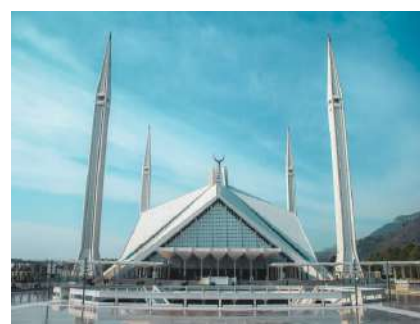




Daily FINANCIAL TIMES

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

Editor: JAVED SIDDIQ

Islamabad

Vol: 15 Issue: 28 Pages: 4 Price: 20 Saturday October 10 2026

The Newspaper of ANI Media Group

Makkah alliance ground forces will not cross Yemen to attack Houthis, will defend KSA: FO



ANI

Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan said on Friday that the Makkah defence alliance between Pakistan, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia was intended to defend the three countries against aggression and the allied forces would not launch attacks inside Yemen.

Addressing a weekly press briefing in Islamabad, the spokesperson said the three countries had agreed to move towards the practical implementation of their collective defence commitments under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA), with the three countries approving measures to strengthen

military readiness, integration and coordination.

The decision includes measures to provide agreed military forces and capabilities and ensure their rapid deployment in Saudi Arabia, in accordance with approved arrangements and the national laws of the three countries.

Asked whether allied forces could engage Houthi forces in Yemen, Khan said the alliance was meant to defend the three countries against aggression and would not launch attacks from within Yemeni territory.

"These forces would not cross the border into Yemen to launch attacks against the Houthis," he said, adding that they would be

used to defend Saudi territory and safeguard its sovereignty. The spokesperson also categorically rejected reports that Pakistani fighter jets had been involved in cross-border operations, describing them as false.

"This is speculative news, which has also been refuted by the minister for information," he added.

"The Committee also decided to move towards the practical implementation of collective defence commitments and approved measures to enhance readiness, military integration and the collective capacity of the three countries to confront these threats," Khan said.

The meeting brought together the foreign ministers, defence min-

isters and chiefs of general staff of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye to review regional developments and cooperation under the agreement.

"The Committee reviewed the security situation and threats facing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, reaffirmed its commitment to collective defence and strongly condemned attempts to target Makkah and Madinah, as well as attacks on cities, civilians as well as on the economic infrastructure," Khan said. At a recent meeting of the three countries' defence cooperation forum, it was decided that appropriate mobilisation would take place as required, he said.

Bilawal Bhutto says PTI must rebuild political ties to regain lost ground

ANI

Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday urged the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to return to political engagement, adding that imposing governor's rule in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa would be a "political atomic bomb". "You will not disappoint the voter in K-P if you amend your politics, return to parliamentary committees and interact with other political parties. Politics is a day-to-day affair, and you can improve your political position," he stated while addressing an inauguration ceremony of a sports complex in Karachi's Baldia Town. Bilawal underscored that while introducing governor's rule or an emergency in K-P was a "constitutional and legal option" for the PPP, it was tantamount to a "political atomic bomb" and should only be considered as a measure of "last resort". "It was the PPP that suggested that PTI should be engaged politically and an emergency not be imposed, because we know that if an emergency is imposed in K-P, then the political space for political parties will shrink and that would reduce the space for all political parties in the country. Imposing an emergency in K-P is an atomic bomb and will only be considered as the last resort". Bilawal stated that for PTI to restore its "lost political standing", the party must renounce the "politics of extremism" if it was "true to their leader Imran Khan" and engage with other political parties through political means.

"If PTI renounces the politics of extremism, then they will save their politics, their government and also, sooner or later, their political leadership. This is evident in the history of Pakistan".

Bilawal further noted that if PTI's politics continued to revolve around extremism, then "Imran shall remain a prisoner and would even break President Zardari's record of incarceration". Responding to a question on negotiations with PTI, the PPP chairman said PTI had harmed itself politically by sabotaging the talks, adding that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman should play his role in the negotiation process.

"We do not want that the last option for the PPP of governor's rule or emergency should be exercised, but it seems that K-P CM is leaving no space for political engage-



ment and is actively working towards the imposition of governor's rule in the province".

Bilawal further questioned why K-P Chief Minister Sohail Afridi wanted to sabotage the political process of dialogue and negotiations, further adding that democratic forces such as the PPP were consequently forced to confront the possibility of an emergency, especially given the external and internal security situation of the country and K-P in particular. "Given the security situation in K-P and the refusal of the provincial government to cooperate in terrorism, how can I legally say that an emergency should not be imposed in the province? It is because of the role of K-P CM that an emergency is being considered in the province." While talking about Gilgit-Baltistan and South Punjab, Bilawal said that his party would follow the will of the people concerning making new provinces and would support any resolution put forward by the elected representatives for this purpose. "However, if you do not have the support of the people, and want to do it forcefully, then you can continue with your efforts by seeking the mandate of the people". Bilawal further stated that there were "some political forces that want to make the youth of this city into criminals", but asserted that the PPP wanted to see the youth "with pens in their hands, not weapons". While speaking about the sports complex, Bilawal said that the city's municipal system had inaugurated the complex so the youth were able to engage in positive activities. "PPP wants to see the youth play, and does not want to see them involved in crime," Bilawal stressed, adding that he was hopeful the youth would take advantage of the sports complex and that it would be taken care of "so the youth here can always be provided this facility".

Kundi advises CM Afridi to resign, warns against May 9-style actions

ANI

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi challenged PTI protesters on Friday to dare and cross Swabi, a KP district that borders Punjab's Attock and which the opposition party in the Centre has announced as the eventual destination of its long march.

The route plan for the march, being carried out to demand the release of jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, has undergone multiple changes since its launch on Oct 4. While the party initially vowed to march towards Islamabad, its final destination seemingly remains tentative as the KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi has yet to announce the plan for the trek beyond Swabi. So far, the march has remained within KP, where the PTI is in power.

The protesters were in Peshawar on Thursday and are expected to reach Charsadda today, as political temperatures between the PTI and the federal government remain high. As tensions remained high, Kundi raised doubt on the realisation on the PTI's plan to reach Swabi on Oct 11. "They are probably going to Charsadda today, then they might go to Mardan, and after that they might end up reaching Afghanistan through Dir," he said while addressing a press conference in Peshawar.

