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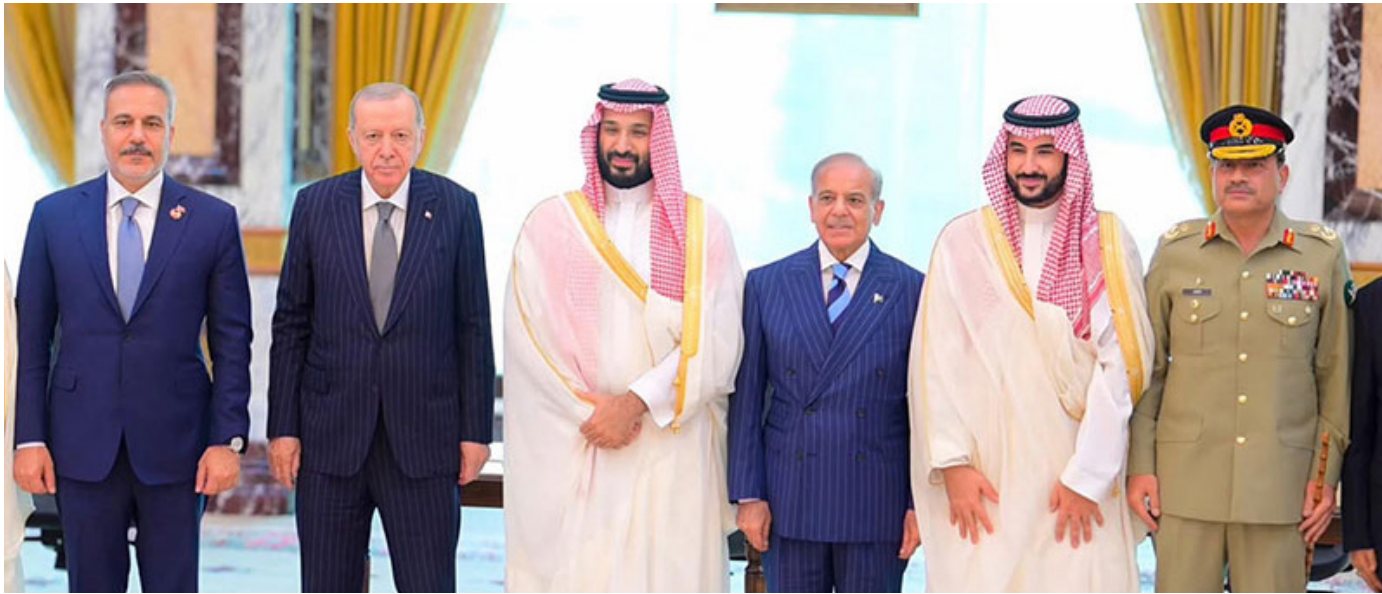
Editor: JAVED SIDDIQ

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# Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye sign joint defence pact in Makkah



ANI

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye on Friday signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, reaffirming their commitment to collective security, defence cooperation and regional stability, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

According to the ministry, the agreement establishes a framework for collective deterrence against acts of aggression and stipulates that an armed attack against any one of the three signatory states will be regarded as an attack against all three. The ministry said the pact was guided by the three countries' "longstanding historical ties", the "enduring bonds of brotherhood and Islamic solidarity" and their shared strategic interests and defence cooperation.

It added that the agreement reflects their "shared commitment to further strengthening their collective security" and to promoting "peace, security and stability in the region and beyond, in pursuit of a secure and prosperous future."

The agreement also provides for enhanced cooperation across all aspects of defence between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye, the Foreign Office said.

The agreement was signed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman during the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Summit for Joint Defence, held at Al-Safa Palace in Makkah, it added.

The ministry said the three leaders reviewed the longstanding

relations among Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye, as well as a range of issues of mutual interest. The three nations share growing concerns over Middle East chaos and an increasingly assertive Israel, as the United States struggles to contain regional threats.

The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs also released a statement regarding the "Makkah Joint Defence Agreement," stating that the agreement was based on "the longstanding historical ties among the three countries, the bonds of brotherhood and Islamic solidarity that unite them, and their shared strategic interests and close defence cooperation."

According to the statement, they echoed that the agreement is intended to strengthen collective security, achieve "security, peace, and stability in the region and the world", and expand defence coop-

eration among the three countries.

The ministry said the agreement "stipulates that any armed attack on any one of the three countries shall be considered an attack on all of them."

Turkey has NATO's second-largest military. Saudi Arabia, the strongest Gulf state, is home to Islam's holiest sites and one of the world's top oil exporters, while Pakistan is the only nuclear-armed Muslim country.

Ahead of the ceremony, Erdogan arrived in Saudi Arabia for a one-day working visit. His plane landed at King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, where he was welcomed by Mishal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, deputy governor of the Makkah Region, Turkiye's Ambassador to Riyadh Emrullah Isler, and Consul General in Jeddah Mustafa Unal.

## SCBA backs call for new provinces, calls it 'step forward' for better governance



ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) — a premier lawyers' body — on Friday voiced support for the controversial proposal recently put forward by Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi regarding the creation of new provinces in the country. Recently, while addressing the Pakistan Economic Summit 2026, the interior minister had urged all political parties to resolve various national issues, including the question of creating new provinces. He termed this the only solution to improving the country's overall condition, which he said had "collapsed".

Speaking at the Full Court Reference held at the Supreme Court (SC) in honour of Justice Musarrat Hilali on the occasion of her laying down her judicial robes, SCBA President Haroonur Rashid said the association endorsed and supported the suggestion to create new provinces.

Headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afriidi, the reference was attended by SC judges both in person and via video link.

The reference was also attended by Additional Attorney General (AAG) Chaudhry Aamir Rehman, representatives of the SCBA and the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), senior members of the legal fraternity, court officers, media representatives and others. "The association believes that any constitutional measure for the creation of more provinces would be a step forward towards an enhanced governance system through devolved and equitable administration at the grassroots level, the creation of equal opportunities for parallel economic development, and stronger political stability in the country," the SCBA

president said. He added that the creation of more provinces would also improve the standard of living by addressing the economic challenges faced by the people of the country.

Meanwhile, in its 250th meeting held in Islamabad on Friday, the PBC — the apex body of the legal fraternity — said it firmly believed that all constitutional matters must be addressed strictly within the framework of the Constitution.

The PBC deliberated upon the issue of the creation of new administrative units and provinces in the country. It reaffirmed through a resolution that the legal fraternity was committed to upholding the Constitution, and that members were of the unanimous view that the question of creating new provinces should be considered in accordance with the constitutional principles and procedures. The resolution emphasised that all political parties, irrespective of their political differences, should act in the "larger national interest" and initiate a "comprehensive and meaningful dialogue" for the betterment of the country and its people.

The PBC resolved that, if the establishment of new provinces was deemed necessary, it must be carried out strictly in accordance with the Constitution through due parliamentary process and national consensus. The PBC also authorised its Vice Chairman Pir Muhammad Masood Chishti and the chairman of its Executive Committee to organise a national seminar by inviting leaders of all political parties represented in Parliament, as well as representatives of provincial bar councils, for meaningful dialogue and to develop a broad-based national consensus.

## Pakistan, Saudi Arabia & Turkiye Forge Landmark Defense Alliance

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar Friday said the landmark Trilateral Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye, in Makkah Mukarramah marks an important step in advancing strategic cooperation and further strengthening the enduring bonds of brotherhood among the three nations.

