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Govt announces daily petroleum pricing to enhance transparency



ANI

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday announced that petroleum product prices would now be determined on a daily basis following the renewed escalation in the region after the recent exchange of strikes between the United States and Iran.

Speaking at a press conference alongside Information Minister Ataullah Tarar, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik said the decision was taken during a meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by the prime minister.

Malik said the move aimed to enhance transparency in the pricing mechanism without exposing the state to financial risks.

"The federal cabinet and the prime minister decided that, without exposing the state to any risk, the responsibility would be assigned to Ogra to determine petroleum prices daily in line with international market trends. Ogra will not only publish on its website the Platts benchmark

rates, which are used globally to determine petroleum prices, but will also disclose the components that make up the final price consumers pay at petrol pumps. Ogra has been directed to publish all these details so that people know why these prices are unavoidable," he said. Malik said it was unfortunate that despite Pakistan's leadership making "tremendous efforts" to steer the region towards reconciliation and a lasting ceasefire, tensions had once again begun escalating.

"It is unfortunate that despite the sincere efforts made by our leadership, especially Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, to move the region towards reconciliation and a permanent ceasefire, tensions are once again rising," he said. The minister said petroleum prices, which had already witnessed sharp fluctuations during previous bouts of regional tensions, were once again on the rise. He said diesel prices

had increased significantly over the past few days, adding that the Platts benchmark for diesel had risen from \$110 per barrel to \$140 per barrel as of Friday.

Referring to petrol prices, Malik said the Platts benchmark, which had been around \$89 per barrel, had climbed to nearly \$100 per barrel, triggering another increase in energy prices across international markets. The minister thanked the public for showing patience despite the hardships, saying people had endured the burden alongside the government despite a Rs130 billion subsidy provided by the government and a targeted subsidy programme being implemented in coordination with the provincial governments. "Today's decision is aimed at bringing greater transparency to the entire system so that people themselves can understand why increases in petroleum prices become unavoidable," he said.

Malik added that if the government had adopted the same approach taken by a previous

administration in 2022, the public would have continued paying the price for years in the form of higher inflation.

Malik acknowledged that the latest decision would be difficult for the public but said it was necessary to strengthen the state.

He rejected the perception that the government had increased the burden on consumers through higher levies or had failed to pass on the benefit of the recent decline in international oil prices.

"The government remains committed to its promise. Just as the price of diesel has fallen from Rs520 per litre to below Rs300 per litre, people have also witnessed a substantial reduction of Rs70 to Rs80 in petrol prices," the minister said. He added that the decline in international oil prices had been fully passed on to consumers. Clarifying the issue of the petroleum levy, Malik said Pakistan was required under international agreements to maintain such levies to support the budget.

Bilawal slams govt for punishing whole of AJK for actions of protesters

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Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday criticised both the federal government and the protesters over the recent unrest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), lashing out at the former for punishing AJK for the actions of the latter. Bilawal formally launched his party's election campaign for the AJK elections from Dadyal, some 200 Kilometres away from the capital city of AJK, describing the upcoming polls as "the most significant in AJK's history". Addressing a PPP rally, Bilawal criticised both sides over the worsening situation in AJK. The PPP chairman said Kashmir had been facing a difficult test for the past month while the entire world watched, but it was the people of the region who were bearing the consequences. "Everyone has the right to protest, but protesting in such a way that food supplies cannot reach Kashmir, fuel cannot reach Kashmir and medicines cannot reach Kashmir does not harm the government. It does not harm the state of Pakistan or the state of Azad Kashmir. The burden, the suffering and the hardship are being borne only by the people of Kashmir," Bilawal said.

He added that the protesters were making the people of Kashmir pay the price for the government's mistakes.

The PPP chairman also criticised the government's response to the protests, saying it was punishing all Kashmiris instead of only those involved in the demonstrations. "The protesters may be good or bad, they may even be wrong, but the government is not punishing only the protesters. It is punishing all Kashmiris, and it has been doing so for the past 30 days," he said.

Bilawal described the upcoming AJK elections as the most significant in the region's history given the prevailing situation, saying the people had never witnessed such circumstances before.

"This is a test for the state of Azad Kashmir, this is a test for the state of Pakistan, this is a test for all political parties and politicians because it is the responsibility of politicians to represent you, to become your voice and to carry that voice to Muzaffargarh, to Islamabad and to the entire world," he said.

Bilawal said politicians, whether from Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir or



elsewhere in the country, had failed to perform their responsibilities effectively by acting as a bridge between the people of Kashmir and the federal government.

He said political leaders had not been able to convey the concerns and aspirations of the people of Kashmir to Islamabad in the manner they should have.

"This is not just Kashmir's issue. I have just returned from the mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan, where the situation is the same. Whether it is Sindh, Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa or Balochistan, whenever a crisis emerges, anti-democratic forces, non-political elements and those pursuing extremist politics exploit that crisis," he said. Urging voters to support the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the upcoming AJK elections, Bilawal promised to become the region's voice at the federal level and on the international stage.

He said the elections presented an opportunity for the people of AJK to entrust the PPP with that responsibility, pledging to raise their issues from Islamabad to the rest of the world.

Expressing concern over the prevailing situation in AJK, Bilawal said every Pakistani and every Kashmiri around the world was worried by the recent developments, but maintained that all of the region's problems could be resolved.

"Whether it is Dadyal's issues, Kashmir's issues or Pakistan's issues, there is no problem that cannot be resolved through politics and in a peaceful manner, and God willing, we will prove it," he added.

Bilawal said he had proposed the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address the ongoing crisis, adding that the mechanism could help resolve the issues if accepted by both the government and the protesters.

Taliban using Indian funds for cross-border terrorism against Pakistan: Ex-Afghan army chief

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ISLAMABAD: Former Afghan Army Chief Lieutenant General Sami Sadat has validated Pakistan's long-standing stance on cross-border terrorism, revealing that the Taliban use Indian financial backing to sponsor militant operations against Pakistan. In a media interview, General Sadat addressed the specific financial nexus driving this instability, stating, "And it is also true that the Taliban have very close relations with India, the money they take here, and then they give that money to TTP and give it to Balochistan to carry out operations in Pakistan".

The former commander asserted that the Taliban facilitate militant organizations while leveraging financial assistance for strategic objectives. General Sadat said that the current Afghan authorities provide operational support to anti-Pakistan militant groups, effectively enabling these



outfits to carry out attacks within Pakistani territory.

He said that external funding is being redirected to sustain the militant networks and that Indian financial assistance specifically reaches groups such as Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan to execute terrorist attacks inside Pakistan.

According to the analysts, General Sadat's remarks closely align with concerns frequently raised by Pakistani regarding the use of Afghan soil for militant activities.

