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Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan sign agreement to boost bilateral trade to \$200m in two years

PEAK POINT

KYRGYZSTAN: Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on Wednesday to boost their bilateral trade to \$200 million in two years. The agreement was signed in Bishkek before Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation wound up their three-day visit to Kyrgyzstan. Addressing the signing ceremony, PM Shehbaz said the two sides had initially signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to expand their bilateral trade to \$200m. But, he continued, "I suggested that an agreement should be signed instead of an MoU as it would be a concrete step to achieve [the target of] \$200m trade."

The prime minister said he requested Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov to consider

this possibility and he agreed. Subsequently, an agreement was signed at the airport, he added.

Earlier in the day, the PM addressed a joint briefing alongside the Kyrgyz president, where he had announced the plan to expand bilateral trade between the two countries.

"To this end, we will be working on a comprehensive plan of practical measures aimed at gradually increasing bilateral trade to \$200 million, improving trade mechanisms, promoting joint investment projects, strengthening industrial cooperation and expanding direct business-to-business contacts," he said after the two countries signed multiple memoranda (MoU) of understanding.



BISHKEK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Nurgozhovich Japarov witnessing the signing and exchange of agreement between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan to enhance the bilateral trade to 200 million USD in the next two years.

Pakistan Navy commences SEASPAK-2026 exercise to test combat readiness

PEAK POINT



KARACHI: The Pakistan Navy commenced a major maritime exercise in Karachi on Wednesday to test combat readiness against threats, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The opening brief of the maritime exercise, named SEASPAK-2026, was presided over by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and attended by senior officers from other branches of the armed forces, the military's media wing said in a press release. "The exercise rigorously tests Pakistan Navy's combat readiness against conventional and emerging maritime threats, integrating ships, submarines, aircraft, unmanned systems, marines, special forces and joint Army and Air Force elements," the statement said. The ISPR added that the exercise focuses on rehearsing multi-domain operations by "integrating maritime, air, land, cyber and space-enabled capabilities", as well as operations in the information environment to "secure decisive advantage in the information battlespace" alongside kinetic operations at sea. Earlier, the naval chief also visited fleet units of the Pakistan Navy and reviewed.

Pakistan 'hopeful' despite US-Iran escalation, will continue to strive for dialogue and diplomacy: FO

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said on Wednesday that Pakistan remained "hopeful" despite recent escalations between the US and Iran and would continue to strive for dialogue and diplomacy. Pakistan has been spearheading efforts for an end to the ongoing war that began with US-Israeli attacks on Iran in February. Besides signing the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding as the mediator in June, Islamabad had also brokered a ceasefire between the US and Iran in April. The April ceasefire put an end to the most intense fighting, but sporadic attacks, mainly around the Strait of Hormuz, have dimmed the prospects of a final peace agreement. Recapping Pakistan's diplomatic efforts in this connection over the week, the FO spokesperson recalled that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the sidelines of an SCO summit earlier this week and discussed the evolving regional situation. "The prime minister had reiterated Pakistan's commitment to peace through restraint, dialogue and diplomacy, while stressing that the Islamabad MoU offered the most viable pathway to lasting peace and stability in the region," he said. He said Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar also interacted with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on the sidelines of the SCO summit, while Pakistan and Iran's leadership had earlier discussed the Middle East and Gulf situation in Istanbul on the sidelines of the Makkah defence pact meeting.

Iran's Ghalibaf terms US 'great satan' as strikes kill Iranian children

PEAK POINT



TEHRAN: Iran's Parliamentary Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf on Wednesday called the United States "satan", citing attacks on children at the Minab school, Lamerd sports hall, and the Kouhestak wedding.

"If power acts like Satan, picks targets like Satan, and kills like Satan, it's Satan," Ghalibaf said in a post on X. He added, "Shields a junior Satan that does the same? It's THE Great Satan."

Separately, four members of the IRGC Aerospace Force were among seven killed in strikes by the United States in western and southern Iran, Iranian authorities said. Four members of the IRGC's Aerospace Force were killed in a US attack in the western Kermanshah province, its provincial branch said in a statement. Separately, three members of Iran's Basij paramilitary force, affiliated with the IRGC, were killed in an overnight US strike on Lavan Island in the southern Hormozgan province, Iranian media reported. Deputy Commander of the IRGC's Seyyed al-Shohada.

