



Daily FINANCIAL TIMES

Email: dailyfinancialtimes2@gmail.com, Whatsapp: 00923060106475
Website: https://dailyfinancialtime.com

Editor: JAVED SIDDIQ

Islamabad

Vol: 14 Issue: 319 Pages: 4 Price: 20 Thursday July 30 2026

The Newspaper of ANI Media Group

Pakistan welcomes Kuwait's ratification of 2023 defence cooperation agreement



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday welcomed the ratification of the Pakistan-Kuwait Defence Cooperation Agreement during a visit by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. FM Jarrah arrived in Islamabad on Tuesday on a two-day official visit aimed at reviewing the full spectrum of Pakistan-Kuwait relations. FM Dar received his Kuwaiti counterpart at the foreign ministry today, where they held a meeting.

between the armed forces of the two countries while enhancing defence cooperation," said a statement issued by the Foreign Office (FO).

FO Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi separately said the development reflected the "shared resolve of both sides to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation and elevate their security partnership".

He said the agreement provided a comprehensive institutional framework for expanding defence cooperation, encompassing military training and education, joint exercises, exchanges of expertise, and other mutually agreed areas of collaboration. It would further consolidate the longstanding defence ties between Pakistan and Kuwait, he added.

"Pakistan and Kuwait will continue to work closely to implement the agreement in accordance with its provisions, thereby

expanding bilateral defence collaboration, strengthening their enduring defence partnership underpinned by mutual trust, shared interests, and close institutional cooperation, and contributing to regional peace, security and stability."

On July 27, Anadolu Agency reported that Kuwait had ratified a broad defence cooperation agreement with Pakistan, three years after it was signed, according to the country's official gazette. The agreement was approved and published on Sunday in the official gazette, Kuwait Al-Youm, formalising a defence pact signed by the two countries in June 2023, the Kuwait Times reported. The agreement establishes a framework for military cooperation between the Kuwaiti and Pakistani armed forces, covering military training, education, intelli-

gence sharing, logistics, defence technology, research and exchanges of expertise, to strengthen institutional military ties between the two countries.

It also provides for cooperation in military manufacturing, electronic communications systems, scientific research, military media and cultural and sports activities.

Under the agreement, a joint military committee will oversee implementation, including the organisation of joint military exercises, official visits and other cooperative programs. The pact will remain in force for five years and will be automatically renewed unless either side decides to terminate it. It also commits both countries to protecting confidential military information and resolving any disputes arising from the agreement through diplomatic channels.

KSA rolled over \$5 billion for three years, SBP governor says

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's external sector pressure subsided after Saudi Arabia rolled over a \$5 billion debt for three years, coupled with \$9b in foreign currency purchases from the local market in the last fiscal year, State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad said on Wednesday.

The "three-to-five-year" rollovers of the short-term debts, which Pakistan had taken many years ago for one year, are part of the government's new strategy to delay repayments and get breathing space before kick-starting the economy.

Due to the rollover of \$5b cash deposits by Saudi Arabia till December 2028, Pakistan's gross external financing requirements have come down to \$21.5b for this fiscal year, the governor said while talking to The Express Tribune here in the Parliament House. Pakistan has taken a total of \$8b in cash deposits from Saudi Arabia, including \$3b obtained in April this year. Out of this, the \$5b deposits were rolled over every year before the kingdom granted some breathing space by giving up to a three-year extension. In April this year, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that the kingdom had extended a \$5b deposit for a longer period, but he did not share further details about its next maturity. In addition, Saudi Arabia had given \$3b for three months, which also matured this month but was further rolled over.

The central bank governor did not comment on whether the remaining \$3b has been rolled over for three months or for a longer period. Ahmad said that the interest costs on foreign debts have also reduced by nearly half a billion dollars, which also contributed to lowering the overall gross financing requirements for this fiscal year. The external gross financing requirements are the sums needed to meet the external obligations. Pakistan has remained heavily dependent on foreign creditors for meeting its external financing needs for debt repayments and funding the current account deficit. Exports and foreign direct investment could not improve despite multi-front efforts, and in a latest push, the federal government approved Rs98b in subsidies for exporters for this fiscal year alone.

For the next fiscal year, the International



Monetary Fund has projected \$30b in external financing requirements.

But the governor said that the IMF's projections for the next fiscal year were on the higher side, as the government was making efforts, and their success would bring down the overall external financing requirements even below this year's level of \$21.5b.

The government has reportedly reached out to Saudi Arabia and the United States for additional financing on a longer term to lessen the immediate heavy repayment requirements.

The governor said that out of the \$21.5b, cash deposits were \$7.3b and another \$3.5b were foreign commercial loans maturing this year. He said that Pakistan also owed \$250 million to Kuwait on account of cash deposits that have been rolled over for a long time. He did not respond to a question about Pakistan's recent request to the United States for a \$10b credit financing line, saying the federal government should respond to it.

The governor added that Pakistan this month repaid a \$1.3b Chinese commercial loan, which pulled down the foreign exchange reserves to \$17.3b as of July 17. He said that China was again expected to refinance the \$1.3b and could disburse the money next month.

Ahmad said that out of \$21.5b total financing requirements for the current fiscal year, the net debt repayments were \$7.5b. Out of this, \$2.2b has already been repaid in July, which has lessened the pressure for the remainder of the fiscal year.

DPM Dar, Kuwait FM discuss Middle East situation, bilateral ties



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar met his Kuwaiti counterpart, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, on Wednesday, with the evolving situation in the Middle East among the key issues discussed. The Kuwaiti foreign minister is in Pakistan on an official visit. According to the Foreign Office, the two held a "warm and productive" meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The two sides reviewed the broad range of Pakistan-Kuwait bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the longstanding ties between the two countries. They also

exchanged views on regional and international developments, with particular focus on the rapidly changing situation in the Middle East.

The visiting minister arrived in Islamabad on Tuesday at the invitation of Dar. He was received at Islamabad International Airport by Zahid Hussain, additional secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Foreign Office said the visit reflected the close and longstanding relationship between Pakistan and Kuwait, built on shared history, mutual trust and cooperation.

The Kuwaiti foreign minister is also expected to pay a courtesy call on Pakistan's leadership during his visit.

Kuwait FM meets Field Marshal to deepen strategic partnership

ANI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan and Kuwait have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and promoting regional peace, as Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. The Kuwaiti foreign minister was accompanied by Nassar Abdul Rahman J. Al-Mutairi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Pakistan, during the meeting, where both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, regional security and avenues to further enhance bilateral cooperation. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the discussions centred on strengthening the longstanding relationship between the two



countries while exploring measures to expand cooperation in areas of shared interest. The visiting dignitary appreciated

Pakistan's steadfast support and acknowledged its constructive contribution towards regional peace and stability.

