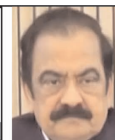




BOI Minister meets Iranian business delegation to enhance bilateral trade, investment cooperation



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Thursday 06 August 2026

Safar 22, 1448 A.H

VOI No: 06

Issue No. 163

Pages 4 Rs. 20

PM Shehbaz seeks expanded JICA cooperation in skills, minerals and SME development

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday called for expanded cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in skills development, mineral exploration and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), saying Pakistan's ongoing economic reforms had laid the foundation for sustainable growth. According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, meeting a nine-member JICA delegation led by its President, Dr Tanaka Akihiko, in Islamabad, the premier said Pakistan greatly valued its more than seven-decade partnership with Japan and the Japanese development agency, and expressed hope that the visit would further strengthen bilateral ties. PM Shehbaz

said Pakistan had overcome difficult economic challenges through "teamwork" and was now rapidly implementing reforms aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth. He said government reforms had resulted in state revenues doubling in just three years. The prime minister said providing young people with skills, technical training and dignified employment opportunities, alongside women's empowerment, remained among the government's top priorities. He identified the minerals sector as another priority area and said Pakistan would welcome JICA's technical cooperation to help develop the industry. Referring to reforms undertaken at the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), PM Shehbaz said the organisation.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Dr. Tanaka Akihiko called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

DPM Dar, Jordanian counterpart discuss deteriorating situation in occupied West Bank

PEAK POINT



Bank" coming under discussion, according to the Foreign Office (FO).

The FO said Dar met Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi on the sidelines of a Ministerial Meeting in Amman to discuss the situation in occupied Jerusalem. The FO said that the foreign ministers exchanged views on regional developments, in particular on the deteriorating situation in the occupied West Bank. Dar appreciated Jordan's role in safeguarding the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and its support for the Palestinian people, it added. "The two leaders welcomed the growing momentum in Pakistan-Jordan bilateral relations and reaffirmed [their commitment] to further enhancing cooperation across political, defence, economic, educational, cultural and people-to-people domains," it added. Dar and Safadi also discussed the situation in the region.

Trump warns Iran to open Strait of Hormuz or get 'hit very hard'

MAHPARA ZAMAN



WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump said a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz could come as soon as Wednesday but warned Iran it would get "hit very hard" if negotiations fell through.

Transit of the waterway, a key conduit for global oil and gas supplies, has been a sticking point in talks and led to renewed fighting following an April ceasefire. Iran has tightened its grip on Hormuz and wants to control the strait and charge tolls — powers it did not exercise before the war began on February 28. Trump said on Tuesday a deal with Iran to reopen Hormuz could happen "tomorrow or the next day," telling reporters in California that negotiators "had a very good day".

Earlier, he struck a more threatening tone. "The strait is going to be open very soon, or they're going to get hit very hard — and then the strait's going to be open," Trump said in an interview with Fox News. "All you can do is fight your way out." US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told CNBC earlier "there is a chance we may have a deal" by Wednesday or Thursday. Underlining the volatile situation, one crew member was listed missing Tuesday on a merchant ship hit by a projectile in Hormuz, while an Indian ship in the Red Sea sank following an unattributed attack. In what has become a regular pattern, Trump last week threatened to hit Iran "very hard", potentially with attacks against civilian infrastructure, only to pull back, hinting a deal was near.

AJK elections: PML-N, PPP secure one seat each following delayed polls in Muzaffarabad constituencies

PEAK POINT



MUZAFFARABAD: The PML-N and PPP have secured one seat each in the two constituencies of Muzaffarabad division where polling was held on Tuesday after being fully or partially deferred due to landslides and adverse weather that blocked roads and prevented the timely dispatch of polling staff and election material. The contest was part of the second phase of elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), during which candidates vied for seats in Muzaffarabad division and 12 seats reserved for refugees from India-occupied Kashmir.

According to official results released by the AJK Election Commission, PML-N's Noreen Arif bagged the LA-27 (Kutla) seat with 18,919 votes, beating first runner-up, Sardar Tabarak Ali of the Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party (IPP) by 298 votes. PPP's Sardar Javed Ayoub was the second runner-up, with 18,037 votes. Meanwhile, PPP's Syed Basil Ali Naqvi bagged 28,214 votes to win the LA-28 (Lachhrat) seat, where PML-N's Chaudhry Shahzad Mahmood secured 26,866 votes.