"Because whenever they turn towards Swabi, their legs start shaking, and their hearts tremble [...] If they have any self-respect, reach Swabi tomorrow and cross it, or even step inside it. I will accept that you are a revolutionary party that aims to make a naya (new) Pakistan."

Continuing to rail against the party, he said senior PTI leaders were "sitting in drawing rooms" in Islamabad while others were in "hiding".

"They say that they have run successful



mobilisation campaigns across Sindh and Punjab; did you see anyone from these provinces on their long march's truck?" he questioned.

Reacting to the PTI's claims that KP lawmakers and cabinet members were being "abducted", Kundi said: "You (KP CM Afridi) should tell who is abducting your ministers as you are the chief executive of the province. 'You cannot protect your ministers, MPAs, and MNAs; how will you protect my people, the province and the nation? This is your position.'"

Kundi added that the KP CM and his cabinet should resign on "ethical grounds".

"They say that the SHOs do not listen to them; if no one listens to you, then why are you sitting [in the government]? Only to make money or for corruption," he remarked, adding that presently, doctors, teachers, nurses, and municipal officers were observing strikes in KP.

The KP governor vowed that "we will protect our province and fight against terrorism on the front line. We will show such incompetent people [...] how a province is run." Answering a question, Kundi contended that no province could run without the Centre. "But these people talk about confrontation with the federal government," he said.

CM Afridi says PTI to unveil 'final plan' in Swabi as long march enters Charsadda on 6th day



ANI

PESHAWAR/ LAHORE: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mohammad Sohail Khan Afridi said on Friday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf would announce its "final plan" in Swabi, which would leave its opponents "sleepless" as the party's long march entered Charsadda on its sixth day.

Addressing party workers at Bakshi Bridge in Peshawar, CM Afridi said the next course of action would be announced in Charsadda before the march proceeded to Mardan and then Swabi.

He urged workers to maintain their enthusiasm and commitment, saying there had been no decline in public participation as he travelled from one end of Peshawar to the other. "I would like to thank the people of Peshawar from the bottom of my heart. I have travelled from one end of Peshawar to the other, but God willing, there has been no decline in the public's enthusiasm, passion or participation," he said. The chief minister said the party had moved beyond the equivalent of a Test match and was ready for shorter formats, using cricketing terminology to describe the next phase of its campaign.

Rs 426 billion in loans approved under PM's Apna Ghar Programme so far: PM

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was informed on Friday that loans worth Rs426 billion had so far been approved under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Programme, of which Rs76 billion had been disbursed against a financing target of Rs 700 billion set under the programme to support the construction and provision of 125,000 housing units.

The prime minister, while chairing a meeting with a delegation of presidents and chief executive officers of various commercial banks, emphasised the need to reduce the gap between loan approvals and actual disbursements, stating that citizens would benefit from the programme only when the approved funds reached them in a timely manner. He was told that consultations were underway on a framework to facilitate developers' access to financing. Regarding the SME sector, it was informed in



the meeting that loans totalling Rs1,137 billion had been provided to approximately 350,862 business owners. The meeting was further

informed that target of the volume of SME lending was being increased to Rs1,500 billion and the number of beneficiaries to 565,000 by June 2027.

Ji chief Hafiz Naeem announces movement for free education

ANI

PESHAWAR: Jamaat-e-Islami chief Hafiz Naeem Rehman has announced a campaign to demand free education for all children in Pakistan.

Speaking to the media at the Peshawar Press Club, he said inflation, high electricity bills and rising petrol prices had placed a heavy burden on the public. He criticised the government for failing to provide basic facilities despite collecting substantial taxes. He said that after launching a movement against the petroleum levy, Jamaat-e-Islami would now start a campaign to secure the right to education. Hafiz Naeem claimed that more than 89,000 people had been killed in Gaza and that over Rs10 billion in funds had been delivered for the people there. He said his party was also working to provide education, including medical studies, to students from Gaza. He highlighted the party's Bano Qabil programme, describing it as an initiative designed to equip young people with modern education and professional skills. He said various training programmes had been launched across Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Pakistan committed to 'negotiated and peaceful outcome' between US, Iran: DG ISPR

ANI

RAWALPINDI: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has said that Pakistan would continue to work towards a "negotiated and peaceful outcome" to the conflict between the United States and Iran, stressing that the war should not "expand horizontally or vertically". "We want that this conflict should not expand horizontally or vertically," Chaudhry said in an interview with CNN correspondent Ivan Watson on Wednesday, a clip of which was shared by Pakistan Television on X on Friday. On August 7, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye formalised their longstanding



strategic relationship through the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA), a trilateral security framework that its proponents describe as a defensive arrangement aimed at strengthening collective deterrence, enhancing mili-

tary cooperation and promoting regional stability. Asked whether Pakistan could continue to act as a neutral broker despite its defence commitments to Saudi Arabia under the Makkah Defence Alliance, Chaudhry said Islamabad had demonstrated its impartiality through its responses to attacks on both Iran and Gulf countries. "I think what Pakistan has been doing is exhibiting that we have been a very honest broker," he said, adding that Pakistan had been clear about its position with all its partners and friends. He said Pakistan had openly condemned attacks on Iran by Israel and the United States, as well as Iranian attacks on Arab and Gulf countries.



Islamabad : Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb hosts a luncheon in honour of a Dutch business delegation led by Founders Carbon Network (FCN) to discuss investment opportunities, trade and enhanced bilateral economic cooperation.