IHC seeks FIA report in case over citizen's blocked bank accounts

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday sought a report from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) after it emerged that a petition challenging the blocking of a citizen's bank accounts was linked to an alleged human smuggling inquiry rather than the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA). Justice Muhammad Azam Khan heard the petition filed by Muhammad Usman against the freezing of his bank accounts. Despite the court's directions, the Director General of the NCCIA did not appear before the court. However, a government lawyer, FIA officials and other parties attended the hearing. During the proceedings, the government counsel informed the court that the matter did not fall within the jurisdiction of the NCCIA but was related to human smuggling and was being investigated by the FIA. The court inquired who had ordered the bank accounts to be blocked. The government lawyer replied that the accounts had been frozen on the recommendation of the FIA, adding that Rs6 million had been transferred into the petitioner's account in connection with a UK work visa arrangement.

Bilawal rejects AJK election results, demands re-polling in Chaudhry Yasin's constituency

ANI

GARHI DUPATTA: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari rejected the results of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) local elections, alleging widespread rigging and demanding re-polling in the constituency of Chaudhry Yasin. Addressing a workers' convention in Muzaffarabad, Bilawal questioned why the PPP should accept the results in Chaudhry Yasin's constituency, claiming there was video evidence showing polling stations being taken over and ballot papers being stamped unlawfully.

He alleged that around 30 polling sta-



tions had been captured and said those stations recorded nearly 90% voter turnout, which he described as suspicious. Bilawal called for fresh polling in the constituency, saying the PPP was competing against a party that, according to him, had a long history of benefiting

from electoral manipulation. He said the party was prepared to accept defeat in a fair political contest but would not recognise what he described as a "stolen mandate." The PPP chairman proposed the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the allegations and determine the facts. He also vowed that the votes of the Kashmiri people would be protected, saying his party would work to recover every seat it believed had been taken through electoral malpractice. Bilawal said he wanted to secure the rights of the people of Kashmir through democratic means, adding that he would pursue those rights by winning elections rather than through violence or by blocking roads.

Security forces kill 32 terrorists in KP, Balochistan operations



ANI

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed 32 terrorists in multiple operations against Indian proxies "Fitna al Khwarij and Fitna al Hindustan" in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. "On night 28/29 July 2026, multiple intelligence-based area sanitization and targeted operations were conducted in district Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During these targeted operations, security forces effectively engaged different terrorist locations killing twenty four terrorists belonging to Fitna al Khwarij," Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a press release. Meanwhile, security forces have also

conducted multiple IBOs in Nushki district of Balochistan where after an intense engagement eight terrorists were killed. Weapons, ammunition and improvised explosive devices used by terrorists were also recovered and destroyed during operations. ISPR said sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist found in the area. "Relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision 'Azam e Istehkam' (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by security forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country," ISPR said.



Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq Lauds Security Forces for Eliminating 32 Terrorists in KP and Balochistan

BY: Hurish Shah:

ISLAMABAD--"Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has paid tribute to the security forces for successfully eliminating 32 terrorists during operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

In a statement, the Speaker said the security forces demonstrated exceptional professionalism, courage, and bravery in thwarting the terrorists' nefarious designs. He said the successful operations against terrorism reflected the forces' professional capabilities and the nation's unwavering resolve to defeat terrorism.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the entire nation would continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with its security forces until terrorism is completely eradicated. He added that terrorists would never succeed in achieving their malicious objectives.

Paying tribute to the martyrs who laid down their lives in the fight against terrorism, the Speaker said they were the pride of the nation. He noted that the sacrifices of the security forces were a guarantee of Pakistan's peace, security, and stability. He further said the country's brave personnel had consistently defeated the designs of terrorists and hostile elements on every front, adding that the nation was proud of the professionalism, sacrifices, and dedication of its security forces.

Saleem Mandviwalla Chairs Senate Finance Committee Meeting; Banking Services, Taxes and Investment Issues Reviewed



BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- The Senate Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, reviewed issues relating to banking services, investment policies, electricity bill taxes, Senate Secretariat employees, and bank dress code policies during its meeting on Tuesday.

The committee discussed complaints regarding difficulties faced by customers, particularly Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs), in dealing with commercial banks. MNA Muhammad Moin Amir Pirzada informed the committee that his bank account had been closed without satisfactory response despite repeated correspondence. State Bank Governor assured the committee that a dedi-

cated focal person would be appointed to address such complaints.

The committee also reviewed investment protection policies, while a private member's bill moved by Senator Manzoor Ahmed was deferred after discussion.

Discussing taxes collected through electricity bills, Chairman FBR informed the committee that Rs476 billion had been collected, including Rs351 billion in sales tax and Rs124 billion in adjustable withholding income tax, rejecting reports suggesting otherwise as baseless.

The committee directed AGPR to resolve the issue of revised payslips for Senate Secretariat employees within seven days, warning that failure to comply would result in referral to the Senate Privileges Committee.

The committee also discussed complaints regarding dress code instructions in certain banks. Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur raised concerns over alleged compulsory dress requirements for female employees, while Senator Sherry Rehman stressed that no employee should be forced to wear any specific attire. The State Bank was directed to issue updated guidelines and obtain HR dress code policies from all banks.

The committee further reviewed banking service charges, including SMS alert fees and card transactions. The State Bank informed members that SMS alerts are optional, domestic Visa card transactions are not charged in US dollars, and reforms under the Pakistan Remittance Initiative (PRI) are saving banks around Rs80 billion annually.

Director Information Munawar Hussain Visits Mandi Bahauddin Information Office, Stresses Effective Publicity of Government Initiatives



BY: ANI Correspondent:

GUJRANWALA: Director Information Gujranwala Division Munawar Hussain visited the District Information Office Mandi Bahauddin to review measures aimed at strengthening the dissemination of government policies, development projects and public welfare initiatives. District Information Officer Muhammad Qasim Ranjha was also present on the occasion.

During the visit, the Director inspected various sections of the office, reviewed official records, administrative affairs, ongoing publicity activities and checked staff attendance. He directed officers and officials to perform their duties with honesty, professionalism and a strong sense of responsibility, emphasizing that the Public Relations Department serves as an effective bridge between the government and the public.

Munawar Hussain stressed the importance of punctuality and office discipline, stating that the timely and authentic dissemination of information regarding government initiatives, development projects and public welfare programmes is one of the department's primary responsibilities. He added that continuous professional development and adaptation to modern communication practices are essential.

He further instructed officials to ensure that the activities of the district administration, public service projects and government achievements are communicated to the public promptly and effectively through print, electronic and digital media to ensure the availability of accurate and verified information.

