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PM directs FBR to continue enforcement against smuggling, tax evasion, illegal businesses

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to continue effective enforcement against smuggling, tax evasion, and illegal businesses across the country. Chairing a review meeting regarding ongoing FBR reforms, the prime minister directed that implementation of the FBR reforms be further accelerated. He welcomed the growing confidence of the business community in the ongoing tax reforms. The prime minister further instructed that the Chairman FBR and senior officers should stay in Lahore for two days every month, in addition to their monthly stay in Karachi. "The FBR should accelerate enforcement measures to achieve the prescribed revenue target."

The prime minister appreciated the FBR's actions against illegal cigarette manufacturing factories in Chakwal and Swabi and directed that officers and personnel of good reputation and integrity be appointed to all sensitive posts and departments of the FBR. He also directed the timely completion of the proposed Faceless System for Inland Revenue. The complete roll-out of the Faceless System should be ensured by 2027. During the meeting, the prime minister was informed that the first phase of the Faceless Inland Revenue System will become operational from October 1, 2026 and the AI- and advanced technology-based Faceless System was an important component of the FBR's recent digitization reforms. The system will include a National Faceless Audit.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding FBR.

Security forces kill 5 terrorists in intelligence-based operation in Balochistan's Panjgur

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed five terrorists, including a key commander, in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Sarkini and Chedgi areas of Panjgur

district in Balochistan, Radio Pakistan reported on Monday. The operation was conducted as part of Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-3 in Balochistan, the state broadcaster said. "According to security sources, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation against Fitna al Hindustan terrorists in Sarkini and Chedgi areas of Panjgur, killing five terrorists, including a key Fitna al Hindustan commander, Wazir," it said. Fitna al-Hindustan is a term used by the Pakistani military for India's alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation in Pakistan. "Four motorcycles, machine guns, heavy weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the slain terrorists," Radio Pakistan reported. The terrorists were allegedly involved in robbery, extortion, kidnapping and attacks targeting local traders and other residents in Panjgur, it added. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi lauded security forces on the successful operation.

Iran says Pak-Saudi-Turkiye deal shows 'change in perception' towards US

PEAK POINT



TEHRAN: Iran's foreign ministry said on Monday that the defence pact signed last week between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye was "a sign of a change in the perception" of regional countries towards the United States. The joint defence agreement, signed in Makkah on Friday, aims to strengthen collective deterrence and empowers its signatory states to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all of them. "This development is a sign of a change in the perception of the countries of the region," ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said while responding to a query during a weekly press briefing on Monday. "Considering the developments of the last two to three years, the countries of the region have realised that security is not a commodity that can be bought from false security brokers," Iran's state media quoted him as saying, referring to the United States. Baqaei further said that there was "no reason to worry that this treaty will be against Iran", highlighting Iran's deep religious, historical and civilisational ties with Pakistan, Türkiye and even Saudi Arabia. "This development is an important sign that the countries of the region have concluded that they cannot rely on and trust the claim of security provided by the United States and some other actors outside the region, and they are attempting to try another method; by relying on their own capabilities and perspectives," IRNA quoted Baqaei as saying. "Any plan that is based on the geopolitical and historical realities of the region, is comprehensive and inclusive, and correctly identifies the enemy and the threat."

3rd phase of AJK elections: Polling concludes in Poonch Division's Bagh, Haveli districts

PEAK POINT



MUZAFFARABAD: Polling in four constituencies of Poonch Division's Bagh and Haveli districts concluded on Monday as part of the third

phase of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections. Elections are being held across AJK in phases amid tensions between protesters and the authorities. Citing law and order concerns, the Election Commission had decided to postpone polling in Bagh and Sudhnoti districts that was originally set for today.

On Monday, polling began at 8am and continued until 5pm in four Poonch constituencies. The PPP, which has accused the PML-N of rigging in the previous phases, continued to make similar allegations on Monday as well. In response, PML-N leaders said the PPP had no evidence for its claims, and reiterated their confidence to form the government in AJK based on the seats it has already secured so far.

