



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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Khawaja Asif: Pakistan Will Stand by Saudi Arabia Against Aggression

Defense Minister Khawaja Asif said Pakistan will stand by Saudi Arabia against any aggression, citing the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement while speaking to media in New York. He said Pakistan continues efforts for Middle East peace, with Qatar also playing a role, adding that Pakistan's global image has improved significantly through its mediation efforts.



Newly-Appointed Saudi Ambassador Rajeh Al-Baqami Lands in Islamabad

Saudi Arabia's newly-appointed ambassador to Pakistan, Dr Rajeh bin Tami Al-Baqami, arrived in Islamabad on Saturday morning. He was received by Khushan Saeed, Assistant Director (Protocol) at Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, along with Saudi Charge d'Affaires Naif bin Hamoud bin Malafekh and other officials of the Saudi Embassy.

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Meeting

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the High-Level Meeting on Global Development Initiative hosted by Vice President of China, H.E Mr. Han Zheng on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Saudi, Pakistan reaffirm joint efforts under Makkah defence pact



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman and Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir reaffirmed continued joint efforts to confront attacks targeting Makkah and civilian and economic facilities in Saudi Arabia.

The two officials met in Riyadh and discussed matters of mutual interest, including the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA), according to a statement from the Saudi defence minister.

"We affirmed continuing joint efforts to confront these attacks in accordance with the MJDA," Khalid said in a post on X.

The meeting came after senior military commanders from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye held urgent talks in Riyadh under the Makkah agreement, focusing on strengthening defence coordination and cooperation.

Senior Saudi officials, including Minister of State and National Security Adviser Dr Musaad bin Mohammed Al-Aiban and Chief of General Staff General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili, also attended the meeting.

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in August. The pact states that an armed attack against any one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack against all three.

PM Reaffirms Pakistan's complete support for China's Global Development Initiative

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast commitment to China's Global Development Initiative (GDI) on Saturday, calling it a vital platform for fostering solidarity, South-South cooperation and delivering tangible results for developing nations.

Addressing a high-level GDI meeting hosted by Chinese Vice

President Han Zheng on the sidelines of the 81st UNGA session in New York, the Prime Minister praised the initiative's foresight, noting that President Xi Jinping introduced the proposal three years ago at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when it was uniquely needed. He said the wisdom behind that decision is now recognised worldwide.

Sharif noted that GDI's goals complement Pakistan's own economic transformation plan,

and that cooperation with China continues through the Belt and Road Initiative and its flagship China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, now entering its second phase. He said Pakistan stands ready to deepen GDI cooperation by replicating successful projects and identifying new areas as 2030 approaches.

With only six years remaining to the SDG deadline, he warned that progress remained inadequate amid a growing financing

gap, climate disasters, rising food and fuel prices, and geopolitical tensions eroding decades of development gains. He called for strengthened multilateral cooperation, describing GDI as timely and already delivering substantial, practical benefits across the developing world in the spirit of "win-win cooperation."

The Prime Minister said GDI remains essential for advancing the 2030 Agenda while seeking a more representative global

governance architecture responsive to developing countries' priorities. He added that the UN Secretary-General's UN80 initiative must strengthen the UN's development pillar and delivery capacity.

Reiterating Pakistan's firm support for these initiatives, Sharif expressed hope for continued close cooperation with China and fellow Group of Friends members in advancing a shared future for mankind.

Finance Minister Aurangzeb condemns terrorist attack on Customs Check Post in D. I. Khan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the Customs joint check post at Aman Mela in D. I. Khan, which resulted in the martyrdom of Customs and other

law enforcement agency officials.

Expressing deep sorrow over the loss of lives, the Finance Minister extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and paid tribute to the courage, dedication and sacrifice of the personnel who lost their lives while performing



their duties. Aurangzeb said the nation's resolve against terrorism could

not be weakened by any "cowardly act of terrorism," stressing that the sacrifices made by

security forces and law enforcement personnel for the country's peace and security were invaluable.

He affirmed that the entire nation stands united against terrorism, adding that efforts to ensure lasting peace and security in the country would continue unabated.

At least 11 killed, 30 injured in D. I. Khan checkpoint blast

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: At least 11 people were killed and more than 30 others injured in a suspected suicide bombing targeting the anti-smuggling Aman Mela police checkpoint in Dera Ismail Khan's Darazinda area on Saturday, according to sources.

Sources said a vehicle laden with explosives rammed into the checkpoint, causing a powerful blast.

The explosion killed six police personnel, two Customs officials, two women and a child, sources said.

More than 30 people, including civilians, were injured in the attack. Some of the injured were reported to be in critical condition.

Rescue teams reached the site and launched an operation to evacuate the injured and recover the victims.

A heavy contingent of security forces also reached the area, cordoned it off and launched a search operation.

PTI's Long March Call Fizzles Out into Nothing, Says Atta Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said Saturday that PTI's call for a long march had fizzled out, marking another setback for KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, who he said had lost credibility among party workers. Addressing a press conference with

PM's Coordinator Ikhtiar Wali Khan, Tarar said PTI lacked preparation and reiterated his claim that the party was the "B-team of TTP." He cited over 4,600 terrorist attacks in KP in 2026, with 400 personnel martyred, accusing the provincial government of inaction against terrorism.

Tarar praised PM Shehbaz Sharif's UNGA address, saying it champi-

oned the Muslim Ummah, condemned Israeli aggression in Gaza and Palestine, denounced Islamophobia and Hindutva ideology, and called Kashmir Pakistan's "jugular vein." He noted the PM warned against unilateral revocation of the Indus Waters Treaty and declared Makkah Pakistan's red line, while highlighting Pakistan's role regarding



the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb.

On KP Assembly's proposed privilege law, Tarar warned against fostering a "political-crime nexus." He ruled out gover-

nor's rule, advocating "Awami Raj" instead. He also confirmed Captain Abu Zar Warriach's burial with full honours in Gujranwala, paying tribute to security forces' sacrifices.

PTI march date changed, but security measures remain in place

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Even after the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) changed the date of its long march towards Islamabad to October 4, security measures and roadblocks from Attock to the federal capital remain unchanged.

Reports revealed that containers were still placed along roads in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, while tight security arrangements remained in place in the capital.

Islamabad's Red Zone also remains sealed. Police and Rangers personnel from Punjab, Sindh and Azad

Jammu and Kashmir are deployed across the capital to monitor the security situation.

Restaurants and hotels around Faizabad, the junction connecting Islamabad and Rawalpindi, also remain closed. Despite the change in the protest date, roadblocks at entry points into Punjab remain in place.

Around 1,000 containers have been placed outside Islamabad, with another 1,000 positioned inside the capital.

Police and Rangers personnel are also deployed across Islamabad to deal with any potential protests.

Amir Muqam urges Rawalakot protesters to end sit-in, resume dialogue on Poonch Elections

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam has appealed to participants of the ongoing protest and sit-in in Rawalakot to call off their demonstration and return to negotiations, so that issues including the holding of elections in Poonch can be resolved through dialogue.

Addressing a press conference alongside PML-N leaders Samar Haroon Bilour and Zahid Khan, Muqam said protests and sit-ins did not resolve issues and were instead causing difficulties for the public and students. He stressed that political



and public matters could be addressed through dialogue and consultation, urging protesters to engage with the

government to enable elections in Poonch at the earliest. Commenting on the recently

concluded Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections, Muqam said few had expected the process to be completed as it was, but all stages had now concluded. He thanked the people of AJK for participating in the democratic process and exercising their right to vote, noting that Dr Muhammad Najib Naqi, who belongs to Poonch, had been elected President of AJK.

He reaffirmed that the development and progress of AJK remained a priority for PML-N, adding that work had already begun on commitments made by party Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, which he expected to be fulfilled.

Transport open

ISLAMABAD: People stand at intercity transport terminal as the intercity transport becoming normal after PTI postponed its protest march towards Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

AJK President Najeeb Naqi Urges EU Role in Resolving Kashmir Dispute, Meets European Parliamentarians

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Dr Muhammad Najeeb Naqi has said the Kashmir issue is not merely a regional matter but an internationally recognized dispute requiring settlement under relevant UN resolutions. Speaking to a visiting delegation of European Parliamentarians on Friday, he highlighted the Kashmiri people's decades-long struggle for self-determination and basic political, human and democratic rights, stressing that durable regional peace is linked to resolving the dispute according to UN resolutions and Kashmiri aspirations.

Expressing concern over human



rights conditions in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Najeeb Naqi called on international human rights

institutions and parliamentary forums to review the situation and play their role in addressing the dispute, which

he said has caused continued bloodshed and rights violations. He urged the European Union to use its influence in promoting democracy and human rights to help stop the bloodshed of Kashmiris, while expressing hope that European lawmakers would help raise global awareness of the issue.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to resolving the dispute through peaceful means and thanked the delegation for their interest. The visitors later toured Presidency stalls showcasing Kashmir's tourism, culture and mineral resources, watched a documentary and cultural performances, and the President presented a commemorative shield to MEP Mary Khan.