Expressing satisfaction over the overall performance of the office, Munawar Hussain said every officer and official of the Public Relations Department should continue to serve with dedication and contribute towards strengthening the institution's professional reputation.

Alipur Traders Association, Ghouri Town Delegations Meet Khakan Waheed; Public and Business Issues Discussed



BY: ANI Reporter :

ISLAMABAD--' Chairman of Pakistan Awami Quwat Party, Khakan Waheed Khawaja, held separate meetings with delegations from the Alipur Traders Association and Ghouri Town, discussing issues related to the business community, public welfare, and local development.

The Alipur Traders Association delegation, led by party leader Amjad Hussain Alvi, included Association President Ali Bhai, Raja Muhammad Adil, Naseer Khan, Muhammad Asif Noor, Irfan Khan, Nauman Khan, and Rubina Anwar Abbasi.

The meeting focused on challenges facing traders, promotion of local business activities, public welfare initiatives, and strengthening mutual cooperation.

Welcoming the delegation, Khakan Waheed Khawaja said the Pakistan Awami Quwat Party would continue its efforts to resolve the issues of the public and the business community, promote economic stability, and work for public welfare. He said public service, transparency, and practical action remained the party's top priorities.

Later, a delegation from Ghouri Town, comprising Pir Muhammad Naseer, Pir Muhammad Yasir of Westridge, Rawalpindi, Major Nadeem, Advocate Mian Khurram Joyia, and senior journalist and columnist Amir Nawaz Khan Niazi, also called on the party chairman.

The meeting reviewed development projects, civic amenities, and other issues affecting the residents of Ghouri Town and adjoining areas. Khakan Waheed Khawaja assured the delegation that every possible effort would be made, in coordination with the relevant authorities, to address these issues on a priority basis.

Both delegations appreciated the chairman's commitment to public welfare and pledged to work jointly for resolving public issues and promoting development in their respective areas.



MUSAFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Murhtarub is addressing the session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly under the chairmanship of Pilar Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar.

Inflation Has Made Life Miserable for People and Traders; Unjustified Fines Must Stop: Ajmal Baloch, Khalid Chaudhry, Akhtar Abbasi

BY: Hurish Shah :

ISLAMABAD--- President of the All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajran and Traders Action Committee Islamabad Ajmal Baloch, Secretary and Chairman of the ICCI Traders and Market Development Committee Khalid Chaudhry, and General Secretary of the Traders Welfare Association Aabpara Market Akhtar Abbasi said government policies had triggered a sharp rise in inflation, placing both the public and the business community under severe financial pressure.

They said higher prices of petrol, gas and electricity had reduced consumers' purchasing power, causing business activity to shrink by nearly 30 per cent. They also alleged that traders were being subjected to unjustified fines in the name of inspections and urged Islamabad Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf to direct the district administration to stop unnecessary penal actions. The leaders called on the government to take effective measures to curb inflation and provide relief to the public.

CAREC Briefs Commerce Minister on Regional Trade Agenda, Invites Pakistan to Mongolia Ministerial Conference



By Ikram Ullah Joyia/ ANI

ISLAMABAD--- A delegation from the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Secretariat called on Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and briefed him on key regional initiatives aimed at enhancing trade, connectivity, investment and economic integration among CAREC member countries. According to the Ministry of Commerce, the delegation informed the Minister that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is expected to approve a Border Connectivity and Logistics Upgrade Facility in the coming weeks. The initiative is intended to support the modernization of Pakistan's border infrastructure and strengthen regional trade and transport connectivity.

The delegation also highlighted Pakistan's active role in implementing the Regional Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership (CARIF) framework, which has entered its operational phase to promote trade facilitation, logistics cooperation and investment across the CAREC region.

The meeting reviewed preparations for the CAREC Ministerial Conference and Business Forum, scheduled to be held in Mongolia on September 29-30, 2026. The CAREC Secretariat formally invited the Commerce Minister to participate in the event, which will bring together ministers, senior government officials, development partners, international investors and private sector representatives from member countries.

Officials said the Business Forum will focus on logistics, energy security, critical minerals, digital connectivity, investment opportunities and private-sector collaboration. The delegation also shared plans to establish a Regional Chambers Alliance to strengthen business-to-business cooperation among Chambers of Commerce and Industry across the CAREC region with support from the Asian Development Bank.

The CAREC Secretariat further briefed the Minister on an ADB-supported Digital Corridor Study involving Pakistan and other CAREC member countries to enhance regional digital connectivity.

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan appreciated the continued support of CAREC and the Asian Development Bank in promoting regional economic integration. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to expanding regional trade, improving connectivity and strengthening investment cooperation with fellow CAREC member states.

Khalid Nawaz Sadhraich Slams Repeated Fuel Price Hikes Despite Decline in Global Oil Prices

BY: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD-- Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Farmers Wing Central Information Secretary Khalid Nawaz Sadhraich on Wednesday criticized the government's repeated increases in petroleum prices, describing them as unjustified despite a reported 12 to 15 percent decline in international oil prices.

In a statement, Sadhraich said the government had failed to pass on the benefit of lower global fuel prices to consumers, while soaring inflation continued to place millions of Pakistanis under severe economic pressure.

He alleged that frequent increases in petroleum prices had sharply raised agricultural production costs, including irrigation, harvesting and transportation, ultimately contributing to higher food prices and inflation.

Calling for transparency in the fuel pricing mechanism, Khalid Nawaz Sadhraich urged the government to provide immediate relief to inflation-hit citizens, particularly farmers, by passing on the benefit of lower international oil prices.

Okara Bar Convention Punjab Bar Council Members Amjad Pervaiz, Rao Ashraf Announce Lawyers' Welfare Initiatives; Advocate Tameena Zahra Attends

BY:ANI Correspondent:

OKARA--- The Okara District Bar Association organised a Lawyers' Convention attended by Punjab Bar Council Members Chaudhry Amjad Pervaiz and Rao Ashraf, President Okara District Bar Association Farooq Sangooka, General Secretary Tariq Naseem Mangan, Senior Vice President Women Lawyers Wing Okara and President Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Okara Advocate Tameena Zahra, along with a large number of lawyers.

The convention focused on lawyers' welfare, construction of new chambers for young lawyers, lifetime bar membership, legal education, and improved facilities at the bar.

Addressing the gathering, Chaudhry Amjad Pervaiz announced key welfare measures, including lifetime bar membership, new chambers for young lawyers, concessions in legal education, and enhanced professional facilities.

Rao Ashraf reaffirmed the Punjab Bar Council's commitment to protecting lawyers' rights and addressing their issues.

Advocate Tameena Zahra welcomed the welfare initiatives, particularly those benefiting women lawyers, and stressed the need for equal opportunities and professional development.