In a post on X, he said he was honoured to participate in the signing ceremony of the agreement.

"May this partnership contribute to greater regional peace, stability, and mutual prosperity for generations to come, Insha'Allah," he added.

In an earlier post, he said, "Ahead of the signing of the Trilateral 'Makkah Joint Defence Agreement', the leadership and delegations of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye offered Jumma



prayers together in the Haram Sharif, praying to Allah Almighty (SWT) to bless our deliberations and guide us toward decisions that strengthen peace, security, and brotherhood among our nations." "May Allah Almighty grant this partnership enduring success and make it a source of lasting peace, stability, and prosperity for our peoples. Ameen," he added.

## Jl stages nationwide protests against petroleum levy hike

ANI

LAHORE/ KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) is holding protests at 510 locations across Pakistan on Friday against what it describes as an "unjust" increase in the petroleum levy, with demonstrations under way on major roads and intersections in several cities. In Karachi, Sindh Assembly member Muhammad Farooq is leading a protest at Natha Khan Bridge on Shahrah-e-Faisal. Demonstrations are also under way on Hub River Road, the Super Highway and near the airport.

The protest blocked Shahrah-e-Faisal, with the JI saying it was being held against continued increases in the petroleum levy, inflation and the growing economic burden on the pub-



lic. Similar protests are taking place at key locations in Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar.

According to the party, demonstrations are also being held at Chakdara Motorway near Swat, Bhiriya Bypass in Sukkur, Shah Nawaz Chowk in Tando Adam, Swabi, Abbottabad and Jhang, as protests continue across the country. The JI had announced nationwide

protests against the petroleum levy, rising fuel prices and inflation, with demonstrations planned on 510 major roads and highways in 170 districts. Protests are scheduled in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Quetta, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and several other cities. Sit-ins were also planned at key locations across the country, including Qurtaba Chowk in Lahore, Stop No 26 in Islamabad, Mian Ghundi Chowk in

Quetta, the Toll Plaza in Peshawar, Bosan Road in Multan, the Indus Highway in Karak, CPEC Chowk in Bannu and the Chakdara interchange.

JI spokesperson warned that if authorities attempted to stop peaceful demonstrations, the protest campaign would be expanded from 510 to 1,500 roads and highways.

## Suspect Sent to Jail in Group Captain Murder Case

ANI

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Islamabad on Friday sent suspect Saad Abbasi to jail on judicial remand after the completion of his four-day physical remand in the murder case of martyred Group Captain Asim Tariq.

The suspect was produced before the court after investigators completed the remand period granted for questioning. The hearing was conducted by Duty Judge Abdul Ghafoor Kakar. During the proceedings, Prosecutor Raja Naveed Hussain

Kiyani appeared before the court on behalf of the prosecution. The prosecution did not seek any further physical remand of the accused and informed the court accordingly. After reviewing the case record and the status of the investigation, the court ordered that Saad Abbasi be sent to jail on judicial remand. The case relates to the killing of Group Captain Asim Tariq, whose death is being investigated under anti-terrorism laws. The suspect had remained in police custody for four days for interrogation and collection of evidence connected to the case.

## AJK Polling Delayed in Seven Poonch Seats

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Friday postponed polling in seven constituencies of Poonch Division scheduled for August 10, citing the prevailing law and order situation, while confirming that voting would proceed as planned in the remaining four constituencies.

The AJK general elections were scheduled to be held in three phases after the Election Commission revised the polling plan, with voting in Mirpur Division held on July 27, followed by Muzaffarabad Division and the 12 constituencies reserved for Kashmiri refugees settled in Pakistan on August 2, while Poonch Division is due to vote on August 10. In a statement, the commission said the decision was taken after reviewing a report submitted by the AJK home secretary, which highlighted security concerns in parts of Poonch and Sudhnoti districts. It added that several political leaders and candidates had also requested that polling in the affected constituencies be deferred. The Election Commission said a revised polling date and election schedule for the postponed constituencies would be announced.

## Security forces kill 10 Indian-sponsored terrorists in KP operations

ANI

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed ten terrorists belonging to Indian-sponsored "Fitna-Al-Khawarij" in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

In first encounter, a group of terrorists belonging to Indian Proxy attempted to attack security forces check posts in general area Azam Warsak, South Waziristan District. The attempt was effectively thwarted by own troops. During ensuing fire exchange, eight militants were killed through effective and precise engagements by own troops.

In another encounter that took



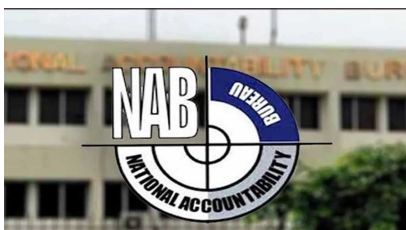
place in Dir District, own troops successfully neutralized two more terrorists. Weapons and ammunition have also been recovered from killed Indian sponsored khawarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area. Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji

found in the area.

ISPR said relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azam e Istehkam" (as approved by 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.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid rich tribute to the security forces for killing ten Indian-backed terrorists of Fitna-al-Khawarij during successful operations in South Waziristan and Dir district.

## NAB recovered Rs16,093 billion over 36 years, Senate committee told



ANI

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) recovered Rs16,093 billion between 1991 and June 2026, officials told the Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice on Friday.

NAB officials briefed the committee, chaired by Senator Farooq H. Naek, on the accountability watchdog's performance over the past 36 years.

According to the NAB director general, the bureau examined 505,799 complaints, completed 7,339 investigations, conducted 121,147 inquiries and filed 4,105 references during the period.

Officials further informed the committee that NAB received a budget of around Rs22.5 billion over the past five and a half years. The NAB chairman said the bureau had remained at the top in terms of recoveries despite operating with limited financial resources. NAB Director General Operations told the committee that there had been extensive shifting of cases between 2022 and 2024. He said the bureau also faced difficulties in determining which cases fell within its jurisdiction.

He clarified that NAB does not deal with cases involving alleged embezzlement of less than Rs500 million.

Committee Chairman Farooq H. Naek expressed concern over the filing of false complaints, saying such cases had damaged public confidence in NAB. He stressed that legal action should be taken against those who lodge fabricated complaints.

During the briefing, the NAB chairman claimed that major challenges involving oil and electricity could be addressed if he were given a four-month mandate.



President Asif Ali Zardari meeting Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Sweden, Ahmed Amjad Ali at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

# Ahsan urges institutions to seize AI revolution, transform education, healthcare

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday urged institutions to rapidly build their capabilities in artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies, saying the country had a historic opportunity to “catch up” with the developed world as AI was set to bring revolutionary changes across every sector of life.

Addressing the 1st International Dental Conference organised by Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University, the minister said the world was undergoing an unprecedented transformation driven by knowledge, innovation, the digital revolution and artificial intelligence, which he described as a change “greater than the invention of the internet.”

“When such a major transformation takes place, it becomes an equaliser,” he said, adding that nations that adapted quickly to new technologies emerged as

winners, while those that failed to build new capabilities were left behind.

“This is Pakistan’s opportunity to catch up for the lost time by embracing the new technological era,” he remarked.

Ahsan said AI would reshape education, industry, healthcare and society, stressing that universities across the world were already preparing students for the technological transition. He said Pakistan’s higher education institutions must also reposition themselves as centres of innovation rather than remaining confined to conventional teaching and research.

Referring to rapid technological advances in dentistry, he said artificial intelligence, regenerative medicine, advanced materials and 3D printing were transforming the profession, making interdisciplinary knowledge indispensable.

