Tarar urges youth to follow Prophet's teachings in digital age

My critics were actually responsible for decline in Pakistan cricket, says Naqvi

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia hold workshops to align IT strategy

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DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

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PM Shehbaz approves establishment of Trade Facilitation Board

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday approved the establishment of a Trade Facilitation Board, which will be chaired by him personally, to streamline the country's trade processes and address non-tariff barriers to cross-border commerce.

Chairing an important meeting on trade facilitation, the prime minister said the proposed board would take decisions aimed at improving the entire trade supply chain and resolving issues relating to cross-border trade.

The board will prepare a roadmap for promotion of trade, formulate a Trade Facilitation Index and devise a mechanism to monitor progress, the meeting was informed.

The prime minister directed that work be undertaken on an emergency basis to enhance the capacity of the country's ports and ordered the establishment of various working groups for this purpose.

The working groups will focus on enhancing port capacity, improving coordination among relevant departments, ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework, facilitating pre-arrival clearance and promoting the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in international trade.

The prime minister also directed that transportation, clearance and other procedures for importers and exporters at ports be simplified.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting on trade facilitation for importers and exporters.

Security forces kill 15 terrorists trying to cross into Pakistan through Afghan border: ISPR

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed 15 terrorists who were trying to infiltrate into Pakistan through its border with Afghanistan, the military's media affairs wing said on Thursday. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the terrorists had tried to cross into Pakistan's North Waziristan district on the night between August 31 and September 1. Their movement, however, was detected by security forces, the statement said, adding that the troops "responded professionally and with patience to engage them". "As a result of precise and skillful engagement that lasted for 36 hours, 15 khawarij belonging to India-sponsored Fitna-al-Khawarij" were killed, the statement added. The state uses the term Fitna al Khawarij for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). ISPR said that during the sanitisation operation after the engagement, large quantities of weapons and ammunition were recovered from the slain terrorists. This further "exposed the nefarious designs of khawarij and their facilitators seeking to disrupt peace and stability in the country," the military's media wing said.

Iran attacks US targets despite Trump threats

PEAK POINT

TEHRAN: Iran attacked US military bases in Kuwait on Thursday, despite US President Donald Trump threatening further strikes in a fresh flare-up six months into the war.

The new clashes, which began with US raids on Sunday, deepen the ongoing impasse in the war, as Iran maintains a stranglehold on the strategic Strait of Hormuz and the United States presses its counter-blockade of Iranian ports.

Trump said his military was prepared to attack Iran "any time we want" after extensive US bombardment of sites across the country left at least 19 Iranians dead between Tuesday and Wednesday.

Tehran has once again retaliated with strikes across the Middle East this week, saying it targeted US bases and forces in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan and Iraq's Kurdistan region.

Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei warned the US on Wednesday that Iran had adopted a "new strategy" in the war that "will shatter your foundations". Iran's pummelling of US military targets across the region came after a US attack that hit a wedding in the country's south, prompting fury from Tehran.

The Iranian Red Crescent said shrapnel from the missile attack in the coastal town of Kuhestak killed four people, including a child, and wounded more than 50.

The US military did not address the attack directly.

At UN, Pakistan advocates women's leadership in global peace initiatives

PEAK POINT

UNITED NATIONS: At a High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, Pakistan has called for an expanded role for women in peace and security, emphasizing the theme of women's leadership.

"Let's invest in women leadership, let's invest in peace, let's invest in future," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the forum held on Wednesday to commemorate the adoption of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 1999. He also lauded Bangladesh for sponsoring the annual follow-up resolution adopted by the 80th session of the 193-member Assembly. "This landmark document affirmed that peace does not merely lie in the silence of guns but, in fact, flows from the protection of human rights, celebration of plurality, and promotion of the rule of law," the Pakistani envoy said. Pointing out that women constitute a major constituency for peace; Ambassador Jadoon said, "Fostering a robust Culture of Peace is predicated on women's full participation in political process and their unhindered access to education and justice."

