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PML-N's Syed Iftikhar Ali sworn in as new AJK PM



ANI

MUZAFFARABAD: PML-N's Barrister Syed Iftikhar Ali Gillani was sworn in as Azad Jammu and Kashmir's prime minister on Friday.

Gillani took oath at a televised ceremony, where he expressed gratitude to PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and the party's senior leadership.

Addressing the gathering, the newly elected prime minister said he was thankful for the leadership's "affection and faith" in him and pledged to uphold that trust.

"I am thankful for the leadership and party's affection and faith in

me, and I assure you that even if I have to work day and night, I will uphold this faith," Gillani said.

He urged members of the Legislative Assembly to cooperate with him, stressing that "we must move forward together and build an AJK that is exemplary for the whole world." "Ours is a small region," Gillani said, noting that "similar to the rest of the country, AJK also has governance issues and unemployment". "Why does anyone work in this country? It is so they can put food on the table, give their children a better education and afford to pay hospital bills," he said, stressing that the three points were "the basis on which his government will move forward". He emphasised that the

youth must be provided employment opportunities. "We have to take all possible efforts to ensure employment for the youth so they may not be led astray and continue on a path to a brighter future".

Gillani stated that the hospitals in the region also needed improvement. "If we address these three things to even a minor extent, many of our tensions will be resolved."

He expressed confidence that the PML-N majority in the legislative assembly will "utilise the experience of senior members and energy of the youth in their ranks".

"I am confident that at the end of our tenure, AJK's prosperity and development will be used as an example all over Pakistan," he

hoped. Gillani was elected as PM after securing 30 of the 44 votes polled in the assembly earlier in the day. His sole contender was PPP's Sardar Mukhtar Ahmed Abbasi, who bagged 14 votes in the contest for the top office. The AJK Assembly comprises 53 members, but its present strength is 46 – PML-N's being 32, including its allies, and PPP's 14 – because elections to seven seats in Poonch and Sudhnoti districts have yet to be held.

However, 44 votes were polled in Friday's elections as the speaker did not cast his vote and PML-N regional president Shah Ghulam Qadir was not present in the assembly.

UK Officials Praise Pakistan's US-Iran Mediation: Dar

ANI

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday that British officials had praised Pakistan's mediation efforts between the United States and Iran during high-level meetings. He added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir were praised for their leadership in "challenging times". FM Dar is currently on a visit to the United Kingdom from August 24-28. Addressing a news conference in London, FM Dar called his UK visit "extremely useful," and said that he held comprehensive talks with the UK Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband on bilateral ties and counter-terrorism cooperation. "In all the meetings, British officials praised Pakistan's mediation efforts between the US and Iran, in particular the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir for playing such a positive role in such challenging times," he added. FM Dar noted that discussions with the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, focused on "reforms and youth initiatives", with Pakistan co-chairing the Commonwealth Youth Programme. Dar further added that he highlighted Pakistan's "vulnerability" to climate change, noting that Pakistan remains among the world's ten most affected countries.

"I had detailed meetings about the ten Pakistani nationals held hostage on MT Honour 25 by Somali pirates, and the Pakistani High Commissioner also attended these meetings," he said, further noting that "there are some global maritime principles and rules that we need to follow, one of which is that you cannot pay ransom to free citizens of your country, which amounts to encouraging piracy and ransom".

FM Dar also said that he met the British National Security Adviser Jonathan Powell, adding that the meeting was "off-camera for security reasons" and no pictures were released because that was the standard procedure.

While talking about the state of the economy, FM Dar highlighted that in the past, the "default mantra" loomed over Pakistan, further stating that when



PML-N came back to power in 2024, "we took steps to return to normalcy under the leadership of the prime minister and now Pakistan's economy is stable".

"The default mantra is now over, and our economic indicators have improved. Inflation was at 30 per cent earlier but now hovers around the single-digit level. Our policy rates have almost halved, and we have achieved macroeconomic stability. Now, all the efforts of the government are focused on increasing growth for development and achieving an increase in per capita income," he highlighted.

FM Dar said that "we want to return to the same point of macroeconomic stability where the PML-N government was previously derailed in 2017 through a conspiracy".

"I am sure you would recall where Pakistan was in 2017 when the conspiracy took place, when inflation was at 3.59 per cent, GDP growth was 6.3 per cent, and we had the highest foreign exchange reserves, policy rate was 5.25 per cent, and we had become the 24th largest global economy in the world and were projected to become part of the G20 in the next few years," he added. Earlier in the day, FM Dar congratulated Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on the election of Mauritania's Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed as the new secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said. According to a post on X, Dar spoke with Prince Faisal, with the two ministers exchanging views on "regional developments and matters of mutual interest, including the forthcoming meeting of the R4." The two ministers "agreed to remain closely engaged", the statement said. Separately, Dar also held a telephone conversation with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, during which they "discussed the evolving regional situation and exchanged views on matters of common interest".

SC continues consultations on standardized national e-filing framework



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC), on Thursday held a consultative meeting with a delegation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council at the Supreme Court Branch Registry Peshawar to seek stakeholders' input on a standardized national e-filing framework.

The delegation was led by the Vice Chairman of the KP Bar Council and comprised members representing various districts of the province. The meeting was part of the ongoing consultation process for developing a uniform and standardized e-Filing System across the Supreme Court, High Courts and District Courts.

The participants were briefed on the proposed National Standardized E-Filing System, envisaged as a structured, intelligent and rules-compliant platform aligned with the procedural and legal requirements governing judicial proceedings.

The proposed framework is aimed at sim-

plifying filing procedures, ensuring procedural consistency, facilitating effective case tracking and maintaining a unified electronic case record across the judicial hierarchy. The Chief Justice emphasized that the Bar, being a principal user of the proposed system, was a key stakeholder in developing standardized e-filing templates and ensuring their effective implementation.

