration, security and development. Pakistan emphasises the unresolved dispute, human rights and the right to self-determination. Between these competing narratives, however, there is another voice too often reduced to an afterthought: that of Kashmiris themselves.

This is not to suggest that Kashmiris share a single political position. They do not — as evident from the recent disagreement between Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti — a reminder that Kashmiri political aspirations, experiences and grievances are diverse. That diversity is

precisely why independent journalism and space for local voices matter. Yet when access to information is restricted, the space available for those voices inevitably narrows.

The problem is not limited to whether information is true or false. Information warfare can also operate more subtly, through selective visibility: deciding what is reported, what is omitted, whose testimony is amplified and whose is dismissed. Restrictions faced by journalists in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have continued into 2026. In January, multiple journalists were summoned by police over their reporting, with the International Federation of Journalists reporting that one journalist was pressured to sign an undertaking promising not to report on “controversial” topics. Srinagar-based Hindustan Times correspondent Ashiq Hussain was also summoned by police in connection with his reporting.

These restrictions carry consequences beyond journalism itself. When independent reporting becomes difficult, the outside world increasingly encounters Kashmir through official statements and carefully managed visits. This is where Ambassador Gor’s visit becomes significant — not because one diplomat can determine Kashmir’s future, but because it illustrates the power of international perception.

A foreign diplomat visiting Srinagar does not encounter Kashmir in a vacuum. What they see, whom they meet, and what

Continued on Page 7

IS 35th Independence Day of Uzbekistan

Pakistan, Uzbekistan enjoy vast potential for expanded energy and economic cooperation: Leghari

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaish Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan and Uzbekistan have vast potential to further expand cooperation in the energy sector, particularly in electricity connectivity, renewable energy, hydropower, energy infrastructure and investment.

He was addressing a large gathering as chief guest at a reception marking the 35th Independence Day of Uzbekistan, held at the Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad.

The event was attended by Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, Sardar Yasir Ilyas, Prime Minister's Advisor and National Coordinator on Tourism, Murtaza Solangi, Spokesperson to the President of Pakistan, Ambassador of Turkmenistan and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Pakistan Mr Atadjan Movlamov, senior government officials, diplomats, parliamentarians, business leaders and other distinguished guests.

Sardar Awaish Leghari warmly felicitated Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the government and people of Uzbekistan on the occasion and conveyed Pakistan's best wishes for the country's continued peace, stability, prosperity and progress.

He said Pakistan deeply admired the achievements of the Uzbek people and valued the historic bonds between the two countries, which were rooted in shared Islamic culture, civilization and traditions.

Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize Uzbekistan's independence, while the two countries formally established diplomatic relations in 1992, he noted. He added that Pakistan and Uzbekistan would also mark the 35th anniversary of their diplomatic relations in May 2027.

The minister said bilateral relations had evolved into a strong partnership based on mutual respect, shared historical and cultural values and common interests. Cooperation between the two countries had expanded into several areas, including trade, investment, energy, regional connectivity, education, science and technology, agriculture, culture and defence.

Leghari said the relationship had gained fresh momentum in recent years following the visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to Uzbekistan in February 2025 and the visit of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Pakistan in February 2026.

He said the signing of various agreements and memoranda of understanding in sectors including trade, mining, information technology, education, agriculture, maritime affairs and defence reflected the growing depth and diversity of bilateral cooperation.

Highlighting the potential for further economic partnership, the minister said Pakistan and Uzbekistan had set an ambitious target



for increasing bilateral trade. He stressed the need to facilitate greater interaction between the business communities of the two countries and encourage investment and joint ventures to achieve the target.

"As Federal Minister for Energy, I particularly see significant scope for expanding cooperation in the energy sector," Leghari said.

He noted that the two countries could enhance collaboration in energy infrastructure, electricity connectivity, renewable energy, hydropower and investment. He also emphasized the importance of sharing expertise and experiences in developing resilient, efficient and sustainable energy systems.

The minister said connectivity was equally central to the shared vision of Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He pointed out that Pakistan could provide Uzbekistan with access to the Arabian Sea and international markets, while Uzbekistan could offer Pakistan greater access to the growing markets of Central Asia.

Uzbekistan Highlights Reform and Development Achievements

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev welcomed federal ministers, diplomats, parliamentarians, business leaders and distinguished guests.