The PML-N has so far bagged 24 seats — nine from Mirpur polls held on July 27 and 15 in the second phase comprising Muzaffarabad Division.

Terrorist killed in joint police, CTD operation in K-P's Bannu

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: A terrorist was killed during a joint intelligence-based operation by police, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and security forces in Bannu, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) police spokesperson Abdul Salam Khalid said on Monday. The operation was conducted in the Miryan area after intelligence reports indicated the presence of suspected terrorists, he added. The spokesperson further said district police, CTD teams, the Quick Response Force and security forces took part.

Bangladesh PM seeks 'conducive environment' to reset ties with India

PEAK POINT

DHAKA: Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman told India's envoy on Monday that there was a need to create a "conducive environment" to boost ties between the neighbours, as Dhaka continues to press New Delhi over the politically sensitive issue of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's exile in India.

Rahman's remarks underline his six-month-old government's efforts to stabilise relations with its largest neighbour while seeking progress on issues that have remained major irritants since Hasina's ouster in August 2024.

While Rahman has sought good relations with India since coming to power, Monday's com-

ments are his first that stress the need to improve

statement after the meeting. Bangladesh also



conditions to boost ties.

Rahman made the comments during his first meeting with the new Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Dinesh Trivedi.

Rahman "emphasised the need to create a conducive environment to further advance the bilateral relations between the two countries", the Prime Minister's Office said in a

statement after the meeting. Bangladesh also urged India to expedite Hasina's extradition, it said. Hasina, who has been staying in India since the fall of her government, is facing legal proceedings in Bangladesh and was sentenced to death in November.

Dhaka's request came days after Hasina interacted with the media for the first time since she fled the country. In an online

audio conference she reiterated that she would return to Bangladesh in December, drawing renewed attention to her continued presence and political activities in India.

The Bangladesh foreign ministry strongly criticised the event, saying that giving Hasina the opportunity to hold the event was deeply hurtful and that Bangladesh was outraged.

India has said it is examining Bangladesh's extradition request in accordance with its legal and judicial procedures.

In a post on X, the Indian High Commission said Trivedi reiterated India's commitment to working with Bangladesh in a "positive, constructive and forward-looking manner".

Delay in judicial appointments IHC tells govt to explain consequences of keeping PM's advice pending

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday issued a ruling on a public interest petition challenging President Asif Ali Zardari's delay in approving judicial appointments, directing the government to explain the constitutional consequences of keeping the premier's advice pending for an indefinite period.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, who had reserved the order on the maintainability of the petition on August 6, issued notices to the president, the federation of Pakistan and the attorney general. He directed them to file separate concise reports explaining the timeline and status of the summary forwarded by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for judicial appointments. The petition was filed by advocate Luqman Zafar through his counsel Zahid Asif Chaudhry amid a presidential delay in approving the judicial appointments recommended by the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP).





SPORTS



Pakistan begin England Test preparations



PEAK POINT

BECKENHAM: Pakistan's Test squad has begun preparations for their upcoming series against England, with the players taking part in their first training session at Kent County Club in Beckenham on Monday. The squad underwent physical drills and fielding exercises during the opening practice session as the team began its preparations for the Test series which is expected to be a highly challenging task for the visitors.

Newly appointed Pakistan batting coach Michael Smith of South Africa also joined the

squad and met with the players before taking part in a batting session. Smith's arrival comes as Pakistan look to fine-tune their batting plans ahead of the series against England. The coaching staff is expected to use the preparation period to assess the players and work on technical and tactical aspects of the game. The Pakistan Test team will continue its training at Kent County Club on Tuesday (today), with the session scheduled to begin at 12:30 pm. The team's preparations are focused on building match readiness and sharpening fielding, fitness and batting skills before the

Test series gets under way.