He encouraged the participants to provide practical input to make the system accessible, user-friendly and responsive to the professional requirements of advocates and litigants. Members of the delegation welcomed the initiative and expressed support for a standardized national approach to electronic filing. The meeting decided to constitute a committee comprising the Registrars of all High Courts and two members nominated by each Provincial Bar Council and the Islamabad Bar Council to review and finalize standardized e-filing templates. After finalization, the framework will be placed before the NJPMC for consideration and appropriate policy directions.

One killed, eight injured in IED blast in Upper South Waziristan's Makeen



ANI

MIRANSHAH: One peace committee member was killed while eight people were injured when an improvised explosive device (IED), planted on a motorcycle, exploded in Makeen Bazaar in Upper South Waziristan district on Friday, police reported. Dera Ismail Khan Regional Police Officer (RPO) Ghulam Mubashir Makin

told The Express Tribune that the IED had been planted on a motorcycle by unidentified individuals. The device exploded at around 10:45am, injuring nine people in the busy market. He said, "Three peace committee members – Inayatullah, Sharat Khan and Bangi Khan – were among those injured in the blast." The injured peace committee members were shifted to the Razmak hospital for further treatment, while the other injured civilians were taken to a local health facility for medical assistance. Following the explosion, police cordoned off the area and launched a search operation. Security was tightened in and around the market, while personnel conducted a search for evidence and possible suspects. Later, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Hidayatullah, a police spokesperson, told The Express Tribune that peace committee member Inayatullah, who was injured in the blast, later succumbed to his injuries.

Makkah Defence Agreement brought three nations closer, sent message of unity, peace: PM

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the recently signed Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye brought the three countries even closer together and sent a message of unity and peace throughout the region. The prime minister, in a meeting with Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Engineer Abdulrahman bin Abdulmohsen Al-Fadley, who called on him here, reaffirmed the deep-rooted and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and conveyed his warmest regards for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

While welcoming the Saudi dignitary, he



underscored that as strategic partners, both Pakistan and the Kingdom must now focus their energies towards deepening economic and agriculture ties to translate their longstanding relationship into a stronger, mutually beneficial trade and investment partnership. He expressed satisfaction at the constructive engagement between the two sides, particularly with regards to export of agricultural products by Pakistan to the Kingdom. Both sides also exchanged views on

enhancing agricultural productivity in Pakistan, through the use of technology, research and development and more efficient use of water resources. Prime Minister Shehbaz announced that a delegation of agricultural experts from Pakistan would soon visit Riyadh to carry forward these discussions with a view to realize the full potential of this partnership. The Saudi minister thanked the prime minister for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation and reaffirmed the Kingdom's commitment to deepening cooperation with Pakistan across the agriculture, water and food security sectors. The meeting was attended by a number of federal ministers including Rana Tanveer Hussain, Mohammad Aurangzeb, Atta Tarar, Jam Kamal Khan, Dr. Musadik Malik, Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Dr. Syed Tauqir Shah, and Bilal Azhar Kiyani, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, and senior government officials.

IHC adjourns hearing on petition to regulate social media use by children under 16

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ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday adjourned hearing on a petition seeking directions for legislation to regulate social media use by children under 16 years of age due to the unavailability of Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfaraz Dogar. The petition, filed by citizen Waqas Nasir through advocates Muhammad Jalal Haider and Yahya Fareed Khawaja, had been fixed for hearing on Thursday but could not be taken up. The petitioner has sought directions for establishing an effective age-verification mechanism for social media accounts of children under 16 and a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework to protect children from the harmful effects of social media, cyberbullying, online harassment and harmful content. The petition cited legislation and regulatory measures adopted or proposed in several countries as comparative examples, including Australia's restrictions concerning social media accounts of children under 16, France's requirement of parental consent for children under 15, the UK's Online Safety Act 2023.

COAS highlights importance of education, entrepreneurship,

ANI

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ interacted with a delegation of students from Harvard Business School, representing multiple countries, during their visit to Pakistan. The interaction focused on the regional and global developments, Pakistan's security outlook and efforts to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). The COAS & CDF highlighted the importance of education,



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding FBR reforms

No one responsible for PIMS tragedy to be spared: Kamal

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal on Friday assured the National Assembly that no person found responsible for the deaths of 14 newborn babies in the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) fire incident would be spared, stressing that the government would ensure accountability based on evidence. Speaking in the National Assembly, the minister said there could be no substitute for the lives of the innocent children and acknowledged that the tragedy had no justification.

He said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had constituted a high-powered inquiry committee without including officials from any government department to ensure an impartial investigation.



He said clear terms of reference had been set for the committee and all departments and institutions concerned had been directed to provide complete cooperation and information whenever required.

Mustafa Kamal said the committee had been working for the past 24 hours and was examining the statements and positions of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), PIMS administration and other relevant quarters.

He said the preliminary report of the committee was expected upon completion of 48 hours, adding that the investigation

Mustafa Kamal also urged lawmakers not to impose an arbitrary deadline on the parliamentary committee, saying recommendations should be implemented as and when they emerged rather than waiting for a fixed period. He said the tragedy should also prompt a broader discussion on child mortality in Pakistan, pointing out that infant deaths occurred annually in the country and many of these lives could potentially be saved through timely and effective healthcare interventions.

“Let us work together to save another child from facing such an incident,” he said. The minister assured the House that the Ministry of National Health Services would provide all available information and details to the parliamentary committee and fully cooperate with any investigation.