“The boundaries between medicine, engineering, data science and artificial intelligence are disappearing,” he said, adding that future dentists would need



expertise extending beyond their traditional discipline to succeed in the evolving healthcare landscape.

The minister said universities should focus on applied research that addresses national challenges rather than pursuing publications solely to improve impact factor rankings.

“The National Development Impact Factor is more important than the Impact Factor Journal,” he said, urging researchers to produce innovations that directly improve the lives of the people and contribute to Pakistan’s development.

Highlighting the significance of preventive healthcare, Ahsan described oral health as the foundation of overall human health, saying good dental hygiene played a vital role in protecting major organs and preventing diseases. He also referred to Islamic teachings that emphasized oral cleanliness and invited the Dental College and the Pakistan Association for Dental Research to formulate a comprehensive national oral health policy, assuring the government would process and implement it on a priority basis.

Recalling the establishment of the university’s dental facilities, Ahsan said he had laid the foundation stone of the project in 2016 with the vision of creating a state-of-the-art institution that would set national standards in dental education.

# PUC Hails Pakistan-Saudi-Türkiye Defense Pact as Milestone for Muslim Unity

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister’s Coordinator on the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee and Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Friday welcomed the defense agreement among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye, calling it a significant step toward greater unity and collective security in the Muslim world. In a video message from Makkah, Ashrafi congratulated the governments and peoples of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye, describing the agreement ‘a historic milestone’ extending beyond cooperation among three countries and carrying broader significance for the future of the Muslim Ummah’.

Ashrafi said the development reflected the aspirations of Muslims worldwide and expressed hope that it would contribute to regional peace, stability, and stronger coordination among Islamic countries. He also voiced support for the Palestinian and Kashmiri peoples, saying he hoped the initiative would ultimately help advance justice and peace in both regions.

He praised Pakistan’s leadership, particularly Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, as well as Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman, for sustained diplomatic efforts intended at preventing wider regional confrontation. He also acknowledged Türkiye’s role in the initiative.

# No invitation extended to opposition for resumption of talks: Ayaz Sadiq

ANI

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday said he did not invite the opposition to resume negotiations with the government during his meeting with MNA Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar on Thursday.

Speaking to the media, the speaker said Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry was also present at the meeting, which was held to discuss matters related to the upcoming National Assembly session.

He said there was no discussion or proposal regarding the resumption or initiation of dialogue between the treasury and opposition benches.

Ayaz Sadiq said he had only asked for the names of opposition members who would participate in the Independence Day ceremony. “Apart from this, there was no other conversation,” he said.

The speaker added that if Dr Tariq

Fazal Chaudhry and Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar had discussed negotiations separately, he was not aware of it.

Ayaz Sadiq said he had made several efforts in the past to facilitate dialogue between the government and the opposition but had now stopped extending invitations for talks.

“I have become tired of extending invitations for negotiations,” he said.

He also added that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had repeatedly invited the opposition to engage in dialogue on the floor of Parliament.

The speaker said political issues could only be resolved through direct dialogue and mutual understanding, adding that negotiations could not take place through media statements alone.

“Dialogue requires sitting together at the table,” he said.

Referring to the parliamentary committee formed earlier for political dialogue, Ayaz Sadiq said opposition members had not approached him with any



request to restore the committee.

The speaker also remarked that PTI had chosen its Leader of the Opposition with the expectation that he would engage in negotiations, but perhaps he had not been granted permission to do

so.

Responding to a question about staff attached to PTI chairpersons of standing committees, he said the staff would be returned if the committee chairpersons relinquished them, and the National Assembly Secretariat would utilise them accordingly.

Ayaz Sadiq reiterated his willingness to meet the Leader of the Opposition. He said that if the opposition leader did not wish to visit his chamber, they could meet in a committee room instead.

He added that he was even willing to vacate his chamber to facilitate the meeting. However, the Speaker questioned whether the opposition genuinely wanted negotiations.

“The real issue is that they do not want to negotiate,” he said.

He reiterated that Parliament remained the proper forum for resolving political issues through dialogue, consultation and meaningful engagement.

# Photo exhibition highlights Pakistan’s rich cultural heritage, Minister announces Rs 500,000 grant for RIPJA

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Friday announced a grant of Rs. 500,000 for the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Photo Journalists Association (RIPJA) and said the Ministry would sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the association to jointly promote Pakistan’s culture and heritage. He made the announcement while inaugurating the 16th Annual Photo Exhibition, titled “Culture & National Heritage of Pakistan – Our Identity, Our Pride,” organised by the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Photo Journalists Association (RIPJA) in collaboration with AI-Sadat Group at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). The event was attended by Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence Senator Talha Mahmood, Chairman AI-Sadat Group Syed Sadaqat Shah, Ambassador of the Philippines to Pakistan Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez and was presided over by RIPJA President Sajjad Haider.

## PNCA pays glowing tribute to renowned artist, educator Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Friday organized a solemn tribute ceremony titled “A Lifetime Tribute to Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood (Late)” at the National Art Gallery to celebrate the extraordinary life, work and legacy of one of Pakistan’s most respected artists, educators, researchers and mentors. The ceremony brought together eminent artists, academicians, architects, researchers, students, family members and members of the cultural community to honour Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood’s lifelong services for the promotion of visual arts and art education in Pakistan. Welcoming the participants, Director Visual Arts Division PNCA, Mariam Ahmed, described Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood as an exceptional artist, teacher and mentor whose contributions shaped generations of artists and enriched Pakistan’s artistic discourse. She welcomed the late professor’s family, including his

daughter Aamna Isani, requested the audience to observe a minute’s silence and offered prayers for the departed soul.

The ceremony was moderated by Dr. Mahmooda Khan, who highlighted Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood’s profound influence on his students and colleagues. She said he remained a guiding force throughout their academic and professional journeys, adding that his wisdom, encouragement and unwavering support would continue to inspire future generations. Speaking on behalf of Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood’s students and colleagues, Dr. Mahmooda Khan remembered him as a self-made, humble and compassionate teacher whose commitment to education remained steadfast for more than six decades, from 1964 to 2026. She highlighted his distinguished academic career at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore, the University of Jeddah, the International Islamic University Malaysia, and the University College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab.

# 12th ERC meeting reviews monsoon readiness

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Emergency Response Committee (ERC) held its 12th meeting at the National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) in Islamabad on Friday to review the prevailing monsoon situation, hydrological risks and national preparedness, with federal and provincial authorities directed to maintain heightened readiness and ensure a swift, coordinated response to emerging emergencies.

The meeting, held on the directions of the Prime Minister and chaired through video link by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, brought together Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik, Minister for National Food Security and Research, Federal Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mueen Wattoo, Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman NDMA Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, representatives of Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs).

# NCRC and PAHCHAAN explore opportunities to strengthen child rights laws in Pakistan

ANI

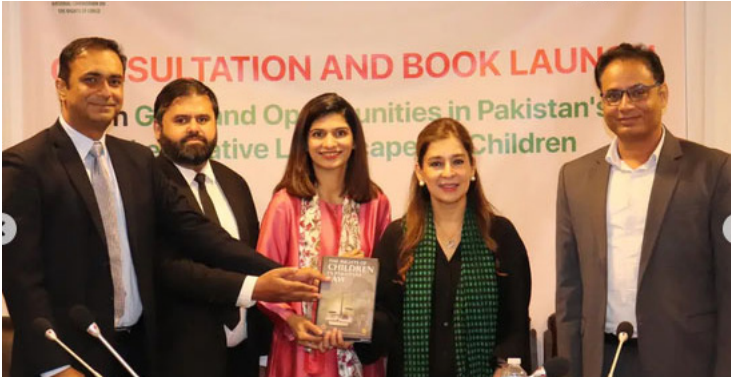
ISLAMABAD: The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) and Protection and Help of Children Against Abuse and Neglect (PAHCHAAN), convened a consultation on “Gaps and Opportunities in Pakistan’s Legislative Landscape for Children” and a book launch of the 5th edition of “The Rights of Children in Pakistani Law” here on Friday, said a press release.