PIA to increase weekly flights to London from four to seven from Oct 27

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Wednesday said that it would be increasing its weekly flights to London from four to seven starting October 27.

Under the new schedule, five flights would depart from Islamabad while two would operate on the Lahore-London route, the airline said in a statement. "The increase in the number of flights reflects passenger confidence and rising demand," the statement added. Pakistani flights had been banned from flying to the European Union.

Sri Lankan, US anti-narcotics agents bust Pakistani drug network in Colombo

PEAK POINT

COLOMBO: Anti-narcotics agents from the United States and Sri Lanka seized almost half a tonne of crystal methamphetamine following a joint operation targeting a Pakistani drug network, police said on Wednesday. Some 463 kilos of the synthetic drug were seized from a shipping container that arrived in Colombo over the weekend and two Pakistani men were arrested, police deputy inspector-general Ashoka Dharmasena told reporters. The US embassy in Colombo said the narcotics, valued at \$21 million and concealed in bath towels, were meant to be smuggled to international markets via Sri Lanka. The

US Drug Enforcement Administration's office



and Sri Lanka Police Narcotics Bureau conducted the joint operation, the embassy said in a statement, after tracking shipping containers from Pakistan between August 14-29. "This operation underscores the strength of the US-Sri Lanka partnership in dismantling transnational criminal organisations that fund terrorism and threaten

communities in both our countries," it said.

Dharmasena said they had also arrested a local man in connection with the latest methamphetamine seizure and confirmed the operation followed a "tip-off". Sri Lanka's ongoing anti-narcotics drive since October has resulted in the seizure of nearly 14 tonnes of illegal drugs, he added.

The haul includes methamphetamine, also

known as ice, heroin and cocaine.

Sri Lanka's Public Security Minister Ananda Wijepala told parliament that most of the illegal drugs originated in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and were being smuggled into the island by sea.

He said there were an estimated 400,000 drug users in the island nation of 22 million people.

In October 2024, a Sri Lanka court sentenced 10 Iranian men to life imprisonment after they pleaded guilty to heroin smuggling.

Sri Lanka's largest single seizure of narcotics was in December 2016, when customs officials found 800 kilos of cocaine in a shipping container of timber destined for India.

Body of missing Irish mountaineer recovered in Siran Valley



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The dead body of an Irish mountaineer, Alexander, who had gone missing while descending the 13,500-foot-high Musa Da Mussala peak in Siran Valley, was recovered after three days of rescue operation. Police said that the body of a British mountaineer, Alun David Cooper Cledwyn, was already recovered from the forests of Siran Valley. A police officer said that the reason behind the mountaineer's death is still unclear. Later, the police shifted the body of the mountaineer to the hospital for completion of the necessary procedure. The Irish mountaineer Alexander, along with a British national, Alun David Cooper Cledwyn, had gone to Siran Valley to summit Musa Da Mussala on August 28, 2026.

SPORTS

King Charles meets Pakistan cricket team at Clarence House

Pakistani martial artist Irfan Mehsood sets new Guinness World Record



PEAK POINT

efforts for peace.

LONDON: Pakistan cricket team players and officials met King Charles at Clarence House, the historic royal residence, in London.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi was also present at the meeting, where the monarch spoke with the players and team officials.

According to Naqvi, King Charles encouraged the Pakistani players and praised the country's

The king also discussed cricket and Pakistan's efforts to maintain peace and security in the country with Naqvi.

During the meeting, the British high commissioner told King Charles that Pakistan and Naqvi had played an important role in efforts for peace in the region.

Speaking to Geo News, Naqvi described his meeting with King Charles as "very productive".

Naqvi has since left the UK and is returning to Pakistan.

The national cricket team is currently in England for a three-match Test series.

The Green Shirts, who entered the England series with a 1-1 draw away against West Indies, were blown away by the hosts in the opening fixture as they succumbed to an innings and 103-run defeat in Babar's absence.

In the subsequent fixture at Lord's, where they had not lost a single Test since 2010 and were on a two-match winning streak, Pakistan succumbed to an equally

humbling defeat as the hosts prevailed by a massive 194 runs to clinch an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

The back-to-back crushing defeats drew severe criticism from cricket pundits, and the PCB eventually enforced an overhaul, releasing seven players, alongside head coach Sarfaraz Ahmed and bowling coach Umar Gul ahead of the third Test in Birmingham, slated to get underway next Wednesday.



PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Pakistani martial artist Irfan Mehsood has added another achievement to his growing list of international accolades by setting a new Guinness World Record for full-extension one-hand punches.

Mehsood performed 38 full-extension one-hand punches in one minute while carrying a 10-kilogram weight.

Speaking to Geo News, Mehsood said the target set by Guinness World Records was 30 punches, which he surpassed to claim the record.

According to the Guinness World Records certificate, the feat was achieved in Dera Ismail Khan on March 19, 2026.

Pakistani martial artist Irfan Mehsood performs 38 full-extension one-hand punches in one minute while carrying a 10-kilogram weight to set another Guinness World Record.

Pakistani martial artist Irfan Mehsood performs 38 full-extension one-hand punches in one minute while carrying a 10-kilogram weight to set another Guinness World Record.

Mehsood said he has already established 70 world records in the push-ups category, the highest number at the global level in the discipline. The martial artist added that he has previously set world records while carrying weights of 100, 80, 60 and 40 pounds.

Aaqib Javed defends Pakistan's mid-series shake-up, says team failed to compete in England



MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: National selector Aaqib Javed on Tuesday defended the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) controversial mid-series shake-up, saying the team's inability to compete in the first two Tests against England had forced the selectors to change the combination and "mindset" for the final match of the series.

The PCB's decision to sack red-ball head coach Sarfaraz Ahmed — to replace him with white-ball head coach Mike Hesson — send seven players home and replace bowling coach Umar Gul with Australian Ashley Noffke has attracted widespread criticism, with former players and coaches questioning the wisdom of making sweeping changes with a Test

still remaining in the series. Selection committee member Misbah-ul-Haq subsequently resigned after reportedly not being consulted over the changes. Speaking on a private news channel after the developments, Aaqib acknowledged that the selectors

would have to take responsibility for the 17-member squad they had originally chosen but argued that the team's management had failed to make the required decisions during the tour.

"When we select a team, we sit with the coach and captain and build a squad. We are absolutely prepared to take responsibility for that squad," Aaqib said. "But when you go on tour, you have to

make the kind of combination you need from match to match."

Pakistan have lost both Tests against England, by an innings and 103 runs at Headingley and by 194 runs at Lord's, leaving them 2-0 down in the series.

Aaqib said the selectors had identified options within the touring squad, including an all-rounder, a second wicket-keeper and fast bowler Ubaid Shah, but those options were not used.

"I also spoke to the captain and the coach before this Test match and told them to play your fast bowler, Ubaid Shah, because you have played three fast bowlers of essentially the same type," he said.

Novak Djokovic falls in US Open first round, Medvedev and Pegula advance



Muneeba hails 'belief' after shaky Pakistan trounce Thailand in Women's Asia Cup

PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Pakistan opener Muneeba Ali hailed the team's "belief" after the side endured a chaotic batting show to trounce Thailand in their Women's Asia Cup opener at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday night.

Pakistan's batting woes exposed themselves once again as they were reduced to 23-3 within the powerplay after captain Fatima Sana won the toss. However, wicket-keeper-batter Muneeba stabilised the innings, and dug in to produce a sturdy knock of 54 runs off 52 balls that gave Pakistan a 35-run win.

Muneeba provided some much-needed relief to the batting line-up, braving the hot and humid conditions in Dubai.

"When wickets kept falling in the powerplay, we knew if we got a good part-

nership and kept on scoring runs, it would put the bowlers under pressure, and give us opportunities to score," she said in the post-match press conference.

"That's what my strategy was," the bespectacled

which would be defendable against the opposition on this pitch."

Pakistan's propensity for batting collapses cost them greatly in the Women's T20 World Cup in June, where they managed only one win



southpaw added, when asked about how she navigated the innings.

"In the past, if wickets fell in the powerplay, we wouldn't be able to come back into the match."

"Today the difference was that even when we lost wickets, the team kept belief and tried setting a total

in their group, against the Netherlands.

A lack of momentum and frequent collapses led them to humbling 64 and 113-run losses against India and Australia respectively, while a mid-innings stutter against Bangladesh left the team at 100-8, unable to chase an achievable 124.

