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Editor: JAVED SIDDIQ

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Makkah defence pact ‘purely defensive’, not targeted at any country: Dar



ANI

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Sunday that the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye was “purely defensive in nature” and was “not targeted against any country”, as he sought to clarify the purpose and scope of the pact amid growing discussion over the agreement.

The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement was signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye on Friday, establishing a framework for collective security and defence cooperation under which an armed attack on any one of the three countries would be considered an attack on all. The pact

built on a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement signed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in September 2025, which contained a similar mutual-defence commitment. In a post on X, Dar said the agreement’s “sole purpose” was to strengthen ongoing efforts towards “peace, stability and prosperity” in the wider region. He described the Makkah Accord as a reflection of the “depth of the brotherly relations” between the leaderships and peoples of the three countries.

In the light of ongoing discussion and interest surrounding the “Makkah Joint Defence Agreement” (The Makkah Accord) over the past two days, the following context and clarity on this Agreement may be

useful for everyone to note:

He said the agreement was the culmination of “years of discussions and coordination”, driven by a shared desire to strengthen strategic cooperation in addressing “multifarious peace and security challenges” and advancing regional peace, stability and prosperity. Dar stressed that the accord did not “abrogate or replace” any existing bilateral or multilateral agreements between the three countries, or their agreements with other countries or organisations.

Under the agreement, “any external armed attack on any one of the three countries will be considered as an attack on all”, consistent with the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence under Article 51

of the UN Charter.

The foreign minister said the accord remained open to other countries in the region willing to uphold its “fundamental principles” and resolve differences through “mutual respect, cooperation and peaceful means”. He said the agreement was consistent with Pakistan’s “fundamental pillars” of foreign policy and reaffirmed Islamabad’s commitment to working with “all brotherly countries in the region” towards lasting peace and stability.

“We remain committed to advancing the cause of peaceful resolution of all conflicts and building a more secure, stable and prosperous future for our peoples,” Dar said.

Trump says US taking ‘low-key’ approach to Iran, stresses Tehran’s economic pain

ANI

President Donald Trump on Sunday said that his administration was watching “economic pressure mount on Iran”, after months of US military strikes on Iran, sanctions and a blockade, in an interview with Axios.

“We are low keying it,” Trump was quoted as saying during a brief phone call. “We are only semi-negotiating with them. We are just watching Iran with its huge inflation and the fact they have no money.”

Iran and the US are not engaged in talks and Tehran will not start them as long as Washington breaches an interim deal signed in June, Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday, adding that messages are being exchanged via intermediaries. Araghchi repeated Iran’s position that an agreement on the Strait of Hormuz between Tehran and Muscat was in the “final stages” but would not reopen the strategic waterway.

In comments reported by Mehr news agency, he said the agreement would set out the new shipping lanes to be used once the US fulfils other conditions and the strait is reopened to traffic.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian met with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei to discuss the country’s “economic and defence strategies”, state news agency IRNA reported.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pledged to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, a goal he has long accused Tehran of pursuing, regardless of the outcome of diplomatic efforts involving Washington and Arab states, AFP reported.

“I want to emphasise once again: with an agreement or without an agreement, as long as I am prime minister, Iran will not have nuclear weapons,” Netanyahu said at a cabinet meeting.

The Strait of Hormuz will remain closed until the United States “corrects its behaviour”, Iran’s state broadcaster IRIB reported, quoting Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr, secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, Al Jazeera reported on Sunday.

Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Sunday that the Strait of



Hormuz would remain closed until its conditions are accepted, as it accused the enemy of shifting its war objectives towards reopening the strategic waterway, PressTV reported.

According to the post on X, IRGC spokesman Brigadier General Mohebbi said the enemy had abandoned all its previous war objectives and was now focusing its efforts on reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

“The enemy, abandoning all its previous war objectives, has now put all its efforts into opening the Strait of Hormuz, which was open before the war,” Mohebbi said.

“We will keep the Strait of Hormuz closed until the enemy accepts all our conditions,” he added.

“We will continue the resistance until the enemy is defeated,” Mohebbi said.

Brig Gen Hassan Zadeh, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ Mohammad Rasulullah Corps in Tehran, said the US and Israel had “completely failed” to achieve their objectives against the Islamic Republic, according to the Tasnim News Agency on Sunday.

The news outlet reported that Zadeh said Iran’s “popular strength and comprehensive readiness of the Basij” had made the country one of the major powers in the region and the world, during a visit to upgraded air defense battalions of the 27th Mohammad Rasulullah Division to assess their readiness.

He also claimed that US and Israeli leaders now had no answers before public opinion, their elites or their own people for their repeated failures. “Today, only part of the immense capabilities and readiness of the 27th Mohammad Rasulullah Division has been demonstrated in this field,” he added.

15 militants killed in intelligence-based operations across Balochistan



ANI

QUETTA: Security forces have killed 15 militants in a series of intelligence-based operations across Balochistan under the ongoing Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad 3, security sources said on Sunday.

According to the sources, security forces conducted multiple operations against militants in Mastung, Bolan, Washuk, Awaran, Sibi, Khuzdar, Harnai and Nushki. The operations resulted in the deaths of 15 militants, while a large quantity of weapons and ammunition was also recovered from their possession, the sources said. They added that the successful operations dealt a significant blow to the militant network and restricted its movement across the province.

Security forces remain committed to continuing operations under Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad 3 without interruption until the complete elimination of terrorism, the sources said.

Pakistan Rejects Afghan Weapons Smuggling Claims

ANI

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Sunday rubbished claims made by the Afghan Taliban about weapons allegedly smuggled from Pakistan into Afghanistan as “frivolous” and “baseless”. In a statement shared on X, the ministry said, “The Afghan Taliban regime’s claim that weapons are being smuggled from Pakistan into Afghanistan for so-called ‘subversive activities’ is frivolous, baseless and contrary to established facts.” It noted that Afghanistan was already awash with “enormous quantities of sophisticated weapons and military equipment abandoned after the withdrawal of US and coalition forces (worth an estimated \$72 billion), in addition to large stocks of Soviet-era weaponry accumulated over decades of conflict”. “Attempts to manufacture a Pakistani connection to such weapons seem designed to divert international attention from the far more serious and documented concern[s]: terrorist groups continue to find space, facilitation and operational freedom on Afghan soil to plan, support and execute attacks inside Pakistan,” the ministry stated. It added that rather than resorting to “implausible accusations and blame-shifting”, the Afghan Taliban must address the “presence of terrorist sanctuaries

on their territory and fulfil their repeated commitments that Afghan soil will not be allowed to be used for terrorism against Pakistan or any other country”. Pakistan has been continuously pushing the Afghan Taliban regime to rein in the terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan and prevent the violent groups from carrying out terror activities against Pakistan from its soil. Officials say those appeals have gone unheeded.

