



President calls for stronger Pakistan-Bahrain trade, investment, security cooperation



Chairman Senate holds meeting with President of IPU



Govt cannot change petroleum levy targets without consulting multilateral partners: Minister

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Friday 09 October 2026

Rabi-us-Sani 26, 1448

A.H VOL No: 06

Issue No. 217

Pages 4 Rs. 20

PM directs all federal ministries to timely complete digitization of relevant data

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed all federal ministries to complete, within the stipulated time frame, necessary measures for digitizing relevant data in coordination with provincial governments and concerned institutions and ensuring its provision to the central data centre.

Chairing a progress review meeting on implementation of Digital Nation Pakistan initiative, the prime minister said that the national-level central data centre under the Digital Nation Pakistan Programme would play a key role in the delivery of government services and provision of facilities to citizens. He said clearly defined responsibilities

of federal ministries, along with the provision of relevant data to the central data centre, would help bring the government system in line with modern requirements.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said the Digital Nation Pakistan Programme was essentially aimed at ensuring efficient and convenient services for citizens at the national level.

He observed that making useful data from all sectors and government institutions available at one place could contribute significantly to the country's economic development.

Referring to the fuel subsidy scheme for deserving segments of society, the prime minister said data sharing among institutions had played a key role in its successful.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a progress review meeting on implementation of Digital Nation Pakistan Initiative.

Security forces kill nine terrorists in North Waziristan IBO

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Security forces have killed nine Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) carried out in several areas of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district, security sources said on Thursday. The IBOs were conducted in Palangzai, Nadeem Kot and Kot Khazri areas of North Waziristan, said the security sources. Several hideouts were also destroyed, while a large quantity of weapons and ammunition was recovered from the terrorists, they said. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded the security forces for killing nine terrorists in North Waziristan. The latest operation comes a day after forces killed 18 India-backed terrorists in multiple operations conducted in KP and Balochistan, security sources said. Security forces targeted militant hideouts in KP's North Waziristan district and adjoining areas, killing 13 militants, they added. Separately, security forces conducted an operation against Fitna al-Hindustan in Mastung, killing five militants, according to the sources.

Turkiye's FM Fidan says Istanbul assessing aid to Saudi Arabia as part of Makkah agreement

PEAK POINT



TURKIYE: Turkiye is assessing how it can help Saudi Arabia counter attacks from Yemen's Houthis under the Makkah defence pact signed between Islamabad, Riyadh and Istanbul, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Thursday.

The defence pact, signed on Aug 7, aims to strengthen collective deterrence and empower its signatory states to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all of them.

"The technical evaluations are [being] carried out, and these continue among our military officials," Fidan said during a joint press conference in Ankara with his Hungarian counterpart, adding that officials were working out what contributions could be made, particularly on air defence. Ankara's top diplomat also stressed that the pact was a defensive agreement, not an offensive one. "When a country of this agreement is attacked, you have to side with them," Fidan stated. "This is not an attack agreement. Turkiye is not carrying out an attack by sending troops to another country's land."

The Turkish foreign minister added that the process of sending the text of the agreement to the Turkish parliament for ratification had been finalised. Fidan's remarks came after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye on Monday agreed to the deployment of military forces and capabilities rapidly in the kingdom during an emergency meeting of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in Riyadh.

'No relief' for Imran if PTI tries to blackmail govt, warns Khawaja Asif

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan would not receive relief if PTI sought

to pressure the government through its long march.

Asif said the government would not yield to pressure and accused PTI of acting in concert with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

"PTI has declared war against Pakistan together with the TTP," the defence minister said, adding that it was the party's "wishful thinking" that it could blackmail the government by holding a long march.

"The government cannot be blackmailed by them under any circumstances," he said, adding that it had become a practice for PTI to "attack Islamabad" every two or three months.

Asif also questioned PTI's position on the TTP and its Afghan patrons. "Show me a statement of theirs against the TTP or those who sponsor them," he said, referring to the Afghan Taliban leadership. "The rulers of Kabul are patrons of the TTP."