DPM Dar winds up China visit after attending AI moot, meeting FM Wang



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SHANGHAI: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday concluded a "productive" official visit to Shanghai, China, expressing sincere appreciation to the Chinese government and its leadership for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements. "Just concluded a productive visit to Shanghai, China. I express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China and its leadership for its warm hospitality and excellent arrangements throughout my short visit," Deputy Prime Minister Dar wrote on his X timeline. He commended Chinese President Xi Jinping for his insightful keynote address at the opening ceremony of the World AI Cooperation Organization, in which he aptly observed, "AI is an invaluable asset that accumulates the collective wisdom of humanity" which is a timely reminder that this transformative technology carries both immense prom-

ise and a shared responsibility to ensure it serves the common good.

The deputy prime minister thanked Foreign Minister Wang Yi for his warm hospitality and their productive discussions. "We reaffirmed our shared commitment to the continued advancement of the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, with a special focus on high-quality development under CPEC 2.0, including the Siaoh Diq mining project, Karakoram Highway (KKH) Realignment Project, as well as other priority areas of bilateral cooperation agreed between our two countries during the official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in May 2025," he sharing details of his bilateral meeting. He also commended the valuable contributions of his accompanying delegation, including Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Adviser to Chief Minister of Punjab on Artificial Intelligence and Special Initiatives Ali Mustafa Dar.

Security of Chinese in Pakistan 'paramount for us', says PM

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asserted on Friday that the security of Chinese in Pakistan was "paramount for us".

"I would like to say with fullest force at my command that the security of Chinese brothers and sisters in Pakistan is paramount for us, it is most important. And we will leave no stone unturned to provide them with the best possible security," he said while addressing the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical and Healthcare B2B Investment Conference in Islamabad.

The conference also saw the signing of multiple agreements between Pakistani and Chinese companies in the areas of healthcare, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, with PM Shehbaz saying that the deals were cumulatively valued at almost \$440 million. PM Shehbaz's assurance came two days after State Minister for Interior Tallal Chaudhry said authorities were stepping up security around the



China-run Saindak copper and gold mine in Balochistan after supply routes were disrupted in the region by terrorists. His statement came against the backdrop of kinetic operations in the province under Operation Shaban, a high-intensity counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaign launched by security forces following multiple high-casualty and high-

profile terrorist attacks in Balochistan. Chinese citizens and projects have also come under attack multiple times in Pakistan in the past. According to data shared by the National Counter Terrorism Authority in December 2024, as many as 20 Chinese citizens had been killed and 34 injured in terror attacks in the country from 2021 until then. In 2024, five Chinese nationals working on the Dasu dam project perished in a suicide bombing in Bisham in March. In April 2022, at least four people, including three Chinese nationals, were killed while four others were injured in a suicide attack outside the University of Karachi's Confucius Institute, which was claimed by the banned Balochistan Liberation Army. Of the major attacks that have targeted Chinese citizens in Pakistan since 2021, a major one was when at least 12 persons, including nine Chinese engineers and two Frontier Corps personnel, were killed when a bus was attacked near the Dasu hydropower plant in KP's Upper Kohistan district in July 2021.

IHC to Hear Imaan Mazari, Hadi Chattha Pleas on July 24

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ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday fixed July 24 for hearing applications seeking the suspension of sentences awarded to lawyer Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha in the controversial tweets case. According to the cause list issued by the IHC registrar's office, Justice Muhammad Azam Khan will hear the sentence suspension petitions. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has also scheduled the hearing on sentence suspension applications for July 21, ahead of the IHC proceedings. Imaan, a rights activist and lawyer, and Chattha, an advocate, were in January 2026 handed a combined 17-year sentence on multiple charges linked to controversial social media posts that the prosecution argued amounted to an anti-state narrative under cybercrime laws. In March, Imaan approached the SC seeking suspension of her sentence, moving the apex court after the IHC did not list her application for hearing. Filed through Siddiqi, the petition stated that despite her counsel's request to suspend the trial court's judgment.

24 terrorists killed in Bannu intelligence-based operations: ISPR

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RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed 24 terrorists in a series of intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's (K-P) Bannu district and adjoining areas over the past 24 hours, following a recent spike in attacks on police and vehicle-borne suicide bombing in the district, the military's media wing said on Friday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operations were launched "in the backdrop of a recent surge in terrorist activities against Police and vehicle-borne suicide bombing in Bannu District, in which Indian Proxy Fitna Al Khawarij targeted law

enforcement agencies and innocent civilians". Fitna al-Khawarij is the term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

"Security forces had initiated extensive joint intelligence-based operations to hunt the perpetrators of these heinous attacks and their support infrastructure," it added.

The military's media wing said, "In the last twenty-four hours following the fierce fire exchanges in Bannu district and adjoining areas, twenty-four khawarij belonging to Indian proxy Fitna Al Khawarij were killed". Read: Two cops martyred in twin K-P attacks The ISPR said weapons and ammuni-

tion were also recovered from the killed Khawarij, who "remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities and the killing of innocent civilians".

"The operations in the area will continue and perpetrators of these heinous and cowardly acts will be brought to justice, as the relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under the vision "Azam-e-Istehkam" (as approved by the Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country," the statement concluded.



A Delegation of students from foreign universities, working as interns under the "Uraan Overseas Pakistan Summer Scholars Programme" called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in



Workers watering and arranging potted saplings at a local plant nursery, preparing ornamental and seasonal plants for sale during the monsoon plantation

Pakistan, China hold landmark Pharma B2B Conference; \$100 million deals expected

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal, on Friday termed the Pakistan-China Business-to-Business (B2B) Investment Conference a “game changer” for the country’s pharmaceutical industry, noting agreements worth around \$100 million were expected to be signed during the event.

Addressing a joint press conference with the Prime Minister’s Special Assistant on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan, the minister said the conference marked a significant milestone for Pakistan’s pharmaceutical sector.

He said the B2B conference covered all six segments of the pharmaceutical industry and brought together 170 dele-

gations representing different categories of the sector.

The minister underscored that the initiative was in line with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s vision of expanding Pakistan’s pharmaceutical exports and integrating the country into new international markets.

While talking about preparations of the conference, Mustafa Kamal said extensive consultations had been held over the past six weeks between Pakistan’s Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), and other stakeholders to ensure the conference’s success.

He appreciated Haroon Akhtar Khan for holding dozens of meetings during



the past six weeks and said every aspect of the conference had been planned through close coordination between the Ministry of Health, DRAP and other relevant institutions.

The minister also acknowledged the

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for translating all documentary material into Chinese language to facilitate engagement with Chinese participants.

Describing the conference as a landmark initiative, Mustafa Kamal said it had projected Pakistan’s potential and positive image before the international business community.

He said technology transfer through enhanced Pakistan-China cooperation would enable the country to access new global pharmaceutical markets while creating employment opportunities and strengthening the local industry.