Last month, following multiple major attacks in Balochistan, Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir had asserted that terrorism originating from across the border would be crushed with the “full might of the state”.

In November 2025, Pakistan warned at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that the acquisition of abandoned weapons by terrorist groups based in Afghanistan not only threatens peace and security in Pakistan but also in the region.

In April that year, an investigation by The Washington Post revealed that terrorists who attacked the Jaffar Express train in Balochistan used weapons left behind when United States forces withdrew from Afghanistan.

MQM-P to support every movement for creation of new provinces: Mustafa

ANI

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leader and Federal Minister for Health Mustafa Kamal has said his party will support and participate in every movement seeking the creation of new provinces in Pakistan.

Addressing an MQM-P public gathering in Surjani Town, Kamal said Pakistan’s population had surpassed 240 million, yet the country still had only four provinces. He said the

creation of new administrative units had become essential. He said the MQM-P had presented a constitutional draft and an agenda aimed at devolving powers to the grassroots level, but the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) did not support the proposal. He added that the party’s demands were also not accepted during the 26th and 27th constitutional amendments. Kamal said the MQM-P would now lead the movement for the creation of new administrative units and become part of every campaign seeking new provinces.

Pakistan to partner with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar on oil storage scheme

ANI

Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik on Sunday said plans were underway to launch a scheme with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar for oil storage to strengthen energy security.

Pakistan has been planning to boost domestic storage for crude oil and refined products to increase its energy security, it emerged in May. With no strategic petroleum reserves, the country has been left exposed to oil supply shocks resulting from the US-Iran war that has choked supplies through the Strait of Hormuz. Addressing a press conference in Lahore today, Malik said: “I am grateful to the governments of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar that we will have a bonded scheme with them, under which these countries will store their oil on the secure territories of Pakistan at their own cost, and supply to the entire world from here.”

He added that Pakistan will have the right that



in the case of a conflict, it could “buy those resources from them by paying for them and fulfil our needs”. The minister said the “commercial bonded scheme drafted with the help of Aramco and other major companies” has been forwarded to the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) upon the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. “When, God-willing, a decision is made on it next week, you will see the progress,” he added, asserting that Pakistan’s energy needs

will be fulfilled “without spending money and despite a lack of resources”.

The US-Israel war on Iran has caused oil supply disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively blockaded, leading to unprecedented hikes in petroleum prices. The minister said the government was committed to strengthening energy security. He noted that \$500 million were required for storing crude oil reserves for one month, in addition to \$300-400m needed for an underground storage system. He said the government would later debate whether the country could invest this amount, adding that the leadership would work on it in the upcoming months.

Highlighting Pakistan’s energy challenges, Malik said the country imported around 90 per cent of its energy requirements, while domestic oil production stood at approximately 70,000 barrels per day against a daily demand of around 500,000 barrels.

Banned group trying to fuel unrest in AJK through anti-state propaganda: IG

ANI

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Inspector General of Police Capt. (retd.) Liaquat Ali Malik has accused a banned committee of attempting to create unrest through what he described as anti-state propaganda, while calling for a fact-based assessment of the events surrounding the death of police officer Aqib. Addressing a ceremony in Muzaffarabad to mark Police Martyrs’ Day, the AJK police chief alleged that members of the banned organisation abducted family members who had arrived to receive Aqib’s body. He claimed that the family members were subjected to violence and humiliation and that videos of the alleged incident were recorded. According to the police chief, Aqib sustained critical injuries and died while being transported in an ambulance, while his body was allegedly withheld for four days. Capt. (retd.) Malik questioned what he described as a contradictory narrative surrounding the incident, asking whether those who allegedly attacked police officers should be portrayed as victims while those protecting public safety were labelled aggressors.

Fazl sees defence agreement a step towards Muslim unity

ANI

MULTAN: Jamiat Ulema Islam – Fazl (JUI-F) emir Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement is a step towards joint security and unity of Muslim World. Speaking after meeting Makhdoom Javed Hashmi at his residence in Multan, Maulana Fazlur Rehman described the defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye as a significant step towards the unity and collec-

tive security of the Islamic world. He said the joint defence force of the Muslim World has always been part of the JUI’s manifesto and ideology, and other Islamic countries should also participate in the agreement. The JUI-F chief said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have full potential to lead the Muslim Ummah, while the defence agreement between the three countries will further strengthen the brotherly relations. This agreement represents a strong pillar of collective security and unity and solidar-

ity among the Muslim Ummah.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that the defence agreement is a proof that the interests of the Muslim Ummah are common, while it is also a symbol of the determination to protect the dignity and security of Islamic sanctities. The agreement will pave the way for closer cooperation among Muslim countries. He said this agreement is an important milestone for the strength, unity and solidarity of the Muslim nation.



Lahore: President Asif Ali Zardari was seen off at Lahore Airport by Acting Governor Punjab Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan and Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi.

OIC-COMSTECH-Revive Medical Technologies industrial internship programme begins

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The OIC-COMSTECH-Revive Medical Technologies Industrial Internship Programme commenced here on Sunday, bringing together selected interns from Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Jordan, Nigeria and Pakistan for four weeks of industrial experience in the healthcare sector.

A welcome ceremony for the interns was held at Revive Medical Technologies, where the participants were introduced to the programme and its technical components. The initiative is aimed at providing hands-on exposure to medical device development, biomaterials, healthcare technologies, research and development, quality assurance, testing, regulatory compliance and advanced manufacturing practices. The selected interns are Ms. Samira Sulaymanova from Azerbaijan, Mr. Tsomene Doungmo Stany Lionel from Cameroon, Mr. Ahmad Hamasha from Jordan, Mr. Mustapha Salihu from Nigeria and Ms. Eshah Rehman Malik from Pakistan.

Addressing the ceremony, Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, welcomed the participants and said practical indus-



trial exposure was essential to bridge the gap between academic knowledge, scientific research and real-world technological applications.

He said the programme was part of COMSTECH's efforts to connect young scientists, engineers and researchers from OIC member states with leading industries and technology-based institutions, enabling them to acquire practical skills and experience in emerging sectors. Prof. Choudhary said healthcare technology

and medical device manufacturing offered significant opportunities for scientific collaboration, technology transfer and entrepreneurship across the Muslim world.