IRM Smart STEP celebrates graduation of young Christian women

ANI

ISLAMABAD: IRM has celebrated the successful completion of its IRMSmartSTEP Digital Marketing & E-Commerce Training Programme through a graduation ceremony titled “The Power of Possibility”, held at the IRM Complex, Islamabad. The ceremony celebrated a group of young Christian women who successfully completed the fully funded programme, gaining practical, future-ready skills in digital marketing and e-commerce. Many of the graduates come from underprivileged and marginalized backgrounds, including orphaned and vulnerable girls, for whom access to quality digital education and economic opportunities can often remain out of reach. A key highlight of the ceremony was the sharing of success stories by young women entrepreneurs who had previously completed the programme, said a press release issued here on Friday. The entrepreneurs spoke about their journeys from acquiring digital skills to launching and growing their own businesses, sharing firsthand experiences of how the training had enabled them to generate income and move towards greater financial independence. They also shared their earnings and business achievements, providing tangible examples of how skills, opportunity, and determination can translate into sustainable livelihoods.

Tariq Fazal hands over Rs 5m cheques to PIMS tragedy victims’ families

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Friday said that, on the instructions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, he handed over compensation cheques of Rs five million each to the parents of children who lost their lives in the PIMS tragedy.

In a statement on X, he said that on the directives of the prime minister, he visited the homes of the bereaved families and handed over the cheques.

“This compensation can in no way be considered a price for the irreparable loss suffered by the parents,” he said. He said the financial assistance was a humble effort by the government to express solidarity with the grieving families. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the grief of losing a child could neither be expressed in words nor could such a loss ever be compensated.

He said the pain of losing a child remained with parents throughout their lives, adding that the pain caused by the loss of innocent children in the PIMS tragedy could not be eased in any way.

“These innocent children were the hope and bright future of their parents, and their loss is an irreparable tragedy,” Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said. He reiterated that anyone found responsible for negligence in the PIMS tragedy would be given exemplary punishment.

“May Allah Almighty protect us all from such trials and tragedies,” he said.

Pakistan, IMF set for 4th review talks next month under \$7bn EFF

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) review mission is all set to visit Pakistan next month (September 2026) to undertake the fourth review under the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

The review mission will inquire about the proposed legislation on the Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF). The government has introduced the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Senate to revise governance and increase fiscal safeguards in order to fulfill IMF conditions. A top official in the Finance Division told The News on Thursday that the IMF review was expected to visit Pakistan in September 2026, but exact dates have not yet been confirmed.

Pakistani high-ups have proposed six amendments to SOE-dedicated laws to parliament. They now need to progress with the remaining three State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) with dedicated laws by the end of August 2026.

The authorities have submitted a draft SWF Law amendment to parliament. These amendments clarify the legal mandate of the SWF as a holding company, strengthen SWF



governance, ensure that SWF-owned SOEs remain under the same high-quality governance structures and accountability standards as all other SOEs, require transparent and competitive procedures for divestment and procurement, and introduce key fiscal safeguards. Most commercial SOEs have published business plans, statements of corporate intent and IFRS-compliant financial statements, in line with recent manuals and guidelines. It is critical that the Central

Monitoring Unit, which is now fully staffed, exercises close surveillance over the quality of this reporting. Progress is under way on preparing and incorporating the public service obligation agreements for the seven largest SOEs in the FY27 budget. The IMF, in its upcoming review mission, will hold parleys on the implementation of the Governance and Anti-Corruption Diagnostics (GCD) Assessment Report. Pakistani authorities have published the Prime Minister's

Economic Governance Reform (EGR) Plan based upon the key GCD recommendations. The EGR sets out 15 reform actions with key performance indicators, timelines and monitoring modalities. The authorities have also established an institutional framework to facilitate implementation and have initiated mechanisms for close coordination with key stakeholders (including Civil Society Organisations) through policy dialogue and publication of semi-annual reports. The revised Civil Servant (Conduct) Rules will support the online publication of asset declarations of high-level federal civil servants by end-December 2026. Further revisions will specify limited disclosure restrictions on confidential personal information, and along with a framework for risk-based and timely verification, will facilitate the publication. To enhance the independence and transparency of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the authorities will submit amendments to the NAB Ordinance to parliament to enhance the appointment process for the NAB chairman and publish investigation and prosecution rules and annual enforcement statistics by the end of January 2027.

Pakistan Expects \$6bn Investment from Refinery Upgrades



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's five oil refineries are expected to sign agreements under the Brownfield Refinery Upgradation Policy early next month, with the deals expected to unlock around \$6 billion in investment in the country's refining sector.

According to a statement issued on Friday by the Petroleum Division, the managements of Pak Arab Refinery Limited (PARCO), Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL), National Refinery Limited (NRL), Cnergyico and Attock Refinery Limited (ARL) had reaffirmed their readiness to sign the agreements.

“The managements of all five refineries reaffirmed their readiness to sign agreements under the Refinery Upgradation Policy, with the agreements expected to be signed early next month. The agreements are expected to unlock approximately \$6 billion in investment in Pakistan's refining sector,” the statement added. Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik held meetings with the managements of

financial and operational performance and its wider plans to strengthen Pakistan's energy security.

The minister “appreciated PARCO for managing its operations effectively during the Strait of Hormuz crisis” and said Pakistan had successfully managed the crisis and ensured that its petroleum supply system did not run dry.

“He emphasised that maintaining continuity of petroleum supplies and building resilient supply chains remained essential components of Pakistan's energy security,” the ministry added. Malik was also briefed on developments concerning the proposed Oil City in Hub, which is envisaged as a strategic energy terminal and storage complex. The project aims to strengthen energy security, enhance trade connectivity, support supply assurance and contribute to economic growth, according to the ministry. At PRL, the managing director, board of directors and management briefed the minister on the company's current financial and operational performance and measures taken to maintain continuity of refinery operations during the Strait of Hormuz crisis.

In separate meetings with Cnergyico, NRL and ARL, Malik sought the views of the respective managing directors on impediments to implementing the New Refinery Upgradation Policy.