Farooq Sangooka and Tariq Naseem Mangan pledged to continue working for the welfare of lawyers and the development of the Okara District Bar Association.

Daily

FINANCIAL TIMES

Group Editor: Dr. Waheed Mehmood Khan, Editor: Javed Siddiq

Executive Editor: Naseem Hassan Awan, Joint Editor: Hurish Shah

Disclaimer: All articles, columns, and opinions published in Financial Times are solely the views of their respective authors. The publication does not necessarily endorse or agree with the opinions, views, or positions expressed therein.

Opinion

3

Gulf countries can win the global talent war

ARNAB NEIL SENGUPTA

For decades, the world’s most ambitious young professionals have made a beeline for a familiar set of destinations: New York, London, Silicon Valley, Boston, Research Triangle Park in North Carolina and a handful of other global hubs. These places promised opportunity, job satisfaction and high-growth careers. Today, that promise is fading. A slowdown in white-collar hiring across the West, being felt most acutely by tech industry executives in the US, has opened a rare window of opportunity for Gulf Arab states. This is the moment the Gulf Cooperation Council can win the global talent war. Recent reports in The Wall Street Journal paint a grim picture. Even graduates from elite US business schools — the traditional providers of executives, consultants and financiers — are taking months to land job offers. At Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business, 21 percent of master’s graduates were still unemployed three months after graduation. At the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, the figure stood at 15 percent, compared with just 4 per-

cent in 2019. Georgetown University reported that fully a quarter of its MBA class was still searching for work after three months. These are sobering numbers for institutions that once served as launchpads for lucrative careers. The reasons are manifold. Companies are cutting back on white-collar hiring amid economic uncertainty, geopolitical risk and the rapid adoption of generative artificial intelligence, which threatens to automate many entry- and mid-level professional tasks. Layoffs in technology, finance and consulting have flooded the US market with experienced candidates competing for a shrinking pool of jobs. As one Wall Street Journal report noted, the US added just 49,000 jobs per month in 2025 — the slowest pace in more than two decades outside major recessions — and most of those jobs were in healthcare, not business or technology. This crisis for Western graduates represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the Gulf. At precisely the moment when hydrocarbon prices are softening and fiscal pressures are rising, countries hitherto reliant on

energy exports need fresh thinking, new business models and the best managerial capacity. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain all have strategies in place aimed at economic diversification. Significant investments are already flowing into AI, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, life sciences, logistics and fintech. But capital alone may not be enough to guarantee the anticipated return on such investments. That depends on skilled engineers, product designers, data scientists, business strategists, venture capital professionals and industrial managers. Time is also of the essence. AI data centers, advanced manufacturing projects and tech ventures will take perhaps years to mature and produce stable returns, assuming all goes well. But Gulf states facing fiscal pressures from lower oil revenues do not have the luxury of sitting back and hoping for the best. One way to bridge this gap is to aggressively attract world-class human capital that can help create entirely new revenue streams and industries, while looking forward to seeing their investments in electronics, advanced

industrials, clean energy and AI pay off in the fullness of time. To be sure, the Gulf already attracts a tremendous amount of talent. Since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, Riyadh and Dubai, for instance, have drawn tens of thousands of new expatriates every year. Their booming populations testify to their international appeal. However, a substantial part of this inflow ends up in real estate, hospitality, retail, basic services and mid-level corporate roles. What remains limited is the recruitment of innovation-driving talent from top business schools, engineering institutes, medical schools and research universities — the kind of graduates that powered the rise of Silicon Valley, Boston’s biotech ecosystem and London’s financial sector. It is no secret that the US owes much of its technological leadership to generations of first-generation immigrants who arrived with talent and ambition. From Silicon Valley to Wall Street, foreign-born talent has powered the engines that drive entire sectors of the American economy. Fortunately, the GCC countries have the financial resources, infra-

structure, lifestyle advantages and geopolitical stability to bet on that strategy — provided they act decisively. Several forces work in the regional bloc’s favor. First, world-class healthcare, international schools, modern housing, cultural openness and physical safety make cities like Riyadh, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha highly attractive to cosmopolitan professionals. Second, taxation levels here remain competitive, allowing professionals to retain far more of their income than in the West. Third, governments are increasingly generous when it comes to visas, work permits, property ownership and long-term residency — a crucial factor for young talents who prioritize families and careers. To attract the brightest minds, Gulf countries must offer something intellectually compelling: the chance to build new institutions, industries and ecosystems from the ground up. This is where the region holds a significant advantage over Western economies that are burdened with high-tax regimes, bureaucratic inertia, regulatory inflexibility and policy rigidity.

— Arab News

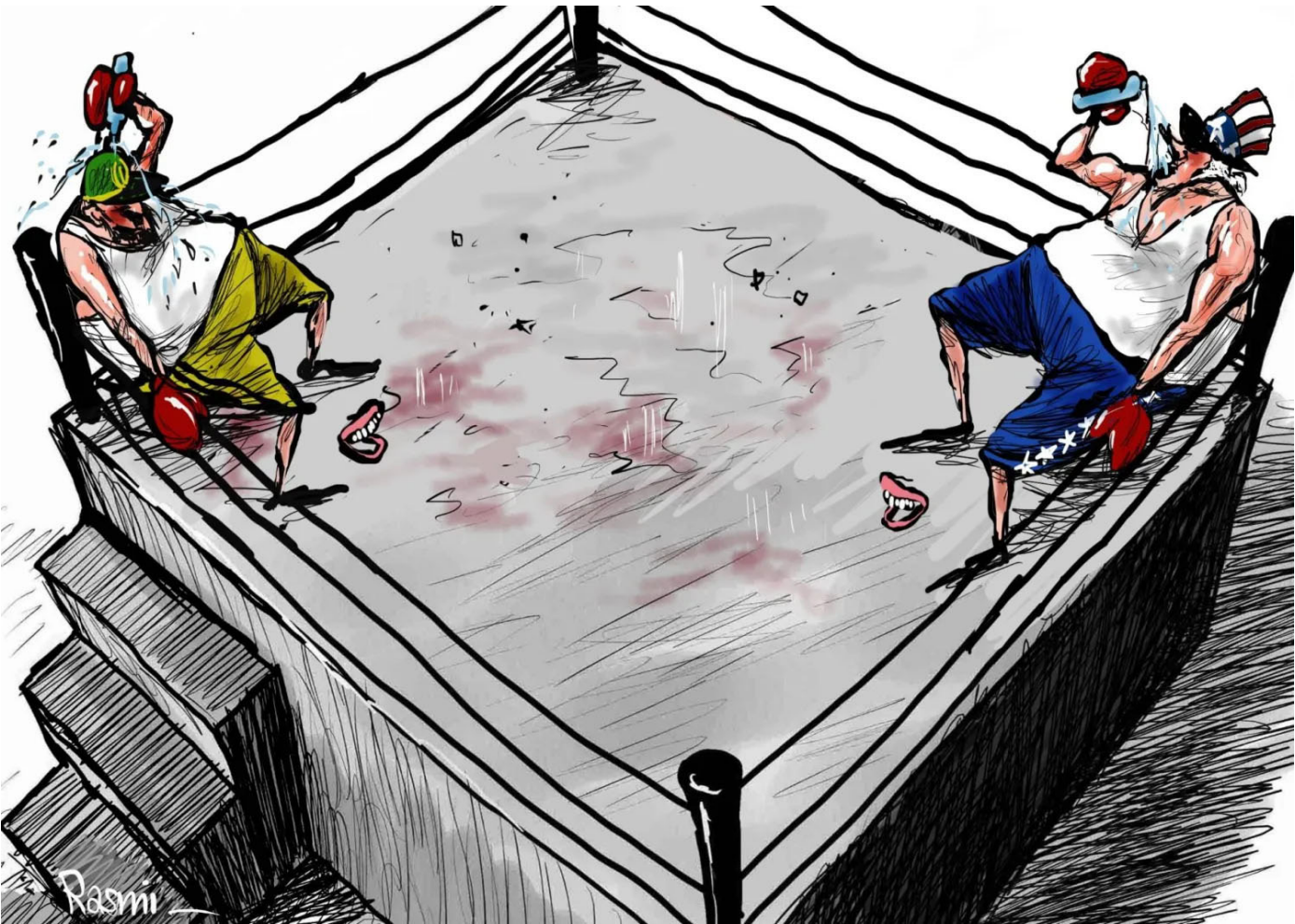
What Myanmar’s genocide defense reveals about global justice