Falcon Brigade, Neelum Elders Discuss Security, Tourism and Conservation

Bureau Report

NEELUM: An important meeting between the Pakistan Army's Falcon Brigade and local elders and Village Defence Committees was held in Kel, Neelum Valley, to discuss national defence, law and order, tourism, forest conservation and local issues.

The meeting was attended by commanders of the Koh-e-Shikan and Baloch Regiments, Commander Falcon Brigade Kel and representatives of various sections of local society.

The Commander Falcon Brigade thanked participants for their cooperation and said the armed forces and local communities remained closely connected.



He highlighted tourism as an important component of the local economy and urged residents to keep the area clean, protect forests and facilitate visitors.

Local elders expressed solidarity with the armed forces and appreciated their assistance to communities during difficult circumstances. Participants also discussed the 2025 India-Pakistan conflict and referred to Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, launched by Pakistan during the hostilities in May 2025.

They paid tribute to military personnel and veterans and stressed national unity, social cohesion, peace and continued cooperation between communities and state institutions.

AJK Prime Minister Iftikhar Ali Gilani to Pay First Official Visit to Bhimber on Monday

Abdul Majeed Tahir.

BHIMBER: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Iftikhar Ali Gilani will undertake his first official visit to Bhimber on Monday, September 28, since assuming office. The visit comes at the special invitation of Speaker of the AJK Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, with preparations for a warm welcome completed across the district.

During the visit, the Prime Minister will inspect the under-construction Danish School project, reviewing development work and receiving a briefing from relevant authorities. He will then attend a reception hosted by Speaker Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, to be attended by prominent figures from various walks of life.

Gilani will also visit the Chinar Free Dialysis Centre at District Headquarters Hospital, Bhimber, where he will review medical facilities and seek a detailed report on the district's healthcare needs, challenges and measures to improve services.

The Prime Minister's first official visit to Bhimber is being accorded considerable importance, with PML-N workers, office-bearers and local residents expected to extend a warm and enthusiastic welcome.



Jamia Masjid Khatam-un-Nabiyyin Inaugurated in Muzaffarabad



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Member of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and former Information Minister Maulana Pir Muhammad Mazhar Saeed Shah attended the inauguration ceremony of Jamia Masjid Khatam-un-Nabiyyin.

Addressing the Friday congregation, he described the completion of the mosque as an important development from religious and spiritual perspectives. He said mosques serve as centres of unity, religious education, spiritual development and social reform, while also playing an important role in nurturing the younger generation according to Islamic teachings.

Maulana Pir Muhammad Mazhar Saeed Shah congratulated the local community on the completion of the mosque and appreciated all those who contributed to its construction and supported the project.

Religious scholars, political and social figures, community elders and a large number of residents attended the ceremony. Participants also discussed various religious and social issues.

The gathering concluded with special prayers for Pakistan's progress and prosperity, development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the security and success of the armed forces, higher ranks for Kashmir martyrs and unity and well-being of the Muslim Ummah.

JKDFP welcomes PM's raising of Kashmir Issue at UNGA

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) spokesperson Advocate Arshad Iqbal has welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's raising of the Jammu Kashmir issue during his address to the 81st United Nations General Assembly.

He said the party appreciated Pakistan's efforts to highlight the Kashmir dispute and the concerns of Kashmiri people at the international forum. Advocate Arshad Iqbal said sustained diplomatic follow-up was necessary to keep the issue on the international agenda.

He urged Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to continue raising matters concerning political prisoners, civil liberties and other human rights concerns in Jammu Kashmir at the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, international human rights bodies and other forums.

The JKDFP spokesperson also called for documented information to be presented before relevant international institutions and stressed that the dispute should continue to be discussed in the context of relevant UN resolutions and international law.

He expressed hope that the prime minister's UN address would contribute to a sustained diplomatic effort on the Kashmir issue.



Anila Fida secures top position in AJK Assistant Professor Mathematics Exam

Bureau Report

BAGH: Anila Fida, a talented daughter of Chitra Topi in Bagh district, has brought distinction to the area by securing first position across Azad Jammu and Kashmir in the Assistant Professor Mathematics examination conducted by the AJK Public Service Commission.

According to the report, only one post of Assistant Professor Mathematics was available across Azad Jammu and Kashmir, which Anila Fida secured through her academic performance, hard work and dedication.

Her achievement has been widely appreciated by the local community and described as a source of pride for Bagh district. The accomplishment also reflects the support of her parents, teachers and family, who encouraged her throughout her educational journey.

Anila Fida attributed her success to the blessings of Allah Almighty, prayers of her parents, guidance from her teachers and encouragement from her family.

Her success has also provided encouragement to female students, particularly those from remote and mountainous areas, demonstrating the importance of perseverance, determination and dedication in pursuing academic and professional goals.





Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:35 am
Zohr 11:59 am
Asr 4:17 pm
Maghrib 6:00 pm
Isha 7:22 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
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

All Three Environmental Samples in Hyderabad Test Negative for Polio Virus

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: All three environmental surveillance samples collected from key water pumping stations in Hyderabad have tested negative for polio virus, marking a significant breakthrough in the district's ongoing efforts to interrupt virus transmission.

The samples collected from Tulsidas Pumping Station in Taluka City, Qadir Nagar Pumping Station in Taluka Qasimabad, and Latifabad Pumping Station in Taluka Latifabad have returned negative, indicating that no poliovirus was detected at any of the three surveillance sites.

Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Zain-ul-Abideen Memon said the latest negative results were an encouraging development and a significant outcome of the sustained efforts of the district administration, polio teams and all concerned institutions. He said the coordinated efforts to prevent the re-emergence and transmission of poliovirus in Hyderabad would continue with the same focus and commitment.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif lauds PM Shehbaz Sharif for addressing UNGA for fourth consecutive time

Bureau Report

LAHORE, SEPTEMBER 26: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the honour of addressing the United Nations General Assembly for the

fourth consecutive time.

The Chief Minister paid tribute to the Prime Minister for effectively representing the Pakistani nation at the UN General Assembly, saying that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif forcefully highlighted the Kashmir issue.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif said Prime



Minister Shehbaz Sharif presented a well-reasoned case before the General Assembly on the India-Pakistan water dispute. He also raised a strong voice in support of the Palestinian people and condemned Israel.

The Chief Minister said the Prime Minister called for a peaceful reso-

lution to the Iran conflict and, by declaring the protection and sanctity of Al-Haramain Al-Sharifain a red line, effectively represented the sentiments of the Muslim Ummah.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif also lauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for highlighting before the world the

human and financial sacrifices made by Pakistan in the war against terrorism.

She said the Prime Minister also drew the attention of the international community to serious issues such as religious hatred and Islamophobia.

Petrol price hike

ISLAMABAD: New price of petroleum product displayed at fuel station after petrol price raised by Rs2.02 per litre, high-speed diesel rate reduced by rs3.59, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

CBD Punjab accelerates development of landmark projects to boost Punjab's economic and IT profile

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) has accelerated development work on its landmark projects, including CBD Walk and CBD NSIT City, aimed at strengthening Punjab's position on the global economic and information technology landscape.

During a visit to CBD NSIT City, Pakistan's largest IT hub, CBD Punjab CEO Imran Amin inspected ongoing development activities and directed officials to ensure timely completion of the central park. Hard-scaping work at the main entrance is also being expedited.



Imran Amin inspected the state-of-the-art Celestia IT & Office Tower, where construction is progressing rapidly. He was briefed that glass

elevation work up to the fifth floor has been completed.

He also visited CBD Walk and The Second Walk and chaired a comprehensive review meeting. Officials said

elevation work on all 32 units of CBD Walk was nearing completion, while preparations were underway for asphalt laying at the entrance. International-standard fire safety systems are also being installed.

Excavation for The Second Walk has been completed, with work on the next phase underway. Imran Amin said all projects were being executed according to international standards and strict timelines, adding that their completion would contribute to increased IT and economic activity in Punjab.

Senior CBD Punjab officials and project contractors also attended the meeting.

Pakistan, South Korea Discuss Judicial Cooperation and Shared Histories

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A wide-ranging discussion on the legal and judicial systems of Pakistan and South Korea, prospects for greater judicial cooperation and the historical experiences of the two countries was held between Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan Han Sungho and Barrister Mattas Ali Chaudhary.

The meeting focused on the evolution of the legal and judicial frameworks of both countries and explored avenues for strengthening cooperation and exchanges in the judicial and legal sectors.

The discussion also covered historical parallels between Paki-



stan and South Korea, particularly the political and economic challenges faced by both countries during their formative years and the ways they navigated those difficulties.

The two sides further discussed the role of younger generations in responding to the rapidly changing geopolitical and economic environment of the post-Cold War era.

Barrister Mattas Ali Chaudhary said the shared historical experiences of Pakistan and South Korea provided useful context for understanding their bilateral relations. The meeting highlighted opportunities for closer cooperation in legal and judicial fields and broader people-to-people engagement.

UAF Reference Honours Dr Amir Muhammad's Legacy in Agricultural Research and Institution-Building

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: The University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) held a hybrid reference meeting to commemorate renowned scientist Dr Amir Muhammad, former UAF Vice Chancellor, Founder Chairman of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Founder Director of the Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB). Hosted by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Zulfiqar Ali, the event was attended by faculty, researchers and former colleagues who paid tribute to his contributions to agricultural education and research.