He expressed confidence that the interns would use the knowledge and experience gained during the programme to contribute to their respective institutions and countries. He appreciated Revive Medical Technologies for opening its research and manufacturing

facilities to young professionals from different countries and said COMSTECH intended to expand such industry-based training opportunities to participants from more OIC member states in the future.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Murtaza Najabat Ali, Chief Executive Officer of Revive Medical Technologies Inc. and COMSTECH Distinguished Scholar, thanked OIC-COMSTECH for providing a platform to connect industry with young scientific talent from across the Muslim world. He said Revive would continue to contribute to professional training, research collaboration, technology transfer and capacity building in partnership with COMSTECH.

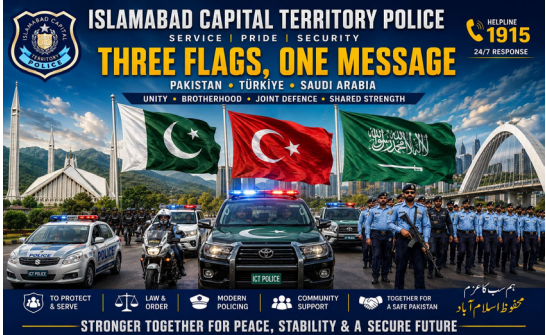
He added that closer linkages between scientific institutions and industry were necessary to transform research into technologies and products capable of addressing healthcare challenges.

Revive Medical Technologies is Pakistan's first private-sector manufacturer of cardiovascular life-supporting and intravascular medical devices licensed by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) and certified under the internationally recognised ISO 13485 quality management system.

Three Flags, One Message: ICT Police march celebrates Pakistan-Türkiye-Saudi defence partnership

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The national flags of Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia fluttered together across the federal capital on Sunday as Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police held a grand flag march to celebrate the Makkah joint defence agreement, projecting a message of brotherhood, solidarity



and shared defence commitment among the three countries. An ICT Police spokesperson told APP that the flag march was led by SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza, while SSP Security and Administration Sulaiman Zafar, SP City Zone Dr Ayaz Hussain and other senior police officers also participated.

Makkah defence pact historic milestone for Pakistan's security: Ali Pervaiz Malik

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik has termed the defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye a historic milestone, saying the pact would further strengthen Pakistan's defence and security. He said just as former prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had made Pakistan a nuclear power, making the country's defence invincible, the Makkah Defence Agreement under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir represented another major development for Pakistan's security.

Ali Pervaiz Malik said it was a significant achievement that the agreement stipulated that aggression against any one of the three countries would be regarded as aggression against all three.

He said the collective defence commitment reflected the strength of the strategic partnership among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye and would serve as an important deterrent against any potential aggression.

Makkah defence pact historic milestone for Muslim Ummah: Rana

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah Khan has described the defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye as a historic document signed on the sacred soil of Makkah, saying it represents a significant step towards unity among the Muslim Ummah.

He said Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan had been brought together through the joint defence agreement, describing the pact as a "document of Muslim unity" and the realisation of a long-cherished dream of the Muslim Ummah.

Rana Sanaullah said the agreement marked a golden moment in the realisa-

tion of that dream and congratulated Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for accomplishing what he termed a historic feat.

He said Pakistan's historic and constructive role in bringing the three countries closer could not be overlooked.

"Those familiar with history know that the presence of Türkiye and Saudi Arabia on the



same side is no ordinary development," he said, adding that it had taken almost a century for the two countries to come together at the same table.

The adviser said the agreement would not remain confined to defence cooperation but would also benefit the three countries in trade and other areas of mutual cooperation.

He expressed the hope that the benefits of such agreements would soon become visible in Pakistan, particularly in the national economy, and eventually reach the common people.

Rana Sanaullah said enhanced cooperation among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye would open new avenues for economic and commercial engagement and further strengthen relations among the three brotherly countries.

Third and Final Phase of AJK Elections: Polling Deferred in Seven Poonch, Sudhnoti Constituencies

BY: ANI Reporter:

MUZAFFARABAD --- The third and final phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) general elections will be held on August 10 in four constituencies of Bagh and Haveli, while polling in seven constituencies of Poonch and Sudhnoti has been officially postponed due to law and order concerns.

Polling will take place in LA-14, LA-15, LA-16 and LA-17, with around 460,000 eligible voters and 82 candidates contesting the four seats. A three-way contest is expected in Haveli (LA-17) between AJK Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, former Kashmir Council member Khawaja



The AJK Election Commission said the decision was taken following concerns over the law and order situation and requests from political personalities and candidates. The decision came after clashes between protesters and law enforcement personnel in Rawalakot on July 27.

Polling for the seven deferred constituencies is tentatively expected around August 20-21, subject to the security situation.

The AJK Legislative Assembly has 53 seats, including 45 general and eight reserved seats. PML-N has already secured 24 seats in the first two phases, crossing the 23-seat simple majority required to form a government.

Hyderabad: Aggrieved Candidates and Students Hold Torchlight Rally Against SPSC

BY : ANI Correspondent:

HYDERABAD: A torchlight rally was organized by aggrieved candidates and students against the Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) in Hyderabad, marching from Naseem Nagar Chowk to the SPSC head office and protest camp.

A large number of students, citizens, lawyers, social activists and people from different sections of society participated in the rally.

The participants and leaders said the rally was aimed at drawing the attention of the government and concerned institutions towards their demands and seeking justice for the affected candidates and stu-



dents.

They said the lighting of torches in the darkness conveyed a strong message that the consciousness of Sindh remains awake. They warned that if justice was not provided to the

aggrieved students, they would continue raising their voice and would not remain silent. Social leaders, lawyers, student leaders and representatives of various sections of society also participated in the rally.

DC Khushab Conducts Surprise Inspection of Various Branches at DC Office Complex

BY : ANI Correspondent:

SARGODHA: Deputy Commissioner Khushab Dr. Jahanzeb Hussain Laber conducted a surprise inspection of various branches at the DC Office Complex, reviewing staff attendance, cleanliness, official records and facilities for citizens.

Branch heads briefed him on pending matters and progress on public applications and complaints. The Deputy Commissioner directed officials to treat citizens with respect and ensure timely and transparent resolution of their issues.

He also ordered strict cleanliness standards and further beautification of the complex through plantation and landscaping. He directed officers and employees to perform their



duties with honesty and dedication, warning that negligence or inappropriate behaviour towards citizens would not be tolerated.

Dr. Jahanzeb Hussain Laber also directed that available government rooms and space be utilized effectively for official purposes.



Heavy machinery is being used for the construction of a flyover along the under-construction 10th Avenue as part of ongoing development work in the Federal Capital

Makkah defence pact step towards Muslim unity, lasting regional peace: Shaza Fatima

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Sunday termed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement a significant step towards unity among the Muslim Ummah and lasting peace in the region.

Talking to the media, the minister said the historic agreement would open new avenues for peace, unity, and cooperation among Muslim countries.

She said the Makkah Agreement would serve as a new source of hope for unity, trust, and shared peace for future generations.