LHC's Justice Raheel Kamran resigns as judge

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Lahore High Court's (LHC) Justice Raheel Kamran Sheikh resigned as a judge on Thursday, saying he wanted to pursue legal scholarship, policy research and comparative judicial practice. He sent his resignation letter, dated Sept 3, to President Asif Ali Zardari under Article 206 of the Constitution. In the letter, seen by Dawn, Justice Sheikh said his years on the bench had been the most formative and fulfilling period of his professional life. He wrote that after "deep and sustained reflection", he had concluded.

Govt, JI agree to form committees to recommend reduction in petroleum levy

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The federal government and Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan (JI) on Thursday agreed to constitute committees to recommend measures for reducing the petroleum levy and providing relief to the public.

JI Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal and Prime Minister's Adviser Rana Sanaullah announced the decision at a press conference in Lahore.

Addressing the press conference, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said a government delegation had met the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) leadership in Lahore.

He said the government would constitute an expert committee and had asked the JI to form a similar committee to jointly discuss measures for reducing the petroleum levy. The government levies Rs114

per litre in taxes and duties on petrol and Rs100 per litre on diesel. "The government will happily act upon recommendations put forward by these committees," Iqbal said, adding that both the government and JI agreed that relief should be provided to the public.

"We requested them [JI] to form a team, and then we will negotiate on practical recommendations for relief," he said.

The government would also present its position and take action on the recommendations put forward by the committees, the minister added. "Pakistan's interest is a priority," Iqbal said, adding that the government would not allow any foreign element to exploit internal instability. "We have to work together for internal peace and stability." According to the minister, the JI had assured the government that it would not make any demand that was against the country's interests. Addressing the press conference, the JI chief said his party and the government had discussed the petroleum levy and other matters during a meeting earlier in the day.

He said Thursday marked the 19th day of JI sit-ins against the petroleum levy at more than 20 locations across the country. "There is no personal agenda behind the sit-ins; it is based on issues faced by the public on a daily basis, along with other major problems," he said. Rehman added that ordinary citizens were bearing a disproportionate tax burden on petroleum products.

"A common bike rider, whose income is non-taxable, is paying 35pc in taxes on every litre of petrol," he said.

PIA to operate daily flights to London from Oct 27

PEAK POINT

LAHORE/ KARACHI: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has decided to expand its air operations to London, increasing the number of weekly flights to seven from October 27.

According to a PIA spokesperson, the national flag carrier will operate daily flights between Pakistan and London, including five weekly flights between Islamabad and London and two between Lahore and London. PIA is currently operating four weekly flights to London. The increase in flight frequency reflects growing passenger demand and confidence in the national airline, the spokesperson said. The expansion is expected to provide passengers with more travel options.

PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

SPORTS

Galiyat holds Pakistan's first 100-mile multi-stage ultra trail challenge race

PEAK POINT

GALIYAT: A total of 48 runners completed Pakistan's first 100-mile multi-stage ultra trail running challenge during a three-day event held in Galiyat.

Organized by Xtreme Adventures, the event covered mountain trails between Namli Gali and Barmi Gali, with participants running nearly 40 kilometres per day and tackling more than 2,000 metres of elevation gain on each stage.

Ultra trail running involves distances longer than a marathon and is held on natural terrain, including mountain tracks and forest trails. The Savage 100 challenge tested endurance, recovery, pacing and consistency over three consecutive days.

The event followed the historic Bridle Track route, with participants required to complete each stage within a 12-hour time limit. Runners returned every day to face another demanding section of the course, making the challenge as much about endurance as performance.

In the men's category, Yasban Karim of GB Scouts secured first place. On the final day, he completed the 40-kilometre trail in 4 hours and 13 minutes, setting a national record for the course. Ali Abbas, also representing GB Scouts, finished second, while Muhammad Fida claimed third position.

Among women, Selena Khawaja, known as Pakistan's youngest mountaineer, won the category and became the first Pakistani woman to complete and win a 100-mile ultra trail running challenge. Ayesha Mastoor Butt finished second, while Eman Khan of DRC Running Club secured third place.