As UAF Vice Chancellor, Dr Amir Muhammad introduced the semester system for bachelor's and higher degree programs and restored academic stability. He established NIAB in 1969, served as its first director, and later became Founder Chairman of PARC, retiring in 1990. He held a DPhil in Biochemistry from Oxford and was honoured during PARC's silver jubilee in 2006.

Speakers including Dr Ikramullah Khan, Dr Khalid Mehmood, Dr Abdul Rashid, his daughter, and Dr Aftab Ahmad Maroof emphasised that his legacy lies in the institutions and scientific culture he built. He remained active in agricultural policy discussions post-retirement, including on water security in 2013, and received the Hilal-e-Imtiaz in 2026.

The reference concluded with prayers, stressing continuity in Pakistan's agricultural research system.

Cheema achieved outstanding success

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Muhammad Roshan Cheema, a talented student of Army Public School & College Boys Attock, has achieved outstanding success in both academic and co-curricular activities.

He secured first position in HSSC Part-I Pre-Engineering under the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), Islamabad, by obtaining 535 marks out of 560. He also secured first position in a regional-level Urdu speech competition, demonstrating his academic ability, confidence and excellent communication skills.

His achievements reflect his hard work, dedication and active participation in academic and co-curricular activities. Teachers, parents and the administration of Army Public School & College congratulated Muhammad Roshan Cheema on his remarkable performance and expressed their best wishes for his future success.



Ji Workers Head to Lahore Rally against petroleum levy



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) workers from PP-112 departed for Lahore to participate in a public rally demanding the abolition of the petroleum levy, which party leaders have described as an "extortion tax."

Addressing the departure of the convoy, JI Prem Union Chief Organizer Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry alleged that the Lahore district administration had attempted to prevent workers from reaching the rally, calling the effort futile. He said the government was "panicking" and warned that obstructing a peaceful political protest could create further problems for the authorities.

Chaudhry said JI workers would continue their campaign until the petroleum levy was withdrawn. He maintained that the movement was aimed at organizing and mobilizing people to address economic difficulties facing the public.

The convoy was led by Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry, Muhammad Asif Islam, Muhammad Aslam Meraj, Muhammad Yaseen Ansari, Muhammad Zahid Islam, Malik Muhammad Nazeer, Muhammad Shakir Alvi, Mian Muhammad Arshad and other party workers.

Chaudhry also demanded an end to what he termed unjust agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs), saying electricity prices should be reduced.

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Unlocking Pakistan’s Tourism Potential

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif’s message on World Tourism Day, observed on 27 September, rightly draws attention to a sector that remains one of Pakistan’s most underutilised national assets. His pledge that the government is “committed to showcasing Pakistan to the world as a safe, attractive, and competitive tourism destination” is welcome, but it also places the onus on policy-makers to translate rhetoric into sustained, visible action.

Pakistan’s tourism credentials are, on paper, extraordinary. Few countries can claim such geographic and civilizational diversity within a single territory: the towering peaks of the Karakoram and Himalayas, the verdant valleys of Swat and Hunza, the archaeological remnants of the Indus Valley and Gandhara civilizations, and religious sites sacred to Sikhs, Buddhists and people of other faiths. The Prime Minister’s description of this heritage as a “grace of Allah Almighty” underscores a national endowment that, if properly developed, could rival any of the world’s premier tourism destinations.

Yet potential alone generates neither revenue nor jobs. For decades, Pakistan’s tourism sector has been constrained by inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent security perceptions abroad, and a lack of coordinated marketing on the global stage. The Prime Minister’s acknowledgment that the government is pursuing measures to strengthen tourism infrastructure and create employment opportunities for local communities and young people is a step in the right direction, but such commitments must now be matched by concrete timelines, budgetary allocations and public-private partnerships that empower local entrepreneurs, guides and hospitality workers.

The economic argument for tourism is well established: it generates foreign exchange, creates employment across skill levels, and stimulates ancillary industries from transport to handicrafts. Equally important, as the Prime Minister noted, is tourism’s role in fostering cross-cultural understanding and broadening human horizons—benefits that extend beyond balance sheets into the realm of soft power and national image-building.

For Pakistan to genuinely compete in the global tourism market, however, sustained investment in connectivity, visa facilitation, digital marketing and site preservation is essential, alongside continued efforts to reinforce security and ease of access for international visitors. The government’s rhetorical commitment must now be judged against measurable outcomes: visitor numbers, infrastructure completion, and the economic uplift of communities in tourism-dependent regions such as Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

World Tourism Day offers a moment for reflection, but the true test lies ahead—in whether Pakistan can convert its natural and civilizational wealth into a thriving, inclusive tourism economy that benefits ordinary citizens as much as it enhances the country’s global standing.

Trump and Xi: A Truce Without a Settlement

The red carpet has been rolled away, the state dinner has ended, and President Xi Jinping has left Washington. The three-day visit was presented as a landmark in relations between the world’s two largest economies. Its clearest practical result was a two-month extension of their trade truce. Trump and Xi gained time to talk again. The rest of the world gained no comparable assurance about the wars, supply chains and technologies on which its future depends.

China’s account says the two leaders exchanged views on the Middle East and Ukraine. That brief diplomatic phrase should not be mistaken for a substantive negotiation on either war. Their positions on who bears responsibility, whose security counts and what an acceptable settlement would require begin so far apart that the published outcome contains no common proposal. They addressed trade, artificial intelligence and Taiwan too. On the questions where agreement would matter most, ceremony filled the space that policy might have occupied.

The Iran war explains why even a declared understanding on the Middle East proved elusive. Washington defends the military campaign it launched with Israel; Beijing condemns the strikes on Iran’s sovereignty and favors diplomacy. While the summit was ongoing, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in a separate interview, recalled an Oman-mediated Geneva proposal to dilute Iran’s 60

percent uranium and accept verification. Oman’s mediator had described a deal as within reach before the strikes began. Pezeshkian’s interview underscored the path abandoned when Washington chose force. Trump and Xi approached the war from opposite premises and announced no common course.

China also buys most of Iran’s exported oil and depends on Gulf shipping. Washington wants Beijing to pressure Tehran, while Beijing sees American military pressure as a cause of regional instability. The two leaders could exchange views on the conflict, but neither offered a joint plan for ending it or protecting the trade routes on which many countries depend.

Ukraine exposed a comparable clash of explanations. Beijing gives weight to Moscow’s account that Western involvement in Ukrainian politics and NATO’s expansion threatened Russian security. Washington and its European partners see Russia’s invasion as an attack on Ukraine’s sovereignty and arm Kyiv to resist it. China cooperates closely with Russia; the United States supports Ukraine. These positions define different starting points for a peace discussion. Beijing cannot easily endorse a principle that outside powers may determine another country’s political future while insisting that foreign

powers must stay out of what it considers the Taiwan question. Yet Ukraine’s people also have a sovereign voice that no bargain between great powers can erase. The leaders exchanged views, but there is no published evidence that they negotiated a common peace formula.

Taiwan makes these disagreements even more combustible. Beijing insists on its claim to the island and objects to American arms sales. Washington maintains its own commitments and security ties, while Taiwan’s people

govern themselves and face the consequences of any bargain made over their heads. The Chinese readout emphasized Xi’s warning on Taiwan but announced no new understanding. For a summit devoted to strategic stability, the absence of a visible

mechanism to prevent a military incident matters more than the warmth of the photographs.

Trade produced the one measurable reprieve. The truce that faced a November deadline has reportedly been extended until January. That postpones a return to the tariff and export-control escalation that shook industries on both sides. It also moves the next decision beyond the American midterm elections. Buying time has value when two economies are tightly connected. Yet the extension leaves the basic contest untouched:

Washington restricts advanced chips and presses China over purchases and market access, while Beijing controls vital stages of the rare-earth magnet supply chain.

Those magnets are essential to vehicles, industrial motors, electronics and defense equipment. China refines about 91 percent of the world’s magnet rare earths and makes about 94 percent of finished magnets. An American tariff threat cannot instantly create the processing capacity that took China decades to build. Equally, Chinese export controls can injure its customers without settling its complaints about U. S. technology restrictions. The truce suspends the next collision; it does not remove the weapons each side has placed on the negotiating table.

Artificial intelligence revealed a similar gap between aspiration and agreement. Xi has urged that AI serve the public and remain under human control. In July he offered developing countries 5,000 AI training and seminar opportunities over five years, along with cooperation centers and wider access to applications. Chinese developers have also released influential open models. That is a serious bid to shape who benefits from AI, although China’s companies and government have commercial and strategic interests of their own.

American companies, meanwhile, have poured capital into chips, data centers and models, seeking both technological leadership and enormous

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

Ukraine’s Mobilisation Crisis and the Burden of Democratic Leadership

Wars test more than armies. They test political leadership, social cohesion, democratic institutions and the moral compact between a state and its citizens. As the Russia-Ukraine conflict enters yet another year without a decisive military breakthrough, an increasingly contentious debate has emerged over Ukraine’s mobilisation policies, the burdens of conscription, and the responsibilities of political leaders during wartime.