Shaza Fatima paid tribute to Prime



Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for their leadership in reaching the agreement.

"Visionary leadership brings nations closer and opens new ave-

nues for peace," she said.

The federal minister also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, for their efforts.

She said the efforts of Pakistan's political and military leadership had strengthened the country's standing as a champion of peace at the global level. Shaza Fatima said that under the Makkah Agreement, an attack on any one member country would be considered an attack on all member countries.

She said the agreement had created a new wave of unity, resolve, and hope among the Muslim Ummah.

Dr Ruth Pfau: A debt Pakistan can never repay

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Some lives are measured in years; others are measured in the lives they touch. Dr Ruth Pfau, widely known as the "Mother Teresa of Pakistan" belonged to the second kind.

A German-born doctor who arrived in Pakistan in the early 1960s, she could have returned to a comfortable life in Europe. Instead, she stayed. What she found in Karachi was not merely a medical challenge but a human tragedy.....people suffering from leprosy were not only battling a disease but also the crushing weight of fear, rejection and social stigma. Pfau chose to stand where others hesitated to tread. For more than five decades, Pakistan became her home, her workplace and, ultimately, her final resting place. She devoted herself to people whom society had pushed to the margins, treating not merely their wounds but their dignity.

That is why Pakistan remains indebted to Dr Pfau.

She did not simply fight leprosy; she fought the fear surrounding it. Through the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre and the wider network she helped establish, she turned a lonely battle into a nationwide campaign. The network eventually expanded to 157 leprosy clinics and treated more than 56,780 people, according to records cited about her work.

Her achievement was not only in numbers. It was in changing attitudes. For patients who had been treated as outcasts, a doctor willing to sit beside them, examine them and care for them sent a powerful message: you are not untouchable; you are human. Pakistan's progress in bringing leprosy under control was a landmark achievement. Dr Pfau played a central role in that transformation, with her work contributing to the country achieving the World Health Organisation's leprosy-control target in 1996. When Dr Pfau died in Karachi on 10 August 2017, Pakistan did not merely lose a doctor. It lost a woman who had made another country her own.

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Opinion

3

Education for All: Pakistan Cannot Build a Future on an Unequal Classroom



Written By:Dr. Nasser Hussyn Bukhari
Published By:ANI News Agency

Perhaps the greatest weakness is fragmentation. Pakistan has government schools, elite private schools, low-cost private schools, divisional public schools and thousands of religious seminaries. The problem is not necessarily the existence of different institutions; it is the enormous difference in curriculum, teaching quality, resources, language and educational objectives.

Consequently, two children born in the same country can grow up with entirely different understandings of Pakistan, democracy, citizenship, science, religion and patriotism. One may study advanced mathematics, computer science and English in an elite school; another may struggle with basic literacy in an under-resourced government school; a third may receive predominantly religious instruction in a seminary. Instead of creating one educated nation, our education system risks producing parallel social worlds.

This fragmentation has serious implications for national cohesion. Religious seminaries have an important place in society and many provide valuable religious education. However, where religious education remains isolated from modern science, social sciences, technology and critical inquiry, students may become disconnected from contemporary knowledge. This does not mean that seminaries themselves are responsible for extremism; rather, the absence of balanced modern education can create conditions in which sectarianism, intolerance and intellectual isolation flourish.

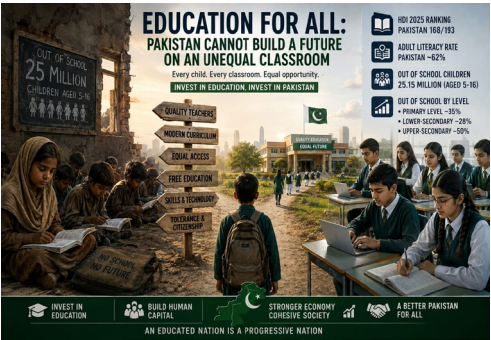
The same principle applies to Islamic Studies. Religious education should cultivate ethics, compassion, tolerance and intellectual curiosity rather than reinforce sectarian divisions. Pakistan must ensure that children are not educated primarily as members of competing sectarian identities. They should first understand that they are equal citizens of Pakistan, regardless of sect, religion, ethnicity, language or province.

Pakistan therefore needs a fundamental restructuring of its education architecture. The long-term objective should be one national education system based on common standards, equal opportunity and a shared civic foundation. Nationalisation should not necessarily mean confiscating every privately owned institution. Rather, the state should establish national standards for curriculum, teacher certification, access, assessment and accountability and bring all educational institutions, including seminaries, within a coherent regulatory framework.

Education up to higher-secondary level should be free for every child. No student should leave school because parents cannot afford fees, books, uniforms or transport. After completing intermediate education, young people should be able to choose universities, professional institutions, vocational education or specialised religious scholarship.

Madaris should be encouraged and legally regulated to enrol students who have completed intermediate education for advanced religious studies. This would help separate basic schooling from specialised religious scholarship and reduce the tendency to place children into sectarian educational environments at an early age. Muslim countries such as Türkiye and Malaysia demonstrate that religious education can coexist with modern education within regulated national systems. Pakistan can develop a model suited to its own constitutional, cultural and religious circumstances.

The most important reform, however, concerns teachers. No curriculum



can succeed without competent teachers. Pakistan should establish Teachers Registration and Certification Authorities at federal and provincial levels. Every teacher in government, private and religious institutions should meet minimum professional standards and receive periodic certification.

Universities must redesign teacher-education programmes around educational psychology, pedagogy, digital learning, critical thinking, classroom management, inclusive education and subject expertise. Teaching should become a prestigious and financially attractive profession. Competitive salaries are not merely a welfare measure for teachers; they are an investment in the quality of the next generation.

Pakistan's curriculum also requires fundamental revision. The present system relies excessively on memorisation and examination-oriented learning. Children must be taught how to ask questions, investigate evidence, solve problems, communicate ideas and think independently. Science and technology should be strengthened, but social sciences, history, philosophy, literature, civics and ethics are equally important for building a democratic society.

Another major obstacle is the rapidly expanding tuition mafia. Pakistan has developed an examination economy in which families increasingly pay private academies to compensate for weaknesses in schools. Medical, engineering and competitive examinations have become lucrative commercial markets. A talented student from a remote district whose family cannot afford expensive coaching is placed at a significant disadvantage against a student receiving months of specialised preparation.

The same problem increasingly affects CSS and other competitive examinations. When coaching becomes a prerequisite for success, competitive examinations cease to be genuinely competitive. They begin to reward purchasing power rather than intellectual ability. Entrance examinations must therefore test understanding, analytical ability and creativity rather than memorisation and coaching-centre techniques.

