



Masato Kanda reelected ADB President

Masato Kanda has been unanimously reelected ADB President for a second, five-year term beginning November 24, 2026, by the Board of Governors. Since taking office in 2025, ADB has provided a record \$44 billion in support, including a Charter amendment boosting annual financing capacity by 50%. Kanda previously served as Japan's Vice-Minister of Finance for International Affairs.



Ulema Delegation Meets CM GB; Pledge Joint Fight Against Extremism

A high-level delegation of religious scholars and mashaikhs from the National Qaumi Paigham-e-Amn Committee met Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Amjad Hussain in Gilgit on Tuesday to discuss regional peace, inter-sectarian harmony, and joint strategies against extremism.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Rabi-ul-Awwal 18, Wednesday, September 2, 2026



www.dailyspokesman.net



@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 20, Issue: 133

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Group Photo

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with heads of States at the SCO Council of Heads of State Summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz Calls for Cooperation Over Confrontation at SCO Summit

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called on Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states to promote regional development through cooperation, dialogue and connectivity rather than confrontation. Addressing the 26th SCO Council of Heads of State meeting, he highlighted the region's potential in trans-region-

al connectivity, energy, IT and artificial intelligence, poverty reduction, healthcare and sports. The prime minister said Pakistan would pursue an action-oriented agenda during its upcoming SCO chairmanship, focusing on these priority areas. He proposed an SCO Sovereign AI Infrastructure and Governance Framework to encourage responsible and inclusive AI development and announced

that Pakistan would host the Global Resilience Expo 2026-27 in Islamabad to strengthen disaster preparedness, early-warning systems and regional response mechanisms. Shehbaz Sharif highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for regional peace, including the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, which he described as a viable pathway towards lasting stability. He also

referred to the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, stressing that it was defensive in nature. He called for implementation of the SCO Development Strategy until 2035 and establishment of an SCO Development Bank. He also emphasized regional connectivity through CPEC, railways, roads and energy projects. The prime minister urged respect for international law, shared-water treaties and the

right to self-determination, while highlighting the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to counter-terrorism and regional security, noting the country's sacrifices in fighting terrorism. He concluded by urging SCO members to choose cooperation, dialogue, unity and hope for regional peace and prosperity.

PM Shehbaz: Water must not be weaponised, terror from Afghan soil must end

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif told the SCO Plus Format meeting in Bishkek that water is the "lifeline" of the region and "must never be weaponised or used for political coercion." He stressed that treaties like the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty are binding and must be honored fully, a day after the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled the IWT remains in force and ordered India to limit hydro-electric construction in Kashmir. Addressing the session themed on the UN and a multipolar world, the PM said Pakistan, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, is contributing to peacemaking.



He cited the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding on the Gulf and Pakistan's signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement with Saudi Arabia

and Türkiye as steps for regional stability. He called the situation in Gaza and West Bank "deeply troubling" and urged the inter-

national community to uphold Palestinian self-determination and the rights of other oppressed nations. He also called for UN reforms to make it more

accountable. On security, Shehbaz said Pakistan remains committed to the SCO's RATS framework against terrorism, separatism and extremism. Noting Pakistan has lost over 90,000 lives and \$150 billion to terrorism, he demanded an end to attacks launched from Afghan territory into Pakistan and other neighbors, saying regional connectivity depends on peace in Afghanistan. As Pakistan prepares to chair the SCO from 2026-2027, the PM said priorities will include IT & AI, energy, poverty reduction, disaster management, health, culture and sports, and invited leaders to the 2027 SCO session in Islamabad.

Heavy Rain Floods Rawalpindi, Islamabad as Authorities Declare Emergency

Waseem Khokhar

RAWALPINDI/ISLAMABAD: Heavy rains caused widespread flooding in low-lying areas of the twin cities on Tuesday, prompting authorities to declare a rain emergency and place rescue agencies on high alert. Educational institutions were also closed amid the worsening situation. The Meteorological Department recorded 201mm of rain in Shamsabad, 186mm in New Katarian, 157mm in Golra and 146mm at the PMD. Several



roads, including Old Airport Road, Rahimabad Bridge and Murree Road, were submerged, causing severe traffic congestion. In Islamabad's G-14 sector, one person died and another was injured after a house roof collapsed. The injured was shifted to PIMS Hospital. Water accumulation also disrupted students and examination candidates travelling to educational institutions. Rawal Dam's water level reached 1,751 feet, prompting authorities to open its spillways. Sirens were sounded near Nala

Lai as water levels rose to 27 feet at Katarian and 21 feet at Gawalmandi. Heavy machinery was deployed at vulnerable locations. WASA, Rescue 1122, Civil Defence, PDMA and district administration teams continued round-the-clock monitoring and drainage operations. Authorities urged citizens to avoid unnecessary travel, stay away from electric wires and accumulated water, and take precautionary measures. The rain spell is expected to continue until September 5.

Acting President Gilani visits Norwegian Ambassador's Residence to condole passing of King Harald V



Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani visited the Residence of the Ambassador of Norway in Islamabad and recorded his condolences in the condolence book opened following the passing of His Majesty King Harald V of Norway. He was received by senior officers of the Embassy. In his remarks, Mr Gilani expressed profound sorrow over the passing of King Harald V and, on behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan and on his own behalf, extended his heartfelt condolences to His Majesty

King Haakon VIII, the Royal Family and the people of Norway. He stated that King Harald V had served Norway with wisdom, dignity and devotion for over thirty-five years and that the late King's long reign and dedicated service to his country and people would be remembered with great respect. Mr Gilani noted that, at this time of sorrow, the thoughts and prayers of the people of Pakistan were with His Majesty King Haakon VIII, the Royal Family and the people of Norway. He prayed that the departed soul may rest in eternal peace.

21 terrorists killed in security operations in Balochistan: ISPR



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Security forces killed 21 terrorists in retaliatory operations in Balochistan during the night between August 31 and September 1, the military's media wing ISPR said on Tuesday. According to ISPR, the operations took place in Nokcha, Chagai district, and Ziarat Cross, Pishin district. In Chagai, terrorists affiliated with Fitna al-Hindustan had set up a checkpoint on the N-40 Quetta-Taftan Highway on August 31 to extort money and disrupt traffic. Following an intense exchange of fire, 11 terrorists were killed. A large cache of

weapons, ammunition and explosives was also recovered from the site. Later that night, terrorists linked to Fitna al-Khawarij attempted to enter the Customs House at Ziarat Cross. Security forces responded swiftly, killing 10 terrorists in the exchange of fire. Pursuing teams also inflicted further casualties on fleeing militants. ISPR said the attack on the Customs House reflects a nexus between terrorism and organized crime. Tragically, six personnel were martyred during the operations, including two officers and a Customs Department official. ISPR added that clearance operations are ongoing to safeguard local communities and key national highways. The military reaffirmed its resolve to eliminate both Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khawarij from the region.

President, PM Laud Security Forces for Eliminating 21 Terrorists

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday commended security forces for eliminating 21 terrorists in operations in Chagai and Pishin districts of Balochistan. According to the President's Secretariat, President Zardari praised the forces for foiling a terrorist attack on the Customs House and thwarting attempts to disrupt traffic on the Quetta-Taftan Highway where terrorists had set up an illegal check post. He appreciated their professionalism in targeting terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hin-

dustan and Fitna al-Khawarij, and said the martyrs who laid down their lives set a great example of defending the motherland. Both the president and the prime minister expressed grief over the martyrdom of six personnel, including two officers and a Customs official, during the operations. PM Office said the prime minister shared the grief of the bereaved families and affirmed that the sacrifices of brave jawans in the fight against terrorism would not go in vain. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also reaffirmed the government's commitment to completely eliminate terrorism of all kinds from the country.

AJK PM Pays Tribute to Syed Ali Gilani’s Unwavering Commitment to Kashmir Cause

 **Spokesman Report.**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Iftikhar Gilani, has said that due to the character and lifelong struggle of Baba-e-Hurriyat Syed Ali Gilani, his unwavering commitment is cited as an example not only in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan but across the world.

He said that Syed Ali Gilani remained steadfast in his stance until his last breath: “We are Pakistanis and Pakistan is ours.”

The AJK Prime Minister expressed these views while addressing, as chief guest, a ceremony held to mark the fifth death anniversary of Baba-e-Hurriyat Syed Ali Gilani, organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell and the All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

He paid tribute to the courage and resilience of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the brothers, sisters, youth and elders, who have faced the worst forms of Indian state brutality. He said the Kashmiri people have proved that they will never bow before India.



The Prime Minister said that Syed Ali Gilani’s slogan, “We are Pakistanis and Pakistan is ours,” remains the cherished objective of every Kashmiri. He said the Kashmir freedom movement has been passed from one generation to another, and the new generation is also carrying it forward

with courage and steadfastness while rendering invaluable sacrifices.

He directed the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell to ensure that all those eminent figures who made invaluable sacrifices for the Kashmir freedom movement are remembered and ceremonies are

organized in their memory.

The Prime Minister said that the recommendations presented by the speakers at the conference would be considered and implementation of their key points would be ensured.

He thanked the organizers and participants for holding the ceremony.

PM Gillani and Acting President Farooq hold key talks on state affairs and public issues



 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Govt.state of Jammu and Kashmir iftikhar Gillani called on Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, at the President’s Office, Kashmir House, Islamabad. During the meeting, the overall political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, matters of mutual interest, and various state affairs were discussed in detail.