PIA Partners with Norse Atlantic Airways to Add Two Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners

Report: Ikram Ullah Joyia/ANI

ISLAMABAD -- Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has signed a partnership agreement with Norse Atlantic Airways to induct two state-of-the-art Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft into its fleet. According to a statement issued on Wednesday, the addition of the Boeing 787 Dreamliners marks the beginning of PIA's fleet expansion plan. The airline aims to meet rising passenger demand by increasing capacity, expanding direct flights and improving global connectivity. The aircraft are expected to join PIA in November 2026 and will operate long-haul direct flights from Pakistan to the United Kingdom. They will facilitate air operations between various destinations in Pakistan and the UK. Under the partnership, Norse Atlantic will provide the aircraft, experienced crew, maintenance and



insurance. The agreement will support PIA's ambitious route expansion plans while enabling Norse Atlantic to redeploy its returning fleet efficiently. Speaking at the signing ceremony, PIA Chief Executive Officer Air Vice Marshal Amir Hayat said the UK was an important market for the airline. He said the agreement would provide much-needed additional capacity and offer passengers greater choice and improved connectivity on these routes. He added that the partnership would strengthen PIA's

international network and help meet the strong demand for direct travel between Pakistan and the UK. Amir Hayat said these were the first Dreamliner aircraft being introduced to the Pakistani market and expressed hope that they would provide passengers with a premium travel experience. Norse Atlantic CEO Eivind Roald said the company had been working to redeploy capacity through new ACMI (Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance) opportunities and was now implementing that strategy. He said Norse Atlantic was pleased to support PIA's long-haul capacity expansion and strengthen connectivity between Pakistan and the UK, providing the large Pakistani community in Britain with more travel options between the two countries. Roald described the agreement as the beginning of a strategic partnership between the two airlines.

Mental Health Key to a Healthy and Stable Society: Ayaz Sadiq

Report: FT Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD -- Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has stressed the importance of mental health in promoting public well-being, social harmony and a stable society. In his message ahead of World Mental Health Day, observed on October 10, he called for greater

public awareness, timely diagnosis and treatment, and an end to the stigma surrounding mental health conditions. He emphasised that people experiencing psychological challenges should be treated with compassion and respect rather than discrimination. He also highlighted the need to protect the mental well-being of children and

young people. Ayaz Sadiq urged the government, Parliament, healthcare professionals and civil society to work together to improve access to mental health services and establish effective support systems. He reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to public welfare, social inclusion and the protection of citizens' fundamental rights.

RDA Chief Directs Swift Resolution of Issues in Six Housing Schemes

Report: Kiran Shehzadi/ANI

RAWALPINDI-- Commissioner Rawalpindi Division and Director General Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Salman Ghani has directed officials to expedite the resolution of pending issues involving six housing schemes in compliance with the Honourable High

Court's directions. A detailed hearing was held at the RDA office, attended by scheme owners, sponsors, legal representatives and affected citizens of Metro City Gujar Khan, Bahria Town, Mega City, Mumtaz City, The Avenue and Top City. Salman Ghani listened to the participants' grievances and directed

Senator Amir Chishti Elected to IPU Health Committee with 64 Votes

Report: ANI Correspondent:

ARUSHA, Tanzania-- Senator Amir Chishti of Pakistan has been elected to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Committee on Health, securing 64 votes -- the highest number received by any candidate in the 153rd IPU Assembly. The election was held at the Arusha International Conference Centre in Tanzania on the sidelines of the 153rd IPU Assembly. Newly elected IPU President and Speaker of Australia's House of Representatives, Milton Dick, personally congratulated Senator Chishti on his election. Chairman Senate of Pakistan and head of the Pakistani delegation, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, along with the Speaker of the National Assembly, also congratulated him, describing the achievement as a



proud moment for Pakistan's Parliament. Senator Chishti thanked the members for their confidence and pledged to contribute

actively to the committee's work on global health challenges, universal health coverage and strengthening healthcare systems.

The Child Behind the School Report Card: World Mental Health Day 2026



By: Dr Pavan Kumar - Public Health Researcher/ Senior Health Officer at Thar Foundation
Email: pawanlumhs@gmail.com
Published By: ANI News Agency

A child can sit quietly in a classroom, complete assignments, and even achieve good grades while struggling with fear, loneliness, anxiety, or sadness. Adults may see a well-behaved student, the child may be experiencing distress that no one has thought to ask about. This is why, on World Mental Health Day, observed on 10th October, Pakistan must look beyond examination results and attendance registers to understand what children are experiencing emotionally. This year's theme, "Lived experiences heard: real voices, real change," offers an important reminder: children should not merely be the subjects of mental health policies. Their voices must help shape them. A global concern with a local reality: The World Health Organization estimates that approximately one in seven adolescents aged 10-19 experiences a mental health condition globally. Anxiety, depression, and behavioural disorders are among the leading causes of illness and disability in this age group. Yet many difficulties remain untreated. Pakistan cannot afford to treat this as a distant international concern. A study published in the Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences in 2022 examined 400 high-school students from government and private schools in Karachi. It reported that 53.2% of participants experienced

symptoms of anxiety and depression according to the study's assessment. This was a study-specific finding, not a national prevalence estimate, but it highlights the need for further investigation and timely support. For Sindh, the question is particularly important. Children in rural and underserved communities may face additional pressures linked to household financial insecurity, limited educational resources, family stress, gender-related barriers, and the effects of climate-related emergencies and displacement. However, reliable, representative data on schoolchildren's mental health across Sindh remain an important research priority. When distress is mistaken for disobedience: Children do not always have the words to explain what they feel. Anxiety may appear as repeated stomach aches, fear of attending school, or difficulty concentrating. Emotional distress may be mistaken for laziness, poor discipline, or a lack of interest in education. Bullying, social exclusion, excessive academic pressure, family conflict, disrupted sleep, and harmful online experiences can further affect well-being. When adults respond only with punishment or criticism, a child may learn to hide distress rather than seek help. Silence should never automatically be interpreted as proof that everything is fine. Schools are therefore more than places of academic instruction. They can be important settings for early recognition, emotional learning, supportive relationships, and appropriate referral. Teachers are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions, but they can listen without judgement, recognise concerning changes, protect children from bullying, and help connect families with qualified professionals. Listening must lead to action: The 2026 theme challenges institutions to move

beyond awareness campaigns towards meaningful participation. For children, this means creating safe, age-appropriate opportunities to explain what makes them feel supported, what causes distress, and what changes they believe would help. Their privacy must be protected, and they should never be pressured to disclose personal experiences publicly. Pakistan's response should include mental health literacy in schools, training for teachers and school counsellors where available, clear referral pathways to qualified health professionals, and constructive engagement with parents and caregivers. Particular attention is needed for children facing poverty, disability, discrimination, displacement, or limited access to services. Research must also go further. Sindh needs stronger district-level evidence, locally validated assessment tools in relevant languages, and studies that include younger children, rural populations, children with disabilities, and those outside formal education. Programmes should be evaluated not simply by the number of awareness sessions conducted, but by whether children feel safer, receive appropriate support, and can access care when needed. From being heard to real change: A meaningful response does not require every school to become a mental health clinic. It requires schools, families, health services, and policymakers to recognise that emotional well-being is part of a child's right to learn, grow, and participate in society. This World Mental Health Day, let us ask children a simple question: "How are you really feeling, and what would help you feel safe?" Then let us listen carefully and act on what we hear. Because a child's struggle should not have to become a crisis before an adult takes it seriously.

