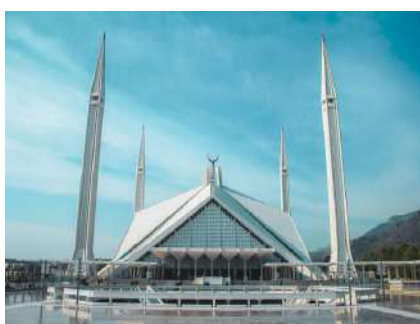




KSA cancels late-September crude cargoes to Europe, sources say



ANI

A satellite image shows a closer view of the damage at the Saudi Arabia East-West pipeline, located across the Arabian Peninsula, after a strike that hit it on September 11, 2026, in Saudi Arabia, September 13, 2026. Photo: Reuters

Saudi Arabia on Tuesday informed its European customers that late-September crude oil cargoes will be cancelled, due to the East-West pipeline being shut after last week's attacks and Yemen's Houthis taking over the entire Red Sea coast, per three sources to Reuters.

Yanbu had five to seven days of crude stocks left for export when the East-West line went down, per indus-

try sources on Saturday, and cancelling late-September cargoes means Riyadh does not expect the line back before they run out.

Europe has been taking Saudi crude through Yanbu because Hormuz has been closed since spring. On top of the pipeline, the Houthis appear to have struck the YASREF refinery at that same port this morning.

Meanwhile, oil loadings at Saudi Arabia's Red Sea port of Yanbu have been suspended, days after the world's biggest crude exporter closed its East-West pipeline due to an attack by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis, shipping industry sources said on Tuesday. Saudi Aramco, which has increased use of the

Yanbu terminal since the US war with Iran began on February 28, declined to comment.

Turkiye says attacks in Gulf harm peace efforts

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Tuesday that reciprocal attacks in the Gulf were impacting peace efforts to end the US-Iran war and called for them to immediately stop, adding that Ankara also valued the stability of its neighbour Iran. Speaking at a joint press conference with his Azerbaijani counterpart in Baku, Fidan also said freedom of passage should be allowed in the Strait of Hormuz, and the pre-war status quo should be re-instated, adding Ankara was in touch with all involved parties to find a solution to

the matter.

Iran's Armed Forces General Staff has issued a nationwide passive defence directive outlining preparations for three possible scenarios: the end of war, a ceasefire, and full-scale war. Major General Ali Abdollahi, chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces and chairman of the country's Permanent Passive Defence Committee, issued the 10-article directive for Iran's 2026 Passive Defence Commemoration programs, according to Fars News Agency on Tuesday. Under the full-scale war scenario, large public gatherings and in-person events would be suspended, with activities instead focusing on operational preparedness.

Tariq Fazal Chaudhry rejects reports of smart lockdown amid rising fuel prices

ANI

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Tuesday rejected reports that the government was considering imposing a smart lockdown in the country amid rising fuel prices linked to tensions in the Middle East.

"Smart lockdown was neither discussed in the meeting chaired by the deputy prime minister nor is it within my knowledge. The meeting chaired by the deputy prime minister was regarding petroleum products," Chaudhry told reporters in Islamabad. His remarks came after reports emerged that the government was considering imposing a smart lockdown to cope with a worsening petroleum situation. Rising tensions in the Middle East have pushed global oil prices higher, while attacks on Saudi energy infrastructure have raised concerns over global fuel supplies. Saudi Arabia also shut down its East-West oil pipeline after the vital conduit came under aerial attack. Chaudhry said the government was providing targeted subsidies for three-wheelers and vehicles up to 800cc for three months.

He added that public representatives were being assigned responsibilities to guide people about the scheme.

Commenting on political protests, the minister criticised Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying the party's marches had often resulted in violence and disruption. He said the Islamabad High Court's recent decision directed the administration to ensure that citizens' movement remained uninterrupted.

"Public places cannot be allowed to be occupied by leaders of any political party," he said.

Chaudhry said Islamabad would not be shut down and assured that authorities would ensure the smooth movement of citizens.

He said the administration was performing its duty and those repeatedly attempting to move towards Islamabad should reconsider their approach.

Responding to PTI's demands, he said, "If they think they are coming to change the system, will the system change because of their arrival?"



"Will the prime minister resign just because they ring the bell at the prime minister's door and ask him to step down?" he added.

The minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had repeatedly invited opposition parties for dialogue.

Referring to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi's visit to Lahore, he criticised the conduct of political leaders.

"The scenes witnessed in Lahore yesterday reflect political immaturity; nothing could be more disrespectful to a public office," he said.

"You are the chief minister of a province. Sometimes you sit on a vehicle and sometimes on a footpath. Every chief minister is respected by us; you should respect the dignity of your office," Chaudhry added.

A day earlier, the government detailed the process for applying for its targeted petrol subsidy, announced by PM Shehbaz as a special relief scheme offering a Rs100-per-litre reduction in petrol prices for motorcycles, rickshaws, Qingqi rickshaws and cars with engines of up to 800cc. Furthermore, Information Minister Ataulah Tatar said consultations were under way on bringing back some of the previous austerity measures as renewed hostilities in the Middle East threaten to push up oil prices and disrupt fuel supplies. While addressing a press briefing, Tatar said PM Shehbaz had directed consultations on the austerity measures, some of which, he noted, "are still in force, such as market timings". Tatar added that "austerity measures previously taken [...] were being reviewed to assess which of the previous measures need to be revived in the present situation".

Sindh Assembly unanimously passes resolution seeking reduction in petroleum prices



ANI

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution calling upon the federal government to reduce petroleum prices and abolish the petroleum levy, amid growing concern over the burden of fuel costs on consumers. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed lawmaker Mohammad Owais moved the resolution, which received support from the provincial government and opposition members. Speaking during the assembly debate, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said, "We fully support this resolution and demand that the federal government abolish the petroleum levy." Memon said the rising prices of petroleum products had created serious difficulties for the public. He said the federal government was collecting more than Rs100 per litre in petroleum levy and urged it to withdraw the levy to provide relief to consumers. The minister also criticised the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), a coalition partner of the federal government, for what he described as silence over the rising cost of petroleum products.

