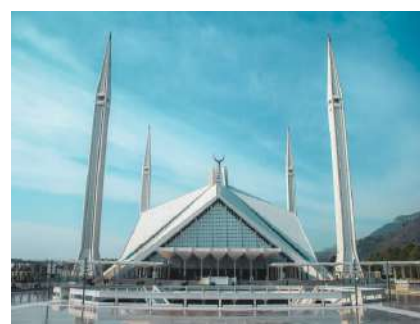




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Bilawal slams PTI's Afridi over K-P security, says PPP ready to fight terrorists



ANI

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Sunday lashed out at Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) "non-functional" chief minister Sohail Afridi over the province's security situation, saying the PPP was ready to fight terrorists if the PTI-led provincial government was unwilling to do so.

"If the chief minister of K-P is not ready to fight terrorists, then PPP is ready to fight them, and that is why we supported the government's decision to impose governors' rule," Bilawal said while speaking to the media during a visit to the Karsaz Monument on the anniversary of

the Karsaz bombing.

He also defended the imposition of governor's rule, saying his party had backed the move in view of the security challenges.

Bilawal underscored that Pakistan was once again confronting "terrorism from Khyber to Khuzdar", recalling that the PPP government in 2008 had launched operations in Swat and other parts of K-P to fulfil a commitment made by former prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

"When the PPP formed the government in 2008, we launched operations in Swat and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and defeated the terrorists," he said, adding that Pakistan was now facing the conse-

quences of decisions to release militants who had previously been held in the country's prisons.

Bilawal recalled that Benazir, in her final public address, had warned that certain forces did not want Swat to remain part of Pakistan. He said the country was once again facing attempts to undermine its control in the region.

He also criticised the handling of terrorism-related incidents, saying such attacks were not taken seriously and alleging that evidence had been washed away even in the Karsaz attack. The PPP chairman said his party had once been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism, but the struggle had since

become a collective responsibility, with citizens across the country striving for peace. Bilawal underscored that terrorism should not be used for political point-scoring and urged political leaders to speak out unequivocally against terrorists. Bilawal further stressed the importance of political reconciliation and consensus, citing Benazir's efforts to strengthen democracy despite political differences and compromises.

He stated that Benazir had worked with parties that had previously opposed her and former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, including during the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD).

PM stresses equal opportunities in education to realize Quaid's vision



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Sunday, emphasized the critical need to provide equal opportunities in the education and health sectors to fulfill the true vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of Daanish School Kuri, the prime minister reflected on the sacrifices made during the 1947 migration, noting that millions left everything behind with the hope of building a nation grounded in justice, fair play, and merit. He asserted that Pakistan cannot reach its true destination without ensuring accessible, high-quality opportunities for all citizens across every field, stressing that every child from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Gilgit-Baltistan must be equipped with a quality education. And after eighty years down the lane, he said they must take a pause and have honest self introspection what they had dreamt of in 1947. "This might be some other Pakistan, but not Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Pakistan?" he remarked while referring to two different sets of education system in the country.

"That what we and our forefathers had dreamt of in 1947, and where we stand today, that the richest of this country earned their assets through hard work or otherwise, have the opportunity to send their sons and daughters to the best schools in Pakistan, not only here, to North of America and South of France. And imagine the plight of likes of this daughter from Bahawalpur and this daughter from KP, and this boy in front of you who also

became a doctor," he added

The prime minister emphasized that every child—from Karachi to Peshawar, regardless of socioeconomic background—deserves equal access to quality education.

Contrasting the opportunities available to the elite, who can easily afford prestigious domestic or international institutions, the prime minister highlighted the plight of exceptionally bright children from impoverished families across Pakistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

He noted that these children could never dream of attending elite institutions like Aitchison College, let alone receiving a decent standard of education. To bridge this massive gap, the prime minister shared that he first established the Daanish Schools network back in 2010, driven by the mission to uplift underprivileged youth and provide them with world-class educational opportunities. The prime minister said that Punjab Endowment Fund now transformed into Pakistan Endowment Fund and it was now a realization of Quaid e Azam's vision that all children from the length and breadth of country, should get equal opportunities in education and health. The event was attended by ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, relevant authorities, teachers and students.

The prime minister cited the example of a young daughter from KP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who is a special child, but she never lost hope and struggled through the muddy waves of life beside a girl from backward area of Punjab who graduated from Daanish School and became a doctor.

Electricity tariff expected to rise by Rs2.56 per unit for one month

ANI



The electricity prices expected to by Rs2.56 per unit for one month for consumers across Pakistan, including the K-Electric customers, following a request by the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA).

The CPPA has filed an application with the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) under the monthly fuel price adjustment for September. The Nepra will hear the application on October 29. If approved, the increase will apply to electricity consumers across the country, including those supplied by K-Electric.

In September, high-speed diesel-generated electricity was the most expensive at Rs62 per unit. Electricity generated from furnace oil cost Rs44 per unit, while liquefied natural gas (LNG)-based power cost Rs39 per unit.

The nuclear power cost Rs3 per unit, while hydropower cost Rs6 per unit.

FM Dar, Iranian FM discuss regional situation, OIC meeting in Baghdad



ANI

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday held a telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart, Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, to discuss the evolving regional situation and an ongoing meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers in Baghdad, the FO said. In a post on X, the FO said the two leaders had discussed "the evolving regional situation" and "the ongoing OIC Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Baghdad". FM Dar "underscored the importance of continued dialogue and diplomacy in addressing regional challenges", the statement said. The two foreign ministers also "agreed to maintain close contact."

Pakistan and Iran were expected to hold further consultations on regional peace efforts on the sidelines of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Baghdad on October 17-18. Iranian state news agency IRNA reported that the meeting would provide an opportunity for consultations between key regional players, including Islamabad and Tehran.

Pakistan has continued to advocate a negotiated settlement to the conflict involv-

ing Iran and the United States. On October 9, the military's media wing chief, Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, said Pakistan remained committed to a "negotiated and peaceful outcome" and warned against the conflict spreading further across the region. He said Pakistan had condemned attacks on Iran by the United States and Israel, as well as Iranian attacks on Arab and Gulf countries. Earlier today, FM Dar also held a telephone conversation with his Egyptian counterpart, Badr Abdelaty, and strongly condemned the Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, reaffirming their full solidarity with the Kingdom and support for its sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. In a post on X, the FO said the two leaders also discussed the next meeting of the R-4 grouping, comprising Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia, during a telephone conversation. "The two leaders exchanged views on recent regional developments," the ministry added. Both looked forward to holding the next R-4 meeting soon to "further strengthen mutual ties and to coordinate on the regional issues." According to the FO, the R-4 framework brings together Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia to strengthen ties and coordinate on regional issues.

