



Democratic Values, Strong Institutions Essential for Pakistan's Progress: NA Speaker



CJP inaugurates Judicial Year 2026-27 with renewed focus on improved service delivery



Rana Sanaullah calls for dialogues among political parties for resolution of any matter

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PM Shehbaz meets Lebanese interior minister, condemns Israeli aggression against Lebanon

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Lebanon's Interior and Municipalities Minister Ahmad al-Hajjar called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Housing Minister Riaz Hussain Pirzada, and Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry were also present during the meeting, the PMO said.

Welcoming the Lebanese minister, the prime minister emphasised the importance of the longstanding fraternal relations between the two countries and extended good wishes

to the Lebanese leadership.

The meeting reviewed bilateral relations and mutual cooperation between Pakistan and Lebanon, with both sides expressing satisfaction over growing cooperation in the fields of interior affairs and security.

The prime minister strongly condemned Israeli aggression against Lebanon, expressing deep grief and sorrow over the loss of precious human lives and property caused by Israeli attacks.

He reiterated the full solidarity of the Pakistani government and people with the Lebanese leadership and people during these difficult times, and reaffirmed Pakistan's continued support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.



Indonesian Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses an MoU signing ceremony between Pakistan and Lebanon on transfer of sentenced persons.

CDF Munir expresses commitment to bolstering defence ties in meeting with Indonesian naval chief

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Indonesian naval chief Dr Muhammad Ali on Monday called on Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, who reaffirmed

Islamabad's commitment to strengthening its ties with Jakarta, the military's media wing said.

According to a statement from Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters of mutual interest, regional security and bilateral defence cooperation were discussed during the meeting. "The two sides expressed satisfaction over the existing military-to-military relations and reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen cooperation, particularly in the domains of professional training, defence collaboration and joint exercises," the statement read. The ISPR added that CDF Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its "longstanding and brotherly relations" with Indonesia, significantly in the defence and security spheres. Admiral Ali "appreciated the professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their contributions towards regional peace and stability", the statement concluded.

Houthis claim large-scale missile, drone attack on King Khalid Air Base in Saudi Arabia

PEAK POINT



YEMEN: Yemen's Houthis on Monday claimed to have carried out a large-scale missile and drone attack on a Saudi air base in the southern city of Khamis Mushait.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said in a statement that the group targeted King Khalid Air Base with dozens of ballistic missiles and drones. He claimed the attack targeted aircraft hangars, radars, runways, ammunition depots and other military facilities, causing "significant losses" at the base. The Houthis said the operation came in response to Saudi airstrikes in Yemen, claiming Saudi F-15 and Typhoon fighter jets had carried out more than 300 strikes across several Yemeni provinces over the past five days. There was no immediate Saudi confirmation of the Houthi claims regarding damage at the air base. Saudi Arabia's Civil Defence issued an alert in Khamis Mushait governorate but later said "the danger has passed." It urged residents to continue following Civil Defense instructions and avoid gathering and filming. The Houthis vowed to continue attacks inside Saudi Arabia as long as Saudi military operations in Yemen continue, warning that any new attacks would be met with "broader and more severe" operations. Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Authority, set up by Iran to manage requests of passage in the Strait of Hormuz, published on Monday an updated list of 77 vessels "violating Iranian protocols for the Strait of Hormuz".

FCC issues notices to KP CM Afridi on estranged PTI leader Marwat's plea against his appointment

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Monday issued notice to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister (CM)

Sohail Afridi for the second week of October in a plea challenging his appointment.

A three-judge FCC bench, headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan, took up the petition moved by estranged PTI leader Sher Afzal Khan Marwat against the resignation of former KP chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur, who preceded Afridi. The FCC also summoned Attorney General of Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan, under Order 27-A of the Pakistan Code of Civil Procedure, which stipulates that a court must notify the attorney general if it is hearing a case regarding the interpretation of constitutional law. Marwat, who pleaded before the court in person, had filed the petition under Article 175-E of the Constitution — which determines the original jurisdiction of the FCC — seeking a declaration that the resignation letters submitted by Gandapur on Oct 8 and 11, 2025.