The event also marked a milestone for young athletes. Saim Abbas, aged 13, became the youngest Pakistani to complete an ultra trail running event, highlighting growing interest among youth in endurance sports.

Several participants drew attention for their personal stories. Hassan Asif of DRC Running Club dedicated his run to his late mother. Meanwhile, Usama bin Rehman supported fellow runners throughout the challenge, helping participants who struggled on the trail. Masood Khan, known for his Peshawar-to-Skardu endurance run record, also assisted and encouraged competitors during the event.

'Unreasonable' to say cricket in Pakistan has finished: Naqvi

PEAK POINT

LONDON: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi has labelled claims of cricket being finished in the country as "unreasonable", citing Pakistan's improved rankings under his tenure to prove otherwise.

"South Africa lost to Namibia, India lost to Ireland. At least check there, has cricket finished there?" said Naqvi while speaking to reporters in London on Wednesday. The PCB has received much criticism for the mid-series shakeup during the national team's Test tour of England, in which seven players and two coaches from the initial squad were replaced after heavy defeats in Headingley and Lords. The decision gathered the ire of fans, pundits and former players alike. Former Pakistan captain Azhar Ali was one of them — while speaking to Dawn on Wednesday, he said that difficult decisions like these cause "insecurity among the players," and that they need to be made within stable frameworks. Naqvi, however, believes it inappropriate to claim that Pakistan cricket is at its worst, and that the white-ball teams have shown improvement in the recent past. "You used to be ranked eighth in ODIs, which has now gone up to fifth. You have had six ODI series, out of which you have won four, but still, our cricket is finished," he said, resorting to sarcasm.

First-ever ICC Women's Champions Trophy to take place in India next year

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The first-ever edition of the ICC Women's Champions Trophy will take place from February 14 to 28 in India next year, the International Cricket Council announced on Wednesday.

According to a press release issued by the cricket governing body, all the matches in the inaugural edition of the six-team event will be played at the Cricket Club of India in Mumbai and the Vadodara International Cricket Stadium in Vadodara. The event was originally scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka, but has now been moved to India as Sri Lanka Cricket continues to make the requisite reforms outlined at the ICC's Annual Conference in July. The ICC, according to the press release, assessed three candidates to host the tournament — the Bangladesh, India and South Africa —against their established host evaluation criteria before recommending India as the replacement host, a decision ratified by the ICC Board on September 1.

"The ICC Women's Champions Trophy 2027 marks an exciting new chapter for women's cricket," ICC Chairman Jay Shah said.

"The ICC Women's Champions Trophy 2027 marks an exciting new chapter for women's cricket. As the inaugural edition of the tournament, it will bring together the best teams in the world in an intense, high-quality competition, while creating even greater incentive for teams to continue rising through the rankings and competing for a place on the global stage. "With a marquee ICC women's event now taking place every year, we have a significant opportunity to build greater momentum, provide more consistency and create a stronger rhythm for the women's game, its players and its fans around the world."

Paredes says suspension, Messi retirement make Argentina future uncertain

One Point Slam steals show at Grade A+ National Ranking Tennis C'ships

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: The exciting One Point Slam competition stole the show at the ongoing 1st Meinhardt Grade A+ National Ranking Tennis Championships at the PTF Tennis Complex, Islamabad, attracting more than 70 players and a large number of spectators.

The special event featured three exciting competitions – One Point Slam, Target Serve and Flex Pass, providing players with an opportunity to showcase their skills in a highly competitive and entertaining format.

In the One Point Slam final, Ahmed Babar displayed composure and skill to defeat Tanveer Munir and clinch the title along with a cash prize of Rs100,000.

The Target Serve Challenge saw Hassan Usmani and Shahnoor Umer emerge as joint winners. The two winners shared the Rs100,000 prize money.

In the Flex Pass Challenge, Muzammil Murtaza and Shayan Afridi jointly claimed top honors after demonstrating excellent touch, control and precision.