Lt Col Shahid Ali wounded in blast during counterterrorism operation in Tirah

PEAK POINT

TIRAH: A Pakistan Army commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Ali, was injured in a blast during an intelligence-based operation against Fitna-ul-Khawarij in Tirah.

According to details, despite suffering serious injuries, Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Ali showed exceptional courage, determination and professional commitment. He continued to encourage his soldiers and maintained the progress of the operation.

The incident is another example of the dedication.

Pakistan, US hold counter-terrorism dialogue, reaffirm commitment to combating terrorist groups

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: The United States and Pakistan on Tuesday held the fourth counter-terrorism dialogue in Washington, reaffirming their commitment to combating terrorist groups and strengthening security cooperation at a time when regional tensions remain high. The talks were led by US Coordinator for Counterterrorism Ambassador Gregory LoGerfo and Foreign Ministry Special Secretary Ambassador Nabeel Munir, a joint statement released by the US State Department said.

"The dialogue underscored shared interests in the US-Pakistan counter-terrorism partnership and the two countries' determination to confront terrorism," the joint statement said.

"Delegations exchanged views on the current threat regional security. "The US and Pakistan affirmed their



environment, explored avenues to enhance collaboration, and discussed steps to strengthen border security and disrupt terrorist facilitation networks," it added. The statement specifically named ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K), Al Qaeda, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its affiliates among organisations that both governments said posed threats to

joint resolve to confront terrorist organisations that endanger the safety of their citizens and the stability of the region," the statement said.

"The two governments committed to ensuring their counter-terrorism collaboration to keep both of their nations safe and secure, and as part of an enduring vision of regional peace, prosperity, and stability," it said. Meanwhile, the Foreign

Office said that the two sides held "extensive deliberations on the regional and global terrorist threat and pledged to deepen counter-terrorism collaboration both bilaterally and at multilateral fora".

The renewed engagement marks a shift from the difficult period in US-Pakistan relations following the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan in 2021. Washington had expressed concerns over terrorists sanctuaries in the region, while Islamabad repeatedly highlighted the security challenges it faced from cross-border militancy and instability in Afghanistan.

In recent years, both countries have sought to focus on areas of mutual interest including counter-terrorism, trade, investment, climate cooperation, and regional stability.

Gulf shipping traffic steady amid uncertainty of peace talks



PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Shipping traffic at the key Middle Eastern maritime chokepoints of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb was little changed on Tuesday from the previous day, ship-tracking data showed.

Eight vessels transited the Strait of Hormuz, including five tankers and three bulk carriers, shipping data from Kpler showed, the same as the previous day. Six of the vessels, three tankers and three bulk carriers, were entering the strait, while a gas carrier and a tanker were exiting.

Roughly 130 to 140 ships would typically transit the waterway before the US-Israeli war with Iran began on February 28, and Iran responded by closing the strait.



SPORTS



Pakistan beat West Indies in second Test, level the two-match series



PEAK POINT

OVAL: Pakistan beat West Indies by eight wickets in the second Test to level the two-match series 1-1 at the Queen's Park Oval on Wednesday.

The Babar Azam-led side comfortably chased down the 75-run target in 23.3 overs, losing only their two opening batters to seal an eight-wicket victory and draw the series.

The victory marked Pakistan's first away Test win since 2023 when they defeated Sri Lanka in Sri Lanka.

Pakistan knocked the winning runs in the sixth over after Lunch

on Day 4, when Babar smashed Jomel Warrican for a second consecutive six.

Abdullah Shafique, who made an unbeaten 160 in the first innings, remained Pakistan's joint top-scorer in the second as well with 24 not out from 51 balls, while skipper Babar also made an unbeaten 24, comprising two sixes and as many fours.

Notably, the visitors only needed 18 runs to round up the comprehensive victory as they concluded the opening session of the penultimate day at 57/2 in 18

overs despite losing their openers Imam-ul-Haq and Azan Awa

is. Pakistan got off to a shaky start to their pursuit as Jayden Seales got Imam-ul-Haq (nine) caught at slip in just the fifth over with 15 runs on the board.

