



Independence Day calls for renewed resolve for national unity, development: Awais Leghari



Rana Mashhood celebrates Independence Day with Danish school students



Shaza Fatima stresses digital sovereignty, stronger cybersecurity

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Saturday 15 August 2026

Rabi-ul-Awaal 01, 1448 A.H

VOI No: 06

Issue No. 171 Pages 4 Rs. 20

Prime Minister Shehbaz briefs President Zardari on Pak-Saudi-Turkiye defence pact

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called on President Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad on Friday and briefed him on a recently signed defence pact between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, according to a statement issued by the Presidency.

For his part, President Zardari "expressed his best wishes for the effective implementation of the tripartite agreement with regard to defence cooperation, regional peace and stability and promotion of the security of the Muslim ummah", the Presidency's statement on its X account said. He also appreciated PM Shehbaz's and Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir's efforts for "further strengthening the

longstanding fraternal relations between Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan into a robust strategic partnership", the statement added. The joint defence agreement, signed on August 7 in Makkah, 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. Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia will form political and military mechanisms under the defence pact, Türkiye's defence ministry said on Thursday, adding the alliance would also deepen defence industry cooperation. Both Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Dar have said the pact is defensive in nature, with the latter saying that it is also "open to any country in the region" willing to uphold its fundamental principles.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari talking to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, who met him at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

US warns Iran it will step up economic pressure; two more ships attacked in Hormuz

MAHPARA ZAMAN



WASHINGTON: Transit through the Strait of Hormuz appeared to grind to a near standstill on Friday after two more ships were attacked there and the United

States said it could maintain a naval blockade of Iran indefinitely. A senior Iranian source said on Wednesday that there had been no progress in talks to build on a June agreement to end the war. As a ceasefire renewed then broke down, Iran has resumed attacks on ships it accuses of trying to transit the strait without its permission. Two vessels from the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company were attacked transiting the strait on Thursday evening, UAE state news agency WAM reported. The United Arab Emirates government blamed Iran, which made no immediate comment. Nine vessels passed through the narrow waterway at the entrance to the Gulf on Thursday, up from five on Wednesday but below the average for August of 12, according to ship-tracking company Kpler. There were no visible crossings by vessels seen early on Friday, according to ship-tracking data.

Afghan soil being used against Pakistan, Naqvi tells Norway FM as two discuss counterterrorism cooperation

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide, where the two sides discussed counterterrorism cooperation, particularly the use of Afghan soil in terror attacks against Pakistan.

Eide arrived in Pakistan a day earlier on a two-day visit — the first by a Norwegian foreign minister in a decade. According to a handout issued by the interior ministry, the two leaders discussed strengthening bilateral relations and the regional situation. Naqvi and Eide also agreed to improve cooperation in counterterrorism, prevention of illegal immigration, police training, and mutual legal assistance. The two sides held discussions on the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan and the activities of proscribed organisations operating from the neighbouring country. During the meeting, Eide lauded Pakistan's "constructive and active" role in the US-Iran war. The two sides also discussed measures taken against illegal immigration to Europe from Pakistan. "Pakistan's effective measures have led to a 47 per cent reduction in illegal immigration to Europe," the statement quoted Naqvi as saying, adding that "a zero-tolerance policy has been adopted against illegal immigration". He said that Pakistan's measures against illegal immigration were also appreciated by the European Union.

Pakistan's leadership stresses need for unity, reforms as nation celebrates Independence Day

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's civilian and military leadership has stressed the need for unity and reforms as the nation celebrates 79 years of independence today. According to state-run Radio Pakistan, the day dawned with a 31-gun salute in Islamabad and a 21-gun salute at the provincial headquarters. A change of guards ceremony was also held at the mausoleum of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in Karachi. Flag hoisting ceremonies were also held at the Supreme Court and the Federal Constitutional Court in Islamabad. In his message, President Asif Ali Zardari paid tribute to Quaid-i-Azam, those behind the Pakistan Movement and those who sacrificed their homes, security and livelihoods in the struggle for a homeland. "But independence is not only a historic achievement. It is also a responsibility that each generation must carry forward. The Pakistan that was created through the democratic will of its people must continue to grow stronger, more secure and more prosperous."