Pakistan needs an education revolution, not another education slogan. The government must significantly increase investment in education, provide free schooling through higher secondary level, establish common national standards, modernise curricula, certify teachers and ensure competitive salaries. Equal attention must be given to science, technology and social sciences so that Pakistan develops both technological capacity and a healthy social fabric. The choice is ultimately straightforward. Pakistan can continue paying the economic and social price of ignorance, unemployment, intolerance and inequality, or invest in the children who constitute its greatest national asset. Twenty-five million out-of-school children are not merely a statistic. They are Pakistan's unfinished future.

If Pakistan genuinely wants to become democratic, tolerant, prosperous and technologically capable, it must begin where every successful nation begins: with a classroom, a trained teacher and a child given an equal opportunity to learn.

The Flood Dividend: Turning Pakistan's Annual Deluge into Economic Prosperity



Written By:Sobia Aqeel
Published By:ANI News

Part II - Building the Flood Economy: The Institutions, Investments, and Policies That Could Transform Pakistan's Water Future

The idea of Flood Dividend is neither an engineering fantasy nor an environmental slogan. It is an economic proposition. It begins with a simple premise: water that destroys wealth can, if managed intelligently, create wealth. For Pakistan, where floods and droughts often occur within the same year, the challenge is not the quantity of water but the quality of governance. The transition from a flood-prone nation to a flood-resilient economy demands more than stronger embankments or larger relief funds. It requires a fundamental redesign of how Pakistan values, manages, finances, and governs water.

Pakistan's current approach remains overwhelmingly reactive. Public attention intensifies only after rivers overflow, villages disappear beneath water, and humanitarian crises dominate headlines. Yet floods are among the country's most predictable natural events. Their timing may vary, but their recurrence does not. A phenomenon that occurs every year must not be managed as an emergency; it must be plan as an integral part of national economic policy. Just as roads are as economic infrastructure and electricity as industrial infrastructure, water must be as strategic economic infrastructure one that underpins agriculture, energy, manufacturing, public health, urban development, and national security.

The first required reform is institutional rather than physical.

Pakistan's water governance remains fragmented among multiple federal and provincial agencies whose responsibilities often overlap while accountability remains unclear. River management, irrigation, disaster response, environmental protection, urban planning, and infrastructure development frequently operate within separate administrative frameworks. The result is duplication, delayed decision-making, and policies that solve one problem while unintentionally creating another.

Pakistan stores only a fraction of the water that flows through its river system each year. During the monsoon, enormous quantities of freshwater rush downstream within weeks, but only after few months, water stress rises across agricultural and urban areas. This seasonal imbalance has become one of the defining constraints on Pakistan's economic development. Public debate often reduces water storage to the construction of large dams. While major reservoirs will continue to play a significant role where they are technically, economically, and environmentally justified, they represent only one component of a modern storage strategy.

The future lies equally in decentralized water retention. Thousands of small retention ponds, recharge basins, restored wetlands, village reservoirs, check dams, and floodplain storage areas can collectively capture significant volumes of seasonal runoff. These investments are comparatively affordable, environmentally sustainable, and capable of replenishing depleted aquifers while reducing downstream flood intensity. Instead of allowing floodwater to become a temporary threat, Pakistan should transform it into a strategic reserve for agriculture, industry, and future generations.

Agriculture, which remains the backbone of Pakistan's rural economy, must also evolve. For decades, agricultural policies have designed based on historical climate patterns that are

becoming increasingly unreliable. Future farming systems must adapt to greater rainfall variability rather than assume climatic stability. This means expanding research into flood-tolerant crop varieties, improving drainage infrastructure, encouraging crop diversification, promoting raised-bed cultivation where appropriate, and integrating fisheries into suitable floodplain agriculture. Precision agriculture, satellite monitoring, and artificial intelligence can enable farmers to make planting decisions based on real-time climate forecasts rather than historical averages. Universities, agricultural research institutions, and extension services should work together to ensure that innovation reaches even the smallest farmers.

Climate adaptation is no longer an environmental expenditure; it is a future investment to enhance productivity.

The same principle applies to urban development. Pakistan's cities have expanded at remarkable speed, often without adequate drainage planning or enforcement of land-use regulations. Housing developments have spread into natural floodplains, waterways have been encroached upon, and impermeable concrete surfaces have replaced landscapes that once absorbed seasonal rainfall. Consequently, urban flooding has become increasingly destructive, disrupting businesses, transport systems, and public services.

Future Urban Floods Planning

Future urban planning must incorporate the concept of sponge cities, where parks, wetlands, permeable pavements, retention lakes, green roofs, and restored waterways work alongside conventional engineering to absorb excess rainfall. Few countries have demonstrated that investing in natural infrastructure frequently produces greater long-term returns than relying solely on concrete barriers. Pakistan's rapidly growing cities should integrate these principles before urban vulnerability becomes irreversible. Financing such transformation presents another challenge but also another opportunity.

In Pakistan, climate adaptation has been discussed as a cost. Increasingly, global financial markets view it as an investment opportunity. Pakistan should position itself not merely as a recipient of post-disaster assistance but as a destination for climate-resilient infrastructure finance. Government should introduce Flood Resilience banking schemes dedicated exclusively to water infrastructure, watershed restoration, urban drainage modernization, and community adaptation projects. These schemes would attract domestic institutional investors, overseas Pakistanis, multilateral development banks, sovereign wealth funds, and climate-focused investment funds seeking long-term, sustainable projects. Transparent governance, independent oversight, and measurable performance indicators are essential to building investor confidence.

Insurance represents another underutilized instrument of resilience. Millions of Pakistanis remain financially exposed because conventional insurance products are expensive, inaccessible, or administratively difficult. Parametric insurance is quite a workable option that offers a more practical alternative. Instead of requiring lengthy assessments of individual damage, payouts trigger automatically when independently verified indicators such as river levels or rainfall intensity cross predetermined thresholds. Immediate financial support enables families, farmers, and businesses to recover more quickly, thereby reducing their dependence on emergency government assistance.

Equally important is the role of technology, yet technology alone cannot build resilience.

The digital revolution offers Pakistan capabilities unimaginable only two decades ago. Artificial intelligence

can improve hydrological forecasting. Satellite imagery can monitor river systems in near real time. Geographic information systems can identify vulnerable settlements with remarkable precision. Drone technology can support rapid damage assessments, while mobile communication platforms can deliver targeted early warnings directly to communities at risk.

Public awareness remains one of Pakistan's weakest defenses against flooding. Early warning systems are effective only when citizens understand how to respond. Schools, local governments, universities, civil society organizations, religious institutions, and community volunteers all have vital roles in fostering a culture of preparedness. Disaster literacy should become as fundamental as public health education, ensuring that every household understands evacuation procedures, emergency planning, and basic flood risk management.