He described their participation as a reflection of the friendship, mutual respect and strong partnership between Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

The ambassador said Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991 following the determination of its people, while its statehood and civilization stretched back more than 3,000 years.

He highlighted Uzbekistan's contribution to world civilization through renowned scholars and thinkers, including Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, Ahmad al-Fargani, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, Abu Ali ibn Sina, Mirzo Ulugbek and Alisher Navoi. He said the legacy of Amir Temur also remained an important symbol of the country's statehood and development.

The ambassador said Uzbekistan was building on its rich historical heritage while pursuing an open, modern and prosperous future. Over the past decade, under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the country had undertaken wide-ranging reforms focused on human dignity, economic development and social welfare.

According to figures presented by the ambassador, Uzbekistan's poverty rate had declined from 35 percent in 2017 to around four percent, while more than



650,000 families had gained modern homes.

He said expansion of preschool and higher education had also remained a major priority, with the number of university students reaching 1.6 million. Uzbekistan was simultaneously investing in science, innovation and modern technology while promoting its Islamic and cultural heritage.

The envoy highlighted the Centre of Islamic Civilization in Tashkent and renovated memorial complexes dedicated to eminent Islamic scholars, saying these were

being developed as centres for research and for highlighting the peaceful and humanistic values of Islam.

Stronger Bilateral Ties and Connectivity

Ambassador Tukhtaev described Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations as being in one of the most active periods in their history, rooted in shared faith, culture, traditions and centuries-old links.

He said recent high-level exchanges had provided fresh momentum to bilateral relations.

On bilateral trade, he said the two countries had set an ambitious target of increasing trade to \$2 billion within five years. He said efforts were focused on expanding investment, strengthening banking cooperation, establishing trade houses and improving the movement of goods between the two countries.

The ambassador said air connectivity between Pakistan and Uzbekistan was also expanding. Direct passenger services currently connect Tashkent with Islamabad and Lahore, while cargo flights had also been launched. With additional routes, including Karachi, the number of weekly flights was expected to reach nine by October 2026.

He described the proposed Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway as a particularly important regional connectivity project. Uzbekistan viewed the railway as a potential bridge between Central and South Asia that could increase trade, create employment opportunities and contribute to regional peace and prosperity.

Congratulating Pakistan on assuming the chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Economic Cooperation Organisation, Ambassador Tukhtaev assured Uzbekistan's full cooperation in promoting regional connectivity, stability and sustainable development.

The reception also featured Uzbek culture, cuisine, music and traditional hospitality, providing guests with an insight into the country's rich cultural identity and heritage.

Concluding his address, the ambassador expressed hope that the friendship between Pakistan and Uzbekistan would continue to strengthen and endure for generations.

"May peace, progress and prosperity always be with the two brotherly countries," he said, concluding with a tribute to Uzbekistan, its people and the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Pakistan and ASEAN: Navigating Our Future Together

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI), organised a special seminar titled "Pakistan and ASEAN: Navigating Our Future Together" to commemorate the 59th ASEAN Day.

In his keynote address, H. E. Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez, Ambassador of the Philippines and current ACI Chair, said peace and security, prosperity, and people empowerment remain central to ASEAN's future, adding that its three pillars — political-security, economic, and socio-cultural cooperation — remain relevant to the evolving Pakistan-ASEAN partnership. He said closer engagement could help address regional challenges while creating new avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation.

In a video message, H. E. Dato' Astanah Abdul Aziz, ASEAN Deputy Secretary General, highlighted the strong foundation of ASEAN-Pakistan relations, identifying dialogue, economic



and technological cooperation, connectivity, and people-to-people development as key future priorities.

Envoys from Brunei, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia reaffirmed support for deepening Pakistan-ASEAN ties, citing trade, investment, tourism, digital economy, cyber-security, agriculture, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges

as areas for expanded cooperation.

Ambassador Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, Pakistan's Ambassador to ASEAN, reaffirmed Pakistan's aspiration for Full Dialogue Partnership status, while Ms. Haseen Fatima of the Foreign Ministry noted growing institutional cooperation and scope for translating frameworks into concrete outcomes.

Ambassador Moin-ul-Haque, ISSI Director General, called ASEAN a model of regional cooperation and urged a more results-oriented relationship, highlighting opportunities under RCEP and proposing dedicated ISSI engagement with Pakistan's business community.

Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC, called for sustained engagement, while Ambassador

Khalid Mahmood, ISSI Board of Governors Chairman, urged a broader, forward-looking partnership backed by stronger institutional, academic and business linkages.

The seminar brought together ASEAN Heads of Mission, academics and media representatives, reaffirming shared commitment to advancing Pakistan-ASEAN relations through



dialogue and practical cooperation.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
176,466.99	176,975.67
Day's High	Day's Low
177,800.28	176,375.00
Index Value	Change
21,088,358,564	−508.68
Percentage	Time
−0.29%	1 Sept, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,756.45	−32.83
Percentage	Time
−32.83	2 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,995.76	+228.88
Percentage	Time
+0.43%	2 Sept, 1:53 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
64,325.64	−1,889.7
Percentage	Time
−2.85%	2 Sept, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	197.28	201.35
Bahrain Dinar	733.64	744.65
Canadian Dollar	198.71	206.73
China Yuan	38.20	38.95
Danish Krone	42.80	43.40
Euro	321.58	325.61
Hong Kong Dollar	34.97	35.97
Indian Rupee	2.65	3.25
Japanese Yen	1.7339	1.8337
Kuwaiti Dinar	886.00	896.45
Malaysian Ringgit	68.05	68.90
NewZealand \$	163.93	166.78
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	718.92	730.05
Qatari Riyal	74.92	75.80
Saudi Riyal	73.95	74.65
Singapore Dollar	217.29	223.04
Swedish Korona	28.40	28.90
Swiss Franc	343.16	347.93
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.85
U.A.E Dirham	75.70	76.53
UK Pound Sterling	375.31	378.50
US Dollar	278.00	278.50

PCJCCI Calls
for Replication
of Gwadar
Friendship
Hospital Model

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) has praised the successful operation of the China-aided Pakistan Friendship Hospital in Gwadar and called for similar modern health-care facilities across Pakistan, particularly in Punjab and other underserved areas.

PCJCCI Commercial Ambassador Adeel Munawar said the Gwadar hospital demonstrated how Pakistan-China cooperation could provide tangible benefits to local communities. He stressed that its model should be replicated to strengthen health-care infrastructure and emergency response capacity.

He said China's expertise in medical technology, diagnostics, emergency care, hospital infrastructure and digital healthcare could help Pakistan improve healthcare quality and accessibility. He emphasized that cooperation should extend beyond hospital construction to technology transfer, medical training, telemedicine, digital healthcare, advanced diagnostics and emergency-response systems.

According to Munawar, the Gwadar Friendship Hospital has provided diagnosis and treatment to around 150,000 patients since its establishment, making it an important facility for Gwadar and surrounding areas.

He urged Punjab to become a major focus of Pakistan-China healthcare cooperation due to its large population and underserved communities. He also called for Friendship Hospitals in major cities and districts of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

PCJCCI said healthcare should become a stronger pillar of Pakistan-China cooperation, ensuring accessible, affordable and quality medical services for ordinary citizens.

\$6 Billion Refinery Upgrade Project
Vital for Pakistan's Energy Security:
Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain has welcomed the proposed \$6 billion investment to upgrade Pakistan's five oil refineries, describing it as a landmark initiative to strengthen energy security, reduce dependence on imported fuels and modernise the country's refining sector.

He said PARCO, Pakistan Refinery, National Refinery, Cynergico and Attock Refinery were ready to sign agreements under the government's Brownfield Refinery Upgradation Policy in early September 2026. With a combined crude-oil processing capacity of around

350,000 barrels per day, the upgraded refineries are expected to produce cleaner Euro-V-compliant petrol and diesel while converting a substantial portion of low-value furnace oil into higher-value products.

According to projected estimates, domestic petrol production would increase by 72 percent, from 10,700 to 18,400 tonnes per day, while high-speed diesel output would rise by 39 percent, from 21,240 to 29,520 tonnes. Furnace-oil production is expected to decline by 63 percent through conversion into value-added fuels.

Mian Zahid said regional conflict and disruptions

around the Strait of Hormuz had exposed Pakistan's energy vulnerability, as about 90 percent of its imported oil and LNG passes through Gulf routes. Rising freight, insurance and crude oil costs have intensified inflation and balance-of-payments pressures.

He urged timely completion of the refinery projects, along with diversification of crude supplies and development of strategic petroleum reserves. He also stressed policy stability, transparent monitoring and linking investor incentives to clear targets, saying delays could leave Pakistan increasingly exposed to imported inflation and future geopolitical shocks.