Mustafa Kamal thanked all stakeholders whose collective efforts made the conference possible and expressed confidence that it would open a new chapter of cooperation between Pakistan and China in the pharmaceutical sector.

Zong launches 5G-ready indoor network at Islamabad International Airport

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ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan’s leading technology services enterprise, has commenced the deployment of its exclusive 5G-ready Indoor Building Solution (IBS) as the only telecom operator at Islamabad International Airport. The company has also established a Customer Facilitation Desk, marking a significant milestone in advancing next-generation digital infrastructure. The initiative will provide seamless, high-speed indoor network coverage across the airport while enabling travellers to access instant SIM activation, data services, and dedicated on-ground customer support. As Pakistan advances toward a digitally connected future, the initiative lays the foundation for intelligent services and next-generation travel experiences powered by 5G. With the deployment of its 5G-ready IBS, Zong will significantly enhance customer experience across key airport facilities, ensuring uninterrupted high-speed connectivity throughout passenger terminals. The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior leadership from Zong, the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA), and Huawei Global, reaffirming their collective commitment to advancing Pakistan’s digital transformation through 5G-ready infrastructure and strategic collaboration across the aviation ecosystem. Speaking at the ceremony, Zong Chief Technical Officer Mao Weiliang said, “Connectivity is no longer just about communication; it is the backbone of intelligent travel, digital services, and economic growth.”

Historic Display of Religious Unity as Scholars Offer Joint Prayers

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KARACHI: Pakistan marked a significant milestone in its campaign against extremism, terrorism and sectarian violence as leading religious scholars and spiritual leaders from all schools of thought offered Maghrib prayers behind a single Imam at Jamia Tur Rasheed, Karachi, in an unprecedented demonstration of religious harmony and national unity. This historic demonstration was observed during an official visit to Jamia Tur Rasheed, organized by the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee and brought together eminent Ulama and Mashaiikh, representatives of major religious seminaries and leaders from different faith communities. The congregation is being regarded as the first of its kind in Pakistan’s history, where scholars representing all schools of Islamic thought assembled at a leading religious institution to offer congregational prayers behind one Imam, sending a strong message of unity, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Among those who attended the event were Prime Minister’s Coordinator for the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee and Chairman of the Pakistan Ulama Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, Allama Arif Wahidi, Allama Muhammad Hussain Akbar, Mufti Abdul Rahim, Allama Syed Ziaullah Shah Bukhari.

Speaker Ayaz Sadiq Pays Tribute to Security Forces for Successful Bannu Operation

BY: Hurish Shah:
ISLAMABAD-- Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq paid rich tribute to Pakistan’s Security Forces for successfully conducting an intelligence-based operation in Bannu, in which 24 terrorists belonging to Fitna Al Khawarij were killed.

In a statement, the Speaker praised the Security Forces for their professionalism, courage and unwavering commitment in thwarting the designs of the Indian proxy terrorist

group, Fitna Al Khawarij. He said the successful operation reflected the forces’ high level of preparedness, resolve and operational capability.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the operation demonstrated the nation’s firm commitment to eliminating terrorism and safeguarding Pakistan’s sovereignty and security. He added that the country’s Security Forces have consistently displayed exceptional bravery and professionalism in defending the nation.

Reaffirming national unity

against terrorism, the Speaker said the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its brave Security Forces, while the sacrifices of the country’s martyrs will always be remembered with the highest respect and gratitude.

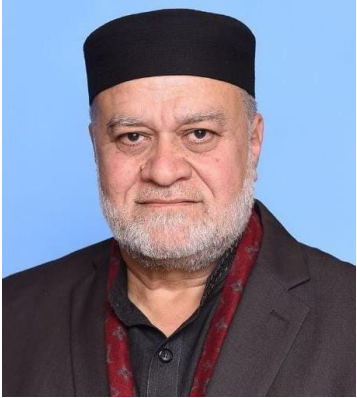
He further expressed confidence that under Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, the Security Forces would continue their operations until the complete eradication of terrorism, ensuring lasting peace, stability and security across the country.

Federal Minister Pir Syed Imran Ahmed Shah to Address 30,000 at Chicago Turkish Festival

BY: ANI Correspondent:
ISLAMABAD-- Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Pir Syed Imran Ahmed Shah, will visit Chicago to attend the Zakat Foundation of America’s annual Turkish Festival on August 1-2, 2026, at the invitation of the organisation’s Founder and CEO, Halil Demir.

The two-day festival is expected to attract more than 30,000 participants from the Turkish, Pakistani, and wider Muslim-American communities, along with civic and interfaith leaders.

During the event, Minister Shah will deliver a keynote address on “Poverty: A Global Threat,” highlighting global poverty challenges,



Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, and the need for stronger international cooperation.

He will also participate in a panel discussion titled “The Enduring Legacy of Mawlana Rumi,” focusing on Rumi’s teachings, the role of Sufism, and its lasting influence on the contemporary Muslim world.

The Zakat Foundation of America, which has been working in Pakistan for nearly two decades, says it has assisted over 750,000 people through food assistance, flood relief, housing, healthcare, orphan support, and other humanitarian programmes. The Chicago Turkish Festival will also feature cultural performances, traditional cuisine, exhibitions, and community activities.

Follow Traffic Rules to Save Lives, Says Mandi Bahauddin DPO Traffic Qamar Abbas Dhariwal

BY: FT Correspondent:
MANDI BAHAUDDIN--- District Traffic Officer (DTO) Mandi Bahauddin, Qamar Abbas Dhariwal, has urged citizens to strictly follow traffic rules, saying adherence to road safety regulations is the hallmark of a civilized society and essential for preventing accidents.

Speaking during a traffic awareness campaign, he said most road accidents occur due to violations of traffic laws and that following traffic rules can protect both drivers and pedestrians from loss of life.



He emphasized that underage individuals should never drive,

while those aged 18 years or above without a driving licence should obtain a learner’s licence from the Licence Branch or Police Service Centre to receive proper driving guidance.

Qamar Abbas Dhariwal also advised motorists to drive responsibly, obey traffic laws, respect pedestrians by allowing them to cross the road safely, and strictly avoid using mobile phones while driving.

He added that the ongoing awareness campaign aims to educate the younger generation about road safety and promote responsible driving habits.

Petroleum Price Hike Cruel and Unbearable, Says PTI MPA Ahmar Bhatti

BY: ANI Correspondent:
LAHORE--- -Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and Member of the Punjab Assembly, Ahmar Bhatti, has strongly condemned the recent increase in petroleum prices, calling it “cruel and unbearable” and warning that it could further worsen the country’s economic situation.

In a statement, Bhatti said the government’s repeated fuel price hikes, despite declining international oil prices, reflected poor economic management and were placing an unbearable burden on the public. He warned that the increase would trigger higher transport fares and rising prices of essential commodities, hit-



ting low- and middle-income families the hardest.

