



## Mustafa Kamal Says Long Marches Futile, Calls for Dialogue to Resolve Political Issues

Islamabad: Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal has said Pakistan cannot afford a long march, arguing that such protests have never produced any benefit or achieved their objectives in the past. He said political issues cannot be resolved through protests and should instead be settled through dialogue.



## Religious Affairs Ministry Opens Hajj 2027 Labor Quota Applications

Islamabad: The Ministry of Religious Affairs has activated the Hajj portal for applications under the labor quota for Hajj 2027. Institutions and privately registered companies can sponsor Hajj for low-income employees at their own expense. The quota covers industrial workers, miners and other eligible laborers. Applications must be submitted exclusively through the portal.

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## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President Asif Ali Zardari at the Presidency to discuss the country's overall political and security situation.



Photo: File

# PM Shehbaz and President Zardari Hold High-Stakes Talks on Security and Political Crisis

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday held meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari at the Presidency to discuss the country's overall political and security situation.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister

and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Senator Rana Sanaullah, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan, Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Tauqir

Shah, Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, and Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah.

During the meeting, concern was expressed regarding the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

While reviewing the national

security situation, President Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the need to further strengthen the national resolve against terrorism and ensure effective cooperation among all relevant institutions for the country's peace and stability.

It was decided during the meeting that a joint delegation

comprising representatives from the federal government and the PPP would meet the PTI leadership on Friday to hold talks on the current political situation.

This joint delegation will include Mohsin Naqvi, Rana Sanaullah, and Amir Muqam, as well as Sherry Rehman, Syed Naveed Qamar, and Aijaz Jakh-rani representing the PPP.

## Cabinet committee reviews pension reforms for uncovered labour force

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Pension Reforms for the Uncovered Labour Force was held here on Thursday under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, Bilal Azhar Kayani, Adviser to the Prime Minister, Haroon Akhtar Khan and relevant officials attended the meeting.

The meeting reviewed various models for bringing informal and pension-excluded workers into the pension system. A voluntary pension scheme for domestic workers, agricultural workers, self-employed persons and other informal workers was also discussed.

Speaking on the occasion,

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar said every worker should have the right to a dignified and secure retirement, and that pension protection should not remain limited to the formal sector. He said bringing domestic workers, agricultural workers, self-employed persons and other informal workers within

the social protection framework was an important need.

The Federal Minister said the proposed pension system would be designed to be accessible, financially sustainable and long-term, while remaining aligned with international standards and International Labour Organization (ILO) principles.

## DG ISPR Says Armed Forces Ready to Respond to Any Indian Move, Exposes "False Flag" Claim

### Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Director General ISPR Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Thursday there would be no compromise on protecting Pakistan's borders and national security, and that the armed forces were fully prepared to respond promptly to any Indian move. He warned of a "very painful" response if New Delhi attempted any "drama."

At a press conference, he presented retired SSG Havaldar Muhammad Asif, whom Indian authorities had claimed was a senior Lashkar-e-Taiba commander killed in an operation in Korag, Indian-administered Kashmir, on September 29. Asif, who



lives with his family in Rawalpindi, rejected the allegations and said he learned of

his supposed death through calls and media reports. The DG ISPR called it another

false flag operation meant to defame Pakistan and cover India's own record on

terrorism.

He accused India of sponsoring terrorism in the region, including support for the TTP and BLA, and said Pakistan had earlier offered third-party examination of any evidence, which India never provided.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's "absolute" commitment to the security of Saudi Arabia and the Haramain Sharifain under the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement, though details are confidential.

Responding to a query, he said the military has nothing to do with politics and operates under the Constitution. He added that security forces would continue protecting people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

## DPM Dar calls for action plan to improve service delivery of Pakistani Missions Abroad

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday chaired a meeting of the Committee to Develop a Strategy and Action Plan for the Management of Pakistan Missions Abroad.

The Committee discussed measures to improve the functioning of Pakistan Missions abroad, including strengthening consular services, providing timely assistance to overseas Pakistanis and undertaking regular repairs and maintenance of government-owned chancery and residential buildings. The



DPM/FM called for an action plan to improve service delivery while ensuring quality and value for public funds, a DPM's Office news release said.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Interior and Narcotics Control, Muhammad Talal Chaudhry; SAPM Tariq Bajwa; and senior officials from the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs.

## Security forces kill 6 terrorists in Kachhi district

### Bureau Report

QUETTA: Security forces killed six terrorists belonging to Fitna al Hindustan in an intelligence-based operation in Sanni area of Kachhi district, Balochistan.

Security sources said, the terrorists were successfully targeted by using quadcopters. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was also recovered from the killed terrorists.

They said that a clearness



operation is continued in the area to eliminate any possible remaining terrorists. Under the Azm-e-Istehkam Vision, security forces remain determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from across the country.

## Governor Kundi updates Bilawal on KP terrorism, drone incidents

### Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held a telephonic conversation with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday and discussed the prevailing political and security situation in the province. During the conversation, Governor Kundi briefed the PPP chairman on recent incidents of terrorism in Hangu, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Kohat and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Governor also informed Bilawal Bhutto Zardari about the reported interception of a drone originating from Afghanistan before it reached its intended target.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stressed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government should fully discharge its responsibilities in dealing with terrorism and the prevailing security situation. He also called for the unconditional end to the ongoing long march in the larger interest of peace and stability.

## PM Shehbaz Reviews Fuel Relief Scheme as Over 7.5 Million Citizens Benefit

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday chaired a review meeting on the progress of the Prime Minister's Fuel Relief Scheme, which provides fuel subsidies to owners of motorcycles, rickshaws and vehicles up to 800cc.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting low-income and middle-class citizens amid rising petroleum prices. He said more than 7.5 million people have benefited since the scheme's launch on September 15, and praised the government team for effective, coordinated implementation.

He also appreciated the role of key ministers, OGRA and federal and provincial officials, adding that the database built through the scheme would be used to assist citizens in future.

The meeting was told that over 8.4 million people have registered, while 10.3 million of the 12.2 million tokens issued have been used. As the scheme enters its third week, earlier beneficiaries can claim the subsidy again. It is operating in 129 districts, with all petrol pumps participating. A round-the-clock call center offers guidance, and the Public Affairs Unit and public representatives are helping with registration.

Senior ministers and officials attended the meeting.

# AJK President Calls for Political Tolerance and Unified Kashmir Strategy in Meeting with Sardar Attique

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Dr. Muhammad Najeeb Khan met former AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan to discuss matters of mutual interest, including the prevailing political situation in the region. Sardar Attique congratulated him on assuming the presidency and extended his best wishes.

President Najeeb said political tolerance was essential to maintaining democratic continuity in AJK. He stressed that the Kashmiris' freedom struggle must remain the top priority and that the sacrifices of millions of Kashmiris should be honored by pursuing the people's aspirations, including accession to Pakistan, in line with the resolution adopted by their forefathers.

He urged all political parties, leaders and opinion-makers to adopt a unified strategy so the international community could be effectively informed about the human rights situation in Indian-administered Jammu



and Kashmir.

The President thanked Pakistan for its continued political, moral and diplomatic support, and acknowledged

the Pakistan Army's role in protecting Kashmiris, especially those along the Line of Control, from security threats and aggression.

Sardar Attique emphasized collective efforts to raise the Kashmir issue at international forums and assured the President of his full support.

## Flowers plantings

LAHORE: Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) workers sapling seasonal flowers plants at Club Chowk, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## All-Pakistan bilingual speech contest held at Cadet College Muzaffarabad

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: An All-Pakistan Bilingual Speech Contest was organized by Cadet College Muzaffarabad, featuring enthusiastic participation from students of educational institutions across Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. After a closely contested competition, Pakistan Air Force College Lower Topa emerged as the leading institution.

Students from Cadet College Battarasi, Model Science College, University of Bagh, University of Kotli, University of AJK, APS institutions and other colleges showcased their oratory skills in both Urdu and English on diverse topics.



AJK Legislative Assembly member Maryam Kashmiri, the chief guest, congratulated the college administration for organizing the event. She said such competitions help students develop intellectual abilities, confidence and communication skills while promoting healthy academic and co-curricular activities.

She emphasized that interaction between students from Pakistan and AJK would strengthen mutual understanding and close ties. Principal Cadet College Muzaffarabad Brigadier (Retd.) Asrat Mahmood, Sitar-e-Imtiaz, teachers and other distinguished guests attended the ceremony. Outstanding performers were congratulated at the conclusion.