Lebanon's interior minister in Islamabad on two-day visit

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Lebanon's Minister of Interior Ahmad Al-Hijjar landed in Pakistan on Monday on a two-day official visit. Ahmad Al-Hijjar is visiting Pakistan on the invitation of Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry welcomed Lebanon's Minister of Interior at Islamabad International Airport. During the Lebanese Interior Minister's visit to Pakistan, important discussions will take place on bilateral relations and promoting mutual cooperation. During the visit, the Lebanese Interior Minister.

IHC directs chief ministers to ensure govt resources are not used for PTI's Sept 27 Islamabad march

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday disposed of a plea against the PTI's planned long march and protest in the federal capital on Sept 27, directing the chief ministers of all provinces to ensure that no government resources or official machinery were used in this regard. The PTI has announced a nationwide protest, including in Islamabad, on Sept 27 to demand the release of party founder Imran Khan and mobilise people for the supremacy of the Constitution. A citizen, Waqas Ahmed, had challenged the planned move on the grounds that the protest could disrupt routine life, traffic and business activities in the federal capital. A larger bench, headed by IHC Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar and including Justice

Muhammad Azam Khan and Justice Muhammad Asif, took



up the plea. The bench's short order, which was announced in the court, said that no political party or its leadership had the "lawful right to occupy public roads, highways, interchanges, toll plazas and buildings in Islamabad that would obstruct in any manner access to educational institutions and medical facilities".

No political party or political leader had the right to obstruct the free movement of citizens, the order stated,

adding that provincial governments must ensure that



government resources were not used for any march, procession or rally. Chief ministers must ensure that public funds or government officials were not used for any protest, and official vehicles, machinery or other government equipment must not be used to facilitate any march, procession or rally, it said. Moreover, no public servant should be compelled to participate in any march, pro-

cession or rally, the court ruled.

Any person, public office holder who undertook any activity against these instructions should be deemed to have violated the Constitution, it said.

The court directed the Islamabad administration and the interior ministry to ensure protection of citizens' constitutional rights, and the chief secretaries and provincial police chiefs to ensure implementation of court directives. The interior secretary and Islamabad chief commissioner and inspector general were directed to ensure compliance with court orders. The bench had reserved its verdict on the plea earlier in the day after the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police chief assured the court that no "illegal or unconstitutional activities" would be allowed in connection with the protest. At one point during the hearing, Chief Justice.

Drone strike on vehicle kills three Indian-sponsored terrorists in Mastung



PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed three terrorists, including a commander identified as Nageeb, during a successful operation against the group described by authorities as Fitan al-Hindustan in Mastung, Balochistan. According to security sources, the forces successfully targeted a vehicle carrying the terrorists with a quadcopter. The strike completely destroyed the vehicle and killed three terrorists, including Commander Nageeb.

Security sources said the forces remained determined to eliminate terrorism and that operations would continue until the last terrorist was killed. The latest action comes 10 days after an operation in Mastung on 4 September, when security forces identified and engaged.



SPORTS



Pakistan fined, lose WTC points for maintaining slow over-rate against England



MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan have been fined 50% of their match fee and hit with a pair of sanctions for maintaining a slow over-rate during the third and final ICC World Test Championship (WTC) Test against England at Edgbaston.

Pakistan were found to be 11 overs short of the required rate after time allowances were taken into account during the Test, which England won by eight wickets. As a result, Pakistan's players were fined 50% of their match fees, while the team were also docked 11 points from their WTC tally. The sanctions were imposed

by Ranjan Madugalle of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees after on-field umpires Paul Reiffel and Chris Gaffaney, third umpire Allahudien Palekar and fourth umpire Russell Warren levelled the charge. The 11-point deduction leaves Pakistan ninth in the WTC standings with a points percentage of 4.63. Under Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, players are fined five per cent of their match fee for every over their team fails to bowl within the allotted time, with the maximum penalty capped at 50%.