They shared the Rs100,000 prize. The event was sponsored by the Nameer Shamsi Tennis & Padel Academy, adding an innovative and entertaining dimension to the national ranking championship.

Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) President Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Secretary General Col. Zia-ud-Din Tufail (Retd.) appreciated Nameer Shamsi, CEO of Nameer Shamsi Tennis & Padel Academy, for supporting the initiative and providing players with new and engaging competitive opportunities.

They congratulated the winners and participants and appreciated the enthusiastic response from players and spectators.

Abdul Qadir's half-century keeps Pakistan U19 on course against England U19

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Pakistan exports fall to $30.8 Billion as committee sounds Alarm

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's overall exports have fallen to US $30.8 billion from US $32.1 billion last year, raising serious concern in the National Assembly Standing Committee on Commerce, which questioned whether the country is doing enough to protect its share of international markets against strong competition from regional economies.The committee, which met at Parliament House under the chairmanship of Muhammad Jawed Hanif Khan, said Pakistan cannot afford to keep discussing trade problems without taking practical action. Members stressed that policies agreed with business groups and other stakeholders must be implemented without unnecessary delay. The committee noted that some sectors are performing better despite the overall decline. Rice exports, for example, increased from US $321 million to US $394 million as of August 30, 2026. Members welcomed the improvement but said one successful sector cannot solve the country's wider export problem.The committee called for more research, better seed varieties, stronger quality standards, value added products and improved competitiveness in the rice sector. Members said Pakistan must turn the rise in rice exports into a wider and lasting export strategy.Members also raised concerns about growing competition from regional countries that offer subsidies to their exporters. They questioned whether Pakistan has enough measures to protect its businesses and maintain its place in foreign markets.The Commerce Minister told the committee that regional trade is a major contributor to Pakistan's trade performance. However, members continued to stress that businesses need a stronger system that helps them compete internationally rather than simply more discussions about trade facilitation.The committee also reviewed the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan's digital transformation and its efforts to make trade easier for businesses.Another major issue was the import of sugar and its later disposal. The committee demanded clearer information about why the sugar was imported, how much it cost the country and what effect the policy could have on food security.Members said export growth depends on several things working together. These include quality, accreditation, competitive prices, production levels and the ability of industries to compete with foreign producers.The committee proposed bringing the relevant ministries and the Federal Board of Revenue together to identify and remove problems faced by export focused industries.Members also called for new policy guidelines to support industrial growth, value addition and diversification. They said Pakistan should not depend too heavily on a small number of products and should identify a few sectors with strong potential for high value exports and job creation.The committee also considered the Trade Organizations Third Amendment Bill moved by Muhammad Farooq Sattar as a private member bill. Members agreed with the proposed amendments in principle but sent the bill to the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Law and Justice for legal advice and an assessment of possible implications before taking a final decision.The committee said Pakistan must move quickly from policy discussions to actual implementation. Members stressed that stronger coordination between government institutions is needed so businesses can face international competition with better products, lower costs and improved support.

CDA employees' children offered major fee concessions under MoU

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Children of Capital Development Authority (CDA) employees will receive major fee concessions at the Global System of Integrated Studies (GSIS) under a newly signed agreement.

The CDA Officers Association and Global System of Integrated Studies (Pvt) Ltd signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Thursday for the welfare of CDA employees and their families.

The event was attended by CDA Member Estate, Muhammad Zaman Watto, CDA Officers Association General Secretary, Chaudhary Kamran Bakht, Principal/Director Admin of GSIS, along with other CDA officers and employees.

Under the agreement, GSIS will waive all one-time admission fees for children of regular CDA employees. The refundable security deposit will also be waived.

The MoU also provides a 50 per cent reduction in monthly tuition fees, allowing CDA employees' children to study at the institution at half the regular tuition cost.

CDA Officers Association General Secretary Chaudhary Kamran Bakht said the agreement would reduce the financial burden on employees. He said admission and security fees had been completely waived for children of CDA officers and employees.