The meeting also discussed measures to further improve political and administrative affairs in Azad Kashmir, address public issues, and strengthen coordination and cooperation among state institutions

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan Congratulates New PM of AḷK, Urges Political Awareness

 **Abdul Majeed Tahir**



ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan congratulated Barrister Iftikhar Gilani on becoming the new Prime Minister of AJK during a TV talk show and wished him well for his tenure.

Speaking on AJK politics, Sardar Attique highlighted what he called the longstanding dependence of AJK’s political institutions on federal-level decision-making. He said leadership decisions in the region have often been influenced by the central leadership of Pakistan’s major parties, sometimes overriding local organizational expectations.

He cited examples: in 1990, Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan was overlooked for Muntaz Hussain Rathore; during the PPP tenure, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed was preferred over Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry; and under PTI, despite Barrister Sultan’s long association with the party, Abdul Qayyum Niazi was made PM after the government was formed.

Sardar Attique urged AJK’s political leadership and local party organizations to learn from history and understand the institutional dynamics shaping decisions. He stressed the need for greater political awareness, institutional maturity, and a realistic understanding of the relationship between local structures and the broader political framework governing AJK.

Multan Police separates investigation, operations wings

 **Correspondent**

MULTAN: The Multan District Police has completed the administrative separation of its Investigation and Operations wings to enhance professional specialization and accountability, City Police Officer (CPO) Sadiq Ali Dogar announced. The restructuring is based on the 2023 draft circular issued by the Inspector General of Police, Punjab, along with relevant police rules, amendments, and judicial orders. Under the new system, officers with strong investigative skills, case-handling expertise, and prosecution experience have been posted to the Investigation Wing. Personnel with greater field-policing and operational experience have been assigned to the Operations Wing. Recommendations from SPs, DSPs, and SHOs on officer suitability and performance were also incorporated. CPO Dogar said Multan has largely adopted the Lahore Police model of separation, with an exception in supervisory arrangements at the SP and DSP levels. As per the new deployment, 48% of the force is allocated to the Operations Wing for crime prevention, field policing, and law and order. The Investigation Wing receives 17%, including a dedicated pool of 128 Sub-Inspectors. Meanwhile, 15.89% is assigned to security and miscellaneous duties, and 19.11% to other specialized wings. A briefing session was held for investigating officers to familiarize them with the new SOPs, roles, and chain of command. CPO Dogar said the reforms aim to improve investigation quality and overall policing effectiveness in Multan.

Takht Bhai Residents Protest Against Prolonged Power Outages

 **Tariq khan Yousafzai**

TAKHT BHAI: Residents of Takht Bhai and adjoining areas staged a protest against prolonged and unannounced power outages, claiming that the area was experiencing 16 to 18 hours of load-shedding daily. The protesters gathered outside Jalala Grid Station and blocked Malakand Road for several hours.



The demonstration was led by PPP Mardan Division Vice President Irfan Mohmand, along with Haji Wajid Khan and Comrade Fareed Khan Lala. A large number of traders, students, lawyers, political figures and local residents participated.

The protesters said excessive load-shedding had severely affected education, businesses, industries, healthcare and water supply. They also raised concerns over overbilling and delays in replacing faulty transformers. They demanded an immediate reduction in load-shedding, a clear electricity schedule, replacement of damaged transformers and prompt resolution of consumer complaints.

They warned that failure to address their demands within 48 hours could lead to an expanded protest, including a possible motorway blockade.

Later, Assistant Commissioner Dr. Aleena Shakeel and other officials negotiated with WAPDA/PESCO authorities. Officials assured protesters that unnecessary load-shedding would be addressed immediately. Following the assurance, protesters dispersed peacefully and Malakand Road was reopened.

Education in the rain

RAWALPINDI: Children wade through a flooded street in front of a school at Millat Colony, after the heavy rain in the city. The Rawalpindi district administration announced a public holiday, with all educational institutions in the city closed amid heavy rainfall and the rising water level in Nullah Lai.



Photo: Online

Ceremony in Muzaffarabad Marks Fifth Death Anniversary of Syed Ali Shah Geelani

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: A ceremony to pay tribute to eminent Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani on his fifth death anniversary was held at the New Prime Minister House, Jalandabad, under the auspices of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell.

The event was attended by former AJK Acting President and Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, APHC Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi,



Secretary J&K Liberation Cell Chaudhry Abdul Rahman, Pasban-e-Hurriyat Chairman Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, students and faculty from AJK University’s Departments of Kashmir Studies and Interna-

tional Relations, government officials, and members of civil society. The hall was decorated with Pakistani and AJK flags and over 2,000 seats were arranged.

Speakers paid tribute to

Geelani’s lifelong commitment to the Kashmir freedom movement and to Pakistan. Chaudhry Latif Akbar recalled his slogan “We are Pakistanis, Pakistan belongs to us” and said his politics of resistance

and demand for self-determination remain relevant.

Ghulam Muhammad Safi said Geelani’s ideology continues to guide the younger generation, noting that despite illness and restrictions in his final years, his narrative remained linked to the Kashmir dispute.

Speakers concluded that Geelani’s legacy will endure and his struggle for the right to self-determination will continue to inspire future generations. The ceremony ended with prayers for Geelani and the martyrs of Kashmir.

JKCI Pays Tribute to Syed Ali Geelani on Fifth Death Anniversary

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The leadership of Jammu and Kashmir Community International (JKCI) has paid rich tribute to Shaheed Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Baba-e-Hurriyat, on his fifth death anniversary.

In a joint statement, JKCI Chairman Ghulam Nabi Butt, Senior Vice Chairman Sardar Kamran Azam, Vice Chairmen Raja Muhammad Zareen Khan, Khalid Gujjar, Raja Maroof Hussain, and other office bearers said Geelani’s lifelong services and unparalleled sacrifices for the Kashmir freedom movement will



always be remembered and continue to inspire the Kashmiri people.

They recalled that Geelani championed the slogan “We are Pakistanis and Pakistan belongs to us,” and endured prolonged imprisonment and detention by Indian forces without

compromising on his principles or ideological commitment to Pakistan.

The JKCI leadership noted that he spent much of his life in Indian prisons and under detention, facing immense hardships with courage and steadfastness while remaining unwa-

vering on the Kashmir cause.

The leadership prayed to Almighty Allah to grant Geelani the highest ranks in Jannat-ul-Firdous and eternal peace, and sought strength for those who continue to honour his memory.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:15 am
Zohr 12:08 pm
Asr 4:44 pm
Maghrib 6:34 pm
Isha 8:00 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

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

*Defence Day
Symbolizes
Sacrifice,
Courage and
National Unity:
Asma Butt*



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Asma Butt, Director, Writer and Chief Executive of Dolphin Communication, said September 6, Defence Day is a reminder of the sacrifices of martyrs and veterans who laid down their lives for Pakistan.

In her Defence Day message, she said the day is an opportunity to renew the national resolve for the country's security, sovereignty and unity. She noted that the sacrifices of martyrs serve as a guiding light and inspire the younger generation to uphold patriotism, unity and responsibility.

Asma Butt emphasized that defending Pakistan is not limited to protecting borders. She added that contributing to the nation's development, peace and stability is also a key national responsibility.

She called on citizens to honor the legacy of the armed forces by working together for a stronger and more prosperous Pakistan.

CM Punjab orders removal of illegal ramps outside houses

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has ordered the removal of illegal ramps outside houses that obstruct roads and directed authorities to install drain covers made of recycled plastic along roadsides.

Presiding over a special meeting to review development projects under the own-source revenue model in Sargodha and Dera Ghazi Khan divisions, the chief minister also directed that the names of cities be displayed on green, landscaped plots at their entry points.

The meeting was informed that 20 projects would be undertaken in

Sargodha division through own-source revenue, including eight in Sargodha district, six in Khushab and six in Bhakkar.

Five major road projects involving construction, expansion and rehabilitation have been approved for Sargodha city. They include Dairy Road, Azad Road, Urdu Bazaar Road, Pilot Chowk and Khayyam Chowk Overhead Bridge Road.

Six road construction and rehabilitation projects have been approved for Khushab, including those at Jahaz Chowk, DPS School, Sehgal Chowk, Mianwali Road, Main Bazaar Quaidabad and Noor Pur Thal Road.



The chief minister also approved six own-source revenue projects in Bhakkar, including GPO Chowk Road, TDA Road, Kallur Kot Road and Mankera City Road.

For Rajanpur, six own-source revenue projects were approved, including the Kotab Canal-Indus Highway link, Post

Office Road, Aqilpur and Fatehpur Road. Ms Sharif also sought additional development projects for Rajanpur city and its tehsils.

The chief minister approved sewerage and drainage schemes for rural areas, including Rojhan, Kot Mithan, Jampur and Dajal, and directed that such

projects be completed on a priority basis.

She also ordered the installation of electronic traffic signals on congested roads in Bhakkar and other cities.

The meeting agreed to prohibit the placement of concrete flowerpots along roadsides and on road medians.

Performance

ISLAMABAD: Army band present national anthem of Pakistan and Uzbekistan during a reception to mark 35th anniversary of the Republic of Uzbekistan at local hotel, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Education, Youth Empowerment Key to Pakistan's Bright Future: Ibrahim Murad

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Former Punjab Minister Ibrahim Murad called on Governor Sindh Nehal Hashmi to discuss ways to promote higher education, empower youth and develop joint initiatives aimed at enhancing the educational and professional opportunities available to young people.