Meanwhile, Article 16.11.2 of

the ICC World Test Championship playing conditions states that a team is penalised one championship point for every over it falls short of the required rate.

Pakistan have therefore lost 11 WTC points following their defeat at Edgbaston.

The national team's next WTC assignment will come in November when they host Sri Lanka in a two-match Test series, with the matches scheduled to be played in Rawalpindi and Lahore.

For the unversed, Pakistan endured heavy defeats in the first two Tests of the England series, suffering an innings and 103-run

loss at Headingley before losing the Lord's Test by 194 runs.

Following those defeats, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) released seven players from the squad and brought in five uncapped players — Razaullah, Arafat Minhas, Imran Randhawa, Mohammad Imran Junior and Saad Baig. Saim Ayub and Abdullah Fazal also returned to the squad.

The coaching setup was also reshuffled, with red-ball coaches Sarfaraz Ahmed and Umar Gul released and white-ball coaches Mike Hesson and Ashley Noffke taking charge.

PFF unveils four-year plan for women's football development in Pakistan



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsin Gilani has announced a four-year strategy to promote and develop women's football across the country.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Gilani said the federation was taking several steps to promote girls' football and improve the performance of the national women's team.

He said the PFF would focus on grassroots football and youth development to build a strong talent pipeline.

He said the FIFA School Project had set a target of involving three million children, while district, regional and national women's leagues would also be organised as part of the development programme.

Gilani said the federation would establish a proper player talent and development system and work on leadership and administration programmes for women.

Skills development programmes would also be introduced for female players, coaches and officials.

He stressed that a complete ecosystem was essential for the sustainable development of women's football in Pakistan.

Winners India refuse to collect Women's Asia Cup trophy from ACC chief Mohsin Naqvi



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: India again refused to accept a tournament trophy from Asian Cricket Council President Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday, with their women's team this time throwing the closing ceremony into uncertainty and delay.

The trophy presentation at the Dubai

International Cricket Stadium was delayed by more than half an hour after India secured a 72-run victory over Sri Lanka in the final, Hindustan Times reported.

Naqvi, also the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman and the country's interior minister, stood on the stage as the audience waited for India to collect

their trophy.

ESPNcricinfo reported that the presentation ceremony wrapped up "without the Indian team collecting their winners' medals or the trophy". Live visuals from the stadium confirmed the same. However, Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu picked up the runners-up cheque from Naqvi, the outlet added.

The final ball of the match was done by 9:55pm UAE time (10:55pm PKT), and by 10:30pm (11:30pm PKT), there were "no signs of the presentation ceremony starting", Hindustan Times noted.

The outlet pointed out that broadcasters interviewed Indian skipper Harmanpreet Kaur "immediately", even though the interview is usually kept for the end of the presentation ceremony.

Asked whether his team's refusal to accept the trophy was "pre-decided", head coach Amol Muzumdar said the "stand has been taken by the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India), and we stand by it".

Pakistan women's cricket team departs for Japan for Asian Games



Rybakina dethrones Sabalenka to claim maiden US Open crown

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: Elena Rybakina produced a commanding performance under pressure to dethrone two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka 6-4, 5-7, 6-2 in the US Open final on Saturday, capturing her maiden title at Flushing Meadows and securing the world No. 1 ranking. The 27-year-old Kazakh, born in Russia, maintained her composure throughout a gripping contest at Arthur Ashe Stadium to end Sabalenka's 20-match winning streak at the US Open. The victory also completed a remarkable Grand Slam season for Rybakina, who won the Australian Open earlier this year after claiming her first major title at Wimbledon in 2022. Rybakina entered the tournament with concerns over an ankle injury but overcame the setback to produce some of the finest tennis of her career. She became only

the third woman this century, after Angelique Kerber and Sabalenka, to win both hard-court Grand Slam titles in the same season. "It's tough to find words. I didn't expect anything like this coming into the tournament," Rybakina

Belarusian's fierce serving and aggressive play. Sabalenka, visibly frustrated after a difficult opening set, responded strongly in the second. The Belarusian raised her level, mixing powerful backhands with a well-timed drop



said after her triumph. "Everything aligned together on my side."