Children of CDA employees will also receive priority during admissions. They will be given preference on the waiting list over members of the general public.

They will have full access to academic facilities, co-curricular activities and student development programmes. They will be treated at par with regular fee-paying students. CDA Member Estate Muhammad Zaman Watto described the agreement as an important step for the welfare of CDA employees and their families.

He said the authority had always remained committed to protecting employees' rights and ensuring their welfare. General Secretary of the Labour Union Chaudhary Muhammad Yaseen said hundreds of CDA employees' children would benefit from quality education under the agreement.

He said CDA employees played a key role in the construction and development of Islamabad. Providing better educational opportunities for their children was an important need, he added.

GSIS Principal and Director Administration Quratulain Ali Rizvi said the institution was committed to providing quality and unbiased education and building partnerships with the community. She said offering educational facilities to CDA employees' children in recognition of their services was a moral obligation. She assured that every effort would be made to implement the agreement successfully.

The CDA Officers Association also assured GSIS of its cooperation in promoting education at the institution and organising sports tournaments and other national-level events.

Kamran thanked CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf for his vision, guidance and education-friendly initiatives, which he said helped make the agreement possible.

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DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

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Digital shield for our children

The Punjab Assembly's unanimous passage of a resolution seeking to ban social media accounts for children under 16 is a welcome move that recognises the biggest crisis facing children around the world. While social media does have its benefits, far too often, mixing children's still-developing brains with a forum where they can choose to be nameless and faceless, or be forced to become nobodies, exposes them to extreme bullying, sexual exploitation, inappropriate content and psychological stress that no child should have to endure. While the resolution is merely a starting point, it still strongly reflects the unanimous desire of the provincial assembly to improve the lives of children in the province. Research links social media to mental health issues among all age groups, but especially minors, who are at increased risk of anxiety, depression, self-harm, addiction and adverse effects on cognitive and emotional development. Social media also does not live up to its claims of bringing people closer. Yes, it may increase our ability to occasionally communicate with people great distances away, but it is actually causing a loneliness epidemic as children and adults alike spend hours online and forget how to build meaningful real-world relationships and engage in other healthy activities.

Managing external debt

Ishrat Husain

PAKISTAN'S debt has crossed Rs100 trillion raising doubts about the stabilisation programme's veracity. First, it's not advisable to use absolute amounts or per capita debt. The correct way is to use indicators that link public debt stock and debt servicing to national income, exports of goods and services, revenues, total foreign exchange earnings and foreign exchange reserves to gauge the future capacity to discharge these obligations.

To begin with, clarify the various definitions that have created a lot of confusion in laymen's minds. Pakistan's total debt and liabilities consist of public debt and private debt. Public debt accounted for 91 per cent of the total stock of outstanding debt and liabilities on June 30, 2026. The remaining 9pc is the private debt mostly to borrowers abroad, for which the government has no fiscal obligation. However, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has to provide foreign exchange to service this debt.