The managing directors told the minister that their companies had completed the required preparations and were ready to sign the agreements.

Tragedy at PIMS Must Not Be Ignored, Says All Pakistan Association of Health and Medical Organizations

BY: F T Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD --The All Pakistan Association of Health and Medical Organizations has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the deaths of innocent children in the tragic incident at PIMS Hospital, calling for concrete and strict measures instead of allowing the tragedy to become a subject of political debate.

In a joint statement, Chairman Saeedullah Jan Marwat, President Malik Sajjad, Senior Vice President Tahir Nawaz, Vice President Zahid Ahmed, General Secretary Abdul Waheed Babi, Women Wing President Nabila Iftikhar, Senior Executive Members Qaiser Shah and Dr. Nauman Khattak, Executive Member Qamar Razaq, paramedics' representatives Arshad Khan, Masood Qureshi, Aamir Raza and others expressed profound grief over the tragic incident.

They demanded that, instead of merely forming inquiry committees and taking routine measures, effective, positive and immediate action should be taken to prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future.

The association also welcomed the government's announcement of financial assistance for the parents of the innocent children who lost their lives in the tragedy and urged immediate implementation of the announced relief package.

The representatives further stressed the need for a complete and impartial investigation into the PIMS tragedy, determination of those responsible and strict action against anyone found guilty of negligence in accordance with the law.

Journalist Foundation Honors Raheela Raja with Certificate of Excellence for Journalistic and Social Services

Report: ANI:

RAWALPINDI-- Renowned columnist, content writer, analyst, social worker and Senior Vice President of the Women's Wing of the Global Union of Journalists, Pakistan, Raheela Raja has been honored with a Certificate of Excellence by the Journalist Foundation in recognition of her journalistic, literary and social services.

The certificate was presented to Raheela Raja by renowned journalist Zahid Hassan Chughtai, associated with Daily Nawa-i-Waqt, Islamabad.

Raheela Raja has established a distinctive identity through her contributions to journalism and social welfare. Her writings focus on social issues, public concerns, human emotions and contemporary affairs, while promoting awareness and positive thinking through simple and impactful writing. Alongside journalism, she has remained actively involved in social welfare activities and has emphasized practical efforts to address issues affecting society. Her contributions have earned appreciation among public, social, educational, literary and journalistic circles. Raheela Raja has previously received several certificates and awards from different forums in recognition of her services. The latest Certificate of Excellence is another acknowledgment of her continued efforts and contributions.

Members of various walks of life congratulated her on receiving the honor and expressed their best wishes for her future endeavors, hoping that she will continue her journalistic and social work with the same dedication, sincerity and courage.



District Prison Health Council Reviews Healthcare Facilities for Inmates at Attock Jail

Report: ANI

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner (Municipal Services) Attock, Aneel Saeed, chaired a meeting of the District Prison Health Council to review healthcare facilities and health-related issues faced by inmates at District Jail Attock.

Chief Executive Officer (Health) Dr. Asad Ismail, Medical Superintendent of Government Asfandiyar Bukhari District Hospital Dr. Jawad Elahi, jail officials and other relevant officers attended the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the availability of medicines, routine medical examinations, treatment facilities and emergency healthcare arrangements for inmates. Officials briefed the participants on the existing healthcare situation and challenges in providing medical services.

The participants stressed the need to ensure timely and adequate medical



facilities for all inmates without discrimination, along with regular medical check-ups, early diagnosis, availability of essential medicines and prompt treatment during emergencies.

Aneel Saeed said the health and well-being of inmates were among the government's priorities and directed officials to further improve healthcare services at the jail in coordination with the Health Department and prison

administration.

He also directed officials to ensure timely medical examinations and treatment of sick inmates, continuous availability of medicines and immediate shifting of patients to the district hospital whenever necessary.

The meeting also reviewed proposals concerning cleanliness, clean drinking water, hygiene and other basic facilities at the district jail.

US, UK & China, top 3 destinations of Pakistani exports during July 2026

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first month of the current financial year 2026-27, followed by the United Kingdom (UK) and China. The US remained the largest market for Pakistani products, with exports totalling US\$595.220 million in July 2026, compared with US\$615.288 million in the corresponding month of last year, showing a decline of 3.26 per cent. This was followed by the UK, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$220.257 million against the exports of US \$203.149 million last year, showing an increase of 8.42 per cent. China was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$216.348 million during the month under review against the exports of US\$199.651 million, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) stood at US \$194.009 million against US \$176.682 million last year, while exports to Germany were recorded at US \$131.072 million against US \$152.183 million last year, data said. During July 2026-27, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$129.067 million against \$134.883 million, whereas exports to Italy stood at \$107.867 million against \$117.743 million. Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at \$163.292 million against US \$130.361 million last year, while exports to Sweden were recorded at \$24.451 million against \$14.143 million last year. The exports to Bangladesh stood at US \$62.931 million against US \$60.441 million. Similarly, the exports to France during the month under review were recorded at US \$46.154 million against US \$46.264 million, while the exports to Belgium stood at US \$40.322 million against US \$44.821 million.

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Opinion

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General Asim Munir’s Iran Visit: A New Chapter for Regional Peace



BY: Sheikh J. Hussain
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For months, the Middle East has stood on the edge of a wider conflict. Tensions between the United States and Iran rose dangerously, threatening to drag the whole region into chaos. Yet through all this, Pakistan never stepped back from its role as a peacemaker. It was Pakistan that helped broker the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran, an agreement that offered a glimmer of hope. But the situation remained fragile. The Strait of Hormuz became a point of deep disagreement. For America it was seen as a vital international waterway that required oversight, while for Iran it was the lifeline of its economy and national security. The war escalated once again, and the memorandum had to be extended as both sides struggled to find common ground. The situation grew worse by the day, and the world watched with growing concern. Yet through every twist and turn, Pakistan continued to work quietly and tirelessly behind the scenes. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal General Asim Munir kept channels of communication open with all sides, refusing to allow the flames of war to consume the region. Their efforts will be remembered in history as a great service to peace.