He criticized the government for failing to reduce its own expenditures and protocol while shifting the financial burden onto citizens. Calling for the immediate withdrawal of the price hike, Bhatti urged the government to focus on cutting unnecessary spending instead of increasing public hardship.

The PTI leader warned that if the government continued to ignore growing poverty and public concerns, his party would intensify its protest both inside and outside the Punjab Assembly, pledging to continue defending the rights of ordinary Pakistanis.

Kazi Asad visits FGP, discusses media-policy collaboration for sustainable development

APP- ISLAMABAD: Prominent political and media figure Kazi Asad Abid visited the office of Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) on Friday and held detailed discussions on media and policy collaboration for sustainable development.

The meeting was attended by FGP Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Anwar, former Managing Director of Daily Pakistan Islamabad and noted businessman Pervaiz Zulfiqar, Strategic Policy Advisor at FGP Shafqat Aziz, and Head of Economy at FGP Dr. Shahbaz Tariq.

The participants exchanged views on governance, economic reforms, climate resilience, the media’s role in national development, and opportunities for collaborative initiatives.

Speaking on the occasion, Kazi Asad Abid said the media must move beyond event-based reporting and play a more effective role in shaping informed national discourse on key issues. He emphasized that meaningful progress depends on



sustained dialogue, institutional cooperation, and informed public participation. Welcoming the visiting delegation, Muhammad Anwar highlighted FGP’s commitment to promoting evidence-based policy dialogue and multi-stakeholder partnerships. He said sustainable development could only be achieved through stronger collaboration among public institutions, academia, the private sector, the media, and development organizations. Pervaiz Zulfiqar stressed that responsible journalism and con-

structive public engagement are essential for strengthening democratic institutions and fostering informed debate on national priorities. Shafqat Aziz highlighted the growing importance of strategic communication in advancing national development objectives. He said stronger collaboration between development organizations and media institutions could enhance public understanding of climate change, economic empowerment, governance reforms, and environmental sustainability.

Railway minister announces expansion, modernisation plans

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LAHORE: Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi on Friday announced an ambitious expansion and modernisation plan for Pakistan Railways after inaugurating the restored Bulleh Shah Passenger Train, saying several new train services, station upgrades and infrastructure projects would be launched to improve rail travel across the country.

Addressing a media briefing after the inauguration ceremony, the minister said the Bulleh Shah Passenger Train had been restored after remaining suspended for 15 years despite strong public demand. He said Pakistan Railways was steadily moving towards progress and more train services would be restored as resources became available. He

announced that the Ravi Express would be relaunched later this month, while preparations were also underway to start a Lahore-Wagah train service. Hanif Abbasi said Pakistan Railways would induct 64 new passenger coaches instead of the previously planned 32, while 43 GEU locomotives would be overhauled and dedicated to freight operations. He expressed confidence that the department’s performance would improve by at least 32 per cent. The minister said Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif had allocated Rs2 billion for the upgradation of Lahore Railway Station, while the Punjab government would also finance the Shahdara-Raiwind railway project. He added that Khanewal, Rawalpindi and Gujranwala railway stations had already been upgraded to state-of-the-

art standards.

Highlighting safety initiatives, Hanif Abbasi said Pakistan Railways had signed an agreement with the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) to develop Safe and Smart Railway Stations. He said 184 surveillance cameras had already been installed at Rawalpindi Railway Station, while Lahore, Multan, Khanewal and Karachi railway stations would also be equipped with modern surveillance systems in the second phase of the project.

The minister said the government was engaging with the Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments to install railway crossing gates across the provinces, adding that the ML-1 and ML-3 railway projects would be completed during the present government’s tenure.

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Opinion

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Hamid Javed Awan, a metaphor for struggle.



Written BY:Dr. Jamal Nasir
Former Provincial Minister for Health and Population Welfare, Punjab
CEO City Lab, Chair Qamar Jahan Foundation
President Pakistan Green Task Force
Published By:ANI



There are some personalities in life who, even after leaving this world, leave indelible impressions of their character, love and sincerity on the hearts. Such people become a source of cool shade, peace and courage in the turmoil, difficulties and trials of life. There is no dearth of people in the world, but perhaps only one or two are lucky enough to be sincere and selfless people. For me, the late Hamid Javed Awan was also such a personality. I considered him not only my friend but also my younger brother. The honor, position and successes that I have in life from Allah Almighty were due to the grace of Allah, then the prayers of my parents and the selfless friendship of Hamid Javed Awan. He encouraged and guided me at every turn. After my student days, the days passed at their own pace, but then there came a stage in my life when I became a little distant from social and public activities. At such a time, Hamid Javed Awan was the personality who reactivated me. One day he published the news that I had been appointed as the Information Secretary of the Pakistan Medical Association Punjab. This position instilled new energy in me. At the same time, he came up with a beautiful idea that why not establish an organization that would play a practical role in making Pakistan green and eco-friendly. It was his natural instinct that in the coming era, environment would be the biggest global issue and conflicts would arise over water. As a result of this insight and foresight, we together founded the Pakistan Green Task Force, which soon became an effective and well-known organization in Pakistan. This platform played a valuable role in raising awareness among the people about environmental protection, tree plantation and pollution prevention. Then when I entered practical politics, Hamid Javed Awan stood by me at every step despite being a government employee. From writing,

reading, speaking, communication, advertising and effective use of social media, he selflessly guided me in every field. Whenever I was in trouble, his opinion proved to be a beacon of light for me. When I suddenly received the news of his death, it felt as if my real brother had been separated from me or an important part of my being had been separated from me. This shock was indescribable for me. But we all submit to the will of Allah Almighty. There are two personalities in my life whom I consider to be my true guide and mentor. One is my respected father, who started his struggle from very simple circumstances, set up a cart, worked hard and taught us to live with self-respect. The other personality is the late Hamid Javed Awan, who achieved a distinguished position in life on the basis of his hard work, honesty and character. He spent his entire working life with utmost honesty. In the responsibilities he held, advertisements worth crores of rupees and major financial transactions were under his supervision, but his honesty was such that till date no person or institution has accused him of even a single penny of irregularity or corruption. This is the biggest recognition of his impeccable character. After retirement, when he came to Rawalpindi, I happened to tell the then Deputy Chairman NAB and my younger brother Sohail Nasir that NAB needs a person of character, talent and experience like Hamid Sahib who can effectively highlight the positive image of NAB because NAB was doing great work. On my suggestion, the late Hamid Javed Awan was given the responsibility of Additional Director Media and as always, he did his best for this position. My relationship with Hamid Javed Awan Sahib spans the past four decades. This relationship, instead of weakening with the passage of time, has become stronger, deeper and enviable. Our friendship has been a beautiful example. Whenever I used to organize walks for public awareness