Balochistan home minister unhurt as convoy comes under attack in Mastung

PEAK POINT

QUETTA: Six people, including three police personnel, were injured in an armed attack on the convoy of Balochistan Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove in Mastung on Friday. A senior police official told Dawn that the home minister remained unhurt in the attack, which occurred as his convoy reached the Khad Kocha area of Mastung. He said that Langove was on his way to Quetta from Kalat. The official added that six people sustained bullet injuries in the attack.

Turkey unveils mechanisms of Makkah pact with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia

PEAK POINT

TURKEY: Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia will group senior ministers, hold joint exercises and deepen defence industry cooperation under Makkah Joint Defence Agreement signed between the regional powers last week, Turkey's defence ministry said. The three states, alarmed by a regional conflagration that has brought Iranian missile fire onto Gulf oil exporters, signed the defence accord on August 7. They said the accord stipulates that an armed attack against any member would be regarded as an attack on all, similar to NATO's Article 5 collective defence clause.

At a weekly briefing in Ankara, the defence ministry said the pact's fundamental goal was to ensure defence and military ties

were put on a "more institutional and sustainable" involving land, naval, and air forces, as well as air



footing. "Under the accord, strategic political and military mechanisms plan to be established involving the defence ministers, foreign ministers, and chiefs of general staff/armored forces commanders, and that coordination among the three countries will be conducted at the highest level," it said.

The ministry added that joint military exercises

defence and unmanned systems were planned, in addition to deeper defence industry cooperation.

"The aim is to provide not only product and system supply, but also joint development and production, technology cooperation, and sustainable maintenance and logistics support," it said, adding that unmanned and autonomous systems, electronic warfare and artificial

intelligence capabilities would be prioritised.

Turkey, which has NATO's second-largest army, has said the pact with nuclear-armed Pakistan and top oil exporter Saudi Arabia was open to expansion — with Egypt as a potential candidate — and did not seek to replace any existing alliances.

The ministry also said Turkey was participating in meetings in Jeddah aimed at establishing an international coalition to protect Red Sea shipping.

Turkish Defence Ministry spokesman Rear Admiral Zeki Akturk told reporters that the agreement aims to create more spaces for military cooperation including training together to practise joint operations and working together on advanced military technology.

Petrol dealers postpone nationwide strike after govt assures margin increase

PEAK POINT



KARACHI: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) on Friday announced the postponement of its planned nationwide strike after the government assured it of an increase in dealers' profit margins on petroleum products. During a press conference in Karachi, PPDA Chairman Malik Khuda Baksh said the petroleum minister had spoken to him by telephone for half an hour and assured him that the dealers' profit margin would be increased.

"The petroleum minister has indicated an increase of Rs1.34 in the profit margin after obtaining special approval from the prime minister," he said. Baksh said an Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) meeting had been convened on Thursday.



SPORTS



Barnstorming Bangladesh take charge against Australia on first day of Test cricket in Darwin



PEAK POINT

DARWIN: Bangladesh savoured their first taste of Test cricket in Australia for 23 years on Thursday as they skittled the world's top-ranked side for less than 200 and went to stumps in command at 96 for one on the first day of the series-opener in Darwin.

Hasan Mahmud was the stand-out performer on a famous day for Bangladesh pace bowling, taking 6-55 at the Marrara Oval to rout Pat Cummins's team for 198, their lowest innings total in seven Tests against the South Asian side.

Hasan's haul was the third best in Tests by a Bangladesh quick

and included the prized wicket of Steve Smith for 71 before tea.

Barring Smith, it was a poor display by Australia's batters after captain Pat Cummins won the toss and put them to work on a slow, green-tinged pitch under a blazing sun. Under-pressure opener Jake Weatherald (23), Darwin's first Test player, squandered a start and all-rounder Cameron Green's 13-ball 13 may deepen doubts about his place in the team.

"Yeah, not our best. Still plenty of cricket to be played, obviously," said Smith, who was dropped in the slips on two.

"It would have been nice to

have taken a few more [wickets]. So, hopefully we start well in the morning, pick up a few early ones and put pressure on."

By contrast, Bangladesh's top order batted with patience and resilience, foiling Australia's elite attack of Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon as the pitch flattened out in the afternoon.

Starc made the sole breakthrough, removing Shadman Islam for 20, but opener Tanzid Hasan (32 not out) and number three Mominul Haque (35 not out) combined in a 60-run partnership to see Bangladesh safely to stumps.