Security forces kill eight terrorists in three operations across Balochistan: ISPR

ANI

Security forces killed eight terrorists belonging to the Indian proxy, Fitna al-Hindustan, in three intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Balochistan and recovered 490 kilogrammes of explosives, the military's media wing said on Sunday.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), on October 17, security forces conducted three IBOs in Quetta, Nushki and Khuzdar districts of Balochistan, on the reported presence of terrorists belonging to the Indian proxy, Fitna al-Hindustan. The federal government last year officially designated all terrorist groups operating in Balochistan as Fitna al-Hindustan, accusing India of sponsoring a proxy war through the outfits. In Quetta's Panipai area, security forces intercepted an attempt by terrorists to establish a roadblock to disrupt local traffic, resulting in the killing of five Indian sponsored ter-



rorists, the ISPR said. The statement added that "during sanitisation operation in Nushki district, security forces busted terrorists' hideout, and after an intense fire exchange, two Indian sponsored ter-

rorists were sent to hell," the ISPR said, adding that weapons and ammunition were also recovered.

In a separate intelligence-based operation in Khuzdar, security forces engaged a terrorist hideout and killed one Indian-sponsored terrorist, according to the statement. A large quantity of explosives, weighing 490 kilogrammes, was also recovered. The ISPR said sanitisation operations were underway to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored terrorists found in the areas. "Relentless counter terrorism campaign under vision 'Azm-e-Istehkam' (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by security forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country," the statement concluded.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi praised the security forces for conducting successful intelligence-based operations against terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan in Quetta, Nushki and Khuzdar.

Sharjeel Memon wants Fazl to take 'unambiguous' stance against terrorism

ANI

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon has said disappointing statements are being heard from an experienced politician like Maulana Fazlur Rehman, adding Maulana himself faced terrorism.

Sharjeel Memon said that his party has suffered at the hands of terrorists, and he hopes that Maulana Fazlur Rehman will take an 'unambiguous' stance against terrorism. He said that PTI lost its government by having a soft corner for terrorists, the blood of innocent people kept flowing, young men kept getting martyred and the founder of PTI kept talking about opening offices for terrorists. The senior provincial minister added that PTI is facing the consequences of its own decisions today.

Earlier, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has said that the provincial government can be formed and run without Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, expressing disappointment over the latter's recent speech and disagreeing with his stance on the imposition of governor's rule in the province.

Khawaja Asif raises alarm over bureaucrats' 'exodus' to Portugal

ANI

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Sunday questioned the commitment of senior bureaucrats to Pakistan, alleging that a significant number of government officers had planned to settle abroad while still serving the country. In a statement on X, Asif said that while Pakistan's bureaucracy had capable and honest officers, many officials had made Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and other European countries their permanent homes over the past several years. He alleged that some officers had prepared for their relocation under a deliberate plan while employed by the



Government of Pakistan, raising questions about their commitment to the country and their official responsibilities during their tenure. Asif said Portugal had emerged as a destination for what he described as a bureau-

cratic exodus in recent years. He added that he had raised the issue on social media a few months ago.

The defence minister said the officers whose names had surfaced in connection with the matter had held important positions and had remained close to successive governments. He further alleged that an individual who facilitated permanent residency (PR) arrangements had fled after collecting substantial sums of money from several influential bureaucrats. Asif said several troubling accounts were circulating in connection with the matter, although he did not provide details or identify the individuals allegedly involved.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif interacts with students at Daanish School

First Pakistani astronaut to undertake space mission from China on Nov 25: Ahsan

ANI

Pakistan’s first astronaut will undertake a space mission from a Chinese space centre on November 25, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said on Sunday.

The minister made the announcement while addressing the concluding ceremony of World Space Week in Narowal, held in collaboration with the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco), the planning ministry said in a statement. According to the handout, the planning minister also said the country was aiming to achieve a lunar landing by 2035, expressing hope that Pakistan’s cooperation with China would help it “reach new heights in space exploration”. In his address at the ceremony, the planning minister highlighted the importance of space technology in agriculture, communications, climate monitoring, education and national security. Iqbal stressed that scientific research and space exploration were essential for technological advancement, the ministry’s statement said. He further noted that Muslim scholars had once made significant contributions to astronomy and scientific discovery, calling for renewed efforts to restore Pakistan’s leadership in knowledge and research.



The astronaut will be one of the two – pilots Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud—China selected in April this year as candidates for its manned space programme and who have been undergoing intensive training in Beijing. China has not said which of the two will fly or when, but speaking to Reuters

last month, Amer Gilani, who oversees human spaceflight cooperation at Suparco, said a final astronaut selection decision was expected in mid-to-late October. According to another Suparco official quoted by Reuters, once in space, the chosen pilot will carry the title of “payload specialist”, which is astro-

naut-speak for someone whose job in orbit is running Pakistan’s science experiments rather than flying the ship. The astronaut will fly aboard a Chinese-built spacecraft, launched from a Chinese site, trained by Chinese instructors and communicating in Mandarin in orbit.

CDA mulls SCADA system to modernise Islamabad’s water supply

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is considering introducing a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to enable real-time monitoring and automated control of Islamabad’s water supply network.

The proposed system is part of a broader initiative to modernise the capital’s water management infrastructure, improve operational efficiency and identify ways to reduce electricity expenditure, Islamabad Water Agency Director General Sardar Khan Zimri told APP on Saturday.

He said the proposed initiative was being discussed with representatives of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), with a technical and financial assessment planned for around 200 tube wells, 40 over-

head water tanks and their associated pumping stations. The assessment is expected to examine electricity consumption, water pressure, distribution efficiency, operational performance and maintenance costs to identify areas where the existing infrastructure could be improved.

If introduced, the SCADA system would allow operators to monitor water supply operations in real time, identify operational problems and use reliable data to improve the management of the distribution network. Automated controls could also help improve oversight of pumping operations and the efficiency of the water supply system. The proposed initiative aims to identify technically and financially viable measures to improve the reliability of water supply ser-



VICES, reduce unnecessary electricity expenditure and promote the sustainable use of water resources amid the growing needs of the federal capital.