"MQM-P is enjoying the perks of being in the government but refuses to speak to their coalition partner on the rising cost of petroleum products," he lamented, urging

the party's federal representatives to raise the issue with the government.

"MQM-P should not ignore the people's problems in the pursuit of power."

He asked the opposition party to clarify its stance on rising fuel costs.

Referring to the Pakistan Peoples Party's political stance on petroleum prices, Memon said the PPP had once withdrawn from a government over a nominal increase in petrol prices. "In 1988, PPP left the coalition when the government increased petrol prices by Re1," he said, adding, "Today, the increase has reached up to Rs150." He stressed that all political parties, including MQM-P, should raise their voice against high petroleum prices because the issue directly affects the public. He asked the federal government to "come to its senses" and take measures to reduce the burden of fuel prices on the people. JI stages sit-ins, pushes govt to abolish petroleum levy

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman announced nationwide protests on July 10 against the petroleum levy, rising fuel prices, inflation, and what he termed the government's ineffective economic policies.

He highlighted that the petroleum levy disproportionately affected low-income and middle-class citizens, including labourers, students and motorcycle users, while influential landowners continued to dodge taxation. He demanded the immediate abolition of the levy and reiterated that petrol prices should not exceed Rs225 per litre. On September 6, JI chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman warned the government of expanding the party's protest movement if its demands were not accepted, saying the next phase could include wheel-jam and shutter-down strikes, closure of petrol stations and a long march towards Islamabad.

Dar reaffirms Pakistan's support for Lebanon's sovereignty, integrity in meeting with interior minister

ANI

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity during a meeting with Lebanese Interior Minister Ahmad Al-Hajjar.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Dar received Al-Hajjar at the Foreign Office in Islamabad and expressed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen bilateral ties, including cooperation in law enforcement and people-to-people contacts. "The two ministers discussed Pakistan-Lebanon relations and law-enforcement cooperation and welcomed the signing of the agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons as an important milestone in bilateral legal cooperation," the statement said. The two



sides also exchanged views on regional and international developments of mutual interest and expressed their desire to expand cooperation in areas of shared interest, the statement added. "Al-Hajjar appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability and congratulated Pakistan on the signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement," it said. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Minister of State Talal Chaudhry and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs were also present during the meeting. Earlier, Al-Hajjar met Naqvi, with both sides discussing security cooperation, counter-terrorism efforts, prevention of drug trafficking, illegal immigration, money laundering and cybercrime.

The two ministers held a one-on-one meeting followed by delegation-level talks, focusing on ways to enhance cooperation in internal security and other areas of mutual interest, the ministry said. Both sides also discussed expanding collaboration between police academies and training programmes to benefit from each other's expertise and experience. "The ministers exchanged views on the regional situation and Pakistan's efforts to promote lasting peace in the region," it added. During the meeting, the two countries agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) soon to further strengthen cooperation between their interior ministries.

Petrol dealers seek revision of fuel relief scheme

ANI

KARACHI: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) has expressed serious concerns over the government's Fuel Relief Scheme.

Speaking to the media on Monday, PPDA Chairperson Malik Khuda Baksh said concerns among petrol dealers across the country over the scheme are growing. He said the scheme, under the existing procedure, is not practically feasible for dealers. He warned that in the era of artificial intelligence, there is a risk of fraud through fake IDs, potentially leaving dealers to bear the resulting financial losses. The PPDA chairperson said 35-50 motorcycles are often lined up in a single queue at a petrol station and questioned how it will be practically possible to check the invoice of every motorcycle. He said invoice verification could lead to long queues at petrol stations. He added that implementation of the scheme will cause inconvenience to the public and create operational difficulties for dealers because of longer waiting times. "If 10-15 customers leave during rush hours because of delays, how will the dealers bear the resulting losses?" he asked. Baksh called for an immediate and comprehensive revision of the fuel relief scheme and urged the minister for petroleum to hold a meeting with dealers to resolve the issue.

PM stresses measures to boost exports, accelerate economic growth



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed that increasing exports should be made the foundation of the country's economic growth and that, alongside traditional sectors, more sectors should also be prepared for exports to international markets.

Chairing a review meeting on improving the country's exports and accelerating the pace of economic growth, the prime minister stressed the need to involve the maximum number of sectors and industries in export activities to diversify trade.

The prime minister directed that effective measures should be taken to bring the quality of Pakistani products in line with international standards, strengthen quality assurance systems and ensure full compliance with international standards and regulations. He emphasized giving special attention to value addition in

exports to enhance both the value and competitiveness of Pakistani products in global markets.

The prime minister directed the promotion of modern technology, research and innovation for export-oriented industries.

He said full advantage should be taken of digitalization and modern technology to bring the national economy in line with contemporary requirements.

The prime minister directed that administrative and business hurdles faced by exporters be removed and the export process made easier, faster and more transparent. The meeting was briefed on progress in the implementation of the strategic roadmap approved for the promotion of exports.

Various proposals regarding access to new international markets, diversification of export sectors, improvement in product quality and ease of doing business were also reviewed.

The meeting also held a detailed discussion on improving the global

competitiveness of export sectors.

The meeting was informed that steps were being taken to conclude free trade agreements and preferential trade arrangements with several friendly countries to enhance access of Pakistani products to international markets.

The meeting was informed that measures were being taken to include Pakistani horticultural products in the country's exports.

It was further briefed that participation of Pakistani exporters in tenders and procurement processes of international hospitals was being encouraged to increase exports of Pakistani surgical and medical equipment.

The meeting was informed that exhibitions, including TEXPO, Health Engineering and Minerals Show, Food and Agriculture (FoodAg) exhibitions and other sector-specific events, were being organized in different cities of the country to introduce Pakistani products to global companies.

Electrical failure most likely cause of deadly Pims blaze, says inquiry report



ANI

ISLAMABAD: An inquiry into the Pims nursery fire that claimed the lives of 14 newborns has attributed the blaze to an electrical fault in the supply cable of air conditioner number two, while identifying broader "systematic and institutional failures" behind the tragedy.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri Chairs Senate Human Rights Committee Meeting on Child Protection, Digital Safety and Labour Welfare



BY: Waheed M Khan/ANI

ISLAMABAD--Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri chaired a meeting of the Senate Functional Committee on Human Rights at Parliament House, where members reviewed child protection measures, digital safety protocols and labour welfare safeguards across the country.