Following the early stutter, Shafique joined emerging opener Azan Awa (18) in the middle, and the duo put together 27 runs for the second wicket until the latter was bowled by Shamar Joseph.

Awa's dismissal paved the way for Babar to walk out, and the Pakistan captain batted sensibly, alongside Shafique, ultimately leading Green Shirts to their first away triumph in Tests since 2023.

Earlier, at the commencement

of the penultimate day, the hosts resumed their second innings from 103/6 through all-rounder Justin Greaves and could add 14 more to their overnight score for the remaining three wickets as top-order batter Brandon King, who picked up a lower-back injury on the preceding day, did not come out to bat.

Left-arm spinner Usman, who closed the pulsating third day on a high for Pakistan by dismissing West Indies captain Roston Chase on the final delivery, continued his brilliance as he cleaned up Kemar Roach (zero) on just the 12th delivery after the resumption.

PCB warns ex-cricketers over participation in unapproved Asian Legends League



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has taken serious notice of the participation of certain former Pakistan cricketers in the 20th Asian Legends League 2026 being held in Zambia.

International Cricket Council (ICC) considers this league an unsanctioned/disapproved cricket event under the ICC Regulations on the Sanctioning of Events and Player Release, and the tournament has not been sanctioned by the Zambia Cricket Union (ZCU) as well.

The ICC has further reiterated that all foreign players are required to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from their respective home Board before participating in overseas cricket events.

The Regulations also place an obligation on Member Boards to take appropriate action against any player who participates in an unsanctioned event. Failure to comply with these obligations may result in action against the respective Member Board.

In light of the above, the following disciplinary measures will be taken on individuals found to have participated in the said unsanctioned event without obtaining the requisite approvals from the PCB.

Pakistan women avoid whitewash with four-wicket win in final T20I



PEAK POINT

DAMBULLA: Pakistan Women ended their tour of Sri Lanka on a positive note after registering a convincing four-wicket victory over the hosts in the third and final T20I at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium on Tuesday, denying Sri Lanka a series whitewash. Although Sri Lanka claimed the three-match series 2-1, while Sanjana Kavindi

Pakistan produced a dis-

ciplined all-round performance to secure their first victory of the T20I leg and finish the tour with renewed confidence. Asked to field first, Pakistan's bowlers kept the Sri Lankan batters under constant pressure, restricting the hosts to 113-6 in their allotted 20 overs. Captain Chamari Athapaththu top-scored with 34 off 33 balls, striking five boundaries, while Sanjana Kavindi chipped in with 20.

Filing Disruptions Season captain Muneeba Ali contributed a valuable 19 off 16 deliveries to keep the chase firmly on track. Sri Lanka attempted to fight back through Athapaththu and Kavisha Dilhari, who claimed two wickets each, but Pakistan held their nerve to comfortably cross the finish line. South Asia's Youth The victory provided a welcome boost for Pakistan after a challenging tour, where they managed two wins in six matches across the ODI and T20I series. More importantly, the performance showcased encouraging contributions from both experienced campaigners and emerging talents as the visitors signed off with a morale-boosting triumph.

Aisam, Aqeel shine as Pakistan blank USA in ITF Masters opener



Arshad Nadeem named in Lausanne Diamond League entry list

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan's Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem has been named in the entry list for the men's javelin throw at the Lausanne Diamond League, scheduled for August 21.

As per the entry list, unveiled by the event organisers earlier today, Nadeem will face stiff competition from Indian rival Neeraj Chopra, two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Germany and recently-crowned Commonwealth Games gold medalist and world leader Rumesh Pathirage.

The lineup further features the likes of Germany's Thomas Rohler and Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad as the 2026 edition of the Diamond League promises to be one of the strongest in recent years.

Notably, Nadeem will enter the competition following an underwhelming outing at the Commonwealth Games

2022 in Glasgow, which saw him fail to defend his gold medal as he finished ninth in the 12-man final.

The 29-year-old, who clinched the gold medal at the previous edition of the Games in 2022 with a sensational

throw of 90.18 metres, started his defence with a foul. He eventually got onto the leaderboard with a 77.41-metre throw in his second attempt but had slipped down to the ninth spot by the end of the round.