Pakistan will be hoping their preparation in English conditions helps the squad adapt quickly and provides a strong foundation for the challenges of the series.

Pakistan headed into their upcoming Test series in England with renewed confidence after recovering from an opening-match defeat to draw their recent series in the Caribbean. The Green-shirts secured an eight-wicket victory in the second Test in Trinidad to level the two-match series 1-1, responding strongly after suffering a 90-run defeat in the opening match.

The result has given Pakistan a timely boost before a challenging assignment in England, where they will face a side accustomed to using home conditions to their advantage. Unusually warm weather during the tour, however, could lessen the assistance traditionally available to England's seam attack and potentially alter the balance between bat and ball.

Pakistan's record in England remains modest despite a number of memorable individual and team performances over the years. The two sides have played 16 Test series on English soil, with England winning eight, Pakistan three and five ending in draws.

Pakistan's most recent series victory in England came three decades ago, in 1996, when they won the three-match series 2-0. They had also prevailed in 1992, winning 2-1, while their earlier success came in 1987, when they secured a 1-0 series victory.

The long gap since Pakistan's last series triumph in England underlines the scale of the challenge facing the current squad.

Pakistan will also have an opportunity to test their combinations in a four-day warm-up match against a Select XI from August 12 to 15. The game is expected to provide the team with valuable preparation ahead of the first Test, particularly for players adjusting to the conditions and demands of English cricket.

Stars set for Champions Cup battle



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading white-ball cricketers will return to domestic action on Tuesday as the Al Batal Presents University of Lahore National Champions Cup 2026-27 gets underway at the Multan Cricket Stadium, providing the national selectors and coaching staff with an early opportunity to assess the country's options ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2027. Pakistan Greens, Pakistan Gold, Pakistan Whites and Pakistan Blues will contest seven 50-over matches from August 11-18, with the top two sides progressing to the final. Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan, Saim Ayub and Saibzada Farhan will lead the four teams respectively. The tournament, which serves as the opening event of Pakistan's 2026-27 domestic cricket season, has been designed not only to crown a domestic champion but also to widen the national team's pool ahead of the 2027 World Cup. The opening fixture on Tuesday will see Shadab's Pakistan Greens take on Saim's Pakistan Whites. All matches will begin at 3pm, with the toss scheduled for 2:30pm. The four squads, along with their support staff, arrived in Multan on August 8 and have since trained in day and night sessions at the Inzamam-ul-Haq High Performance Centre and Multan Cricket Stadium.

Thailand beat Pakistan in Asian netball



PEAK POINT

HONG KONG: Pakistan's women's netball team suffered a 66-48 defeat at the hands of Thailand in their second outing at the Asian Netball Championships 2026 Plate Division in Hong Kong on Monday.

Pakistan, who made an impressive start to their campaign with a convincing vic-

tory over Japan, were unable to maintain the same momentum against a well-organised Thailand side. Thailand remained in control for much of the contest, combining accurate shooting, disciplined passing and strong defensive play to keep Pakistan under pressure. The Pakistani players fought hard and produced several promising passages of play. The comprehensive

win provided an early boost and showcased the team's attacking quality and ability to control the tempo of the game.

However, the defeat against Thailand highlighted the need for greater consistency as Pakistan look to finish their campaign strongly. Pakistan will now face South Korea on Tuesday, with the match scheduled to begin at 8am Pakistan Standard Time. The fixture presents the national side with an immediate opportunity to bounce back and regain winning momentum. The team will be hoping to reproduce the attacking efficiency and defensive discipline that helped them overcome Japan.

Sabalenka suffers Toronto shock as Alexandrova reaches quarterfinals



Pakistan reach Netherlands ahead of FIH World Cup 2026

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan's national hockey team has arrived in the Netherlands for the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2026, which will be jointly hosted by the Netherlands and Belgium from August 15 to 30.

The Pakistan contingent departed Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport on Sunday and received a warm welcome from officials of the Pakistan Embassy upon arrival in the Netherlands. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has completed the team's logistical arrangements ahead of the prestigious tournament, including travel, accommodation, meals, local transportation and the movement of sports equipment.