Pakistan's Universities Sign Charter for Tobacco- and Nicotine-Free Campuses

Report: ANI Reporter:

ISLAMABAD -- Vice Chancellors and Rectors of leading universities across Pakistan have signed a historic charter to make university campuses tobacco- and nicotine-free, aiming to protect young people from addiction and promote a healthier educational environment. The charter was approved during the 5th monthly meeting of the Vice Chancellors and Rectors Forum, hosted by COMSATS University Islamabad at its Central Library. University leaders and representatives from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir participated. Under the initiative, universities will develop joint action plans to eliminate tobacco use, smoking, vaping and recreational nicotine consumption on campuses. Measures include student-led awareness campaigns, research, institutional monitoring and annual



progress reviews. The forum also decided to forward the signed charter and a joint letter to the Prime Minister through the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to support national-level policy measures. Welcoming participants, COMSATS University Islamabad Rector Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar highlighted the evolving role of university leadership amid rapid technological developments, particularly Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Computing, and their impact on research and higher education. The forum also discussed academic, regulatory and financial challenges facing universities. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to institutional cooperation, evidence-based policymaking, research and reforms to strengthen Pakistan's higher education sector.

Mahmood Ahmed Khan Congratulates Newly Elected ABAD Chairman Hanif Gohar

Report: ANI Correspondent

KARACHI -- Star Marketing and Sun Builders & Developers Managing Director and Saknane Shehar-e-Quaid Chief Organiser Mahmood Ahmed Khan has congratulated newly elected Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) Chairman Muhammad Hanif Gohar, Senior Vice Chairman Danish Bin Rauf and Vice Chairman Khurshed Alam on their unopposed election. Mahmood Ahmed Khan said the unopposed election reflected the construction community's confidence in the new leadership under the guidance of former ABAD Chairman Mohsin Shekhani. He expressed hope that the new team would address challenges facing the construction industry and strengthen its contribution to Pakistan's economic growth. Highlighting the concerns of



builders investing in Gwadar under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he urged ABAD's new leadership to raise their issues with the relevant government authorities. He said the real estate

and construction sectors played a vital role in investment, employment generation and economic development, expressing confidence that the new leadership would support the industry's growth.

National Press Club, Roots Millennium Schools Sign MoU to Offer Fee Concessions to Journalists' Children

Report: Naseem Hassan/ANI

ISLAMABAD -- The National Press Club (NPC), Islamabad, and Roots Millennium Schools have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide special educational concessions to the children of NPC members. Under the agreement, journalists' children will receive a **50% discount on admission fees, 20% on tuition fees, and 50% on security fees.** The MoU was signed by NPC President Abdul Razzaq Sial and Roots Millennium Schools Founder and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Faisal Mushtaq at a ceremony held at the National Press Club. NPC Secretary Dr. Furqan Rao, Finance Secretary Abid Abbasi, Joint Secretary Shakeela Jalil, Syed Zaigham Naqvi, Nasir Aslam Raja and other members attended the event. Abdul Razzaq Sial thanked the Roots Millennium Schools administration, saying the NPC was working with various institutions to provide greater facilities to journalists and their families. He described the agree-



ment as an important step towards helping journalists secure quality education for their children. NPC Secretary Dr. Furqan Rao stressed that the concession should apply to all Roots Millennium Schools campuses to benefit members living in different cities across Pakistan. Dr. Faisal Mushtaq said facilitating access to quality education was among his institution's key priorities. He highlighted the important role journalists play in promoting public awareness and democratic values,

adding that supporting their children's education was a positive social initiative. He also emphasised the importance of integrating modern technologies, including artificial intelligence, into education while maintaining the essential role of teachers, parents and human interaction in children's intellectual, emotional and social development. The NPC leadership expressed hope that the partnership would support journalists' families and contribute to a brighter educational future for their children.

PM Shehbaz Announces National Award for Shaza Fatima as Fuel Subsidy Beneficiaries Cross 10 Million

Report: ANI

ISLAMABAD -- Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday appreciated the collective efforts of federal and provincial governments and relevant institutions as the number of direct beneficiaries of the government's fuel subsidy scheme crossed 10 million. He also announced a national award for Federal Minister for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja. Speaking at a high tea hosted to recognise ministers and government officials for implementing the scheme, the prime minister said the initiative had overcome several challenges through coordinated efforts and transparent implementation. He announced that other contributors would also receive shields in recognition of their dedication and hard work. Shehbaz Sharif said the government had allocated Rs75 billion for the scheme and reaffirmed that it would continue. He thanked provincial governments and chief ministers for their cooperation, saying their support had been instrumental in expanding the programme. The prime minister said the scheme was benefiting motorcyclists, rickshaw and Qingqi operators, and owners of cars up to 800cc. Considering an average household size of five, he estimated that around 50 million people were benefiting directly or indirectly.



He recalled that an earlier initiative launched in February had recorded approximately 1.3 million fuel subsidy tokens redeemed at its peak, adding that coordinated efforts had significantly expanded the reach of the current scheme. The prime minister acknowledged the contributions of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, federal secretaries, provincial chief secretaries and other officials. He also appreciated the role of the Petroleum Division, Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), State Bank of Pakistan, National Database

and Registration Authority (NADRA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), telecommunication operators and other institutions involved in implementation. Shehbaz Sharif announced that Shaza Fatima Khawaja would receive a national award in March in recognition of her contribution to the initiative. According to the figures shared at the event, more than 10.8 million citizens had registered for the scheme, while approximately 27 million tokens had been issued. Around 194 million tokens had been redeemed to obtain fuel at subsidised rates. Of these, approximately 9.2 million citizens had used tokens more than once, while nearly 96 per cent of beneficiaries were motorcyclists.