Flood Friendly Ecosystems Must Be a Priority.

For generations, wetlands, forests, floodplains, and mangrove ecosystems have been treated as unproductive land awaiting development. They perform valuable economic services by storing floodwater, reducing erosion, filtering pollutants, supporting biodiversity, and protecting coastal communities. Economists increasingly describe these ecosystems as natural infrastructure because replacing their functions through engineered solutions is often substantially more expensive. Pakistan should therefore incorporate ecosystem restoration into mainstream economic planning rather than treating conservation as a separate environmental agenda. Protecting wetlands and river corridors is not merely about preserving nature; it is about reducing future public expenditure on disaster recovery.

Pakistan Must Rethink to Measure the National Success.

Economic growth has traditionally been assessed through indicators such as gross domestic product, exports, industrial production, and investment. While these remain essential, they reveal little about the sustainability of natural resources that underpin long-term prosperity. The future demands broader measures of national wealth. Water storage capacity, groundwater health, ecosystem resilience, flood-risk reduction, and climate-resilient infrastructure should become recognized indicators of economic strength. A country that continuously loses billions of cubic meters of freshwater while spending billions more on reconstruction is not simply facing an environmental problem, it is mismanaging one of its most valuable forms of capital. Viewed through this broader economic lens, Pakistan's annual floods cease to be isolated disasters. They become evidence of an untapped national asset awaiting institutional transformation.

The challenge is therefore not whether Pakistan possesses sufficient water to secure its future. The challenge is whether it possesses the political will, institutional capacity, and strategic vision to convert that water into enduring prosperity. For too long, the nation has measured floods by the depth of destruction they leave behind but now is the time to gauge by the depth of economic value they create. The Flood Dividend will not emerge from a single dam, a single policy, or a single government. It will emerge from a new national philosophy, one that recognizes water not as a seasonal threat to fear, but as a strategic resource to govern with foresight, innovation, and discipline.

Part III will conclude by examining how Pakistan can transform climate resilience into a competitive economic advantage, attract global climate finance, strengthen food and energy security, and position itself as a model for climate-smart development in the twenty-first century.

The Mecca Agreement: A New Dawn of Regional Security and Shared Prosperity



Written By:Sheikh J Hussain London
JawadKhayal @icloud.com
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In the holy city of Mecca, a new chapter in regional history has been written — one that reaches beyond borders, beyond alliances, and beyond the narrow interests of the moment. The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, signed by Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan, is far more than a security pact. It is a promise made in a place revered for faith and unity, that three nations will stand together to protect their people, advance their shared interests, and build a future where peace and progress go hand in hand. At its core lies a principle both simple and powerful: an armed attack against any one of the signatories shall be regarded as an attack against them all. This is not a declaration of hostility toward anyone. It is a shield raised in defence of stability, sovereignty, and the right of nations to determine their own destiny free from fear.

Each country brings unique strengths that together create something far greater than any single nation could achieve alone. Saudi Arabia contributes immense economic influence, vast energy resources, and unparalleled

standing across the Arab and Islamic world. It provides the financial foundation, global reach, and diplomatic weight that lend this partnership credibility and purpose. Turkey brings advanced defence technology, growing industrial capability, and decades of experience bridging continents and cultures. Its expertise in manufacturing, innovation, and infrastructure adds vital practical capacity to the alliance. Pakistan brings one of the world's most resilient and battle-tested armed forces, established defence production facilities, and a credible strategic deterrence that has preserved regional balance through the most difficult times. When combined, these complementary strengths create a partnership that is economically robust, technologically advanced, and defensively secure — a balance that no external power can dismiss or ignore.

The benefits extend deeply into trade, development, and shared prosperity. By coordinating procurement, sharing research, and building defence equipment together rather than buying it from abroad, the three nations retain wealth within their own economies, create skilled jobs, and develop capabilities that serve civilian life as well as security. Technology developed for defence can advance healthcare, communications, agriculture, and infrastructure. Standards harmonised across borders simplify trade, reduce costs, and open markets to smaller businesses. For Pakistan, in particular, this partnership offers

access to advanced innovation from Turkey and investment capital from Saudi Arabia — resources that can accelerate industrial growth, upgrade infrastructure, and create new pathways out of economic difficulty. Prosperity becomes a shared goal, not a private advantage.

China has long stood for the vision that regional nations should work together to build cooperation rather than confrontation. It has consistently encouraged countries across this vast region to strengthen mutual understanding, improve connectivity, and pursue shared progress. China's interest in the Mecca Agreement rests on the same principles: that peace is built through partnership, that trade creates trust, and that a stable and united region serves the interests of all nations, both within it and beyond. China's decades-long commitment to infrastructure development, trade routes, and economic connectivity offers a proven model that aligns naturally with what Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan are now building. When nations stand together in mutual respect, they create an environment where wider cooperation becomes possible — and that is exactly what China has consistently advocated.

In the area of trade, the agreement creates confidence that encourages investment and opens new routes. Security is the foundation upon which commerce is built. When borders are secure, when disputes are settled through dialogue, and when nations

stand together, businesses invest with greater confidence, goods move more freely, and supply chains become more reliable. China's experience in building trade corridors, ports, and transport links demonstrates clearly what can be achieved when nations cooperate. By aligning regional partnership with wider connectivity initiatives, the Mecca framework can open new trade routes connecting South Asia, the Gulf, the Middle East, and beyond. Goods, energy, technology, and people can move more easily, creating shared growth that reaches every participating nation.

In defence and security, the partnership creates balance rather than threat. Joint military exercises, shared intelligence, and coordinated planning improve each nation's ability to defend itself while reducing the need for costly and dangerous arms competition. China has long maintained that security should be shared, not monopolised by a few powerful nations. The Mecca Agreement embodies exactly that idea: nations working together to keep peace, rather than competing to dominate one another. Strength is used to preserve stability, not to project power. Deterrence is built so that conflict becomes unnecessary. This approach reduces tension, lowers risk, and creates space for dialogue even between nations that do not always agree.

Peace remains the ultimate purpose of every part of this collaboration. Stronger defence capability does not

create conflict — it discourages it. When potential aggressors know that an attack on one will be met by the combined strength of three, they think twice before acting. That deterrence protects lives and preserves peace. Trade and economic cooperation bind nations together in mutual interest, making conflict less likely over time. Shared infrastructure and connectivity create relationships that cannot easily be broken. China's vision has always recognised this simple truth: development and security are inseparable. A nation cannot be peaceful if its people remain poor, and prosperity cannot take root where fear and conflict persist. The Mecca Agreement addresses both sides of this equation — security to protect progress, and progress to sustain peace.