## Samia Sajid Condemns Crackdown on Hurriyat Leaders in IIOJK

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairperson Kashmir Women Alert Forum (KWAF) Samia Sajid has expressed concern over what she described as increasing Indian state repression, arrests, raids and legal cases against Hurriyat Conference leaders and workers in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.

She said the Hurriyat Conference represented an important voice for

Kashmiri political aspirations and that restrictions on political activities could not resolve questions concerning fundamental rights and self-determination. She alleged that prolonged detentions, raids and pressure on families were creating fear and uncertainty among Kashmiri communities.

Samia Sajid said Kashmiri women and families were particularly affected by arrests and other coercive measures. She pledged that the Kashmir Women

Alert Forum would continue highlighting the concerns and experiences of Kashmiri women and affected families before the international community.

She urged the United Nations, international human rights organizations, global powers and international media to independently examine allegations concerning detainees, legal proceedings and human rights violations. She called for transparent investigations and measures to protect funda-

mental human and political rights, while stressing the need for a sustainable and peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue.



## Farah Naz Akbar called on President AĴK



**City Report**

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage and Culture Ms. Farah Naz Akbar called on President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Dr. Muhammad Najeeb Khan.

Ms. Farah Naz Akbar presented a bouquet to the President and congratulated him on assuming office. President Dr. Muhammad Najeeb Khan thanked her for the gesture and felicitations.

## PML-N, PPP Nominees File Papers for Kashmir Council Elections



**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Nominees of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have filed their nomination papers for the upcoming Kashmir Council elections.

Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Ifthikhar Gilani, President of PML-N AJK Shah Ghulam Qadir, former Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan, ministers Col. (ret'd.) Waqar Ahmed Noor, Dr. Mustafa Bashir, Sardar Mir Akbar, Azhar Sadiq, Member of the Legislative Assembly Ms. Noreen Arif and others filed nomination papers for PML-N nominees Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed, Raja Mushtaq Ahmed Minhas and Chaudhry Manzoor.

Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition and President of PPP AJK Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, along with PPP legislators Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Sardar Mukhtar Ahmed Khan and Zobia Khursheed Raja, filed nomination papers for their party's nominee, Chaudhry Latif Akbar.

## PPP AĴK calls for joint parliament session on Kashmir situation

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Azad Jammu and Kashmir has called for a joint session of the National Assembly and Senate to discuss alleged human rights violations, arrests of Hurriyat leaders and violence against civilians in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.

PPP AJK Central Deputy Secretary Information Shaukat Javed Mir urged the government to invite foreign diplomats, Kashmiri political leaders from both sides of the Line of Control and international media representatives to the proposed session. He also called for pursuing appropriate legal proceedings at international forums.

Mir said Pakistan had supported dialogue and confidence-building measures but alleged that successive Indian governments had obstructed such efforts. He urged the United Nations, European Union and influential countries to intensify diplomatic efforts for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

He said the PPP had consistently supported Kashmiri self-determination, citing the contributions of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Mir stressed that a peaceful resolution in line with the UN Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions was essential for regional peace.



## Commissioner Hyderabad reaffirms commitment to inclusion of persons with different abilities

**Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: A delegation of the Inclusion and Empowerment Organization (IEO) held a meeting with Commissioner Hyderabad Division Fayaz Hussain Abbasi at the Commissioner's Office to discuss initiatives for the rights, inclusion, accessibility and empowerment of persons with different abilities.

CEO IEO Independent Living Center Lal Muhammad Baloch briefed the Commissioner on the organization's nearly three decades of work and its efforts to promote independent living, equal opportunities and meaningful participation of persons with diverse abilities at national and international levels.

Commissioner Abbasi appreciated IEO's efforts and acknowledged its contribution towards promoting the inclusion of persons with different abilities in mainstream society. He particularly appreciated the organization's international initiatives and participation in disability-inclusive sporting activities.

## Riaz Hussain Nizami Remembered for Journalistic and Social Services

**Special Correspondent**

MULTAN : Renowned journalist, writer and social leader Syed Riaz Hussain Nizami was remembered for his lifelong services to journalism, social reform and public welfare at a condolence reference held at Muawia Islamic Center, Dar-e-Bani Khadim, Muzaffarabad, Multan.

Speakers paid tribute to the late Riaz Hussain Nizami, Chief Editor of daily Mudabir, highlighting his significant contributions to journalism and social activities. Chief organiser of Tanzeem Jawan Fiker (TJFP) Dr Rashid Hussaini, Syed Ali Asghar Shah Bukhari and other leaders addressed the gathering.

Khateeb-ul-Asr Allama Abdullah Khadim said Nizami faced challenges throughout his journalistic and social career with courage and determination. Dr Rashid Hussaini described the deceased as his long-time social colleague and recalled his role in establishing TJFP, a nationwide literary, social and cultural organisation for youth.



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

## SERVICES

## Namaz Timings

Fajr ..... 4:39 am  
Zohr ..... 11:58 am  
Asr ..... 4:11 pm  
Maghrib ..... 5:53 pm  
Isha ..... 7:15 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

## FAO Hands Over Advanced Groundwater Monitoring Network to Sindh Irrigation Department

Qayoum Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has handed over an advanced groundwater monitoring sensor network to the Sindh Irrigation Department to strengthen water-resource management and support climate-resilient agriculture.

The high-tech system has been installed at selected locations in Sanghar and Umerkot to continuously monitor groundwater levels and salinity. The project was implemented under the "Transforming the Indus Basin with Climate-Resilient Agriculture and Water Management" initiative, funded by the Green Climate Fund and co-financed by the Sindh government.

FAO Technical Advisor and Project Manager Emelda Berejena said the initiative involved transferring technical expertise and institutional responsibility along with equipment. She stressed regular maintenance, reliable data collection and effective use of information.

FAO's international water expert said groundwater fluctuations could affect crop production, while sensor-generated data would support improved irrigation planning and efficient water use.

Provincial Project Director Dr Khuda Bux Kalwar said effective use of data would strengthen decision-making and help protect farming communities from climate-change impacts. Officials said coordination among relevant departments and technical institutions would be essential for sustaining the

# Punjab Launches Rs5bn Interest-Free Scheme to Promote Value-Added Pink Salt Products

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Thursday launched the province's first Pink Salt Value Addition Financing Scheme and distributed cheques among 10 busi-

nesspersons who secured interest-free loans. She stressed the need to introduce value-added pink salt products to international markets under the Pakistani brand.

According to officials, the scheme has an allocation of Rs5 billion, with individual businesses eligible for up to Rs50



million. The Punjab government will bear Rs1.456 billion in interest costs.

A 110-acre Pink Salt Processing Unit has been set up in Quaidabad as a specialised industrial cluster. The processing zone is planned to house 200 value-addition units and create more than 10,000

jobs. A model retail outlet has also been established to promote branding, packaging and marketing. Officials said value addition could raise annual exports by up to \$300 million.

The chief minister said Pakistan should export branded pink salt rather than raw

material, calling it a national mineral asset and "like gold hidden in the mountains." She pledged support for young entrepreneurs and startups, and said Punjab's resources should benefit its people.

The beneficiaries thanked her and called the scheme a significant initiative.

## Operation against encroachments

ISLAMABAD: Traders and people gathers near Capital Development Authority (CDA)'s truck in Sitara Market as the CDA continuing its operation against illegal encroachments in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Zaamin Group, Khudi Wellness Mark International Day of Older Persons at Aaghosh Home

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Philanthropists Kashif Shah and Sarwat Nasim Shah, Chairman and Managing Director of Zaamin Group and founders of Khudi Wellness, marked the International Day of Older Persons at Aaghosh Home Trust on Thursday, spending time with elderly shelterless women and orphan girls with disabilities living there.

The couple interacted warmly with residents and listened to their life stories and challenges. Kashif Shah was particularly moved by conversations with several educated elderly women, including some from professional and medical backgrounds, about the circumstances that brought them to the Home.

He encouraged the residents to stay positive and active and to share their knowledge



and experience with younger generations, saying senior citizens can continue to play a constructive role in society.

Sarwat Nasim Shah praised Aaghosh Trust's humanitarian work and pledged

continued support. The couple also appreciated Trust President Shagufta Saba, the trustees and management for providing shelter, care and dignity to women with nowhere else to turn.

## Political Uncertainty, Highway Security in Balochistan Concerning: Aman Shah

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan President Syed Aman Shah has expressed concern over what he described as continuing political uncertainty and an intensifying economic crisis in the country. He said insecurity on national highways in Balochistan had become a major problem for citizens, passengers, transporters and the business community.