The final initially belonged to the Kazakh, whose powerful groundstrokes repeatedly troubled Sabalenka. Rybakina broke for a 3-2 lead in the opening set and held her nerve to take the advantage despite the

shot before forcing the match into a decider.

The third set, however, belonged firmly to Rybakina. She regained control with her aggressive baseline game and steadily pulled away from her opponent, establishing a 5-2 lead before serving out the match to complete a landmark victory.

Arshad Nadeem misses podium in World Athletics Ultimate Championship





Drug use in schools slarms NA Panel, Nationwide data sought

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training has raised serious concern over growing reports of drug use and supply in educational institutions and called for a coordinated response by police, the Anti Narcotics Force, the Higher Education Commission and the Federal Directorate of Education. The committee said reports of students becoming involved with narcotics require immediate action and stressed that simply forming committees and making policies would not be enough without regular monitoring and visible action against those supplying drugs. The issue was discussed during the 26th meeting of the committee held at Parliament House under the acting chairmanship of Anjum Aqeel Khan. The committee sought verified data on reported cases of drug use and supply in educational institutions. It asked for details of the number and type of cases, action taken, coordination between departments and the penalties imposed on people found involved. Officials told the committee that Anti Drug and Tobacco Committees have been established in higher educational institutions to monitor drug and tobacco use among students. The committee, however, said these arrangements should be linked with law enforcement and other relevant authorities so that complaints can be reported, investigated and acted upon without delay. The committee stressed that educational institutions should provide students with a safe and secure environment and that all concerned departments must have clear responsibilities for preventing drug-related problems. The meeting also focused on preparing Pakistani youth for jobs in foreign countries. The committee was presented with beneficiaries who had successfully qualified the NCLEX Nursing Training Programme. The beneficiaries told the committee that they would complete remaining requirements, including visa screening and other formalities, before seeking employment opportunities abroad. The committee directed NAVTTC to make its training programmes more closely connected with international job markets. Members said global demand for skilled workers is changing rapidly, particularly in the Middle East, and training programmes should be updated regularly to match new opportunities. The committee said Pakistani youth should receive market relevant skills, recognised qualifications and training that can improve their chances of finding decent jobs abroad. The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education also briefed the committee about steps taken for students with dyslexia. Students who need assistance are being provided additional time in examinations and support in reading question papers. The committee stressed that schools should also provide psychological support and trained remedial teachers so learning difficulties can be identified early and students can receive proper help. The Inter Boards Coordination Commission said it would take up the issue with education boards across the country to encourage common facilities and support measures for students with dyslexia. The committee was also briefed about the reported leakage of Cambridge examination papers. Officials said the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency found no evidence showing that the leakage had originated from Pakistan. Officials further informed the committee that the agency does not have direct access to servers located outside Pakistan, making it difficult to independently trace the source and method of any alleged leakage involving overseas systems. The committee also learned that around 200 to 250 cases involving Grade 14 teachers are currently pending. It directed that these cases be processed and completed as quickly as possible. The government assured the committee that necessary steps would be taken to deal with the pending cases. The committee also deferred the Hyderabad Institute for Technology and Management Sciences Amendment Bill 2026 until its next meeting.

CDA, JICA sign 36-Month deal to secure Islamabad's water future till 2050

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday to prepare an integrated Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Master Plan for Islamabad Capital Territory, with 2050 as the target year.

CDA Chairman and Chief

Commissioner Sohail Ashraf signed on behalf of CDA, while JICA Detailed Planning Survey Team Leader MIYAGAWA Masahito signed for JICA at a ceremony held at CDA Headquarters.

The event was also attended by Director General Islamabad Water Sardar Khan Zimri, Joint Secretary Japan at Economic Affairs Division Fakhryia Anjum and other senior officials.