Nadeem needed to improve his standing in his third attempt to stay in contention but only managed a slender throw of 75.39 metres and remained in ninth spot, which resulted in him being knocked out of the medal race.

Lausanne Diamond League 2026 javelin throw entry list



Pakistan name 20-member squad for FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2026



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on Wednesday unveiled a 20-member squad and team management for the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2026, scheduled to be played in Amstelveen, the Netherlands, and Belgium from August

15 to 30. Having secured qualification for the prestigious tournament, Pakistan are set to compete on hockey's biggest international stage. The announced squad features a balanced blend of experienced internationals and promising young

talent as the Green Shirts aim to make a strong impression at the World Cup.

The 20-member squad includes Waqar, Muhammad Abdullah, Owais Qarni, Head Coach Bob Johan Khan, Moeen Shakeel, Abdul Waheed Ashraf Rana, Assistant Coach Abdul Hanan Shahid, Zakaria Hayat, Arshad Liaquat, Adeel Latif, Ahmad Nadeem, Ghazanfar Ali, Imad Shakeel Butt, Muhammad Hamaduddin Anjum, Rehman Abdul Afraz, Umar Mustafa, Abu Bakar Mahmood, Ali Raza, Abdul Matan and Muhammad Imad. The two goalkeepers named in the squad are Waqar and Ali Raza. The team management comprises Team Manager Muhammad Abdullah, Head Coach Bob Johan Khan, Moeen Shakeel (Netherlands), Waheed Ashraf Rana, Assistant Coach Christopher John Bowen (Great Britain), Assistant Coach Adnan Zakir and Video Technician Ashraf Sultan. The announcement comes around a week after experienced midfielder Ammad Butt was removed as captain of the national men's hockey team after 14 years in the role.



BISE Rawalpindi announces matric 2026 position holders as Muhammad Manan Ahtsham tops with 1,191 Marks

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Rawalpindi has officially announced the position holders of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) First Annual Examination 2026, with Muhammad Manan Ahtsham securing the overall first position by obtaining 1,191 marks. The board also released the names and marks of top-performing students across Science and General Groups for both boys and girls. Chairman BISE Rawalpindi Professor Dr. Iqbal Mahmood congratulated the position holders, their parents and teachers on their outstanding achievement. He said the remarkable success reflects the students' hard work, the dedicated guidance of teachers and the valuable support of parents.

He expressed confidence that these talented students would continue to excel in higher education and bring pride to the country through their academic achievements. According to the board, Muhammad Manan Ahtsham, son of Ahtsham Bashir, from Al Amir Foundation Public Secondary School for Boys, Daultala, Gujar Khan (Rawalpindi), secured the overall first position with 1,191 marks. The overall second position was secured by Zunaira Tahir, daughter of Tahir Ahmed, from Presentation Convent High School for Girls, Pindipoint, Murree, who obtained 1,180 marks. Muhammad Fasih Abdullah, son of Muhammad Fiaz, from Cambridge International Boys Secondary School, Talagang, claimed the overall third position with 1,178 marks. In

the Male Science Group, Muhammad Manan Ahtsham secured first position with 1,191 marks, followed by Muhammad Fasih Abdullah with 1,178 marks, while Syed Muhammad Imran Bukhari, son of Syed Rafiqat Hussain Bukhari, from Steps International Grammar Boys Secondary School, Talagang, obtained the third position with 1,175 marks. In the Female Science Group, Zunaira Tahir secured first position with 1,180 marks. Four students jointly secured the second position, each obtaining 1,176 marks. They include Hafsa Azhar, daughter of Muhammad Azhar, from Bahria Foundation Secondary School for Girls, Pindi Road, Chakwal; Hareem Fatima, daughter of Parvez Ali, from Allied Secondary School (Girls), City Campus, Dhoke Kala Khan, Shamsabad,