Chairman Lotte Chemicals Dr. Imtiaz was also present during the meeting.

Talking on the occasion, Ibrahim Murad emphasized that investment in education and youth is an investment in Pakistan's future, stressing that the country's development could be accelerated by equipping its young population with quality education, modern skills and meaningful



opportunities for professional growth.

Murad highlighted the need for stronger collaboration among educational institu-

tions, government bodies and other stakeholders to promote higher education and effectively harness the potential of Pakistan's youth. He said

that greater access to modern education, technology, vocational and professional skills, and practical experience would enable young people to make a more meaningful contribution to national development.

Governor Sindh Nehal Hashmi appreciated Ibrahim Murad's contributions in the fields of education and social development and agreed on the importance of taking effective and result-oriented measures to strengthen higher education and youth development.

The Governor emphasized the need to empower young people by expanding opportunities for education, skills training and career development, noting that the country's future prosperity was closely linked to the successful development of its youth.

Quran Must Be Understood and Practiced, Not Merely Recited: Allama Riaz

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Renowned scholar Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah said the Holy Quran is not just for recitation but a complete guide that must be understood, reflected upon, and practiced in daily life.

Addressing a weekly Mehfil-e-Zikr and Dars-e-Quran at Idara Taleem-e-Islamia, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, hosted by Allama Hafiz Sheikh Muhammad Qasim, he said the Quran teaches humility, patience, good character, peace, love and tolerance. He urged people to remain respectful and patient despite differences.

Allama Shah added that the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) exemplifies knowledge, justice, morality and service to humanity, while the lives of the Ahl al-Bayt and the tragedy of Karbala offer enduring lessons of courage, sacrifice and steadfastness.

He called on youth and students to study the Quran and adopt its teachings in their character. The gathering concluded with prayers for the peace, prosperity of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah.



Jamaat-e-Islami meets Faisalabad Business Leaders Ahead of Sept 3 Nationwide Strike



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami continued its outreach ahead of the nationwide shutter-down strike on September 3 against levy taxes and rising petrol and electricity prices. District Ameer Mehboob-uz-Zaman Butt met with Supreme Traders Association Faisalabad leaders including former MNA Mian Abdul Manan, Chairman Muhammad Aslam Bhali, Malik Shahid Rasool and other business figures to seek support for the strike on public issues. JI delegation members included Mian Tahir Ayub, Sheikh Muhammad Mush-taq, Chaudhry Muhammad Saleem Gujjar, Sheikh Afzal Shaheen and Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry. Business leaders said the levy tax, high petroleum prices, IPP contracts and rising electricity tariffs have hit purchasing power and severely impacted traders and industrialists. They called for abolishing the levy tax and reviewing IPP contracts to make electricity cheaper and restore public buying power. After consultations, the traders gave positive assurances of support. Mehboob-uz-Zaman Butt thanked the association leaders for backing the strike.

IHC suspends controversial NIRC Order on Hydro Union Elections

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has issued a key order regarding the intra-union elections of the All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Electric Workers Union. The Court ruled that the controversial order issued by the Chairman of the National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC) will remain suspended until the NIRC Full Bench becomes functional and decides the pending appeal and interim relief application. The Court noted the Full Bench is currently not available, and the suspension will end automatically once it is functional. Citing the current judicial position, the Hydro Union stated that no disputed elections should be held and no new body should be constituted based on those elections, to ensure compliance with the Court's orders. The Union urged all office-bearers and workers to respect the Court's directions and avoid any action that could amount to contempt. It added that all union affairs will be conducted per the Constitution, law and judicial orders, and any attempt to impose a new body through an unlawful process will be challenged in all available legal forums.

PITAD Officers Visit PHMA House to Understand Exporters' Challenges

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Newly inducted civil servants of the 32nd batch of the Specialized Training Programme (STP) of the Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development (PITAD), Ministry of Commerce, visited the Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA) House to gain firsthand knowledge of the business environment and challenges confronting exporters.

The delegation, led by PITAD Director (Training) Suhail Ahmed, was briefed on issues facing manufacturers and exporters. Ahmed said the visit aimed to provide officers joining the Commerce and Trade Group with practical exposure and help them understand the business communi-



ty's expectations from government institutions.

PHMA Senior Vice Chairman North Zone Ahmed Afzal Awan highlighted the value-added textile

sector's challenges, particularly high production costs and policy uncertainty. He called for regionally competitive energy tariffs, taxation policies and interest rates to

strengthen Pakistan's export competitiveness.

Awan noted that Pakistani textile and apparel exporters faced strong competition from Bangladesh, Vietnam, China and India, while US reciprocal tariffs had further increased competitive pressures.

During a question-and-answer session, participants discussed trade, taxation, energy costs, production expenses and export-related challenges. Awan urged the Ministry of Commerce to maintain regular consultation with exporters and introduce consistent, business-friendly policies.

Commemorative shields were presented to TDAP Director Naheed Akhtar and PITAD Director Suhail Ahmed.

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Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

Preserving Pakistan’s Living Heritage

Culture is not stored in museums alone. It lives in the hands of a calligrapher, the voice of a folk singer, the needle of an embroiderer, and the chisel of a woodcarver. When those hands fall silent, an entire chapter of our identity vanishes. That is why Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi’s announcement of special measures to preserve rare, traditional and endangered art forms deserves serious attention.

Pakistan’s artistic landscape is vast and fragile. From Ajrak and Sindh embroidery to Balochi needlework, Kashmiri wood carving, and classical music gharanas, these traditions carry centuries of history, geography and philosophy. The Minister is right to call them not just artistic practices but an integral part of our national identity. If we lose them, we lose part of the story of who we are.

The collaboration with UNESCO and the renewed focus by Lok Virsa and PNCA signal a shift from passive celebration to active preservation. Documentation, intergenerational transmission, and giving artists platforms are the three pillars needed. It is encouraging that the National Awards 2026 this year prioritized merit and included a significant number of young artists. Culture cannot survive if it only looks backward. By bringing youth into the fold, the government is ensuring that tradition is not a relic, but a living practice.

Equally important is the emphasis on women artists. Pakistani women have long been custodians of craft, from phulkari to drama and design, often without institutional support. Identifying talent across regions and giving them opportunities to advance and represent Pakistan internationally is both overdue and essential. A nation’s heritage is incomplete if half its creators remain in the shadows.

Transparency in the awards process also matters. Federal Secretary Asad Rehman Gilani noted that selections went through multiple reviews, provincial consultations, and final scrutiny. In a field where patronage and favoritism have often dominated, a merit-based approach builds trust among artists and gives the awards credibility.

But awards are a beginning, not an end. The real work lies in creating ecosystems: workshops in schools, apprenticeships for endangered crafts, digital archives, and markets that pay artists fairly. Artists themselves must be invited not just to perform, but to shape policy. Their offer to serve the government and institutions should be met with concrete programs.

Pakistan’s heritage is under pressure from globalization, economic hardship, and neglect. Yet it is also one of our greatest soft-power assets. If preserved and promoted, these arts can generate livelihoods, tourism, and pride.

The government’s resolve is welcome. Now it must be matched with sustained funding, institutional reform, and public engagement. Our rare arts are not the past. They can be the future — if we choose to keep them alive.

Jobless Growth: Who Bears the Blame?

Over the past several years, Pakistan’s economic growth has remained persistently low and largely jobless, failing to absorb a rapidly expanding labour force. The social consequences are now stark. Official data shows the unemployment rate has risen to 7.1 per cent, leaving over eight million people jobless in a labour force of 77.2 million. Poverty and underemployment have increased, household incomes have been squeezed, and social stress has intensified. Growth that does not translate into jobs is not merely inadequate — it is destabilising.

In theory, the private sector is the primary engine of employment creation. In practice, however, Pakistan’s private sector has been systematically weakened by perennial political instability, macroeconomic volatility, policy inconsistency, and weak institutional support. High interest rates, unpredictable taxation, energy shortages, and currency instability have sharply reduced firms’ capacity and willingness to expand. Expecting the private sector to generate jobs in such an environment is tantamount to asking businesses to perform while policy actively constrains them.

Beyond macroeconomic mismanagement, governance failures have inflicted direct damage on productive sectors, particularly construction and real estate, which have traditionally been engines of employment for both skilled and unskilled workers. Even more unsettling, the Association of Builders and Developers has recently warned that an extortion mafia is extracting large sums from builders, with reports of staff being harassed. Such lawlessness does not merely raise costs; it destroys investor confidence, freezes activity, and suffocates sectors that have historically absorbed surplus labour.

If the government does not create jobs directly, it must at the very least create the conditions in which jobs can exist. This requires policy stability, affordable credit, reliable energy, and above all, the rule of law. Without addressing governance failures and security concerns, shifting responsibility to the private sector becomes an abdication rather than a strategy. In Pakistan’s current context, job creation is not just an economic outcome — it is a governance obligation.

Recent data from the Large-Scale Manufacturing (LSM) sector illustrates this contradiction clearly. Late 2025 brought tentative signs of recovery, with output expanding 4.08 per cent year-on-year in the first quarter of FY26 (July–September 2025), supported by better performance in automobiles, cement, and food processing. The momentum, though encouraging, remains fragile.