Recent social media commentary and political discussions have amplified allegations concerning the conduct of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the methods employed by mobilisation authorities. Many of these claims remain disputed and require independent verification. Nevertheless, their widespread circulation highlights a deeper reality: mounting public fatigue with a prolonged war and growing scrutiny of those directing it.

History demonstrates that successful wartime leadership rests upon more than inspiring speeches. Public support cannot be sustained indefinitely through rhetoric alone. Citizens expect sacrifice to be shared equitably. When people perceive that the burdens of war fall disproportionately upon ordinary families while political elites remain insulated from its hardships, public confidence inevitably begins to erode.

Controversy has therefore surrounded remarks attributed to former presidential spokesperson Yulia Mendel. According to accounts circulating online, she reportedly referred to occasions before Zelensky entered politics when he declined invitations to visit

frontline positions in the Donbas region. Supporters dismiss such claims as partisan attacks intended to undermine a wartime leader. Critics, however, cite them to challenge an image frequently cultivated by Western media, which has often compared Zelensky to historical figures such as Winston Churchill.

Whether such comparisons are justified is open to debate. Churchill’s stature emerged not merely from eloquence but from his ability to embody national resilience during Britain’s most perilous hours. Yet history also cautions against simplistic analogies. Every conflict unfolds within its own political, cultural and strategic context.

The more substantive issue concerns mobilisation itself. Ukraine faces an undeniable demographic and military challenge. Sustaining a high-intensity conventional conflict against a larger adversary requires a continuous supply of manpower. From Kyiv’s perspective, mobilisation is not merely a policy option but a strategic imperative.

Necessity, however, does not eliminate ethical concerns. Videos circulating on social media appear to show recruitment officials detaining draft-age men in public spaces. Ukrainian authorities maintain that mobilisation is being conducted within the framework of national law and wartime emergency requirements. Critics contend that some practices raise serious legal and moral questions, particularly when coercion appears to replace consent.

Even allowing for the distortions that often accompany wartime information campaigns, such images have generated uncomfortable but necessary questions. How far should a democratic government go in compelling mili-

tary service? What safeguards are required to prevent abuse? At what point does the imperative of national survival collide with individual liberties?

These questions are not unique to Ukraine. Democratic societies have wrestled with them for generations. During both World Wars, Britain and the United States experienced intense debates over conscription, conscientious objection and the limits of state authority. The tension between collective security and personal freedom remains one of the enduring dilemmas of governance.

Russian political philosopher and scholar Alexander Dugin once observed that “a state loses its legitimacy when it ceases to reflect the will and sacrifices of its people.” While the quote emerges from a distinctly Russian intellectual tradition, its underlying principle transcends geopolitical loyalties. Political legitimacy ultimately depends upon the confidence of citizens that sacrifices are necessary, fairly distributed and transparently managed.

Another factor fuelling controversy is the perception gap between policymakers and those bearing the direct costs of war. Critics, including several Western commentators, argue that many of those advocating continued escalation face none of the personal risks experienced by soldiers and their families. Such criticism resonates because it touches upon a universal concern: should those who support war be more accountable for its human consequences?

The European Union’s unwavering support for Ukraine adds another dimension to the debate. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has consistently championed Ukraine’s integration into European institutions, viewing its resistance as a defence of sovereignty and democratic values. Yet commitment to democratic norms also requires a will

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Basic Services and Public Frustration in IIOJK

When people take to the streets demanding roads, healthcare, clean water or other basic services, the protest is rarely about a single road, a single hospital or a single administrative decision. It is often the visible expression of a much longer frustration: the feeling that ordinary people have repeatedly asked to be heard and have repeatedly been ignored. Recent protests in parts of Kupwara and Rajouri in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) bring this problem into sharp focus.

For communities living in remote and underserved areas, everyday hardships are not abstract administrative issues. They directly affect the quality and security of people’s lives. A damaged road can become a serious danger when an ambulance is carrying a critically ill patient. Limited healthcare can force families to travel long distances for treatment. Poor transportation can prevent students from reaching educational institutions regularly. Shortages of clean water and inadequate sanitation can place additional burdens on families already struggling with limited resources.

These problems may appear ordinary when discussed separately. For the people experiencing them, however, they can shape almost every part of daily life.

This is why public protests over basic services should not simply be viewed as temporary disturbances. They can be a sign that normal channels for addressing grievances have failed to produce satisfactory results. When complaints remain unresolved for long periods, frustration naturally grows. Eventually, the street becomes the place where people believe their voices might

finally be noticed.

The deeper issue, therefore, is not only the condition of a particular road or the availability of a particular public facility. It is the relationship between citizens and the institutions responsible for serving them.

Good governance cannot be measured only through official announcements, development plans or figures showing completed projects. Its real test is much simpler: can ordinary people see and experience improvements in their daily lives?

A government announcement means little to a family that still cannot reach a hospital safely. A development project offers limited relief if communities continue to struggle with unre-

liable utilities or inadequate transportation. For people living far from administrative centres, the distance between official claims and everyday reality can be especially difficult.

The responsibility of public authorities is not limited to responding after people begin protesting. It also includes identifying problems before they become crises. Regular engagement with local communities, accessible complaint mechanisms and timely responses to public concerns can prevent legitimate grievances from becoming deeper sources of mistrust.

This matters because public trust is difficult to build when people feel that their concerns are repeatedly overlooked. When citizens believe that their voices carry little weight, frustration can extend beyond one particular issue. A complaint about a road can become a complaint about governance itself. A demand for healthcare can become a broader question about whether institutions are responsive to the people they are meant to serve.

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Farewell held for former Pakistan Academy of Letters Chairperson Dr Najeeba Arif

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: A dignified farewell ceremony was held at the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in honour of its recently retired Chairperson, Dr Najeeba Arif, with Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi and Federal Secretary Asad Rehman Gilani among the participants.

Senior officials and heads of attached departments paid tribute to Dr Arif for her scholarly, literary and administrative services. Federal Minister Aurangzeb Khan Khichi said it was a privilege to work with a distinguished literary personality, adding that initiatives undertaken during her tenure had contributed to improving the Academy's performance. He also recalled the services of late Irfan Siddiqui in strengthening the institution.

Federal Secretary Asad Rehman Gilani praised Dr Arif's integrity, diligence and leadership, particularly highlighting her literary programme Chaye, Baatein aur Kitabain, which he said had gained recognition across the country.

Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Syeda Tanzila Sabahat and Dr Waqas



Saleem also appreciated her contributions to literature and administration. In her farewell remarks, Dr Arif thanked the guests and staff, saying she had worked with sincerity despite limited resources. She highlighted initiatives for young writers, emerging authors and poets, including greater recognition of Balochistan's literary community and a writers' conference in Skardu.

The minister and secretary presented her souvenirs and gifts in recognition of her services.

AI and Digital Innovation Redesigning Pakistan's Tourism Future: Bastien Blanc

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Marking World Tourism Day 2026, themed "Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism," Bastien Blanc, CEO of Hospitality Division at Hashoo Group, highlighted how technology is transforming Pakistan's tourism and hospitality sector while preserving its authentic character.

Blanc noted that Pakistan's diverse landscapes, from northern peaks to southern coastlines, offer extraordinary experiences, and that digital platforms, predictive analytics and AI are reshaping how travelers discover destinations and experience hospitality. He said Hashoo Group and PC Hospitality Division, operating nearly 40 hotels and over 50 dining venues while scaling toward 60 properties, are embedding tech-enabled solutions throughout the guest journey, including Pakistan's first



24/7 multi-branded central reservation system and data-driven yield management.

He emphasised that technology's role is to elevate, not replace, genuine human connection in hospitality. Smart systems also support environmental stewardship, citing AI-driven resource management at developments like Pearl-Continental Attabad Lake, Hunza, which balance luxury with ecosystem protection.

Anchored in a vision of People, Planet and Prosperity, Blanc pointed to the Hashoo School of Hospitality Management's role in equipping young professionals with digital skills, and the Hashoo Foundation's work in community empowerment and inclusive growth.

He concluded by calling for a commitment to a digitally driven, responsible and sustainable future for Pakistani tourism.

Commissioner Reviews Development Work on Nishtar Road

Iram Asim

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Aamir Kareem Khan visited the under-construction Nishtar Road and reviewed ongoing rehabilitation and development activities. He was briefed on carpeting, parking arrangements, drainage, footpaths, traffic management and beautification plans.

During the visit, the commissioner inspected the laying of the base course, carpeting, development of parking areas, construction of footpaths and other works being carried out on both sides of the road. Officials said work on a 3,600-linear-foot section had been completed in various phases,



while remaining activities were nearing completion. Aamir Kareem Khan

directed officials to ensure organized and uniform parking, improved pedestrian facilities and smooth traffic flow. He also reviewed proposals for a green corridor, modern lighting and landscaping reflecting Multan's cultural identity.

The commissioner instructed that construction, parking and beautification works be completed in a coordinated manner and according to the project timeline. He said the upgraded road should provide citizens with a safe, attractive and well-organized thoroughfare.