Exchange of agreements

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Nurgozhovich Japarov witnessing the signing and exchange of agreement between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan to enhance the bilateral trade to 200 million USD in the next two years. Bishkek, 2 September 2026.



Photo: PID

FPCCI Standing Committee on
Dental Care & Supplies Holds 1st
Meeting of 2026



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 1st meeting of the FPCCI Federal ICT Standing Committee on Dental Care & Supplies was held on 1st September 2026 at the FPCCI President Secretariat, Islamabad. Convened by Mr. Sharafat Ali, Convener of the Committee, the meeting was attended by Mr. Tariq Khan Jadoon, Vice President FPCCI, and

Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, Incharge FPCCI Capital Office. Members discussed the challenges faced by the dental sector and its significant growth potential. The focus was on strengthening government support and departmental facilitation, promoting dental exports, and creating opportunities for exporters. The Committee emphasized that local manufacturers of dental instruments and products can play a key role

in boosting exports, generating employment, driving industrial development, and contributing to Pakistan's economic growth. Regulatory and procedural hurdles in the import of medical devices and dental products were also reviewed. The Committee proposed recommendations for improved facilitation and a more business-friendly regulatory framework to support sector expansion.

Eighteen Introduces
'Eden by Eighteen'
with Nature-Centric
Community Vision



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Eighteen, a master-planned residential community in Pakistan, has announced the launch of Eden by Eighteen, a nature-focused development designed to promote sustainable and modern community living.

The launch comes as direct entry and exit access from the M-1/M-2 Link Road has become operational, improving connectivity and convenience for residents, visitors and the surrounding community.

Eden offers residential plots ranging from half to four Kanal, along with commercial spaces. Its planning focuses on integrating development with the natural landscape by preserving valleys, contours and green areas. Around

72.4 percent of the development's total area is allocated to parks and green spaces, while 15.4 percent comprises roads and pavements and 12.19 percent consists of building footprints.

Eighteen CEO Dr. Mohamed Mansour said Eden had been thoughtfully designed to bring residents closer to nature while maintaining the sophistication associated with the Eighteen community. He said the development reflects a philosophy of working with the landscape rather than against it.

The company said Eden represents its commitment to sustainable, nature-centric living and aims to create a healthier, connected environment while setting a new benchmark for modern community development in Pakistan.

Meezan Bank Approves
Over Rs31.5 Billion in
Housing Finance

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank has approved more than Rs31.45 billion in housing finance for 4,424 applicants under the Government of Pakistan's Wazir-e-Azam Apna Ghar Programme – Ghar Ho Tu Apna (GHTA), reflecting strong demand for affordable, Shariah-compliant home financing.

The approved applications represent a substantial financing pipeline expected to result in further disbursements as customers complete property selection, documentation and other formalities.

The bank has already crossed Rs4 billion in cumulative disbursements under the programme, supporting

around 650 families in moving towards home ownership. Momentum increased significantly during August 2026, when approximately Rs2.2 billion was disbursed in a single month, accounting for more than half of the bank's total disbursements under the programme so far.

Ahmed Ali Siddiqui, Group Head Consumer Finance at Meezan Bank, said the approval of more than Rs31.5 billion across over 4,400 applications demonstrated significant demand for affordable Islamic housing finance. He said the bank was focused on converting the approved financing pipeline into home ownership for thousands of additional customers.

foodpanda
launches Panda
Academy to empower
delivery fleet

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: foodpanda, has launched its 'Panda Academy,' a specialised learning and development initiative aimed at empowering its delivery fleet through continuous education, knowledge sharing, and professional upskilling.

Designed to create personal and career growth, the Panda Academy

brings together foodpanda's employees with its delivery heroes. The program enables foodpanda employees to conduct interactive workshops and share their specialised expertise, practical insights, and professional experiences directly with delivery partners.

"At foodpanda, our delivery partners are at the core of everything we do, and our commitment to their well-being goes far beyond flexible earning



opportunities," said Ahsan Malik, Director Logistics at foodpanda. The Rider Academy was created with the

vision to boost personal and professional empowerment. By equipping our riders with practical skills, we are

investing directly in their future and helping them build sustainable paths forward."