The federation has also transferred Rs20 million in foreign daily allowances to the bank accounts of the players and coaching staff in

advance, aiming to ensure that financial concerns do not distract the team from its preparations and on-field performance. PHF President Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani said the welfare of players and coaches remained the

for the four-time world champions to re-establish themselves on the global stage. Pakistan are drawn in Pool D alongside hosts Belgium, Germany and England. Their campaign will begin against England



federation's top priority and that all necessary financial and administrative matters had been settled before the team's departure.

Pakistan are returning to the Hockey World Cup after securing qualification at the March qualifiers in India. The 2026 tournament marks an important opportunity

on August 17, followed by matches against Germany on August 19 and Belgium on August 20. With preparations now moving into their final phase, Pakistan will be aiming for a strong start and a deep run in the tournament as they seek to revive their proud hockey legacy.

Lionel Messi bids farewell to father who guided his glittering career





NUST professor calls for National SMA registry, early diagnosis and Genetic testing

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Tenured Professor of Biomedicine at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Professor Peter John, called for a national strategy to deal with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), stressing the need for early diagnosis, better genetic testing facilities, newborn screening, specialised treatment centres and a nationwide patient registry. Speaking at a symposium on SMA, Professor Peter John said Pakistan faced several major challenges in dealing with genetic diseases, including delays in diagnosis, limited genetic testing facilities, high treatment costs and a lack of public awareness. He said SMA patients and their families often faced difficulties even before treatment could begin because the disease could be

delayed or wrongly diagnosed. According to him, genetic testing was another major challenge because Pakistan lacked proper nationwide facilities for screening and testing genetic disorders. Professor Peter John said even when treatment options were available, their high cost made them difficult for ordinary families to afford. He also pointed out that Pakistan did not have a national newborn screening programme for SMA, leaving families to arrange testing on their own. He stressed the need to establish specialised centres where patients with genetic disorders could receive proper diagnosis, treatment and guidance. He said existing advanced hospitals might provide some facilities, but the country still needed dedicated centres for genetic screening and related services. The professor also



highlighted the lack of public awareness about genetic diseases. He said people needed to understand such diseases better, adding that awareness was particularly important in communities where marriages between close relatives are common. Another major problem, he said, was the absence of a national registry. Without reliable national data, it was difficult to know how many people were suffering from SMA and other genetic disorders or to properly plan healthcare services for them. Professor Peter John also called for

genetic counselling for families affected by inherited diseases. He said genetic disorders should be recognised as a national health issue and addressed through coordinated government efforts. He recommended early diagnosis, stronger genetic testing facilities, expansion of newborn screening, establishment of specialised centres, a nationwide SMA registry and greater genetic counselling services. He also urged the government to support research into genetic diseases so that better solutions could be developed in Pakistan.

Speaking separately about the mental health needs of SMA patients and their families, Professor Peter John said the emotional impact of a serious disease could begin from the moment parents first suspected that their child was not developing like other children. He said families could experience long periods of stress, grief and emotional distress after learning about a child's condition. He also pointed to the stigma surrounding mental health problems and said psychological support should be treated as an important part of patient care. Professor Peter John said Pakistan needed to move beyond a purely medical approach in which doctors mainly focus on diseases, tests and medicines. He advocated a bio-psycho-social approach that also considers a patient's feelings, family problems

and wider social circumstances. He said access to mental health specialists remained difficult in Pakistan, particularly for people living away from major cities. To address this problem, he said ordinary people in communities could be trained to provide basic support and guide patients towards professional help. He further proposed developing a team of mental health professionals who could supervise and support community workers in other parts of the country through telehealth services. Professor Peter John, who has supervised more than 60 postgraduate research students and contributed to research and teaching in biomedicine, said scientific work should not remain limited to academic publications but should reach patients, families and public policy.