DR. AZEEM IBRAHIM

Over the past several days, the hearings at the International Court of Justice in The Hague have revealed something far more consequential than a procedural dispute over jurisdiction or representation. They have exposed a deliberate and coherent legal strategy by Myanmar’s military rulers: the systematic erasure of the Rohingya as a people from the courtroom itself. Rather than grappling with the substance of the genocide allegations brought under the Genocide Convention, the junta’s lawyers retreated almost entirely into abstraction. Their submissions were dominated by arguments about standing, admissibility, timelines and who has the authority to speak for Myanmar. What was striking was not simply what was said but what was consistently avoided. The Rohingya were rarely named. Their identity, history and continued suffering were conspicuously absent from a case that exists solely because of crimes committed against them. This was not an oversight. It was a strategy. Genocide, under international law, begins with the targeting of a protected group. The crime is not only about mass killing, it is about the destruction of a people as such. In Myanmar, that process unfolded over decades through the denial of citizenship, restrictions on movement, exclusion from education and the systematic delegitimization of Rohingya identity. By the time the military launched its 2016-2017 “clearance operations,” the Rohingya had already been rendered legally and politically invisible within the state. What the recent hearings at the world court demonstrate is that this logic of erasure has now migrated from the battlefield and bureaucracy into the courtroom. The junta’s legal approach seeks to strip the case of its human core and reframe it as a technical dispute between states. By doing so, it avoids confronting the central question before the court: whether specific people were targeted for destruction because of who they are. This matters because genocide law cannot function in the abstract. The Genocide Convention was drafted in the shadow of the Holocaust precisely to prevent legal formalism from shielding perpetrators. It requires courts to identify victims, name protected groups and assess intent. When

a respondent state refuses even to acknowledge the existence of the group at the center of the case, it is not mounting a defense in good faith; it is attempting to hollow out the law itself. The danger is that proceduralism becomes complicity. International courts are, by design, cautious institutions. They prize jurisdictional clarity, procedural fairness and state consent. But when those instincts dominate to the exclusion of substance, they can be exploited by regimes that understand how to weaponize the legal process. The junta’s approach at The Hague reflects a broader pattern seen in other atrocity cases: delay justice long enough, bury facts under procedure and eventually the political urgency dissipates. For the Rohingya, time is not neutral. Nearly 1 million remain in refugee camps in Bangladesh. Conditions in Rakhine State have deteriorated further, with new rounds of violence, restrictions on humanitarian access and deepening food insecurity. Each year of legal delay entrenches displacement and normalizes a reality in which return, citizenship and justice drift further out of reach. If the International Court of Justice allows the case to be reduced to questions of representation and standing without insisting on engagement with the underlying crimes, it risks setting a dangerous precedent. Other regimes accused of mass atrocities will learn the lesson quickly: you do not need to refute the facts if you can avoid discussing them altogether. This is not simply a problem for Myanmar or the Rohingya. It goes to the heart of whether genocide law remains fit for purpose in an era of fragmented states, contested sovereignty and authoritarian resilience. Many contemporary conflicts involve regimes that lack full territorial control or popular legitimacy. If such actors are nonetheless able to use procedural shields to evade scrutiny, the deterrent value of international justice will erode rapidly. The world court does not need to abandon legal rigor to avoid this outcome. But it does need to recognize that silence can be as consequential as speech. When a respondent refuses to name the victims of alleged genocide, the court should treat that refusal as legally and morally significant.

— Arab News



Greenlanders’ fever dream over but nightmares continue

NIC ROBERTSON

On Sunday, after two and a half weeks’ reporting from Nuuk, Greenland, my team and I finally boarded a plane and said goodbye. Leaving is hard. Greenland has me in its thrall, in rapture of its raw beauty and seduced by its quiet Inuit culture. But it’s a good thing to exit. Tonnes of journalists and equipment, clearing out, making space for Greenlanders to reflect on what just happened. As our producer, Ben, sagely observed, their fever dream has broken. Residents of this giant, icebound Arctic island could be forgiven for thinking they might awaken back to a simpler time, before the trauma of President Donald Trump’s ratcheting up of demands to own Greenland just a few weeks ago. But they are not where they began and they know it. Instead, they are awakening to an uneasy new reality. Trump’s capricious claims over their sovereignty are not over and his apparently flimsy grasp of basic facts about their homeland does not appear to have improved. White House tweets make that abundantly clear. Were it not for his declaration at Davos last week, forswearing a military invasion of Greenland, an image posted of the president trudging across a snow field toward a Greenland flag, hand in wing with a penguin, would be triggering a renewed fever for its residents. The apparent trolling is hard to fathom, much less take seriously. For a start, penguins — as everyone knows — live exclusively at the South Pole. Greenland is at the opposite end of the planet. But such incontrovertible truths seem to have become eclipsed by expansionist ambitions. Trump says he must own Greenland for the US’ “national security,” so he feels “psychologically” empowered to take it for his soon-to-be-built Golden Dome missile protective shield for the US. He might deny that he covets the minerals and rare earths buried below its ice sheets, but many are skeptical. What’s more, both objectives are already within his grasp. As Denmark, of which Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory, has made repeatedly clear to Trump’s diplomats, the 1951 defense agreement between these two sovereign nations grants sweeping rights for the US to base missiles and troops, as well as mine minerals and rare earths, to its heart’s content. What I learned during my all-too-brief time in Greenland is that nature and its preservation are at the heart of Inuit culture. Locals told me they believed that Trump