in Islamabad, Hamid Sahib would always participate with full enthusiasm and enthusiasm along with his family. His presence was not only encouraging for me but also a positive message for the other participants that serving the society is not done only through words but through practical participation. He always considered my happiness and sorrow as his own. Be it moments of happiness or days of trial, he stood by my side at every opportunity. His companionship always made me realize that true friends are the greatest blessing of life. Today, when I turn the pages of the past on the occasion of Hamid Sahib's first death anniversary, every moment spent with him becomes fresh before my eyes. The pain of his separation is still present in my heart with the same intensity. Hamid Sahib had gone to America on leave during the last days of his service and apparently he had no intention of returning. But when I got the honor of becoming the Health Minister of Punjab, a desire arose in my heart that such an experienced, honest and talented officer should definitely complete his term of service. I personally persuaded him to return to his homeland and complete his government service. I convinced the then caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, caretaker Information Minister Aamir Mir and Information Secretary Ali Nawaz Malik to call him back from America on my request. He returned home and resumed his duties as Director Advertisements Punjab, DGPR Lahore and completed his job with great grace, dignity and sense of duty. Even during my time as the Health Ministry, Hamid Sahib always supported me fully. He would attend various important meetings, provide guidance with his valuable opinions and vast experience. And played a significant role in communicating the public projects and welfare initiatives of the Health Department to the public. I will always regret that I could not attend his funeral prayers and last rites. I was out of the country during those days due to my personal engagements. As soon as I returned home, I offered my condolences to his son and family at his residence, recited Fateha and expressed my heartfelt sorrow and grief over the separation of this long-time friend and brother of mine. I pray that Allah Almighty forgives him com

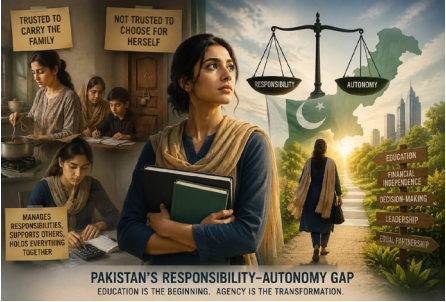
pletely, grants him a high place in Paradise, raises his ranks and grants his family patience. Amen.

Trusted to Carry the Family, Not to Choose for Herself, Pakistan’s Responsibility–Autonomy Gap

BY: Humaira Noreen
Published By: ANI

A daughter can be the person a family trusts the most — and still be the person whose choices it trusts the least. She may be the one who manages household responsibilities, supports younger siblings, accompanies parents through difficult moments, contributes financially, and becomes the emotional backbone of the family. In times of crisis, her maturity and judgment are often unquestioned. Yet when decisions about her own life arise — her career, finances, mobility, marriage, or future — that same confidence often disappears. This contradiction points to a deeper social reality in Pakistan: we recognize women's responsibilities more readily than we recognize their agency. I know this pattern from my own life. As the eldest child in my family, I was the one who worked and contributed financially — yet I was never the one trusted to decide anything for the household. My younger brother has always held more say in family decisions than I have. I hold two postgraduate degrees earned abroad, and even that made no real difference. Education did not translate into authority. My mother's life has followed the same pattern, and it has for generations before her. For decades, discussions around women's empowerment have focused on access: sending girls to school, increasing employment opportunities, improving financial inclusion. These efforts remain essential. But a harder question remains unanswered: once women gain education and opportunity, do they actually have the power to decide what happens with it? Because education alone does not guarantee empowerment. A woman can hold a degree but have limited say in personal decisions. She can earn an income but not control how it is spent. She can manage the household but still be excluded from decisions that shape her own future. The challenge is not only whether women participate. It is whether they have power. From Responsibility to Agency Pakistan has made real progress in girls' education over the past two decades. But the transition from education to economic and social autonomy remains incomplete. Pakistan's female labour force participation rate stood at roughly 24 percent in 2024 — compared to a global average above 50 percent, and among the lowest in South Asia. That gap has barely moved in years, even as girls' school enrolment has climbed. This tells us something important: opportunity is only one part of empowerment. The other part is a social environment where women are actually allowed to use it. The same pattern shows up in financial inclusion, an area I have studied

closely in my own fieldwork. Pakistan has seen rapid growth in mobile wallets and branchless banking. Yet the 2024 Karandaaz Financial Inclusion Survey found only 14 percent of women had access to a bank account, mobile wallet, or other financial service, compared to 56 percent of men — and just 11 percent of women had a registered mobile money account, against 48 percent of men. Research from CGAP places Pakistan's gender gap in account ownership at around 30 percentage points, one of the widest in South Asia, closely tracking the country's low female labour force participation. Access does not automatically translate into control. A woman may have a wallet in her name and still depend on someone else for permission, information, or the final decision on how it is used. So the question is not simply: “Does she have an account?” The deeper question is: “Does she have the authority to use it?” In more than a decade of fieldwork across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Gilgit-Baltistan, I have watched this play out in home after home. Women are often the breadwinners of their households, yet men remain the decision-makers. I have met widows who are, on paper, the heads of their families — and yet it is their sons, sometimes much younger than them, who decide for the house. When Protection Becomes Control One reason this responsibility-autonomy gap persists is that control is often expressed through the language of care. Many families genuinely want to protect their daughters. They worry about safety, social pressures, and uncertainty. These concerns are real. But protection and control are not the same thing. Protection supports a person's ability to make informed choices. Control removes those choices. A daughter who is trusted to hold the family together should also be trusted to make decisions about her own life. Someone capable of carrying responsibility is also capable of exercising judgment. Different Expectations, Different Futures From childhood, Pakistani society often prepares sons and daughters for different roles. Sons are encouraged to become decision-makers. Daughters are encouraged to become responsible caregivers. A son's independence is read as preparation for adulthood. A daughter's adjustment is read as good character. These early expectations shape adult lives. Women are frequently praised for patience, sacrifice, and endurance. But a society that only celebrates women when they give something up risks confusing sacrifice with success. A daughter's value should not be measured by how much she can tolerate. It should also be meas-



ured by how much she can contribute — through her ideas, her choices, her leadership. Why This Matters for Pakistan's Development This is not only a women's issue. It is a development issue. When educated, capable women cannot fully participate in economic and social decision-making, families and the country lose real human potential. Research across low- and middle-income countries consistently links women's decision-making power within the household to better outcomes in children's education, health, and family economic resilience. When women have more say, families tend to do better — not worse. Expanding women's agency does not weaken families. It strengthens them. Strong families are not built on silence or unequal power. They are built on trust, respect, and the belief that every member is capable of contributing. The Question Pakistan Must Ask Pakistan does not only need educated daughters. It needs daughters whose knowledge is respected, whose judgment is trusted, and whose decisions are valued. The next stage of empowerment is not simply opening doors for women. It is making sure that once they walk through, they have the authority to shape what happens next. A daughter should not have to spend her entire life proving she is responsible before she is trusted with responsibility over herself. The very qualities families rely on — her resilience, her intelligence, her care — are the qualities that make her capable of choosing. The question Pakistan must ask is not whether daughters are ready to decide. The question is whether society is ready to trust them. A nation that trusts its daughters with responsibility must also trust them with choice. Pakistan's future will not be shaped simply by educating women or expanding opportunities for them. It will be shaped by whether society is willing to respect their judgment, value their decisions, and recognise them as equal partners in building stronger families, stronger communities, and a stronger nation. Only then can Pakistan truly unlock the full potential of half of its population.