Saka strike steers Arsenal win over rebuilding Villa



Sukkur Shikarpur highway faces inquiry as NHA moves to suspend official

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: A National Highway Authority official is set to face suspension and an inquiry over the poor condition of the Sukkur-Shikarpur highway, where frequent accidents have raised serious safety concerns. This development came during the 19th meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Communications, chaired by Aijaz Hussain Jakhani at Parliament House. The committee expressed serious concern over the condition of the Sukkur Shikarpur highway and was not satisfied with the response given by NHA officials, who claimed that periodic maintenance work

had already been completed. The NHA Chief Executive Officer admitted a clear difference between the officials' claim and the actual condition of the road. He informed the committee that a Maintenance and Improvement report had been prepared and the concerned official would be suspended. An inquiry will also be conducted. The CEO assured the committee that the inquiry findings would be submitted and that the remaining payment to the contractor would not be released. The committee allowed the Ministry to submit a new and detailed response at its next meeting. The committee also rejected the Ministry's general explanation for roads deteriorat-

ing soon after construction. The Ministry had blamed extreme weather and a lack of funds for maintenance. The committee and the member who raised the issue were not satisfied and demanded a specific and complete answer. The committee noted that the matter had remained pending for nearly eight months and ordered the Ministry to come fully prepared at the next meeting. The Ratodero Gwadar Motorway, known as M 8, also came under discussion. The Ministry told the committee that a hydrological study would be carried out to determine the most suitable design for the area connecting Sindh with Balochistan. The Ministry

assured the committee that the remaining work would be completed by November 2026. On the basis of this assurance and with the agreement of the member who raised the matter, the committee closed the issue. The Sukkur Hyderabad M 6 Motorway also received an important update. The committee was informed that construction work on the M 6 would begin by the end of October 2026. The committee decided to visit the project site, hold its meeting there and attend the groundbreaking ceremony. Toll collection on roads still under construction also came under serious scrutiny. A subcommittee report on National Highway Authority work

forward schemes under the Public Sector Development Programme 2026 to 2027, toll plazas on roads that are still being built and the awarding of all toll plazas in Sindh to one contractor was presented before the committee. The committee expressed dissatisfaction over the absence of the Secretary Communications and the NHA Chief Executive Officer without prior information. It also criticised the incomplete response provided by Ministry and NHA officials. The committee decided to directly examine the terms of reference of the subcommittee at its next meeting. It also asked a committee member to meet the NHA Chief Executive

Officer regarding toll collection on roads still under construction, particularly where collecting tolls may go against NHA policy and commuters are not being provided proper facilities. Several other road projects were also reviewed, including the New Baran Bridge, Dera Murad Jamali Bypass, Bhong Interchange, the poor condition of the Pindi Batya Sahianwala Road and progress on the M 10 project. The committee's proceedings showed growing concern over road safety, poor maintenance, project delays and toll collection, with lawmakers demanding clear answers from the Ministry of Communications and the NHA.

NA panel examines WPDA security bill, K-IV delay, Tarbela affectees

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The 13th meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Water Resources was held under the Chairmanship of Ahmad Atteeq Anwer, MNA at the Parliament House on Wednesday.

The Chairman WPDA briefed the Committee on the vital role of the WPDA Security Force (WSF) in safeguarding national assets, securing scattered installa-

tions, and protecting national and foreign personnel working on WPDA projects. He highlighted that the proposed WSF Act would provide the Force with the requisite legal authority and operational framework to effectively discharge its responsibilities.

The Committee was further informed that the WPDA Act, 1958 presently contains no statutory provisions regarding the creation, jurisdiction, powers, or functions of the security setup.



After a threadbare discussion, the Committee decided to defer consideration of the Bill until its next meeting.

The committee appointed a sub-committee under the

convenorship of Muhammad Idrees "to investigate the non-completion of K-IV project despite huge expenditure incurred".

The Committee dis-

cussed the establishment of the Tarbela Dam Authority for the settlement and rehabilitation of Tarbela Dam affectees, as presented by Babar Nawaz Khan. After detailed deliberation, the Committee emphasized the need for a clear and legally viable mechanism to address their longstanding concerns and recommended that the Ministry propose an appropriate legal way forward for the effective resolution of the matter.

The meeting was attended by MNA's Shamaila Rana, Muhammad Idrees, Syed Javed Ali Shah Jillani, Shazia Marri, (On Zoom), Saba Talpur, Mian Khan Bugti, Zulfiqar Ali Behan, Syed Waseem Hussain, Amin Ul Haque (Mover), Babar Nawaz Khan (Mover), Mian Muhammad Mueen Watto (Federal Minister for Water Resources) besides the officials of the Ministry of Water Resources.