AIOU starts dispatching textbook alongside admissions for first time

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: For the first time in the history of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), the process of supplying textbooks to students has been initiated alongside admissions, ensuring that students receive their prescribed academic materials without unnecessary delay. On the special instructions of Vice

Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood, the dispatch of textbooks to students enrolled in Semester Autumn 2026 has commenced simultaneously with the ongoing admissions process. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood, said that relieving students of the wait for textbooks and providing them with academic materials in a timely manner was the

university's priority.

He said the initiative was aimed at providing students with the necessary academic materials at the very beginning of their educational journey and making the distance learning system more effective. He directed that the dispatch of textbooks should be completed according to the prescribed schedule in line with the uni-

versity's annual academic calendar, and that every student should receive a complete set of textbooks corresponding to the courses in which they are enrolled. Referring to complaints received during the previous semester regarding students receiving incomplete sets of textbooks, Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood said that such complaints should not arise

during the current semester. He directed the relevant authorities to prepare complete textbook packages carefully according to the courses selected by each student and ensure their timely delivery. He further directed that the available human resources, logistical facilities and administrative capabilities should be utilized effectively in the preparation

and dispatch of textbooks so that students do not face any inconvenience. Director Admissions, Syed Zia-ul-Hasnain while briefing the Vice Chancellor, said that in the first phase, textbooks were being dispatched to students enrolled in the Associate Degree in Arts and Associate Degree in Commerce programs.

Opinion & Editorial

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Theatre of the absurd

US President Donald Trump signed two new executive orders in yet another attempt to feed his obsession with ending birthright citizenship. This comes just five weeks after the Supreme Court, by a 6-3 vote, rejected his previous order as unconstitutional. The Chief Justice affirmed in the ruling that the 14th Amendment's protections extend to all children born on American soil. Legal scholars have further clarified that only the children of diplomats or "invading forces" are exempt under the law. The former because they are born with diplomatic immunity, and the latter because they are subject to the jurisdiction of their parents' nation. At 735 words, the 14th Amendment is also the longest amendment, and since the Constitution has no pictures or mention of the Trump name, the president is unlikely to get through any attempt to read, or have it read to him. The only way to challenge the amendment is through an overriding amendment, which would need two-thirds majorities in Congress and three-quarters of the 52 states to pass corresponding legislation, both of which are impossible as things stand. The president is thus only wasting taxpayers' money on litigation that is doomed to fail, making it clear that this is simply a performative exercise to distract from the scandals and corruption dogging his administration.

Death of mailman

Shahzad Sharjeel

MAILMAN must be among the last of the generations to have waited eagerly for the mailman to bring us a missive; mostly an interview call, and on rare occasions, an appointment letter. Until the late 1990s, there was no concept of online applications or email appointments. As beat reporters, the first gadget issued to the more important among us was a beeper, a match-sized contraption capable of relaying messages such as 'call office urgently' or 'post-haste' when they emanated from the subbing desk.

The world of literature and cinema would be that much poorer without the genre centred on a lost mailbag containing letters ranging from confessions of mischief to professions of love. From the personal archive, two stand out. One was an interview letter from a foreign news outlet, received a month later than intended. My editor was a lot more crestfallen than I was; imagine the esteem in which yours truly was held. The second was more amusing: a typed letter in a brown, official envelope, crumpled among the myriad contents of a diplomatic pouch. Its opening was a show-stopper: "The competent authority is pleased to terminate your services with immediate effect..." However painful the rest of the message, the comic irony of the opening remains an all-time favourite. Laughing my

head off, with tears in my eyes, I entered a much senior colleague's office, waving the letter at him and exhorting him to read just the opening paragraph. Being a member of the deriving-sadistic-pleasure officialdom, he kept puffing at his cigarette and had only this to add: "This is exactly how clemency appeals from death-row convicts are rejected, ie, 'the competent authority is pleased to reject your mercy plea'."