Viewed over a longer horizon, this short-term improvement masks a deeper structural malaise. Over the past six years, Pakistan’s domestic manufacturing sector has been trapped in a persistent downward spiral. Research by the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry shows that private investment in manufacturing has collapsed from Rs706 billion in FY19 to Rs377 billion in FY25 — a 46 per cent decline, marking the weakest phase of industrial expansion in over a decade.

The causes of this collapse are neither obscure nor accidental. A hostile business climate — marked by policy inconsistency, regulatory unpredictability, and soaring operating costs — has steadily driven investors away. Frequent changes in tax regimes and statutory regulatory orders make long-term planning nearly impossible, while high and volatile energy tariffs have severely eroded competitiveness. The Pakistan Textile Council

notes that electricity costs average 13.2 cents per kWh in Pakistan, compared with 7.0 cents in Vietnam and 10.2 cents in Bangladesh, placing Pakistani exporters at a structural disadvantage.

These weaknesses are compounded by a broader macroeconomic environment characterised by political instability, a decline in the rupee’s value, chronically low foreign exchange reserves, and prohibitively high borrowing costs. Under such conditions, capital behaves rationally — it exits but does not expand.

The consequences of this prolonged investment drought are severe. Pakistan is undergoing a subtle but dangerous form of de-industrialisation: factories may still stand, but ageing equipment, declining efficiency, and technological stagnation are steadily reducing productive capacity. Export competitiveness weakens, job creation stalls, tax revenues shrink, and the state becomes increasingly dependent on indirect taxation, fuelling inflation and inequality.

The contrast with regional peers is stark. While Pakistan’s manufacturing and mining contribution to GDP has remained stuck at around 13.2 per cent for six consecutive years, countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam have pursued consistent, investment-friendly strategies. As a result, Pakistan’s exports have fallen from 16 per cent of GDP in the 1990s to around 10 per cent in 2024, leaving growth dependent on debt and remittance-driven consumption — a key reason for the country’s recurring boom-bust cycles.

Against this backdrop, the recent 50-basis-point cut in the policy interest rate, though symbolically welcome, is economically inconsequential for industrial revival. When real borrowing costs remain deeply restrictive, a marginal reduction does little to alter investment decisions. For manufacturers facing double-digit financing costs, energy shocks, and policy uncertainty, the cut is more cosmetic than catalytic.

(Email: pro.iqra.14@gmail.com).

Analysis



Iqra Liaqat

The Global Data-Center Race: An Opening Pakistan Cannot Afford to Miss

President Donald Trump has issued a blunt warning to American communities resisting artificial-intelligence data centers: reject them, he argued, and they risk becoming “backwards and poor.” In his August 31 statement, Trump presented data centers as essential infrastructure for economic prosperity, technological leadership and competition with China. His language was confrontational, but the strategic concern behind it deserves serious attention.

Artificial intelligence and robotics are likely to be among the most consequential technologies of the coming decades. The countries controlling the computing power required to train and operate advanced AI systems will gain economic influence, scientific capabilities and national-security advantages. Data centers are therefore becoming to the digital age what ports, railways, power stations and industrial zones were to earlier periods of development.

China recognized this reality early and began constructing not merely individual data centers but an entire computing ecosystem. Its “East Data, West Computing” programme connects demand in the populous and commercially developed east with land, energy

and computing facilities in western regions. By mid-2024, China had invested more than \$6 billion directly in eight national computing hubs, with the wider investment stimulated by those hubs exceeding \$28 billion. The clusters contained more than 1.95 million server racks.

China’s approach incorporates electricity generation, high-capacity transmission networks, fibre-optic connectivity, cooling systems, equipment manufacturing and workforce development. Five of its eight national computing hubs are in western China, where comparatively inexpensive land and abundant wind and solar resources can reduce operating costs. Computing requirements generated in eastern technology centres can consequently be transferred to facilities thousands of kilometres away.

With a futuristic approach, China built capacity ahead of immediate demand, while setting aside the cost of underutilization in the initial stage. This strategy worked and now these 10 principal national data-center clusters had an overall utilization rate of approx-

imately 63 percent in early 2024. This encouraged China to improve national scheduling, connectivity and coordination. By 2025, China reportedly had 10.43 million standard computing racks in use, while its major hubs were increasingly devoted to intelligent computing.

China is, in effect, making a long-term wager: capacity that appears underused today will become strategically indispensable as demand for AI services accelerates. The International Energy Agency estimates that Chinese data centers consumed more than 100 terawatt-hours of electricity in 2024 and that their consumption could double by 2027. China can accommodate such growth because it has simultaneously expanded power generation. At the end of 2025, its installed solar capacity exceeded 1,200 gigawatts and its wind capacity reached approximately 640 gigawatts.

The United States possesses superior companies, advanced semiconductors, enormous capital and many of the world’s best AI researchers. Nevertheless, it is encountering a different problem: translating technological leadership into

physical infrastructure.

Data-center projects are facing resistance from communities worried about electricity prices, water consumption, industrial noise, loss of agricultural land and tax concessions offered to wealthy technology companies. Residents also question the employment benefits. A hyperscale facility can create thousands of temporary construction jobs, but its highly automated operation may provide relatively few permanent positions.

These concerns cannot simply be dismissed as hostility to progress. U. S. data centers consumed approximately 4.4 percent of national electricity in 2023, and researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory projected that their share could reach between 6.7 and 12 percent by 2028. A 2026 analysis identified at least 46 American AI data-center projects delayed or cancelled following community opposition. The backlash has crossed party lines and encouraged municipalities to introduce moratoriums or stricter conditions.

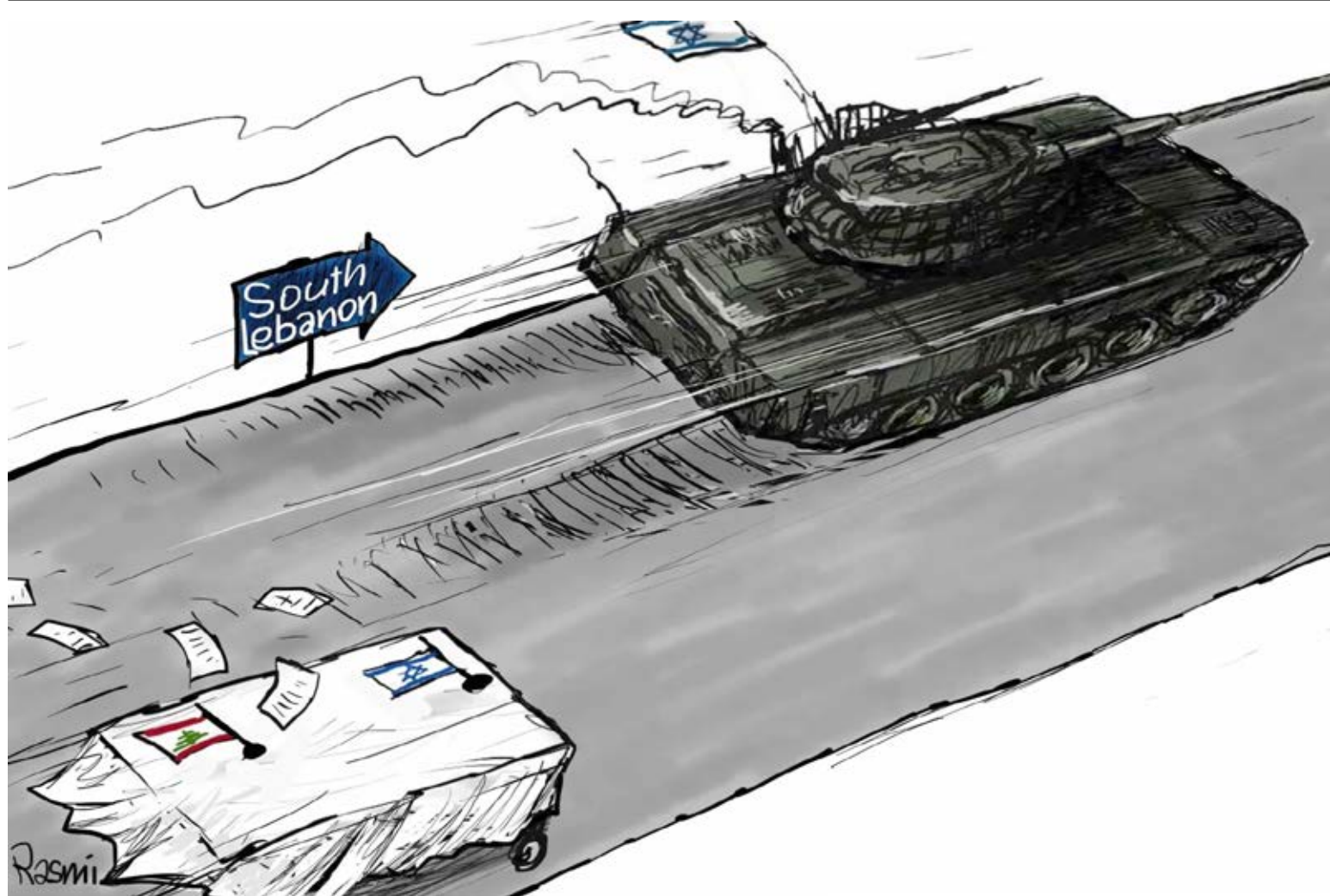
Trump is correct that rejecting digital infrastructure indiscriminately could weaken American competitiveness. Local communities are equally justified in demanding that private companies should not transfer their electricity,

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Analysis



Qamar Bashir



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

Kashmir Under Securitisation: The BJP’s Political Assault on IIOJK

Seven years have passed since 5 August 2019, when the Indian government revoked the State of Jammu and Kashmir’s special constitutional status and reorganised the former state into two Union Territories. Yet the central political question of Kashmir, an internationally disputed territory, remains unresolved. The region has experienced profound institutional change, but questions of political rights, political agency and a durable settlement remain. The real question, therefore, is not simply what changed in 2019, but whether the changes brought Kashmir closer to peace.