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The Bishkek moment

As Pakistan assumes the chairmanship of the SCO's Council of Heads of State for 2026-27, it has spelt out a viable agenda of cooperation across all political realms of development. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif proposed a plan to prioritise IT, AI, energy development, poverty reduction, disaster management, health, culture and sports as avenues to pool synergies for a better tomorrow for the region's three billion people. If this prospective bloc of geo-economics in Central and Southwest Asia walks the talk, it could go a long way in harnessing a framework of understanding to better address bilateral and regional irritants. Thus, Islamabad demonstrated an awareness of ground realities as it raised the issues of terrorism and the weaponisation of water resources, cautioning that such friction only leads to further instability, chaos and degeneration. The summit in the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek saw heads of state and government rub shoulders as they marshalled for an aligned geopolitical entity free from bilateral encumbrances. In order to realise that dream, major stakeholders such as Russia, China and Iran must prevail upon India to mend its fences with Pakistan and work on a collective regional theme for the sake of tranquillity.

Moving upstream

Salma Khan

IMAGINE someone in Pakistan is standing at a counter this morning. She is being told that the system will not accept her name as it appears on her degree. Her name on the degree is spelled differently, and the database will only accept the name in the format already stored against her identity record. The clerk is not difficult; the field on the digital form will not take it. There is no form for objection and no hearing at which she can explain that both names belong to the same person.

In this hypothetical scenario, a decision about her legal identity has just been made by a database. When a state moves from paper to software, a lot more changes than just the speed at which things are done.

For most of our history, law lived in a medium we understood: the register, the file, the stamped deed, the court record. A lawyer's authority came from mastering that medium: what the text said, what a court had made it mean, and how to work out the space between the two. On paper, a rule takes effect through interpretation. An official reads it; someone contests it; a judge decides.

In a system, the rule is executed. The database either lets that department see your record, or it does not. Nobody necessarily weighs your circumstances at the moment of decision unless somebody deliberately built

that pause into the design. Pakistan's digital state needs a new kind of lawyer — one who stops treating the system as somebody else's department.

Pakistan is now building at pace. The Digital Nation Pakistan Act, 2025, created the Pakistan Digital Authority, with a mandate covering digital governance, data, artificial intelligence and digital public infrastructure. The draft National Data Governance Policy, 2026, declares government data a strategic national asset and proposes rules on data sovereignty, and cross-border transfers. In April, the National Judicial (Policy-making) Committee issued guidelines positioning AI as an assistive tool for judicial institutions.

Meanwhile, the Personal Data Protection Bill remains a draft, years after the 2018 version was published.

So, the architecture is arriving ahead of the supposed governing law. Therefore, it is safe to assume that for now governance will largely come from policy documents, procurement contracts and default settings. This means lawyers will increasingly need to be involved not just when something goes wrong, but when these systems are being designed and built in the first place.

Consider interoperability, which is the quiet center of all of this. A service links records, so a citizen no longer submits information

the state already holds. That makes life easier, but it also creates important legal questions. Who may open that record, and for what purpose? How long does an incorrect entry follow someone, and who is answerable for it? What is left of consent when refusing to share means losing a service you need? Those are legal questions with technical answers, and technical questions with legal consequences.

Legal practice is forming around them. Data governance is the most visible piece: someone has to negotiate the terms on which institutions share, secure and delete individuals' data, and that work happens before a system is built, not afterwards.

Artificial intelligence adds another layer. The National AI Policy, 2025, and the Islamabad AI Declaration both put accountability alongside adoption. This sounds unobjectionable until you have to demonstrate it. A lawyer in this space needs to know how a model was tested, where it fails, and what record would satisfy a regulator two years later. Much of the work is about evidence rather than doctrine.

Then there is the lawyer who sits with the people building the thing. The old sequence was linear: a team builds, legal checks. What is emerging moves counsel upstream, into the design conversation. Courtesy Dawn

A choice to not care

Muhammad Hamid Zaman

THE horror of the PIMS tragedy last week has stayed in the news for about a week — as expected — and has already started to fade in the background. Soon, in a manner not unfamiliar to us, it will get lost in the bureaucratic burden of poorly written reports and recommendations that are unlikely to be acted upon. That will follow with a collective memory loss for most, except for those who will carry that burning scar in their hearts and souls for the rest of their lives.