This partnership is not closed or exclusive. It stands open to all relevant nations who share its principles of respect, sovereignty, and peaceful cooperation. Every Arab country is invited to take part, to contribute its strengths, and to benefit from shared security and trade. The more nations join, the stronger the peace becomes. Wider participation means broader trade routes, shared infrastructure, and a unified voice that speaks with clarity and influence on behalf of the entire region. Unity is not imposed — it is offered as an opportunity.

Looking toward the future, there is a sincere hope that Iran may one day also join this collaborative partnership. Iran is a nation of ancient civilisation,

deep culture, and undeniable importance to regional peace. True and lasting peace cannot be built around any nation, nor can it exclude those who live within this shared geography. The Mecca Agreement creates a framework where neighbours can speak openly, address concerns calmly, and build trust gradually. If Iran chooses to join in time, this partnership could evolve into something truly historic — a comprehensive regional security system that spans from the Arabian Sea to the Mediterranean, uniting nations in peace, trade, and mutual protection. That is the vision: a house large enough for all who wish to live in peace.

In the end, the Mecca Agreement offers a powerful lesson for our times: that nations need not choose between independence and partnership. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan have shown that it is possible to stand together without losing one's identity, to gain strength through cooperation rather than surrendering to influence, and to build security and prosperity on one's own terms. With encouragement from those who believe in connectivity, mutual benefit, and shared progress, this agreement can grow into a cornerstone of peace, trade, and stability across one of the world's most important regions. It stands as proof that when nations unite in common purpose, guided by principle and goodwill, even the most difficult challenges can be overcome — and a brighter future built together.

Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani Welcomes Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Türkiye Joint Defence Agreement, Calls It Important Step for Regional Peace and Stability

BY: FT Correspondent:

QUETTA-- Balochistan Provincial Minister for Education Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani welcomed the signing of the joint defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in Makkah, describing it as an important step towards promoting peace, security and stability in the region.

Durrani said the agreement was a significant diplomatic achievement of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar. She said Pakistan's relations with brotherly Islamic countries were further strengthening due to the Foreign Minister's effective foreign policy



and tireless efforts.

She said Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye were united in protecting their sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, while the agreement would open new avenues for

defence cooperation and strengthen collective security.

The provincial minister congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Senator Ishaq Dar on the historic agreement.

She also paid tribute to Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for his leadership and professional services, saying his steadfastness had played an important role in strengthening Pakistan's defence partnerships and strategic interests.

Durrani expressed hope that the historic agreement would contribute to lasting peace and stability in the three brotherly countries and the wider region.

Strong Parliament & Constitutional Supremacy Essential for Stable, Prosperous Pakistan: NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

BY : ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that the establishment of the Constituent Assembly was a historic milestone in Pakistan's national and parliamentary history and laid the foundation for the country's constitutional and democratic system.

In his message on the 79th anniversary of the Constituent Assembly, the Speaker said that parliamentary democracy, supremacy of the Constitution and rule of law were essential for national unity, stability, sustainable development and public prosperity.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the first session of the Constituent Assembly, held in Karachi on August 10, 1947, reflected the democratic vision of Pakistan's Founding Fathers and paved the way for constitution-making, legislation and the parliamentary system.

He stressed the need to strengthen democratic institutions, promote dialogue, tolerance and consensus, and acquaint the younger generation with Pakistan's constitutional and parliamentary history.

The Speaker said the National Assembly was adopting modern technology, artificial intelligence and digital systems to improve transparency, access to information

and institutional capacity. He added that the Parliament has been fully shifted to solar energy since 2015 as part of its commitment to sustainable development.

He reiterated that Parliament would continue to uphold the Constitution, rule of law, democratic values and public welfare.

Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah said the anniversary was an opportunity to reaffirm the democratic vision of the Founding Fathers and the commitment to public service. He said Parliament represented the federation, national unity and the collective voice of the people.

Successful Training Sessions on Digital and Administrative Modules Held in Khushab

BY : ANI Reporter ;

SARGODHA: In accordance with the directives of the Higher Education Department, Government of Punjab, successful training sessions on digital and administrative modules were conducted in Khushab.

District Master Trainers Mrs. Ghulam Hafsa, Mrs. Iram Zahra Ghaus, Mr. Amir Abbas and Mrs. Saima Sikandar were presented Certificates of Appreciation by



Professor Dr. Irum Iqbal, Deputy Director Colleges, District Khushab, in recognition of their outstanding performance and contribution to the training programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Professor Dr. Irum Iqbal appreciated the efforts of the master trainers and said that the achievement reflected the power of hard work, vision and teamwork.

She congratulated all the master trainers and said, "You are all a source of pride for us."

Grand Meeting Held in Rawalpindi to Finalize Arrangements for Central Eid Milad-un-Nabi S.A.W Procession



BY: ANI Reporter:

RAWALPINDI--- A grand meeting was held at Markazi Jamia Masjid Hanfia, Jamia Masjid Road, Rawalpindi, to review and finalize arrangements for the central Eid Milad-un-Nabi □ procession. Religious scholars, spiritual leaders, representatives of Ahle Sunnat organizations, Seerat and Milad committees, and procession organizers attended the meeting.

The meeting unanimously

decided that all Milad groups from across the city would join the central procession on 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal instead of holding separate neighborhood-level processions, to demonstrate unity, discipline and collective solidarity.

Detailed consultations were held regarding the procession route, security arrangements, discipline, reception camps and other logistical matters, which were finalized through mutual consensus. President of the Central Seerat-o-Milad Committee Rawalpindi

Fawad Butt, General Secretary Abrar Ahmed Sheikh, Chairman Farhan Sheikh, Vice Chairman Ghulam Ali Khan, Senior Vice President Asimullah Qureshi, other office-bearers, core committee members and representatives of various Milad committees attended the meeting.

Participants expressed full confidence in the arrangements and pledged their cooperation to ensure that Eid Milad-un-Nabi □ celebrations are observed in a peaceful, organized and dignified manner.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Hails Makkah Joint Defence Agreement as Landmark for Muslim Unity and Security

BY: FT Correspondent :

ISLAMABAD-- Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training and Chairman Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, has hailed the historic Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye as a major milestone for Muslim unity, collective security and lasting peace.

In a special statement, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui commended the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and brotherly Muslim countries for their strong and welcoming response to the agreement.

The Federal Minister described the agreement as a landmark development aimed at strengthening the defence, security and collective resili-



ence of the Muslim Ummah, while contributing to peace and stability in the region.

He said the strategic defence agreement signed in the holy city of Makkah by three major Muslim countries was a timely step towards addressing the complex security challenges facing the Muslim world.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said the agreement would not only help safeguard the security and sanctity

of the Holy Land but would also promote regional cooperation, strengthen strategic partnerships among Muslim countries and enhance collective defence capabilities and self-reliance.