The BJP’s approach to India-illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) did not emerge without warning. Its 2019 election manifesto explicitly reiterated its commitment to abrogating Article 370 and annulling Article 35A. The subsequent constitutional transformation was therefore consistent with a longstanding political programme. The problem, however, is not only constitutional change. It is the increasingly security-centred way a deeply political dispute has been addressed.

IIOJK has long been securitised through the language of terrorism, separatism, national security and territorial integrity. Recent academic research identifies a cycle in which political issues and social relationships in IIOJK were progressively framed as security threats, contributing to alienation and eventually culminating in the 2019 revocation of autonomy. When political disagreement is

increasingly treated through a security lens, political engagement risks being displaced by security management. A government may control a conflict through force and restrictions, but control is not the same as conflict resolution.

The consequences for political and civil liberties remain deeply concerning. Human-rights organisations documented serious restrictions

following the 2019 changes, while more recent assessments continue to identify significant constraints on political rights and civil liberties. Freedom House’s 2026 assessment rates IIOJK as “Partly Free”, scoring it 38 out of 100, and notes continuing restrictions alongside limited political participation. These conditions raise a fundamental question: what does political stability mean if the people most affected by the conflict cannot exercise meaningful political agency?

Kashmir cannot be reduced to a territorial contest between India and Pakistan. Kashmiris are also stakeholders whose political voices must matter. Elections, administration, and development may be important, but they do not, by themselves, settle the wider political dispute or remove questions surrounding representation and rights. A lasting peace cannot be produced simply by silencing political disagreement or treating every demand through the language of security.

Nor can the international and bilateral dimensions of Kashmir be ignored. United Nations Security Council Resolution 47

Continued on Page 7

Analysis



Jawad

Putin Highlights SCO's Growth, Trade Gains at Bishkek Summit

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Addressing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Council of Heads of State in Bishkek on September 1, Russian President Vladimir Putin reflected on the SCO's evolution since its 2001 founding by Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. He described it as the world's largest regional association, with member states home to nearly half the global population and over a third of global GDP.

Putin emphasized strengthening commercial ties, noting Russia's trade with SCO members exceeded \$400 billion in 2025, with national currencies now making up over 98% of Russia's transactions within the bloc. He highlighted the SCO Business Council, Interbank Consortium, and the upcoming Development Bank, which he said should stay independent from financial systems used as tools of unilateral pressure. He also cited progress in energy cooperation, education, healthcare and youth exchanges, pointing to the SCO University network of over 100 institutions.

Putin referenced the ongoing World



Nomad Games in Kyrgyzstan, confirmed Russia will host the 2028 edition in Kazan, and noted the upcoming Inter-

national United Cultures Forum in St Petersburg. He closed by marking the anniversary of World War II's start,

stressing the need to prevent armed conflict from becoming normalized internationally.

Germany Must Pair Greater Defence Responsibility with Dialogue: Christoph Schmid

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: German Bundestag member Christoph Schmid has stressed that Germany must assume greater responsibility for its own and European security while complementing stronger defence capabilities with dialogue, trusted partnerships and sustained international engagement.

Speaking at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Schmid said Germany's security policy had undergone significant reassessment following the Ukraine conflict. He identified recruitment, infrastructure development and efficient defence procurement as key priorities, while calling for greater public awareness and resilience against emerging threats. He described Russia as the main security challenge for Germany and Europe but emphasized that military preparedness should not replace diplomacy.

Schmid praised Pakistan's recent mediation efforts between the United



States and Iran as a major diplomatic achievement and said Germany would be willing to engage with Pakistan to learn from its experience.

ISSI Director General Ambassador Moin ul Haque said major-power competition, conflicts and emerging

non-traditional threats were reshaping the global security environment. He called for more representative global governance and highlighted opportunities for Pakistan-Germany cooperation in security, trade, technology, climate, energy, education and connec-

tivity.

Ambassador Jauhar Saleem stressed sustained transatlantic cooperation and peaceful coexistence with China, while Dr. Neelum Nigar highlighted the wider implications of Germany's evolving defence policies.

SouthAsia Forum Nominates Faisal Siddiqi as Secretary General

News Desk

KARACHI: The SouthAsia Forum, a private-sector think tank established in 1996 to promote informed discussion on regional and global affairs, has nominated Faisal Siddiqi as its new Secretary General.

Siddiqi is an experienced corporate communications professional with expertise in public affairs, advocacy, reputation management and strategic communications. His appointment is expected

to strengthen the Forum's efforts to promote constructive dialogue and enhance understanding of the social, cultural, business, economic and political developments shaping South Asia.

Chairman SouthAsia Forum Syed Jawaid Iqbal welcomed Siddiqi and expressed confidence in his ability to advance the organization's objectives. He said Siddiqi's communications experience and understanding of regional and contemporary issues would help strengthen the Forum as

a platform for informed discussion and engagement.

Established as a private-sector platform, the Forum regularly examines regional and global issues through research, debate and diverse perspectives. It also collaborates with public-sector organizations, international foundations and endowments to encourage dialogue on political, economic and social matters.

As Secretary General, Siddiqi will work to expand the Forum's outreach, strengthen institutional



and stakeholder engagement, and enhance its role in promoting thought leadership and meaningful regional discourse.

Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH Congratulates COMSTECH Staff member & other team members

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Jabina Fawwad, Program Officer at OIC-COMSTECH, represented Pakistan at the Kazan Global Youth Summit 2026, where the team "Climate Change and Environmental Crisis" secured first position in the innovative competition organized by ICESCO under the theme "INNOVERSE 50+: For a Resilient Future."

The competition brought together more than 100 young participants, who were required to develop, submit,

and present innovative ideas before a jury. The winning team comprised five young participants representing Pakistan, Malaysia, Türkiye, Algeria, and Russia.

The team's innovative idea on climate change and environmental challenges earned the top position, highlighting the importance of youth-led innovation and international collaboration in addressing global environmental crises.

As part of the award, the winning team members also received the opportunity to benefit from free Coursera courses and free Gini courses, further

supporting their professional and innovative development.

Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, congratulated Ms. Jabina Fawwad and her fellow team members on this outstanding achievement. He appreciated their innovative approach, teamwork, and commitment to addressing critical global challenges, and expressed hope that their success would inspire more young people from OIC member states to participate in international innovation and youth leadership platforms.



On the occasion of the death anniversary of veteran Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Geelani, a gathering was held at the Syed Ali Geelani Corner under the auspices of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), Pakistan Chapter. Muhammad Siddique, Head of the Department of Islamic Studies at AIMS Education System, APHC Executive Director Altaf Ahmad Bhat, and other participants paid tribute to the lifelong struggle and services of Syed Ali Geelani for the Kashmir cause.

Hashoo Foundation, UNDP Hold Panel on Women's Role in Peacebuilding, Climate Security in Swat



SWAT: Hashoo Foundation, with support from the UNDP, organized a panel discussion on "Women's Role in Peacebuilding, Climate Change, Environmental Justice and Climate Security in Swat" under its project "Empowering Women for Peace & Environmental Justice in Swat." Held at the University of Swat's Main Theatre Hall, the event brought together government officials, academics, civil society members, media, Environmental Human Rights Defenders, youth, and religious leaders.

Dr. Arshad Ali Khan, Registrar of University of Swat, opened the session, stressing collaboration between academia and communities on climate challenges. Panelists included Dr. Naveed Gul (EPA Malakand), who spoke on gender-inclusive environmental governance; EHRDs Muhammad Asif and Mahinoor, who shared grassroots experiences; Dr. Shah Muhammad Khan, who addressed civil society's role in climate action; media representative Asif Javed, who highlighted digital platforms' role in amplifying women's climate leadership; and religious scholar Dr. Shafiq Bushra, who emphasized women's role in building resilient, environmentally responsible communities through trusted religious and community platforms.

The event closed with a Q&A session, key recommendations, and a group photo, reinforcing commitments to inclusive, women-led climate and peacebuilding efforts in Swat.

IESCO Officer Anwar Ali Bhatti Honoured for Outstanding Performance

Malik Faisal Munir

ISLAMABAD: Additional Superintending Engineer (SE) IESCO Pindi Gheb Division Anwar Ali Bhatti has received a special award from the Chief Executive, IESCO Islamabad, in recognition of his outstanding performance and services during 2025-26.

The award acknowledged his professional competence, dedication and effective leadership. Officers and staff of IESCO Pindi Gheb Division congratulated Bhatti, describing the recognition as a source of pride for the entire division.

According to the divisional staff, Bhatti is a hardworking and capable officer as well as an effective team leader with strong administrative and managerial skills. Under his leadership, the division has achieved significant improvements in operational performance, administrative affairs and electricity services for consumers.