Within the gross public debt, the government's share was almost 92pc while the balance was owed by public enterprises but guaranteed by the government. Borrowing from the IMF is also included in the gross public debt, although it is the SBP's liability. The total debt and liabilities is made up of borrowings in rupees from the SBP, banks, national savings schemes, prize bonds, Sukuk etc., and borrowings in foreign currency from multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, ADB, IDB, bilateral governments or global financial markets in the form of Eurobonds or Sukuk. Rupee-denominated borrowing is termed 'domestic debt' and foreign currency-denominated borrowing 'external debt'. Domestic debt risks are different from those of the external debt. Lumping them together is analytically incorrect. While both create debt-servicing liability for budgetary purposes and thus affect fiscal balances, the risk profile of each is quite different. Domestic debt has to be paid in rupees, which can be printed, or the central bank can acquire those obligations on its balance sheet by creating reserve money. It involves creating possible inflationary pressures but there is no risk of default — a real threat in case of foreign currency-denominated debt. Countries that have suffered debt crises have faced solvency and liquidity risks in servicing their foreign currency loans. Risks from domestic debt include rollover risk, interest rate risk, and crowding out of private-sector credit. Here, we'll focus largely on external debt and liabilities and its servicing. The reform journey to increase exports, investment and productivity must be accelerated. Pakistan's external debt and liabilities amount to $139 billion, of which public sector debt accounts for almost two-thirds and the private sector one-third. In the public sector, direct government debt is 80pc of the total. What are the diagnostics of vulnerability indicators of the stock of EDL and debt-servicing capacity? First is the break-up between medium- and long-term and short-term loans. In our case, the ratio is: 88 MLT and 12 ST. Official liquid reserves are enough to cover the ST loans and loans maturing during the year. However, the rollover of friendly country deposits next year will go up to $12bn again. Second is concessionality — the average interest rate, years to maturity, and proportion of fixed rate loans. The higher the element of concessionality, the stronger the safety valve. Fifty per cent of loans are concessional, showing a downward slide from the past ratios. Other stock indicators don't look healthy. Third, EDL-to-GDP ratio has moved from 24pc to 31pc in the last decade. Fourth, EDL-to-export of goods and services too has worsened — from 210 to 340. Fifth, EDL-to-foreign exchange earnings shows an upward movement from 100 to 168 — not a satisfactory trend. Sixth, EDL-to-foreign exchange reserves has shot up alarmingly from 350 to 750, despite a build-up of reserves in the last two years.

Debt-servicing indicators show that external debt servicing-to-GDP has risen from 1.7pc to 4pc, while EDS-to-exports of goods and services has more than doubled from 18pc to 44pc.

Courtesy Dawn

Is Gen Z really asleep?

Dr Intikhab Ulfat

For some time, I have been writing in these pages about generations: Generation X, Millennials, Gen Z, Gen Alpha and even the emerging Generation Beta. Each time I return to the subject, I become more reluctant to judge one generation by the standards of another. Generations do not grow in isolation. They are shaped by their homes, classrooms, institutions and, above all, the opportunities society places before them. Having spent nearly three decades as a university teacher, I have had the privilege of watching generational change unfold inside the classroom. I taught students who entered university before smartphones transformed everyday life, and I now teach young people for whom the digital world is inseparable from reality. This experience makes me cautious about describing Pakistan's Gen Z simply as passive, indifferent or asleep. My students are often remarkably aware of what surrounds them. They discuss unemployment, inequality, corruption, climate change, politics and institutional failures. They have access to information at a speed unimaginable when my generation was young. I have frequently heard questions in classrooms that are sharper and more direct than those students asked two decades ago. Yet awareness does not necessarily become collective action.

We often encourage young people to think critically while simultaneously rewarding obedience at school, university and home. My experience as a teacher suggests that students are not short of opinions or awareness; many simply remain uncertain about where they can express them safely. Before calling Gen Z silent or passive, we should ask whether our institutions genuinely provide space for questioning, disagreement and independent thought. There is another important difference. Protest itself has changed.

Courtesy Tribune

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Tarar urges youth to follow Prophet's teachings in digital age

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday urged young people to draw guidance from the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), particularly the principles of truthfulness, trustworthiness, tolerance, respect for parents and responsible use of social media. Addressing a one-day seminar titled "Seerat ka Paigham, Nojawanon ke Naam" at Islamabad Model College for Girls, F-7/2, organised by the National Rahmatul-lil-Alameen Wa Khatam-un-Nabiyeen Authority in connection with Rabi-ul-Awwal activities, the minister said the teachings of the Prophet offered guidance for people of all ages and all sections of society. Atta Tarar said young people could find important lessons in the Prophet's treatment of parents, his patience and forgiveness, his leadership and his dealings with people of different backgrounds.