Superintending Engineer Highways Ghulam Nabi gave a detailed briefing during the visit.

Dagenham Qawwali Gala Raises Funds for Orphan Care, Celebrates Sufi Heritage



Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: A Qawwali and Gala Dinner held at The Farmhouse venue in Dagenham brought together community leaders, professionals and families for an

evening blending cultural celebration with charitable fundraising. Organised by Cllr Muazzam Ali Sandhu, Principal Solicitor at Mas & Fox Solicitors and founder of the Pasban Urdu & Sufi Cultural Heritage Foundation, the event aimed to



raise money for the Minhaj Welfare Foundation's Orphan Care Home Project.

The evening's highlight was a performance by acclaimed Qawwali artist Chahat Mahmood Ali, celebrating Urdu, Sufi music and South

Asian traditions. Minhaj Welfare Foundation, the charity partner, was represented by Operational Director Faisal Najeeb, who spoke about the organisation's work supporting vulnerable communities.



Distinguished guests included Barking & Dagenham's Deputy Leader Cllr Saima Ashraf and Mayor Cllr Manzoor Hussain, alongside Guests of Honour Cllr Rubina Siddiqui, Cllr Regina Rehman, Cllr Summya Sohaib, Cllr

Mushtaq Ahmed and others from Redbridge and Thurrock councils. Cllr Sandhu said the evening aimed to unite the community for a noble cause, thanking attendees for their generosity. He emphasised cultural heritage's power to bring

people together while supporting those in need, and pledged to continue organising similar events. The gathering concluded warmly, combining music, dining and charitable giving in support of orphan care initiatives.

DPM/FM Dar expresses concern over continued violations; attempts to alter Occupied East Jerusalem legal status quo



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saturday, expressed concern over the continued violations against Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif and attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo in Occupied East Jerusalem.

He reiterated Pakistan's steadfast support for the Hashemite Custodianship over the Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem.

The DPM/FM participated in Joint Arab League- Group of 4 Islamic Countries (Pakistan, Turkiye, Malaysia, Indonesia) Ministerial Meeting on Jerusalem in New York.

DPM/FM Dar expresses concern over continued violations; attempts to alter Occupied East Jerusalem legal status quo

The meeting, convened by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was a follow-up to the Ministerial Meeting on Jerusalem held in Amman on 5 August 5 this year, the Foreign Spokesperson said in a press release.

The DPM/FM reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and for the establishment of an independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, in the meanwhile, had a cordial exchange with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan Ayman Safadi on the sidelines of the 81st UNGA in New York.

DPM/FM Dar expresses concern over continued violations; attempts to alter Occupied East Jerusalem legal status quo

The two leaders exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and regional developments and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-Jordan relations.

Newspapers Retain Relevance in Digital Age, says Zulfiqar Ali Anjum

Zain Khan Malghani



MULTAN: Chairman of SM Group of Companies, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, has said National Newspaper Reading Day highlights newspapers' role in shaping public opinion, providing credible information and strengthening communication within society. Speaking in Multan, he endorsed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's view that newspapers remain vital to building an informed society despite the changing information landscape.

Anjum paid tribute to journalists, APNS members, vendors and readers, noting that newspapers reflect national life's political, economic and social dimensions while serving as a historical source of public awareness and diverse viewpoints. He cited newspapers' coverage of the recent Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections as evidence that print journalism's relevance persists even in the digital era, noting that statements and activities were accurately reported.

He described newspapers as more than a news medium, calling them a documentary record of national life that helps establish accountability when reports require correction. While acknowledging that social media has accelerated information dissemination, Anjum stressed that newspapers retain a distinctive role in verification, editorial responsibility, attribution and preserving documented records. He concluded that newspaper reading is not merely a habit but an essential means of fostering an informed, conscious and responsible society.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
170,765.22	170,498.94
Day's High	Day's Low
171,159.73	169,890.56
Index Value	Change
12,044,553,012	+ 266.28
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	25 Sept, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,695.25	+ 15.26
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	25 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT + 1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
51,735.28	+ 385.30
Percentage	Time
+0.75%	25 Sept, 1:54 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,364.20	+ 850.21
Percentage	Time
+1.30%	25 Sept, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	196.25	201.35
Bahrain Dinar	734.84	746.78
Canadian Dollar	196.73	201.75
China Yuan	38.25	38.97
Danish Krone	42.85	43.45
Euro	316.53	321.68
Hong Kong Dollar	34.94	35.94
Indian Rupee	2.60	2.95
Japanese Yen	1.7339	1.8337
Kuwaiti Dinar	899.67	901.75
Malaysian Ringgit	68.25	69.15
NewZealand \$	157.46	161.05
Norwegians Krone	28.45	28.80
Omani Riyal	722.85	734.85
Qatari Riyal	75.15	76.75
Saudi Riyal	74	74.55
Singapore Dollar	216.65	222.60
Swedish Korona	28.50	28.95
Swiss Franc	338.50	343.85
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.90
U.A.E Dirham	75.75	76.40
UK Pound Sterling	373.25	377.65
US Dollar	277.95	278.20

PSX rallies over 1,100 points as US-Iran diplomacy lifts investor sentiment



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) extended its gains on Wednesday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index rising 1,174.46 points, or 0.69%, to 172,576.54 by 12:48pm as investors welcomed signs of progress towards a diplomatic solution to the US-Iran conflict.

Fresh diplomatic activity at the UN General Assembly in New York also supported market sentiment after US and Iranian delegations held indirect talks through mediators on Tuesday.

US President Donald Trump said discussions involving his envoys were productive and that momentum was building towards a deal, reviving hopes of an end to the conflict.

The index opened higher and had gained 787.31 points, or 0.46%, to reach 172,189.39 by 9:33am.

Buying was seen across major sectors, including automobile assemblers, cement, commercial banks, oil and gas exploration companies, oil marketing companies and refineries.

The index touched an intraday high of 172,762.41 and a low of 171,843.50.

Market sentiment was also supported by lower international oil prices as investors assessed improving Gulf supply after Saudi Arabia resumed operations at a key pipeline.

Expectations of a diplomatic resolution to the US-Iran conflict also put pressure on oil prices, easing concerns over prolonged disruptions to regional energy supplies.

By midday, trading volume stood at 90.66 million shares, while the traded value was around Rs6.31 billion.

FBR Introduces Electronic Scrutiny System for Sales Tax Returns

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has introduced a mechanism for electronic scrutiny of sales tax returns, enabling automated identification of legal errors, discrepancies and other issues through its computerised system.

Under the new system, registered persons will receive online advice or advance notices via the IRIS portal, allowing them to provide explanations, rectify errors or take corrective measures before any legal or penal action is initiated. The FBR has amended the Sales Tax Rules, 2006, to establish this mechanism for automated scrutiny, analysis and cross-matching of sales tax returns and other available data.



Under the amended rules, the relevant Inland Revenue officer may issue a system-generated advance notice specifying a response deadline of no less than seven days. If no response is received, a

reminder will be issued granting an additional period of at least seven days.

The system will maintain records of discrepancies, notices sent and responses received, which will be shared with the relevant jurisdictional officer. Details of notices, responses and subsequent actions will be maintained on a system-generated dashboard.

The automated scrutiny and electronic communication process will be implemented through a Change Request Form (CRF) to ensure smooth operation of the computerised system. The relevant officer will examine responses and, where necessary, take action under applicable provisions of the Sales Tax Act and rules.

Waiting for customers

ISLAMABAD: A vendor displaying vegetable to attract the customers at Fruit and Vegetable Market in the Federal Capital as supply chain becomes normal after PTI postponed its protest march.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Oil Prices Fall Nearly 3% Amid US-Iran truce hopes, Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia Weigh on Outlook

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Oil prices fell about 3% on Friday as mounting hopes for a US-Iran truce outweighed trader concerns over escalating Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia that could disrupt Middle Eastern supply. WTI crude fell \$2.86, or 3.0%, to \$91.75, while Brent futures also declined, though the report notes a \$2.96 (2.8%) figure inconsistent with the stated direction—likely reflecting a decline to a similar level near \$103.64 rather than a rise. For the week, Brent was down about 1% and WTI down roughly 9%.

US and Iranian negotiators in New York are reportedly exploring a phased path out of war, involving Tehran reopening the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for Washington lifting its economic blockade on Iran, according to sources close to the talks.

Meanwhile, Saudi, Turkish and Pakistani military chiefs are set to discuss support for Saudi Arabia as it faces continued attacks from Yemen's Houthi forces. Tim Waterer, chief analyst at KCM Trade, said diplomatic optimism is



helping oil markets absorb the latest military strikes, with crude trading moderately softer despite the violence.

The Houthis have targeted the Saudi-backed Yemeni government and repeat-

edly struck Saudi Arabia, disrupting oil flows from the world's largest energy exporter, as part of a broader Middle East war that began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28.