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

IMF Pushes Targeted Electricity Relief Through BISP, 200-Unit Subsidy System Set for January 2027 Reform



By: Ahmed Shamsur Rehman
Published By: ANI News Agency

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reiterated the need for Pakistan to overhaul its electricity subsidy system by replacing broad-based cross subsidies with targeted financial assistance for low-income households through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). The new framework is scheduled to be implemented by the end of January 2027, marking a significant shift in the country's electricity pricing and social protection policies.

The development follows the IMF's 2026 Article IV consultation with Pakistan and a staff-level agreement on the fourth review under the 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the third review under the 28-month Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

An Article IV Consultation is an annual process through which the IMF engages with the government of each member country to assess its overall economic and financial health, identify potential risks and recommend appropriate policy measures to help prevent future economic difficulties. During these consultations, the Fund reviews a country's economic performance, fiscal and monetary policies, financial stability, external position and structural reform priorities. The process provides a framework for discussing economic challenges and identifying measures to support stability and sustainable growth.

The IMF team, led by Ms. Iva Petrova, held discussions with Pakistani authorities in Karachi and Islamabad from September 23 to October 7, 2026. The staff-level agreement remains subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board. Following approval, Pakistan is expected to receive approximately US\$1 billion under the EFF and around US\$210 million under the RSF, bringing total disbursements under the two arrangements to approximately US\$5.7 billion.

Electricity Subsidies to Be Linked to BISP

A central component of the reform agenda is the restructuring of electricity subsidies. Pakistan has committed to replacing the existing budgeted tariff differential subsidy and cross subsidy arrangements with a targeted subsidy framework for low-income electricity consumers through BISP.

Under the existing system, domestic consumers classified as "protected" on the basis of electricity consumption of up to 200 units may qualify for comparatively lower tariffs, subject to applicable eligibility conditions. The existing tariff structure provides rates of approximately Rs10.54 per unit for the first 100 units and Rs13.01 per unit for the next 100 units.

However, the government and the IMF have raised concerns about whether consumption-based subsidies adequately identify households that genuinely require financial assistance. Electricity consumption alone does not necessarily reflect a household's income or socioeconomic circumstances.

Under the proposed mechanism, eligibility for assistance will be determined more closely by household socioeconomic status rather than electricity consumption alone. This would shift the emphasis from providing relief through comparatively lower electricity tariffs to delivering targeted financial support to eligible low-income families.

According to the IMF programme documents, Pakistan is working with the World Bank to link electricity consumers with the National Socio-

Economic Registry (NSER), conduct data validation checks and establish eligibility criteria for the new system.

The authorities have committed to completing the transition from the existing tariff differential and cross-subsidy arrangements to a targeted subsidy framework, with BISP disbursements through the new mechanism scheduled to begin by the end of January 2027.

The reform is intended to direct limited public resources towards the most vulnerable households, reduce subsidy leakages and minimise incentives for excessive electricity consumption. It is also expected to address distortions in the electricity tariff structure and improve the efficiency of government support.

Rs830 Billion Allocated for Power Subsidies

Pakistan has allocated up to Rs830 billion, equivalent to approximately 0.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), for power-sector subsidies in FY2027.

The IMF has emphasised that electricity tariffs should continue to move towards cost recovery while ensuring that vulnerable consumers receive appropriate protection. The challenge for policymakers is to improve the financial sustainability of the power sector without imposing an excessive burden on households that cannot afford higher electricity costs.

The subsidy reform is also closely connected to Pakistan's efforts to contain circular debt in the power sector. The government has committed to reducing the accumulation of power-sector circular debt and working towards zero net circular debt flow through timely tariff adjustments, improved recoveries, operational reforms and greater efficiency across electricity distribution companies.

The Fund has also called for measures to improve the performance of distribution companies, increase private sector participation, strengthen competition in the electricity market and reduce operational losses throughout the energy sector.

These reforms are intended to address structural weaknesses that have contributed to financial pressures in the power sector and limited the government's capacity to sustain broad-based subsidies.

BISP Payments to Increase from January 2027

Alongside electricity subsidy reforms, the IMF has stressed the importance of strengthening social protection to cushion vulnerable households from the effects of economic adjustment and higher energy costs.

Under the agreed programme, the quarterly BISP Kafaalat benefit is scheduled to increase from Rs14,500 to Rs18,000 beginning in January 2027. The authorities have also committed to continuing inflation adjustments to protect the real purchasing power of benefits received by eligible families.

The increase is intended to strengthen assistance for low-income households as the government moves towards a more targeted approach to public subsidies. The effectiveness of the new electricity relief system will depend on accurate beneficiary identification, reliable data sharing, transparent eligibility criteria and an efficient payment mechanism.

The transition will also require clear communication with electricity consumers to explain how the new arrangements will work and how eligible households can access assistance.

Economic Recovery Amid External Risks

The IMF's latest assessment also highlighted improvements in Pakistan's macroeconomic position. Real GDP growth reached 4 per cent during the first three quarters of FY2026, while full-year growth was estimated at 3.6 per cent. Headline inflation, after peaking in May, moder-

ated to approximately 10.3 per cent in September, while the current account remained broadly balanced, supported by strong remittance inflows.

Gross foreign exchange reserves increased to approximately US\$21.5 billion by the end of September, strengthening the country's external position.

The Fund noted that Pakistan had navigated the economic impact of the conflict in the Middle East, although significant risks remained from geopolitical tensions, volatile energy prices, tighter global financial conditions and disruptions to international trade.

Against this backdrop, the IMF has urged the government to maintain disciplined fiscal policies and implement the FY2027 budget in line with an underlying primary surplus target of 2 per cent of GDP.

It has also called for continued tax administration reforms, including risk-based audits, digital invoicing and the use of third-party data to improve compliance and revenue collection.

On social spending, the IMF noted that Pakistan had increased health and education expenditure from 2.2 per cent of GDP in FY2024 to 2.5 per cent in FY2026, with the government targeting 2.8 per cent in FY2027.

The Fund has also called for the prompt phasing out of the broad-based fuel support scheme. Any future fuel assistance, it has stressed, should be temporary, targeted through established social protection programmes and accommodated within the existing budget framework.

Structural and Climate Reforms

The 2026 Article IV consultation also focused on structural reforms considered necessary to improve Pakistan's long-term economic performance. These include strengthening competition, reducing regulatory and trade barriers, advancing privatisation, improving the governance of state-owned enterprises, strengthening anti-corruption institutions, developing financial markets and establishing a simpler and fairer tax system.