The consultation brought together legal experts, practitioners, researchers and child-rights advocates to examine legislative and policy challenges affecting children in Pakistan.

Discussions focused on gaps in existing laws, barriers to the effective implementation of legal protections for children, and opportunities to strengthen the current legal landscape related to children.

Opening the consultation and launch, Chairperson of NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq emphasised the importance of accessible legal resources that can support institutions and professionals responsible for protecting children. “This compilation will serve as a valuable resource for courts, enforcement agencies, civil society, and researchers.” She emphasized that the true measure of child-related laws lies not only in their enactment, but in their effective implementation and their ability to respond to the realities faced by children. NCRC’s statutory mandate includes reviewing laws, policies and practices, conducting inquiries into child-rights violations, strengthening institutional capacities and advising the government on legislative and policy matters concerning children.

In his remarks, “Where the Law Meets the Child,” President and CEO of PAHCHAAN Dr. Naem Zafar reflected on the difficulties faced by organisations, families and professionals when legal protections are difficult locate, understand or apply. “During our work, we repeatedly



reached a point where counselling, compassion and referral were not enough.

We needed to know: What right does this child have? Who has the legal responsibility to act? What remedy is available?”

He stressed that laws can protect children only when caregivers, professionals and institutions are able to understand and use them. Legal recognition must therefore be supported by awareness, accessible assistance, effective referrals and timely institutional responses.

Dr. Mehek Naeem, Miqdad Mehdi and Ahmar Majeed presented key reflections from the fifth edition of The Rights of Children in Pakistani Law, using the publication to guide a structured discussion on Pakistan’s legal land scape for children.

The publication consolidates relevant federal and provincial legislation and compares it within the context of Pakistan’s commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The consultation underscored that the existence of child-related legislation does not automatically ensure protection. Greater attention is needed to the implementation of laws across federal and provincial jurisdictions, particularly where responsibilities, enforcement mechanisms, and legal provisions remain inconsistent or unclear.

# Rain Likely in Upper Regions as Hot, Humid Weather Continues

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast hot and humid weather in most parts of the country on Saturday, with rain-wind/thundershowers expected at isolated places in Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northeastern and southern Punjab, and Gilgit-Baltistan. According to the PMD, Islamabad and adjoining areas are likely to remain partly cloudy, with chances of rain-

wind/thundershowers. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hot and humid weather is expected in most districts. However, rain-wind/thundershowers are likely at isolated places in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Battagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Buner, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai and Kurram. During the evening and night, similar weather is expected at isolated places in Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Kohat, Bannu, Hangu, Waziristan and Dera Ismail Khan.

# US-Pakistan ties continue to make progress, says US Embassy

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The United States and Pakistan continue to make progress in bilateral relations, with cooperation between the two countries expanding under the administration of President Donald Trump, the US Embassy in Islamabad said on Friday.

In a post on social media platform X, the embassy said US members of Congress and business leaders had visited Islamabad and Lahore to explore opportunities for expanding cooperation between the two countries.

The embassy said senior officials also discussed shared security priorities during US-Pakistan counterterrorism talks held in Washington.

According to the embassy, Chargé d’Affaires Natalie Baker also participated in a golf tournament held to mark the United States’ 250th anniversary and celebrate the decades-long friendship between the United States and Pakistan.



The embassy described the summer as a busy period for the growing US-Pakistan partnership, saying engagement had continued across diplomatic discussions, security talks and business interactions.

# UNDP Country Head visits National Institute of Public Administration

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative of UNDP Pakistan, visited the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), Islamabad, to interact and deliver a lecture to the Civil Servants of Pakistan. The esteemed speaker delivered an insightful talk on UNDP’s partnership with Pakistan in advancing climate financing and sustainable development.

The lecture was delivered to 47 civil servants of the senior management course and 44 civil servants of the mid-career management course belonging to various service groups currently undergoing training at NIPA Islamabad. Rizk provided an overview of UNDP’s support to Pakistan in strengthening policy development, leadership, institutional capacity, partnership building, and resilience to sustain development outcomes. He

also highlighted UNDP’s role in promoting collaborative frameworks with national institutions to address climate challenges, mobilize financing for sustainable initiatives, and enhance governance mechanisms for long-term resilience. During his presentation, Rizk underscored the importance of collaborative partnerships between development partners and national institutions in advancing climate action. He shared valuable insights into global best practices, innovative climate financing mechanisms, and the key challenges associated with mobilizing and accessing climate finance, enriching participants’ understanding of the evolving global landscape. The session was highly interactive, with participants engaging in substantive discussions on policy implications, institutional reforms and integration of sustainable development strategies into Pakistan’s governance framework.

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Opinion

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## Pakistan’s Water Crisis: The Economic Emergency We Are Still Underestimating



**By: Dr Waheed M Khan**  
**Published By: ANI News Agency**

For many Pakistanis, water is still something they think about only when a tap runs dry, a crop begins to wither, or a city faces an unusually hot summer. But behind these everyday experiences is a much bigger national problem. Pakistan’s water crisis is no longer simply an environmental concern or an issue for farmers and irrigation departments. It is becoming an economic emergency that could determine the country’s food security, employment, exports and long-term development.

Pakistan has one of the world’s largest irrigation systems, yet its water resources are under growing pressure. The country receives an average of around 138.4 million acre-feet of water annually through its river system, while the Indus Basin Irrigation System supports agriculture across roughly 47 million acres. Despite this extensive infrastructure, increasing demand and changing climate conditions are putting greater pressure on available water.

The warning signs are becoming harder to ignore.

Pakistan’s per-capita water availability has fallen from around 5,260 cubic metres in 1951 to below 1,000 cubic metres today, placing the country in a severe water-stress category. Agriculture consumes more than 90 percent of national water use, making the health of the water system directly connected to the country’s food and rural economy.

This should concern every Pakistani, including those who have never planted a crop.

When farmers have insufficient water, agricultural production suffers. When production falls, food prices can rise. When food becomes expensive, household budgets come under pressure. When farmers earn less, rural economies weaken. When exports decline, the country loses valuable foreign exchange.

Water, therefore, is not simply a natural resource. It is an economic asset.

Pakistan’s dependence on agriculture makes the situation particularly serious. Millions of people depend directly or indirectly on farming, while agricultural products and agro-based industries contribute significantly to employment, exports and economic activity. Crops such as wheat, rice, cotton, sugarcane and vegetables require reliable water supplies.

A water shortage at the farm level can quickly become an economic problem at the national level.

The recent situation in Sindh demonstrates how serious the consequences can be. In June 2026, Sindh faced substantial shortages during the critical Kharif season, with reports of a nearly 40 percent shortfall in some canal supplies. The shortage threatened seasonal crops, including rice, while concerns were also raised about drinking water supplies.