The second-wicket stand was six runs better than Bangladesh's paltry second innings total of 54 when they crashed to defeat in a warm-up against a Cricket Australia XI over the weekend.

Starc's dismissal of Shadman, coaxing a leading edge that Lyon caught at cover point, made him the most prolific among left-arm bowlers with 434 wickets, moving past Sri Lanka spinner Rangana Herath. It was about the only highlight for the Australians, who had been coasting at 45 for no loss in the first hour before 26-year-old Hasan struck to remove both openers.

PHF calls up national sr hockey team's training camp



MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: For the preparations of the "Four-Nation Invitational Hockey Tournament" to be held in Kazan, Russia, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has called up the National Senior Hockey Team's training camp in Islamabad starting from August 15. The training camp will be established at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, starting on August 15. The Four-Nation Tournament will be played from August 27 to September 1, in Kazan, Russia, said a press release. According to the notification issued on the recommendations of the Professional Development Committee and the National Selection Committee of the Pakistan Hockey Federation, all selected players have been directed to report by 5pm on August 15.

List of Called-Up Players: Goalkeepers: Faizan Janjua, Muhammad Awaiz, Muneeb-ur-Rehman, Awaiz Rasheed. Defenders: Yasir Islam, Ehsan Khan, Usman Khan, Muhammad Zain, Asad Aziz, Bilal Aslam. Midfielders/Half-Backs: Abdul Hamid, Ahsan Nadeem, Samiullah, Aqeel Ahmed, Irfan Shah, Muhammad Atif, Abdul Wahab, Rehan Ali. Forwards/Strikers: Arsalan, Taha Sherwani, Sarfraz Zaheer, Awaiz Arshad, Shareef Khan, Muhammad Faizan, Ali Murtaza, Muhammad Bilal, Taimoor Javed, Muhammad Ahmed, Danish Tariq, Ramzan Sargana, Abu Bakar/Abuzar, Abdul Yousuf, Waseem Akram.

Pakistan to open FIH Hockey World Cup campaign against England after eight-year absence



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan will launch their FIH Men's World Cup campaign against England on Saturday with a young Green-shirts side eager to make a strong impression after an eight-year absence from the global showpiece.

The Pool D opener at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, Netherlands, is scheduled to begin at 10pm PST. Pakistan team

manager Muhammad Awaiz Qarni said the players were fit, excited and ready for the challenge. "Yes, the boys are fit and very excited," Awaiz told The Express Tribune from Amstelveen on Friday. "It's a young team and barring Ammad Shakeel Butt and skipper Abu Bakar, the rest of the players are set to play their first World Cup."

Pakistan have used

their preparations in the Netherlands to expose the squad to different conditions. They played warm-up matches against South Africa and Japan, losing 3-1 to the former before securing a 2-1 victory over Japan.

"The matches were good and the boys were exposed to different situations. It's part of the plans," Awaiz said. The weather has also been a talking point, with temperatures in the

Netherlands climbing above 34 degrees Celsius. However, conditions are expected to become a bit pleasant in coming days.

Pakistan, who are staying at the official FIH hotel near Amstelveen airport, will face a demanding Pool D campaign. India and Wales are the other teams in the group with Pakistan having recently suffered defeats against England and India in the FIH Pro League.

The tournament is being jointly hosted by Wavre, Belgium, and Amstelveen, Netherlands, from August 15 to 30. A new crossover-pool format has replaced the traditional quarter-finals, with teams moving into Pools E to H after the opening stage.

Six Arab federations endorse Infantino ahead of FIFA election



Moazam, Rajea win titles at ACTIVIT Jashan-e-Azadi Cycling Race

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Moazam Ali and Rajea Shabbir clinched the men's and women's titles at the ACTIVIT Jashan-e-Azadi Cycling Race 2026, organised to celebrate Pakistan's 79th Independence Day. The event was jointly organised by ACTIVIT, Unique Group (UGI) and the PCF, bringing together leading cyclists, students and sports enthusiasts in a colourful celebration of patriotism and sportsmanship. Punjab Minister for Health Khawaja Imran Nazir and UGI Chairman Abdul Manan Khurram graced the closing ceremony as chief guests, who along with ACTIVIT Ambassador Moazzam Khan Klair, distributed cash prizes, trophies and medals among the top performers. ECC approves Rs1.34 per litre increase in petrol and diesel dealers' margin.