The IMF also welcomed progress under Pakistan's climate reform agenda, including efforts to integrate climate considerations into public investment planning, strengthen disaster-risk financing, improve irrigation water pricing and collection, enhance energy efficiency and advance transport decarbonisation.

These measures form part of the broader effort to improve economic resilience, attract investment, strengthen public institutions and reduce the economy's exposure to external shocks.

A Shift Towards Targeted Relief

The transition from consumption-based electricity subsidies to BISP-linked assistance represents a significant change in Pakistan's energy and social protection policies. Under the proposed framework, the government intends to move away from providing broad relief primarily on the basis of electricity consumption and towards a system in which assistance is determined by the socioeconomic vulnerability of households.

The success of the reform will depend on whether the government can identify eligible families accurately, deliver payments transparently and ensure that vulnerable consumers are not left without support during the transition.

The government and the IMF view the reform as a means of improving the efficiency and financial sustainability of the power sector while directing scarce public resources towards families most in need. Its implementation by January 2027 will be an important milestone in Pakistan's ongoing efforts to reform electricity subsidies, strengthen social protection and address persistent financial pressures in the energy sector.

What Makes Nations Prosper: The Rule of Law, Not Concrete and Steel



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

A nation can build motorways, airports

and glittering towers without building prosperity. Concrete and steel are the visible symbols of development; the less visible foundations are the rule of law, institutional predictability, accountability and civic responsibility. Without those foundations, infrastructure remains an impressive shell rather than a durable engine of national progress.

My stay in China and Canada for my PhD, as well as my participation in international conferences in several other developed countries, gave me an opportunity to observe societies beyond their universities, laboratories and conference halls. What impressed me most was not simply their modern infrastructure, impressive buildings, advanced technology or material prosperity. It was the discipline behind everyday life: respect for law, adherence to rules, institutional predictability and a strong sense of civic responsibility.

These experiences often made me reflect on Pakistan. We frequently ask why countries such as Canada, the United States and China have achieved remarkable economic and institutional progress while Pakistan, despite its considerable human and natural resources, continues to struggle with governance, accountability and public order.

The answer does not lie simply in wealth. Nor does Pakistan lack talent. Our scientists, doctors, engineers, academics, entrepreneurs and professionals have excelled around the world. Pakistanis often perform exceptionally well when working within systems that reward merit and provide predictable rules.

The more fundamental difference is institutional.

In developed societies, laws are generally understood as the framework within which public and private life must operate. Citizens may disagree with particular regulations, but there is a broad recognition that rules cannot simply be ignored whenever they become inconvenient. Institutions are expected to enforce them, and individuals are expected to comply.

Pakistan has no shortage of laws. Our difficulty lies in their consistent implementation.

A traffic signal has little value if drivers regard it as optional. Building regulations become meaningless if violations can be regularised through influence. Tax laws cannot produce sufficient revenue if obligations can be avoided through connections. Anti-corruption measures lose their deterrent effect if accountability is perceived as selective.

This gap between law and practice is one of the most serious obstacles to Pakistan's development.

From France to Pakistan: Education Is Not a Business, It Is the Future



By: Rana Farooq Ashraf
Published By: ANI News Agency

What is happening in France today should not be

viewed merely as another student protest. It is a warning about what happens when young people begin to believe that their education, opportunities and future are being compromised.

In recent weeks, French high-school students have taken to the streets, blocking schools and protesting against overcrowded classrooms, shortages of teachers, deteriorating infrastructure and inadequate educational facilities. Their anger reflects a broader frustration with the rising cost of living, economic pressure and policies that, in their view, are making education increasingly unequal.

For Pakistan, the French experience should be less a matter of political comparison and more a moment for serious reflection.

The fundamental question is simple: Are we going to reform our education system before frustration among our own young generation becomes a social crisis?

Pakistan's educational situation is deeply concerning. According to UNICEF, around 251 million children between the ages of 5 and 16 are out of school, representing roughly 35 percent of children in that age group. At the same time, public spending on education remains far below what is required to build a competitive human-capital base.

But access is only one part of the crisis.

The more disturbing issue is the quality of education. According to the World Bank, approximately 78 percent of Pakistani children around the age of ten cannot read and understand a simple age-appropriate text. This means that even among children who attend school, a large proportion are not acquiring the basic skills necessary for further education, employment and productive participation in society.

Pakistan therefore faces two crises simultaneously: millions of children are outside the education system, while

We have gradually developed a culture in which finding a way around a rule is sometimes regarded as cleverness rather than wrongdoing. A queue can be bypassed through influence. A government office can be approached through a personal contact. A regulation can be negotiated. Public property can be treated as though it belongs to nobody.

Individually, these acts may appear minor. Collectively, they weaken the foundations of the state.

When citizens believe that rules apply differently to different people, trust in institutions declines. When connections become more important than merit, capable people become discouraged. When regulations are unpredictable, businesses hesitate to invest. When public officials are not adequately accountable, citizens lose confidence in the state.

The rule of law is therefore not merely a constitutional or judicial issue. It is an economic necessity.

My experience in Canada made this particularly apparent. Everyday life functions with considerable predictability because people generally know what the rules are and expect them to be enforced. On roads, in offices, at universities and in public spaces, individual convenience is balanced against the collective interest. Canada is not without its challenges, but institutional predictability reduces uncertainty and allows citizens and businesses to plan with confidence.

China offers Pakistan a different but equally relevant lesson. Its political system is very different from those of Canada and the United States, yet its economic transformation demonstrates the importance of long-term planning, continuity, administrative capacity and implementation. The lesson for Pakistan is not to copy China's political model, but to recognise that national development requires policies that survive political cycles.

The United States provides another institutional lesson. Its political system is often contentious, but constitutional and legal mechanisms provide checks on public authority. Courts, legislatures and other institutions play important roles in holding power accountable. Again, Pakistan need not reproduce the American system. The broader principle is that institutions must be strong enough to restrain power and resolve disputes through lawful means.

These countries differ greatly, yet their experiences point towards a common principle: sustainable development requires institutions that function beyond personalities and governments.

Pakistan has spent too much time looking for individuals who can solve institutional problems. We repeatedly search for the strong leader or administrator who will transform the country. But no individual can permanently substitute for strong institutions.