Over time, the mailman's profession lost its standing and charm. In Western imagery, the mailman was portrayed as being chased by a dog over a very jumpable fence. In our part of the world, the dakia (in Urdu) or tapali (in Sindhi), went from being the confidant who not only delivered but sometimes read letters aloud to unlettered addressees to a derided figure suspected of defrauding people out of their money orders and of not delivering Eid cards until after the event to get some Eid.

Maqbool, our postman in a middle-class Karachi neighbourhood in the 1970s and 1980s, was a respectable man. He always delivered letters, no matter how wrong the address; he wanted to see if all was well when delivering telegrams called 'taar' (literally meaning wire), for these were usually the bearers of bad news from distant towns. He not only delivered Eid cards on time, but would turn on his heel and leave, lest he be seen as eager for a tip.

Long before anything was ever expected to be mailed to our age group, one remembers coming across him during our daily runs to the market, asking "Maqbool bhai, anything for us?", and he would very politely say "no, nothing today".

The postman's profession has lost its charm.

Among all the service groups that one could enter through the competitive civil service exams in the subcontinent, the postal service ranks among the lowest in the eyes of wannabe babus. In fact, the 'elite' who pass this exam and join the worthy ranks of customs, excise, or better still, police or the district management group would deride their lesser colleagues as not even worthy of the postal service. With technological advances in the last few decades and changing modes of communication, no other profession has tried as hard to reinvent itself as the postal service around the world. On the heels of fax and cellular phones, when PCs and email gained currency, the mailman faced redundancy in many parts of Europe and America. While institutions such as the postal ballot survive, the 'cheque-in-the-mail' ruse has lost currency amid digital payment platforms.

True, technology has done wonders to improve the quality of life, enabling people to study or do business without geographical or physical constraints.

Courtesy Dawn

The low hanging fruit

Farrukh Khan Pitafi

THE question of new provinces is back in the news, and it deserves a fair hearing.

But almost everything we know about smaller provinces in Pakistan comes from modelling, not lived experience. Even our one true precedent cuts the other way. The One Unit scheme of 1955 merged the four provinces of the western wing into a single block, the opposite of a split, and it fell apart within fifteen years under the very grudges a fresh carve-up now risks stirring in reverse. Large-scale redrawing of the map is uncharted water, thick with moving parts we can only guess at, not measure. There is one tier of government on which we do hold real data, gathered at real scale, more than once. Pervaz Musharraf built the version most of us remember, a full district system, with elected nazims and coordination officers standing in for deputy commissioners, and commissioners struck off the map altogether. It was not the first attempt. Ayub Khan had tried something similar decades earlier, as Basic Democracies, a pyramid of some eighty thousand elected village representatives who in turn chose the president, meant to root power close to home while keeping it well fenced off from national politics. Both, notably, were drawn up under army rule and pushed down from the top rather than argued up from below. Both were, within a few years of a return to civilian rule, hollowed out or undone outright. That is not an accident. It is a pattern, and worth reading closely before we open a costlier, harder frontier elsewhere. Consider what new capitals would and would not fix. They would bring the seat of power closer in miles. But the bureaucrat sitting in that office would still answer upward, to a chief secretary and a cabinet, not outward, to the town he serves. Being nearer is not the same thing as being answerable. Local government, done properly, is the one design meant to close that second gap rather than merely shorten the first.

Courtesy Tribune

AJK polls peaceful, PML-N poised to form govt: Rana Sanaullah



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah has said polling in the third phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections is proceeding peacefully in the remaining constituencies of Poonch Division, particularly Haveli and Bagh, with only a few isolated incidents reported.

Speaking to the media, Sanaullah said the elections were being held after the AJK and federal governments agreed to give protesters sufficient time to reconsider their position. He said those who had sought to prevent the elections should now accept that they had failed to stop the democratic process.

"Those who wanted to stop the elections should now realize that they have failed. The people of Azad Kashmir have exercised their right to vote and given their mandate to their elected representatives," he said.