The agreement follows a

detailed JICA survey conducted from August 24 to September 14, during which consultations were held with CDA, Islamabad Water and relevant institutions to finalise the project framework. The 36-month technical cooperation project will primarily cover ICT Zones 1 to 5, with detailed facility planning for Zone 1 and strategic assessment for Zones 2 to 5.

Under the Master Plan, existing and potential water resources including surface

and groundwater will be assessed.

Studies related to Tarbela, Chinot, Shahdara, Dotara and Chirah dams will also be reviewed to meet long-term water needs. The plan will focus on demand forecasting, treatment, transmission, storage, water quality, asset management and reducing non-revenue water. For sewerage and sanitation, the study will address both sewer and non-sewered areas, wastewater treatment, decentralized

systems, fecal-sludge management and service responsibilities. On drainage, it will assess natural streams, stormwater networks and flood-risk zones to propose measures against urban flooding and extreme rainfall. Digital transformation will be a major part of the project to improve Islamabad Water's efficiency through smart metering, leakage detection, billing, customer management and water quality monitoring.

Pilot activities on metering, pressure monitoring and complaint systems are also planned, along with a review of a phased shift to metered tariffs keeping affordability in mind.

Climate change adaptation will be built into the plan through source diversification, aquifer recharge, treated wastewater reuse and nature-based solutions. Energy efficiency and renewable energy options will be promoted as well.

Opinion & Editorial

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Total collapse

Pakistan's collapse to a 3-0 clean sweep at Edgbaston closes one of the bleakest chapters in the team's recent Test history. The manner of the defeat, an eight-wicket loss with England chasing a modest 130, will sting more than the scoreline itself. The win completes a dominant series for England that had already taken the first Test by an innings and 103 runs and the second by 194 runs. Pakistan have now lost 16 of their past 21 matches and sit at the bottom of the World Test Championship table. They are the record of a team without direction, one that responded to a hammering at Lord's by sending seven players home, sacking head coach Sarfraz Ahmed and assistant Umar Gul, and hoping fresh faces might paper over deeper cracks. Amid that wreckage came a moment worth holding onto. Fast bowler Razaullah, twenty-one years' old and playing his first Test, took four wickets in England's first innings and then walked out at number nine to strike nine sixes and four boundaries in a defiant 81 of just 63 balls, sharing a last wicket stand of 121 with Mohammad Abbas. Razaullah, if groomed properly, can take the place of someone like Abdul Razaq in this Pakistan side. The raw ingredients are there. A broader strategy is what's missing, and the bleak state of Test cricket in Pakistan makes that harder to ignore.

Political disconnect

Malecha Lodhi
THE disconnect between the government and public concerns could not be starker. While people worry about their economic situation the government is focused on altering the country's provincial structure. According to the latest Ipsos poll, three in four people believe the country is headed in the wrong direction. The economy and especially inflation are their top concerns. A majority of respondents also said they do not view the economy as strong.

It is this low public confidence and pessimism about the future that should concern the government rather than seeking to redraw the provincial map for ill-defined objectives. So far it hasn't offered any coherent rationale for carving out more provinces. It has also not conducted any study on an issue of such consequence.

Although speculation had long been rife about the hybrid government's intentions it was Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi who made a public pitch for new provinces in July. Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal went further, calling for 15 additional provinces. Each province, he said, should be subdivided into three. As an alternative, he proposed 160 district governments. He argued that establishing more administrative units would deliver effective governance and better social outcomes.

The proposal provoked a

furios response from the ruling party's ally, PPP, which opposed any plan to divide Sindh. The party got the Sindh Assembly to adopt a resolution rejecting the division of the province or creation of new administrative units. The MQM, which has long wanted Karachi as a separate province, boycotted the session. It said its proposals were not incorporated in the resolution, including establishing new administrative units. The resolution declared "Sindh is one and shall remain one" and "unequivocally rejected any proposal, plan, scheme or constitutional arrangement ... which sought to divide Sindh ... or create any new province out of its territory".

Technical fixes are no panacea that will miraculously solve the country's problems.