A country cannot be built around personalities. It must be built around rules.

Pakistan's reform agenda must

therefore become practical. Equality before the law should be enforced regardless of social or political status. Government procedures should be simplified and digitised to reduce unnecessary discretion and opportunities for rent-seeking. Police, local government and other public-facing institutions need professionalism, measurable performance and accountability.

Economic and development policies should have continuity beyond electoral cycles. Priorities such as education, exports, energy, water, industrialisation and human capital require long-term institutional ownership. Merit must guide recruitment and promotion in public institutions, while accountability should be timely, transparent and subject to due process.

Reform must also reach society itself. Schools should cultivate civic responsibility as a habit, not merely teach it as a chapter in a textbook. Respect for traffic laws, public property, queues, contracts, taxes and the rights of others should become part of everyday citizenship.

These changes may sound less dramatic than a motorway, a new airport or a major economic package. Yet they are more fundamental.

A motorway is not the full measure of progress if traffic rules are ignored on it. A new hospital means little if access depends upon influence. A new university is not enough if merit is compromised. An industrial zone cannot fulfil its potential if investors face unpredictable regulations. A modern government building is of limited value if citizens still require connections to obtain routine services.

Real development begins when ordinary people can trust institutions.

Pakistan possesses the talent, resources and ambition necessary to prosper. What it needs is a system capable of converting those strengths into sustained national progress. That requires equality before the law, institutional continuity, merit, accountability and a culture in which rules are respected even when breaking them appears easier.

My experiences in China, Canada and other developed countries have left me with a simple conclusion: the visible symbols of development are built with concrete, steel and technology, but the foundations of development are built with law, discipline, integrity and responsibility.

Pakistan's greatest national project should therefore be more than building infrastructure. It should be building institutions that citizens can trust.

The real test is simple: can an ordinary Pakistani obtain justice without influence, a public service without a connection, start a business without paying a bribe, compete on merit and expect the law to protect him or her equally?

If the answer gradually becomes yes, Pakistan will not merely look more developed. It will actually become more developed.

Only then can the country's enormous potential be converted into lasting prosperity.



Message from President Asif Ali Zardari on World Mental Health Day – October 10, 2026

ANI

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of World Mental Health Day, President Asif Ali Zardari has called for greater awareness, accessible mental health services and an end to stigma and discrimination against people living with mental health conditions.

In his message, the president said mental health was an integral part of overall health, human dignity and national development. He emphasised that every individual should be able to seek mental health support without fear of stigma or discrimination and have access to quality and affordable services.

Referring to this year's theme, "Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change," President Zardari stressed the importance of



listening to people who have experienced mental health challenges and incorporating their perspectives into policies and healthcare services.

He appreciated the contributions of healthcare professionals, civil society organisations, development partners, communities and families in promoting mental health and

strengthening support services.

The president emphasised that special attention must be given to children and young people, women, persons with disabilities, vulnerable communities and those affected by emergencies and difficult circumstances.

He called upon all stakeholders to move beyond awareness and take meaningful action by addressing stigma, strengthening community-based mental health services and making mental health an essential part of universal health coverage and national development.

President Zardari urged collective efforts to build a Pakistan where every person is heard, valued and treated with dignity, and where mental health is recognised as an essential component of public well-being.

Message from Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on World Mental Health Day – October 10, 2026

ANI

ISLAMABAD: On World Mental Health Day, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed the government's commitment to improving mental health services in Pakistan, stressing that "there can be no health without mental health."

In his message, the prime minister said the country joined the international community in recognising the importance of mental health and addressing psychological challenges with the seriousness they deserve.

Referring to this year's theme, "Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change," he emphasised the need to listen to people experiencing mental health conditions and incorporate their perspectives into policies, services and decisions affecting their lives. The prime minister said mental health was essential not only for preventing and treating psychological conditions but also for the healthy development of young people and enabling them to realise their full potential. He stressed that their intellectual and emotional development was vital to national progress and prosperity.

He called for mental health conditions to be treated with the same



acceptance as physical illnesses at individual, family and societal levels. He said a supportive, non-judgmental environment was necessary to encourage people to seek timely treatment without fear of stigma or social pressure. Shehbaz Sharif said the government was committed to eliminating discriminatory attitudes and removing barriers that prevent people from accessing mental health support.

He said the Ministry of National Health Services was working on Pakistan's National Mental Health Policy 2026-2035, which aims to establish a more accessible, equitable and rights-based framework for mental

healthcare. He added that effective implementation, supported by measurable outcomes, remained a government priority.

The prime minister said the government was working with provincial administrations and relevant stakeholders to promote early diagnosis and intervention and integrate mental health services into primary healthcare facilities, educational institutions and community-based platforms.

He emphasised that children, young people, women and vulnerable groups required particular attention, especially communities affected by poverty, displacement, emergencies and climate change.

He stressed that effective treatment, care and rehabilitation required sustained cooperation among governments, educational institutions, families, civil society, mental health professionals and development partners.

On the occasion, the prime minister urged every Pakistani to help build a society where people could discuss mental health openly without fear, stigma or embarrassment, and where everyone had the opportunity and support to lead a healthy, active and fulfilling life.

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif
Prime Minister of Pakistan

World Mental Health Day: A Call for Compassion and Action



****Message by Ms. Sumblina Hassan****
Former Secretary to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto
Former Consultant, Foreign Office, Islamabad
In-Charge, Office 10, UK RCC, Bilawal Bhutto House

On World Mental Health Day, we must recognise that mental health is just as important as physical health.

Every individual deserves compassion, dignity and access to appropriate mental healthcare without stigma or discrimination.

The government may consider introducing a dedicated mental health support initiative through the existing health department network, potentially under the Benazir Support Fund, to help vulnerable individuals who cannot afford treatment. Charitable organisations and philanthropic institutions should also be encouraged to contribute towards this important cause.

Rising living costs, unemployment, family breakdown and unresolved

psychological trauma can leave people feeling hopeless and isolated. Some may turn to drugs in search of temporary relief, but lasting solutions require professional care, counselling, rehabilitation and support that addresses the root causes of their distress.

We must move beyond awareness and take practical action to ensure accessible mental healthcare for all. Vulnerable individuals must receive timely support, and no one should feel alone in their struggle. Every life matters, every voice deserves to be heard, and hope must be available to everyone.