Referring to the migration from Makkah to Madina, he highlighted the relationship between the Muhajireen and Ansar as an example of tolerance, solidarity and social cohesion. He also cited the Prophet's conduct after the conquest of Makkah and the incident of Taif as examples of forgiveness, patience and restraint. The minister said the Prophet's emphasis on "sidq" (truthfulness) and "amanah" (trustworthiness) was particularly relevant in the present era of social media, misinformation and rapidly circulating information. "If we adopt these two qualities, I believe many of the problems confronting us today can be addressed," he said. Atta Tarar also stressed the importance of giving young people meaningful responsibilities. Citing the examples of Hazrat Zaid bin Sabit.

, Hazrat Usama bin Zaid and Hazrat Musab bin Umair, he said the early Muslim community entrusted young people with important responsibilities and demonstrated confidence in their abilities. He said empowering young people could help bring fresh ideas into society while enabling them to make a positive contribution. Speaking about women's empowerment, the minister said the life of Hazrat Khadija (RA), particularly her role in trade, offered an important historical example.

of women's economic participation.

He said the teachings of Islam had accorded women an important status long before the modern discourse on women's empowerment emerged.

Atta Tarar said there was a need to bridge the communication gap between religious teachings and younger generations, particularly Generation Z and Generation Alpha, through contemporary means.

Ali welcomes GPXP's interest in expanding investment in Pakistan's energy sector

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik Wednesday met with Khaled Al Saati, CEO of Gulf Petroleum Exploration Pakistan (GPXP), and Mosleh Al Otaibi of Gulf Petroleum Exploration to discuss the company's ongoing operations and prospects for expanding investment in Pakistan's energy sector.

Gulf Petroleum Exploration Pakistan (GPXP), a Kuwaiti company operating in Pakistan's exploration sector, expressed keen interest in expanding its investment and further contributing to the country's energy development.

The Federal Minister welcomed GPXP's interest and assured the company of the government's full support and facilitation for its investment and expansion plans.

"Pakistan and Kuwait are brothers, and our two countries share a longstanding relationship," the Minister said, emphasizing the importance Pakistan attaches to strengthening economic and investment ties with Kuwait.

Khaled Al Saati and Mosleh Al Otaibi expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for its continued support and facilitation.

Ahsan reviews progress on Kachhi Canal Phase-II, PIDE land, Iqbal Memorial projects

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday reviewed progress on various development projects including the Kachhi Canal Phase-II, provision of land to the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), and the Allama Iqbal Memorial and Iqbal Library.

The meeting also examined delays in the completion of the 35-kilometre road connecting Loralai and Zhob and considered measures to ensure its timely completion in line with the directives of the Prime Minister, a news release said.

Discussing the Kachhi Canal Phase-II project, Ahsan Iqbal stressed that the scheme must meet the highest standards of construction quality and directed the authorities to ensure strict compliance at every stage.

He further directed that the Government of Balochistan be taken on board on all available options to ensure effective, transparent and coordinated implementation of the project.

While reviewing the issue of land for PIDE, the minister expressed serious concern over the delay by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in providing land to the institution.

He noted that PIDE had deposited approximately Rs. 4 billion with the CDA between 2017 and 2020, but had not been provided the required land despite the passage of six years.

Ahsan said PIDE had been pursuing the matter with the CDA since 2022, but no viable progress had been made.

He observed that land allocated to the institution had frequently been found to be encumbered by legal or ownership issues.

He made it clear that PIDE required the land on an urgent basis and, if suitable land was not available with the CDA, its funds should be returned.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal chairs a meeting in Islamabad to review progress on the Kachhi Canal Phase-II project, PIDE land matters and other key development initiatives.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia hold workshops to align IT strategy

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are holding joint workshops to align Pakistan's national IT strategy with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

More than 50 Pakistani technology companies and 25 startups are participating in the LEAP Conference in Riyadh.

Addressing the conference, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Thursday that no country could progress alone or in isolation. She said global cooperation was essential for technological advancement.The minister said the LEAP Conference reflected the potential of Pakistan's 240 million people and its rapidly growing technology ecosystem.