Aman Shah said Balochistan's highways were vital for connecting the province with other parts of Pakistan and facilitating trade and economic activity. He maintained that inadequate security on these routes affected public confidence, routine travel and commercial operations, with wider implications for the national economy.

Aman Shah said the Awaam Pakistan Party would continue advocating improved governance, protection of citizens' fundamental rights, law and order and economic development. He described providing a secure environment, better transport facilities and economic opportunities as key responsibilities of the state.



## Fire Breaks Out at GCWUF Parking Area, No Casualties Reported



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A fire broke out in the parking area of Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) on September 30 after the battery of an electric scooter reportedly exploded while charging. The fire spread to a nearby university bus, which was completely gutted. No injuries or loss of life were reported.

The university's fire safety system was activated immediately after the incident. Security and support staff evacuated the affected area and launched initial firefighting efforts while Rescue 1122 was called for assistance.

The Rescue 1122 team reached the university and successfully brought the fire under control, preventing further damage and ensuring the safety of people on the premises.

University authorities expressed appreciation for the prompt response of security personnel, estate staff and Rescue 1122. Their timely action helped contain the incident and protect students, faculty and other members of the university community from harm.

## 520 Cases Registered, 520 Suspects Arrested by Faisalabad Highway Patrol

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Region Highway Patrol Police registered 520 cases and arrested 520 suspects during September, according to its monthly performance report. Using the e-Police App, patrol teams also arrested 19 proclaimed offenders and 13 court absconders wanted in various cases.

Police recovered three pistols, bullets and cartridges from suspects and registered 16 narcotics-related cases, seizing 224.5 litres of liquor. During routine checks, 2,460 motorcycles were impounded over suspicious status or registration issues.

The patrol force responded to 18 accidents involving 31 people, provided immediate medical assistance to five injured persons and helped 1,996 stranded motorists and passengers. Six missing children were also safely reunited with their families. Police removed 52 temporary and permanent encroachments from highways.

Reviewing the report, SSP Mirza Anjum Kamal said protecting citizens' lives and property remained the force's top priority. He directed a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and rude behaviour toward citizens.



## Experts at ISSI Roundtable Warn Hybrid Warfare Is Shrinking Crisis-Response Time, Urge Stronger Resilience

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a roundtable on "Hybrid Warfare and Pakistan's National Security," attended by strategic experts and academics.

Air Commodore (Retd.) Khalid Banuri said hybrid warfare has compressed decision-making timelines and narrowed space for diplomacy, calling for stronger communication mechanisms and verification of information before escalation.

Adeela Waqar of PKCERT warned that dependence on data, third-party



services and interconnected systems creates new vulnerabilities, urging digi-

talization be paired with resilience planning to keep essential systems running.

Dr. Sumaira Kausar said AI can rapidly produce and spread authentic and manipulated content, trigger diplomatic reactions and leave little time for verification.

Dr. Zahir Kazmi said diplomacy and strategic communication alone are insufficient and must be backed by credible capabilities, crisis management, regular exercises and pre-established communication channels.

Dr. Zafar Ali and Dr. Bilal Zubair noted that citizens are now part of the hybrid battlefield, stressing an audience-centric approach, effective narratives and stronger institutions ahead of the upcoming National Security Policy.

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## Pakistan’s Mental Health Reckoning: From Policy to Practice

The launch of the National Mental Health Policy 2026-2035 at the Global Mental Health Summit in Islamabad is a welcome and overdue step. For decades, mental illness in Pakistan has been treated as a private shame rather than a public health crisis. The numbers show how costly that neglect has been. The World Health Organization estimates that 32.4 million Pakistanis need mental health care, yet only about 5 percent can access it. That leaves a treatment gap of roughly 95 percent, a figure that should alarm every policymaker.

The workforce shortage makes the gap even harder to close. Pakistan has about 0.19 psychiatrists per 100,000 people, against an average of seven in high-income countries. No policy document can overcome that deficit overnight. Training, retaining and fairly distributing professionals, particularly outside major cities, must be at the heart of implementation.

Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal was right to call mental health an emergency and a matter of both national security and economic well-being. The economic argument is persuasive. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus noted that every dollar invested in treating depression and anxiety returns four through better health and productivity. In a country struggling with fiscal pressures, mental health spending should be seen as an investment, not a luxury.

The policy’s emphasis on schools, primary healthcare and communities is sensible. Care that reaches people early, close to home and without stigma is far more achievable than one dependent on scarce specialist hospitals. UNICEF’s call to place children and adolescents at the centre also deserves attention, given the pressures of climate change, economic uncertainty and digital environments on young people.

Yet the real test lies beyond the summit hall. Pakistan has produced no shortage of ambitious policies that faltered for want of funding, coordination or political will. Health is largely a provincial subject after devolution, so the success of this policy depends on genuine cooperation between Islamabad and the provinces. The Minister of State for Health has promised to work with provincial governments, and that promise must be matched by clear budgets, measurable targets and public reporting of progress.

Stigma remains another formidable barrier. Awareness campaigns, community engagement and the integration of mental health into everyday healthcare can help families understand that seeking support is not weakness. As Dr Tedros said, there is no shame in needing help.

The summit has given Pakistan a platform and a framework. What it needs now is follow-through. Success should be judged not by the speeches delivered in Islamabad, but by whether a struggling student, a stressed mother or a farmer in a remote district can find care when it is needed. Until then, the policy remains a promise.

## Quetta’s Daughter, Pakistan’s Pride

While browsing today’s international news, one story stopped me and filled my heart with both pride and anguish: Jalila Haider, a Hazara woman born, raised and educated in my hometown, Quetta, has won the 2026 Right Livelihood Award, announced today, September 30. Presented by the Stockholm-based Right Livelihood Award Foundation, the distinction is widely known as the “Alternative Nobel Prize.”

This year, just four recipients—two women and two women-led organizations—were selected from 200 nominations across 72 countries. Haider was recognized for challenging ethnic persecution, state repression and discrimination against women through her legal work and activism.

For recipients, such recognition brings international visibility to their struggles and strengthens their ability to rally support; for Pakistan, Haider’s achievement highlights the courage and humanity of citizens defending its most vulnerable communities.

Amid reports of conflict and suffering, here was a Pakistani woman honored for standing beside people whom violence and indifference had pushed into the shadows. The news brought pride, but also anguish over the injustices that made her work necessary—and memories of a city whose humanity I once knew intimately.

Quetta, nestled like a bowl among towering hills, was beautiful for more than its landscape and refreshing weather. During my years of education, from 1970 to 1984, its greatest attraction

was the fellowship between its communities. In the Quetta I remember, differences of ethnicity, language and religious tradition did not prevent friendship. We studied, played and visited one another, sharing a city that felt like home to us all.

I watched Hazara families advance through education, commerce, public service and sport. Their businesses grew, their young people distinguished themselves, and their contribution became woven into Quetta’s everyday life. Their achievements enriched the city. Remembering that shared life makes the subsequent persecution especially painful: people who helped build our hometown were increasingly denied the freedom to live safely within it.

I witnessed that atmosphere deteriorate as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 drew our region into confrontation between Moscow and Washington. In my observation, foreign ideological rivalries, money and weapons deepened divisions among people who had lived together. I saw resentment grow around Hazara and Punjabi advancement in commerce and public employment. These memories carry the pain we shared as neighbours: the gradual destruction of trust, followed by violence against familiar families.

The consequences were merciless. Hazaras were attacked in markets, on roads and while travelling to worship. Human Rights Watch recorded that two major bombings in Quetta in January and February 2013 killed at least 180 Hazaras. Such figures describe the scale,

but cannot convey the anguish within each household. Every victim left relationships, responsibilities and hopes that no compensation or official condolence could restore.

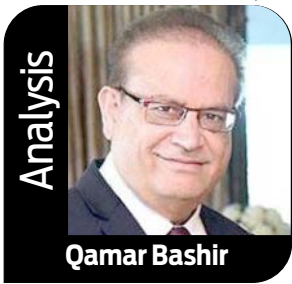
For me, this tragedy has a familiar face: Abrar Hussain, the celebrated Hazara boxer who trained us during our school and college years. He brought distinction to Pakistan in international competition. When I later served in Quetta as deputy income tax commissioner, I knew him in his sports administration role. In June 2011, he was murdered in the city

he had served. A man who strengthened Pakistan’s reputation abroad could not be protected at home.

Fear drove families away from their neighbourhoods, livelihoods and memories. Some sought safety elsewhere in Pakistan; others

rebuilt their lives overseas, including in Australia. Those who remained faced restricted movement and shrinking opportunities. The loss extended beyond households. Quetta itself was diminished whenever a family left because it could no longer trust that its children would return safely from school, work or the market.