Rawalpindi; Meerab Hassan, daughter of Mudassar Hassan, from Divisional Public School (Girls Branch), Shamsabad, Rawalpindi; and Zainab Fatima, daughter of Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas Kadhar, from Dar-e-Arqam Girls High School, Pind Dadan Khan, Jhelum. Three students jointly secured the third position in the Female Science Group with 1,174 marks each. They are Eman Fatima, daughter of Malik Muhammad Saeed Khan, from District Public School for Girls, District Complex, Chakwal; Musfirah Khalid, daughter of Khalid Mehmood, from Sir Syed Public School for Girls, Tipu Road, Rawalpindi; and Irsa Hameed, daughter of Hameed Ul Hassan, from Cambridge International Girls Science Secondary School, Talagang. In the Male General Group, Abdul

Salam, son of Abdul Waheed Abbasi, secured first position with 1,077 marks. He is a private candidate from DHA Phase II, Islamabad. Muhammad Ali, son of Muhammad Saleh, from Jamia Rehmania Rizvia, Sohawa, Jhelum, secured second position with 1,048 marks, while Muhammad Abdul Ghaffar, son of Zulfiqar Ahmed, also from Jamia Rehmania Rizvia, Sohawa, Jhelum, claimed third position with 1,044 marks. In the Female General Group, Sohana Qadeer, daughter of Abdul Qadeer, from Government Girls High School Sangohi, Jhelum, secured first position with 1,122 marks. Malaika Habib, daughter of Habib Ullah Khan, from Government Girls High School, Peoples Colony, Attock City, obtained second position with 1,115

marks, while Nazia Bibi, daughter of Rooh Ullah, from Government Girls High School, Hassan Abdal, Attock, secured third position with 1,103 marks. The chairman further announced that a ceremony to honour the position holders will be held at 10:00 am on August 6, 2026, at Fatima Jinnah Women University, Kachehri Chowk, Rawalpindi. Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi will attend the event as the chief guest. During the ceremony, shields, certificates of appreciation and cash prizes will be awarded to the top-performing students in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements and to encourage them to continue striving for excellence.

Irfan Salamat Khokhar congratulates Shahid Younus Diwan on becoming the new Bishop of Peshawar Diocese

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Irfan Salamat Khokhar, central leader of Pakistan Muslim League (Q) and Secretary General of the Federal Capital Minorities Affairs, warmly congratulated Right Reverend Bishop Shahid Younus Diwan on his



appointment as the new Bishop of the Church of Pakistan, Peshawar Diocese. He said that his appointment is a source of joy and a good omen for the Christian community. In his congratulatory message, Irfan Salamat Khokhar said that Bishop Shahid Younus Diwan is fully

qualified and suitable for this holy and prestigious position. He is a wise, skilled, and enthusiastic religious leader with intellectual and scholarly abilities, who has always played a key role in promoting service, unity, and interfaith harmony. He added that he is confident that, thanks to

Bishop Shahid Younus Diwan's spiritual, religious, and leadership abilities, not only the Peshawar Diocese but also the Christian community across the country will gain new energy, confidence, and guidance. His leadership will further strengthen the Church's mission and play an

important role in promoting love, peace, tolerance, and brotherhood in society. Irfan Salamat Khokhar further said that the role of minorities, especially the Christian community, has always been valuable in Pakistan's development, stability, and national unity.

Opinion & Editorial

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DAILY PEAK POINT
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No ground to concede

Seventeen dead, more than twenty wounded, an entire district placed under emergency - this is the arithmetic of Sunday's suicide bombing outside a police station in Kabul tehsil of Swat. Six policemen were among the martyred. Malakand's deputy inspector general has attributed the attack to Fitna al Khawarij, the outlawed TTP in other words. Preliminary investigation suggests the bomber may have been an Afghan national. If confirmed, this will be one more entry in a pattern that Pakistan's security establishment has spent the better part of two years documenting and that Kabul has spent the same two years denying. The pattern is no longer disputable in its broad shape, whatever remains contested in its details. Yet, the Afghan Taliban continue to insist the TTP is Pakistan's internal matter, a formulation that asks Islamabad to accept as domestic a threat that is manufactured, trained and sheltered across an international border. That formulation should be rejected as often and as plainly as it is offered. It is worth stating without euphemism what a no tolerance policy actually requires. It requires that the writ of the state be treated as non-negotiable. It requires that facilitators, financiers and sympathisers inside Pakistan face the same institutional resolve as the men who plant the explosives.