Budget of Prime Minister’s Youth Program and Launch of UN Pivot Program

BY:Asghar Ali Mubarak: Published by ANI News Agency

When our youth succeed, Pakistan succeeds. The Prime Minister's Youth Program, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations, launched the Pivot Program at an event titled “Connection to Contribution: Pakistani Youth Diaspora Connect” held in New York. The program aims to provide a structured platform for Pakistani youth around the world to connect with Pakistani youth through mentorship, knowledge and experience exchange, professional networking, innovation and education, business opportunities and regular collaboration in the areas of skills.

The event was attended by young Pakistani professionals, business figures, researchers, students and community leaders from across the United States and expressed keen interest in mentoring, supporting and sharing knowledge with Pakistani youth through the Pivot platform. Remember that Pakistan's youth represent the country's single greatest national asset and the ultimate foundational pillar for long-term socio-economic growth. With nearly 70 percent of the national population currently under the age of 30, the strategic necessity of investing in young generations transcends basic social welfare. Under the governance of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, youth empowerment has been systematically placed at the absolute epicenter of the state's federal development agenda. The overarching vision is structurally anchored around the principle of “Productive Employment,” a paradigm shift explicitly engineered to transition Pakistani youth from passive job seekers into proactive, high-yielding job creators. The Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 2026–27 stands as a historic milestone, reflecting the largest-ever public financial investment in domestic youth development. The state has allocated a monumental PKR 40.58 billion directly to targeted Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) initiatives. To complement this baseline deployment, an additional PKR 21 billion has been synergistically allocated through various federal ministries for specialized youth-centric programs. This consolidated fiscal intervention demonstrates a rigorous, multi-sectoral strategy designed to institute cross-sectional equality of opportunity across higher education, digital skills acquisition, entrepreneurial financing, public innovation, athletic development, and civic leadership. Fiscal Allocation Breakdown: Tracking the PKR 40.58 Billion PMYP Core PortfolioThe youth-focused budgetary blueprint prioritizes high-impact operational nodes designed to yield measurable dividends in economic self-reliance, technical literacy, and social inclusion. The distinct budgetary lines are mathematically itemized as follows:Prime Minister's Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme (PMYBALS): PKR 22.4 billion. This represents the single largest financial cornerstone of the youth budget, explicitly channeled to stimulate micro-entrepreneurship, small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs), and modernized agricultural ventures. Youth Skills Development Programme: PKR 9.9 billion. These funds are directed entirely toward equipping the domestic workforce with market-driven, high-demand technical and professional capabilities. Pakistan Education Endowment Fund (PEEF): PKR 3 billion. A protective educational fund designed to provide sustainable, merit-based financial coverage and scholarships to exceptionally talented students originating from marginalized or socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.IT Startups and Venture Capital Support: PKR 3 billion. Direct state equity injected into the digital economy framework to accelerate home-grown technology



startups and bridge local tech innovators with venture capitalists. Youth Development Centres: PKR 700 million. Dedicated to establishing localized physical infrastructure for youth engagement, career counseling, and community resource pooling. Talent Hunt Youth Sports League: PKR 500 million. Strategic institutional financing aimed at grassroots athletic talent identification across multiple sporting fields. National Volunteer Corps: PKR 400 million. A civil deployment budget utilized to systematically train and integrate youth into communal service pipelines. E-Sports Arenas and Training Centres: PKR 300 million. Targeted infrastructure spending to capture a sustainable share of the rapidly expanding global digital entertainment economy. National Innovation Awards: PKR 250 million. Fiscal rewards and operational grants aimed at recognizing and commercializing breakthrough research and engineering solutions designed by young Pakistanis. Green Youth Movement (GYM): PKR 50 million. Micro-grants and institutional backing for youth-led environmental conservation and eco-friendly grassroots operations. Beyond the direct PMYP structural umbrella, the federal framework has separately earmarked PKR 24.48 billion for the comprehensive expansion of the Daanish Schools Network. This targeted educational fund is engineered to expand access to premier-tier academic training for underprivileged segments of society, ensuring that structural poverty does not serve as a barrier to elite primary and secondary education. Strategic Pillar I: Entrepreneurship, Credit Dispersion, and Agricultural RevolutionThe flagship Prime Minister's Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme (PMYBALS) functions as the primary vehicle for driving economic self-determination. Backed by the budget's largest single sub-allocation of PKR 22.4 billion, the scheme relies on the strategic deployment of interest-free and low-markup institutional financing. By mitigating the prohibitive cost of capital, the state lowers the entry barrier for early-stage entrepreneurs, enabling them to launch small-scale industrial startups, establish technology firms, and modernize traditional agrarian ventures. The historical data underscores the far-reaching operational footprint of this intervention. To date, PMYBALS has overseen the cumulative disbursement of PKR 365.5 billion to more than 625,740 distinct borrowers. Empirical labor market metrics confirm that this massive injection of credit has successfully generated approximately 1.96 million jobs across the national landscape. For the Fiscal Year 2026–27 cycle, the program introduces a strict 25 percent statutory quota reserved exclusively for women. This structural safeguard guarantees that young female entrepreneurs enjoy institutionalized, equal access to commercial financing, thereby driving gender parity within the nation's active economic labor pool. Strategic Pillar II: High-Tech Skill Acquisition and Digital TransformationThe modern globalized landscape disproportionately rewards advanced technical specialized knowledge, rapid adaptability, and digital innovation. Recognizing this market reality, the