This was the environment in which Jalila Haider chose to stand her ground. Born in 1984, she lost her father when she was twelve. Her mother raised six children and supported her determination to study law. In 2010, she earned her degree from University Law College, Quetta, becoming the first woman lawyer from Pakistan’s Hazara community.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir



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

## A Conscious Worker, a Dignified State - II

In contrast, when workers respect laws, regulations, and merit, public confidence in institutions increases. This trust becomes an important foundation of the dignity of the state.

The dignity of a state is not determined only by its power at the international level. It is also reflected in the way its citizens and institutions treat one another. A state in which citizens receive justice according to law, institutions perform their responsibilities effectively, public resources are treated as a trust, and the dignity of ordinary people is respected develops greater institutional credibility. Conversely, maladministration, corruption, injustice, and violations of law can weaken public confidence in state institutions.

The relationship between a conscious worker and a dignified state is mutual. When the state provides its workers with an appropriate working environment, training, resources, professional security, and opportunities for advancement based on merit, workers can perform their duties with greater responsibility and dedication. At the same time, workers are also required to perform their duties honestly, protect institutional resources, observe punctuality, and treat the public with respect and courtesy.

Employees of educational institutions have particular importance in this regard because they play a fundamental role in shaping the minds and character of the younger generation. A teacher does not merely teach from a textbook; through personal conduct, communication, attitude, and behavior, a teacher influences the personality of students. When a teacher demonstrates punctuality, honesty, tolerance, research, and a spirit of service, students are more likely to adopt these values. In this way, a conscious teacher actually helps produce conscious citizens for the future.

Similarly, workers in government institutions serve as an important link between the state

and the public. Ordinary citizens often experience the state through its institutions and the officials working within them. When a citizen receives respect, guidance, and timely assistance in a government office, confidence in the state is strengthened. On the other hand, unnecessary obstacles, disrespectful behavior, or injustice can negatively affect the citizen’s perception of the state system. Therefore, the behavior of every worker represents the state in one way or another.

In the modern era, a worker’s responsibility is no longer limited to a specific workplace. The

digital world has transformed almost every individual into a potential source of information. A worker’s activities on social media can also influence the reputation of an institution and society. Therefore, digital awareness has become an essential quality of a modern worker. Verification of information, protection of personal and official data,

respect for the dignity of others, and responsible expression are important characteristics of a conscious worker.

Building a dignified state also requires more than government action alone. Every segment of society must contribute to this objective. Parents should develop a sense of responsibility and honesty in their children. Educational institutions should give importance to character building. Religious and social institutions should promote moral development. Government institutions should strengthen merit and accountability. Workers should perform their duties with a spirit of service and consider their responsibilities a trust. When all these elements work together, the institutional system of the state becomes stronger.

It is equally important for workers to develop the courage to acknowledge their mistakes and learn from them. Consciousness does not mean that a person never makes a mistake. Rather, it means recognizing one’s mistakes, correcting them, and making a sincere effort not to repeat

them. Similarly, the ability to accept differences of opinion without turning them into hostility, to regard criticism as a means of improvement, and to listen to the perspectives of others are also characteristics of a civilized and conscious worker.

Ultimately, it is clear that a dignified state begins with a conscious individual. A state is not an abstract concept; it is a combination of individuals, institutions, laws, and collective behaviors. When individuals understand their responsibilities, workers regard their positions as a trust, institutions operate according to law and merit, and citizens give importance not only to their rights but also to their responsibilities, the state becomes stronger, more stable, and more dignified.

There is a need to develop a collective mindset in which every individual asks: What role am I playing in my home, institution, society, and country? Change does not always begin with grand slogans; often, it begins with a small but responsible action. Punctuality, honesty, respect for law, regard for the rights of others, courteous treatment of the public, and proper performance of one’s duties may appear to be ordinary actions, but together they create a strong national character.

A conscious worker is, in reality, an architect of a dignified state. When a worker performs duties with responsibility, honesty, and a spirit of service, the institution becomes stronger. Strong institutions gain public trust; public trust provides stability to the state; and a stable state earns respect and dignity at the international level. Therefore, the construction of a state does not begin somewhere far away. It begins in every office, every institution, every classroom, and through the conduct of every responsible individual.

If we want a dignified and respected state, we must first produce conscious, principled, and responsible workers. Awareness gives birth to responsibility; responsibility develops character; character strengthens institutions; and strong institutions provide the foundation for a state that is trustworthy for its citizens and respected by the world.

## Pak Army to Support Kuwaiti Forces in Multiple Fields

The Pakistan-Kuwait “Protocol Agreement 2026” has generated widespread excitement, pride, and prayers in Pakistan, reflecting strong public confidence in the armed forces. The agreement strengthens the longstanding brotherly relationship, mutual trust, and defence cooperation between Pakistan and Kuwait, while Kuwait’s decision to seek Pakistan Army support recognizes its professional reputation and combat effectiveness and enhances Pakistan’s role as a reliable international security partner.

Cooperation will cover training, capacity building, border management, and other mutually agreed areas as Kuwait modernizes its military. Training will include infantry tactics, artillery, armoured warfare, aviation, special operations, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, while capacity building will improve logistics, procurement, maintenance, repair, and command-and-control systems. Pakistan will also share border-security expertise, including surveillance, patrol tactics, and intelligence sharing to counter infiltration and smuggling and protect Kuwait’s territorial integrity. The partnership can expand into additional areas as security needs evolve, while further strengthening national pride in Pakistan Army’s record of defence, stability, disaster assistance, internal crisis response, peace-keeping, and commitment to peace and security.

The agreement was negotiated through

high-level political and military engagement marked by cooperation, mutual respect, and a series of important visits. A Kuwaiti delegation led by Defence Minister Sheikh Abdullah, including Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Khalid Daraj Saad Al-Sharian, visited Pakistan’s Ministry of

Defence and met Defence Minister Khawaja Asif before visiting GHQ. These meetings established political and military consensus, clarified the strategic objectives of cooperation, aligned the partnership with both governments’ foreign-policy goals, and enabled the Kuwaiti delegation to

engage directly with Pakistan Army leadership and learn about its organization, training methods, operational capabilities, facilities, equipment, and readiness. The delegation’s meeting with Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir provided strategic direction and senior-level endorsement for finalizing and implementing the agreement. The two military leaders discussed regional security, shared threats, and ways to address common challenges, while Asim Munir reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to high-quality, tailored training and capacity building for Kuwait. The Kuwaiti military leadership expressed appreciation for Pakistan’s hospitality and professionalism and emphasized its desire for a lasting, mutually beneficial defence partnership, with both sides committing to stronger bilateral defence ties and greater regional peace and stability.

Continued on Page 7

# Russian Ambassador Khorev Briefs on Ukraine Crisis, Says Moscow Committed to Political Settlement

Naveed Ahmad Khan

Islamabad: On October 1, Russian Ambassador Albert P. Khorev held a briefing on the situation in and around Ukraine. Before the event, guests observed a minute of silence for the victims of the Siege of Leningrad, the 85th anniversary of which was marked on September 8.

Speaking on the Russian parliamentary elections, the ambassador said the September 20 vote saw record turnout despite external pressure and Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian cities aimed at disrupting the process.

The main part of the briefing covered the military, political, economic, legal and informational dimensions of the conflict. Khorev described the Ukraine crisis as a large-scale confrontation between Russia and the collective West, which, he said, is using Ukraine as a proxy to weaken Russia.

On the economy, he argued that sanctions have failed to cause the collapse the West sought, while causing serious harm to the countries imposing them and to the global economy. He said the EU's cumulative losses from sanctions in 2022-2025 amounted to €1-1.6 trillion, and European companies that left Russia lost €400-450 billion. He added that sanctions are accelerating the shift to settlements in national currencies and the development of alternative financial and trade



infrastructure within BRICS, the SCO and ASEAN.

The ambassador also addressed international maritime law and freedom of navigation. He called Western actions against the so-called "shadow fleet" criminal, saying the concept was artificially created as a

pretext for seizing Russian vessels. He voiced concern over a sharp rise in Ukrainian attacks on civilian vessels in the Black and Azov Seas, warning that escalation threatens international shipping. Noting that Russia accounts for 23 percent of global wheat exports and Ukraine for 7 percent, he said Western

restrictions on Russian agricultural exports harm global food security.

On legal matters, Khorev said Russia does not recognize Western-created compensation mechanisms for Ukraine and will not comply with their decisions. He highlighted the June 15, 2026 ruling of the Permanent Court



of Arbitration in The Hague, which he said unanimously rejected a number of Ukraine's claims, including demands for compensation and reparations and claims over the maritime areas and resources of Crimea and the Sea of Azov region.