Unravelling order

Zahid Hussain
It is not so much what he said as who said it. We all know that the existing political system has failed to deliver, but that admission coming from the all-powerful interior minister raises many questions. Mohsin Naqvi is himself a product of a system whose legitimacy he is now questioning. His statement points to the unravelling of the hybrid arrangement. What he said cannot be dismissed as merely his personal views, given his perceived association with the powers that be.

Speaking at the Pakistan Economic Summit last week, the interior minister said the current system of governance had "collapsed" and that it was fundamentally incapable of resolving the country's problems. He stressed the need for structural reform to address Pakistan's mounting challenges.

No one can disagree with Naqvi's assertion. But his suggestion of creating new administrative units as a means of improving governance and his thinly veiled criticism of his own government's policies have laid bare the fault lines within the hybrid political structure established after the controversial 2024 elections. Naqvi's statement was later tacitly endorsed by the military spokesman, who also urged political parties to consider an administrative reset to improve governance, arguing that the country's security and stability depended on

adapting its governance structure to the requirements of modern times and a growing population.

The statement has also generated speculation about the Shehbaz Sharif government's survival less than halfway through its term. Given the historically brief tenures of civilian governments, such uncertainty is deeply rooted. The interior minister's remarks have jolted the ruling coalition, with some federal ministers questioning Naqvi's own credentials. Yet while chastising him, they understand that he is not answerable even to the cabinet or the prime minister.

The interior minister should focus on security rather than administrative reorganisation. In the words of Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Naqvi is a "powerhouse" who is not answerable to anyone. A man for all seasons, he is referred to by some, Naqvi deals with everything from cricket to security and even ventures into foreign policy. He seldom attends cabinet meetings or appears in parliament. He is not a member of any political party, yet is arguably the most powerful person in the government after the prime minister. Most analysts agree that he draws his power from close ties with the establishment. Naqvi's journey from media professional to one of the most powerful political positions in the country began when he was appointed caretaker chief minister of Punjab, the country's most

powerful province, in 2023. He joined the federal cabinet after the 2024 elections. Recently, he was also involved in Pakistan's mediation efforts during the US-Iran war. His meteoric rise defines where the balance of power lies. His indictment of the government was not just a spontaneous outburst; it lays out a plan for a political and administrative reset. The statements of the interior minister and military spokesman must be read together to make sense of what appears to be in store. The "restructuring" plan is likely to intensify the existing chaos rather than bring political stability. While both officials pointed to the absence of governance, the real cause behind this state of affairs wasn't mentioned.

It is easy to blame the politicians for all the problems, but there is no mention of other obvious factors. Naqvi regretted that the 'failed system' had been dragged on for seven decades. He is absolutely right, but he failed to mention the dominant influence of the security apparatus for much of the country's history. The decline of the present hybrid, and increasingly autocratic, system was long foretold.

A mere change of face and creation of new administrative units will not solve the state's problems. Many view the statements as an attempt to redirect public attention from the real issues and tighten control.

Courtesy Dawn

Protect the children

Mujeeb Ali

Last Sunday at around 11pm, I went to a restaurant about two miles from my home with my wife and children for dinner. As we sat waiting for our meal, two little girls, who appeared to be between 10 and 12 years old, approached our table carrying crunchy Papadom. They politely requested that we buy one. We declined to buy the snacks because we had no desire for them.

Is it not an injustice that children of such a young age, who should be playing with other children, are selling edible items from one restaurant to another late at night to earn a few rupees?

My children, however, were curious. They were surprised to see girls their own age alone at such a late hour without any adult accompanying them. As they had never experienced such a situation themselves, they began talking to one of the girls, who looked innocent and shy.

During the conversation, the girl politely asked if she could have some water. She explained that the restaurant staff did not allow her to drink bottled water because it was sold to customers. She said she was thirsty and had not found any nearby source of drinking water. We immediately gave her water.

My elder daughter gently asked where her father was and why he allowed her to work alone at night. The girl's answer was heart-breaking. She said her father stayed at home because he did not work. When asked what he did all day, she quietly replied that he was addicted to drugs. Most of his time, she said, was spent with other addicts. He forced her to earn and hand over the money so he could buy drugs. If she returned home empty-handed, he would beat her with a stick and refuse to let her sleep. Her innocence convinced us that she was not lying. As the father of two daughters, I felt immense sympathy for her. All I could do was to give the two girls some money before they left.