According to the proposed framework, the initial assessment would be followed by

the preparation of technical documentation and financial and administrative feasibility studies. Subject to the completion of the required assessments, approval by the relevant authorities and compliance with applicable rules and regulations, the CDA may consider an international competitive bidding process for implementation.

The scope of work and responsibilities of the selected company would be determined in accordance with the final contract and approved terms and conditions. The initiative is being pursued under the leadership of CDA Chairman Sohail Ashraf, with Sardar Khan Zimri overseeing the process at Islamabad Water Agency. The CDA has not yet announced the estimated cost of introducing the proposed system, the potential savings in electricity expenditure or a time-line for implementation.

Parents urged to vaccinate girls against cervical cancer

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Health authorities have urged parents to ensure that their daughters receive the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine under the cervical cancer prevention campaign, describing vaccination at an early age as an important step towards protecting girls from the disease. The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) have encouraged parents to make informed decisions about their daughters’ health and benefit from the preventive vaccination programme.

Health experts explain that the HPV vaccine protects against the types of human papillomavirus responsible for most cases of cervical cancer. Vaccination at the recommended age of 9 to 14 years provides the best protection, ideally before exposure to the virus. Cervical cancer develops in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus, and is largely preventable through HPV vaccination and appropriate screening later in life. However, limited awareness and barriers to healthcare can prevent women and girls from receiving timely preventive services. The vaccine is considered safe and effective, with health authorities encouraging parents to seek information from qualified healthcare professionals and follow the recommended vaccination schedule. Parents have also been advised to consult healthcare providers regarding the availability of the vaccine and any questions or concerns about its safety and benefits. The health authorities urged families to support the vaccination campaign to help reduce the future burden of cervical cancer and safeguard the health of the next generation.

IHRA assesses Life Care International Hospital for licensing

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) has conducted a licensing assessment of Life Care International Hospital to evaluate its compliance with prescribed healthcare standards and requirements for patient safety and quality of care.

During the assessment, IHRA assessors evaluated the hospital against the indicators outlined in the Minimum Service Delivery Standards (MSDS) and prepared a comprehensive assessment report. The exercise forms part of IHRA’s ongoing licensing process aimed at ensuring that healthcare establishments operating in Islamabad meet the required standards of service delivery, patient safety and public health. The authority’s regulatory framework focuses on assessing healthcare facilities against established benchmarks to promote quality services, improve patient outcomes and ensure compliance with applicable requirements. The licensing assessment also reflects IHRA’s continued efforts to strengthen oversight of healthcare establishments and encourage adherence to standards designed to safeguard patients and the wider community.

Health experts urge preventive measures against dengue

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Health experts have urged citizens to adopt preventive measures against dengue fever by eliminating stagnant water. They asked for using mosquito repellents and seeking timely medical attention to protect themselves and their families from the mosquito-borne disease. They advised people to regularly inspect their homes and surroundings for standing water, which provides breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and ensure that water containers, flowerpots, discarded tyres and other potential breeding sites are properly cleaned or covered. The public has also been encouraged to use mosquito repellents, mosquito nets and protective screens on windows and doors to reduce exposure to mosquito bites, particularly during periods of increased mosquito activity.

Dr Saeed Naeem, a medical practitioner stressed that maintaining clean surroundings and ensuring proper waste disposal could help control mosquito breeding and

reduce the risk of dengue transmission in residential areas.

He further advised citizens to wear clothing that covers the arms and legs and take additional precautions during the day, as dengue-transmitting mosquitoes are active during daylight hours, particularly in the early morning and before dusk. Common symptoms of dengue include high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pain, nausea and skin rash. People experiencing such symptoms, particularly during an outbreak, should consult a qualified healthcare professional promptly, he added. Medical expert, Dr Hameed Khawar cautioned against self-medication, especially the use of aspirin and ibuprofen, as these medicines may increase the risk of bleeding in dengue patients. Paracetamol may be used for fever under appropriate medical guidance. He emphasized that severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, bleeding from the nose or gums, difficulty breathing, unusual drowsiness or extreme weakness require urgent medical attention.

DPM/FM Dar chairs meeting to review preparations for Maldives President’s upcoming visit

APP- ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saturday, chaired a meeting to review preparations for the forthcoming visit of the President of the Maldives to Pakistan.

The meeting reviewed the bilateral agenda, with a focus on expanding cooperation in trade, investment, health, education, climate change, tourism and civil aviation, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Secretaries of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Inter-Provincial Coordination, Pakistan’s High Commissioner to the Maldives and senior officials from concerned ministries and departments.

The DPM/FM underscored that the visit would provide an opportunity to further strengthen fraternal ties and advance a mutually beneficial partnership.

AJK PM Iftikhar Gilani Chairs Meeting on Role of Mosques and Religious Scholars in Character Building of Youth

**Report: Naseem Hassan/ANI

Islamabad-- Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Iftikhar Gilani chaired a meeting on the role of mosques and religious scholars in character building of the younger generation, with discussions focusing on Quranic education in educational institutions, moral training of students and the development of a coordinated strategy for character building.

During the meeting, religious scholars appreciated the teaching of Nazra Quran (Quranic recitation) and Fahmul-Quran (understanding of the Quran) in educational institutions. They assured the Prime Minister of their full support and cooperation for government initiatives aimed at promoting Quranic education and strengthening the moral character of the younger generation.

The meeting was informed that making Quranic education more effective and meaningful for students learning Nazra Quran remains a key government priority. Participants also emphasized the importance of a coordinated strategy to promote students’ moral development and character building.

Addressing the meeting, AJK Prime



Minister Iftikhar Gilani said character building and moral education were essential for developing a civilized, enlightened and responsible society. He said the purpose of education was not limited to acquiring knowledge but also included instilling good morals, discipline, tolerance and a sense of responsibility among young people.

He emphasized that teachers, religious scholars and parents all had a vital role to play in this process. He added that guidance and consultation would be sought from senior religious leaders and scholars to strengthen character-building initiatives for the younger generation. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the government’s commitment to taking measures that promote both the academic develop-

ment and moral training of children.

The meeting was attended by President Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaris Azad Kashmir Maulana Saeed Yousaf, founder chairman of the Character Education Foundation Mahmood Ahmed; Principal Secretary Adnan Khurshid; Secretary Schools Education Inayat Ali; spokesperson for Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaris Azad Kashmir Syed Adnan Ali Shah; Rabatul-Madaris Azad Kashmir representatives Qazi Shahid Hameed and Qazi Muhammad Israel; Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Salafiyyah Azad Kashmir representative Maulana Ateeq-ur-Rehman; and Tanzeem-ul-Madaris Azad Kashmir representatives Maulana Abdul Rauf Nizami and Abid Hussain Chishti, among others.