would have no regard for their most precious commodity, which is inextricably linked to their identity. Instead, the White House’s messaging seems to indicate they are either planning to introduce an alien species to Greenland or simply do not understand what it is they covet. Greenlanders, on the other hand, know exactly what they fear and why. They do not trust Trump. The president’s apparent about-face at Davos, rescinding threats of military action and announcing, after meeting NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, that an “agreement” had been hatched, giving him everything he wanted, carries no water — or ice for that matter — in Greenland. For Greenlanders, Trump is an open book, each new chapter strewn with the same falsehoods and self-aggrandizement. They also saw what he did in Venezuela, a leader plucked from a country with air defenses and an army, of which Greenland has neither. Instead, it relies on Denmark and, by extension NATO — and America, to defend it. The night before we left, the power abruptly went out across Nuuk, its 20,000 residents plunged into darkness. A few hours later, the internet also throttled back. Plenty of well-educated and rational Nuummioqs (as the capital’s residents are known) fretted they were about to experience a Venezuela redux. Relief came just before daybreak and the slow, late morning sunrise. Power lines that had come down in the strong and unusual easterly winds were repaired. In the extremes of Greenland, uncertainty is an ever-present state of being. Flights are often canceled at the last minute. In fact, several were before our bumpy, wind-jerked aircraft took off. But Trump has injected a fresh layer of nervousness that Greenlanders see as entirely unnecessary. Now he is back where he started, apparently reengaging in a dialogue that Denmark and Greenland’s foreign ministers thought they had already concluded with Vice President J.D. Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the White House two weeks ago. With details of the new post-Davos agreement as scarce as penguins at the North Pole, no Greenlander is confident Trump will not up the ante again — and many are convinced that the mercurial president may do exactly that sooner rather than later. But what Greenlanders feel most acutely is that Trump’s at times relentless rhetoric has shown no regard to their beliefs and feelings. Never once, they say, has he even tried to assuage their misgivings in his bellicose speeches.

— Arab News

How developing countries can make the most of AI

SHAMIKA SIRIMANNE AND TAFFERE TESFACHEW

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, industrial policy has crept back into respectable economic discourse after decades of being derided as misguided interventionism, particularly for developing countries. But its renaissance is being led by the advanced economies that once rejected it, with the push into artificial intelligence and renewable energy hastening the shift. For developing countries, this revival presents new opportunities, provided they can manage three major constraints: a weak enabling environment (a lack of infrastructure and other necessary inputs), limited autonomy in policymaking, and fiscal constraints. Industrial policy is often understood in terms of subsidies and tax breaks, but for many developing economies far more than these instruments must be put in place. Without reliable digital connectivity, dependable power supplies, trusted data protection regimes and a skilled workforce, ambitions for AI-led growth will amount to little more than rhetoric. Developing countries’ policy options are also constrained because World Trade Organization rules limit the use of instruments — export-contingent subsidies, local content rules and technology transfer requirements — that once underpinned industrialization success stories, namely in East Asia. At the same time, major economies continue to march to their own drummer, with the US, the EU and China deploying industrial policy at scale, often bending or breaking the very rules that others are expected to observe. The asymmetry is obvious: of more than 2,500 industrial policy measures introduced globally in 2023, these three economies accounted for almost half. For developing countries, the sensible approach to AI is to deploy the sophisti-

cated frontier models that are already available. Shamika Sirimanne and Taffere Tesfachew Finally, fiscal limits are biting hard. In many developing economies, up to 80 percent of public spending goes to wages and debt service, leaving little for the long-term investments that industrialization requires. Unlike the US or the EU, poorer countries cannot summon vast subsidy packages or bankroll multibillion-dollar technology programs. And while technology parks and incubators have multiplied across Africa and Asia, few have delivered meaningful results. As UN Trade and Development observes, such zones succeed only when anchored in established supply chains. Without that grounding, they risk becoming costly white elephants — impressive on paper but inert in practice. For developing countries, the sensible approach to AI is to deploy the sophisticated frontier models that are already available. Unburdened by legacy infrastructure, developing countries can leapfrog directly into emerging technologies, as many did when they skipped over landlines and went straight to mobile telephony. Deploying AI costs a fraction of what it takes to build it. Anyone can use tools like ChatGPT without erecting data centers or assembling elite engineering teams. Such targeted applications can be transformative. In healthcare, AI-assisted diagnostics can rationalize the use of scarce clinical capacity. In education, digital platforms can compensate for chronic shortages of teachers. In agriculture, predictive analytics can support farmers navigating climate volatility. These uses may not dazzle those on the technological cutting edge, but they can deliver real-world returns where they matter most. They also represent industrial policy at its most effective — meaning pragmatic, experimental and oriented around

Letters to the Editor

Road sense

Wrong parking is a major issue in Pakistan. It frequently causes the obstruction of traffic flow, pedestrian pathways and accessibility channels for persons with disabilities. This often causes accidents which can sometimes even prove to be fatal. Many drivers in Pakistan are not even aware of parking rules and regulations, which leads them to these errors. The government must take action and ensure that drivers are aware of both their responsibilities and rights. In this country, there are no rules. Causing obstruction is a safety risk for other people. A car or bus parked on the sidewalk is an example of wrong parking, as it blocks the pedestrians’ path. The citizens must pay heed to these issues.

Sanita Nazeer
Hub City

Doomscrolling

Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat and numerous other social media platforms are often the first source for spreading negativity. Content creators are chang-

ing their niche to making memes and roasting others. However, every child on these platforms is watching these reels. Their minds are being filled with garbage instead of educational and knowledgeable things. Additionally, watching reels, especially memes, creates an empty mind and harms both our physical and mental health. If our children are already addicted to reels, we should check their feeds and change them accordingly. In place of meme creators, we should follow educational content creators. What our children end up watching is up to us. Taking positive actions is our responsibility for the physical and mental health of our families. We need to focus on positivity for healthier futures.