In his statement, CEO ACTIVIT & Director

National Hospital DHA Lahore, Rd. Rizwan Aftab Ahmed, said: "We honour Quaid-e-Azam, Allama Iqbal, Hafeez Jalandhari, and every unnamed civilian who sacrificed everything for Pakistan. We salute Pakistan Army and

ished second and Zahid Ali Imran claimed third position. In the women's category, Rajea Shabbir claimed the title, followed by Kishwar in second place and Alizbath in third. Expressing their delight after the race, the position



our martyrs, and honour our labourers, athletes, farmers, teachers, doctors, and every citizen who serves this land. Some gave their dreams, some their sweat, and some their lives and today, we carry their sacrifice forward. Pakistan Zindabad!" In the men's competition, Moazam Ali secured first place, Mansoor Khan fin-

holders thanked ACTIVIT, Unique Group and the PCF for organising a professionally managed event. The celebrations also featured an Independence Day cake-cutting ceremony, patriotic songs and poetry, creating a festive atmosphere that reflected the spirit of Pakistan's 79th Independence Day.

Babar hurt, withdraws from practice match



Contractors secured Multiple deals, Senate questions transparency in World Bank funded projects

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Serious questions were raised over foreign funded road projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs expressed concern over the transparency of the bidding process and ordered a detailed inquiry into alleged irregularities. Chairman Senator Saifullah Abro directed the Economic Affairs Division to approach the relevant authorities for a comprehensive investigation and recommended strict action against those responsible if wrongdoing was found. He also suggested recovery of any additional public

money paid due to inflated tender costs and advised that the matter should be presented before the World Bank for review as a possible case of misprocurement. The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs was held at Parliament House under the chairmanship of Senator Saifullah Abro to review foreign funded development projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other important development matters. The meeting was attended by Senator Haji Hidayatullah Khan, Senator Rana Mahmood Ul Hassan, Senator Syed Waqar Mehdi, Senator Rubina Khalid, Senator Kamran Murtaza, Senator Kamil Ali Agha and

Senator Dilawar Khan as a special invitee. During the briefing, the Committee examined World Bank funded road infrastructure projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and raised concerns over the way contracts were awarded. Members observed that some projects appeared to have been divided into different packages, allowing multiple contractors to receive contracts. The Committee also questioned the bidding process used in NIT I, NIT II and NIT III projects. Members raised concerns over the use of the Single Stage One Envelope bidding method instead of the Single Stage Two Envelope procedure, stating that transparency

could be affected through such practices. Officials of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Communication and Works Department informed the Committee that financial bids were opened before the technical evaluation of the lowest bidder. Committee members questioned the approach and observed that procurement procedures must follow transparent rules to protect public money. The Economic Affairs Division informed the Committee that after discussions with the World Bank, it was found that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government had requested the Single Stage One Envelope method because of the urgency of the pro-

jects. However, the Committee remained concerned over the fact that a small number of contractors had obtained several contracts. Senator Saifullah Abro directed that the issue should be properly investigated and that responsibility should be fixed if any violations were found. The Committee also decided to discourage unnecessary dependence on foreign loans and recommended reducing reliance on foreign funded projects. Senator Saifullah Abro directed the Economic Affairs Division to arrange a meeting with the World Bank Country Director to discuss the Committee's concerns. The Chairman further directed that the findings of the Committee should be presented before the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Cabinet through the Chief Secretary so that the provincial government could take notice of the matter. The Committee stressed that development projects funded through public money and international loans must follow fair procedures. Members said that transparency and accountability are necessary to ensure that projects benefit citizens and that funds are used properly. The Committee directed the concerned departments to provide further details and take necessary steps regarding the issues raised during the meeting.

Ms. Aisha Rasool Awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz for Distinguished Public Service and Justice Sector Reform

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has conferred the Sitara-i-Imtiaz on Ms. Aisha Rasool, Senior Consultant (Research & Opinion), Ministry of Law & Justice, for her outstanding contributions to public service, justice reform, legal education, digital transformation, ADR, and international legal engagement. Hailing

from South Waziristan, she is the first Waziristani to receive this honor. With 15+ years of experience, an LL.M. from the University of York, and accreditation from the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK), she exemplifies excellence and resilience. As Project Director of IMAC and CAMS, she has led major reforms in mediation, arbitration, and digital



case management. Internationally, she represented Pakistan at the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) and organized training programs with Azerbaijan, China, Türkiye, and Bangladesh. She established the Federal Law Journal, authored 28+ research papers, and launched the Federal Judicial Academy's E-Campus. For innovation in public service, she received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Prime Minister. The Sitara-i-Imtiaz honors her leadership in justice reform, digital governance, and global legal cooperation. Her journey from South Waziristan to national and international prominence is an inspiration for women and youth across Pakistan.