The economic implications are significant. Larkana Division, for example, is a major rice-producing region. Local business representatives have estimated that rice production in the area contributes billions of rupees in foreign exchange each year and supports hundreds of rice mills and related businesses. A water crisis in such an area does not stop at the farm gate. It affects transporters, millers,

labourers, traders and exporters.

This is why Pakistan must stop treating water shortages as temporary seasonal problems. The country is also facing a deeper groundwater challenge. As canal supplies become unreliable, farmers increasingly turn to tube wells. In some areas, groundwater that was once available at shallow depths is now being extracted from much deeper levels. This means higher pumping costs, greater electricity consumption and additional financial pressure on farmers.

The situation creates a vicious cycle. Farmers need more water because temperatures are rising. They pump more groundwater because surface supplies are uncertain. Pumping requires more energy. Energy is already expensive. Higher costs reduce farm profitability. Lower profitability discourages investment in modern equipment and technology.

Meanwhile, climate change is making the situation even less predictable.

Pakistan is experiencing increasingly irregular rainfall, rising temperatures, drought conditions in some areas and destructive floods in others. The Indus Basin is particularly vulnerable because it depends on snow and glacier melt as well as rainfall. In 2026, the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region recorded another year of unusually low seasonal snow cover, raising concerns about future water availability in the Indus Basin.

The irony is striking: Pakistan can face both floods and water shortages.

Too much water arrives at the wrong time, causing destruction, while too little is available when farmers need it most.

The answer cannot simply be to build more dams, although additional storage is important. Pakistan also needs to fundamentally change how it uses the water it already has.

Modern irrigation must become a national priority. Drip irrigation, sprinkler systems, laser land levelling, improved watercourses and better farm-management practices can help farmers produce more with less water. The country also needs to reconsider what it grows and where it grows it. Water-intensive crops should not automatically receive priority simply because they have traditionally been cultivated in particular regions. Agricultural policy should increasingly encourage crops that provide higher economic value while consuming less water.

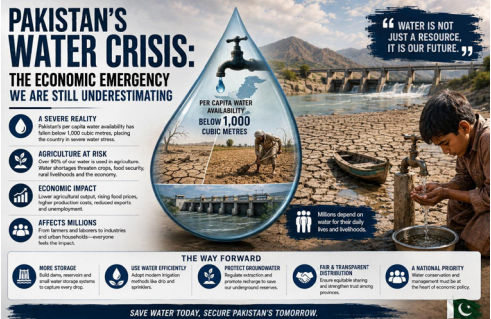
Water losses must also be reduced.

Pakistan has invested heavily in its irrigation network, but an ageing system and inefficient distribution mean that a significant amount of water can be lost before reaching fields. Repairing canals, improving measurement systems and introducing transparent monitoring can potentially deliver economic benefits without requiring the creation of entirely new water sources.

Equally important is the question of provincial trust.

Water has always been a sensitive issue between provinces, and recent shortages have again produced disagreements over distribution. In June, Sindh raised concerns about shortages despite improved overall inflows and reservoir storage, highlighting how questions of allocation and trust can become as important as the absolute quantity of water available.

Pakistan cannot afford a water policy based on suspicion.



The country needs accurate data, transparent measurement and confidence that every province is receiving its legitimate share under the 1991 Water Apportionment Accord. The stronger the monitoring system, the less space there will be for political controversy.

There is also a human dimension that economic statistics cannot fully capture.

In parts of the Indus Delta, freshwater shortages have allowed seawater intrusion to damage farmland and freshwater supplies. Reports from coastal Sindh indicate that salinity is increasingly threatening communities, livestock and agriculture.

For families living in these areas, the water crisis is not a future threat. It is already part of daily life.

Pakistan needs a national water strategy that looks beyond crisis management. The government has already recognised the need for greater water security, including investment in reservoirs, smaller dams, groundwater recharge, rainwater harvesting and floodwater storage.

But policy announcements alone will not solve the problem.

Water security requires long-term investment, political consensus, better governance and public participation. Farmers must be supported in adopting efficient irrigation. Cities must improve wastewater management and rainwater harvesting. Industries must reduce unnecessary water consumption. Households must also recognise that conservation is not merely an environmental responsibility; it is an economic necessity.

Pakistan’s economic future depends heavily on how intelligently it manages water.

A country cannot expect sustainable agricultural growth without reliable irrigation. It cannot maintain food security while allowing groundwater to decline unchecked. It cannot increase exports if agricultural production remains vulnerable to water shortages. And it cannot protect rural employment while farmers face rising costs and uncertain water supplies.

The choice before Pakistan is therefore clear.

We can continue treating water shortages as an issue that appears in the news whenever a canal runs low, or we can recognise water security as a central pillar of national economic planning.

The country has limited water, but it still has choices.

It can waste it or conserve it. It can fight over distribution or build trust through transparency. It can continue using outdated irrigation practices or invest in modern technology. It can wait for another crisis or prepare before the next one arrives.

Pakistan’s water crisis is already an economic crisis.

The real danger is not that we have suddenly run out of water. It is that we may continue using tomorrow’s water as if there will always be more.

Pakistan cannot build a secure economic future without first securing the water on which that future depends.

## From Makkah, a New Architecture of Collective Defence

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye turn longstanding strategic ties into a trilateral security commitment



**By Rana Farooq Ashraf:**  
**Published by ANI News Agency**

There are moments in international politics when a document signed at a particular place acquires significance far beyond its legal text. Friday, Aug 7, 2026, was one such moment. In Makkah, at the Al-Safa Palace, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, committing themselves to strengthening collective security and defence cooperation. Most significantly, the agreement stipulates that an armed attack against any one of the three states will be regarded as an attack against all three.

The symbolism could hardly be stronger. Makkah has historically represented the spiritual unity of the Muslim world. The decision to launch a new chapter of strategic cooperation from the holy city therefore carries a message that goes beyond conventional military diplomacy: countries with shared historical, cultural and strategic interests can build mechanisms for collective security without surrendering their national sovereignty.

The agreement should not be reduced to rhetoric about a “Muslim alliance”. Nor should it automatically be interpreted as a military bloc directed against a particular country. Its declared objective is collective deterrence, stronger defence cooperation and greater regional stability. That distinction matters. The real strength of an effective defence arrangement lies not in threatening war but in making aggression increasingly difficult and costly.

For Pakistan, this is a major diplomatic and strategic achievement. It brings together three countries with complementary strengths. Saudi Arabia possesses enormous economic and strategic weight; Türkiye has a sophisticated defence industry and substantial military capabilities; Pakistan brings decades of operational military experience, an established defence-industrial base and nuclear deterrence. Their cooperation, if translated into practical mechanisms, could have consequences for the wider security architecture of the region.

But agreements of this nature do not emerge overnight.

The Makkah declaration represents the culmination of a process in which Pakistan’s political and military leadership has invested considerable diplomatic effort. The role of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff, deserves particular recognition in this regard.

Field Marshal Munir has maintained sustained high-level engagement with both Riyadh and Ankara. His longstanding familiarity with Saudi institutions and defence leadership has been particularly valuable in developing Pakistan-Saudi strategic relations. The importance of his role was already visible in the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement signed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in September 2025. That agreement formalised decades of security cooperation and established a stronger framework for mutual defence.



The relationship with Türkiye has followed a similarly deliberate trajectory. In June 2026, Field Marshal Munir met senior Turkish leadership and discussed regional security, professional matters and avenues for expanding bilateral defence cooperation. The military leadership described the relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye as rooted in deep historical, cultural and strategic ties.