The meeting was attended by Senators Aimal Wali Khan, Qurat ul Ain Marri, Hafiz Abdul Karim, Atta ul Haq and Masroor Hussain, along with the Secretary Ministry of Human Rights and relevant officials from ICT, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

The committee expressed serious concern over the low conviction rate in child abuse cases in KP, the absence of a provincial forensic science laboratory and weaknesses in the enforcement of child protection laws. Officials reported that 625 cases had been registered in KP, with 576 processed and more than 300 referred for trial, while the conviction rate remained approxi-

mately 6 per cent.

The Director General Child Protection briefed the committee on the reported rise in peer-to-peer child abuse involving minors exposed to explicit adult content at home. According to the briefing, 855 cases were reported in KP during 2025, while more than 17,000 cases were reported nationwide.

Senator Aimal Wali Khan questioned the unresolved child abuse cases in Punjab despite the availability of specialised forensic laboratories and criticised procedural loopholes and weak investigation reports. The committee also took serious notice of the alleged non-reporting of a child abuse case involving a four-year-old survivor associated with Westminster School, Islamabad, and recommended strict action against educational institutions failing to implement child protection policies.

The committee directed KP officials to submit the exact terms of reference governing community-

level child protection units and decided to undertake an oversight visit to Balochistan.

During a briefing on online safety, PTA officials explained the authority's enforcement powers under Section 37 of PECA and acknowledged technical difficulties in preventing automated pop-up adult advertisements. The committee directed the PTA to revise its standard operating procedures in line with parliamentary guidelines.

The forum also reviewed the suicide of a Gujranwala Waste Management Company worker allegedly facing salary delays and employer misconduct. The committee directed the DIG Investigations to probe procedural lapses and submit a comprehensive report at the next meeting.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri directed the Secretary Ministry of Human Rights to ensure that provincial representatives attending parliamentary meetings were fully prepared and submitted complete, verified documentation.

SHO Morah Raja Arsalan Supervises Arrest of House Burglary Gang Leader

By: ANI Correspondent

RAWALPINDI -- Morah Police, under the supervision of SHO Raja Arsalan, arrested the alleged leader of a gang involved in house burglaries and thefts during a major operation.

Police recovered stolen gold jewellery, cash, an iPhone and other valuables worth more than Rs30 million from the suspect. A car allegedly used in the crimes was also seized.

According to police, the arrested suspect is a known offender and had previously been involved in robbery and illegal weapons cases. The suspect was traced and arrested with the help of technical and human intelligence.

Police said raids were underway at different locations to arrest the



suspect's accomplices.

SP Potohar Chaudhry Asar Ali said the suspect would be challaned on the basis of solid evidence,

adding that operations against criminal elements would continue to protect the lives and property of citizens.

Aamir Waliuddin Chishti Reviews Health Insurance Framework for Senate Secretariat Employees

By: ANI Correspondent:I

ISLAMABAD-- A meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee of the Senate Secretariat Employees Welfare Fund (SSEWF), chaired by Senator Aamir Waliuddin Chishti, was held at Parliament House.

Senators Samina Mumtaz Zehri, Anusha Rahman and Shahzaib Durrani, along with Financial Advisor to the Chairman Senate Aizaz Khan and senior Secretariat officers, attended the meeting.

The committee reviewed existing medical facilities and discussed establishing a sustainable, transparent and cashless health insurance framework covering around 1,300 employees and more than 7,400 dependents across all pay grades.

Members examined preliminary premium estimates and multi-year



cost projections for at least five years. They directed that future premium increases, inflation adjustments and annual claim ratios be carefully assessed to ensure protection of public funds. The committee also stressed a thorough review of policy terms offered by insurance companies to ensure seamless hospitalization and avoid unnecessary

coverage restrictions.

The convener and members emphasized aligning internal service rules with the proposed insurance model to streamline procedures and prevent duplicate claims.

The sub-committee will continue deliberations and submit its comprehensive recommendations within the stipulated timeframe.

Amir Waliuddin Chishti Calls for Rational MDCAT Policy and Stakeholder Consultation



By: ANI Correspondent

ISLAMABAD ---The Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, chaired by Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti, reviewed the sub-committee report on policy and planning for the Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT).

The meeting was attended by Senators Syed Masroor Ahsan, Anusha Rahman, Samina Mumtaz Zehri, Shahzaib Durrani and Saleem Mandviwalla.

Senator Anusha Rahman, convener of the sub-committee, highlighted concerns over the PMDC's

annual cap of 22,300 medical seats, saying it may not adequately meet Pakistan's healthcare needs. The committee was informed that around 93,000 MDCAT-qualified students are unable to secure admission to medical colleges.

The sub-committee called for meaningful consultation with all stakeholders, particularly private medical colleges, and recommended reconsidering the medical seat cap and the existing 50 percent MDCAT weightage in admissions.

The committee also recommended stronger regulation of sub-standard foreign medical institutions and publication of a list of institutions that fail to meet pre-

scribed standards.

Members raised concerns over the mismatch between FSc/A-Level curricula and the MCQ-based MDCAT examination, recommending multiple opportunities for candidates to take the test each year.

Chairman Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti appreciated the sub-committee's work and directed PMDC to ensure meaningful stakeholder consultation while revising medical education and admission policies.

He stressed that expansion of medical education must be accompanied by strict quality standards and effective regulation of private medical colleges.

ICCI Election Today, 57 Candidates Vie for 28 Executive Committee Seats

By: ANI Correspondent

ISLAMABAD -- The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Election 2026-28 will be held today (Wednesday), with 57 candidates contesting 28 Executive Committee seats.

A total of 30 candidates are contesting from the Associate Members (AM) Class and 27 from the Corporate Members (CM) Class. Voters will elect 14 candidates from each class.

The election has generated considerable interest among Islamabad's business community, with candidates and their supporters actively campaigning and presenting their priorities for the Chamber.



Chief Election Commissioner Omar Rafiq said all necessary administrative and logistical arrangements had been completed and expressed confidence that polling would be conducted in a free, fair, transparent and peaceful manner.