SCO at 25: Seminar Reflects on Shanghai Spirit, Pakistan’s New Chairmanship

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A seminar titled “SCO at 25: The Shanghai Spirit and a New Journey with Islamabad,” organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) and China Media Group (CMG), brought together federal ministers, senators, ambassadors and academics to mark the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation’s 25-year evolution and Pakistan’s assumption of its chairmanship.

Chief Guest Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister and Chairman BOI, said the SCO had grown from a confidence-building mechanism into a platform spanning security and economic cooperation, representing roughly a quarter of the global economy. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem highlighted the bloc’s resilience without a formal alliance treaty or army. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed called the SCO “a strategic option” for the Global South amid

global turbulence. China’s Embassy Counselor Zhuang Xinyan reaffirmed Beijing’s support for Pakistan’s chairmanship, calling it a “significant milestone.” Ambassador Naela Chohan traced Pakistan’s SCO journey from observer to full member, while Dr. Shafqat Munir Ahmad urged a shift from institution-building toward practical delivery on counter-terrorism, water, climate and energy cooperation. The seminar concluded with



remarks from Dr. Usman Chohan Spirit as reflecting shared human from CGTN Urdu’s Tasawar Zaman of IRS, who described the Shanghai values, followed by a vote of thanks Babar.

Wohaib Football Club’s Role in Promoting Football Unforgettable: Players Pay Tribute to Late Hafiz Salman Butt



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Former international footballers and senior players have praised Wohaib Football Club for its outstanding contribution to the promotion of football in Pakistan, particularly in nurturing young talent and strengthening the sport at the grassroots level. Addressing a high-level meeting held in connection with Wohaib Club, former and current players said the club had played a significant role over several decades in training and introducing thousands of talented footballers. Many of these players later represented Pakistan at national and international levels, reflecting the club’s contribution to the development of football talent. The meeting also discussed

the current state of grassroots football in Pakistan, measures to encourage emerging players and strategies for further promoting and developing the sport. Participants stressed the importance of providing young footballers with opportunities, training and platforms to demonstrate their abilities. The participants paid rich tribute to the late Hafiz Salman Butt, founder of Wohaib Football Club and a renowned football leader. They acknowledged his exceptional services in identifying and developing young talent and creating opportunities for aspiring footballers. Speakers said Hafiz Salman Butt’s vision, dedication and passion for football helped thousands of young players pursue

the sport, with many eventually earning the honour of representing Pakistan at national and international levels. They described his services as highly respected both within Pakistan and abroad. The participants said the football legacy and traditions established by Hafiz Salman Butt would continue to inspire future generations and contribute to the growth of the sport. Former internationals Iftikhar Shatta, Amjad Zakaria, Zahid Luqman, Nadeem Butt, Ubaid Tariq, Rauf Bari and Muhammad Amjad, along with many former and current players, attended the meeting. Hassan Butt thanked all participants for their presence and continued commitment to Wohaib Club’s legacy.

Pakistan Cricket Club Clinch Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament Title

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Regional Cricket Association Karachi established a new record by organizing biggest tournament of club cricket history. In Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament, 237 teams from different zones of Karachi participated, while during tournament full opportunities were provided to clubs and players. This was said by Tabish Javed Vice President of Regional Cricket Association Karachi while addressing as chief guest at prize distribution ceremony of Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament at KCCA Stadium. Tabish Javed said that vision of President of Regional Cricket Association Karachi President Nadeem Umar is that maximum tournaments of club cricket should be organized in Karachi so that players get maximum opportunities for expression of their abilities and more refinement is created in their game.

Under this same vision, region successfully organized such a big tournament consisting of 237 teams. He said that Master Oil has given full cooperation with Regional Cricket Association Karachi for promotion of club cricket and in future also cooperation will be continued for promotion of club cricket at region and zones level. Vice President of Regional Cricket Association Karachi Syed Muhammad Talha said that Naya Nazimabad Gymkhana Ground is also available for regional cricket and matches of region will also be held here. He congratulated region’s Tournament Committee on holding of excellent and successful tournament while saying that holding of such tournaments for promotion of club cricket is extremely necessary. Chairman Tournament Committee Regional Cricket