These engagements provide important context for today’s development. The Makkah agreement is therefore better understood not as an isolated diplomatic event, but as the latest stage of a sustained effort to convert longstanding friendships into structured strategic partnerships.

That is where the credit due to Pakistan’s military leadership becomes particularly important.

Field Marshal Asim Munir’s contribution should not be viewed merely through the lens of military preparedness. Modern national security increasingly depends upon strategic diplomacy, personal relationships, institutional trust and the ability to connect political objectives with defence realities. Pakistan’s experience demonstrates that military diplomacy can complement conventional foreign policy when it is carefully aligned with national interests.

The significance of Türkiye’s participation is equally profound. Ankara has developed considerable indigenous defence capabilities, while its political influence extends across Europe, the Middle East and the wider Muslim world. Its inclusion gives the trilateral framework a wider strategic dimension and opens possibilities for cooperation in defence production, technology, training, intelligence, air defence, maritime security and counter-terrorism.

For Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, the agreement provides another layer of strategic reassurance at a time when the regional security environment remains exceptionally volatile. Recent developments have demonstrated the limitations of relying exclusively on external security guarantees. A stronger network of capable regional partners can enhance deterrence and give states greater strategic autonomy.

Pakistan also stands to gain diplomatically. For years, Islamabad has spoken of stronger relations with major Muslim countries. The challenge has always been to convert political slogans into institutions. The Makkah agreement is significant precisely because it attempts to do that.

Yet the real test begins now.

A defence agreement becomes meaningful only when it is translated into operational cooperation. The three countries will need mechanisms for intelligence sharing, joint exercises, military education,

defence production, technological collaboration, crisis consultation and coordinated responses to emerging threats. They must also establish clear institutional structures capable of functioning during a crisis.

Equally important is the need to preserve the defensive character of the agreement. The objective should be deterrence, stability and the protection of sovereignty—not confrontation for its own sake. A stronger collective defence posture should ideally create greater space for diplomacy and reduce the temptation of adversaries to test the resolve of any individual member.

The message from Makkah, therefore, is not that the Muslim world has suddenly overcome all its differences. It has not. Nor should anyone pretend that one agreement can resolve the complex political and security disputes stretching across the Middle East and beyond.

The message is more practical—and potentially more consequential: cooperation is possible where interests converge.

For Pakistan, this is a moment to build upon rather than merely celebrate. The country should pursue economic diplomacy alongside defence diplomacy, strengthen its defence-industrial partnerships with Türkiye and Saudi Arabia, and ensure that strategic relationships generate tangible benefits for national development.

The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement is ultimately about credibility. If the three states can transform today’s commitment into sustained institutions, shared capabilities and responsible collective deterrence, the agreement could become an important pillar of a changing regional order.

From Makkah has come a powerful reminder: unity does not require uniformity. Three sovereign states can retain their individual identities while standing together where their vital security interests converge.

For Pakistan, the achievement deserves recognition not only as a diplomatic success but as the product of sustained strategic engagement by its political and military leadership. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir deserves particular credit for helping nurture the defence relationships that have contributed to this historic moment.

The words of Allama Iqbal acquire renewed relevance:

“One Muslim nation for the guardianship of the Haram,

From the Nile’s shores to the soil of Kashgar.”

The dream is not fulfilled by a signature alone. But in Makkah, on Aug 7, 2026, a significant step was taken towards transforming the idea of Muslim solidarity from an aspiration into an instrument of collective security.

That is the real significance of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement.

## Why Is Pakistan’s Gen Zs at a Crossroads?



**Written By: Dr. Nasser Hussyn Bukhari**  
**Published By: ANI News Agency**  
**Analyst & Researcher**

Pakistan is home to one of the world’s youngest populations. Nearly two-thirds of its citizens are below the age of thirty, making Generation Z the country’s greatest demographic asset. This generation has grown up in an era of smartphones, artificial intelligence, global connectivity, and unprecedented access to information. It is energetic, technologically literate, entrepreneurial, and eager to participate in shaping the future. Yet many young Pakistanis also face uncertainty about identity, citizenship, opportunity, and their place in national life. The paradox is striking: a generation with immense potential often finds itself navigating institutions that struggle to prepare it for the demands of the twenty-first century.

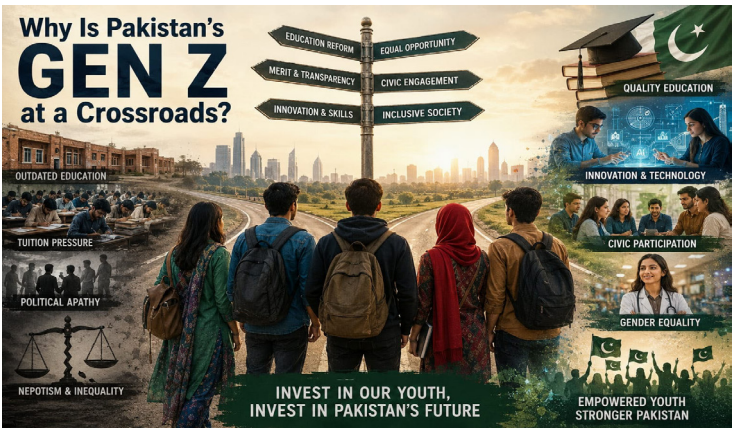
The challenges confronting Pakistani Gen Z are not simply economic; they are intellectual, educational, social, and political. The country’s education system remains fragmented into multiple parallel streams—public schools, private schools, cadet and semi-government institutions, and religious seminaries. Each stream follows different educational priorities, teaching methods, and social environments. Rather than creating a shared civic identity, this fragmentation can contribute to different worldviews among students who are nevertheless expected to function as equal citizens within the same constitutional framework.

stitutional framework.

Curriculum reform deserves particular attention. Education should cultivate informed citizenship, ethical reasoning, scientific inquiry, and respect for constitutional values. Where curriculum content is perceived to emphasise sectarian interpretations or discourage critical engagement, policymakers should periodically review it to ensure that it promotes tolerance, constitutional equality, and evidence-based learning. The objective is not to diminish religious education but to ensure that it encourages ethical conduct, intellectual curiosity, and mutual respect in a religiously diverse society.

Similarly, the language of majority and minority, while constitutionally relevant in some contexts, should never undermine the principle that every Pakistani enjoys equal citizenship under the Constitution. Young people should grow up with a clear understanding that constitutional rights belong equally to all citizens regardless of religion, ethnicity, language, gender, or province. Civic education should strengthen national cohesion by emphasising equality before the law, shared responsibilities, and respect for diversity.

Another concern is the persistent gap between constitutional ideals and practical realities. Merit remains one of the most powerful aspirations of young Pakistanis. Whenever recruitment, admissions, promotions, or opportunities are perceived to depend on influence rather than competence, confidence in public institutions weakens. A generation that values transparency increasingly demands accountability, fairness, and equal opportunity. Restoring public trust therefore requires institutions that consistently reward merit and uphold the rule of law.



Equally significant is the rapid expansion of the private tuition industry. For many students, formal schooling no longer marks the end of the academic day. Long hours in schools are followed by equally demanding schedules in tuition academies, leaving little time for sports, reading, debating, artistic expression, community engagement, or family life. While supplementary education can benefit some learners, an excessive dependence on tuition raises important questions about the effectiveness of mainstream schooling and the overall well-being of students. Education should develop balanced personalities, not merely examination performance.