state's PKR 9.9 billion technical training budget under PMYP shifts away from obsolete manual vocations toward highly sophisticated, high-demand vertical fields. The program actively finances institutional training in crucial emerging technologies, including: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning models. Blockchain Engineering and decentralized database architectures. Data Science, big data analytics, and computational forecasting. The ultimate objective of this technical overhaul is to bridge the historical chasm dividing conventional academic education from modern corporate employer demands, preparing Pakistani professionals for highly lucrative remote or physical job opportunities both domestically and in international labor markets. Simultaneously, the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme serves as the computational backbone for this digital transformation. The initiative has successfully distributed 600,000 laptops to higher education students across the four provinces, including the regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The operational rollout of Phase-IV is currently executing the deployment of an additional 100,000 devices. Looking ahead, the program is slated to transition into its next evolutionary tier: the nationwide rollout of specialized Prime Minister's Chromebooks. These cloud-optimized computing units will be targeted directly at underserved and grassroots student populations to ensure access to internet-based education. This hardware ecosystem is fully integrated with the Prime Minister's Digital Youth Hub, the hub has amassed over 800,000 registered users, generated more than 1.6 million mobile application downloads, and actively hosts over 114,000 vetted job listings. The digital tracking architecture ensures a completely transparent, merit-based pipeline for scholarships, internships, and corporate recruitment. Strategic Pillar III: Policy Frameworks for Structural Reform and Long-Term EngagementTo translate short-term budgetary allocations into permanent institutional gains, the state has rolled out comprehensive national policies targeting labor market reform, social protection, and systemic climate adaptation. 1. The National Youth Employment Policy (NYEP)The NYEP addresses one of Pakistan's most urgent demographic vulnerabilities: the estimated 32.4 million youth classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). The policy builds a sustainable bridge between industrial market demands and vulnerable populations by tracking high-growth economic sectors. The ultimate statutory target of the NYEP is to achieve a 100% absorption rate of all new domestic labor force entrants by the year 2030 while aggressively driving total female labor force participation to a minimum threshold of 35.2%. The National Adolescent & Youth Policy (NAYP)Spanning a critical development demographic of citizens aged 10 to 29 years, the NAYP serves as the primary masterplan for national social inclusion. —To be concluded

A Symbol of Renewed Commitment, National Unity, and the Completion of Pakistan



July 19 – Accession to Pakistan Day
BY:Adnan Mukhtar, District Information Officer, Bhimber
Published by ANI

BHIMBER—July 19 marks a significant chapter in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, reflecting the people's deep emotional, ideological, and political attachment to Pakistan. On July 19, 1947, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, in a historic meeting held in Srinagar, unanimously adopted the Resolution for Accession to Pakistan, expressing the desire of the Muslim-majority state to join Pakistan on the basis of shared religious, geographical, cultural, and economic ties. This historic resolution continues to symbolize the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and remains a cornerstone of their political struggle and demand for the right to self-determination.

Under the principles governing the partition of British India, Muslim-majority regions were expected to become part of Pakistan. Jammu and Kashmir, being a Muslim-majority state, naturally sought accession to Pakistan. However, following partition, the Kashmir issue evolved into a prolonged international dispute. For decades, the people of Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir have continued their struggle for their internationally recognized right to self-determination, enduring immense hardships and sacrifices. Despite these challenges, their commitment to their cause and their affinity with Pakistan have remained steadfast. Pakistan observes July 19 every year as Accession to Pakistan Day to honor the historic decision of the Kashmiri people and to reaffirm its moral, political, and diplomatic support for their right to self-determination. On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Bhimber, Chaudhry Muhammad Tariq, arrangements are being made to commemorate the day. Across Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan, seminars, rallies, special ceremonies, and prayer gatherings are organized to pay tribute to the sacrifices

of the Kashmiri people and to highlight the need for a peaceful and just resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The day also serves as a reminder that the Kashmir issue remains an unresolved matter linked to the partition of the subcontinent. Pakistan maintains that relevant United Nations resolutions support the principle of allowing the people of Jammu and Kashmir to determine their future through a free and impartial process, and calls upon the international community to play an effective role in this regard. Accession to Pakistan Day renews the collective commitment to stand with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their pursuit of justice, peace, and their recognized rights. National unity, solidarity, and harmony remain the foundation of Pakistan's strength and its continued support for the people of Kashmir. The article concludes with prayers for lasting peace, stability, and prosperity for Pakistan, for justice and peace for the people of Kashmir, and for enduring bonds of brotherhood and goodwill between the people on both sides. It also pays tribute to the sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces. Pakistan Zindabad.

Saudi Vision 2030 Opens New Avenues for Pak-Saudi Trade, Says Deputy Chairman Senate



BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasir said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy deep-rooted brotherly relations based on faith, mutual trust and shared progress, adding that Saudi Vision 2030 has created vast opportunities for investment and private-sector growth for Pakistani businesses.

Addressing the Saudi Company Formation and Business Expansion Summit 2026, organized by Al Rae Group in Islamabad, he described

the event as an important step towards enhancing bilateral trade and investment. He assured the Senate and the government would continue supporting initiatives promoting economic growth, employment and technology transfer.

Al Rae Group Chairman Bilal M. Zubair highlighted Saudi Arabia's investor-friendly policies under Vision 2030, including 100% foreign ownership, simplified banking procedures and the removal of minimum capital requirements for many business activities. He said eligible Pakistani companies can expand

into the Saudi market with a streamlined registration process.

FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh emphasized stronger private-sector collaboration and praised Al Rae Group's role in promoting Pak-Saudi trade relations.

A key feature of the summit was the signing of MoUs between Al Rae Group and 12 Pakistani companies, paving the way for their business expansion and investment in Saudi Arabia, marking a significant step towards stronger long-term economic cooperation between the two countries.

Market-Driven Skills Key to Transforming Youth into Economic Force: Tahir Ayub

BY: Hurish Shah:

ISLAMABAD--- Acting President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Tahir Ayub, said that equipping Pakistan's youth with modern, market-driven and technology-oriented skills is essential to reduce unemployment, improve productivity and build a competitive economy.

Speaking to visiting trade and industry delegations at the Chamber House on Friday, he stressed that technical and vocational education, digital literacy, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, data analytics and entre-



preneurship are critical to preparing youth for evolving local and global job markets. He called for stronger col-

laboration among the government, academia, training institutions and the private sector to develop demand-driven curricula and practical training programmes. Tahir Ayub also emphasized supporting young entrepreneurs through access to finance, mentorship, incubation facilities and digital platforms.

ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry urged industries to expand internship, apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities, while delegation members endorsed ICCI's focus on youth development as vital for Pakistan's sustainable economic growth.

Governor Sindh Nehal Hashmi Honours Outgoing Malaysian and Iraqi Consuls General



BY: ANI Correspondent:

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi attended a farewell ceremony in honour of Malaysian Consul General Herman Hardynata Ahmad, Iraqi Consul General Dr. Maher Mujahid Jejan, and Deputy Chief of Protocol Sadia Gohar.

Addressing the ceremony, the Governor praised the diplomats for strengthening Pakistan's ties with Malaysia and Iraq, emphasizing that diplomacy is built on trust, mutual respect and constructive dialogue. He reaffirmed Sindh's commitment to expanding trade, investment and cooperation with friendly countries in areas including information technology and renewable energy.

Governor Hashmi wished the out-



going diplomats success in their future assignments, expressing confidence they would continue to promote friendship with Pakistan. The ceremony, hosted by Director General Foreign Affairs Liaison

Office Karachi Irfan Soomro, was attended by diplomats, senior officials and members of civil society. Later, the Governor cut a commemorative cake and received an Ajrak, bouquet and commemorative shield.