Cadets of four military courses pass out at Pakistan Military Academy Kakul

ANI

RAWALPINDI: Passing Out parade of cadets of 154th PMA Long Course, 39th Technical Graduate Course, 73rd Integrated Course and 28th Lady Cadet Course was held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul.

Cadets from several friendly countries including Bangladesh, Iraq, Maldives, Palestine, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Yemen also graduated

from Pakistan Military Academy, said a press release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). Cadets of four military courses pass out at Pakistan Military Academy Kakul. General Syed Aamer Raza, NI (M), S Bt, Commander National Strategic Command, graced the occasion as Chief Guest and Reviewing Officer of the parade.

Commander National Strategic Command reviewed the parade and gave awards to distinguished cadets.

The coveted Sword of Honour was awarded to Academy Senior Under Officer Muhammad Junaid Jabbar of 154th PMA Long Course; the President’s Gold Medal to Battalion Senior Under Officer Syed Hassan Abbas of 154th PMA Long Course and Chief of Defence Forces Overseas Gold Medal to Friendly Country Company Senior Under Officer Riyad Mahmood Khan from Bangladesh of 154th PMA Long Course.

ICT Police nab 768 suspects, recover stolen property worth over Rs 217.5 mln in two weeks

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested 768 suspects, including 84 members of 33 criminal gangs, and recovered stolen property worth over Rs217.5 million during a two-week crackdown against criminal elements across the federal capital.

An ICT Police official told APP on Sunday that the operations targeted suspects involved in dacoities, robberies, house burglaries, vehicle theft, drug trafficking and illegal possession of weapons. He said police busted 33 criminal gangs and arrested 84 of their members involved in dacoities, street robberies, house burglaries and theft of cars and motorcycles. ICT Police nab 768 suspects, recover stolen property worth over Rs 217.5 mln in two weeks

The official said stolen vehicles, motorcycles, gold jewelry, mobile phones and cash were recovered during the operations, with the total value of recovered property exceeding Rs217.5 million. He said police also intensified action against proclaimed offenders and criminals with previous records, arresting more than 515 proclaimed offenders during the past two weeks. In separate operations against illegal weapons and their public display, police arrested 98 suspects and recovered eight Kalashnikovs and rifles, 83 pistols of different calibres and ammunition. The official said the crackdown against drug dealers resulted in the arrest of 71 suspects and the recovery of more than 10 kilograms of hashish, over four kilogrammes of heroin, 13 kilogrammes of ice (crystal methamphetamine) and 874 bottles of liquor.

Gilani recalls Heart-Wrenching night of Karsaz tragedy, pays tribute to martyrs’ sacrifices for democracy

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, recalling the Karsaz tragedy, said that the heartbreaking night remained vivid in his memory, as he was personally present on the truck that night. He said that among the martyrs were victims whose identities could not be established at the time. The tragic incident marked a painful chapter in the history of sacrifices made for democracy. He paid glowing tribute to the martyrs, saying their sacrifices would always be remembered. Paying homage to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and all those who laid down their lives for democracy, the Chairman Senate said the Karsaz tragedy remains one of the most tragic events in Pakistan’s political history, reflecting the nation’s unwavering commitment to democratic ideals, political



resilience and national resolve. He said Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto’s courageous return to Pakistan despite threats and grave risks demonstrated her unshakable bond with the people and her commitment to the democratic struggle.

The sacrifices of the Karsaz martyrs continue to remind the nation of its responsibility to uphold the Constitution, strengthen democratic institutions and protect fundamen-

tal rights.

Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani emphasised that the best tribute to the martyrs was to promote peace, tolerance, democratic traditions and national unity. He reaffirmed that efforts to strengthen democracy, ensure parliamentary supremacy, uphold the Constitution and build a peaceful, stable and prosperous Pakistan must continue.

Daily

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Opinion

3

Karsaz: A Tragedy Whose Echoes Still Resonate



By: Sumblina Hassan
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Published By: ANI News Agency

Some events in a nation's history are never forgotten with the passage of time. They remain deeply embedded in collective memory because of the lives they changed, the sacrifices they represent and the questions they leave behind. The Karsaz tragedy of October 18, 2007, is one such defining moment in Pakistan's political history.

The day began with anticipation and hope. After years of exile, former Prime Minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan, and Karachi witnessed an extraordinary public reception. Hundreds of thousands of people gathered along the route of her procession, reflecting the political significance of her return and the expectations surrounding the country's democratic future.

But the atmosphere of celebration was transformed into tragedy near Karsaz.

A deadly terrorist attack struck the procession, killing and injuring a large number of people. Families who had come to welcome their political leader were suddenly confronted with unimaginable loss. The streets that had been filled with political slogans and expressions of hope became a scene of grief and devastation.

The Karsaz tragedy was not merely an attack on a political gathering. It was an attack on ordinary citizens who had assembled to participate in a significant political moment. Among the victims were political workers, supporters and citizens whose names may not have become widely known, but whose loss was deeply felt by their families.

Behind every victim was a personal story a parent, a child, a spouse, a sibling or a friend whose life was changed forever. For the families of those who died, October 18 is not simply a date in Pakistan's political calendar. It remains a painful reminder of the loved ones they lost and the future they were denied.

Yet Karsaz cannot be understood without remembering Benazir Bhutto herself.

Her return to Pakistan was more than a political homecoming. It marked a significant moment in her political journey after years abroad and reflected her determination to re-



enter the country's political landscape. Despite the security threats surrounding her return, she chose to face the public and continue her political struggle.

The attack at Karsaz demonstrated the grave dangers surrounding that journey. Benazir Bhutto survived the attack, but hundreds of people accompanying her procession were killed or injured. The tragedy consequently became an inseparable part of the final chapter of her political life.

Only a little more than two months later, on December 27, 2007, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in Rawalpindi. Her death plunged the country into mourning and further deepened the national grief that had followed the Karsaz tragedy.

Remembering Karsaz is therefore also an opportunity to pay tribute to Benazir Bhutto not only as a political leader, but as a woman whose life was marked by exile, struggle, public service and personal sacrifice. Her return to Pakistan in October 2007, despite the risks involved, remains one of the most significant moments of her political career.