Sanaullah said the completion of the third phase would pave the way for government formation in AJK. The elected government, he added, would address the legitimate problems and concerns of the people through democratic means.

He urged protesting groups to end their sit-ins and return to the democratic process, saying candidates from constituencies where elections remained pending could join the assembly through by-elections.

At the same time, Sanaullah warned that individuals who had allegedly taken up arms, attempted to mislead the people, undermine the Kashmir freedom movement, damage the state or act in the interests of hostile forces would have to face the law and account for their actions.

According to Sanaullah, polling in Haveli and Bagh began at 8 am and

continued peacefully. He said an incident occurred at a police station in Haveli where some individuals allegedly attempted to seize official records. The situation was brought under control after the Quick Response Force, including Rangers and other security personnel, reached the area, allowing polling to resume.

He also said attempts were allegedly made to disrupt polling at three stations in one of the Bagh constituencies. Apart from these incidents, he said, no major violence had been reported.

He alleged that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was attempting to portray its electoral defeat as a result of rigging.

"I have mentioned this incident because I do not want the death of this elderly voter to later be presented as the death of a political worker or a victim of electoral violence," he said.

Sanaullah said law-enforcement agencies were fully prepared and that the Quick Response Force was providing additional security throughout the electoral process.

Makkah Accord aims at bolstering collective deterrence: Dar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has reiterated that the Makkah Accord was defensive in nature, and it was not directed against any country.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Office in Islamabad on Monday, Ishaq Dar said "Its purpose is to strengthen collective deterrence against external aggression and reinforce our capacity to defend our sovereignty, territorial integrity and peoples."

Extending warm felicitations to the nation on the signing of the "Makkah Joint Defence Agreement" (Makkah Accord) by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in the blessed city of Makkah Al-Mukarramah, he said this his-



toric accord reflected the depth of our brotherly bonds, shared values and common commitment to peace, security and stability, the deputy prime minister said in his message to the Nation.

He said the signing of the Makkah Accord was a significant milestone in Pakistan's longstanding strategic relationships with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Türkiye. "It embodies our shared resolve to strengthen cooperation in addressing the evolving peace."

Pakistan, Russia explore cooperation in farm machinery, inputs, animal health

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Russia on Monday explored avenues to expand bilateral cooperation in agriculture and livestock sectors, with a focus on farm machinery, fertilizers, pesticides, vaccines and related technologies.

Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain chaired a meeting with Nikita Buzanov, representative of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, to discuss ways to translate bilateral ties into practical cooperation.

The minister said Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Russia and sought enhanced trade, technology and technical cooperation in sectors linked to food security and agricultural productivity.

He emphasised the need for modern and efficient agricultural machinery to improve farm productivity, reduce production costs and promote mechanisation, expressing

Pakistan's interest in greater Russian cooperation in this area.

Rana Tanveer also stressed the importance of ensuring timely availability of quality fertilizers and pesticides at affordable prices, saying stronger cooperation with Russia could help boost agricultural productivity and support food security.

The minister also called for enhanced cooperation in livestock and animal health, particularly in access to quality vaccines and modern technologies for disease prevention and improved livestock productivity.

Buzanov briefed the minister on Russia's interest in expanding agricultural cooperation with Pakistan, saying Russian companies and institutions were ready to explore opportunities to supply machinery, fertilizers, pesticides and vaccines to Pakistan.

He also highlighted the potential for increasing bilateral trade in agriculture-related products and strengthening institutional linkages between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain meets Russian representative Nikita Buzanov to discuss agricultural cooperation.

No party meetings as Zardari leaves Lahore

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Without holding a single meeting with any member of his party in Lahore, President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday left the provincial metropolis for Islamabad after a brief stay of around two days.

Against the backdrop of rumours about PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's departure from Pakistan - which The Express Tribune repeatedly tried to confirm with key party leaders - Zardari's visit has taken on a new importance.