It is against this difficult background that General Asim Munir arrived in Iran. Already the first results of this important visit are visible. The fighting has stopped, tensions have eased, and negotiations between the United States and Iran have opened once again. This is no small achievement. It shows that when trust is built and dialogue is encouraged, even the deepest differences can be set aside. During his visit, General Asim Munir is expected to meet with senior Iranian leaders, and there is strong hope that he will also have the honour of meeting Dr. Mojtaba Khamenei, the Supreme Leader’s representative, to discuss ways to resolve all outstanding issues and build lasting peace.

There are several important reasons behind this timely visit. In times of conflict, military leadership naturally takes a more central role in decision making, as the security of nations becomes the highest priority. General Asim Munir’s discussions with Iranian military officials are therefore vital. He is seeking to convey the importance of de-escalation and to encourage both sides to use their influence to prevent further violence. He wants the Iranian military leadership to understand that lasting peace is not only possible but beneficial for all the people of the region.

A second and equally important issue is the situation in Yemen and



the actions of the Houthi movement. Their continued attacks on shipping and on Saudi Arabia have kept the region in a state of constant tension. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are bound together in a spirit of mutual defence and cooperation, and Pakistan has a deep interest in the security and stability of Saudi Arabia. General Asim Munir is expected to discuss this matter openly with Iranian officials. It is widely recognised that Iran maintains significant influence over the Houthi movement, and this influence can be used to bring about a

The third and far reaching objective of this visit relates to the historic Mecca Agreement signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. This agreement is not directed against any country, nor is it based on any sectarian divide.

halt to the violence. If the Houthi attacks can be stopped through dialogue and cooperation, it will remove one of the most serious obstacles to peace across the entire Middle East. Pakistan stands ready to play its part in bringing all parties to the table.

The third and far reaching objective of this visit relates to the historic Mecca Agreement signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. This agreement is not directed against any country, nor is it based on any sectarian divide. It is a framework for mutual defence, economic cooperation and shared prosperity for all nations willing to join. Some Western analysts have suggested that this agreement is aimed against Iran, or that it represents some form of Sunni

alliance against Shia nations. This view is completely incorrect and misleading. The Mecca Agreement is open to every country in the region, regardless of faith or background. It is about security for all, not security against some. General Asim Munir’s visit offers a perfect opportunity to clarify these misunderstandings and to invite Iran to consider joining this platform for peace and cooperation. If Iran were to become part of this shared vision, the future of the entire region would become far more secure and prosperous.

The Mecca Agreement offers much more than just military cooperation. It creates a framework for mutual support in many areas. Member nations agree to stand together in the face of aggression, to support one another on international platforms, to share technology and resources, and to work together for the economic development of all their people. It is a broad and forward looking partnership that respects the sovereignty of every nation while creating a strong bond of mutual assistance. Egypt and other nations that have so far held back may also choose to join in the near future, as the benefits of this shared vision become clearer.

General Asim Munir’s visit to Iran comes at a critical moment, and the early signs are very encouraging. The fact that fighting has stopped and negotiations have resumed is a victory for diplomacy and for the people of the region. Pakistan has once again shown that it is not only a strong nation but also a responsible and peace loving one. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal General Asim Munir, Pakistan has proven time and again that it is willing to walk the hardest path to build peace. The full results of this visit will unfold in the days and weeks ahead, but one thing is already clear. When nations come together with sincerity and mutual respect, even the most difficult conflicts can be resolved.

This visit may well mark the beginning of a new era in which Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey and all the nations of the region can live in peace, trade in prosperity, and stand together against common threats. That is the future we all hope for, and that is the future this visit is helping to build.

US’ Gaza ‘Master Plan’ clashes with reality

CHRIS DOYLE

Anyone who saw Jared Kushner’s PowerPoint presentation in Davos last week without knowing the topic would have struggled to identify the territory to which he was referring. Many might have thought this was for North America, with shiny new office and residential blocks and a certain space-age or Hollywood sci-fi feel to the slides of the “Master Plan.” The vaulting ambition of the speaker may have impressed his father-in-law, US President Donald Trump, who is certainly familiar with the world of real estate. No doubt Trump, the freshly minted chairman of the Board of Peace, was the premier target of the messaging. It reflected much of what was released at the announcement of Trump’s “Gaza riviera” plan last February, which envisaged the Strip being entirely emptied of Palestinians. Even this version treats Gaza as a tabula rasa to impose whatever architectural fantasies its authors can conjure up. It treats the enclave as being devoid of any culture, tradition or history.

Others have been more skeptical – and with good reason. First of all, Israel has not even adhered to the Oct. 10 ceasefire and is bombing and shelling with intensity. Second, the full entry of aid, as referenced in the Trump peace plan, has not yet been achieved. Third, the plan presumes the disarmament of Hamas, something that is far from imminent. Finally, no international stabilization force is on the horizon. Those are the significant near-term impediments. Delivering this plan, at a time when the conflict still rages, will be nigh on impossible. Just clearing the 60 million tonnes of rubble, which is peppered with unexploded ordnance and a host of toxins, will take an age and cost a

fortune.

One major element Kushner did not address was how the land would be acquired and whether owners would be compensated. According to a 2015 study, about half of the land in Gaza is privately owned. Much of the land is unregistered because owners did not wish to pay tax. What is clear is that the companies lining up to fill their coffers have no claim to the land at all. But progress also presumes the Israeli leadership will be comfortable with this. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is still smarting from the invitation that was extended to Turkiye and Qatar to join the executive committee of the Board of Peace. Many members of Netanyahu’s Cabinet and right-wing Knesset members have dreams of inhabiting these plush new riviera residences themselves.