The staff said the award reflected his tireless efforts, sense of responsibility and ability to motivate employees to perform their duties with honesty and dedication. They stressed that institutional success depended on collective teamwork, cooperation and shared responsibility.

They said the recognition would encourage Bhatti and his team to work with greater commitment toward providing reliable, efficient and quality electricity services to the public. The officers and employees also expressed their best wishes for his continued success and public service.



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
10,789.28	−34.98
Percentage	Time
−0.32%	1 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,753.88	−432.02
Percentage	Time
−0.81%	1 Sept, 1:57 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,215.34	−96.59
Percentage	Time
−0.15%	1 Sept, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198.29	202.35
Bahrain Dinar	734.45	745.65
Canadian Dollar	198.71	206.73
China Yuan	38.20	38.95
Danish Krone	42.80	43.40
Euro	323.15	327.20
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	719.24	729.35
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	75.65	76.50
UK Pound Sterling	376.80	381.75
US Dollar	277.60	278.55

Strong partnership
between petroleum
dealers and PSO is
vital: Malik Khuda
Baksh

Commerce Desk



KARACHI: A delegation of the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) attended the PSO Excellence Awards Ceremony held at a local hotel on the special invitation of Pakistan State Oil (PSO) Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Jawwad Ahmed Cheema.

The PPDA delegation was led by Chairman Malik Khuda Baksh and included Vice Chairmen Tariq Hassan, Malik Shair Khan, Anwar Kamal and Raja Waseem, President Sindh Haji Ameer Khan, President Karachi Saeed Khan, and members of the Executive Committee.

The ceremony recognized the outstanding performance and contributions of individuals and organizations in Pakistan's petroleum sector. It also provided an opportunity for meaningful interaction and exchange of views among key stakeholders of the petroleum industry, PSO management and representatives of petroleum dealers.

Ufone and Telenor
Pakistan secure
nine awards
at Dragons of
Pakistan 2026

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ufone and Telenor Pakistan have secured nine awards at the Dragons of Pakistan 2026, comprising two Gold, two Silver and five Black Dragons, across Marketing, Public Relations, Media, Digital, Content Creation and Small Budget categories.

Ufone secured five awards, led by its campaign, "Babar Azam's Lost Phone, Data Bohhaat Hai," which won Gold Dragons in both Marketing Discipline and Public Relations, as well as a Black Dragon in Media.

The brand also received a Silver Dragon in Media for "Super 5" and a Silver Dragon in Digital for "5G Launch: It's More Than Just Speed."

Telenor Pakistan added four Black Dragons to PTML's tally, with its work recognized across Content Creation, Digital, Small Budget and Public Relations. The brand won for "Comic Feeds" in Content Creation, "Tension Ko Smash Karo" in Digital, "Karachi Ka Connection" in Small Budget, and "Influencer Tactical Campaigns" in Public Relations.

Commenting on the success, Syed Atif



Raza, Chief Commercial Officer, PTML said, "We are proud of the recognition received by Ufone and Telenor Pakistan at Dragons of Pakistan 2026. The nine awards reflect the quality and impact of the hard work of our

team and partners. These campaigns demonstrate our commitment to create innovative products and services, substantiated by relevant and powerful communication that resonates with the audiences.

Called on

Malik Sohail Hussain President Hafizabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Secretary General Pakistan Canada Trade Association & Chairman FPCCI PAK-USA Business Council along with Luqman Shaheen President & Chief Executive Officer and Vice President PCTA called on Shazad Hussain Counsel General Pakistan Vancouver Canada and discussed trade relations between Canada and Pakistan at the meeting Malik Sohail Presented the crest of FPCCI on behalf of Mr Atif Ikram Sheik President FPCCI



Zong Wins Five Dragons of Asia
Awards for 5G Campaigns

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong has won five awards at the Dragons of Asia Awards 2026, including two Gold, one Bronze and two Black Dragon Awards, recognizing its creative and marketing campaigns.

Zong became the only telecom operator to secure Gold for its 5G campaigns, particularly "5G Launch" and "Aisa Hai Future." The campaigns focused on making 5G and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence easier for consumers to understand, highlighting their potential to improve everyday life, work and connectivity.

The company also received recognition for its "Zong My5 2025" and "Pro Max Hattrick" campaigns, reflecting the breadth of its communication strategy and creative execution.

Zong Marketing Head Sajid Munir said the awards demonstrated the creative excellence behind the company's brand strategy and validated its approach of communicating technology through real-world benefits. Deputy Director Marcom Hina Ali said the objective was to simplify advanced technologies for audiences.



The recognition strengthens Zong's position as a technology services enterprise and

supports its ambition to lead Pakistan's 5G era through innovation, AI and digital connectivity.

FrieslandCampina
Engro Pakistan and
Citi Pakistan Partner
to Strengthen Supplier
Financing

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited (FCEPL) has partnered with Citi Pakistan through the Citi[®] Supplier Finance digital platform to support FCEPL's suppliers and improve supply chain resilience. Under the program, eligible FCEPL suppliers can access early payments and competitive financing against approved invoices, improving their liquidity and financial flexibility.

At the same time, FCEPL can maintain its agreed payment terms, supporting a bilateral working capital strategy without impacting cash flow. Kashan Hasan, Managing Director, FCEPL,

said the initiative addresses financial imbalance in the supplier landscape and gives small and growing suppliers equal access to capital. He noted it aligns with FCEPL's purpose of "Nourishing Pakistan" and ensures all stakeholders in its "Grass to Glass" journey are equipped to grow. Habib Yousuf, Citi Country Officer & Banking Head, Citi Pakistan, said the partnership uses Citi's global capabilities to meet local business needs by extending working capital to suppliers at better terms. The collaboration also aims to enhance FCEPL's treasury and working capital management while fostering sustainable business growth and strengthening Pakistan's corporate ecosystem.

QistBazaar Raises
Rs500 Million Through
First Private Sukuk

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: QistBazaar, a leading Pakistani Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) and installment-financing platform, has raised Rs500 million through a privately placed Sukuk, marking the first tranche of a planned series of Sukuk issuances.

The transaction is described as Pakistan's first unrated, privately placed Sukuk of its kind and reflects growing investor confidence in QistBazaar's business model and expansion plans. Dada Partners acted as exclusive financial adviser and arranged the issue, which was fully subscribed through the Alfalah Shariah Private Financing Fund-I, managed by Alfalah Asset Management Company.

The funds will be used to expand QistBazaar's Shari'ah-compliant consumer installment financing portfolio, increase financing, broaden its merchant network, enter new product categories and expand geographically. The initiative aims to provide affordable financing to underserved and unbanked consumers.

Co-founded in 2021 by Arif Lakhani and Karim Gilani, QistBazaar has expanded to more than 100 branches across 18 cities, employing around 800 people. The company is backed by Bank Alfalah, Indus Valley Capital and Gobi Partners.

The company plans further Sukuk issuances and is also considering a future listing on the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

Bank Alfalah, SAWiE Hold
Roadshow on Climate-
Smart Agriculture

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Bank Alfalah and SAWiE Ecosystems organised a Climate Smart Village roadshow in Lahore to discuss climate risks facing Pakistan's agriculture sector and ways to strengthen farmers' resilience. The event brought together policymakers, researchers, farmers, development organisations and financial institutions.

Former Pakistan Central Cotton Committee Vice President Dr Yusuf Zafar delivered the keynote address, while Bank Alfalah Head of Agri Finance Yahya Hameed

Wahla gave opening remarks. Discussions focused on the impact of climate change on agricultural productivity, farmers' financial resilience and access to formal financing.

A "Grower's Voice" session enabled farmers to share experiences related to water scarcity, changing weather patterns and other production challenges. Three expert panels discussed climate change impacts, sustainable water management and strategies for promoting climate-smart agriculture, with participation from academia, ADB, IFC, FAO and the private sector.

Standard Chartered, Dolmen
Group Partner to Offer Home
Ownership Benefits

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan and Dolmen Group have partnered to provide exclusive financing and benefits to clients interested in purchasing homes at Grove Residency, Dolmen Group's latest residential project in Karachi.

Under the collaboration, eligible customers can receive savings of at

least PKR 5 million on qualifying purchases, along with tailored home financing solutions. The initiative combines Standard Chartered's home finance expertise with Dolmen Group's experience in developing residential projects to offer prospective homeowners greater value and flexibility.

Located near the KPT Interchange, Grove Residency is designed as a modern residential

community in one of Karachi's emerging areas. Eligible customers will also have access to Standard Chartered Saadiq Home Finance, offering flexible financing options to support home purchases.

Standard Chartered Pakistan's Head of Wealth & Retail Banking Saadya Riaz said the partnership would provide customers with both financing and trusted solutions suited to their long-term financial goals.

Dolmen Group CEO and Director Faisal Nadeem said Grove

Residency reflects the company's vision of modern community living and welcomed the collaboration.



Japan Provides 21m Yen Grant for TB Screening in Islamabad, Punjab

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has provided grant assistance of 21 million Yen, approximately \$142,500, to the Dopasi Foundation for procuring equipment and a vehicle for tuberculosis (TB) screening in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Chakwal.

The grant agreement was signed at the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad by Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Akamatsu Shuichi and a representative of the Dopasi Foundation. The project aims to improve access to early diagnosis and basic healthcare services for vulnerable communities.