Her legacy continues to be discussed from different political and historical perspectives. However, the human dimension of her story cannot be separated from the people who stood beside her during the final months of her life, including those who lost their lives while welcoming her home.

The Karsaz tragedy also raises broader questions about political life in Pakistan. Can political differences exist without turning into hostility? Can citizens participate in public life without fear? And can a democratic society protect the right of people to express their political beliefs peacefully?

These questions remain relevant today.

Pakistan has paid an enormous price in its struggle against terrorism. Soldiers, police officers, journalists, political workers and ordinary citizens have lost their lives in acts of violence across the country. The victims of Karsaz are part of this larger national history of sacrifice.

The importance of remembering them lies not simply in recalling the tragedy, but in understanding what it represents. Democracy is not only about elections or the transfer of political power. It also requires tolerance, dialogue, respect for differences and the protection of citizens who choose to participate in public life.

For this reason, the victims of Karsaz deserve to be remembered with dignity. Their sacrifice should strengthen the national commitment to peace, justice and democratic values. The families who lost their loved ones deserve more than annual tributes; their suffering should serve as a reminder of the human cost of political violence and terrorism.

This historic moment in Pakistan's national journey has left a lasting mark on its youth, ordinary citizens and countless innocent people. At the same time, it has strengthened the resolve of those who believe that the country's democratic aspirations must never be surrendered to forces that seek to undermine freedom and political expression.

The Karsaz tragedy, along with the sacrifices that followed, continues to remind Pakistanis that courage in the face of adversity is essential to preserving democracy and justice. Benazir Bhutto's life and ultimate sacrifice became powerful symbols of resilience, reminding the nation that the will of the Pakistani people cannot, and must not, be compromised by violence or fear.

Her memory, together with that of those who lost their lives at Karsaz, remains an enduring part of Pakistan's democratic history. Their sacrifices call upon future generations to value peace, uphold democratic principles and continue striving for a Pakistan where freedom, justice and human dignity are protected. The most meaningful tribute to Benazir Bhutto and the victims of Karsaz is to ensure that their sacrifices are not reduced to a chapter in history, but inspire a future in which political differences are resolved through dialogue rather than violence, and democratic freedoms are protected for generations to come.

Saniha Kaarsaz a Turning Point of PakistanPolitical History *Role of Terrorism in Politics



By: Ahmed Shamsur Rehman
Published By: ANI News Agency

The Karsaz tragedy stands as one of the most tragic events in the history of Pakistani politics and terrorism. This catastrophe occurred on October 18, 2007, on Shahrah-e-Faisal near the Karsaz of Karachi, where the welcoming procession for Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who had served twice as the country's Prime Minister, was targeted. Let us examine the background of this incident and how it unfolded.

On October 18, 2007, Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan, ending nearly eight years of self-imposed exile. Hundreds of thousands of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) workers and supporters from across the country gathered at Karachi Airport to welcome her home.

The journey from the airport to Mazar-e-Quaid took the form of a massive procession. For this purpose, a specially prepared bullet-proof truck was used to carry Benazir Bhutto and other senior party leaders. Due to the enormous crowds and enthusiastic reception, the procession moved at an extremely slow pace, turning what should have been a brief journey into one lasting several hours.

At around midnight, as the procession reached the Karsaz area near Shahrah-e-Faisal, close to the Karsaz Flyover and PNS Karsaz, the streetlights suddenly went out. Moments later, two powerful explosions occurred in quick succession. The first blast was reportedly caused by a hand grenade of relatively low intensity, apparently intended to create confusion and disrupt the security cordon. The second explosion was a devastating suicide attack that plunged the area into chaos, darkness, and bloodshed.

Benazir Bhutto narrowly escaped harm, having moved into the inner cabin of the truck only moments before the explosions. At the time of the attack, several senior PPP leaders were aboard the bombproof vehicle, including Makhdoom Amin Fahim, Sherry Rehman (who sustained injuries), Rehman Malik, Qaim Ali Shah, Nisar Khuhro, Safdar Abbasi, Naheed Khan, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Jahangir Badar, Fauzia Wahab, Abida Hussain, and Qasim Zia.

Also present on or around the truck were members of the "Jan-Nisaran-e-Benazir" security force, which had been formed to protect Bhutto, along with her personal bodyguards, including Khalid Shahenshah and Bilal Sheikh. According to various official and

independent sources, approximately 180 people lost their lives in the attack. Most of the victims were PPP workers and supporters, while the dead also included around 20 police officers and members of the Jan-Nisaran-e-Benazir volunteer security force.

Following the attack, Benazir Bhutto reportedly sent a letter to then-President Pervez Musharraf, expressing suspicions regarding several influential figures, including Pervaiz Elahi, former ISI chief Hamid Gul, and Brigadier Ijaz Shah, who was serving as Director General of the Intelligence Bureau at the time.

Meanwhile, Pakistani authorities and international agencies attributed responsibility for the attack to Al-Qaeda and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), particularly the faction associated with Baitullah Mehsud.

Despite the passage of many years, the Karsaz tragedy remains unresolved. Although the PPP later held power at the federal level, the individuals and networks ultimately responsible for planning and executing the attack have not been conclusively identified or brought to justice. Multiple FIRs were registered, and several investigative committees were established; however, no definitive conclusion has emerged, and no prominent individual or major terrorist organization has been successfully convicted in connection with the attack.

The Karsaz tragedy proved to be a significant turning point in Pakistan's political history, leaving profound and long-lasting impacts on the country's politics. Following this attack, Benazir Bhutto's public popularity and the wave of sympathy for her surged significantly. Despite the life-threatening assault, she declared that she would not leave the country and would continue her political struggle; this greatly strengthened the Pakistan Peoples Party's voter base and boosted the morale of its workers.

This tragedy raised serious questions regarding the administration of the then-President, General (Retd.) Pervez Musharraf, and his claims concerning security. Opposition parties accused the government of failing to provide adequate security, leaving the Musharraf administration under intense political and international pressure. This shared threat of terrorism brought political rivals closer together. Leaders, including Mian Nawaz Sharif of the PML(N), expressed solidarity with Benazir Bhutto; this further strengthened the movement for the restoration of democracy a cause championed under the "Charter of Democracy" against both dictatorship and terrorism.

Following the Karsaz tragedy, Pakistan's political and security sit-

uation worsened significantly. In response to rising instability, the Musharraf government-imposed emergency rule on November 3, 2007, suspending the Constitution and restricting the judiciary. Security measures for political leaders, especially Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, were tightened, including mandatory use of bulletproof vehicles. Despite these precautions, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in a terrorist attack at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi, on December 27, 2007, along with 23 Party workers. The events leading to this tragedy can be traced back to the Karsaz incident.