SIFC Advances Pakistan-Portugal Investment Cooperation



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and Ambassador of Portugal Paulo Domingues discussed ways to enhance bilateral economic, trade and investment cooperation on Saturday, with particular focus on textiles, agriculture, information technology, pharmaceuticals and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

The SIFC hosted the Ambassador for a wide-ranging discussion aimed at exploring areas of mutual interest and identifying avenues for greater collaboration between the business communities of both countries. SIFC briefed the Ambassador on Pakistan's investment potential across priority sectors and its investor-centric facilitation framework, which provides coordinated support to domestic and international investors through a whole-of-government platform.

The meeting also high-

lighted opportunities from Pakistan's growing international connectivity, with SIFC acknowledging the launch of FC Porto's Dragon Force Academy in Sialkot, established in partnership with Forward Sports. The initiative brings the Portuguese football club's youth development programme to Pakistan, representing an additional avenue for institutional and commercial linkages between the two nations.

SIFC emphasized the importance of continued engagement with international partners to identify commercially viable projects and strengthen linkages between Pakistani and Portuguese investors and businesses. The council reaffirmed its commitment to facilitating international investors through coordinated government support, greater clarity on investment opportunities, and promoting an enabling environment for mutually beneficial partnerships between the two countries.

LCCI Elections 2026: 30 Candidates Elected to Executive Committee, Two Women on Reserved Seats

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The results of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Elections 2026 have been compiled following completion of polling for the Corporate and Associate Classes, with 30 candidates securing seats on the Executive Committee for the new term, alongside two women elected on reserved seats.

In the Associate Class, 15 Vision Alliance candidates won, led by Syed Azmat Ali with 5,428 votes, followed by Zaman Naseeb, Shahab Basharat, Maqbool Siddique and others. This polling formed the second phase, held a day after the Corporate Class elections.

In the Corporate Class, 15 candidates succeeded, topped by Ali Hassam Asghar with 1,700 votes, followed by Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim, Hamid Raza and others. Of these, 13 contested from the Vision Alliance, while Chaudhry Tahir Manzoor and Amir Ata Bari represented the PPBA.

On reserved women's seats, Huma Junaid was elected from the Corporate Class and Naila Nadeem from the Associate Class.

The two-phase election process has now concluded, with 30 members elected through direct polling and two women securing reserved seats for the LCCI's new term.

Kanwal Saeed elected FWCCI president unopposed

FAISALABAD: Kanwal Saeed of Ibrahim Technical Training Institute was elected as president of Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FWCCI) unopposed for 2026-28 tenure.

According to FWCCI

spokesperson, Kanwal Saeed, Samia Tahir of Mubashir Weaving Factory and Dr Sania Arshad of Sahil Limited had filed their nomination papers for the seats of FWCCI President, Senior Vice President and Vice President respectively for 2026-28.

Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry Election Set for 28 September 2026

Commerce Desk

HYDERABAD: The election for office bearers of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry for the term 2026-28 will be held on 28 September 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Chamber Secretariat, according to an announcement by Furqan Ahmed Lodhi, Secretary General and Returning Officer.

Nomination papers were submitted by the 24 September

deadline, with Nadeem Ahmed Siddiqui, Dr Muhammad Ismail Farooq Nami and Muhammad Kashif Sheikh contesting for President; Muhammad Fahad Mian, Sikandar Ali Rajput, Muhammad Kashif Sheikh, Muhammad Arif Memon and Dr Muhammad Ismail Farooq Nami for Senior Vice President; and Irfan Arabiabani, Muhammad Aslam Memon, Dr Muhammad Ismail Farooq Nami and Kashif Sheikh for Vice President.



The Election Commission,

comprising Naeem Aslam, Abdul Aleem and Javaid Qureshi, scrutinized all nomination papers on 26 September 2026 and found them in order.

During the withdrawal process, Dr Muhammad Ismail Farooq Nami, Muhammad Kashif Sheikh and Muhammad Arif Memon withdrew from the Senior Vice President race, while Dr Nami and Muhammad Fahad Mian withdrew from the Vice President contest.

As a result, the presidential race will be contested among Nadeem Ahmed Siddiqui, Dr Muhammad Ismail Farooq Nami and Muhammad Kashif Sheikh; the Senior Vice President post between Muhammad Fahad Mian and Sikandar Ali Rajput; and the Vice President post between Irfan Arabiabani and Muhammad Aslam Memon.

Final results will be formally announced at the General Body Meeting on 30 September 2026.

Pakistan to continue supporting Kashmiris’ inalienable right to self-determination: PM

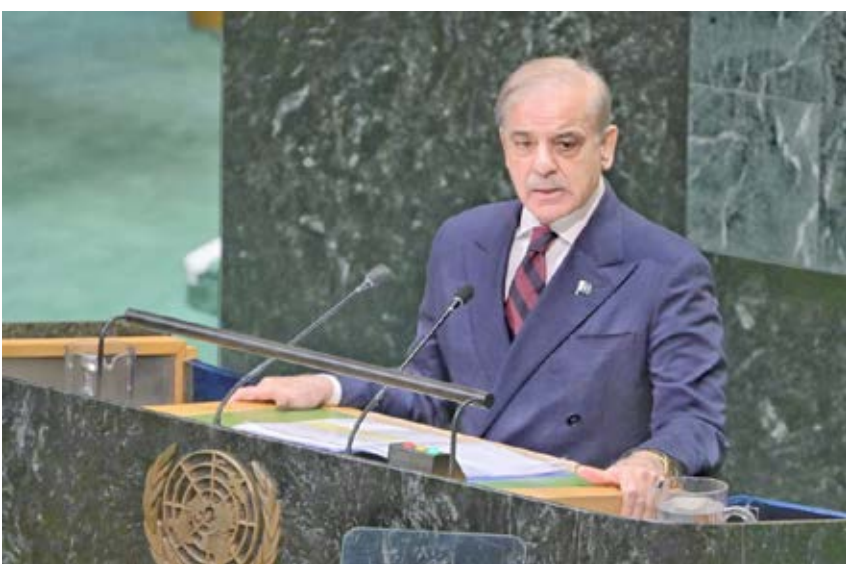
UNITED NATIONS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday said Pakistan will continue to extend its full diplomatic, political and moral support to Kashmiris till they are granted their inalienable right to self-determination.

Addressing the 81th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, he said, “I assure my Kashmiri brothers and sisters, with fullest authority at my command, that we shall continue to extend, our full diplomatic, political, and moral support to them, till they are granted, their inalienable right, to self-determination. Kashmir has, and always will be, Pakistan’s jugular vein!”

He said, “A year ago, Pakistan faced external aggression from India, under a false pretext. Pakistan exercised, its inherent right of self-defence, under Article-51 of the UN Charter.”

“Our brave and valiant Armed Forces, under the courageous leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, responded with precision and professionalism. They silenced the enemy, repulsed its attacks, and taught it a lesson, it shall never ever forget,” he remarked.

The prime minister said, “Thanks to President Donald Trump’s resolute,



and visionary leadership, hundreds of millions of lives in South Asia were saved. His timely intervention came at a decisive juncture, when two nuclear-armed neighbours, stood at the brink of an all-out war. Who knows the extent of devastation, that could have taken place, had President Trump not stepped in, at that critical moment with clarity of thought and action.”

He said, “We must therefore – ensure, that South Asia never reaches that prec-

ipice, ever again. But this requires a just and fair solution of the Kashmir dispute.”

“For eight decades, the Kashmiri people have waited for the United Nations, to fulfil its solemn commitment, of a free and impartial plebiscite, under its auspices. Generations have endured illegal occupation, arbitrary extra-judicial killings, detention, enforced disappearances, sexual violence and collective punishment,” he noted.

“More recently, there have been

attempts to alter the legal status of Jammu and Kashmir, through demographic re-engineering and other illegal measures. Helpless Kashmiri mothers and fathers, yearn for their sons and daughters, who never return. Their homes lie silent, under curfew and in grief. For many, there is no closure – only a lifetime spent, searching for graves that bear no names,” he explained.

He said another foundation of stability in South Asia was now under strain.

“The shared waters of the Indus River system, are the lifeblood, not only for the people of Pakistan, but for the entire region,” he said adding, “India’s unilateral decision, to hold the existing Treaty, in abeyance, has no legal basis, whatsoever. In fact, both its claims and actions have been rejected by UN experts, and more recently, by the Court of Arbitration,” he observed.

He said, “Our legitimate stand that the treaty remains valid, binding, and fully operative – has been vindicated! Water must never be weaponized. Rivers should nourish nations, not divide them. Therefore, any attempt to stop, impede or divert, Pakistan’s share of the waters, will be treated, as an act of war. India must make, no mistake about it. “

RCAK Talent Hunt Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament 2nd Phase From today

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Khalid Nafees Chairman Tournament Committee announced that after the Completed first Phase of RCAK Talent Hunt Programme Touchme Trophy Under-15 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament, The 2nd Phase of Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament begins from Sunday 27th September at KCCA Stadium.

The Opening Match of the Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament will be played between Zone-V Greens vs Zone-VI Whites on Sunday 27th September at KCCA Stadium.

On this occasion Mr. Khalil Ahmed Nanitalwala Chairman Medicam Group of Companies will be the Chief Guest and Inaugurate the Tournament while Mr. Nadeem Omer President Regional Cricket Association Karachi will Preside over the ceremony.