Courtesy Tribune

BOI Minister meets Iranian business delegation to enhance bilateral trade, investment cooperation



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI), Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, held a comprehensive meeting with a high-level Iranian business delegation, accompanied by officials from the Embassy of Iran.

The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral trade, exploring joint investment opportunities, and enhancing economic collaboration between Pakistan and Iran.

BOI Minister meets Iranian busi-

ness delegation to enhance bilateral trade, investment cooperation

The Iranian delegation comprised of prominent representatives including Mohammad Reza Chafarallah, Chairman Trade Facilitation and Development, Shahrooz Shariat, and members of the Chambers of Commerce of Kerman and Tehran. Senior officials from BOI, including Director General Mehmood Tufail, also attended the meeting, said a release issued here on Wednesday.

The Federal Minister warmly welcomed the delegation and emphasized the deep-rooted historical, cultural, and religious ties between Pakistan and Iran, describing both countries as brotherly neighbors with immense untapped economic potential. He noted that Pakistan, with a market of over 250 million people, offered significant opportunities for trade and investment. The Iranian delegation highlighted the economic importance of Kerman province, which hosts four economic zones and a Chamber of Commerce comprising over 2,000 members. They shared that Kerman was a leading region in mining, contributed approximately 25 percent to agriculture, and was globally recognized for its production of pistachios and dates.

During the meeting, the Iranian side proposed the development of a strategic trade corridor linking Karachi, Rimdan, Bam, and potentially extending to Chabahar.

Pakistan, US make progress on reciprocal trade framework: Aurangzeb

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States made "significant" progress in negotiations on a reciprocal trade framework and are aiming to agree "at the earliest", Pakistan's Finance Ministry said on Wednesday following talks between Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.

The virtual meeting reviewed the latest round of negotiations aimed at strengthening bilateral trade and economic cooperation, with both sides expressing satisfaction over the pace of discussions and agreeing to maintain regular engagement to finalise the remaining elements of the framework. The meeting was attended by Federal Secretary for Commerce Jawad Paul and senior officials from the Office of the US Trade Representative. Finance Minister Holds Virtual Meeting with U.S. Trade Representative to Advance Pakistan-U.S. According to a statement issued by the Finance Ministry, Aurangzeb recalled recent discus-

sions held in Washington and welcomed "the steady progress made by the respective negotiating teams," while appreciating "the constructive engagement that has characterised the dialogue over time."

The ministry said both sides noted that negotiations on the proposed reciprocal trade framework had "advanced significantly" and reaffirmed "their shared commitment to concluding the agreement at the earliest."

During the meeting, Aurangzeb stressed the importance of sustaining the current pace of negotiations in line with Pakistan's economic priorities. The finance minister added that a stronger trade and investment partnership with the US would contribute to Pakistan's "export-led growth strategy", support economic resilience and create "greater commercial opportunities for businesses in both countries."

He also highlighted the importance of continued collaboration with the US Export-Import Bank (EXIM) to facilitate bilateral trade and investment.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, holding a virtual meeting with United States Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Jamieson Greer to discuss Pakistan-U.S. trade and economic.

Wajha Reaffirms Pakistan's Support for Kashmiris on Youm-e-Istehsal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir, the Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Wajha Qamar, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering political, diplomatic and moral support for the people of Indian

Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), reiterating that the events of 5 August 2019 marked a grave violation of international law, the United Nations Security Council resolutions, and the fundamental right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination. The Minister stated that the unilateral measures taken by India on 5 August 2019 sought to alter the internationally recognized disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir. She noted that continued restrictions on fundamental freedoms, alleged human rights violations, and attempts to change the demographic composition of the territory remain matters of serious concern for the international community.

Wajha paid tribute to the courage, resilience and sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, emphasizing that their peaceful struggle for justice and dignity continues to inspire generations.