Holy See Secretary for Relations with States arrives in Pakistan on first-ever visit

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations of the Holy See Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, arrived here on Thursday on his first-ever visit to Pakistan by a Holy See Secretary, marking a significant milestone in Pakistan-Holy See relations. He was received by Additional Foreign Secretary (Europe) Ambassador Ayesha Ali, according to a press statement issued by the Foreign Office. Archbishop Gallagher is visiting Pakistan from October 8 to 10.

Bahrain working to 'speed up' approval of Pak-GCC free trade pact, foreign minister says

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Bahrain on Thursday said it was working to "speed up" the approval of a free trade agreement between Pakistan and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The remarks came after the two countries held the third session of their Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) in Islamabad.

Bahrain's FM Abdulatif bin Rashid Al Zayani — who arrived in Pakistan last night on a two-day visit — co-chaired the JMC session along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Addressing a joint press briefing with Dar, the Bahraini minister noted that the JMC meeting covered "more than 15 fields".

He said both sides agreed to establish a joint

working group on trade and investment, as well as to



convene the joint working group on energy next month on oil, gas and minerals. They also agreed to take forward cooperation in food security, information technology, law enforcement, media, labour mobility, health, education, culture and sports.

"We also committed to finalising the GCC-Pakistan free trade agreement," he said, referring to the potential deal that was

said to be near finalisation in late 2025.

The minister said that Bahrain, having the GCC presidency, was working to "speed up" the signing of the approval of the GCC-Pakistan FTA.

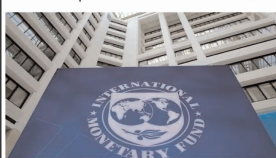
Responding to a query, the visiting dignitary described the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Bahrain as "very healthy and strong".

He added that it was "radiant and well-looked after" by Bahrain's King

Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. "It is really valued by the people of Bahrain," he added.

Highlighting recent bilateral exchanges between their countries, FM Al Zayani said: "We have a very truthful relationship; we are so frank with each other. We understand the constraints on each other and work accordingly." Emphasising the consistency in their ties, with no "ups and downs", he said, "We are consistent and growing. We feel safe in this relationship." Al Zayani expressed Manama's appreciation for Islamabad's "principled positions on the ongoing crisis", including its support in March for a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Iranian attacks on GCC countries.

Pakistan, IMF reach staff-level agreement for \$1.2bn tranche



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday reached a staff-level agreement (SLA) with the Pakistani authorities on the fourth review under the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the third review under the \$1.4bn Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), qualifying Pakistan to draw about \$1.2bn from the Fund's resources within four to five weeks. "The IMF team has reached an SLA with the Pakistani authorities on the fourth review of the 37-month Extended Arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the third review of the 28-month arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)", the lending agency announced in an early morning statement.

The SLA is subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board. Upon approval.



SPORTS



PSL 12 dates unveiled: Mega event to be played from 18 March to 2 May 2027



MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's biggest cricket event is coming back as HBL PSL on Thursday confirmed that the 12th edition of the tournament will be held from 18 March to 2 May 2027, with all eight franchises returning to compete for the coveted title.

The window was determined following extensive consultation with all key stakeholders after the PSL Governing Council meeting held in London on 1 September 2026, attended by owners and representatives of all eight HBL franchises.

HBL PSL 12 will build on a landmark 2026 season that broke new ground — eight teams competed for the first time, a first-ever player auction replaced the draft system and the final at Gaddafi Stadium drew a record crowd of 32,461.

Peshawar Zalmi were crowned champions after beating debutants Hyderabad Kingsmen by five wickets on 3 May 2026, ending a nine-year wait for the title.

With the window now confirmed, a series of marquee milestones will follow including Direct Signings, Retention announcements, the Trade window and the

Player Auction, each one a moment for fans to look forward to as the competition takes shape.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi: "HBL PSL 11 showed the world what this league is capable of — thrilling moments that had the whole nation transfixed, record crowds, record broadcasts. HBL PSL 12 will raise the bar further. "We are committed to delivering another outstanding season and look forward to seeing all eight franchises compete once again for the title."