He also raised the "children's issue" and alleged systematic pressure by Ukrainian authorities on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its members.

In conclusion, Khorev said Russia remains committed to a political and diplomatic settlement. He noted that Russia initiated the resumption of

negotiations last year after Kiev halted them and remains ready to continue talks that take its national interests into account. He also stated that Russia is not preparing military action against Europe or NATO countries and has no reason to escalate tensions with Europe.

Guests also viewed the exhibition "Crimean Gold: 'Civilized' Europe Plunders Russian Treasures." The ambassador said the archaeological artifacts, more than two thousand years old and kept in Crimean museums until 2014, should be returned to the peninsula.

## Pakistan Launches National Mental Health Policy 2026-2035 at Global Mental Health Summit

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan launched the National Mental Health Policy 2026-2035 at the Global Mental Health Summit, in partnership with WHO, UNICEF and the Global Institute of Human Development at Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University. The two-day summit, held from October 1-2 under the Ministry of National Health Services, brings together 800 in-person and online participants, including experts, academics, development partners and policymakers.

WHO estimates that 32.4 million Pakistanis need mental health care, yet only about 5 percent have access to services, leaving a 95 percent treatment gap. Pakistan has about 0.19 psychiatrists per 100,000 people,



compared with seven in high-income countries.

Health Minister Mustafa Kamal called mental health a national emergency, a security issue and an economic issue. Minister of State Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath said the government would work with provinces to deliver

care through schools, primary healthcare and communities.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said every dollar invested yields four in returns. UNICEF's Pernille Ironside urged putting children and adolescents at the centre of efforts.

Pakistan aims to make the summit its flagship global mental health platform.

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## Experts Urge Immediate Rollout of Mandatory Front-of-Pack Warning Labels at World Heart Day Session

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Youth Club of the Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA) at the University of Karachi organized a World Heart Day awareness session and walk, focusing on the rising burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and the need for mandatory Front-of-Pack Warning Labels (FOPWLs).

Experts from PSQCA, PCSIR, the Sindh Food Authority and Nutrition International joined the session. Speakers voiced concern over growing rates of diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular and kidney diseases, linking them to unhealthy diets and increased consumption of ultra-processed foods high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

PSQCA Director Gul Sanobar stressed that



standardized, understandable labelling is essential for consumers to recognize nutritional risks. Health expert Munawar Hussain said FOPWLs give simple, visible information at the point of purchase, and noted that the Nutrition Profile

Model sets thresholds for warning labels.

PANAHA General Secretary Sana Ullah Ghumman urged the federal and provincial governments to implement the approved warning-label system without delay, saying young people

and universities can help build awareness.

PANAHA called on authorities to expedite implementation to protect children and young people. Students joined an awareness walk promoting healthy eating and heart health.

## Pakistan Slips to 95th in WEF Travel & Tourism Development Index 2026 Despite Sector Growth

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan ranked 95th out of 110 economies in the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index 2026, falling seven places from 88th in 2024. Its

score slipped from 3.44 to 3.42 out of 7, even as 92 percent of ranked economies improved.

The tourism economy nonetheless expanded. Industry GDP rose 14.3 percent to \$8.98 billion, employment grew to 1.511 million jobs, and inter-

national tourism receipts increased 8.1 percent to \$812.2 million.

Pakistan improved in policy and enabling conditions, tourism resources, cultural and natural resources, and prioritisation of tourism. However, business environ-

ment fell 13 places to 105th, sustainability dropped from 51st to 74th, and infrastructure and services declined. Price competitiveness (14th) and demand sustainability (15th) remain strengths but lost ground. Human resources and labour market ranked

109th.

In South Asia, Pakistan trails India (31st), Sri Lanka (69th) and Nepal (86th) but is ahead of Bangladesh (98th).

Amir Jahangir of Mishal Pakistan said growth has not been matched by

improvements in competitiveness, and urged an integrated national strategy covering access, safety, digital services, workforce training and sustainable destination management.

Japan topped the index, followed by the US, Spain, Australia and France.

## NCCIA Chief Orders Priority Action on Harassment, Blackmail and Financial Fraud Cases

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

MULTAN: Director General of the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi visited the Multan Cyber Crime Circle on September 29, inspecting the front desk, reporting centre, investigation wing and record room, and chairing a meeting of senior officers.

He directed that cases involving financial fraud, online harassment, cyber harassment of women and children, and social media blackmail be handled on a priority basis. Where sufficient evidence exists, he said, arrests should not be unnecessarily delayed.

Rizvi urged investigators to combine modern technology and digital forensics



with conventional methods, ensuring electronic evidence is scientifically collected and

preserved for court. He also stressed building officers' technical capacity and ordered

complete digitisation of the Multan Circle's records.

Calling timely redress of



complaints a core responsibility, he said complainants should receive clear legal guidance without unnecessary visits or delays, and be treated with courtesy. He stressed discipline,

cleanliness and a professional work environment, and met staff individually to address their problems.

The DG said no one is above the law and action against

cybercriminals would continue without discrimination.

Rizvi was appointed NCCIA chief on September 12, 2026, after serving as Islamabad Police chief.

 **Bull & Bears**

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

| Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index       |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Current                             | Prev. Close              |
| 168,636.85                          | 169,969.32               |
| Day's High                          | Day's Low                |
| 170,688.38                          | 168,567.78               |
| Index Value                         | Change                   |
| 9,355,669,130                       | −1332.47                 |
| Percentage                          | Time                     |
| −0.78%                              | 30 Sept, 2026<br>4:30 pm |
| Europe: FTSE 100 Index              |                          |
| Index Value                         | Change                   |
| 10,428.27                           | − 177.73                 |
| Percentage                          | Time                     |
| −1.68%                              | 1 Oct, 4:35 pm<br>GMT +1 |
| USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average   |                          |
| Index Value                         | Change                   |
| 50,891.94                           | − 14.11                  |
| Percentage                          | Time                     |
| −0.028%                             | 1 Oct, 1:58 pm<br>GMT-4  |
| Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average |                          |
| Index Value                         | Change                   |
| 68,956.72                           | + 2,203.00               |
| Percentage                          | Time                     |
| +3.30%                              | 1 Oct, 3:45 pm<br>GMT+9  |
| Open Market Forex Rates             |                          |

Events held to honor delivery riders

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Online delivery network foodpanda, in collaboration with its local restaurant partners, organized events to honor delivery riders. During these events, delivery riders were presented with certificates of appreciation. The management of partner restaurants also acknowledged the riders' services and arranged special meals for them. The initiative aimed to recognize the important role played by riders in the local food ecosystem.

Speaking on the occasion, foodpanda Pakistan Commercial Director Khawaja Shariq Mustafa said, "Our delivery riders are the vital link that connects local businesses directly with customers at their doorsteps. We are grateful to our restaurant partners for recognizing the riders' contribution to keeping local businesses active."

Such initiatives, which foster stronger connections between restaurant kitchen teams and delivery riders, further strengthen the foundation of Pakistan's evolving delivery landscape.

PIBF Congratulates Sohail Aziz on Election as PCFA Chairman

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Pak International Business Forum (PIBF) has congratulated Mr. Sohail Aziz on his election as Chairman of the Pakistan Cotton Fashion Apparel Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PCFA) for 2026-2028.

In a joint message, PIBF Central President Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Ahmed Mangat, General Secretary Muhammad Ejaz Tanveer and PIBF Karachi General Secretary and Mera Brand Pakistan Coordinator Muhammad Amir Rafi felicitated Sohail Aziz on assuming the new responsibility. They described him as a prominent business leader and noted his roles as President PIBF Karachi, Director Global PIBF and CEO of NASA International. They said his election reflected recognition of his leadership, professional commitment and services to Pakistan's business and export community.

Finance Minister Aurangzeb says economy moving in right direction, private sector must lead growth

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, visiting the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), said Pakistan's economy was moving in the right direction and that sustainable growth must be led by the private sector, with the government providing a conducive policy framework and investment ecosystem.

He outlined six priorities: lasting macroeconomic stability, sustainable growth driven by productivity, investment, exports and jobs, continued structural reforms, a shift from aid to trade and investment, wider access to finance for SMEs, agriculture and housing, and positioning Pakistan for the new economy, including digitalization, blockchain and Web 3.0.

Noting that the economy had contracted three years ago, he said it had moved from stabilization towards growth and must break the boom-and-bust cycle. He cited the PIA transaction, in which local business groups mobilized close to \$1.2 billion.