Mahrang Naseer
Hub

Unity, faith, discipline

The national emblem of Pakistan is a familiar sight for everyone, yet its deeper meaning remains largely overlooked. Beyond its visual identity, the emblem embodies profound symbolism: the crescent and star represent progress and enlightenment, while the four

crops, cotton, wheat, tea and jute; signify agricultural strength and economic self-reliance. The emblem features a shield encircled by a floral wreath of Jasminum officinale, Pakistan’s national flower, symbolising purity and reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the Mughal era. The Urdu motto ‘ittihad, iman, tanzim’ encapsulates the nation’s ideological foundations of unity, faith and discipline. Almost everyone is unaware of this, which highlights a need for stronger civic education. Such a disconnect not only reduces national symbols to ceremonial imagery, but it also contributes to a weakening of national consciousness, particularly among younger generations. Including the historical, ideological and symbolic significance of the national emblem into educational curriculum, public awareness campaigns and media discourse can help build real patriotism based on knowledge rather than mere symbolism. At a time when Pakistan faces political, social and moral challenges, helping citizens connect with the values represented in the national emblem is a vital need.

Khizr Rashad

HEC engages varsities to accelerate tangible outcomes under CPEC consortium of Universities



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar chaired a meeting of Pakistani member universities of the CPEC Consortium of Universities to review progress and identify future priorities for strengthening Pakistan-China academic collaboration.

The meeting was attended by the Executive Director of HEC, senior HEC management, Vice Chancellors/Rectors from universities across Pakistan. During the meeting, Director General (Global Engagement/CPEC Unit) HEC Ms. Aayesha Ikram presented the achievements of the Consortium, highlighting that it has grown from its inception in 2017 to include 93 Pakistani and 40 Chinese universities. She highlighted that the key achievements include the establishment of six China Study Centres, collaborative research grants, faculty and student exchanges, training and talent development programmes and enhanced institutional linkages between Pakistan and

China.

Chairman HEC Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar emphasised that Pakistani universities must adopt a more proactive, results-oriented approach in their engagement with Chinese counterparts. Referring to feedback received during his recent visit to China, he noted that while a significant number of MOUs have been signed over the years, greater efforts are required to convert these agreements into tangible outcomes. He urged universities to focus on measurable deliverables such as joint and dual degree programmes, collaborative research projects, faculty and student exchanges, innovation partnerships, co-publications and Transnational Education (TNE) initiatives. Sharing insights from meetings held with Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU), Fudan University and the China Association of Higher Education (CAHE), the Chairman highlighted new avenues for collaboration in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, integrated circuits, biotechnology, public health, cybersecurity, agriculture, green technologies and emerging industries.

Senior officers intensify oversight as Islamabad Police recruitment enters second day

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Senior officers of Islamabad Police intensified monitoring of the ongoing recruitment process as physical endurance and running tests entered the second day at multiple test centres, directing officials to ensure merit, transparency, effective security arrangements and maximum facilitation for candidates. An ICT Police spokesperson told APP on Wednesday that, on the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, senior officers were personally supervising recruitment activities at test centres across the country to ensure every stage was conducted in a fair, transparent and well-organised manner. The spokesperson said DG Safe City/DIG Traffic Muhammad Haroon Joiya visited the Police Lines Headquarters recruitment centre, where he reviewed the physical and running tests, security arrangements and overall administrative measures.

Strengthening Women’s Protection and Rape Prevention Measures Imperative: Barrister Danyal Chaudhry



BY: Hurish Shah :

ISLAMABAD-- The National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights reviewed the performance of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), measures for women's protection, rape prevention, and the implementation of previous recommendations during its 13th meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Asiya Naz Tanoli, with Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry serving as co-chair.

The committee was informed that the NCSW's complaint management system is operational, the National Gender Data Portal is being updated regularly, and the first Gender Parity Report has been published. It was also briefed that journalists have received training on responsible reporting of rape and gender-based violence cases.

The Ministry of Human Rights informed the committee that women and child protection units and special investigation teams have been strengthened to improve support for victims of gender-based violence.

Speaking on the occasion,

Barrister Danyal Chaudhry stressed the need to enhance women's protection and rape prevention measures through public awareness and clear legal definitions of harassment. He also called for wider publicity of the Ministry of Human Rights' 1099 helpline and the 1121 child helpline.

Committee member Shahida Rahmani proposed presenting a rape case as a case study for policy recommendations, while the Human Rights Secretary suggested examining the feasibility of introducing a fee-free trial system for rape victims in Pakistan.

Health Minister directs to institutionalize lifestyle medicine within medical education in meeting with NTLM

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal, on Wednesday directed the members of Nationals Taskforce on Lifestyle Medicine (NTLM) to institutionalize lifestyle medicine within medical education, aiming to build a healthier Pakistan through sustainable lifestyle-based interventions.

He expressed these views during second meetings with members of the National Taskforce on Lifestyle Medicine, which was conducted to review progress made since the inaugural session and to accelerate the integration of lifestyle medicine into Pakistan's healthcare system.

During the meeting, the minister highlighted that the Pakistan Medical



& Dental Council (PMDC) will be formally advised to incorporate lifestyle medicine into undergraduate medical curricula. In the meeting, the Taskforce reached several landmark decisions to strengthen Pakistan's preventive health framework, including a dedicated curriculum development sub-committee was constituted to develop

the required academic modules. Simultaneously, the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSF) will be requested to integrate lifestyle medicine into postgraduate medical education and residency training programmes.

The Federal Minister also approved the establishment of a Healthy Food Kiosk within the Ministry premises through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The initiative will benefit from the several successful experience in implementing healthy menu reforms and will serve as a model for other public sector institutions.

The Federal Minister reaffirmed that Pakistan's growing burden of non-communicable diseases requires a decisive shift from treatment-oriented healthcare towards prevention through healthy lifestyles.

Judge Amir Saleem Rana Orders Release of 13 Prisoners During Visit to Mandi Bahauddin District Jail

BY: FT Correspondent:

MANDI BAHAUDDIN-- District and Sessions Judge Amir Saleem Rana, accompanied by Superintendent Jail Haq Nawaz and Senior Civil Judge Tahir Mehmood, visited District Jail Mandi Bahauddin and ordered the immediate release of 13 prisoners involved in minor offences.

During the visit, the judge inspected the jail barracks, hospital and other facilities, reviewed the quality of food provided to inmates, and expressed satisfaction with the cleanliness and overall arrangements. He also met prisoners individually, listened to their grievances and directed officials to resolve their issues on the spot.

Judge Amir Saleem Rana appreciated the efforts of Superintendent Jail Haq Nawaz for maintaining hygiene standards, ensuring quality food and improving sanitation in the jail.

Earlier, the visiting judges were



presented with a guard of honour by a jail contingent. Superintendent Jail Haq Nawaz informed them that, following the directions of the Inspector General Prisons Punjab, security at

the jail had been further strengthened, private vehicle entry had been banned, and all inmates were being provided facilities in accordance with the Jail Manual.