A leader considered close to the party leadership said Asif Ali Zardari was not in Lahore to hold any meetings with the local party leadership.

He said the president was there for a much more important visit, adding that there were urgent matters that needed to be addressed away from prying eyes, which was why Lahore was chosen.

Asked about the rumours regarding Bilawal's departure, he said he too had heard them but was not in a position to confirm or deny the matter.

BISP reaffirms commitment to maternal, child nutrition on World Breastfeeding Week

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has reaffirmed its commitment to protecting and promoting breastfeeding as a critical intervention for maternal and child health, stressing that financial support must be complemented by counselling, accurate information and access to quality health and nutrition services.

BISP Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid made these remarks while addressing the launch ceremony of World Breastfeeding Week 2026, organized at BISP Headquarters in collaboration with UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of



National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination.

She said breastfeeding provided every child with the healthiest start in life and was fundamental to child survival, family well-being, human capital development and national progress. Senator Rubina Khalid urged mothers to exclusively breastfeed their infants during the first six months of life and discouraged the unnecessary use of formula milk and bottle feeding. She said the vision of Shaheed.

Minorities equal citizens, key partners in Pakistan's progress: Governor KP

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday said minorities were equal citizens of Pakistan and their role in the country's development and prosperity was of vital importance.

Addressing a ceremony held at Parliament House in connection with National Minorities Day, the Governor said Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had always raised her voice for the protection of minority rights, while President Asif Ali Zardari and Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari remained committed to safeguarding the rights of minority communities.



He said National Minorities Day provided an opportunity to reaffirm the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the constitutional principles of equality, freedom, human dignity and inclusion.

Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, addressing the ceremony, said that during his tenure as prime minister in 2009,

Minority communities' contribution to Pakistan's development is commendable: Speaker National Assembly

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has paid tribute to the valuable contribution of minority communities to the development and progress of Pakistan, saying that minorities living in the country are rendering valuable services in all walks of life, including education, health, defence and trade. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that under Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan, all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of

law without discrimination on the basis of colour, race, sex or religion. He expressed these views in his message on the occasion of National Minorities' Day, observed across the country every year on August 11 with national spirit and enthusiasm. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that National Minorities' Day provides an opportunity to reaffirm the collective resolve to promote mutual respect, tolerance, interfaith harmony and national unity. He said that in his historic address to the Constituent Assembly on

August 11, 1947, the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had articulated the fundamental principle that every citizen was free to practice his or her religion, visit places of worship and live according to his or her faith. He said that Quaid-e-Azam's historic address laid the foundation for a society based on religious freedom, equality, tolerance and the rule of law, where all citizens enjoy equal rights without discrimination on the basis of colour, race or religion. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the State of

Pakistan is committed to the vision of Quaid-e-Azam and that all citizens living in Pakistan enjoy equal rights, including the right to religious freedom. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the Parliament of Pakistan had always played an effective role in protecting the rights of minority communities, promoting interfaith harmony and ensuring equal opportunities through legislation. He said that minority parliamentarians in the National Assembly were actively contributing to legislation and national affairs,

which was a manifestation of the strength of Pakistan's democratic and inclusive parliamentary system. Referring to the outstanding contributions of prominent non-Muslim personalities of Pakistan, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly C.E. Gibbon, former Speaker of the Punjab Assembly S.P. Singha, Justice A.R. Cornelius, Justice Dorab Patel, Justice Rana Bhagwandas, Dr. Ruth Pfau, Pakistan Air Force Squadron Leader Cecil Chaudhry,

Pakistan Air Force Group Captain Kamran Bashir, renowned diplomat Jamsheed Marker and other non-muslim distinguished personalities, had rendered invaluable services in various fields. He said that their contributions constituted a proud and enduring part of Pakistan's national history. NA Speaker said that the foundation of a strong, developed and prosperous Pakistan lay in equality, justice, religious freedom and the equal participation of all citizens. He reiterated that Parliament would continue.