He urged candidates, supporters and voters to maintain the spirit of democratic competition and cooperate with the election administration.

The election of two reserved seats for women entrepreneurs will be held on September 17, followed by the election of office-bearers on September 19. The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for September 30, 2026.

The newly elected leadership will be responsible for strengthening business advocacy, promoting investment and entrepreneurship, and addressing the concerns of Islamabad's business community.

Acting AJK President Meets Kashmir Council Members

Report: Naseem Hassan/ANI

ISLAMABAD ---Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Tariq Farooq met members of the Kashmir Council, including Khawaja Tariq Saeed Advocate, Raja Shuja Khurshid Rathore, Younis Mir and Adnan Khalid.

The meeting discussed the overall political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, matters of mutual interest, public issues and various matters related to the development and progress of the region.

Chaudhry Tariq Farooq said all relevant institutions should play their effective role in promoting development in Azad Kashmir and ensuring the provision of basic



facilities to the people. He said improved coordination and cooperation among state institutions could help resolve public issues and make the development process more effective.

He said resolving the problems faced by the people of Azad Kashmir remains among the gov-

ernment's top priorities, and all available resources are being utilized for public welfare. The Kashmir Council members briefed the Acting President on various matters and presented their suggestions regarding regional development, resolution of public issues and institutional cooperation.

Balochistan High Court Rejects Plea of Afghan Medical Students Seeking to Continue Education in Pakistan

By: Syed Sardar M Khondai/ANI

QUETTA -- The Balochistan High Court has dismissed a petition filed by Afghan nationals seeking permission to continue their medical and dental education in Pakistan.

A division bench comprising Justice Muhammad Amir Nawaz Rana and Justice Abdul Qayyum Lehri, while announcing the verdict, held that judicial intervention in government policies concerning foreign students was not warranted. The court observed that foreign nationals do not have an absolute or permanent right to reside, study or receive professional training in Pakistan, particularly where such matters are subject to state policy. The judgment further stated that executive decisions relating to immigration control, repatriation of foreigners and national security fall within the domain of the government. The court therefore declined to interfere with state directives regarding the admission, transfer or facilitation of Afghan



nationals in medical institutions.

The judges observed that humanitarian considerations are important, but humanitarian grounds alone do not create a legal right to permanent residence or admission to educational institutions for non-citizens.

The High Court clarified that foreign nationals must be treated with

human dignity, justice and in accordance with the law. However, the judiciary cannot set aside government decisions concerning foreign policy and related executive matters.

The bench advised the affected Afghan students to approach the Embassy of Afghanistan for redressal of their grievances.



Islamabad 15.09.2026: Dr. Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto MNA, Convener Standing Committee on Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) chairing the committee meeting at Parliament House.

Daily

FINANCIALTIMES

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

Iran Changed Missile Equation and Balance of Power in West Asia



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

Over the past two decades, Iran has transformed its missile programme from a largely defensive capability into one of the most consequential instruments of military power in West Asia. Missiles and long-range drones now form the backbone of Tehran's security doctrine, enabling it to project power despite decades of sanctions, technological restrictions and limitations on its conventional air force. This transformation has altered the strategic calculations of the United States, Israel and the Gulf states, even as debate continues over the extent to which Iran can penetrate sophisticated air and missile defence systems.

The ongoing Iran-US confrontation appears to have entered what may be called its third phase. The first was dominated by sanctions, diplomatic isolation and covert operations intended to constrain Iran's nuclear and military ambitions. The second expanded into proxy warfare, cyber operations and targeted strikes across Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the Red Sea. The third is characterised by sustained direct exchanges involving long-range missiles, drones and precision-guided weapons. This marks a fundamental change in the nature of military competition in the Middle East.

Iran no longer depends primarily on proxy organisations to demonstrate its strategic reach. Indigenous missile technology has become the centrepiece of its military doctrine. Tehran has invested heavily in ballistic and cruise missiles, loitering munitions and increasingly capable drones designed to challenge layered air-defence systems. Its objective has never been to compete aircraft-for-aircraft with the United States or Israel. Instead, it has sought to develop a retaliatory capability capable of imposing substantial military and economic costs on any adversary contemplating direct military action.

The transformation has significance far beyond the battlefield. Iran's missile programme has emerged as a strategic equaliser. Despite sanctions, restrictions on advanced fighter aircraft and repeated sabotage campaigns, Tehran has developed an indigenous defence industry capable of producing increasingly accurate and survivable missile systems. This technological self-reliance has complicated the assumption that economic pressure alone can compel Iran to alter its strategic behaviour.

Recent military exchanges have reinforced this perception. Missile and drone attacks have demonstrated that even sophisticated, multi-layered air-defence networks can be placed under severe pressure when large numbers of projectiles arrive simultaneously from different directions. No air-defence architecture can guarantee complete protection under saturation conditions. Its effectiveness

depends on interceptor stocks, intelligence, warning time, targeting information and the scale and sophistication of an incoming attack.

This is perhaps the defining characteristic of the third phase. The strategic question is no longer simply how to prevent Iran from acquiring advanced military capabilities. It is increasingly how to manage a regional environment in which Iran already possesses substantial missile forces capable of reaching American military installations and allied infrastructure across West Asia.

For Israel, the implications are profound. Its security doctrine has long rested on qualitative military superiority, technological innovation and overwhelming air power. Its multi-layered defensive architecture, including Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow, remains among the world's most sophisticated. Yet large-scale missile and drone attacks have shown that even advanced defensive networks can be strained, forcing difficult choices over interceptor allocation and exposing vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure.

The United States faces a similar operational challenge. Washington maintains extensive military facilities across the Gulf, Iraq, Syria and Jordan. These installations were designed principally around conventional military operations and rapid force projection. They are now increasingly vulnerable to precision strikes capable of threatening runways, command centres, logistics hubs and energy infrastructure. Sustained operations also raise questions about the availability and sustainability of interceptors during a prolonged regional conflict.

The Gulf monarchies occupy an even more delicate position. Their strategic partnerships with Washington remain central to their security calculations, but their geography places them within relatively easy reach of Iranian missiles. Consequently, many Gulf governments have increasingly sought to balance their security relationships with efforts to avoid direct confrontation. Their growing emphasis on dialogue reflects a sober recognition that a major conflict would impose enormous economic and humanitarian costs, regardless of its eventual military outcome.