Israel will have to consent as the occupying power. For starters, it will have to allow in all the construction materials and abandon its restrictive dual-use list. Throughout Kushner’s presentation to world leaders and the business elite, it was clear that Palestinians have had no input into these plans – and not just because the Arabic on the slides was all wrong. He did not outline how the local Palestinians in Gaza would be won over by the project or where they would go during reconstruction. Kushner said Gaza would be run on free-market principles, as opposed to how Palestinians might wish to shape their economic future.

Do Palestinians want tourism, given the beachfront is all labeled for coastal tourism? Who decided on the importance of data centers at this stage? And how many of the companies making a fortune out of this dreamworld will be Palestinian and how many will be rich busi-

nessmen with no link to Gaza at all? The Palestinians in Gaza I have spoken to largely see this all as a sick joke. “Who is going to live in these villas and flashy apartments? Certainly not us Palestinians,” sighed one woman. Another said: “What will stop Israel from bombing them again? Where will our security come from? We need that before rich houses.” But there is also the issue of who will pay for it. The experts at the UN, those who actually have experience of such situations, calculate that postwar reconstruction will cost about \$70 billion. This is without the high-end infrastructure of Kushner’s presentation. The UAE has reportedly expressed an interest in funding the first planned community on the outskirts of Rafah in the south. Beyond that, it is not clear. More alarming is who might make money out of it. This is a war zone profiteering racket. US companies are lining up at the trough. This is all premised on the naive and ill-founded belief that the entirety of Gaza’s problems can be resolved with bulldozers, cranes and cement. The plan has echoes of earlier economic roadmaps for peace, but even those were not so divorced from reality. At no stage did the presentation reference a viable peace process or even mention that Gaza would be the western segment of an independent state of Palestine. It did not address a single one of the underlying causes or drivers of this 100-year-plus conflict. On this occasion, the last word goes to French President Emmanuel Macron, who was reported as saying: “Peace is not a real estate transaction. You cannot build stability on the erasure of a people’s history and the privatization of their tragedy.”

– Arab News

Drowning in Someone Else’s Emissions: Pakistan and the Broken Ledger of Global Climate Finance



By: Babar Akhtar :
Published by ANI

Water has become the clearest measure of injustice in the modern world economy. Just two days

ago, a glacier collapse on the Nepal-Tibet border sent a wall of ice and debris down the Trishuli Valley, killing hundreds and erasing entire settlements within minutes. Nepal’s tragedy made global headlines because of its violence and suddenness. But for Pakistan, such a headline is no longer a distant warning from a neighboring mountain range, it is increasingly a description of an emergency that returns almost every year. Consider the toll Pakistan has endured in recent years. In 2022, devastating monsoon floods submerged a third of the country, killed more than 1,700 people, and caused approximately \$40 billion in damages and economic losses. In 2025, exceptionally heavy rains and flash floods again struck Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Azad Kashmir, killing more than a thousand people and displacing millions. In 2026, the pattern has continued, with hundreds again losing their lives during the monsoon season. Yet Pakistan contributes less than one per cent of global greenhouse-gas emissions. This contradiction should be at the heart of every discussion about global climate finance: those who have contributed least to the problem are often paying the highest price for its consequences.

At COP27 in 2022, held in the immediate aftermath of Pakistan’s catastrophic floods, Pakistan played an important role in the diplomatic push that resulted in agreement to establish the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage. The decision was historic because it recognized that vulnerable developing countries suffer climate-related losses that cannot always be prevented through adaptation. Yet the resources mobilized remain tiny compared with the scale of the challenge. The world is increasingly willing to acknowledge climate injustice in principle, but far less willing to finance it at the scale required.

The problem is larger than the size of one fund. The real crisis is hidden in the accounting system of global climate finance. Money is announced in billions, but vulnerable countries often experience it in millions, after years of negotiations, project preparation, approvals, and conditions. The United Nations Environment Program’s 2025 Adaptation Gap Report estimates that developing countries will require between \$310 billion and \$365 billion annually by 2035 for climate adaptation, while international public adaptation finance stood at only \$26 billion in 2023. The gap is therefore enormous.

The Positive Role of Youth in Countering Social Media Propaganda Is Essential



By Rana Farooq Ashraf :
Published by ANI

Social media has given today’s youth an unprece-

dent ability to communicate, influence public opinion and shape national discourse. A young person with a smartphone can now reach thousands, or even millions, of people within minutes. This extraordinary power can become a force for education, awareness and national development when used responsibly. However, when social media is used to circulate rumours, fabricated content, misinformation and propaganda, it can also create confusion, polarization and distrust within society.

The recent emphasis by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on the responsible and constructive role of youth in confronting social-media propaganda deserves serious attention. His message is particularly relevant for Pakistan, where a large and increasingly influential young population is active on platforms such as Facebook, X, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and WhatsApp. The central challenge is not whether young Pakistanis should use social media. They inevitably will. The real question is how they use it and how responsibly they consume and disseminate information.

In the digital age, information travels much faster than verification. A sensational headline, an edited video, an old photograph presented as a recent event, or an AI-generated image can become viral within hours. Once false information has reached millions of people, correcting it becomes considerably more difficult. This phenomenon has been extensively discussed by researchers and international organisations working on media and information literacy.

Pakistan has experienced the consequences of this problem on numerous occasions. During periods of political tension, national emergencies and regional conflict, social media has frequently become flooded with unverified claims, manipulated photographs, old footage and misleading narratives. Such content can intensify public anx-

ety, provoke emotional reactions and create perceptions that have little connection with reality.