The roots of this tragic event can be traced back to the Karsaz incident, which marked the beginning of a series of developments that ultimately led to one of the most devastating chapters in Pakistan's political history.

The wave of sympathy that emerged in the wake of these two major tragedies, the Karsaz incident and her martyrdom altered the course of the February 2008 general elections. These represent two tragic turning points in Pakistan's political and national history, events that have left behind profound and bitter lessons for the country's political system, security infrastructure, and public consciousness.

These incidents underscore a vital lesson: the security of political leaders facing extreme threats must never be compromised by public sentiment or political grandstanding. In the case of the Karsaz tragedy, gathering a crowd of hundreds of thousands in an open environment—despite the presence of a bulletproof truck posed a significant security risk. Similarly, in Rawalpindi, emerging from the sunroof of a bulletproof vehicle created a moment that provided an opportunity for the attacker. Political leadership must strictly adhere to the advisories issued by security agencies. Terrorism is not an issue confined to any single group or ideology; rather, it poses a threat to the very existence of the entire nation. Upon her return from exile, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto advocated a clear stance against terrorism, underscoring that to effectively counter extremism, it is imperative for the entire nation, all political parties, and state institutions to be aligned—adopting a policy of "zero tolerance." Following a major tragedy, it is essential to adhere to international standards of scientific and professional investigation; this is crucial for tracking down the perpetrators and preventing the emergence of doubts or suspicions. The solution to even the gravest national crisis does not lie in political vendettas or violence, but rather in the continuity of the democratic process, political harmony, and the supremacy of the Constitution.

Sustainable Finance: A Strategic Pathway to Pakistan's Economic Transformation



By: Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naveed
Published By: ANI News Agency

Pakistan must rethink sustainable finance not merely as an environmental obligation, but as a strategic instrument for economic transformation, export competitiveness, fiscal resilience and social protection.

The country faces interconnected challenges: limited fiscal space, external financing pressures, energy vulnerabilities, weak export diversification and growing climate risks. Addressing these challenges requires a financial strategy that mobilizes capital for productive investment while protecting economic stability and social welfare.

From Climate Vulnerability to Economic Opportunity

Climate change is no longer simply an environmental concern; it is a macroeconomic risk. Floods, heatwaves, water scarcity and agricultural disruptions threaten productivity, livelihoods and public finances. Sustainable finance can help transform these vulnerabilities into opportunities by directing investment towards renewable energy, climate-resilient infrastructure, efficient water management and modern industrial technologies.

The objective must be to ensure that climate investment generates measurable economic returns rather than becoming another pressure on an already constrained public budget.

Green Finance and Export Competitiveness

Global markets increasingly reward resource efficiency, environmental transparency and lower carbon production. For Pakistan's textile, manufacturing and agricultural-processing sectors, adapting to these changes is essential to maintaining international competitiveness.

However, businesses cannot transition without affordable

financing, modern technology and reliable energy infrastructure. Pakistan should therefore expand targeted green credit, energy efficiency financing and investment incentives for exporters, particularly small and medium sized enterprises.

Sustainability must become a driver of productivity, value added exports and industrial modernization not an additional compliance cost.

Fiscal Resilience and Innovative Financing

Pakistan cannot finance its green transition through public borrowing alone. A more effective approach would combine domestic capital, private investment, development finance, concessional fund-

income households, workers and small businesses. Affordable green financing, targeted social assistance, skills development and energy efficiency programmes should accompany structural reforms.

A just transition is not merely a social consideration; it is an economic necessity. Protecting vulnerable communities strengthens human capital, supports domestic demand and improves the sustainability of reform.

A Strategic Choice for Pakistan
Pakistan needs an integrated sustainable finance strategy built around five priorities: export competitiveness, productive investment, fiscal sustainability, climate resilience and inclusive growth.

Success should be measured not by the volume of green financing announced, but by its contribution to higher productivity, stronger exports, reduced climate-related losses, decent employment and improved social welfare.

ing and carefully structured green bonds.Public resources should prioritize climate adaptation, resilient infrastructure and projects with substantial social returns. Commercially viable investments should attract private capital through transparent risk sharing mechanisms and credible regulatory frameworks.

Equally important, climate related expenditure must be monitored through transparent budgeting, rigorous project appraisal and measurable performance indicators. Sustainable finance should strengthen fiscal resilience, not deepen debt vulnerabilities.

Putting Social Protection at the Centre

Economic transformation must not disproportionately burden low

Success should be measured not by the volume of green financing announced, but by its contribution to higher productivity, stronger exports, reduced climate-related losses, decent employment and improved social welfare.

Sustainable finance cannot replace sound macroeconomic management, tax reform or institutional accountability. It can, however, make these reforms more effective by directing scarce resources towards long term economic value. Pakistan must move beyond treating sustainability as a cost and recognize it as an investment in national competitiveness and resilience. The ultimate objective is not simply a greener economy, but a more productive, financially stable and socially inclusive Pakistan.

Karsaz: The Night Terror Tried to Silence Democracy



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

Some lives become chapters in a

nation's history; others become the language through which that history is remembered. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto belonged to the latter. Daughter of a leader executed by a military regime, she emerged from imprisonment, exile and personal grief to challenge authoritarian rule and defend the people's right to choose their representatives. From General Zia-ul-Haq's dictatorship to General Pervez Musharraf's military-led order, her journey was marked by courage, resilience and an unyielding belief that Pakistan's future must be decided by its citizens, not by fear.

On October 18, 2007, Karachi prepared to welcome her home after eight years of exile. Streets filled with people carrying party flags, chanting slogans and waiting for the leader whose return had become a symbol of democratic hope. The procession was more than a homecoming; it declared that political participation could not be extinguished by threats or repression. Yet, as her caravan moved along Shahrah-e-Faisal near Karsaz, celebration turned into one of the darkest nights in Pakistan's political history.

Two explosions tore through the procession, killing well over 150 people and injuring hundreds. Party workers, volunteers, and supporters were among the dead and wounded. The blasts struck close to the truck carrying Benazir Bhutto and the party leadership. She survived narrowly, while streets that had echoed with welcome became a scene of blood, confusion and grief. Families searched for loved ones and hospitals filled with the injured. The precise death toll has varied across reports, but the magnitude of the loss is beyond dispute.