Association Karachi Khalid Nafees said that under the leadership of President Nadeem Umar, cricket is playing every where in Karachi. Those people who used to say that club cricket is not held in Karachi, they can now themselves see that at zones level club cricket tournaments are being organized on daily basis. He said that objective of Regional Cricket Association Karachi is to provide maximum opportunities to players and clubs of Karachi. M Touseef Siddiqui Joint Secretary of Regional Cricket Association Karachi said that full cooperation of all clubs was included in success of this big tournament consisting of 237 teams, for which he is grateful to all clubs and organizers Specially Khalid Nafees, Azam Khan. He further said that successful holding of tournament on such a large scale is proof of best cooperation among clubs, players and

Regional Cricket Association Earlier Pakistan Cricket Club became champion of Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament after beating Alamgir Gymkhana by 109 runs. Pakistan Cricket Club batting first and scored 299/6 in 40 overs. Umair bin Yousuf batting brilliantly made 98 with the help of 7 fours 3 sixes, Jahanzeb Sultan 88 with help of 5 fours 6 sixes, Khawaja Muhammad Nafay made 40 and Rameez Aziz Unbeaten with 33. Muhammad Yaqoob 3/55, Abdul Hayee 3/57. In reply Alamgir Gymkhana 190 all-out in 40 overs. Adeel Meo 39, Muhammad Yaqoob 30, Usman Raheem 28, Habibullah 22. Jahanzeb Sultan 3/28, Muhammad Asghar 3/53. After the end of the Match Chief Guest Tabish Javed gave the Winner Trophy and two hundred thousand rupees to Skipper of winning Pakistan Cricket Club Rameez Aziz while



Runner Trophy and one hundred thousand rupees to captain of Alamgir Gymkhana Kashif Ali. Award of best batsman was given to Fazal Subhan, best bowler to Nadir Shah and final match award given to Umair bin Yousuf. Media Coordinator award was obtained by Dr. Arif Hafeez.

In ceremony Assistant Secretaries Muhammad Ali Naqvi, Zafar Ahmad, Rehan Siddiqui, President of Zone-IV Musarrat Raza, President of Zone-VI Saim Ahmad, Secretary Zone-III Zamin Ali, Secretary Zone-V Muhammad Saeed Jabbar, Arif Waheed Khan, Tariq Hafeez,

Zafar Khan, Nusratullah, S. M. Asim Zahoor, Shahbaz Qureshi, Naveed Al Amin, Amir uddin Ansari, Muhammad Nizam, Muhammad Majid, Shaikat Rajput, Raisuddin along with other officials of Zones and in large number players also participated.

Beyond the ‘Technocrat’ Label: Iftikhar Gillani, AJK’s New Government and the Politics of His Selection

Continued from Page 4

It is clear that the people have welcomed the new government and have rejected all propaganda against a genuine political process. Despite the efforts of certain political factions and critics to undermine the credibility of the elections and the subsequent government formation, the public has shown its support for the democratic transition. The massive public turnouts

at the election rallies of the PML-N were a clear indication of the people’s endorsement of the party’s vision and its leadership. The people have demonstrated through their vote and their subsequent acceptance of the results that they are tired of baseless allegations and propaganda campaigns. They are more interested in seeing their political leaders work for their welfare and address the real issues affecting their lives, such as inflation, elec-

tricity prices, and the need for development. The public discourse has been dominated by a desire for progress and good governance, and the people have largely ignored the negative campaigns launched by those who seek to delegitimize the political process. The new government has been given a clear mandate by the people, and it now carries the heavy responsibility of delivering on their expectations and fulfilling the promises that were made to them.

Rain, Thundershowers Forecast for Upper Pakistan, Islamabad on Thursday

Continued from Page 1

cause urban flooding in low-lying areas of Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Mardan, Swabi, Peshawar, Gujranwala, Gujrat and Sialkot. Flash flooding is also possible in streams and nullahs of Kashmir, Murree, Galiyat, Islamabad/Rawalpindi and Pothohar, while landslides are feared in hilly areas of upper

KP, Gilgit-Baltistan, Murree, Galiyat and Kashmir. Islamabad will see partly cloudy skies with rain-wind/thundershower and isolated heavy rain at night. In KP, rain is expected in Dir, Swat, Peshawar, Mardan, Abbotabad, Mansehra and others. Punjab will remain hot and humid overall, but rain is likely in Murree, Galiyat, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Gujranwala and Sialkot.