AJK PM Announces One-Window Facility to Promote Industrial Growth and Investment

Report: Naseem Hassan/ANI

MUZAFFARABAD -- Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Iftikhar Gilani has said the government will provide a secure and investor-friendly environment to promote industrial development and attract investment in the liberated territory.

Chairing a meeting of the Industries and Mineral Resources Department, the prime minister said industrial growth was essential for boosting economic activity, strengthening the local economy and creating employment opportunities.

He announced that a one-window operation would be introduced to simplify registration procedures and facilitate investors. He also directed the Mineral Resources Department to streamline the process for granting large and small mining leases and simplify the registration of industrial



plots and related formalities. Gilani said investors' concerns would be addressed on a priority basis, adding that the proposed one-window facility would provide essential services at a single point. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to expanding the industrial sector through investment-friendly policies and directed the department to explore Azad Kashmir's mineral potential.

The meeting was briefed on the affairs and performance of the Industries, Commerce and Mineral Resources Department. Minister for Industries, Commerce, Mineral Resources and Tourism Chaudhry Abdul Rehman, Principal Secretary and Secretary of Industries Sardar Adnan Khurshid, Deputy Secretary Raja Zaheer Mukhtar and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

Daniyal Chaudhry Criticises KP Government Over Rising Terrorism, Police Martyrdoms

Report: ANI Correspondent:

RAWALPINDI -- Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry has criticised the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government over rising incidents of terrorism and the martyrdom of police personnel, alleging that political activities appear to be taking precedence over public safety.

Speaking to journalists at the Rawalpindi Press Club, Chaudhry said security forces and police personnel had made significant sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, which must not go in vain.

He said four Customs officials and one police official were martyred on the 5th, while SHO Daud also lost his life in the line of duty. He alleged that the provincial government had not demonstrated the level of seriousness and responsibility expected following these incidents. He also questioned the absence of provincial leadership from the families of the deceased to offer condolences.

Chaudhry said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was already facing serious security



challenges and that protecting citizens and law-enforcement personnel should be the provincial government's foremost responsibility. He questioned the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures over the past 15 years and called for concrete action under a comprehensive counterterrorism policy.

Referring to reports that four people, including a head moharrir, had been taken away the previous night, he questioned why the provincial government had not adopted a clear position against terrorist activities attributed to Fitna al-Khawarij. He also stressed the need to strengthen border security, improve

coordination among law-enforcement agencies and provide police personnel with modern weapons, protective equipment and essential resources.

He called for effective implementation of the National Action Plan, saying that decisions taken at high-level meetings must translate into visible results on the ground. He added that all political parties needed to take the province's security situation seriously.

Chaudhry further expressed concern that a PTI sit-in could heighten political tensions, disrupt law and order and affect Pakistan's international image at a time when international cricket activities were continuing in the country and foreign delegations were expected to visit. He said Pakistan had made substantial sacrifices in its long struggle against terrorism and stressed the importance of protecting national stability, economic activity and international engagement. Chaudhry also alleged that people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had become disillusioned with the PTI government because of corruption, insecurity and terrorism, urging other political parties to play a role in addressing the province's challenges.

CDA begins handing over developed plots in C-14

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Sohail Ashraf on Friday reviewed development work in Sector C-14 and at Sangjani Interchange, directing officials to expedite pending work and ensure timely completion of the projects. During his visit to Sector C-14, officials briefed him that basic infrastructure had been completed, while arrangements for electricity supply were in the final stages. Installation of streetlights and signboards on main roads and streets had also been completed, while landscaping and horticulture work was under way. The CDA has begun handing over possession of developed plots to allottees following completion of the basic infrastructure. Sohail Ashraf directed officials to expedite the process and ensure that eligible allottees received possession without unnecessary delay. He said meeting Islamabad's residential needs and



ensuring the timely development of new sectors were among the authority's priorities. He directed the relevant departments to remove administrative and technical bottlenecks and complete the remaining development work on a priority basis. Later, the CDA chairman visited Sangjani Interchange and reviewed construction progress, quality standards and completion targets. He

directed officials to accelerate work and ensure completion within the stipulated timeframe, stressing that construction quality and compliance with approved standards would not be compromised.

He also called for regular monitoring of the projects, prompt resolution of on-site issues and effective coordination among the departments concerned.

Vice chancellors sign charter for Tobacco, Nicotine-Free university campuses



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Heads of higher education institutions have signed a landmark Charter for Tobacco and Nicotine-Free Campuses to protect Pakistani youth from tobacco and nicotine addiction.

The Charter was adopted during the Fifth Monthly Meeting of the Vice Chancellors and Rectors Forum, hosted by COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) at its Islamabad Campus. The meeting held at CUI Central Library brought together university leaders and representatives of higher education institutions from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and

Kashmir to deliberate on pressing challenges facing the higher education sector. The Charter establishes a collective framework for achieving 100 percent tobacco, smoke, vape and recreational nicotine-free university campuses, covering conventional tobacco products as well as emerging products including electronic cigarettes, vaping devices, heated tobacco products and nicotine pouches.

Under the Charter, participating universities have committed to progressively eliminating tobacco and recreational nicotine use from their campuses and promote student-led awareness campaigns, research, institutional monitoring and annual assessment of progress.

The Forum further agreed that a joint letter along with the signed Charter would be forwarded to the Prime Minister through the Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) seeking national-level policy intervention.

Welcoming the participants, Rector COMSATS University Islamabad Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar emphasized the responsibilities of university leadership in responding to rapidly changing societal and technological challenges.

He highlighted the transformative implications of artificial intelligence and its convergence with emerging technologies including quantum computing for scientific discovery and future of higher education.

JUW Students Visit Sindh Assembly, Discuss Women's Role in Diplomacy

Report: ANI Correspondent:

KARACHI -- Students of the Department of International Relations at Jinnah University for Women (JUW) visited the Sindh Assembly and participated in an interactive session with MPA Dr. Fouzia Hameed on "Women in Foreign Policy and Diplomacy."

Dr. Fouzia Hameed highlighted the role of women in foreign policy, diplomacy, governance and political representation. The session concluded with an engaging question-and-answer session.

The students also visited the old



and new buildings of the Sindh Assembly to learn about the history

and functioning of the provincial legislature.