She stressed the need to remove sectoral barriers to accelerate progress in technology. Shaza said Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations were not limited to trade and could be strengthened through greater cooperation in the technology sector.

Governor Kundi stresses youth character-building through scouting

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that the youth of the province were highly talented and along with education, character-building was equally important for their success. He said scouting played a vital role in developing discipline, leadership skills and a spirit of service among young people. The Governor expressed these views while addressing the concluding ceremony of a risk management training workshop organized for the Pakistan Boy Scouts Association by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and UNICEF at Governor House.

The ceremony was attended by Provincial Secretary Pakistan Boy Scouts Association KP Iftikhar Shamozai, Executive Director NDMA Air Commodore (Retd) Tanveer Paracha, Acting Commissioner Pakistan Boy Scouts Association Hafiz Tariq Mahmood, Principal Pakistan Scouts Cadet College Batrasi Brigadier (Retd) Abdul Hafeez, representatives of UNICEF and scouts. The Governor also distributed certificates among the scouts who completed the training.

Northwest School of Medicine Awards 32 Merit Scholarships

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: In a proud celebration of academic excellence and student achievement, Northwest School of Medicine (NWSM) awarded 32 merit-based scholarships to outstanding MBBS students from first year through final year. The scholarships recognize students for their exceptional academic performance, dedication, hard work, and perseverance throughout their medical education.The prestigious ceremony was graced by Honourable Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi as the Chief Guest, while Prof. Dr. Rubina Nazli, Vice Chancellor, Khyber Medical University Peshawar, attended as the Guest of Honour.The distinguished guests distributed scholarship cheques among the deserving students and commended their commitment to academic excellence. The initiative serves as an encouragement for students to continue striving for higher achievements and contributing meaningfully to the field of healthcare.The event was also attended by Mr. Malik Abdul Latif Awan.

Pakistan steps up tax reforms to broaden base, improve taxpayer compliance: Bilal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani Thursday said that Pakistan is stepping up efforts to broaden its tax base, reduce the burden on compliant taxpayers and improve the efficiency of tax collection through digitalization and greater engagement with the private sector.

Addressing the "High-Level Dialogues on Taxation for Fiscal Sustainability", organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, he said that the Prime Minister had given an unprecedented level of attention to reforms at the Federal Board of Revenue, or FBR, holding weekly reviews and examining both strategic and operational aspects of the tax authority's transformation.

He cited a range of ongoing initiatives, including faceless customs, digital invoicing, track-and-trace systems and a new tax operating model aimed at reducing human intervention in tax assessments and audits.

The level of detail that the Prime Minister goes into in order to reform the FBR was aimed at ensuring that the tax authority improves both as a revenue collector and in its dealings with taxpayers, he said adding that a key recent initiative was the government's retailers' tax scheme, which is intended to bring a larger number of retailers into the formal tax system and broaden the country's narrow tax base.

Kayani said the government developed the scheme after extensive consultations with retailers and their representative organizations, including discussions about why previous attempts to tax the sector had failed.

He said retailers had raised concerns about informal payments and sought greater protection from such practices in return for participating in the formal tax system. The government subsequently worked with traders to finalize the scheme's tax rates, penalties, procedures and documentation, including a simplified one-page form in Urdu, he added.

The minister said the consultation process had helped secure support from major trader organizations even before the government formally announced the scheme. He also stressed the importance of sustained dialogue between government agencies and the private sector, saying poor communication had sometimes contributed to the failure of economic reforms. The minister said the government had also taken steps to reduce the tax burden on exporters, small and medium-sized businesses and salaried workers. He said the super tax rate for businesses earning between Rs150 million and Rs500 million annually, as well as those earning more than Rs500 million rupees, had been reduced by 2 percentage points, from 10% to 8%.

For exporters, the combined rate of advance income tax and minimum tax deducted at source had been reduced from 2% to 1.25%, he said adding that the government has also retained the final tax regime for information technology exporters while reducing the tax burden on salaried taxpayers, which was a major priority for the Prime Minister. He said salaried workers had been carrying.