This changing calculation may prove to be one of the most consequential political effects of Iran's missile revolution. For perhaps the first time in recent Middle Eastern history, Arab states are being compelled to reconsider whether regional security can depend indefinitely on external military powers. The inability of foreign powers to guarantee the absolute security of their own military assets, let alone that of their regional partners, has encouraged greater interest in regional dialogue, cooperation and independent strategic policies.

Energy security adds another dangerous dimension. The Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world's most important maritime choke-points, while the Bab al-Mandeb has become another potential pressure point through Iran's regional partners. Any prolonged conflict

affecting these waterways could reverberate through global energy markets and international trade.

The wider geopolitical environment has also changed. China and Russia have strengthened their political and strategic relations with Tehran, although the precise extent of their military support remains contested. From Washington's perspective, Iran increasingly forms part of a broader strategic challenge involving powers seeking to reshape aspects of the existing international order.

Yet the conflict has also exposed limitations on both sides. Advanced missile-defence systems remain highly capable and can intercept substantial numbers of incoming threats. Iran's missile forces, meanwhile, have demonstrated resilience but have also suffered losses under sustained American and Israeli strikes. Neither side has established absolute military dominance.

The central lesson, therefore, is not that Iran has become militarily invulnerable or that the United States and Israel have lost their technological superiority. Rather, the strategic balance has become considerably more complicated. Iran's missile capability has reduced the confidence with which military force alone can achieve political objectives. It has increased the costs of pre-emptive action and given Tehran greater leverage in any future confrontation.

The psychological dimension is equally important. The perception that Iran possesses a credible capacity for retaliation has influenced regional diplomacy. States that once considered confrontation manageable increasingly recognise that modern missile warfare can threaten civilian infrastructure, energy production and economic stability across the Middle East.

Iran's missile revolution has therefore changed the calculations of warfare well beyond its borders. It has exposed the vulnerability of even the most powerful military forces and altered the balance of power in the Gulf. The lesson for regional states is increasingly clear: security cannot rest exclusively on dependence upon external powers.

Ultimately, the third phase of the Iran-US confrontation demonstrates the limits of military coercion. Missiles and air-defence systems cannot create lasting stability. They have instead produced a precarious balance in which every escalation carries the risk of wider war, economic disruption and humanitarian catastrophe.

The future of West Asia will depend less on achieving decisive military victory than on preventing strategic miscalculation. As missile technology becomes more sophisticated and widespread, diplomacy is not a sign of weakness but a strategic necessity. Regional security will require dialogue, confidence-building and greater cooperation among neighbouring states. The missile revolution may ultimately be remembered not for producing a clear victor, but for demonstrating that in the new strategic landscape of West Asia, regional cooperation and diplomacy are becoming as important as military power itself.

Balochistan Resources, Security, Geopolitics, and the Need for a New Administrative Vision

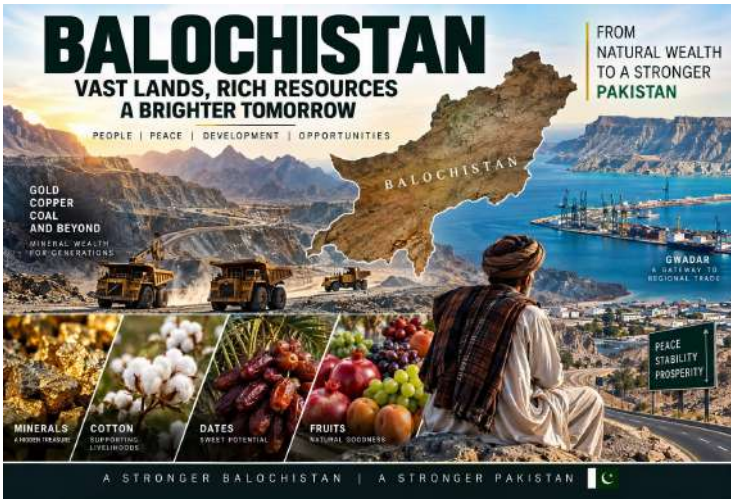


By: Rana
Farooq Ashraf:
Published by
ANI

Balochistan is not merely a province of Pakistan; it is an extraordinary national asset in terms of geography, minerals, maritime potential, agriculture, and regional trade. Covering the largest landmass while remaining relatively sparsely populated, the region has yet to realize its true economic potential. From the rich copper and gold reserves of Chagai to coal, chromite, and other precious minerals, Balochistan is positioned to play a foundational role in Pakistan's future economy. Current developments surrounding the Reko Diq project demonstrate that major global mining investors are taking the region's potential seriously.

The province's wealth extends beyond what lies beneath the surface. Various districts produce high-quality fruits, including dates, grapes, apples, and peaches, while agricultural belts generate significant revenue through cotton farming. Unfortunately, due to a lack of cold storage, processing, packaging, and export infrastructure, much of this produce yields far less than its actual market value. The dates sector, in particular, requires immediate investment to establish local value-addition industries.

The primary crisis facing Balochistan is not a scarcity of resources, but rather challenges related to peace, governance, and security. In recent years, the nature of unrest in the province has evolved. The banned Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), whose operational footprint was previously confined to two or three remote districts, now attempts visible disruptions along major transit routes. Hostile elements seek to force extensive deployments of the Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies across every district. The strategic objective behind this calculated engagement is to inflate security expenditures, thereby straining national finances and weakening the broader economy. Attacks such as the March 2025 Jaffar Express incident highlight the risks posed by this ongoing



insurgency.

This hybrid security challenge is further compounded by non-state political movements operating parallel to armed groups. Analysis indicates that organizations like the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) receive external backing and funding. The establishment of foreign offices, international lobbying, and coordinated digital campaigns abroad suggest a structured effort to build external narratives, fuel domestic instability, and challenge state authority. Substantial evidence points toward significant foreign funding and direct involvement from India in supporting these elements.