He said investor interest is rising in mining, technology, agriculture, oil and gas and refinery upgrades, including Turkish interest in power distribution privatisation. Tax filers have crossed 5.7 million, up from about 3.9 million last year. Around Rs60 billion has been financed under the Apna Ghar Programme. OICCI representatives shared their views on the investment environment.

High-level meeting

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani chairs a high-level review meeting on the implementation of the Aasan Tax Scheme in Finance division



Mini LED TV Performance Depends on More Than the Label

Commerce Desk

Mini LED technology is increasingly common in televisions, but its performance depends on more than the label itself. Using smaller LED chips allows manufacturers to place thousands of LEDs behind a screen, creating more independently controlled dimming zones. This can improve contrast, produce deeper blacks and brighter highlights, and reveal greater detail in scenes containing both light and shadow.

Three factors are particularly important: hardware-based local dimming, the number of independently controlled zones and the backlight architecture. Hardware dimming provides more precise control than software-based alternatives, while a greater number of zones can improve separation between bright and dark areas. Full Array Local Dimming (FALD), with LEDs distributed across the panel, enables localized control.

TCL Marketing Director Majid Khan Niazi highlighted these factors for consumers. According to Omdia, TCL shipped 2.43 million Mini LED TVs globally in the first half of 2026, up 77.1 percent year-on-year.

Hashoo Group, Al Rehman Group Announce “Grandeur by Hashoo” Project in Bahria Town Rawalpindi



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Hashoo Group's Real Estate Division, in partnership with Al Rehman Group, has announced Grandeur by Hashoo, a multi-purpose development in the Business District of Bahria Town Phase 8, Rawalpindi, near the Statue of Liberty.

The 25-storey high-rise will have a covered area of about 554,270 square feet, including a seven-storey shopping mall with retail outlets, a Fun City and a food court, a 10-storey hotel apartment component, and club facilities such as a swimming pool, gymnasium, spa, salon, cigar bar and shooting range. The agreement signing ceremony was attended by Hashoo Group Deputy Chairman and CEO Murtaza Hashwani, NAB Deputy Chairman Sohail Nasir, Al Rehman Group Chairman Muhammad Yousaf and Hashoo Group Real Estate CEO Shakir Bhura.

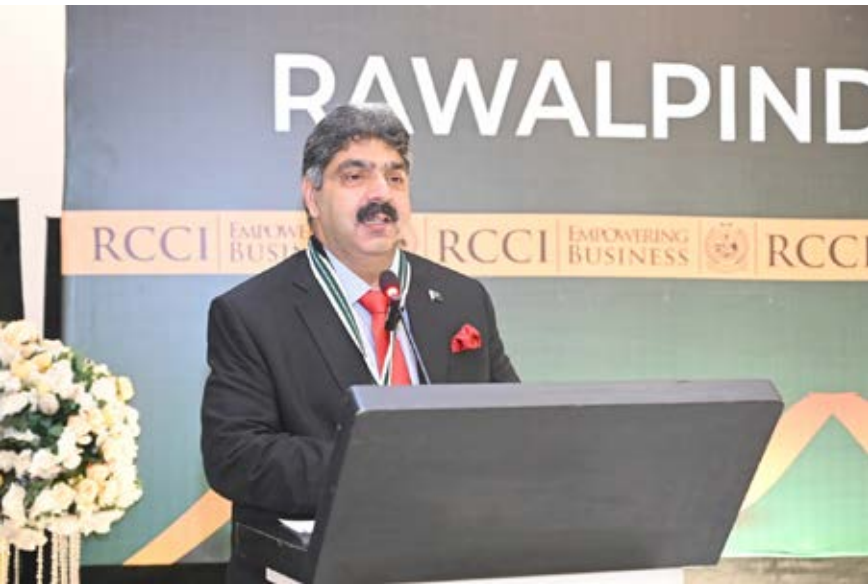
Bhura said the group would work with all stakeholders, including customers who have already invested, to ensure progress, transparency and delivery. Sohail Nasir said NAB helped bring the two groups together, calling the agreement good news for the project's affectees and a step towards completing it. Yousaf said the partnership combines expertise in real estate and hospitality.

Noshervan Khalil Khan sworn in as RCCI President for 2026-28 term

RAWALPINDI: Noshervan Khalil Khan was sworn in as President of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), with Waseem Aslam taking charge as Senior Vice President and Ikram ur Rehman Abbasi as Vice President. Group Leader and former President Sohail Altaf administered the oath to the newly elected office bearers and Executive Body for 2026-2028.

Altaf praised the outgoing team's services and expressed confidence that the new leadership would strengthen RCCI's role as an effective platform for promoting business and economic development.

Addressing the ceremony, Khan reaffirmed his commitment to tackling the business community's key challenges. He identified the high cost of production, export competitiveness, industrial policy, development of economic and industrial zones along the Rawalpindi Ring Road, taxation issues, and alleged harassment by tax authorities and government departments as priority areas.



He stressed constructive engagement between the business community and government institutions to find practical solutions, and said RCCI would advocate policies that encourage investment, industrial growth and exports.

Former RCCI presidents, trade association representatives, Executive Members and a large number of members attended.

Mohammad Zikria Zia Takes Charge as ICCI President

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Zikria A Zia on Thursday formally assumed charge as President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), along with Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatah as Senior Vice President and Mohammad Waqas Khan as Vice President.

The ceremony was attended by ICCI Founder Group Chairman Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, several former presidents, executive members, senior members, and business leaders including Kashif Chaudhry of the Markazi Tanzeem e Tajran Pakistan and Pakistan Business Forum, and Ajmal Baloch of the All Pakistan Anjuman Tajraan.



Zia called leading ICCI a great honour and a major responsibility, pledging to protect and promote the business community's interests. He said his focus would be resolving key business issues, improving the

business environment and developing markets, industrial areas and Islamabad as a whole, adding that the team would remain accessible to members.

The senior vice president and vice president assured members of their dedication and close work with the business community.

Sheikh Tariq Sadiq congratulated the new team and expressed confidence that it would continue the tradition of serving traders and strengthening ICCI. Former president Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub and Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry also extended best wishes. The outgoing office-bearers were given a warm send-off.

# IRS Launches ‘Hate Tracker 2025’ Report on Discrimination Against Minorities in India



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) launched its “Annual Report: Hate Tracker 2025” on discrimination and hate crimes against religious minorities and lower castes in India. Senior diplomats, scholars, researchers, journalists and students

attended. According to the report, persecution of Muslim, Christian and Dalit communities deepened in 2025 through the convergence of state power, legal infrastructure and extrajudicial networks. IRS President Ambassador Jauhar Saleem highlighted voter roll revisions, citing the report’s finding that in Bihar

Muslims were 16.9 percent of the population but about 33 percent of reported voter deletions, with a 52 percent higher probability of removal. Dr. Gregory Stanton, Founding President of Genocide Watch, said the report documents what he called the initial phase of neo-Nazism in India. He sought permission to publish it on

the Genocide Watch website. The report claims about 25,110 Muslim-owned properties were demolished in 2025, along with the vandalism of around eight churches and destruction of over 50 mosques. It says most incidents occurred in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and other states.

## Kaspersky warns of rising online risks for children on social media and gaming platforms

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky has analyzed children’s digital activity across the META region, including Pakistan, for the first eight months of 2026. YouTube was the most popular mobile app among children in Pakistan at 31.2 percent of activity, followed by Instagram (18.8 percent), WhatsApp (17.4 percent), Facebook (10.8 percent) and TikTok (5.7 percent). Multiplayer games were among the top 10 most visited online resources, with children accessing Roblox on smartphones and computers, and Discord on desktop. Experts warned that multiplayer games allow direct contact with strangers, exposing children to online grooming, in which malicious actors use manipulation to gain trust, obtain personal photos, arrange meetings or blackmail. Phishing remains another key threat. Generative AI adds new risks, including deepfakes used in cyberbullying. Andrey Sidenko, Kaspersky’s Head of Child Online Safety, urged parents to teach children not to talk to strangers or share personal information, and to encourage open communication at home. Seifallah Jedidi advised good digital habits and parental controls such as Kaspersky Safe Kids.

## Modern genetic research essential for crop improvement: Hazara University VC

Abdul Wahid Khan

MANSEHRA: The Department of Agriculture, Hazara University Mansehra, organized its first International Workshop titled “From Field to Genome: The Future of Crop Breeding,” bringing together more than 200 national and international experts, researchers, faculty members and students. Speaking at the inaugural session, Hazara University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Ikramullah Khan stressed that researchers should focus beyond academic publications and ensure their work produces practical solutions and benefits the agricultural sector. He emphasized scientific integrity, hard work, research and continuous learning for students. Dean Faculty of Biological and Health Sciences Prof. Dr. Inamullah Khan said developed countries had advanced agriculture through modern technologies, genetic research and scientific approaches to crop breeding. He said the workshop would introduce young researchers to emerging trends in crop improvement.