The attack carried a chilling political message: abandon the struggle, retreat from public life, and understand that a return to democratic politics could cost everything. Whatever the attackers' motives, the target and timing made the intended effect unmistakable: spread terror, break public resolve and force a political leader into silence. Benazir

had returned despite explicit threats. The assault demonstrated the danger she faced, but also exposed a society in which political violence sought to dictate who could speak, organize and lead.

Her response the following day gave the tragedy its significance. Rather than retreat into private safety, she visited hospitals and neighbourhoods, met the injured and offered condolences to families of the dead. She stood beside people whose loved ones had joined the procession to welcome her and who now faced the permanent absence of sons, brothers, husbands and friends. Her presence could not restore the dead, but it conveyed solidarity: the leader would not abandon those who had risked their lives beside her. When fear might have paralysed a movement, she stood with its bereaved and wounded members.

The courage of those workers deserves remembrance beyond anniversary speeches. Many had formed protective human chains around the procession, placing their bodies between danger and their leader. They were not anonymous figures in a crowd, but citizens with families, aspirations and futures. Their sacrifice testified to their commitment to a democratic cause. Survivors carried injuries and scars, while families of the martyrs endured grief that no public tribute could repay. Honouring them requires more than slogans; it demands truth, justice, care for survivors and commitment to democratic values.

Karsaz belongs to a longer history. Since its foundation, the Pakistan Peoples Party has championed popular rights, parliamentary government and resistance to dictatorship. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's execution in 1979 became a defining wound in its political memory. During General Zia's rule, party activists endured imprisonment, censorship, persecution and, in some cases, death. Benazir herself faced detention and exile before returning in 1986 to a historic reception in Lahore. Her confrontations with military power and the uncertainties of civilian rule shaped Pakistan's democratic journey. The party's history is inseparable from workers who demanded



Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani Pays Tribute to Karsaz Tragedy Martyrs

Report: FT Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD-- Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, recalling the Karsaz tragedy, said the heart-breaking night remained vivid in his memory as he was personally present on the truck that night. He said some of the martyrs could not be identified at the time, describing the incident as a painful chapter in the history of sacrifices for democracy.

Paying tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and all those who laid down their lives for democracy, Gilani said the Karsaz tragedy remained one of the most tragic events in Pakistan's political history, reflecting the nation's commitment to democratic ideals, political resilience and national resolve.

He said Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's courageous return to Pakistan despite serious threats



and risks demonstrated her enduring bond with the people and her commitment to the democratic struggle.

The Senate chairman said the sacrifices of the Karsaz martyrs continued to remind the nation of its responsibility to uphold the Constitution, strengthen democratic institutions and safeguard funda-

CAP Seeks Islamabad Administration's Clarification on PET Bottle Ban Confusion

Report: FT

ISLAMABAD-- The Consumer Association of Pakistan (CAP), Islamabad and North Pakistan Chapter, has sought clarification from Chief Commissioner Islamabad regarding confusion at the retail level over the status of recyclable PET bottles.

In a statement, CAP Chairman Islamabad and North, Riaz Asher Siddiqui, said that following recent media reports, including The Express Tribune report published on October 17, 2026, titled "Govt, MNCs in deadlock over PET bottle ban," some shopkeepers had stopped stocking beverages in PET bottles as a precaution. This has caused inconvenience to consumers struggling to find bottled

water, juices and soft drinks.

Mr. Siddiqui said that, according to CAP's understanding, the ICT Single-Use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulations 2023 prohibit six categories of items: polythene bags, straws, crockery, cutlery, food-service ware and stirrers. PET bottles are not included in the ban, he stated.

He added that Schedule-II provides for a requirement of 50 per cent recycled content from July 1, 2028, to promote recycling. He also referred to a clarification attributed to Pak-EPA Director Dr. Zaigham Abbas, reported by Dawn under the headline "PET bottles not banned: Pak-EPA," stating that PET bottles are not prohibited and that the clarification had been conveyed to the ICT Administration.

The CAP chairman said the associ-

Working Journalists Media Group Finalises Arrangements for Media Office Inauguration and Oath-Taking Ceremony

Report: ANI Correspondent:

SIBI -- An important meeting of the Working Journalists Media Group was held under the chairmanship of President Mir Allah Dad Rind, during which arrangements for the inauguration of the group's media office and the oath-taking ceremony were finalised.

The meeting was attended by Senior Vice President Allah Yar Domki, General Secretary Khurram Shehzad, Deputy General Secretary Nadeem Babar Mughal, Office Secretary Imran Khan Marghzani and Finance Secretary Ishtiaq Ahmed Chachar.

Participants discussed organisational activities, journalistic matters



and preparations for the ceremony. Political, social and tribal figures, district officials, religious scholars and senior journalists from across Balochistan are expected to attend.

The participants reaffirmed the

Pakistan's Wheat Production and Food Security Under Threat, Says PTI Kisan Wing

Report: Reporter ANI

ISLAMABAD --PTI Kisan Wing Central Information Secretary Khalid Nawaz Sadhraich has warned that water shortages, rising agricultural costs and concerns over government wheat stocks are threatening Pakistan's food security, urging the government to take immediate action.

Sadhraich said Punjab and Sindh were facing a reported 22 per cent water shortage during the current Rabi season, with availability estimated at around 22 million acre-feet against a requirement of approximately 38 million acre-feet. He added that inadequate rainfall had also affected wheat cultivation in Balochistan.

He said the estimated production



cost of wheat had reached Rs3,761 per maund, while rising DAP fertiliser and high-speed diesel prices had increased farmers' financial burden. According to him, reduced

Islamabad Police Arrest 768 Suspects in Two Weeks, Recover Stolen Property Worth Over Rs217.5 Million

Report: ANI

ISLAMABAD --Islamabad Police have intensified their crackdown on criminal elements, arresting 768 suspects over the past two weeks and recovering stolen property worth more than Rs217.5 million, following special directions from Inspector General of Police Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry.

According to police, 84 members of 33 gangs involved in robbery, street crime, house burglaries and vehicle theft were arrested. Recovered items included stolen vehicles, motorcycles, gold jewellery, mobile phones and cash.

Police also arrested more than 515 proclaimed offenders and 98 suspects accused of illegal possession or display of weapons. The recoveries included eight Kalashnikovs and rifles, 83 pistols of various calibres and ammunition.



In operations against drug dealers, 71 suspects were arrested, with more than 10 kilograms of hashish, over four kilograms of heroin, 13 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine and 874 bottles of liquor recovered.