He further stated that the unity and cooperation demonstrated by Muslim countries reflected a growing commitment to collective responsibility and mutual solidarity.

The MQM-P chairman expressed hope that the agreement would pave the way for broader cooperation and stronger institutional mechanisms for peace, security and stability across the Muslim world.

He reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue to play its constructive role in promoting peace, stability, dialogue and cooperation among Muslim countries and safeguarding the collective interests of the Muslim Ummah.

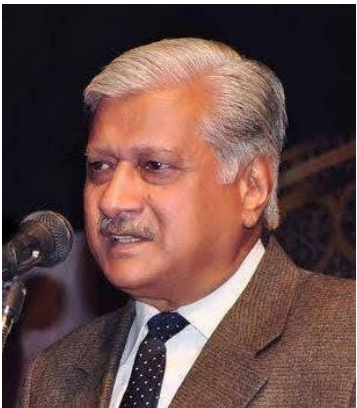
Jinnah Iqbal South Asian Forum Announces Special Dry Ration Initiative for Deserving Women on Independence Day

BY: FT Correspondent:

RAWALPINDI --- The Jinnah Iqbal South Asian Forum has announced a special initiative to distribute one month's dry ration among educated, widowed, white-collar and deserving women to enable them to participate in Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations with dignity.

Founder Chairman of the Forum Rana Abdul Baqi said a special ration distribution ceremony would be held on August 14, 2026, at Jinnah Iqbal Education, Rawalpindi. Secretary General of the Thinkers Forum of Pakistan, Col. (Retd.) Bakhtiar Hakeem, will preside over the ceremony. Rana Abdul Baqi said participants, particularly children, would be briefed about the Pakistan Movement, its historical background and the unprecedented sacrifices made by their forefathers for the creation of their fore.

He stressed that Independence Day celebrations should have a



meaningful purpose and that the younger generation must be made aware of the struggle and sacrifices of their elders. He said instead of meaningless revelry, noise and fanfare, young people should understand their responsibilities as citizens and express gratitude to Almighty Allah for the precious blessing of freedom.

Rana Abdul Baqi said Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal envisioned a Pakistan where the objectives of independence would be translated into social and economic justice, including the elimination of poverty and deprivation.

In line with the vision of the national leaders, he said, the Jinnah Iqbal Forum would provide dry-ration packages to educated, widowed and needy women struggling with rising inflation, unemployment and the heavy burden of taxes reflected in utility bills.

He further said renowned writer and poet, PTV Censor Board member and recipient of the International SAARC Writers Award, Ms. Farheen Chaudhry, would be the chief guest at the ceremony.

Rana Abdul Baqi also appealed to social welfare organizations, philanthropists and people of means to come forward and support poor and deserving members of society.

Pakistan SMA Symposium 2026 Held in Islamabad, Experts Call for Early Diagnosis and Better Care

BY: Reporter ANI:

ISLAMABAD --- The Pakistan SMA Symposium 2026, organised by STRIVE - Strive Eradication of Disability Foundation, was held at Serena Hotel Islamabad with participation from doctors, researchers, academics, medical experts, civil society representatives and families affected by Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA).

The symposium focused on SMA awareness, early diagnosis, genetic screening, modern treatment, medical research and challenges faced by patients and their families. Experts from Pakistan, Poland, the United Kingdom and other European countries also participated, providing an international research perspective.

Chief HSRU Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr Syed Ejaz Ali Shah, Chairman Zakat and Ushr Council Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Imtiaz Khan and STRIVE Chairman Muhammad Yasir



Khan were among the prominent participants.

Dr Syed Ejaz Ali Shah appreciated the resilience of SMA patients and their families and stressed the need for collective efforts by healthcare professionals, government institutions and civil society.

STRIVE Chairman Muhammad Yasir Khan said the organisation was working to promote awareness, early diagnosis and research on

SMA across Pakistan. He announced that STRIVE would organise a major SMA Summit on October 30 and 31, 2026, at Tulip Marquee Islamabad.

Participants stressed the importance of early diagnosis, genetic screening, modern treatment and stronger cooperation between Pakistani and international medical and research institutions to improve care for people living with SMA.

Barrister Daniyal Chaudhary Hails Makkah Joint Defence Agreement as Historic Diplomatic and Defence Milestone

BY: FT Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhary has welcomed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, describing it as a major diplomatic and defence milestone for Pakistan and a historic development for the Muslim Ummah.

Daniyal Chaudhary said the agreement was an extraordinary moment of joy, hope and pride for the Muslim Ummah and marked the beginning of a new era of unity, trust and collective security.

He said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had taken a historic decision that would open new avenues for peace and stability.

The Parliamentary Secretary credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir



for their hard work, sincerity and exemplary leadership, saying their efforts made the historic defence agreement possible.

He stated that under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, an armed attack on any one member country would be considered an attack on all three countries. He added that following the historic agreement, no member country would stand alone in any difficult situation.

Daniyal Chaudhary said the strong economy and leadership of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye's advanced defence

technology and Pakistan's experienced armed forces would collectively lay a strong foundation for peace and security.

He described the agreement as historic good news and a new ray of hope for unity among the Muslim Ummah, saying the message of brotherhood and solidarity emanating from Makkah had the power to unite hearts across the Muslim world.

He further said the positive impact of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement would not remain limited to the region but would contribute to promoting peace, trust and mutual cooperation across the world.

Daniyal Chaudhary said Pakistan's political and military leadership had enhanced the country's national prestige and further strengthened Pakistan's position as a reliable partner in collective security. He termed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement a bright hope for a secure, united and prosperous future for Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Pakistan and the entire Muslim Ummah.

Maarka-e-Haq Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Championship Held on Independence Day, Shazia Rizwan Attends as Chief Guest



BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture Shazia Rizwan attended the Maarka-e-Haq Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Championship as chief guest, held on August 8 at Leisure City Bowling Club, Safa Gold Mall, F-7 Islamabad, to mark Independence Day.

The championship was organised by Growing Women Pakistan in col-

laboration with the Tenpin Bowling Federation Pakistan and was attended by bowling players, sports enthusiasts and other participants.

Shazia Rizwan interacted with the participants and congratulated the organisers for holding the championship. She paid tribute to the armed forces of Pakistan for their services and sacrifices in defending the country and safeguarding its security and sovereignty.

She said sports activities on Independence Day were an effective way to promote patriotism, national unity and positive thinking among young people. She also stressed the importance of providing women equal opportunities in sports and other fields. Shazia Rizwan appreciated the efforts of Growing Women Pakistan in promoting women's participation, empowerment and development through sports.