Opinion & Editorial



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The unfinished independence

Justice (retd) Syed Mansoor Ali Shah

EVERY August, we raise the flag and call ourselves free. But on the first morning of that freedom, in 1947, Faiz, in Subh-i-Azadi, looked at the long-awaited dawn and said it was not the one: 'yeh daagh daagh ujala, yeh shab-gazida sehar' — this stained, night-bitten dawn is not the morning we had set out for. Seventy-nine years on, our national day deserves an honest question: did we win a country and quietly postpone its freedom? In 1947, we changed the nationality of our rulers and left the harder task — changing the nature of rule — to a later generation. That is our unfinished independence — still ours to finish.

Begin with the one thing the British empire left behind that no repeal can reach: not a law, but a habit of mind. Colonial rule does not merely occupy a land; it occupies the imagination of those it governs, teaching them to see themselves through the ruler's eyes — as subjects to be managed, not citizens to be served; supplicants at a counter, not owners of the state. Ashis Nandy called colonialism, above all, a colonisation of the mind — a condition that outlives the flag.

This servility was not an accident of empire; it was its design. In 1835, Lord Macaulay told the British that education in India

should produce a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect — trained not to rule but to serve. That reflex — to defer, to request rather than require, to treat power as something that happens to us rather than something that belongs to us — is the empire's most durable export.

A new nation needs strong institutions to hold power to account — parties with roots, a parliament with nerve. We did not yet have them: our leadership was thin and soon thinned further, our parties young and quarrelsome. India inherited a mass movement decades in the making and gave itself a constitution within three years. We took nine — nine years without the rules of a shared game, which are exactly the years in which a political culture is meant to grow. Into that vacuum stepped the two institutions the empire had built to their fullest strength — the army and the civil service, disciplined and sure of themselves while everything else improvised. The old colonial master had sailed home; a new establishment, home-grown but colonial in instinct, took his chair. That is the quiet tragedy of our first independence: we did not defeat colonialism so much as change its address.

How do we raise citizens — and judges — with the strength to say no when

power sits across the table offering everything?

And here I must speak of my own house, for the gravest damage was done not by generals or bureaucrats but by judges. The judiciary was meant to be the citizen's shield — the one institution whose purpose is to say no to power on the authority of law. But it too was a colonial inheritance, and carried the reflex in its bones: under the Raj it had served the sovereign, not the subject, and at independence it transferred that loyalty from the departed Crown to the new establishment, not the people. So when the tanks rolled, the courts, again and again, said yes. They fashioned a doctrine of necessity to legalise the seizure of power; they swore in usurpers; they dressed lawlessness in the robes of law. The colonial mind inside the judiciary has cost this country more than any single dictator, for it turned the guardian of the Constitution into the notary of its breach. Why did they give in? For three human reasons that have nothing to do with law. The first is fear: independence has cost judges their careers, their liberty, at times their lives. The second, and the least confessed, is comfort — the office, the title, the house and the car. The third is isolation — the weight of standing alone when colleagues have already found reasons to look away.

Courtesy Dawn

We, the humans, are afraid

Imran Jan

THE planet that we live on used to be considered infinite a long time ago. The flat earths back in the day believed that the earth was flat and there was always more land out there. Many smart people around the same time believed that the earth was a sphere and not flat but that was not a popular opinion entertained in those days. Then came the Magellan's ship around 1520 AD, which circumnavigated the earth and returned with the confirmation that the earth indeed was a sphere and not flat. That in turn, led to the obvious conclusion that there wasn't infinite land out there, rather land was limited. The fear of losing the opportunity of grabbing more land caused humanity to create the idea of real property and deeds to it.

While the Agricultural Revolution around 12,000 years ago did convince mankind to stay in one place and establish cities as opposed to moving from place to place in search of the next meal, they did not lay claim to the land for the sake of ownership but rather for the control of food production. Today, man wants to own land even if it produces nothing at all and is rather expensive to keep, given the taxes to be paid and maintenance to be had.