Pakistan has consistently acted as a responsible regional neighbor. During heightened tension between the United States and Iran, Pakistan maintained a balanced approach while fulfilling its regional obligations. Despite Pakistan repeatedly identifying terrorist hideouts along border areas, portions of local media across the border continue to view Pakistan with skepticism. Concurrently, global powers maintain distinct strategic interests in the region: the United States focuses on critical minerals and precious metals, while China adopts a cautious approach toward Gwadar Port's progression through 2032 as it observes regional geopolitical shifts.

Addressing these challenges requires structural administrative and political reforms. Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti's governance initiatives and security measures represent a pragmatic approach toward stabilizing the

province. Managing a landmass as vast as Balochistan from a centralized administration in Quetta remains impractical; decentralization is essential. Following the reorganization of the province into 11 divisions and 41 districts in July 2026, the next logical step involves adapting the political representation model.

Reconfiguring national electoral boundaries to assign an independent National Assembly seat to each of the 41 districts could transform the political landscape. Under the current model, mainstream political parties rely heavily on traditional tribal leaders (sardars) due to the limited number of seats spread over vast geographic areas. Allocating a dedicated seat to every district would incentivize national parties to establish functional organizational structures at the grassroots level. Increased political competition would foster a new generation of educated, local leaders, encouraging structured political discourse while gradually reducing reliance on traditional tribal patronage.

Gwadar Port, trade corridors connecting Iran and Afghanistan, and international mineral markets position Balochistan to become a major regional economic hub. Achieving this transition requires viewing Balochistan not solely through a security lens, but as Pakistan's economic backbone. The copper, gold, and mineral wealth embedded in its terrain will yield national prosperity only when paired with lasting security, inclusive political representation, and effective governance.

Netanyahu the biggest obstacle to Trump's Gaza plan

OSAMA AL-SHARIF

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was never on board when US President Donald Trump announced his 20-point Gaza peace plan, which led to the Oct. 10 ceasefire agreement. He has resisted pressure to honor Israel's commitments under phase one of the plan: allowing the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid and stopping the killing of Palestinians in Gaza. More than 450 Palestinians, including women and children, have been killed since the ceasefire came into effect. And Israel has prevented the entry of the caravans and shelter needed to protect tens of thousands of displaced Gazans from the bitter cold that has swept the region for weeks. Infants have died of cold and exposure as a result.

Netanyahu was equally unhappy with Trump's idea of establishing a "Board of Peace" to oversee the implementation of his plan, including the naming of a Palestinian national committee to run the enclave and inviting international troops to serve as a stabilization force in Gaza.

When Trump unveiled the four-tier structure of his Board of Peace this month – with an executive committee, a Palestinian national committee, a US general to head the stabilization force and a high commissioner to liaise between the Palestinian tech-

nocratic body and the executive committee – Netanyahu found himself cornered. Trump had stripped him of leverage regarding the fate of the Palestinian enclave. The US president also announced it was time to move to the second phase of the plan, which would entail Israel's gradual withdrawal from Gaza, in addition to disarming Hamas.

But the real challenge for the Board of Peace will be forcing Netanyahu to yield and embrace the plan and its requirements fully and unconditionally. One litmus test is the opening of the Rafah border crossing. Trump sent his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and his special envoy, Steve Witkoff, to Israel earlier this week to push this step forward. Netanyahu resisted, reiterating that for the crossing to open, Hamas must hand over the body of the last Israeli captive.

Within 24 hours, the Israeli military found the hostage's remains in an area under its control in Gaza. Netanyahu bowed – but not before setting new conditions. He would allow the Rafah crossing to open not for aid trucks, but only for pedestrians to travel between Gaza and Egypt as part of a "limited reopening."

Meanwhile, Israel continues to refuse entry to the 15-member Palestinian committee tasked with assuming responsibilities in the beleaguered Strip.

Whatever the outcome of Kushner

and Witkoff's trip to Israel, the general impression is that Netanyahu will continue fighting to have a final say on what happens next in Gaza. While the two US envoys met with Netanyahu, Israeli shelling killed at least three Palestinians in various parts of the Strip. The Israeli army has also continued expanding areas under its control beyond the so-called Yellow Line. It is believed to occupy nearly 60 percent of Gaza. The areas under its control have been flattened, while the army is digging deep trenches to prevent Palestinians from returning to what used to be their homes.

Trump's Board of Peace has sent tremors across the globe because it has been given a mandate that extends beyond Gaza. Most of America's Western allies have declined the invitation to join. The Arab and Muslim nations that have joined have done so after a careful assessment of the costs and benefits. Being on board regarding Gaza's future is better than opting out. Working with Trump and his aides from within far outweighs being locked out of the deliberations and discussions. The Palestinian Authority has not been represented at any level of Trump's plan and is unlikely to have a role in the near future, pending its much-touted reform, which is a red herring.

—Arab news

NA Committee Seeks Early Completion of Delayed Housing Projects

Report: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD -- The National Assembly Standing Committee on Housing and Works, chaired by Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, expressed serious concern over delays in major public housing projects in Islamabad and directed authorities to ensure their timely completion while safeguarding the interests of allottees.

The committee reviewed the performance of the Pakistan Infrastructure Development Company Limited (PIDCL) and appreciated its digital initiatives, including SAP/ERP, RAAST-based payments, E-Office, EPADS and GIS-based project monitoring.

The committee was briefed by FGEHA on the delayed Lifestyle Residency Apartments Project in G-13.



The Ministry attributed the delay to financial constraints, disputes between joint-venture partners, contractual issues and rising construction costs. The committee directed the authorities to take immediate steps to restart and complete the project. The Secretary Housing and Works informed the

committee that work on a new Joint Venture agreement was being finalized for advertisement shortly.

The committee stressed that the interests of allottees must be protected and directed regular reporting on progress until completion and timely handing over of possession.

LIIBS 2026 to Bring Business and Policy Leaders Together in Islamabad

Report: Hurish Shah

ISLAMABAD --The Nutshell Group will host the 9th edition of the Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit (LIIBS) 2026 on September 17 at a local hotel in Islamabad under the theme "The Next Move."

The summit will bring together federal ministers, global institutional leaders and leading corporate executives for discussions on Pakistan's economic, technological and geopolitical direction.