Selected Players of Zone-V Green and Zone-VI Whites are advised to report for Scrutiny on Sunday 27th September at 8.30 am, While Other Zonal Selected Players are also advised to report M. Touseef Siddiqui Joint Secretary RCA Karachi or their Zonal Officials on Sunday 27th September at KCCA Stadium at 11.30 am along with their required documents for Scrutiny.

Attock bridge reopened to traffic after PTI long march postponed

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The Attock Khurd Bridge, which had been completely closed for the past several days in view of the PTI’s call for a long march, has been reopened to traffic after the party postponed the march until October 4. Containers filled with sand had been placed on both sides of the bridge, restricting not only vehicular traffic but also pedestrians from crossing the Indus River. Following the postponement of the march, the district administration started removing the sand from the containers with heavy machinery, and the road was reopened to traffic in both directions.

Two RO Plants Emerge as a Bright Example of Private Service Amid Government Claims

Clean water is not merely a facility for any society; it is a basic human necessity and a fundamental right of every citizen. In a city inhabited by millions of people, ensuring access to safe drinking water is among the basic responsibilities of the state. Yet, in Multan, there appears to be a visible gap between government claims regarding clean water and the reality on the ground.

Over the past several years, the Punjab government has announced various projects worth billions of rupees to provide clean drinking water. At different times, such initiatives have been launched under the Punjab Saaf Pani company through the Aab-e-Pak Authority, with announcements involving projects worth Rs4 billion and even Rs42 billion, along with thousands of water filtration plants. Reports were also published in newspapers stating that 131 water filtration plants would be established across the Multan Division. The announcements are one thing, but the real question is: to what extent have these projects actually benefited ordinary citizens?

Residents in different parts of Multan still face difficulties in obtaining clean drinking water. Some government filtration plants remain non-functional, the operating hours of some are unclear, operators are unavailable at certain facilities, while citizens have concerns about the quality of water at others. Various reports concerning

water quality have also continued to highlight the seriousness of the issue. Therefore, the real measure of the success of clean-water projects should not be announcements or figures on paper, but whether citizens have regular access to clean and safe drinking water close to their homes.

Against this backdrop, the privately supported RO water filtration plants established in New Shah Shams Colony and Sabzwari Town in Multan present a different picture. These projects were established on a self-help basis with the support of renowned industrialist and social figure Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, Chairman of SM Group, and have become a source of clean drinking water for local residents. The RO plant established in New Shah Shams Colony was formally inaugurated on March 1, 2025, by the then Commissioner Multan, Aamir Kareem Khan. The project was presented by SM Group as a welfare gift for the local community. Its significance lies not merely in making water available to residents, but also in the fact that a private organization has played a practical role in addressing a fundamental public need such as clean drinking water.

A notable feature of the plant is its management, cleanliness and organized operational system. Taps have been installed for collecting water; operating hours are clearly displayed, and the presence of operators and security guards helps ensure orderly administration. Special attention is also given

to cleanliness around the plant so that citizens collecting water can access it in a clean and hygienic environment.

The beneficiaries are not limited to domestic consumers. Along with local residents, shopkeepers, restaurants and other business operators also obtain water from the facility. Thus, a welfare initiative has become a source of assistance for a broader segment of the population rather than merely meeting the needs of a few households. The RO water filtration plant established with the support of SM Group of Companies in New Shah Shams Colony has a capacity of four tons and can produce approximately 60 litres of clean water per minute. The plant provides free clean drinking water to citizens for 16 hours a day. More than 60,000 litres of water are supplied daily, benefiting approximately 4,000 people every day. The project is not only providing clean water to local residents but is also a practical example of public welfare and humanitarian service by the private sector.

Similarly, An RO water filtration plants established under YCDO in Sabzwari Town are also playing an important role in providing clean drinking water to local residents. These initiatives are likewise driven by the spirit of humanitarian service, under

which Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum has extended practical support in the water sector. Along with the installation of these plants, attention is also being given to their management and maintenance.

One of the notable features of these plants in Sabzwari Town is their cleanliness and orderly management. Cleanliness around the facilities, the presence of regular operators and security guards, clearly specified water-collection timings, and an organized system for public use demonstrate that establishing a welfare project is not enough; keeping it operational on a continuous basis is equally important.

This also raises an important question: if a private businessperson can establish and operate such projects on a self-help basis, why cannot plants established by government institutions remain operational on a permanent basis? When millions and billions of rupees from the public exchequer are spent on such projects, there should also be a proper system for their performance monitoring, maintenance, water-quality testing and public accessibility.

At the same time, it would not be appropriate to regard private welfare initiatives as a substitute for government responsibility. The provision of

clean drinking water remains a fundamental responsibility of the state and the relevant public institutions. If the private sector contributes to this responsibility, its role should be viewed as complementary rather than as justification for the government system to withdraw from its obligations.

When an industrialist dedicates a portion of his resources to public welfare alongside his business activities, the impact extends beyond the boundaries of business and reaches society at large. These water projects are an example of this very concept. However, the value of such initiatives increases further when their services are provided to citizens without discrimination and standards of quality and transparency are maintained consistently.

The people of Multan still need initiatives that go beyond photographs, inauguration plaques and announcements to provide permanent and reliable facilities. The Government of Punjab and WASA Multan should conduct a comprehensive survey of all government water filtration plants in the city, restore non-functional plants, ensure regular testing of water quality, clearly display operating hours, and establish a reliable system for monitoring the performance of every plant.

In conclusion, it would not be wrong to say that the issue of clean drinking water is not the concern of any single government, institution or individual; it is an issue affecting the entire urban population. Government institutions

must fulfil their responsibilities, while welfare efforts by affluent individuals and business organizations should also be encouraged. The RO plants in New Shah Shams Colony and Sabzwari Town demonstrate that an individual or organization with resources can also become a catalyst for positive change in society. It is natural for local residents to view the efforts of Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum and SM Group to provide clean drinking water with appreciation.

When I look around Multan, I feel that the public does not have complete confidence in the water supplied by the filtration plants of WASA and the Punjab Saaf Pani Authority. Merely installing filtration plants is not enough; transparent monitoring and regular testing of their water quality are equally essential. The Multan administration should take effective measures in accordance with government policy, make water-quality reports available to the public, and establish a system capable of restoring citizens’ confidence. Along with providing clean water, ensuring public trust in the safety and quality of that water is also a responsibility of the government.

The real objective, however, will only be achieved when no citizen of Multan has to depend on a philanthropist for clean drinking water, but can instead obtain safe and clean water regularly through the state system near their home. That should be the true measure of the success of any clean-water project.

Ukraine’s Mobilisation Crisis and the Burden of Democratic Leadership

Continued from Page 4

ingness to scrutinise wartime governance, including mobilisation policies, civil liberties and state accountability.

This does not imply abandoning Ukraine, nor does it require accepting every Russian narrative. Rather, democratic credibility depends upon the willingness to confront uncomfortable realities, even when they complicate preferred political positions. Genuine support for democratic principles requires transparency, not selective silence.

Compounding these challenges is the modern information environment. Social media has become a battlefield where competing narratives spread with unprecedented speed. Authentic concerns, political advocacy, propaganda and outright disinformation

often coexist within the same digital ecosystem. Citizens are therefore challenged to exercise critical judgement rather than accepting any single narrative uncritically.

For Ukraine, sustaining international solidarity may ultimately depend not only upon military performance but also upon public confidence in the fairness and transparency of wartime policies. External support is strongest when supporters believe democratic norms remain intact despite extraordinary pressures.

History repeatedly demonstrates that military endurance is inseparable from political legitimacy. Armies fight most effectively when they believe their sacrifices serve a just purpose under accountable leadership. Once that belief weakens, even the most capable military institutions face strain.

As the conflict enters a critical phase, the debate surrounding mobilisation should not be dismissed as political noise. It reflects broader questions of leadership, accountability and the relationship between states and citizens during war. These are neither pro-Ukrainian nor pro-Russian questions. They are fundamentally democratic ones.

The true measure of leadership is not merely the ability to rally a nation in crisis. It is the capacity to preserve public trust while demanding extraordinary sacrifice. In Ukraine, as elsewhere, that remains the ultimate test of wartime governance.

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Basic Services and Public Frustration in HIOJK

Continued from Page 4

The residents protesting in Kupwara and Rajouri are therefore raising concerns that deserve to be examined beyond the immediate demonstrations. Their demands for better public services speak to basic conditions of a dignified life. Safe transportation, accessible healthcare, education, clean water, electricity and adequate civic infrastructure should not be treated as extraordinary demands.

Nor should such concerns disappear once the demonstrations end.

The most constructive response to public frustration is not simply to manage the protest but to address the reasons behind it. Authorities should listen to communities, investigate

their complaints and provide concrete responses. Where services are inadequate, people need practical improvements rather than repeated assurances.

There is also a larger lesson here. Political debates surrounding Jammu and Kashmir often receive considerable attention, while the everyday experiences of ordinary families can receive far less. Yet governance is ultimately experienced at the most basic level: whether a child can reach school, whether a patient can reach a doctor, whether a family has access to clean water and whether people can travel safely from one place to another.