The government's attempt to start a debate seemed to flounder and spin out of control after its key coalition partner came out in strong opposition. A senior PPP leader questioned Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's silence and asked him to state his position publicly. Another PPP leader accused federal ministers pushing for new provinces of having a "fake mandate". Meanwhile, PML-N ministers themselves issued contradictory statements. Rather than clarifying matters, this compounded the confusion and exposed divisions within the party. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is also said to be

opposed to any division of her province.

The joint parliamentary opposition comprising PTI, JUI-F and other smaller parties rejected any plan to divide provinces at its inaugural meeting in late August. Earlier, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman argued this was not the time to divide provinces given the country's troubled economic and security situation. PTI is now planning a multiparty conference of the opposition on the issue. The party itself has yet to enunciate a clear public position. In the past, it advocated creating a new province in south Punjab. Some PTI leaders say the party opposes changes under "an illegitimate and fraudulent set-up". The party chairman, however, has urged consultations and said any hasty decision would "harm the federation". Meanwhile, the leader of the National Party in Balochistan has said creating new provinces would only exacerbate present tensions.

None of this has deterred federal ministers from continuing to insist on administrative restructuring. Mohsin Naqvi declared this was essential and no one can stop it. But he added it will only happen with the "will of the people". He wasn't walking back from his proposal. His statement implied a referendum might be held to ascertain the 'will of the people'. Such a move would be deeply controversial and divisive.

Courtesy Dawn

Freedom without security

Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan

David Emile Durkheim, the famous French sociologist, describes the role of a statesman not as simply pushing society toward an ideal that seems attractive to him. In his opinion, a statesman should act more as a physician who can prevent the outbreak of an illness with good hygiene and who seeks to cure it at the early stages of its appearance.

Politics in Pakistan has never been smooth or tolerant, but with the escalating debate over creating new provinces, it seems to be heading toward an unavoidable clash. Today, Pakistani society is not in balance, and so is not the state. Balance results from the conditions in which a state exists. In the last seventy-nine years of our independence, the political, economic and security condition of the state was never as poor as it is today. A state prospers not only because of political outcomes but also because of economic security and social outcomes. Our downward trajectory as a state explains the unfavourable outcomes in all these domains. I am part of the generation that grew up believing that men make societies in their own image. The conditions offered to our subsequent generations changed them. They are all a product of the society that made them who they are. Are they winning the hockey matches at the World Cup? No, they are not. Are they winning the test series in England? No, they are not. In England, I see no resilience, character, or fight. The world is laughing at how we have miserably let ourselves down from being who we were — once world champions in cricket and four-time world champions in hockey. When a state is in trouble, if it seems not to be doing well, Kenneth Waltz suggests that the problem can be discovered from facts found in three images. Writing in his book, Man, the State and War, he explains the first image as the nature of human beings, that being the nature of the decision-maker, statesman, or governor in politics.

Courtesy Tribune

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Govt estimates monthly cost of fuel relief scheme at Rs25-30bn, says petroleum minister



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik on Monday estimated that the government's fuel relief scheme would cost Rs25 billion to Rs30 billion per month.

He made the remarks at a press conference alongside federal ministers Attaullah Tarar and Shaza Fatima Khawaja, where the government briefed the media on the scheme's eligibility criteria, registration mechanism and implementation.

Malik said the scheme could cost around Rs300 billion if it continued for 10 months, adding that Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif had directed the government to mobilise additional resources for the programme.

PM Shehbaz Sharif launched the scheme on Sunday, announcing a Rs100-per-litre discount on petrol for motorcycleists, rickshaw and Qingqi drivers and users of vehicles with engine capacities of up to 800cc.

Under the scheme, two-wheelers, rickshaws and other two- and three-wheelers will receive relief on up to 20 litres of petrol per month, while vehicles up to 800cc will be eligible for a discount on up to 30 litres.

The relief will be rolled out in

Islamabad from the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday and across the rest of Pakistan, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, from the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday.