The inaugural session, "The Next Move: Reaching the Moment," will feature Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, Federal Minister and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation Muhammad Ali, Federal Minister for Finance and



Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, and ACCA Global Executive Director Lucia Real Martin. The summit will feature strategic dialogues on geopolitics and geoconomics, business and technology, artificial intelligence and digital transformation, and capital and finance. Speakers will include senior representatives

from IFC, UNDP, VEON, TCS, easy-paisa, ABACUS, SAP, S&P Global, Mobilink Bank, foodpanda and other leading organizations.

The event will conclude with a session titled "Pakistan's Moment of Choice," featuring former caretaker Prime Minister Senator Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Dr Musadik Malik, former Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman, Pakistan Business Council Chairman Ziad Bashir and other prominent business and media leaders. LIIBS 2026 is supported by leading national and international companies and institutions, including Coca-Cola Pakistan, ABACUS, Systems Limited, S&P Global, ACCA, Serena Hotels and several major banks and corporate organizations.

Hurish Shah/FT

ISLAMABAD --Captain Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry has formally assumed charge as the Inspector General (IG) of Islamabad Police.

The newly appointed IG arrived at the Central Police Office, where he received a warm welcome from police officers and personnel. A smartly turned-out police contingent presented him with a guard of honour.

A formal change-of-command ceremony was held at the Central Police Office. Following the ceremony, Captain Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry held introductory meetings with senior police officers and received detailed briefings on professional and operational matters.

The new IG also met with the staff of the Central Police Office and discussed various administrative issues.

Captain Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry visited the Martyrs' Memorial, laid a floral wreath and paid tribute to the sacrifices of the martyrs.



He also offered prayers for the elevation of their ranks.

Speaking on the occasion, the IG Islamabad said that maintaining law and order and ensuring the protection of citizens were his foremost priorities. He said timely and effective police services would be provided to the public.

He emphasised that no compromise would be made on merit, transparency and the supremacy of law. The professional capabilities of Islamabad Police would be further enhanced, while

effective measures would be taken to prevent crime and protect the lives and property of citizens.

The IG said further improvements would be introduced in traffic management and public facilities across Islamabad.

He directed police officers and personnel to demonstrate courtesy, responsibility and professionalism in their dealings with citizens. Efforts would also be made to further strengthen public confidence in the police.

Captain Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry stressed the effective use of modern technology to improve the policing system and called for stronger accountability and discipline within Islamabad Police.

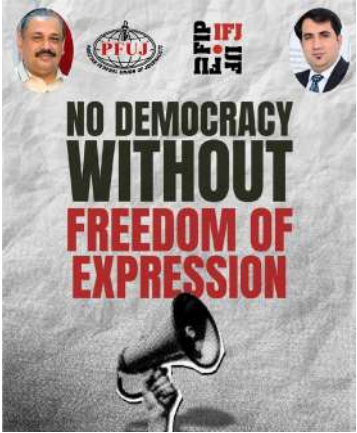
He said the sacrifices of the martyrs would always be remembered, adding that the police force would carry forward their mission. Islamabad Police would perform its duties with full responsibility to ensure public safety and uphold the rule of law.

No Democracy Without Freedom of Expression PFUJ Calls Free Press Foundation of Strong Democracy

Report: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD --President of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) Rana Muhammad Azeem and Secretary General Shakeel Ahmed have said that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are fundamental pillars of democracy, stressing that no democratic system can be strong and effective without these essential rights.

They said the slogan “No Democracy Without Freedom of Expression” reflects the fundamental principle that citizens in a democratic society must have the right to express their views, access information and know the facts. They added that an independent media plays a vital role in promoting transparency, accountability and public awareness. Rana Muhammad Azeem and Shakeel Ahmed said free and responsible journalism is the voice of the people, with journalists playing an essential role in highlighting public issues, government policies and matters of public interest. They stressed that journalists must be protected from threats, pressure, harassment and unnecessary restrictions.



assment and unnecessary restrictions.

The PFUJ leadership called for a safe, independent and conducive environment for journalists to perform their professional duties. No journalist should face harassment, intimidation or retaliatory action for carrying out professional responsibilities or exercising the fundamental right to freedom of expression, they said.

They emphasised that protection

of press freedom is not merely a journalists’ issue but a matter concerning the entire society. A strong democracy requires tolerance for differing opinions, respect for critical voices and an environment where the media can perform its role independently and responsibly.

The PFUJ leaders reaffirmed that the organisation would continue its struggle for the protection of the fundamental, professional and constitutional rights of journalists and would not compromise on freedom of expression, freedom of the press and democratic values.

Rana Muhammad Azeem said the strength of democracy depends on a free and independent media, while Shakeel Ahmed said genuine transparency and accountability cannot be ensured without protecting freedom of expression.

The PFUJ called upon the government, relevant institutions and media organisations to take effective and practical measures to protect journalists and press freedom and discourage all factors that create obstacles to independent and professional journalism.



Islamabad: Muhammad Moin Aamer Pirzada, MNA Convener chairing the PAC committee meeting in Parliament House.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri Chairs Senate Human Rights Committee Meeting on Child Protection, Digital Safety and Labour Welfare



BY: Waheed M Khan/ANI

ISLAMABAD--Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri chaired a meeting of the Senate Functional Committee on Human Rights at Parliament House, where members reviewed child protection measures, digital safety protocols and labour welfare safeguards across the country.

The meeting was attended by Senators Aimal Wali Khan, Qurat ul Ain Marri, Hafiz Abdul Karim, Atta ul Haq and Masroor Hussain, along with the Secretary Ministry of Human Rights and relevant officials from ICT, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The committee expressed serious concern over the low conviction rate in child abuse cases in KP, the absence of a provincial forensic science laboratory and weaknesses in the enforcement of child protection laws. Officials reported that 625 cases had been registered in KP, with 576 processed and more than 300 referred for trial, while the conviction rate remained approximately 6

per cent.

The Director General Child Protection briefed the committee on the reported rise in peer-to-peer child abuse involving minors exposed to explicit adult content at home. According to the briefing, 855 cases were reported in KP during 2025, while more than 17,000 cases were reported nationwide.