Punjab Government Distributes Pak Seeder/Super Seeder to Farmers on 60% Subsidy in Mandi Bahauddin

BY: ANI Correspondent:

MANDI BAHAUDDIN--- A ceremony was held at the District Agriculture Training Hall, Office of the Assistant Director Agriculture (Extension), Mandi Bahauddin, to distribute Pak Seeder/Super Seeder machines to farmers on a 60 percent subsidy under the Punjab Clean Air Program.

The event was chaired by Assistant Commissioner Mandi Bahauddin, Lieutenant (Retd) Asfandiyar, who said agriculture is the backbone of Pakistan's economy and that the Punjab government is promoting the sector through various farmer-friendly initiatives. He emphasized that modern farming practices are essential for increasing productivity and assured farmers of the government's continued support.

Deputy Director Agriculture (Extension) Muhammad Afzal highlighted the importance of Pak Seeder/Super Seeder for wheat cultivation and efficient paddy field management. Assistant Director Agriculture (Extension) Dr. Rab Nawaz briefed farmers on the environmental and soil fertility benefits of incorporating paddy residue into the soil instead of burning it.

Agriculture Engineer Gujrat Waqar Ahmed and Assistant



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Agriculture Engineer Gujrat Waqar Ahmed and Assistant

Agriculture Engineer Muhammad Tayyab explained the scheme's features and the booking procedure for the machines. A draw was also held among the participating farmers for the allocation of the subsidized equipment.

The farmers thanked the Punjab government for introducing the environment-friendly initiative and appreciated its efforts to promote modern and sustainable agriculture.

Gilani, Aurangzeb Honoured at Dinner Hosted by Zaheer Mehdi

BY: Hurish Shah:

ISLAMABAD--- Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb were honoured at a dinner hosted by Zaheer Mehdi, Head of Jazz World, with prominent business, financial and social sector leaders in attendance. The participants discussed Pakistan's political and economic outlook, investment promotion, the digital economy, agricultural development, youth employment and national development priorities.

Addressing the gathering, Chairman Senate Gilani said national unity, political stability and sustained economic reforms are vital for Pakistan's progress. He reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to strengthening democratic institutions, promoting effective legislation and addressing public concerns.

He also stressed the importance of digital innovation and modernization of



the agricultural sector through advanced technology, affordable financing and greater support for farmers, noting that increased agricultural productivity would significantly contribute to economic growth.

The participants appreciated Chairman Senate Gilani's leadership and commitment to democratic values,

expressing their best wishes for Pakistan's peace, progress and prosperity. Among those present were MNA Asad Alam Niazi, Habib Group Chairman Muhammad Ali Habib, Habib Bank AG Zurich Cluster CEO Mohsin Nathani, along with leading business leaders, investors and other distinguished guests.

Pakistan Overseas Women Association Appoints Misbah Khar as Patron-in-Chief

BY: Hurish Shah:

ISLAMABAD--- The Pakistan Overseas Women Association (POWA) has appointed Ms. Misbah Khar, Advisor to the Chairman Senate of Pakistan, as its Patron-in-Chief.

Welcoming the appointment, the association said Ms. Khar's leadership, vision and dedication to public service will further strengthen POWA's mission of empowering women and promoting community welfare across Pakistan.

Ms. Misbah Khar serves as Advisor to Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and is also Ambassador for the



Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC). She is widely recog-

nized for her contributions to parliamentary diplomacy and for representing Pakistan at regional and international forums.

POWA is committed to promoting women's empowerment, leadership development, entrepreneurship and inclusive social and economic progress through collaboration with various organizations and stakeholders.

The association expressed confidence that Ms. Khar's experience and guidance will help advance its objectives, strengthen support for women and communities, and contribute to building a more inclusive and progressive society.

FCCI President Farooq Yousaf Sheikh Calls for Stronger Academia-Industry Linkages at UCP Launchpad 2026

BY: ANI Correspondent:

FAISALABAD--- President of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), Farooq Yousaf Sheikh, attended UCP Launchpad 2026 - The Ultimate Tech Pitch as the chief guest. The event was organized by the University of Central Punjab (UCP) in collaboration with FITCO at Regency Executive Marquee, Canal Road, Faisalabad.

The event brought together entrepreneurs, investors, industry leaders, academics and students to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and technology-driven business ideas. Young innovators presented their startup concepts and technology-based solutions before a panel of experts.

Addressing the participants, Farooq Yousaf Sheikh praised UCP and FITCO for providing a platform that encourages innovation and enables aspiring entrepreneurs to showcase their talent. He stressed that Pakistan's economic progress depends on



stronger collaboration between academia and industry, allowing students to transform innovative ideas into successful commercial ventures.

He reaffirmed FCCI's commitment to supporting young entrepreneurs, promoting technological advancement and strengthening ties between educational institutions and the business community. He urged students to

develop practical, market-oriented solutions that contribute to the country's economic growth.

The event concluded with startup presentations, networking sessions and awards for outstanding participants, while organizers pledged to make UCP Launchpad an annual platform for innovation and technology-based entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

Mahboob Siddiqui Congratulates Rahat Ali on Appointment as Director Pakistan of International Human Rights Movement

BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- Secretary General Pakistan of the International Human Rights Movement, Muhammad Mahboob Siddiqui, has congratulated Rahat Ali on his appointment as Director Pakistan, approved by the Central Working Committee on the recommendation of World Chairman Rana Basharat Ali Khan.

In his message, Siddiqui said the appointment reflects Rahat Ali's dedication, leadership and commitment to the Movement's mission. He expressed confidence that Rahat Ali will strengthen Pakistan's role in the organization's international activities and represent the country with distinction.

He hoped the newly appointed Director would actively participate in UN forums, international human



rights conferences and global meetings, highlighting Pakistan's human rights perspective while promoting justice, peace, equality and respect for human rights.

Muhammad Mahboob Siddiqui

wished Rahat Ali continued success in his new role and prayed for his wisdom and excellence in representing both Pakistan and the International Human Rights Movement at the international level.

Shutter-Down Strike Observed Across Balochistan Over Ziarat Tragedy; Dharna Committee to Announce Next Strategy

BY: ANI Correspondent:

CHAMAN--- A complete shutter-down strike was observed across Balochistan, including Quetta and Chaman, on Friday in solidarity with the victims of the Ziarat tragedy.

The strike, called by the Dharna Committee after talks with the government ended without agreement, remained peaceful across the province. Markets stayed closed while authorities deployed strict security measures, and no untoward incident was reported.

The Dharna Committee said negotiations failed because the government did not accept its legitimate demands. Meanwhile, Provincial Home Minister



Mir Ziaullah Langau said the Ziarat martyrs belonged to the entire province, while Food Minister and MPA Noor Muhammad Dummur urged people to avoid politicizing the tragedy.

The Dharna Committee is scheduled to hold a joint meeting this evening to review the situation and announce its future course of action.

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