A healthy education system also introduces students to literature, history, philosophy, the social sciences, and the arts. These disciplines cultivate imagination, empathy, creativity, and critical thinking—qualities increasingly valued in the global knowledge economy. Nations that aspire to innovation cannot rely exclusively on rote memorisation or examination-centred learning. They must encourage questioning, research,

experimentation, and intellectual independence.

Political socialisation represents another neglected dimension of youth development. Democratic societies require informed citizens who understand constitutional institutions, public policy, and civic responsibility. Young people should be encouraged to engage peacefully with public affairs rather than becoming alienated from politics altogether. Civic participation, debate, volunteerism, and student leadership strengthen democratic culture and prepare future leaders. Political disagreement should be understood as a normal feature of democracy rather than a threat to national unity.

Gender remains another area requiring urgent attention. Pakistani women have demonstrated extraordinary achievements in education, medicine, engineering, entrepreneurship, public administration, sports, and the arts. Nevertheless, many highly educated women continue to face structural, cultural, and economic barriers to full participation in the labour market and public life. Expanding oppor-

tunities for women is not only a matter of social justice but also an economic necessity. Countries that fully utilise the talents of both men and women are generally more innovative, productive, and globally competitive.

The digital age has transformed the expectations of Generation Z. Unlike previous generations, today’s youth compare educational systems, employment opportunities, governance models, and social freedoms across the world in real time. They seek transparency, institutional accountability, and meaningful participation in decision-making. They are less willing to accept hierarchy without explanation and more inclined to ask difficult questions. Rather than perceiving this curiosity as a challenge to authority, policymakers should recognise it as an essential ingredient of scientific progress and democratic maturity.

Pakistan therefore requires a comprehensive national strategy for youth development. Curriculum reform should strengthen critical thinking, constitutional literacy, scientific reasoning, civic ethics, and respect for diversity. Educational quality should be improved across all school systems so that every child receives comparable opportunities regardless of socioeconomic background. The examination system should reward analytical ability instead of memorisation. Public institutions must demonstrate that merit, integrity, and competence are the primary pathways to success.

At the same time, governments should invest in research universities, technical education, digital skills, entrepreneurship, innovation hubs, sports facilities, libraries, cultural institutions, and creative industries. Such investments would not merely create employment; they would cultivate confident, informed, and innovative

citizens capable of competing in a rapidly changing global economy.

Pakistan’s Generation Z is not the country’s problem; it is its greatest opportunity. The question is whether national institutions will evolve quickly enough to harness their creativity, intelligence, and aspirations. If education encourages inquiry instead of conformity, if governance rewards merit instead of patronage, if constitutional equality becomes a lived reality rather than a written promise, and if young men and women are empowered to participate fully in national life, Pakistan’s demographic dividend can become its greatest strength.

The future of Pakistan will ultimately be determined not by the size of its youth population but by the quality of education, governance, and opportunities it provides that generation. Investing in Generation Z is, therefore, not simply an educational priority; it is the most important nation-building project of the twenty-first century.

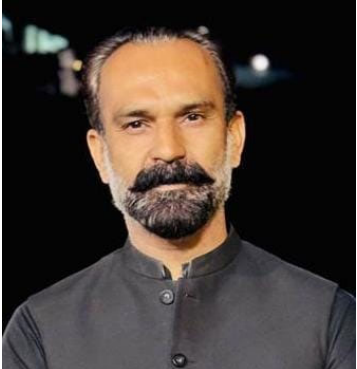
A final area requiring serious reconsideration is the revival of student unions under a transparent and democratic regulatory framework. Across many democratic societies, student unions have served as important training grounds for leadership, civic engagement, debate, and public service. In Pakistan, however, student unions have largely remained absent from educational institutions since the late 1980s. This has reduced opportunities for young people to develop democratic leadership skills, negotiate differences, and participate in representative decision-making. Carefully regulated student unions could once again help nurture a new generation of responsible, tolerant, and capable leaders equipped to strengthen Pakistan’s democratic future.

## Importing Costly Wheat While Underpaying Local Farmers Is Gross Injustice: PTI’s Khalid Nawaz Sadhraich

BY : ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD --- Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Farmers Wing Central Secretary Information Khalid Nawaz Sadhraich on Friday criticized the government’s wheat policy, saying farmers were forced to sell wheat for Rs. 2,800–3,200 per maund despite the official support price of Rs. 3,500 per maund, while the government is now preparing to import one million tonnes of wheat at Rs. 4,300 per maund.

He said the government offers farmers promises and loans instead of ensuring fair prices, adding that paying growers Rs. 4,000 per maund would have strengthened Pakistan’s



wheat self-sufficiency. Sadhraich noted that farmers had produced a record 31.47 million metric tonnes of

wheat two seasons ago, but anti-agriculture policies had since reduced production.

He claimed importing one million tonnes of wheat would cost around Rs. 107.5 billion, while local farmers continue to suffer due to inadequate procurement and exploitation by middlemen. He said farmers could produce more than the country’s domestic requirement if they received fair compensation.

Referring to the Punjab government’s decision to fix the wheat price at Rs. 3,800 per maund, Sadhraich said genuine support for farmers lies in ensuring fair prices for their produce rather than burdening them with additional agricultural loans.

## Senate Committee Reviews Chitral Development Projects, Expresses Concern Over Delays and Wheat Transportation Issues



BY: ANI CORRESPONDENT:

ISLAMABAD--- The Senate Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Coordination, chaired by Senator Dilawar Khan, on Friday reviewed development projects and public issues in Chitral, focusing on tourism, road infrastructure, electricity, telecommunications, and the transportation of wheat between

Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

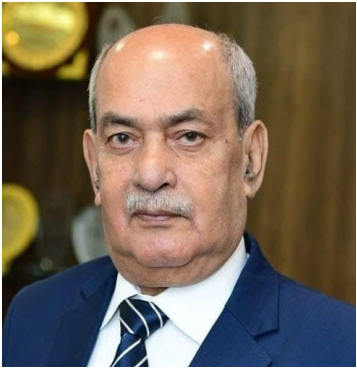
The Committee reviewed the performance of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and sought a report on damaged government properties in Chitral. It also expressed concern over delays in the Lowari Tunnel and Chakdara Road projects, directing the National Highway Authority (NHA) to ensure their timely completion.

Members also discussed electricity shortages, mobile connectivity, and wheat transportation, stressing that unnecessary hurdles to inter-provincial trade should be avoided. The Committee directed relevant departments to address public service issues and submit progress reports before the next meeting, reaffirming its commitment to transparency, coordination, and timely completion of development projects.

## Khalid Chaudhry Demands Uniform Implementation of Trade Licence Abolition in Islamabad

BY: Hurish Shah / FT

ISLAMABAD --- Former Senior Vice President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Secretary of the Traders Action Committee, Khalid Chaudhry, has urged Chief Commissioner Islamabad Lt. Gen. (R) Sohail Ashraf to ensure that the federal government’s decision to abolish trade licences is implemented uniformly across all departments. He said that while the Directorate of Municipal



Administration (DMA) has already stopped issuing trade licences, the Islamabad Food Authority and the Excise Department should also immediately stop issuing business licences and professional tax notices.

Khalid Chaudhry said traders support compliance with all legal and food safety regulations but should not face unnecessary licensing requirements that contradict the government’s policy. He called for a clear and uniform notification to remove uncertainty and facilitate the business community in Islamabad.