Additionally, more than 96 search and combing operations were conducted across the federal capital to

curb criminal activities and maintain law and order. DIG Islamabad Ali Wasim said protecting citizens' lives and property remained the police's foremost priority, adding that action against criminal elements would continue and all available resources would be utilised to maintain peace in the capital.

New Tashkent Emerges as Major Urban Development Project in Uzbekistan

By Zahid H. Karani / ANI

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan is developing New Tashkent, a major urban expansion project near the country's capital, aimed at accommodating future population growth, strengthening economic activity and introducing modern infrastructure and environmentally sustainable urban planning.

The project covers approximately 20,000 hectares, with the first phase envisaging development across 6,000 hectares and planned investments of around \$50 billion. The master plan includes residential and commercial buildings, educational institutions, public facilities and extensive green spaces.

According to the project details, approximately 2,000 hectares are earmarked for green spaces and 500 hectares for recreational parks. Plans also envisage 150 million square metres of residential and non-residential floor space, reflecting the scale of the proposed urban development.

Construction and infrastructure development worth approximately \$2 billion have been reported to date. Several facilities have been developed, including residential buildings, university facilities, a library and an amphitheatre. Seven projects valued at a combined \$1 billion have also been commissioned, according to the



information provided.

These facilities include the first phase of the Sharq Bahori residential complex, road infrastructure, an electrical substation, a trigeneration plant, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry building, Sohil Park and a comprehensive school designed to accommodate 2,000 students.

The project is intended to extend beyond residential construction by creating an urban centre integrating business, education, healthcare, tourism and services. Its long-term development will depend on infrastructure expansion, investment, employment generation and the availability of essential public services.

By the end of 2026, 20,000 residential units are scheduled to be commissioned, with accommodation planned for at least 70,000 people. Supporting

facilities, including schools, health-care centres, sports complexes, commercial establishments and recreational spaces, are also part of the development plans.

A 55,000-seat stadium designed to meet FIFA requirements is another planned component, intended to support sporting events and increase the city's capacity to host international gatherings.

The scale of New Tashkent reflects Uzbekistan's broader urban development ambitions, with a focus on modern infrastructure, environmental planning and the creation of new economic opportunities. The project's progress, investment implementation and delivery of public services will be important factors in determining its long-term impact on the capital region.

PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Sets Admission Record with Over 4,500 Students in Fall 2026

Report: FT

RAWALPINDI -- Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) has enrolled more than 4,500 new students in the Fall 2026 semester, marking a record in the university's admission history under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Qamar-uz-Zaman.

According to a four-year comparative analysis released by the university, admissions increased by approximately 73.1% compared with 2,600 students in Fall 2024. The figure also represents an increase of nearly 9.8% over the 4,100 admissions recorded in Fall 2025.

University statistics show that 3,000 students enrolled in Fall 2023, followed by a decline to 2,600 in Fall 2024. Admissions subsequently rose to 4,100 in Fall 2025 before exceeding



4,500 in the current semester. Congratulating faculty members, administrative staff and admission teams on the achievement, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Qamar-uz-

Zaman attributed the growth to the collective efforts of the university community. He said the growing enrolment across a range of academic disciplines reflected students' interest in the university's educational and research programmes. These fields include agriculture, livestock, computer science, information technology, natural and social sciences, management sciences, engineering and biotechnology. University spokesperson and Director of DITS, Dr. Nadeem Ahmad Malik, said the strong admission figures reflected the institution's academic reputation, practical training opportunities and laboratory facilities. He reaffirmed the university's commitment to providing quality education, modern academic facilities and an environment that supports learning, research and professional development.

Punjab Auqaf Department Prioritises Protection of Properties, Revenue Generation and Accountability

Report: ANI Correspondent:

LAHORE: Secretary and Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta has declared the protection of Auqaf properties, revenue enhancement and timely achievement of government targets as top priorities, warning of departmental action against officials who fail to meet their targets.

Chairing a conference of Zonal Administrators at Aiwan-e-Auqaf, Lahore, he reviewed the department's administrative, financial and development activities and called for stronger accountability and performance monitoring.

During inspections in Rahim Yar Khan, Rajanpur and Mithankot, dedicated teams identified hundreds of acres of Auqaf land under illegal cultivation. Dr. Bhutta directed officials to complete legal proceedings, protect the properties and submit recommendations to



increase revenue.

He also ordered daily monitoring of dengue prevention targets, public awareness campaigns through religious scholars, and greater promotion of historical galleries at model shrines to encourage religious tourism.

The secretary further directed officials to expedite land mutations, remove illegal constructions, coordinate with NAB where necessary, and accelerate commercial and development projects on Auqaf lands.

He stressed that continuous monitoring, effective follow-up and timely action were essential to achieving departmental targets.

Indonesian Consulate Facilitates 14 Business Agreements Worth US\$9.4 Million at TEI 2026

Report: ANI Correspondent:

TANGERANG, Indonesia: A Pakistani business delegation from Sindh has concluded 14 cooperation agreements with Indonesian partners, with a combined projected value of US\$9.4 million, during Trade Expo Indonesia (TEI) 2026 and related business engagements.

According to a press release issued by the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi, the consulate supported around 22 companies from Sindh and facilitated more than 200 scheduled business meetings with Indonesian businesses, exporters and institutions.

A key event was the Indonesia-Pakistan Business Matching and Partnership Forum, held on October 16 in Tangerang, where Pakistani entrepreneurs met prospective Indonesian partners and signed several cooperation agreements.

The agreements cover multiple sectors, including cocoa powder, copra, desiccated coconut, automotive components, mother-and-baby products, entrepreneurship development, trade, investment and the Islamic economy. The projected values cover different implementation



periods, with actual transactions dependent on follow-up by the parties. Indonesian Consul General in Karachi Mudzakir stressed that signed memorandums of understanding were only a starting point, emphasising the importance of completed orders, fulfilled commitments and lasting partnerships.

Bilateral trade between Indonesia and Pakistan stood at approximately US\$4 billion annually in both 2024 and 2025, according to the press release. The emerging partnerships could help diversify trade beyond traditional commodities and industrial products.

During TEI 2026, Karachi-based Mapak Edible Oil (Pvt) Ltd. also received the Primaduta Award 2026 in recognition of its contribution to bilateral trade and promoting Indonesian products in Pakistan.

The focus now is on translating the agreements into actual transactions and strengthening long-term economic cooperation between the two countries.