Under the initiative, the foundation will deploy a fully equipped Mobile Health Unit offering digital chest radiography, TB screening, family planning counselling and basic health checks. The services will target marginalized groups, including daily wage earners, women and families facing barriers to healthcare.

Toyota Tsusho Corporation, in collaboration with Fujifilm, is supporting the project through a specially equipped Land Cruiser featuring a compact X-ray system and AI technology for TB screening, along with maintenance support and technical training.



The project is expected to screen around 20,000 people annually and

help reduce healthcare barriers and the financial burden of serious illnesses. Ambassador Akamatsu said early diagnosis and basic healthcare were essential to protecting lives and strengthening vulnerable families.

NAB Multan Holds Awareness Session on Integrity and Prevention of Corruption

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Multan organized an awareness and interactive session on "Integrity, Self-Accountability and Prevention of Corruption" in line with the vision of the NAB Chairman and directives of the Director General NAB Multan.

The session highlighted the importance of honesty, justice, transparency, self-accountability and public trust in the performance of official duties. It also focused on strengthening ethical and professional responsibilities to prevent corruption in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Chief guest Maulana Muhammad Hanif Jalandhari, Rector of Jamia



Khair-ul-Madaris, Multan, discussed the significance of trust, justice, integrity, accountability and the rights of others (Huqooq-ul-Ibad) in the light of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. He urged public officials to avoid personal interests and perform their responsibilities with sincerity, fairness and integrity.

The session was attended by senior NAB Multan officers and representatives from public institutions, including Faeed Sharif, Dr. Muhammad Asif, Mohsin Raza and Muhammad Ramzan.

NAB Multan said such initiatives seek not only to strengthen legal measures against corruption but also to promote ethical and social values, addressing root causes and fostering a culture of integrity, accountability and transparency.

Experts Seek Blended Finance, Strong MRV Systems to Address CBAM Challenges

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: International experts and policy analysts have called for blended finance, robust measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems and stronger support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to help Pakistan's exporters cope with the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organized a consultative discussion titled "Antalya Road to CBAM: Financing Technology and Green Industrialization," bringing together policymakers, industry representatives and international experts.

SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said Pakistan needed a green



industrialization strategy linking policymakers and the private sector. He suggested public finance backed by sovereign guarantees could help industries access climate financing on easier terms, while technology-transfer programmes could support energy transition and efficiency.

SDPI's Saleha Qureshi highlighted priorities including a costed industrialization strategy

linking policymakers and the private sector. He suggested public finance backed by sovereign guarantees could help industries access climate financing on easier terms, while technology-transfer programmes could support energy transition and efficiency.

SDPI's Saleha Qureshi highlighted priorities including a costed industrialization strategy

trial decarbonization plan, national MRV data infrastructure, rationalized energy tariffs for export industries and greater private-sector engagement.

Experts warned that CBAM could increase carbon-related costs for Pakistani exports, particularly in carbon-intensive sectors. They stressed stronger monitoring, documentation and verification systems to identify carbon exposure.

MG HS Hybrid+ and Super Hybrid Begin Hitting Pakistani Roads

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The newly launched MG HS Hybrid+ and MG HS Super Hybrid have started reaching roads across Pakistan, with customers sharing positive feedback about their performance, comfort, technology and fuel efficiency.

MG Pakistan said the all-new HS range reflects its commitment to providing Pakistani customers with the latest global specifications. The HS Hybrid+ offers a self-charging hybrid system designed to provide responsive performance, efficiency and convenience for daily driving, while the HS Super Hybrid features plug-in hybrid technology, combining electric driving capability with the flexibility of a hybrid SUV.

According to the company, early customer responses have highlighted smooth acceleration, comfortable interiors, advanced features, modern styling and efficient hybrid performance. The vehicles are aimed at meeting growing demand for mobility that combines performance, technology, safety and practicality.



SLCMC Declares First-Ever Dividend in Landmark for Sindh's Government-Owned Coal Miner

Qayoom Sarohi

KARACHI: Sindh Lakhra Coal Mining Company (Pvt.) Ltd. (SLCMC) has achieved a historic milestone, declaring its first-ever dividend of Rs. 441 million for its shareholder, Sindh Energy Holding Company (Pvt.) Ltd. (SEHC).

Established in 2016 under the Sindh Energy Department, SLCMC is the province's only fully government-owned coal mining company. With a paid-up capital of Rs. 382 million, it achieved profitability and financial independence in 2019, and has since expanded operations in Lakhra, District Jamshoro, while eyeing future ventures at Sonda, District Thatta.

The dividend cheque was presented by SLCMC CEO Engr. Mushtaq Ali Panhwar to SEHC CEO Shahab Qamar Ansari. The Rs. 441 million profit share will be deposited into the Government of Sindh's treasury through SEHC.

The milestone reflects the guidance of the Board of Directors and the Energy Department, along with the SLCMC team's dedication. The shareholder specifically praised Panhwar's leadership, strategic vision, and commitment to transparency and financial discipline in transforming SLCMC into a self-sustaining public enterprise.

Panhwar said the dividend demonstrates that good governance and professional management can enable public-sector companies to become financially self-sufficient and meaningful contributors to the provincial treasury, marking a key step in SLCMC's growth and Sindh's economic development.



Pakistan Cricket Club Clinch Master Oil Inter-Club Cricket Tournament Title

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Club won the Master Oil Inter-Club Cricket Tournament, defeating Alamgir Gymkhana by 109 runs in the final at KCCA Stadium. The tournament, organized by the Regional Cricket Association Karachi (RCAK), featured a record 237 teams from different zones of Karachi.

Batting first, Pakistan Cricket Club scored 299 for six in 40 overs. Umair bin Yousuf led the innings with an impressive 98, including seven fours and three sixes, while Jahanzeb Sultan scored 88 with five fours and six sixes. Khawaja Muhammad Nafay contributed 40 and Rameez Aziz remained unbeaten on 33. Muhammad Yaqoob and Abdul Hayee took three wickets each for Alamgir Gymkhana.

In reply, Alamgir Gymkhana was dismissed for 190 in 40 overs. Adeel Meo scored 39, followed by Muhammad Yaqoob with 30 and Usman Raheem with 28. Jahanzeb Sultan and Muhammad Asghar claimed three wickets each.

Chief guest Tabish Javed presented the winner's trophy and Rs200,000 prize to Pakistan Cricket Club captain Rameez Aziz, while Alamgir Gymkhana received the runner-up trophy and Rs100,000.

Fazal Subhan was named best batsman, Nadir Shah best bowler, and Umair bin Yousuf received the award for his performance in the final. RCAK officials said the record tournament reflected their commitment to expanding club cricket and providing Karachi's players with greater opportunities to develop their talent.

Kashmir Under Securitisation: The BJP's Political Assault on IIOJK

Continued from Page 4

adopted on 21 April 1948, addressed the restoration of peace and order and a proposed plebiscite in Kashmir. The 1972 Simla Agreement, meanwhile, committed India and Pakistan to peaceful means and required both sides to respect the Line of Control without unilateral alteration, while envisaging a future settlement of Kashmir. These frameworks remain part of the history against which the continuing dispute must be understood.

The consequences extend beyond Kashmir. India and Pakistan remain nuclear-armed states, and the risks of confrontation are therefore regional as well as bilateral. SIPRI's 2026 assessment notes that both countries continued to modernise their nuclear forces and that the 2025 India-Pakistan conflict challenged assumptions about nuclear

deterrence. Continued securitisation and confrontation are therefore not merely obstacles to Kashmiri peace; they also risk destabilising South Asia.

India and Pakistan need a different approach: responsible rhetoric, sustained political dialogue, crisis-management mechanisms and meaningful confidence-building measures. Such CBMs should not only build confidence between governments; they should also improve human contact, mobility and security for Kashmiris.

Seven years after 2019, IIOJK needs more than security management. It needs political space, dialogue and a peace process in which the people living through the conflict are not treated as spectators. Force may contain a political conflict, but it cannot by itself resolve its political roots.

The Global Data-Center Race: An Opening Pakistan Cannot Afford to Miss

Continued from Page 4

water and environmental costs to ordinary citizens. The workable solution is a new social contract: developers must finance required grid upgrades, disclose resource requirements, reuse water wherever possible and generate or procure additional electricity.

Requiring companies to build dedicated generation can protect households and even add surplus power to the grid. It will, however, increase capital costs. American AI services could become more expensive if every project must separately negotiate land, power, water and local approval while Chinese competitors operate within coordinated national industrial plans.

Europe faces comparable

constraints. Its difficulty is not necessarily an absolute shortage of electricity but insufficient grid capacity in established data-center centres such as Frankfurt, London, Amsterdam, Paris and Dublin. The European Investment Bank estimates Europe's installed data-center capacity at about 11 gigawatts, with 15–20 gigawatts in the development pipeline. In Dublin, grid pressure produced a de facto restriction on new connections and requirements for on-site generation. Planning procedures, high energy costs and environmental rules can further slow construction.

This combination creates an opportunity for countries able to offer politically acceptable sites, reliable energy and competitive

costs. Pakistan should consider positioning itself as one such destination.

Pakistan possesses important advantages: a large and young population, an English-speaking technology workforce, relatively inexpensive land and labour, growing digital demand and a geographic position connecting South Asia, Central Asia, China and the Middle East. Its government has already adopted a Cloud First Policy and approved a National Artificial Intelligence Policy. A domestic data-center industry could improve cloud availability, strengthen data sovereignty, develop specialized engineering skills and attract foreign investment.