Federal Minister for IT Shaza said the programme was divided into two parts, with eligible citizens first required to register before availing the fuel relief.

Applicants must send their CNIC number from a SIM registered against their identity card to 9771, followed by their vehicle registration number, province or city and registration date. The province entered must be the one where the vehicle or motorcycle is registered, Shaza said, adding that applicants would receive a message if any required information was missing.

She said the registration process only needed to be completed once. After registering, beneficiaries could obtain the fuel token by sending "TOK" to 9771 when purchasing petrol. Shaza urged citizens not to share their CNIC numbers or any other personal data with anyone.

Democratic Values, Strong Institutions Essential for Pakistan's Progress: NA Speaker

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that promoting democratic values and strengthening democratic institutions are essential to putting Pakistan on the path to sustainable development, stressing that a strong democratic system is the guarantee of a prosperous and stable future. In a message marking the International Day of Democracy, observed annually on September 15 under the auspices of the United Nations, the Speaker said democracy was fundamentally about ensuring people's participation in governance and was based on freedom, equality and collective decision-making. He said the strength of democracy depended on respect for the public mandate, transparency in national affairs, accountability and the rule of law. He paid tribute to



political leaders and workers who had made sacrifices for the restoration of democracy and the strengthening of democratic institutions in Pakistan, saying the country's history was marked by a sustained struggle for democratic governance, constitutional supremacy and popular representation. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq described Parliament as a cornerstone of the democratic system and the institution that represents the aspirations of the people. He said elected representatives had a responsibility to legislate for public welfare and address issues confronting citizens.

CCoSOEs reviews bi-annual performance of Federal SOEs, emphasizes stronger governance, transparency and financial discipline

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) on Monday reviewed the performance of federal state-owned enterprises (SOEs) during the first half of the fiscal year 2025-26, with the government stressing the need for greater financial discipline, improved governance and reduced reliance on public support.

The meeting, chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, was also attended by Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, according to a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The Central Monitoring Unit (CMU) of the Finance Division presented a detailed assessment of the SOEs' financial and operational performance, profitability and losses, fiscal flows, implementation of approved business plans, governance, financial reporting and progress against key performance targets. The committee was informed that profitable SOEs earned

aggregate profits of Rs423.3 billion during July-December 2025, while loss-making entities recorded combined losses of Rs342.8 billion. The figures highlighted the significant value generated by several entities while also pointing to the need for continued corrective measures and structural reforms in underperforming organisations.

Government support to SOEs during the period amounted to Rs804 billion, while the entities contributed Rs839 billion to the government, resulting in a positive net fiscal flow of Rs35 billion in favour of the government.

The committee observed that improving commercial performance, strengthening financial discipline and gradually reducing dependence on public support remained key priorities of the government's SOE reform agenda. The review identified circular debt and other fiscal risks, operational weaknesses in parts of the power and infrastructure sectors, corporate governance shortcomings and weak board effectiveness as areas requiring sustained attention.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) at the Finance Division.

Dialogue only way to resolve political issues: Dr Tariq

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Monday urged the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to resolve political issues through dialogue, saying negotiations were the only way to address political differences. Speaking to a private television channel, the minister said the government had invited the opposition for talks on several occasions, but PTI leaders had refused to engage in dialogue. Commenting on PTI's planned long march, he said the party had a track record of creating violence during long marches and protest demonstrations. He made it clear that the government would not allow anyone to create a law-and-order situation in the country. He said the opposition should focus on issues of public interest and avoid pursuing personal agendas. He also alleged that the PTI-led Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had used official machinery for the long march and protest demonstrations. Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry reiterated that political issues could only be resolved through meaningful dialogue.

Acting chinese consul general Feng Deheng meets SAPM on Digital Media Fahd Haroon

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: At the invitation of Acting Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Karachi, Feng Deheng, Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media Fahd Haroon visited the Chinese Consulate in Karachi, where they had a warm and cordial interaction.