The Islamabad incident is unfortunately the latest episode in the long line of tragedies at our health facilities. Media tracking data indicates as many as thirty incidents in the last 16 years, and twelve incidents in the last four years alone. This is not normal and should not be acceptable in any society. I do wonder whether the slightly longer coverage and outrage (whether real or feigned) is because it happened in Islamabad. What if this was in a smaller town? A village? There are many questions that remain unanswered from the persistent lapses in safety to the timing of the incident to the actions of the concerned authorities — and I hope before amnesia and natural inclination to focus on the latest gossip takes over our time, we will get some answers about what actually happened through an honest and public inquiry. But while we wait, it is worth pondering over something else that came from the hospital staff themselves (and was reported in several domestic and international outlets) and has been bothering me: the notion that doors of these units are often locked or manned because babies are stolen from government hospitals. Many of us would acknowledge this as something that does happen, and to many this evil act would not sound unfamiliar. But let us take a minute to think a bit more deeply. What does it say about us and the society at large where little babies are stolen? How can we simply say this without really being ashamed?

Courtesy Tribune

Political leaders, business community representatives call on Acting President



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Wednesday, held meetings and representatives of the business community and discussed matters of national, regional and international importance, including the security situation and flash floods.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundli, accompanied by PPP Parliamentary Leader in the KP Assembly Ahmad Karim Kundli, called on the acting president and

apprised him of matters relating to peace and stability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

Political leaders, business community representatives call on Acting President. Security issues, flood situation in various parts of the province and the ongoing efforts for relief and rehabilitation also came under discussion as well as the overall political situation in the country.

In another meeting, former federal and provincial minister Syed Samsam Bukhari called on Gilani and

discussed matters relating to his constituency.

Political leaders, business community representatives call on Acting President. Former president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan also called on the acting president and discussed the political situation in AJ&K following the recent elections, as well as matters relating to the development and welfare of the people of the region.

Political leaders, business community representatives call on Acting President. He recalled the landmark development initiatives undertaken in AJ&K during the tenure of Gilani as Prime Minister of Pakistan, including the establishment of three medical colleges in Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot and Mirpur in which students from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir were also given a quota. He mentioned that, as a result of steps taken during that period, more than 16,000 students from various provinces and regions of Pakistan.

NA Speaker meets Abdul Khaliq, offers condolences on demise of his son

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visited the chamber of the Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd.) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai, at the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan and expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathies over the demise of his young son. Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Member National Assembly Haji Jamal Shah Kakar and Members of the Balochistan Assembly were also present during the visit. Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed his heartfelt condolences to Captain (Retd.) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai



and the bereaved family, stating that the loss of a young son is an immense and irreparable loss for parents and an extremely painful tragedy. He further stated that he fully shares the grief and sorrow of Captain (Retd.) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai and his family during this difficult hour. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq offered Fateha for the departed soul and prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of the deceased and grant the bereaved family strength, patience and fortitude to bear this irreparable loss.

Rana Mashhood, Palestine envoy discuss youth cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Wednesday met Palestinian Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Zuhair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid at the Prime Minister's Office to discuss strengthening Pakistan-Palestine ties, with a focus on youth development, education and support for Palestinian students, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to helping Palestinian youth through educational and development opportunities. During the meeting, Rana Mashhood warmly welcomed the Palestinian ambassador and discussed matters of mutual interest with officials and representatives from both sides. The Palestinian



envoy appreciated the initiatives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and expressed gratitude for Pakistan's invitation to Palestinian youth to pursue medical education at Pakistani universities. Dr. Zaid also thanked Pakistan for its continued support for the Palestinian people and expressed hope for greater cooperation, particularly in education and youth development. Rana Mashhood reiterated Pakistan's steadfast support for the Palestinian people.

CJP holds consultative meeting on judicial development projects in Karachi

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi on Wednesday held a consultative meeting at the Supreme Court Branch Registry Karachi to review judicial sector development projects and reform initiatives being undertaken in the city.

Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput and representatives of the legal fraternity attended the meeting. The consultation focused on measures to strengthen judicial infrastructure and improve court facilities in Sindh, including the establishment of Women Facilitation Centres, shifting of courts to suitable premises and development and upgradation of judicial infrastructure. Various options concerning the proposed initiatives were discussed with representatives of the Bar to obtain their views and incorporate their input into the planning and implementation process.

Chief Justice, Yahya Afridi emphasized that judicial reforms and development pro-

jects could not achieve their objectives without meaningful consultation, broad-based consensus and active participation of all stakeholders, particularly the Bar.

He stressed that sustained engagement with the legal fraternity was essential to ensure that judicial projects and reforms remained practical, inclusive and responsive to the needs of litigants, lawyers and other court users.

The Bar representatives appreciated the consultative approach and shared their views on the proposed projects and reforms. They assured their cooperation and coordination with the Supreme Court and Sindh High Court for successful implementation of judicial sector initiatives.

The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment of the Bench and Bar to advancing judicial reforms through continued consultation and close coordination, with the objective of developing accessible, efficient, citizen-centric and responsive justice institutions across Sindh.

Ahsan Iqbal proposes 15 new provinces

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday called for a fundamental restructuring of Pakistan's governance system, saying the country must either create 15 more provinces or establish 160 fully empowered district governments to address its deteriorating social indicators. Speaking at a consultative session with media representatives on proposed governance reforms for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), the minister said the existing two-tier system of federal and provincial governments had failed to deliver effective governance and improve social outcomes. The minister went on to say that Pakistan's democracy was "monopoly" as there were only 1,170 public offices to cater for the needs of a 260 million population, adding that people's problems could not be resolved unless 150,000 to 200,000 public offices were created through local governments.

"If politicians will not do anything, the events will take over," Iqbal said. Iqbal, who is also the secretary general of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz,



KARACHI: Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan/Chairman, NJPMC, along with the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Sindh High Court, in a constructive meeting with a delegation of the Sindh Bar Council at the Supreme Court Branch Registry.

Ambassador calls on SAPM Fahd Haroon; discusses digital media landscape

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan, Han Sungho, called on Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Digital Media Fahd Haroon at his office here on Wednesday. Fahd Haroon warmly welcomed Han Sungho on assuming his diplomatic responsibilities in Pakistan and conveyed his best wishes for a successful tenure. He expressed confidence that the Ambassador's tenure would further strengthen the longstanding and cordial relations between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on



developments in the fields of media and digital media, evolving global media trends, challenges confronting modern media platforms, and the growing role of digital platforms in public engagement and communication.

Ambassador Han Sungho appreciated Pakistan's initiatives in the fields of digital media and communications and expressed interest in exploring further.

Risalpur Locomotive factory to be revamped according to international standards: Hanif Abbasi

PEAK POINT

RISALPUR: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Wednesday visited the Pakistan locomotive factory Risalpur and reviewed its various sections, production activities, locomotive repair and rehabilitation work, and local manufacturing of spare parts.

During his detailed visit, the minister directed that the Risalpur Locomotive Factory be completely revamped according to international standards and its 100 per cent production capacity be

utilised. He stressed the need to adopt modern technology, promote technology transfer and reverse engineering, and enhance local manufacturing of spare parts using indigenous resources.

The minister directed that the production and rehabilitation of AGE-30 locomotives be completed on a priority basis.

He said the factory's capacity should be fully utilised to meet the requirements of Pakistan Railways.

He also decided to start manufacturing 400 hopper



wagons from January 2027.

He directed the authorities to develop various products at the factory while

keeping the requirements of the private sector in view.

The minister ordered that all trains should have fully

functional braking systems by December 31, 2026, to further improve safety and operational efficiency.

During a briefing, the minister was informed that 300 spare parts had been manufactured locally at the Risalpur factory as import substitutes. The initiative had resulted in foreign exchange savings of Rs2.6 billion.

The minister was further informed that the modernisation of 15 AGE-30 locomotives was under way under the SR-100 project. Another 16 AGE-30 diesel-electric locomotives were planned

for rehabilitation from September 2026 to February 2027.

Under the 820 hopper wagons project, the Risalpur factory had been assigned 230 ZBKCO open-top wagons, of which 147 had already been completed.

The minister directed the authorities to complete the remaining 83 open-top wagons by November 30, 2026.

Muhammad Hanif Abbasi also met workers and engineers at the factory and listened to their problems. He directed the relevant authorities to resolve.