Aug 5 reminds of Indian atrocities in IIOJK: Rana Sanaullah

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister Senator Rana Sanaullah Khan has said that August 5 serves as a reminder of the atrocities being committed against the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In his message on the occasion of 'Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir' (Kashmir Exploitation Day), the Advisor said that on August 5, 2019, India unilaterally revoked the special status of IIOJK.

"This usurpation by India was a direct assault on the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination," Sanaullah said. "Pakistan rejects every attempt to unilaterally alter the status, demographic composition, or political identity of Jammu and Kashmir."



He stated that the human rights situation in IIOJK has further deteriorated since August 2019. "Extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, military operations, and prolonged detentions have created a deep sense of insecurity among the local population of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

"On this tragic day, I express complete solidarity with my Kashmiri brothers and sisters. Kashmir is Pakistan and Pakistan is Kashmir. The Kashmir freedom movement is the movement."

Pakistan and Iran renew pledge to raise bilateral trade to \$10b

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran have signed the agreed minutes at the conclusion of the 10th meeting of the Pakistan-Iran Joint Trade Committee, reaffirming their commitment to increase bilateral trade to 10 billion US dollars. The three-day meeting ended with both countries agreeing to accelerate practical measures aimed at strengthening trade, investment and wider economic cooperation.

The two sides agreed to move swiftly towards finalising the Pakistan-Iran Free Trade Agreement. Officials also reported significant progress on the agreement's rules of origin and the mechanism for reducing tariffs, marking an important step



in advancing negotiations between the two countries.

During the talks, Pakistan and Iran agreed to strengthen business-to-business relations by encouraging direct links between their business communities and increasing the exchange of trade delegations. They also agreed to expand and improve the barter trade system to support commercial activity across the shared border. Both countries reaffirmed their commitment.

SBBWUP observed Kashmir Solidarity Day

PEAK POINT

SWABI: In pursuance of the directions of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, successfully observed Youm-e-Istehsal (Kashmir Solidarity Day) on 05 August 2026 at the Main Campus. The event was held under the leadership of Dr. Farhat Amin, Vice Chancellor, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, with active participation from faculty members, students, and administrative staff. The observance aimed to express solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and to sensitize students to the histori-



cal and humanitarian dimensions of the Kashmir issue. The main programme commenced at 11:00 AM at the Front Lawn of the Vice Chancellor's Secretariat. The activities included hoisting of the National Flag at half-mast, observance of a one-minute silence, and a Kashmir Solidarity Walk led by the Vice Chancellor and attended by faculty, students, and administrative staff.

CPEC 2.0: Ahsan directs ministries to fast-track implementation of key projects

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday directed all ministries to expedite the implementation of the five corridors under CPEC 2.0, namely the Corridors of Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green Development and Regional Connectivity.

He issued these directives while chairing the 91st meeting of the CPEC Projects Review and National Steering Committee, which

brought together key stakeholders to review progress in infrastructure, power, petroleum, water resources, food and agriculture, Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings and Special Economic Zones (SEZs), a news release said.

The minister said CPEC 2.0 offered immense opportunities to build on the successes of CPEC 1.0 by leveraging investments made in energy and physical infrastruc-

The Pakistan Mission in Beijing and the respective JWG conveners briefed the



forum on preparations for the upcoming JWG meetings and the 15th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting. The forum was informed that the calendar had been finalized in consultation with the respective conveners and

shared with the Pakistan Mission in Beijing to facilitate coordination with the Chinese side.

During the meeting, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs (MoMA) and the Government of Sindh briefed

participants on the latest progress of the Karachi Coastal Comprehensive Development Zone (KCCDZ) project.

Expressing concern over implementation delays, the minister directed all stakeholders to submit their observations within a week and resolve all outstanding issues without further delay.

He emphasized that the memorandums of understanding (MoUs) must be implemented in accordance with agreed terms and applicable rules, stressing that agreements should translate

into timely implementation rather than remain confined to paperwork.

He urged all relevant institutions to take ownership of their commitments and directed the Government of Sindh, MoMA and the Board of Investment (BOI) to hold a meeting with the Chinese company to resolve technical issues and expedite the project's implementation through regular coordination.

Reviewing progress on the initiative to train 1,000 agriculture graduates in China, the minister stressed that the expertise acquired.