# Thirteen Days, Nine in London: What Did Pakistan Reap?

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has returned home after a 13-day foreign tour, a significant portion of which nine full days was spent in London. While his participation in the United Nations General Assembly in New York constituted a vital international engagement, the lingering question on the public mind is simple yet profound: what tangible dividends did Pakistan secure from those nine days in the British capital? During his stay, the prime minister interacted with senior executives of premier global financial institutions, pitched Pakistan as an attractive investment destination, and attended the historic listing ceremony of the country’s three-billion-dollar sovereign Eurobond at the London Stock Exchange (LSE) where he became the first Pakistani premier to open a trading session. According to official figures, the bond issue attracted approximately six billion dollars in global investor demand. Yet, for the common citizen, the query remains deeply grounded in everyday realities: Pakistan continues to roll out the red carpet for foreign investors, but where is the domestic economic ecosystem to absorb and sustain that capital? On the one hand, the prime minister holds high-profile meetings with representatives from Barclays,

J. P. Morgan, Citi, BlackRock, and Rothschild & Co., urging them to expand their footprint in Pakistan. On the other hand, domestic industry, commerce, and agriculture are battling an uphill struggle. When local factories operate below capacity or remain shuttered entirely, production costs spiral, the ease of doing business deteriorates, farmers find themselves priced out of viable markets, and regional trade routes face persistent bottlenecks, how can foreign capital be persuaded through rhetoric alone? This contradiction lies at the heart of the government’s current economic narrative. The volatile situation along the Pakistan-Afghanistan trade route serves as a glaring case in point. Cross-border and transit trade have witnessed a dramatic slump. Prolonged border closures and administrative disruptions have left traders, transporters, and export-dependent businesses counting heavy losses. When container trucks remain stranded, perishable agricultural produce rots at the border, and local livelihoods are choked, it creates an untenable dissonance with Islamabad’s projection of Pakistan as a regional hub for trade and investment. Capital does not flow merely on the strength of invitations. It demands predictable markets, unhindered trade corridors, policy continuity,

affordable and reliable energy, robust security, and deep-rooted business confidence. These are prerequisites that must be cultivated from within. The fundamental malady plaguing our economy is not a total aversion by foreign investors; rather, it is whether enterprises already operating within Pakistan possess an environment conducive to survival, expansion, and reinvestment. When a domestic industrialist grapples with crushing utility tariffs, arbitrary taxation, stifling import curbs, and constant policy shifts, an overseas investment drive loses its efficacy. The same systemic friction afflicts the agricultural sector. A farmer’s mandate extends beyond cultivation; it requires secure, efficient pathways to markets. When cold storage, transportation networks, and export channels break down, the economic value of a bountiful harvest evaporates before reaching either the grower or the national exchequer. Pakistan urgently requires a cohesive economic framework where industry, agriculture, and trade reinforce one another where the farmer secures a fair market, the trader commands an open route, the manufacturer obtains competitive

energy, and the investor retains faith that today’s policy will not be undone tomorrow. There is another question that warrants equally serious examination. Is there any other world leader who would spend nine full days in a foreign country without a single publicly reported meeting with its senior government leadership? If this unusual pattern is indeed the case, perhaps Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif deserves a measure of credit for demonstrating that a lengthy overseas stay can be conducted without high-level political engagements forming the centerpiece of the visit. The irony, however, is difficult to miss. When a head of government travels abroad for over a week, the public naturally expects tangible diplomatic dividends strengthened bilateral ties, expanded trade concessions, binding investment commitments, and high-stakes political engagement. If the primary visible outcome remains a series of closed-door interactions with financial institutions, while clouding the visit in questions regarding official state-level dialogue, the public is entirely justified in asking what this extended sojourn ultimately achieved.



Analysis

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

This brings us to a fundamental test of accountability. Beyond the optics of international financial forums, what concrete deliverables has the prime minister brought home for the citizenry? How much net new investment has been locked in? How many binding agreements have been signed? How many enterprises are slated to break ground on new projects, and how many jobs will be generated? Most importantly, when will these theoretical commitments translate into visible ground realities? These are not adversarial talking points; they are basic tenets of democratic accountability and performance evaluation. The three-billion-dollar Eurobond must be assessed through the same analytical lens. While the massive global demand and successful LSE listing reflect returning international confidence in Pakistan’s macro stabilization path, a sovereign Eurobond remains debt financing. It is fundamentally distinct from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that builds factories, transfers technology, and expands the country’s productive base. Pakistan’s ultimate salvation lies in productive, job-creating enterprise, not sovereign borrowing. There is also the pressing issue of official communication. When the executive branch bypasses regular,

unfiltered engagement with the media opting instead for curated official clips and sanitized soundbites legitimate public inquiries remain unanswered. A government secure in its economic trajectory must be equally willing to subject itself to rigorous journalistic scrutiny. Public communication should extend far beyond state-sanctioned PR exercises. Ultimately, the issue transcends the prime minister’s itinerary or his high-profile meetings in London. The central test is whether the Pakistan projected to foreign financiers in London mirrors the Pakistan experienced on the ground. If that alignment exists, the evidence must manifest visibly: factories expanding, trade volumes rising, borders facilitating commerce, exports surging, and local businesses operating with predictable certainty. If these metrics remain stagnant, then 13 days abroad nine of them spent in London will amount to little more than diplomatic theatre, photo-ops, and press releases, leaving Pakistan precisely where it started. The public does not require regular updates on foreign excursions; they demand tangible dividends. And as the dust settles on this extended tour, the citizens of Pakistan are entirely justified in posing the most pressing question of all: Where are the results?

# Quetta’s Daughter, Pakistan’s Pride

Continued from Page 4

We the Humans, founded in 2015, she has helped more than 400 widows of terrorism victims gain financial independence. Rug weaving, childcare, education and literacy support connect income with dignity. A widow able to support her children acquires something beyond financial relief: greater freedom to

make decisions about her family’s future. As a founding member of the Women’s Democratic Front, Haider also helped pioneer Balochistan’s first Women’s March. Her advocacy reaches women facing forced marriage and honour violence, crossing the boundaries of her own community. That breadth matters. Having experienced persecution,

she has refused to make another person’s ethnicity or identity a condition for receiving help. Pakistan owes women like her more than ceremonial praise. They need protection, functioning courts and institutions that respond before desperation forces a hunger strike. Their work reveals both the courage within our society and the distance between constitutional

promises and everyday experience. Supporting them would allow more families to recover the ordinary security that violence has stolen. Pakistan is too often viewed through an unfavourable lens in the international media, with few stories allowing its humanity and courage to shine. Finding Jalila Haider’s recognition among the day’s top ten world news stories

filled my heart with pride, even as it revived the agony of everything our Hazara community has endured. May this honour bring her greater dignity, respect and protection, and inspire many more Jalila Haiders across Pakistan and the world to join the struggle for justice and freedom. May their courage restore hope to those pushed into the shadows and challenge

the label of “illegal” imposed on human beings through no fault of their own, but by systems, borders and laws that fail to recognise their humanity. The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Michigan, USA