The experience of recent regional tensions has demonstrated another important dimension of the problem: digital propaganda is no longer limited to conventional fabricated news. Artificial intelligence, sophisticated video editing, deepfakes and manipulated audio have made it increasingly difficult for ordinary users to distinguish fact from fabrication.

This is where Pakistan’s youth can play a decisive role.

A responsible digital citizen should develop the habit of asking a few basic questions before sharing information: What is the original source? When was the information published? Is the photograph or video actually related to the event being discussed? Are credible news organisations reporting the same information? Has the claim been independently verified? These simple questions can prevent thousands of people from becoming accidental distributors of misinformation. Research on misinformation and media literacy also suggests that merely warning people against fake news is not enough. Users need practical skills that enable them to evaluate sources, recognise manipulation, understand context and distinguish opinion from factual reporting. Educational institutions, media organisations and public institutions therefore have an important role in developing critical-thinking and digital-literacy programmes for young people.

At the same time, responsible social-media use should not be confused with the suppression of legitimate disagreement. A healthy society requires questions, criticism and diversity of opinion. Young people should have the confidence to challenge claims and demand accountability. But there is a fundamental difference between constructive criticism and deliberate disinformation, between disagreement and hatred, and between freedom of expression and the deliberate manipulation of public opinion.

The responsibility of youth is therefore not to accept every narrative blindly, but to develop the intellectual discipline to examine competing claims on the basis of evidence. Pakistan’s young professionals, students, entrepreneurs and content creators can become an important first line of

priorities, prepare bankable projects, measure outcomes, and demonstrate where every dollar goes. Climate finance cannot become another fragmented collection of donor-funded projects scattered across ministries and provinces. Pakistan needs a national climate-investment architecture connecting climate policy with fiscal, industrial, energy, and development planning. A transparent tracking mechanism should distinguish clearly between grants, concessional loans, commercial finance, and private investment. Pakistan should also become more assertive in international negotiations. It should not approach climate finance merely as a recipient asking for assistance, but as a vulnerable economy demanding a fairer financial relationship. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities is already embedded in international climate diplomacy. Those who have historically contributed more to the accumulation of greenhouse gases have a greater responsibility to support those facing the consequences with fewer resources. That principle should be reflected not only in speeches but also in balance sheets.

Pakistan’s demand should therefore be neither charity nor compensation without accountability. It should be climate justice expressed through finance. Climate-resilient irrigation protects agricultural output; energy efficient factories reduce production costs; renewable energy can reduce exposure to imported fuel prices; and resilient infrastructure protects supply chains. Climate investment is not an expense imposed on development. It is increasingly a condition for development itself. The tragedy of Pakistan’s climate story is that the country is being asked to pay twice: first through the physical damage caused by a warming planet, and again through the financial cost of protecting itself from that warming. That is why the global climate ledger must be rewritten. The world should stop judging climate finance by the size of pledges announced at international conferences and start judging it by the resilience created in vulnerable economies by lives protected, infrastructure secured, debt avoided, emissions reduced, and livelihoods made more resilient.

Pakistan cannot control how much carbon has already accumulated in the atmosphere. But it can determine whether the next generation inherits a resilient economy or a permanently indebted one struggling to rebuild after every disaster. The international community has a choice: continue treating Pakistan’s floods as humanitarian emergencies requiring temporary appeals, or recognize them as symptoms of a global economic imbalance demanding a structural financial response. Until that happens, every new climate pledge will remain just another number in a ledger that does not balance and Pakistan will continue drowning in someone else’s emissions.

Transparent Probe into PIMS Nursery Tragedy and Action Against Those Responsible Imperative: Barrister Daniyal Chaudhary

BY: Hurish shah

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Advisory Council of the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights was held at the PIMS Secretariat under the chairmanship of Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhary.

The meeting expressed deep grief over the deaths of 14 newborn babies in the tragic fire at the PIMS nursery and called for a transparent investigation to determine those responsible for any negligence or lapse.

Participants stressed the need to strengthen fire safety and emergency arrangements in hospitals, particularly in newborn nurseries, and ensure strict implementation of safety standards.

A resolution was also presented in the National Assembly, expressing



sorrow over the deaths and demanding a transparent inquiry, identification of those responsible and legal action.

Barrister Daniyal Chaudhary said no compromise could be made on the lives and safety of children. He stressed that the facts of the PIMS

tragedy must be brought to light and those responsible for negligence should face action under the law.

He added that ensuring an effective system for the protection and safety of children remains a key priority of the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights.

Acting President Sardar Ayaz Sadiq felicitates Barrister Iftikhar Gilani on his successful Election as AJK Prime Minister

BY : Hurish Shah FT

ISLAMABAD -- Acting President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has congratulated Barrister Iftikhar Gilani on his successful election as the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). He expressed his best wishes and prayers for the newly elected Prime Minister.

Acting President Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said Barrister Iftikhar Gilani's election reflected the confidence of the members of the AJK Legislative Assembly in his leadership abilities. He expressed hope that the newly elected Prime Minister would use his political insight and leadership skills to steer AJK towards development, prosperity and public welfare.

Acting President Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has also said that the Federal Government would continue to



extend its full support and cooperation for the development and prosperity of AJK. He said the welfare of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir remained a priority. He appreciated the continuity of the democratic process in AJK and

termed it a commendable development. Acting President Sardar Ayaz Sadiq prayed for the success of Prime Minister AJK Barrister Iftikhar Gilani and for the progress and prosperity of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

NUTECH Launches Four Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology Qualifications

BY: City Reporter FT :

ISLAMABAD -- The National University of Technology (NUTECH), in collaboration with the National Technology Council (NTC) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), has developed four Level-6 Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology qualifications in Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Electronics under the TVET Sector Support Programme (TVET-SSP), co-funded by the European Union and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The initiative aims to improve the quality, relevance and international alignment of engineering technology education in Pakistan by equipping graduates with advanced, industry-oriented skills aligned with national and international labour-market requirements. A launch ceremony was held at NUTECH on August 24, 2026, attended by senior representatives of the European Union, German Embassy, GIZ, NTC, industry and academia.