## Makkah Defence Pact a Historic Step Towards Muslim Unity, Says Farid Afghan

BY : ANI Correspondent:

KARACHI --- PML-N Balochistan senior leader Advocate Farid Afghan has welcomed the reported Makkah Defence Pact between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, calling it a historic step towards strengthening



unity and defence cooperation among Muslim countries.

In a statement, he said the agreement would promote regional peace, collective security and closer strategic cooperation. He added that the pact reflects the commitment of the three countries to safeguarding their sovereignty and addressing common security challenges through mutual cooperation

## Rawalpindi Children’s Hospital 25% Complete, Set for Completion by December 2026

BY: Irum Shehzadi/ ANI

RAWALPINDI --- Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Salman Ghani visited the under-construction Children’s Hospital on Asghar Mall Road and reviewed the project’s progress. Officials informed him that the project is 25% complete, with the main structure finished, and is

scheduled for completion by December 31, 2026.

The Commissioner said the hospital would be the region’s first dedicated government children’s hospital, providing modern pediatric healthcare services under one roof. He described the project as a major initiative of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for the people

of Rawalpindi.

Salman Ghani directed officials to ensure timely completion of the project, installation of modern medical equipment, and provision of essential facilities, including emergency services, ICU, operation theatres, laboratory, pharmacy, parking, sanitation, and security, while maintaining the highest construction standards.

## NAB Should Focus on Mega Corruption Cases: Senator Farooq H. Naek



BY : FT Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD -- The Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice, chaired by Senator Farooq H. Naek, on Friday reviewed the performance of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), stressing that the Bureau should focus on mega corruption cases while smaller cases should be handled by the FIA, provincial anti-corruption

departments and other relevant agencies. The Committee expressed concern over the lack of visible action in major corruption cases and emphasized that accountability must be fair, transparent and applied uniformly across all public institutions.

NAB Chairman briefed the Committee on institutional reforms, including a mechanised monitoring system to prevent harassment,

reduced use of arrest warrants, and the establishment of a Business Facilitation Desk. He also proposed reviewing the Rs.500 million jurisdictional threshold for NAB. The Committee also directed the Ministry of Law and Justice to rationalise the number of NAB courts in several cities and decided to continue reviewing NAB’s performance and accountability reforms at its next meeting.

## No Proposal for Resumption of Government- Opposition Dialogue Discussed in Meeting: NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq

BY: Hurish Shah / FT

ISLAMABAD ---National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday clarified that no proposal for the resumption of dialogue between the government and the opposition was discussed during his meeting with Opposition Leader Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar and Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Thursday. Speaking informally to the media, the Speaker said the meeting was held solely to discuss matters related to the upcoming

National Assembly session. He said he had only asked for the names of opposition members who would participate in the Independence Day ceremony and that no invitation for negotiations was extended.

Ayaz Sadiq said that if Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary and Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar discussed negotiations separately, he was not aware of it. He added that he had made repeated efforts in the past to facilitate dialogue between the government and the opposition but had now stopped extending invitations.

The Speaker said Prime Minister

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had also repeatedly invited the opposition to engage in dialogue on the floor of Parliament. He stressed that political issues could only be resolved through direct talks rather than statements made in the media.

Reiterating his willingness to meet the Opposition Leader, Ayaz Sadiq said Parliament remained the appropriate forum for resolving political differences through meaningful dialogue. However, he maintained that the key issue was whether the opposition genuinely wanted negotiations.

## Pakistan-Türkiye-Saudi Defence Cooperation Reflects Muslim Unity, Atif Ikram Sheikh

BY: Hurish Shah / FT

ISLAMABAD -- -President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Atif Ikram Sheikh, has welcomed the reported trilateral defence cooperation agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, describing it as a practical manifestation of unity among Muslim countries.

In a statement on Friday, he said the agreement would strengthen regional peace, stability and mutual



trust while enhancing Pakistan’s defence and diplomatic standing. He added that stronger strategic cooperation would also create new opportunities for trade and investment.

Atif Ikram Sheikh said the business community welcomes every initiative that promotes peace, security and economic growth. He expressed the hope that closer cooperation among the three countries would boost investor confidence and contribute to regional economic prosperity.

## Khushab Development Projects Reviewed, Timely Completion Stressed

BY: ANI Correspondent:

SARGODHA --- A meeting of the District Coordination Committee for Development, Khushab, was held under the joint chairmanship of former MPA Malik Karam Elahi Bandial and Deputy Commissioner Dr. Jahanzeb Hussain Laber to review progress on development projects, the Punjab Development Program, the Suthra Punjab Program, clean drinking water schemes, and law and order.

The meeting, attended by MNA Malik Shakir Bashir Awan, MPA Malik Muhammad Asif Bhah Awan, and senior officials, was informed that billions of rupees had been allocated for development projects



across the district under the Punjab Development Program.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Jahanzeb Hussain Laber directed all departments to complete projects within the stipulated timeframe while ensuring high construction

standards. MPA Malik Muhammad Asif Bhah Awan also informed the meeting that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif had approved the construction of 10-kilometre roads and installation of streetlights along both sides of the Shawala Drain.

## Commissioner Pays Tribute to Police Martyrs at Police Martyrs’ Day Ceremony in Sargodha

BY:Raja Noor Ilahi Atif/ANI

SARGODHA--- Commissioner Hafiz Shaukat Ali attended a dignified ceremony held in Sargodha to mark Police Martyrs’ Day. The families of police martyrs were the guests of honor at the event. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Muhammad Shehzad Asif, District Police Officer (DPO) Tauqeer Muhammad Naeem, Deputy Commissioner Hussain Ahmad Raza Chaudhry, senior police officials, and heads of various civil departments also attended the ceremony.

Special prayers were offered for the eternal peace and elevated ranks of the police martyrs. Patriotic songs and tribute performances were presented in their honor, while the children of the martyrs shared their heartfelt emotions. The RPO and DPO also distributed gifts among the children of the fallen police personnel.

Addressing the gathering,



Commissioner Hafiz Shaukat Ali said that the police martyrs sacrificed their lives to ensure the peace and security of the nation, and their sacrifices would always be remembered. He stated that the families of the martyrs had demonstrated remarkable patience, courage, and

resilience, and the entire nation pays tribute to every martyr of the Punjab Police. He also appreciated the Punjab Police’s continued commitment to maintaining close contact with the families of its martyrs, describing it as a commendable and exemplary tradition.

## Pakistan Armed Forces Pay Tribute to Major Tufail Muhammad Shaheed on 68th Martyrdom Anniversary

Report: ANI

RAWALPINDI--- The Pakistan Armed Forces solemnly commemorated the 68th martyrdom anniversary of Major Tufail Muhammad Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, paying tribute to his extraordinary bravery, unwavering devotion to duty and supreme sacrifice in defence of the motherland.

According to ISPR, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of Naval Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of Air Staff, and the Armed Forces of Pakistan paid glowing tributes to the Nishan-e-Haider recipient.

Major Tufail Muhammad Shaheed demonstrated exceptional courage while leading his troops in a daring assault against enemy forces. Despite sustaining critical injuries, he continued fighting with determination and courage, ensuring the successful completion of his mission. His conspicuous gallantry and supreme sacrifice earned him the Nishan-e-Haider, Pakistan’s highest military honour. On the occasion, the people and Armed Forces of Pakistan also



paid tribute to all martyrs who sacrificed their lives in defence of the country. Their legacy of courage, patriot-

ism and sacrifice continues to inspire generations and remains a beacon for the defenders of Pakistan.