# Pak Army to Support Kuwaiti Forces in Multiple Fields

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The meetings between the two sides culminated in a strong and unambiguous reaffirmation of their shared vision and their collective determination to take their bilateral relations to new and unprecedented heights. The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to expand bilateral defence cooperation between the two brotherly countries, a commitment that is grounded in a long history of friendship and mutual support that has always characterized the relationship between Pakistan and Kuwait. This reaffirmation was not just a diplomatic formality but a heartfelt expression of the deep and abiding ties

that bind the two nations together, ties that are based on a common faith, shared cultural values, and a mutual interest in regional peace and stability. The meeting also reaffirmed the commitment to transform the bilateral relationship into a strategic and mutually beneficial defence partnership, a transformation that is now well underway and that is being given concrete shape through the provisions of the Protocol Agreement. This strategic partnership is envisioned as a long-term and enduring relationship that will go beyond the specific provisions of the agreement and will encompass a wide range of collaborative activities, including joint military exercises, mutual exchange of military

personnel, and close coordination on regional security issues. The use of the word “strategic” is highly significant in the context of international relations, as it indicates a partnership that is not merely transactional but one that is based on a shared understanding of the broader geopolitical landscape and a common commitment to promoting peace and security. The fact that this partnership is described as “mutually beneficial” is equally important, as it ensures that both countries will derive tangible and sustained benefits from their cooperation, whether it is in the form of enhanced military capabilities, greater strategic influence, or stronger economic and diplomatic ties. This balanced and

equitable approach is the foundation of a durable and resilient partnership that can withstand the test of time and the vagaries of changing geopolitical circumstances. It is a very good news for Pakistani nation who is happy to see that their Army is such a strong army which is now supporting other countries, a sentiment that has been echoed in countless conversations and messages of congratulations that have been exchanged across the country. This news has filled the hearts of Pakistanis with a profound sense of joy and satisfaction, as it confirms their long-held belief that their army is a world-class institution that is capable of

holding its own on the international stage. The happiness of the nation is rooted in a deep sense of gratitude for the sacrifices that the soldiers of Pakistan have made over the years, sacrifices that have ensured the security and prosperity of the country and that have earned it a reputation as a formidable military power. People have been expressing their pride and happiness in a variety of ways, from waving flags and distributing sweets to sharing messages of support on social media and praising the army’s leadership for its vision and foresight. This widespread public support is a powerful testament to the strong bond that exists between

the Pakistani people and their military, a bond that is based on mutual respect, trust, and a shared commitment to the nation’s well-being. People love Pak Army and feel proud on it, and this love and pride are not just abstract emotions but are expressed in concrete ways, such as the enthusiastic recruitment drives, the generous donations to military welfare funds, and the unwavering support for military operations during times of crisis. The army is deeply embedded in the national fabric of Pakistan, and its successes are celebrated as the successes of the entire nation, while its challenges are met with empathy and solidarity. This overwhelming sense of national pride and unity that has been generated by the news of the agreement is a reminder of the positive and unifying role that the armed forces play in Pakistani society, and it is a source of strength and inspiration for the nation as it looks forward to a future of greater prosperity and international recognition. The people are confident that the Pakistan Army will execute its responsibilities under the Protocol Agreement with the same dedication and professionalism that have always been its hallmark, and they are eagerly looking forward to the positive outcomes that this partnership will bring for both Pakistan and Kuwait.

## Gong Ceremony

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, rings the gong at the Gong Ceremony organised by Arif Habib Corporation at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) to mark the listing of Naya Nazimabad Apartments REIT on Thursday.



Photo: Online

# Finance Minister Aurangzeb Says Private Sector-Led Growth and Capital Formation Key to Economic Progress

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb reaffirmed the government's commitment to sustainable growth, macroeconomic stability and private sector-led development while addressing a Gong Ceremony at the Pakistan Stock Exchange marking the listing of Naya

Nazimabad Apartments REIT. He said the KSE-100 Index had risen from around 67,000 points in March 2024 to around 170,000. A record 25,281 new investors joined in September 2026, bringing the total to 656,218, more than double the March 2024 figure. Eleven companies came to market in FY26, the most in over two decades, and five

more IPOs were completed in the first quarter of FY27. However, he stressed that the goal is capital formation for businesses, infrastructure, housing and jobs, not just the index. On the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Programme, he said about Rs60 billion has been financed, with a further Rs340 billion approved by

banks awaiting disbursement. He called on the supply side to speed up housing development and highlighted REITs as a tool for mobilizing investment. He cited growing local and foreign investor interest, including a PIA consortium involving close to \$1.2 billion, Turkish interest in power distribution privatisation, and US interest in several sectors.

The minister said growth is around 3.7 percent and expected to approach 4 percent, urging an end to boom-and-bust cycles. Tax filers have crossed 5.7 million, up from about 3.9 million last year. The REIT offering was subscribed about eight times in book-building and 4.3 times in the public offering.

# Quality Healthcare Among Top Priorities of Balochistan Govt: CM Bugti

### Bureau Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said providing quality healthcare to citizens is among the provincial government's top priorities, with ongoing reforms aimed at improving medical facilities in public hospitals. Speaking during a visit to Civil Sandeman Provincial Hospital, Quetta, where MPA and former provincial health minister Mir Rahmat Saleh Baloch underwent a successful angioplasty, the chief minister said reforms were beginning to produce positive results. He said the government was working to equip major hospitals with modern facilities capable of treating complex



diseases locally.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said the

reforms aimed to reduce the

need for residents to travel to other cities or outside the province for treatment, saving them time, hardship and additional expenses. He added that measures were being taken to improve medical equipment, diagnostic services, emergency care and treatment capabilities. Mir Rahmat Saleh Baloch expressed satisfaction with the treatment, saying improved healthcare facilities were benefiting people across Balochistan. The chief minister, accompanied by National Party chief Dr Abdul Malik Baloch, also consulted doctors about his condition and said efforts would continue to restore public confidence in government hospitals.

# Investment Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Invites Jeddah-Based Pakistani Diaspora to Invest at Home

### Spokesman Report

JEDDAH: Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh attended a reception hosted in his honour by prominent Pakistani businessmen in Jeddah, including Chaudhry Tariq Iqbal and Ali Malik. A large number of the Pakistani business community attended, welcoming the government's efforts to improve the investment climate. The minister described the diaspora as an important economic bridge between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and encouraged entrepreneurs to explore investments and joint ventures in Pakistan. He said more than 500 regulatory reforms have been implemented to simplify procedures and reduce compliance burdens. He highlighted the Business Facilita-



tion Center, which offers one-window services for registrations, licences, NOCs and approvals. He also pointed to opportunities in agriculture, IT, mining, manufacturing, energy, logistics, tourism and export industries, as well as in Special Economic Zones offering dedicated infrastructure and incentives. Sheikh said Pakistan aims to give investors a simpler, faster and more predictable experience. He urged the community to bring investment, technology and networks, and to promote Saudi-Pakistan business partnerships. The gathering also featured an open exchange of views on investment, reforms and economic cooperation. The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to an enabling environment for sustainable investment, exports and jobs.

# PM Directs Expansion of Aasaan Khidmat Centres Across Pakistan



### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed the expansion of Pakistan Aasaan Khidmat Centres across the country through public-private collaboration to provide citizens with fast, transparent and quality services at their doorstep. Chairing a meeting on the centres' performance, he said citizens should not need repeated visits to government offices and directed officials to provide multiple services under one roof while further reducing service delivery times. He ordered expedited expansion of the Islamabad centre, including increasing staff according

to public needs and presenting its third-party performance audit. The prime minister also directed officials to accelerate work on centres in Muzaffarabad, Gilgit and Skardu and initiate immediate steps to establish centres in Peshawar and Bannu. A plan for using existing federal government buildings for the latter centres was also sought. The meeting was informed that more than 171,000 applications were processed at the Islamabad centre from January to September, while 99.5 percent of citizens expressed satisfaction. Average service delivery time was reported at three to 10 minutes.

# Gilani meets Speaker National Assembly



### Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Thursday met Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House. The meeting discussed the overall political, economic and security situation in the country, along with other matters of mutual interest. The participants also exchanged views on further strengthening institutional cooperation between the two Houses of Parliament and enhancing the effectiveness of the legislative process. The Chairman Senate emphasized that all political forces should rise above political affiliations and prioritize the national interest to promote Pakistan's development, prosperity and stability. He stressed the impor-

ance of political dialogue, mutual consultation and greater cooperation among political forces, Parliament and state institutions to address the challenges facing the country. He underlined that Parliament is a fundamental pillar of the democratic system and has a key role in building consensus on national issues, addressing public concerns and ensuring effective legislation. He said stronger institutional coordination between the Senate and National Assembly would further improve the legislative process and advance matters of public interest. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of both Houses to strengthening democratic and parliamentary traditions and playing their effective role in addressing the country's political, economic and security challenges.

# DPM Dar for effective use of AI, digital techs to shift focus from reactive response to preemptive preparedness

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday called for the effective use of artificial intelligence and digital technologies to shift the focus from reactive response to early warning and preparedness. The deputy prime minister issued these directions amid chairing a high-level meeting on the Establishment of the Joint Pak Global Tech Facility at the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), a DPM's Office news release said. The Chairman NDMA briefed the meeting on NEOC's role in disaster monitoring, early warning, preparedness and coordinated response. He also outlined NDMA's Next Generation Technology project and plans to establish the Global Resil-

ience Hub for international cooperation in proactive disaster management. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr Musadik Malik; Chairman NDMA, Lt General Inam Haider Malik; Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Bajwa; Secretary, Economic Affairs Division; and senior officials from the Ministries of Planning and Development, Finance and Foreign Affairs, as well as NDMA.