A few hundred years later, a man named Thomas Malthus, introduced his theory called the Malthusian Theory. This was also a fear-driven idea, which basically argued that human beings were increasing their numbers at a tremendous scale compared to the life sustaining resources, which are not multiplying with the same rate. Therefore, all the human beings and their progeny would not be able to survive on this planet given the much fewer resources. The same fear-driven mind-set just like after Magellan's ship.

This idea was and ever since has been deeply internalised by the most powerful men of the world, who, for the most part, have always worked in the shadows.

Courtesy Tribune

Dar discusses regional developments with US chargé d'affaires, UK high commissioner



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday met the United States Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker and the United Kingdom High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott, among other dignitaries, discussing regional developments.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), FM Dar "appreciated the positive trajectory in Pakistan-US relations and underscored the importance of dialogue and diplomacy for lasting peace."

The ministry added that the foreign minister emphasised that the implementation of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, in

letter and spirit, was the only way forward. "He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and security while safeguarding its national interests," MoFA noted.

According to MoFA, Baker "appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability and conveyed felicitations to the DPM/FM on Pakistan's Independence Day." Meeting with High Commissioner Marriott, FM Dar "appreciated the positive momentum in Pakistan-UK relations," MoFA said. It added that the foreign minister "recalled his recent meeting with UK Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Manila and highlighted the importance of sustained high-level contacts."

Dar and Marriott also "discussed key areas of mutual interest and ways to further strengthen bilateral cooperation."

Further, according to MoFA, the two discussed recent regional and international developments, with

FM Dar stressing that the Islamabad MoU should be properly implemented, reaffirming that dialogue and diplomacy were the only way forward to address outstanding issues.

The high commissioner also conveyed warm wishes on Pakistan's Independence Day, MoFA stated. The meetings came as Islamabad continues to engage with regional and international officials amid the ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran, during which Islamabad has emerged as a key mediator.

The foreign minister also met the Ambassador of China Jiang Zaidong, conveying condolences "on the tragic death of a Chinese mountaineer following an avalanche incident at Broad Peak in Gilgit-Baltistan."

FM Dar "assured full facilitation for the repatriation of the deceased's remains." According to MoFA, Zaidong "appreciated Pakistan's prompt assistance and support following the incident."

Rana Mashhood celebrates Independence Day with Danish school students

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan celebrated Pakistan's 79th Independence Day with Daanish School students in Islamabad on Friday, calling them the torchbearers of the country's future and urging them to turn the privilege of education into a lifelong mission of excellence, national service and unity. Addressing the students at the Independence Day ceremony, Rana Mashhood said youth empowerment is aimed at breaking barriers of privilege and opening the doors of opportunity for talented children from every corner of Pakistan. He said Daanish School students had earned their place through a merit based selection process from across the country, describing the initiative as a decisive move away from the



culture of influence and personal connections.

"We have ended the culture of invitation," he said, stressing that talent, rather than privilege, should determine a child's opportunity to succeed. Rana Mashhood said children from less privileged backgrounds possessed extraordinary potential and, when given quality education and a level playing field, could surpass even those who enjoyed greater opportunities. Citing the recent achievement of a Danish School student who secured second position.

Shaza Fatima stresses digital sovereignty, stronger cybersecurity

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Friday stressed the growing importance of technology and cybersecurity, saying national sovereignty now also depended on protecting Pakistan's digital space.

Addressing a flag-hoisting ceremony on Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, she said independence in 2026 was no longer limited to physical borders. It also included digital sovereignty.

She said technology was playing an increasing role in national security, governance, the economy, health, education, agriculture and industry.

"Today, we are celebrating the 79th Independence Day of Pakistan.

It is an important day in our history, and we are celebrating it with great passion and enthusiasm. Undoubtedly, this is the day of the living nations," she said.

The minister said the Independence Day celebrations should also be a time for national introspection.

"On the one hand, we are celebrating all these things, but on the other hand, we have to do a little introspection. In the last 79 years, which will be 80 years next year, what have we done, how have we contributed, and moving forward, which is our vision for 2047, God willing, we have to do a little introspection," she added.

She said independence in 1947 meant creating physical boundaries and a territory that people could call Pakistan.

"But today, in 2026, that independence, that freedom means, on the one hand, our physical boundaries and our nation-state, but on the other hand, increasingly, it is also about digital sovereignty," she said.