Nevertheless, Pakistan cannot sell ambition alone. Electricity is

its central challenge. Data centers require continuous, high-quality power; outages of even seconds can be costly. Pakistan should therefore identify dedicated "digital infrastructure zones" where investors can construct captive solar, wind, hydro, gas or nuclear-supported generation, combined with batteries and reliable grid connections. Any surplus electricity could be supplied to neighbouring communities under transparent agreements.

Water policy must be equally rigorous. Pakistan is already water-stressed, so offering unlimited cheap water would be economically and environmentally irresponsible. Facilities should be directed toward locations where they can employ closed-loop cooling, treated

wastewater, air cooling or other low-water technologies. Projects must undergo credible environmental review and guarantee that household and agricultural supplies will not be displaced.

The government must also establish dependable data-protection rules, cybersecurity standards, tax certainty, streamlined approvals and international connectivity through diversified fibre and submarine-cable routes. Pakistan must compete through reliability and sound policy—not merely low wages or weak regulation. Security, political continuity and contractual enforcement will matter as much as land prices.

The objective should be a negotiated partnership with companies such as Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Meta, Oracle and major

international data-center operators. Pakistan could offer prepared sites and coordinated approvals in return for locally generated power, workforce training, university partnerships, environmental safeguards and minimum domestic investment commitments.

China's experience demonstrates that successful computing infrastructure depends on an ecosystem, not a warehouse filled with servers. The American and European experience demonstrates that ignoring local costs produces resistance and delay. Pakistan should learn from both: plan with China's strategic horizon while protecting communities through transparent and enforceable standards.

The opportunity is real, but it will not remain open indefinitely.

Pakistan's Ministry of Information Technology, energy authorities, provincial governments and investment agencies should jointly prepare a credible national data-center strategy and begin presenting bankable projects to global investors. If Pakistan acts quickly and responsibly, the worldwide struggle to accommodate AI infrastructure could become a powerful source of technology, skills, electricity investment and long-term national prosperity.

The writer is a retired Press Secretary to the President, former Press Minister at the Embassy of Pakistan to France, former Press Attaché to Malaysia, and former Managing Director, SRBC. He lives in Michigan, USA.

Meeting

BISHKEK: DPM/FM Ishaq Dar, along with Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch and Pakistan's SCO National Coordinator Muhammad Faisal, meets the Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Bishkek.



Photo: PID

Ishaq Dar meets SCO secretary-general, outlines Pakistan's priorities as new chair

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar Tuesday met the Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Bishkek and outlined Pakistan's priorities and strategy after assuming the SCO

chairmanship for 2026-27, the Foreign Office said.

During the meeting, the SCO secretary-general congratulated Pakistan on assuming the chairmanship of the organization and assured full cooperation and support for the country's priorities during its tenure.

Dar briefed the secretary-general on Pakistan's planned approach and key priorities for the SCO chairmanship.

The two sides agreed to maintain close coordination and undertake joint efforts to advance the organization's agenda during Pakistan's

chairmanship.

The SCO secretary-general assured Pakistan of the secretariat's full cooperation in implementing its priorities and facilitating activities planned during the chairmanship period.

Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch and Pakistan's SCO

National Coordinator Muhammad Faisal also attended the meeting.

Pakistan assumed the SCO chairmanship for 2026-27 in September 2026.

As part of its chairmanship, Pakistan is also scheduled to host the next SCO summit in 2027.

PM Shehbaz, President Lukashenko Pledge to Elevate Pak-Belarus Ties

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to elevate Pakistan-Belarus long-standing friendly relations to new heights.

The two leaders met on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Heads of State meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. According to the PM Office, they expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of bilateral relations and robust cooperation in political, trade, economic, defence, and cultural fields.

Recalling President Lukashenko's visit to Pakistan in November 2024 and the prime minister's visit to Belarus in April 2025, both leaders agreed to further enhance cooperation in



priority sectors including trade, industry, agriculture, Information Technology, and vocational training.

As the incoming Chair of the SCO Council of Heads of State, PM Shehbaz extended a cordial invitation to President

Lukashenko to visit Pakistan next year.

The meeting underscored mutual resolve to deepen

strategic partnership and expand people-to-people and economic linkages between the two countries.

Acting President AJK Visits Federal Minister Amir Muqam

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Tariq Farooq visited the residence of Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engr. Amir Muqam in Islamabad and inquired about his health.

The Acting President expressed his good wishes for the Federal Minister's speedy and complete recovery and prayed for his early return to good health.

Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Urges Adopting 'Shanghai Spirit' for Regional Peace and Growth

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh has called on Pakistan to learn from the "Shanghai Spirit" of mutual trust, dialogue and peaceful dispute resolution to advance peace, economic cooperation and development.

Speaking as Chief Guest at the seminar "SCO at 25: The Shanghai Spirit and A New Journey with Islamabad" hosted by IRS and China Media Group, he said the SCO holds huge potential for regional cooperation as Pakistan assumes its



chairmanship.

The Minister urged Pakistan to study China's model of

30 years of double-digit growth and lifting 800 million people out of poverty. He stressed prior-

itizing human development and education alongside defence, and using dialogue to resolve issues including the Indus Waters dispute with India.

Other speakers including Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed and Chinese Minister Counselor Ms. Zhuang Xinyan highlighted the SCO's 25-year role in promoting stability and Pakistan-China ties.

The session concluded with consensus to embrace the Shanghai Spirit of cooperation to strengthen Pakistan's regional connectivity and improve citizens' quality of life.

Ishaq Dar meets UN chief Guterres on sidelines of SCO summit

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar met United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Heads of State Summit in Bishkek, the Foreign Office said.

During the meeting, Dar appreciated the UN secretary-general's leadership in addressing global challenges and advancing the role of the United Nations in promoting an effective multilateral system.

He reiterated Pakistan's strong commitment to the UN and its long-standing and close partnership with the organization.

The two sides discussed the regional situation, preparations for the upcoming session of the UN General Assembly and ongoing issues before the UN Security Council.

Guterres appreciated Paki-



stan's constructive and principled role in multilateral diplomacy and praised the country's contribution to promoting regional peace and security, according to the Foreign Office.

Dar also invited the UN secretary-general to visit Pakistan. Guterres accepted the invitation.

The Foreign Office said Pakistan would coordinate with the UN Secretariat to finalise the dates of the visit.

PVARA Chairman Briefs Finance Minister on Hong Kong Visit



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) Bilal Bin Saqib met Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb and briefed him on his recent visit to Hong Kong and engagements with policymakers and financial institutions.

Bilal Bin Saqib shared details of discussions with Hong Kong's Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, Hong Kong Monetary Authority and Securities and Futures Commission. The engagements focused on knowledge-sharing, international best practices and successful digital finance models relevant to Pakistan.

The meeting reviewed emerging opportunities in virtual assets and digital finance, particularly blockchain and tokenization technologies,

digital assets, stablecoins, compliance frameworks and digital financial infrastructure. The PVARA chairman highlighted potential applications of these technologies in Pakistan's developing virtual assets ecosystem and discussed opportunities for institutional cooperation.

Finance Minister Aurangzeb welcomed the briefing and emphasized the need for a responsible, transparent and well-regulated digital assets ecosystem that encourages innovation while ensuring appropriate safeguards.

He appreciated PVARA's engagement with international institutions and stressed the importance of identifying practical use cases and opportunities that could strengthen Pakistan's digital financial infrastructure and contribute to the growth of its emerging digital economy.

CM Maryam Nawaz Directs DG Khan MPAs to Monitor Development Projects

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday directed MPAs from Dera Ghazi Khan to monitor ongoing development projects in their constituencies. In a meeting with MPAs Ahmed Khan Leghari, Ali Ahmed Leghari, Osama Abdul Karim, Hanif Pitafi, Osama Leghari and Salahuddin Khan, the CM discussed the country's political situation, law and order, and public issues. The MPAs congratulated CM Maryam on her successful visit to China and praised the launch of the electric bus service in DG Khan, calling it a "game changer" project. They also noted a continuous decline in the



crime rate in DG Khan and improvement in law and order in the Katcha area under the current government. Speaking at the meeting, CM Maryam Nawaz said the purpose of her China visit was to make Punjab a hub of artificial intelligence. She added that advanced cancer and disease diagnosis and treatment methods, on the Chinese model, will soon be introduced in Punjab.

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf Backs Medical Rights for PTI Chief

News Desk

MANDI BAHAUDDIN: PPP leader Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Monday said the government is providing medical facilities to the PTI chief, adding that like every other prisoner, the former prime minister has a fundamental right to healthcare under the law. Speaking to media, Ashraf said the country's political system faced uncertainty when assemblies were dissolved.

He noted that the PPP had joined hands with other political forces, including the PML-N, for Pakistan's stability. "The agenda of the PPP and the PML-N is to get Pakistan out of difficulties," he said. On proposals

for a new political or administrative system and creation of new provinces, Ashraf said any such matter must first come before parliament, which is the proper forum to decide.

Commenting on global issues, he said the Iran-US situation had triggered inflation worldwide, but Pakistan's international image had improved and a "new face of Pakistan" had emerged. On energy, the former PM said the core problem is the gap between electricity demand and supply. He disagreed with the government's solar policy, arguing that greater solarisation is the best solution and solar energy should be made cheaper for ordinary households.