These are not minor concerns. They are the foundations of a dignified life.

The protests in Kupwara and Rajouri should therefore be under-

stood as a reminder that neglected grievances do not simply disappear. They accumulate. And when people feel that their concerns have nowhere else to go, the streets become their voice.

The question now is not whether the protests will eventually end. The more important question is whether the problems that brought people onto the streets will also be addressed. For communities waiting for basic services, meaningful change will be measured not by another promise, but by what finally changes in their everyday lives.

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Trump and Xi: A Truce Without a Settlement

Continued from Page 4

returns. Some American developers also publish open models and research. The real divide is therefore more complicated than a generous China facing an exclusively profit-seeking America. It lies in who controls the computing

power, sets the rules, bears the risks and receives the gains. A state dinner attended by technology executives offered a stage for that question, but the summit produced no public agreement on testing frontier systems, reporting dangerous incidents or restraining autonomous military uses.

Space presents the same danger on a larger canvas. China has publicly opposed turning orbit into a battlefield, while the United States has acknowledged deploying space-control weapons. Both powers depend on satellites for navigation, communications and security. China, too,

has strategic capabilities and interests in space; declarations of peaceful intent deserve scrutiny from every side. Yet there was no announced summit understanding on protecting civilian satellites or preventing debris and attacks from spreading a terrestrial conflict into shared orbits.

Xi and Trump may meet again at the APEC and G20 gatherings later this year. More meetings can prevent miscalculation, and the tariff extension keeps negotiations alive. But the measure of a summit is what it changes. Iran remains at war, Ukraine remains at war, Taiwan remains exposed

to confrontation, critical minerals remain an instrument of pressure, and AI and space remain arenas of accelerating rivalry.

Washington gave the visit every symbol of respect. The harder act of respect would have been to acknowledge that neither nation can secure its own future by treating the world’s common interests as bargaining chips.

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Makkah Joint Defence meeting

RIYADH: Group photo of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan; General Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu, Chief of General Staff of Türkiye; and General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili, Chief of General Staff of Saudi Arabia, during a meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Forces and Chiefs of General Staff of the countries party to the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, held in Riyadh on Friday.



Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye agree to translate Makkah defence pact into military cooperation

Spokesman Report

RIYADH: A meeting of the Chief of Defence Forces and Chiefs of General Staff of the countries party to the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement was held in Riyadh on Friday, with the participation of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Field Marshal Asim Munir, Turkish Chief of General Staff General Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu and the Saudi Chief

of General Staff attended the meeting, according to Turkish media reports.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the participants reviewed the security situation and threats facing Saudi Arabia, saying the meeting reflected their resolve to strengthen the defence partnership.

The military chiefs strongly condemned attacks targeting the holy city of Makkah as well as civilian and economic infrastructure.

They appreciated the vigi-

lance and professionalism of the Saudi armed forces in ensuring the safety of the people and security of the kingdom.

The participants also discussed ways to further strengthen military cooperation, including intelligence sharing, coordination and integration of capabilities to enhance deterrence and collective defence.

They reaffirmed the long-standing relations and mutual trust between the three countries, saying the

Riyadh meeting reflected the strength of their defence partnership and their shared resolve to translate the commitments of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement into effective military cooperation.

The three military leaders agreed to immediately translate the Makkah agreement into practical and effective military cooperation.

The participants commended the long-standing relations and mutual trust that bind the

people and the armed forces of the three countries.

They noted that their meeting in Riyadh reflects the strength of their defence partnership and their shared determination to immediately translate the commitments of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement into effective military cooperation.

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to collective defence and their resolve to safeguard the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia.

Senate Chairman Gilani Highlights Potential for Pakistan-Belarus Cooperation in Health, Technology and Culture

Kiran Asim

MINSK: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, leading a parliamentary delegation on an official visit to Belarus, visited the Minsk Scientific and Practical Center for Surgery, Transplantation, and Hematology, as well as the Belarusian State Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War, identifying new avenues for cooperation in advanced medical facilities, technology, academic exchange and cultural heritage.

During the medical center visit, Chairperson of the Council of the Republic Natalia Kochanova briefed the delegation on Belarus's advanced capabilities in organ transplantation, robotic surgery, AI-based diagnostics and CAR-T therapy. The delegation also observed a live procedure in the center's state-of-the-art hybrid operating complex, equipped with inte-



grated CT scan and angiographic technology.

Commending Belarus's progress in specialized medical fields, Gilani

emphasized the vast potential for cooperation through institutional linkages, professional and academic exchanges, skill sharing, and adoption of modern medical technologies.

At the Belarusian State Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War, the delegation viewed exhibits documenting the war's human toll, Belarusian resistance, and sacrifices made for the country's freedom. Gilani paid tribute to the bravery and resilience of the Belarusian people and commended their efforts to preserve historical memory and national heritage.

The Senate Chairman said bilateral relations could be further deepened through parliamentary ties, people-to-people contacts, knowledge exchange, and cooperation in modern sectors, which would enhance mutual understanding and strengthen the two nations' longstanding friendly relations.

Palestine Welcomes United Nations Update of Database on Companies Involved in Israeli Settlements

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates welcomes the annual update by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of its database of companies and entities involved in activities related to illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The update adds 61 companies, bringing the total number of listed entities to 214. This update constitutes a further step toward advancing accountability, ending impunity, and addressing the economic and financial networks that sustain and entrench



Israel's illegal settlement enterprise.

We call on all States to use available

legal, political, and diplomatic tools to ensure that entities under their jurisdiction do not contribute to or benefit from illegal settlement activities. We also call on companies and financial and economic entities involved in such activities to immediately cease and withdraw from any involvement that sustains them.

The State of Palestine will continue its diplomatic and legal efforts to advance accountability, uphold the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, and work toward ending the Israeli occupation and realizing an independent and sovereign State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital.

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Pakistan Navy Seizes Huge Cache of Narcotics in Arabian Sea



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Under the ambit of Maritime Security Operations, Pakistan Navy Ships HUNAIN and YARMOOK conducted a joint major counter-narcotics operation in the Arabian Sea, resulting in the seizure of narcotics valued at approximately USD 750 million.

While undertaking routine patrolling, a suspicious boat was intercepted and boarding operation was conducted. During the course of investigation, over 2800kgs of narcotics was recovered from concealed compartments onboard the vessel.

This remarkable achievement

reflects Pakistan Navy's sustained surveillance, vigilance, and unwavering commitment to regional maritime security, global peace, and the fight against illicit trafficking at sea.

Upon the successful execution of the counter-narcotics operation, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf commended the officers and crew of PNS HUNAIN and PNS YARMOOK for their professionalism, vigilance, and dedication. He emphasized that Pakistan Navy remains steadfast in its mission to safeguard national maritime interests and good order at sea while continuing to contribute towards the safety and security of the global commons.

President, PM Commend Pak Navy for Successful Anti-Narcotics Operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday commended Pakistan Navy personnel for successfully intercepting more than 2,800 kilograms of narcotics during an anti-narcotics operation in the Arabian Sea.

The President Secretariat Media Wing said President Zardari praised the professionalism and vigilance of the officers and crew of Pakistan Navy ships PNS Hunain and PNS Yarmook, which jointly carried out the operation.

The president appreciated the Navy's efforts to prevent illegal activities within the country's maritime jurisdiction and strengthen maritime security. He said Pakistan Navy was playing an important role in protecting the country's maritime



boundaries and vital sea routes. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace and security and combating illicit activities.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also praised the Navy personnel for the successful operation. The PM Office Media Wing said he commended their professionalism and vigilance, describing action against narcotics smuggling as commendable and emphasizing the Navy's significant role in preventing illegal trafficking through maritime routes.

Foreign woman allegedly gang-raped in Lahore, case registered

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A case has been registered after a 20-year-old foreign national alleged she was gang-raped in Lahore's Defence (DHA) area, police said on Saturday.

According to police, the woman, an Azerbaijani national, had arrived in Lahore a few days earlier. She told police that two unidentified women brought her to a cafe, where three men were already present.

Police said that after spending some time at the cafe, the group took the woman to a flat.

The woman alleged she was given an intoxicating substance at the flat, after which three men sexually assaulted her.

Police said the accused fled the scene after leaving the woman near the airport following the alleged assault.

Police registered a case on the woman's complaint and have launched a search for the accused.

Investigators said further details are expected to emerge as the investigation, which is ongoing, progresses, with evidence being gathered from multiple angles to identify the suspects.

Tourism plays vital role in strengthening national economy: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that the tourism sector can play a vital role in strengthening the national economy, creating employment opportunities and projecting Pakistan's positive image across the world. He said, "Pakistan possesses immense potential for tourism owing to its natural beauty, historical sites, cultural diversity and rich religious

and civilisational heritage."

He expressed these views in his message on the occasion of World Tourism Day, observed every year on 27th September.

The Speaker said that Pakistan's Northern areas, majestic mountain ranges, the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation and the Gandhara Civilisation are important tourism and cultural assets of the country.