She said the world was undergoing a major shift towards technology, with digital tools becoming important in health, education, finance, agriculture and industry.

She said national security had also become part of the technology landscape.

"Last year, when we fought a war against our enemy, where our border guards, under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Shahbaz Sharif.

Flag hoisting at SC building marks 79th Independence Day

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A dignified and inclusive flag-hoisting ceremony was held at the Supreme Court of Pakistan building on Friday to commemorate the 79th Independence Day.

The ceremony was attended by the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Judges of the Supreme Court, the Registrar, officers, staff and their children. In a symbolic expression of Pakistan's constitutional commitment to equality, inclusion and religious harmony, the national flag was hoisted by children of the minority community, the Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court, a Hindu Pandit, a Christian Priest, and a Muslim Cleric.

The national anthem was played by the Police Band, adding a sense of solemnity and national pride to the occasion. The participation of people from diverse religious communities in the flag-hoisting ceremony underscored the message that Pakistan belongs equally to all its citizens and that the country's strength lies in its diversity, unity and shared commitment to the ideals of the Constitution.

Independence Day calls for renewed resolve for national unity, development: Awais Leghari

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Friday felicitated the nation on the 79th Independence Day, saying the occasion called for renewing the resolve to promote national unity and work collectively for Pakistan's development and prosperity. In his message on Independence Day, he said freedom was the result of the great struggle and countless sacrifices rendered by the country's forefathers. The minister said the day reminded the nation to remain united for the national interest and work collectively for the development, prosperity and progress of Pakistan. Leghari said building a strong, sovereign and prosperous Pakistan in accordance with the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah should remain the nation's



collective commitment. He said the entire nation stood firmly with the country's brave Armed Forces in defending Pakistan's security and sovereignty. The minister said the success in Marka-e-Haq had further strengthened the nation's resolve, unity and courage. He emphasized that every citizen had an important role to play in Pakistan's development and urged people to utilize their abilities and energies in the service of the country and contribute towards taking Pakistan to new heights of progress and prosperity.

Tariq Fazal Chaudhry Felicitates Nation on Independence Day

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Friday felicitated the nation on the occasion of Independence Day.

In a post on X, he said the day reminded the nation of the great sacrifices that led to the creation of Pakistan.

"Pakistan is the result of the tireless struggle, sacrifices and determination of our elders," he said. The minister said the government would work to make Pakistan a strong, prosperous and dignified country in line with the vision of Quaid-i-Azam



Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

He said the country's development journey would be strengthened by making faith and discipline guiding principles of national life.

The federal minister also prayed for Pakistan's security, stability, survival and prosperity.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja cuts cake to celebrate independence day at national CERT.

Governor Kundi hoists national flag at Governor House, reaffirms support for security forces on Independence Day

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday hoisted the national flag at the Governor House here during a dignified ceremony held to mark Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, reiterating the nation's resolve to work for peace, stability and prosperity.

A smartly turned-out police contingent presented a guard of honour, while Iranian Consul General Ali Banafsheh Khah also attended the ceremony. The event began with the national

anthem, followed by a special prayer for Pakistan's progress, prosperity, peace and stability. Governor Kundi and the Iranian Consul General also cut a cake to celebrate the Independence Day.

Speaking to the media, the Governor extended heartfelt greetings to the nation on Independence Day and expressed gratitude to Allah for the blessing of living in a free country. Referring to the inauguration of the Yadgar-e-Fateh monument in Islamabad on Thursday night, he said President Asif Ali Zardari inaugurated the



memorial in the presence of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, the chiefs of the armed forces and ambassadors from various countries.

The Governor paid tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country's

unity and development.

Commenting on Pakistan's diplomatic role during the Iran-US tensions, Governor Kundi said Pakistan played a positive and responsible role that was appreciated internationally. He said the Prime Minister, the Field Marshal, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Interior Minister made significant contributions towards regional peace and stability. He urged the nation to remain united and play its role in ensuring Pakistan's progress, prosperity and stability. On the occasion, Iranian Consul General Ali

Banafsheh Khah congratulated the government and people of Pakistan, particularly those of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on the country's 79th Independence Day.

He said Iran was also celebrating the 79th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Pakistan and reaffirmed his country's commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation in culture, trade and economy.

The Consul General appreciated Governor Kundi's efforts in promoting relations between the two neighbouring countries.