Sindh and Balochistan will stay hot and humid, with partly cloudy conditions and drizzle possible in coastal areas including Karachi. Kashmir and GB will have partly cloudy weather with rain, and isolated heavy rain in Kashmir. In the past 24 hours, Saidpur recorded 45mm of rain. The highest temperature was 43°C in Dalbandin and Nokkundi.

The Kashmir Information War: Who Gets to Tell the Story?

Continued from Page 4

information reaches them all shape the picture they take home — a picture that, once communicated to an international audience, can reinforce a particular understanding of the conflict. The same problem, however, exists beyond Indian-adminis-

tered Kashmir. Pakistan, too, cannot claim complete immunity from the politics of information. Recent restrictions on foreign media and reporting in Pakistan, including requirements affecting journalists working outside major cities, have raised concerns among press-freedom organisations. This matters

because credibility in an information war cannot be demanded; it has to be earned. This brings us to the question of how states can address the information divide. If Pakistan wants the international community to listen to Kashmiri concerns, it must also support an environment in which journal-

ists can report freely. The same standard must apply to India. In March, India rejected allegations concerning Jammu and Kashmir at the UN Human Rights Council as “baseless and politically motivated,” reflecting its broader reluctance to engage with international criticism of its record in the region. If India

wants the international community to accept its narrative of normalcy and development, it must be willing to allow independent scrutiny of that narrative, including greater access for journalists and international observers. And if international actors genuinely seek to understand Kashmir, they must listen

to more than the governments on either side. Ultimately, the Kashmir conflict is not only a struggle over territory or political status. It is also a struggle over who gets to define reality. Perhaps the question the international community should be asking is therefore not simply: Who controls Kashmir?

It is also: Who controls the story of Kashmir — and, more importantly, whose voices are missing from it? *The author is a researcher at Kashmir Institute of International Relations. She can be reached at alinaija2006@gmail.com*

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani meeting Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi and PPP Parliamentary Leader in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mr. Ahmad Karim Kundi at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Acting President Gilani Discusses Security, Floods and Kashmir Affairs

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani held separate meetings with political leaders and business representatives at Aiwan-e-Sadr, discussing national, regional and international matters, including security, flash floods and the political situation.

Governor Khyber Pakh-

tunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, accompanied by PPP Parliamentary Leader in the KP Assembly Ahmad Karim Kundi, briefed the Acting President on peace and stability in the province. They also discussed security challenges, the flood situation in various areas and ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Former Federal and Provin-

cial Minister Syed Samsam Bukhari also called on Gilani and discussed matters concerning his constituency. Former AJ&K President Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan discussed the political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir following recent elections, along with development and welfare issues.

Yaqoob recalled develop-

ment initiatives undertaken during Gilani's tenure as prime minister, including the establishment of medical colleges in Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot and Mirpur. He said over 16,000 students from different parts of Pakistan were currently studying in AJ&K universities as a result of measures taken during that period. He also highlighted the Bab-e-Yousuf bridge over the River Jhelum,

which improved connectivity with Islamabad.

Gilani reaffirmed the Pakistan Peoples Party's long-standing commitment to the Kashmir cause. He separately met former Foreign Minister Syed Jail Abbas Gilani to discuss regional and international developments. REAP Chairman Faisal Jahangir also briefed him on rice exports.

Kayani Chairs High-Level Review meeting on cashless economy

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani chaired a high-level review meeting at the Finance Division today to prepare for the upcoming Prime Minister's Cashless Initiative review. The meeting brought together senior officials from the Ministry of Finance, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), NADRA, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Ministry of IT & Telecommunication, and private sector stakeholders.

The Minister reviewed progress on the Prime Minister's prior directives and outlined key priorities to accelerate Pakistan's digital financial transformation. A central objective was to review the last



years progress and initiate the annual performance targets

setting for the national Cashless Dashboard for the current

fiscal year, as well as introducing new analytical indi-

cators to improve real-time monitoring and data transparency.

Key Highlights & Strategic Focus of the meeting was to Evaluate last year's growth across active digital merchants, total digital transaction volumes, and overall digital banking users, Assessed progress on digitizing government payments across State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and autonomous bodies, reiterating the objective to fully digitize all vendor, employee, and pension payouts. The committee members also discussed strategies to expand merchant adoption nationwide and proposed establishing a centralized merchant database to enhance real-time transaction visibility.

PIDE Senate Approves Landmark Reforms to Strengthen Pakistan's Development Agenda

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 19th meeting of the Senate of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), chaired by Federal Minister for Planning Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, approved a comprehensive package of institutional reforms aimed at strengthening research, governance and policy development.