Diplomats from the Chinese Consulate, members of the business community, among others, were also present on the occasion, said a release received here. The interaction included an exchange of views on the enduring Pakistan-China relationship and the rapidly



evolving digital landscape.

Discussions covered digital media, technology and digital transformation, including the growing role of digital platforms in communication, innovation and economic development. The occasion reflected the iron-brother relationship between Pakistan and China, built on deep trust, mutual respect and a shared commitment to a strong and prosperous future.

KP Governor for peace, interfaith dialogue, investment

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday said the doors of the province were open for peace, religious harmony and interfaith dialogue, adding that Pakistan was ready to play a leading role in promoting global peace and interfaith understanding. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation led by American scholar and founder of the Multi-Faith Neighbors Network, Pastor Bob Roberts here.

The delegation included Network Director and other members. Senator Tahir Khalil Sindhu, Prof Dr Qibla Ayaz,



Muhammad Israr Madani, Bushra Ali, Madiha Malik and Shahid Rehmat were also present.

The Governor said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa offered vast investment opportunities in minerals, natural resources, energy and other sectors, and invited investors to explore the province's economic potential.

He also paid tribute to Bob Roberts for his contributions.

Survey launched at PILDAT-sponsored citizens roundtable

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first-ever public survey specifically designed to measure the mismatch between citizen expectations and public resource allocation, was launched on September 14, 2026 at a Citizens' Roundtable in Islamabad, convened by PILDAT Consulting (PILDAT facilitated the Citizens' Roundtable and led stakeholder engagement and communications for the report's public launch) on findings independently researched by Institute for Public Opinion Research (IPOR). Experts from academia, think tanks, the judiciary, the legal pro-

fession and the media gathered to dissect its findings. The National Citizen Survey 2026 was conducted by IPOR through face-to-face, in-home interviews with 5,155 voting-age citizens between 23 August and 5 September 2026, using a four-stage stratified sample representing all four provinces, both rural (60%) and urban (40%) areas, and all major age, gender and income groups. The survey, delivers a blunt verdict: rising electricity and gas prices are the single most-cited concern of Pakistani citizens nationwide — yet federal health spending amounts to a mere 0.1% of the Rs 18.771

trillion national budget, dwarfed 400 times over by the 42.9% swallowed by debt servicing alone. Main Headlines: 19% of citizens name rising electricity and gas prices as Pakistan's number one problem — more than any other issue in the country; 42.9% of the federal budget goes to debt servicing alone — more than defence, health, education, pensions and subsidies combined; 18% of citizens say they were personally asked for a bribe by a government official in the past year — hard evidence behind Pakistan's low global corruption ranking; 91% say it is difficult to start or run a busi-

ness in Pakistan today, with taxes named as the single biggest obstacle; Not one public institution surveyed — not Parliament, not the Election Commission, not the FBR — commands the complete trust of a majority of citizens; 42% now trust social media more than television for their news — even as 56% blame the internet for declining social values; 79% call the rise of drug use in Pakistan "extremely dangerous"; 66% of citizens view Pakistan's rising national debt as a grave concern, including 49% of who call it "extremely concerning"; 43% view reports on Pakistan by foreign-funded

NGOs and think tanks as either contrary to facts and exaggerated, or driven by a foreign agenda — nearly double the 25% who see such reporting as fact-based; FIA and NAB record the highest levels of public confidence among all institutions tested (33% and 23% complete trust respectively), well ahead of Parliament (15%) and the Revenue Department (13%); 60% say Pakistan's education system does not meet the needs of a modern economy; 68% view Pakistan's IMF program as either harmful or of no benefit to the general public. What makes the findings hard to ignore,

researchers say, is their consistency: the gap between citizen priorities and public spending holds across all four provinces, cutting across urban and rural areas, income levels and age groups alike. Survey points that nearly one in five citizens cite the sharp rise in the cost of everyday goods as a leading concern, while unemployment ranks third nationally. Meanwhile, taxation emerges as the single biggest complaint of the business community, with an overwhelming 91% of respondents describing it as difficult to start or operate a business in the country.