Rector NUTECH and Chairman NTC Lt Gen Moazzam Ejaz, HI(M)



(Retd), appreciated the support of all stakeholders and emphasized the importance of national and international partnerships in strengthening Pakistan's technical education system. German Embassy Deputy Head of Development Cooperation Dr Manuel Winkenbach highlighted the initiative's potential to create better employment opportunities

for Pakistani youth, while EU Head of Cooperation Jeroen Willems reaffirmed the EU's continued support for Pakistan's TVET sector.

The initiative is expected to strengthen links between education, industry and employment while providing Pakistan's youth with modern, industry-relevant engineering technology skills.

Khurram Dastgir Khan, Khan Brothers Announce Support for One Unity Vision Group

By: ANI Correspondent:

GUJRANWALA -- Former Federal Minister Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan, Sabir Khan and the Khan brothers have announced their support for the One Unity Vision Group in the upcoming elections of the Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Speaking to Wazan Group Executive Member Chaudhry Dilawar Mehr on the occasion, Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan said the leadership of the One Unity Vision Group could play an effective role in resolving the problems faced by the business community, promoting business activities and improving trade and industry.

He appealed to the business com-



munity to extend full support to the candidates of the One Unity Vision

Group to ensure their success in the chamber elections.

Mövenpick Hotel Karachi Brings Flavours of Thailand to Life with Special Thai Weekend

Report: ANI

KARACHI, August 28, 2026: Mövenpick Hotel Karachi is concluding its Grand Pan-Asian Food Festival with a special Thai Weekend, offering guests an opportunity to experience the distinctive flavours, aromas and culinary traditions of Thailand.

Taking place from August 28 to 30, the Thai Weekend features a wide selection of Thai-inspired dishes showcasing the signature sweet, sour, spicy and savoury flavours associated with Thai cuisine.

The event marks the final chapter of Mövenpick Hotel Karachi's "4 Weeks. 4 Culinary Destinations" Grand Pan-Asian Food Festival, which has taken guests on a culinary



journey through China, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand.

The four-week festival has provided diners with an opportunity to explore different Asian cuisines and

cultures under one roof. The Thai edition brings the celebration to a close with vibrant flavours, warm hospitality and a Thailand-inspired atmosphere.

Chinese Consul General Visits Commissioner's Office Gujranwala, Reviews Security Arrangements

Report: ANI

GUJRANWALA: Consul General of the People's Republic of China Mr. Sun Yan visited the Commissioner's Office Gujranwala and met Commissioner Gujranwala Division Muhammad Ali.

During the meeting, the Chinese Consul General was given a detailed briefing on special security arrangements and measures taken for the protection of Chinese citizens in Gujranwala Division. Mr. Sun Yan expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and appreciated the efforts of the administration.

The meeting, held in a friendly



and cordial atmosphere, was described as an important step towards further strengthening Pakistan-China friendship and mutual trust. Commissioner Gujranwala Muhammad Ali reaffirmed that all possible measures

would be taken to ensure a safe, peaceful and conducive environment for Chinese citizens and investors.

He said no negative force would be allowed to undermine the strong and enduring relations between Pakistan and China.

IG Punjab Orders Heightened Security Across Province on Friday

Report: ANI

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab Abdul Kareem has ordered enhanced security arrangements across Punjab, including Lahore, on the occasion of Friday prayers. He directed police officers to ensure foolproof security at mosques,



imambargahs, shrines, markets and other sensitive locations, with increased patrolling around places of worship, business centres and major roads.

IG Punjab said maintaining law and order and protecting the lives and property of citizens remain the foremost priorities of Punjab Police.

He directed all DPOs and senior police officers to remain in the field and personally monitor security arrangements. He further instructed police officers to engage with citizens at mosques after Friday prayers, listen to their problems and take effective measures for their prompt resolution.

Rakhi Bandhan Celebrations Underway at Gurdwara Panja Sahib

Report: ANI Correspondent:

HASAN ABDAL: Religious celebrations of the Hindu festival of Rakhi Bandhan are underway at the historic Gurdwara Sri Panja Sahib in Hasan Abdal, with members of the Hindu community arriving from different parts of the country to participate in the festivities.

As part of the traditional rituals, sisters are tying rakhis around their brothers' wrists and offering prayers for their safety, good health, pros-



perity and long lives. In return, brothers are expressing their commitment to protecting their sisters

and ensuring their happiness and well-being.

The celebrations have created an atmosphere of religious devotion and traditional enthusiasm. Participants said Rakhi Bandhan symbolizes love, family bonds, mutual respect and the strong relationship between brothers and sisters.

A large number of members of the Hindu community are participating in the religious rituals and celebrations.

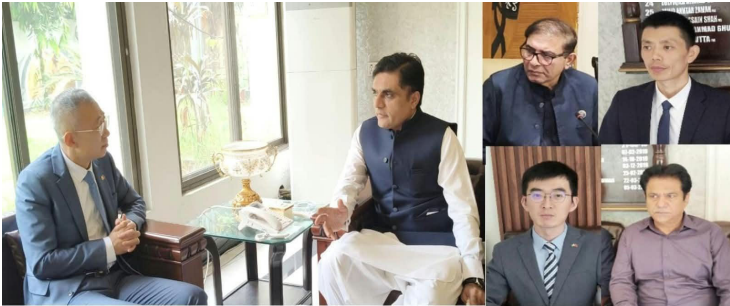
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