Senate Panel Seeks NAB Briefing on Delayed Federal Housing Schemes

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works met today under the Chairmanship of Senator Nasir Mehmood at Parliament Lodges, to conduct a comprehensive oversight review of major ongoing public housing projects, joint ventures, and civil infrastructure directives across Islamabad and some projects in Quetta.

Expressing profound concern over long-standing structural, legal, and administrative bottlenecks that have stalled key development initiatives for years, the Committee reiterated its firm commitment to safeguarding the financial interests and legal rights of public sector allottees. During the deliberations, the

Secretary for Housing and Works presented a detailed briefing on the status of various housing schemes managed by the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) and the PHA Foundation (PHAFF). Committee Directs to call NAB Chairman Briefing on Bara Kahu and Sky Garden Schemes in the next meeting. Reviewing the Green Enclave-I project in Bara Kahu, Islamabad where land acquisition commenced as far back as 2009 covering 3,375 kanals, the Committee observed with grave concern that despite the signing of a construction agreement in 2019, physical work remains suspended due to ongoing disputes regarding contractual modes, work execution percentages, and performance security revisions.

MoST, UNICEF, LEEP join hands to tighten lead-free safety standards for consumer products

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), in collaboration with UNICEF and the Lead Exposure Elimination Project (LEEP), on Wednesday agreed to strengthen national safety standards and regulatory enforcement to eliminate lead from consumer products, including turmeric, paints, traditional eye liners (surma), and other commonly used items. The understanding was reached during a meeting between Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Hussain Magsi, UNICEF Officer-in-Charge Representative Sharmela Rasool, and LEEP Country Head Abid Hasan.

Federal Secretary for Science and Technology Shahid Iqbal Baloch and Chairman of the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIr) Dr. Syed Hussain Abidi also attended the meeting.



The participants discussed the health risks posed by lead exposure, particularly for children and pregnant women, and stressed the need for stringent national safety standards and stronger regulatory mechanisms to ensure lead-free consumer products. The minister announced that these products would be brought under the mandatory certification regime of the Pakistan Standards and

Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), saying the move would strengthen regulatory oversight, improve market surveillance, and ensure that only safe and quality-assured products reach consumers. UNICEF and LEEP reaffirmed their commitment to providing technical assistance to the ministry and its affiliated organisations in developing and implementing national standards.

NA Panel calls for uniform marriage age, stronger coordination to address social issues

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights Wednesday called for adopting a uniform minimum marriage age across the country and directed the Ministry of Human Rights to strengthen coordination among relevant ministries and departments to effectively address social issues that are affecting the society. The committee, which met at Parliament House

under the chairpersonship of MNA Asiya Naz Tanoli, also appreciated the Ministry of Human Rights for successfully organizing the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women in Islamabad, saying the event would contribute to promoting women's socio-economic empowerment, digital inclusion and political participation. Expressing concern over different minimum marriage ages prescribed under federal and provincial laws, the committee directed the Ministry of

Human Rights to take concrete measures, in consultation with all provinces, to make the marriage age uniform across the country.

The committee also voiced concern over what it described as the poor performance of ministries and departments responsible for addressing social evils, attributing the situation to inadequate coordination among institutions. It observed that many policies remained confined to paper with little implementation at the grassroots level.

PML-N Wins 9 of 13 Seats in First Phase of AJK Local Elections in Mirpur Division; PPP Secures 4

BY: ANI Correspondent:

MUZAFFARABAD--- The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has officially notified the returned candidates for the first phase of elections held in Mirpur Division. According to the official results, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) emerged as the leading party by winning 9 out of 13 seats, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) secured 4 seats.

The Election Commission's official notification also includes the vote tally of each returned candidate. The second phase of the elections is scheduled to be held on August 2, 2026.

The returned candidates are as follows:

LA-1 Mirpur: Azhar Sadiq (PML-N) - 13,036 votes



LA-2 Mirpur: Qasim Majid (PPP) - 9,304 votes

LA-3 Mirpur: Chaudhry Saeed (PML-N) - 9,361 votes

LA-4 Mirpur: Rokhsar Ahmad (PML-N) - 7,987 votes

LA-5 Bhimber: Waqar Ahmad Noor (PML-N) - 21,573 votes

LA-6 Bhimber: Muhammad Razaq Chaudhry (PML-N) - 18,336 votes

LA-7 Bhimber: Tariq Farooq (PML-N) - 21,590 votes

LA-8 Kotli: Malik Zafar Iqbal (PPP) - 4,851 votes

LA-9 Kotli: Sardar Omair Naeem (PML-N) - 23,568 votes

LA-10 Kotli: Chaudhry Yasin (PPP) - 6,999 votes

LA-11 Kotli: Chaudhry Akhlaq (PPP) - 10,659 votes

LA-12 Kotli: Mohammad Raisat (PML-N) - 3,969 votes

LA-13 Kotli: Raja Ayaz Ahmed (PML-N) - 13,036 votes

With the completion of the first phase in Mirpur Division, the PML-N has gained an early advantage by securing a clear majority of the declared seats. The remaining constituencies will go to the polls in the second phase on August 2, with further results expected to determine the overall political composition of the elected local bodies.

Achakzai Condemns Firing on Civilians in AJK, Claims Government Writ Has Collapsed in Balochistan

BY:ANI Correspondent:

QUETTA--- Chairman of the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) and head of Ayeen Tahafuz Pakistan, Mehmood Khan Achakzai, has strongly condemned the firing on unarmed civilians in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), saying that public issues cannot be resolved through force.

Addressing a press conference in Quetta, Achakzai said the problems of AJK should be resolved through dialogue with the local people. He claimed that efforts by Ayeen Tahafuz Pakistan and Maulana Fazlur Rehman to visit the area were not allowed.

Commenting on the law and order situation in Balochistan, he alleged that the government's writ had collapsed in the province, claiming that lives, property and major highways were no longer secure.

He also appealed to those advocating freedom to ensure that poor Pashtuns and their vehicles were not targeted in their areas. Achakzai rejected what he described as the



allocation of Pashtun land without local consent and opposed the exploitation of the region's mineral resources. He further alleged that armed groups had been unleashed in different areas to intimidate people and create unrest.

Announcing a future course of action, Achakzai said a Pashtun Quami Jirga would be held in Quetta on August 29-31 to discuss the situation in southern Pashtunkhwa, with participation from Pashtun repre-

sentatives from across the region.

The press conference was also attended by Pashtun Quami Jirga Convener Nawab Muhammad Ayaz Khan Jogezi, along with central and provincial leaders of PKMAP and party workers.

Referring to Imran Khan, Achakzai said the PTI founder would complete three years in jail on August 5, adding that peaceful protests would be held across Pakistan on that occasion.