Senator Aimal Wali Khan questioned the unresolved child abuse cases in Punjab despite the availability of specialised forensic laboratories and criticised procedural loopholes and weak investigation reports. The committee also took serious notice of the alleged non-reporting of a child abuse case involving a four-year-old survivor associated with Westminster School, Islamabad, and recommended strict action against educational institutions failing to implement child protection policies.

The committee directed KP officials to submit the exact terms of reference governing community-level

child protection units and decided to undertake an oversight visit to Balochistan.

During a briefing on online safety, PTA officials explained the authority’s enforcement powers under Section 37 of PECA and acknowledged technical difficulties in preventing automated pop-up adult advertisements. The committee directed the PTA to revise its standard operating procedures in line with parliamentary guidelines.

The forum also reviewed the suicide of a Gujranwala Waste Management Company worker allegedly facing salary delays and employer misconduct. The committee directed the DIG Investigations to probe procedural lapses and submit a comprehensive report at the next meeting. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri directed the Secretary Ministry of Human Rights to ensure that provincial representatives attending parliamentary meetings were fully prepared and submitted complete, verified documentation.

Ayaz Sadiq Calls for Stronger Parliamentary Ties with Uganda and Bangladesh



By: ANI Correspondent

CAPE TOWN --- Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq held separate meetings with Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda Jacob Marksons Oboth and Deputy Speaker of Bangladesh’s House of the Nation Barrister Kayser Kamal on the sidelines of the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Cape Town, discussing ways to strengthen bilateral and parliamentary relations.

During his meeting with the Ugandan Speaker, Ayaz Sadiq said Pakistan was committed to further strengthening ties with African countries and invited him to lead a parliamentary delegation to Pakistan. He said an 18-member Pak-Uganda Parliamentary Friendship Group was already functioning in

the National Assembly, while the Ugandan Speaker confirmed that a similar group had been constituted in Uganda.

The two sides discussed cooperation in higher education, agriculture, food security, defence, climate change and parliamentary innovation. Ayaz Sadiq also reiterated Pakistan’s position that regional disputes should be resolved peacefully and that war was not a solution.

He invited Uganda to participate in the forthcoming CPA Women Parliamentarians Conference to be hosted by the KP Assembly’s CPA Branch in March next year.

In his meeting with Bangladesh’s Deputy Speaker Barrister Kayser Kamal, Ayaz Sadiq expressed Pakistan’s desire for strong and cordial relations with Bangladesh and highlighted opportunities for

greater parliamentary cooperation and mutual learning.

The Speaker also briefed the Bangladeshi delegation on Pakistan’s position regarding regional tensions and reiterated its commitment to peaceful resolution of disputes. He appreciated the Makkah Accord and Pakistan’s role in facilitating diplomatic engagement between Iran and the United States. Bangladeshi parliamentarians called for stronger Pakistan-Bangladesh relations, while Deputy Speaker Kayser Kamal welcomed the resumption of direct flights between Dhaka and Lahore. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also invited the Bangladeshi Deputy Speaker to visit Pakistan. The meetings concluded with a shared resolve to promote parliamentary engagement, people-to-people contacts and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Ishaq Dar US Chargé d’Affaires Discuss Bilateral Cooperation, Regional Developments

By: ANI Correspondent

ISLAMABAD -- U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Natalie A. Baker called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed Pakistan-U.S. bilateral cooperation and recent regional developments.

Ishaq Dar underscored the importance of dialogue and diplomacy for achieving lasting peace and appreciated the positive trajectory in Pakistan-U.S. relations.

He stressed the need for regular engagement on issues of mutual interest.

Referring to the upcoming 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the Deputy Prime Minister said Pakistan’s delegation would be led by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



Malik Nisar Awan and Naseem Hassan Awan Congratulate SSP Abbottabad on Assuming New Responsibilities

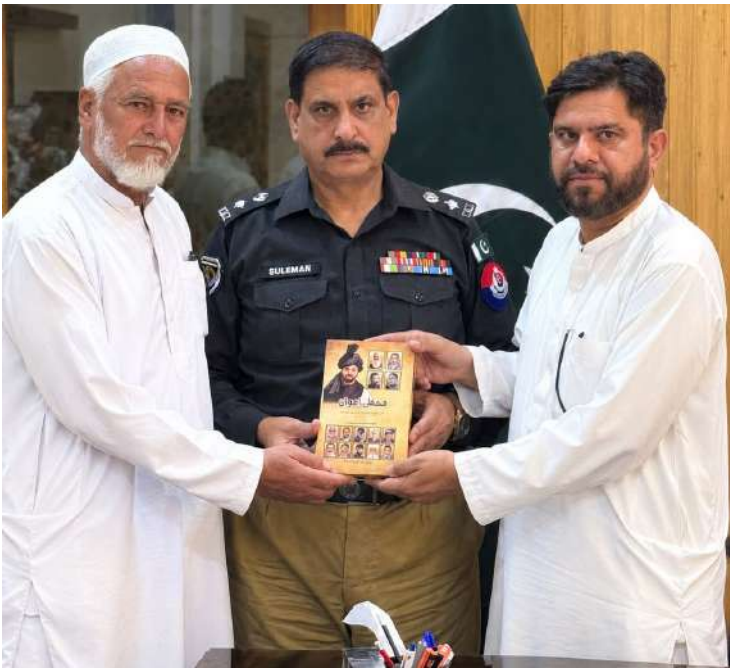
By: ANI Correspondent

ABBOTTABAD -- Renowned social figure from Balakot Malik Nisar Awan and senior journalist, author and social activist Naseem Hassan Awan congratulated SSP Abbottabad Sulaiman Khan Awan on assuming his new responsibilities and expressed their best wishes for his tenure.

During the meeting, they said the Awan community has always been known for its loyalty, service and sense of responsibility. They expressed hope that Sulaiman Khan Awan would perform his duties with dedication, integrity and professionalism.

They said maintaining law and order in Abbottabad, an important tourist and commercial city, was of great significance, and hoped the new SSP would play an effective role in combating crime, protecting citizens and improving police-public relations.

On the occasion, Malik Nisar Awan presented a bouquet to SSP Sulaiman Khan Awan, while senior journalist and author Naseem



Hassan Awan presented him with his book, “Majlis-e-Awan.”

The meeting also included a discussion on matters of mutual interest

and the law and order situation in the area.