The Senate reviewed PIDE's performance for 2025-26, noting that its research output increased by over 50 percent to 361 products, while academic enrolment, triple and graduate employment reached 89 percent within one year. Eight new research centres were also established, while a digitised research plan was introduced to track assignments.

The meeting approved 11 insti-



tutional policies covering academic appointments, employee welfare and student support. These included provi-

sions for Professors of Practice, Emeritus Professors, Senior Fellows, post-doctoral and visiting academic staff,

as well as scholarships and fee waivers. A National Talent Hunt Programme was also approved to identify and support talented students through tuition waivers, stipends and mentorship.

The Senate endorsed the self-financing MS in Project Management programme and approved 20 senior academic appointments following a rigorous selection process. Faculty representation in statutory bodies was restored through elections.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal directed that representatives from Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan be included in the Senate, while stressing stronger collaboration between PIDE and provincial governments on evidence-based policy research.

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NAB Chairman Calls on Finance Minister

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Lieutenant General (Retired) Nazir Ahmed called on the Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, in Ministry of Finance, Q-Block, Pakistan Secretariat, Islamabad.

Chairman NAB apprised the Finance Minister of the major

initiatives being taken by the accountability arm of the Government of Pakistan and contribution towards national exchequer through recoveries of funds effected by way of thorough investigations.

The Finance Minister appreciated the excellent work and assured the full-fledged support of the Ministry of Finance towards achievement of national goals.

Pakistan Navy launches maritime exercise SEASPARK-2026 in Karachi



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy's major maritime exercise SEASPARK-2026 began in Karachi on Wednesday, the military's media wing said.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf presided over the opening brief of the exercise, flanked by senior officers from across Pakistan's Armed Forces, according to a statement by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

"The exercise rigorously tests Pakistan Navy's combat readiness against conventional and emerging maritime threats, integrating ships, submarines, aircraft, unmanned systems, marines, special forces and joint army and air force elements,"

the statement further said.

Earlier, the Chief of the Naval Staff visited PN Fleet units and reviewed ongoing operations.

Speaking on the occasion, he stressed that the evolving security environment demands uncompromising readiness, enhanced tri-service integration, adaptability and effectiveness across physical and information domains.

Exercise SEASPARK-2026 focuses on rehearsing multi-domain operations by integrating maritime, air, land, cyber and space-enabled capabilities, alongside operations in the information environment, to secure decisive advantage in the information battlespace, in lockstep with kinetic operations at sea, the statement added.

Workers Welfare Fund Provides Rs. 1 Million Each to Families of Martyred Balochistan Mine Workers

News Desk

SWABI/SWAT: On the directives of Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Workers Welfare Fund Secretary Zulfiqar Ahmed visited the homes of two workers who died in the Sourange Coal Mine accident in Balochistan. The workers were from Jhando Islam Pura, Swabi, and Tal Dardiyal, Tehsil Kabal, Swat.

Secretary Zulfiqar Ahmed offered

Fateha, conveyed the Minister's condolences, and presented cheques of Rs. 1 million to each bereaved family on behalf of the Workers Welfare Fund.

He said "the pain of workers is our pain" and that the Fund stands with workers' families in every difficulty. He added that while no compensation can replace a life, the government and WWF will continue support, including educational and basic needs for the martyrs' children, calling them "children of the Workers Welfare Fund."

CM Maryam Nawaz Rejects Down Payment for E-Bike Scheme, Approves Rs. 3,000 Monthly Instalment

Bureau Report

LAHORE: DGPR Punjab Handout No. 732 Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a meeting on the "CM Maryam Nawaz E-Bike Scheme" and rejected proposals to charge students a down payment or any fees other than monthly instalments. Under the scheme, over 125,000 e-bikes will be provided to talented male and female students. The Punjab government will also bear the interest and insurance costs. The meeting agreed in principle to fix the monthly instalment at around Rs. 3,000. The CM approved, in principle, expanding the scheme gradually to government employees, depart-



ments, and public delivery riders. She ordered the e-bike portal to be opened this week and directed that eligible students receive e-bikes within six weeks. Officials briefed that helmets and safety rods will be provided free with each e-bike, which will use lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries. On the CM's directive, aspiring students will also receive free two-day e-bike driving training.