HBL PSL CEO Salman Naseer: "Last season changed what

people expect from this league and we intend to meet every one of those expectations in 2027. Today's announcement is only the first step, Direct signings, retentions, the trade window and the auction will each bring their own excitement in the months ahead.

"Eight teams, eight squads hungry to go one better and millions of fans across Pakistan and the world already counting down the days. Naye Daur ka Aghaaz ho chuka hai. #NewEra"

Full details on the schedule, venues, player auction and ticketing arrangements will be announced in due course.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka T20I series to begin today in Rawalpindi



PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan and Sri Lanka will begin their three-match T20 International series on Friday at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The series will be played on October 9, 11 and 13, with all three matches scheduled to take place at the same venue. Each match will start at 6 pm, with the toss scheduled for 5:30 pm. The matches will be broadcast live in Pakistan on PTV Sports, while fans will also be able to stream the games on the Tamasha and Tapmad platforms. The PCB Live app will stream the series in Pakistan as well as in the UK, North America, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa. Former Pakistan cricketers Aamer Sohail, Basit Khan and Salman Butt, along with former Pakistan women's captain Urooj Mumtaz and Sri Lankan commentator Roshan Abeysinghe, will form part of the commentary panel. Ahead of the series, Pakistan captain Sahibzada Farhan and Sri Lanka captain Kusal Mendis took part in a trophy photoshoot. Sahibzada Farhan said Pakistan have a good combination of young and experienced players and will look to make the most of playing on home conditions. Kusal Mendis said Sri Lanka would try to challenge Pakistan on their home ground and compete strongly throughout the series.

Former Test captain Aamir Sohail reviews NCA development work



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan Test captain Aamir Sohail visited the National Cricket Academy in Lahore on Thursday to review player development programmes and high-performance initiatives.

Sohail, who made the visit at the invitation of the Pakistan Cricket Board, was briefed by Director High Performance

Aqib Javed on age-group pathways for under-15, under-17 and under-19 players and the academy's structure for identifying and preparing young cricketers.

He also received a briefing on the Athlete Management System, which is used to monitor player development, assess performances and identify areas for improvement.

The former Test

batter, who previously served as Director of cricket but stressed that infrastructure and resources must transcend late into improved performances.

"With the chairman providing such encouragement and showing a willingness to invest in the betterment of cricket, it is equally important that this investment transpires into performances and results," he said.

Sohail also called for greater expertise among those working with players and said the new biomechanics laboratory could help cricketers identify technical shortcomings and improve their performances.

The former captain welcomed the new player pathways but urged the PCB to maintain a sustained focus on school and club cricket.



MULTAN: Players of the Sri Lanka Under-17 cricket team take part in a practice session at Multan Cricket Stadium ahead of their upcoming series against Pakistan Under-17. The series will feature one three-day match and five one-day matches and will be played at the venue.

Alcaraz, Sinner, Osaka commit to Australian Open '1 Point Slam'

PEAK POINT

MELBOURNE: The Australian Open will revive its innovative "1 Point Slam" in 2027 with Carlos Alcaraz, Coco Gauff, Naomi Osaka and Jannik Sinner among those agreeing to take part Thursday.

The sudden-death contest was played for the first time at Melbourne Park this year ahead of the opening Grand Slam of the year, pitting 24 professionals alongside 24 amateurs and celebrity wildcards. Each match consisted of just one point — win and you advanced, lose and you were out. Against the odds, amateur Jordan Smith sensationally upset the star-studded field at a packed Rod Laver Arena to collect a Aus\$1 million (US\$670,000) prize. "It creates an opportunity for grassroots tennis players to share the spotlight with some of the biggest names in the game," said

Tennis Australia's Tom Lerner. "Having stars like Carlos Alcaraz, Coco Gauff, Naomi Osaka and Jannik Sinner locked in to play, alongside everyday Australians ... captures exactly what this event is about,

bringing people together through tennis." The amateur field will again comprise winners of eight state cham-



viewing capacity and seating even further for the 2027 tournament which runs from January 17-31.

Norris confident McLaren can shine in Singapore





BISP chief calls for stronger climate-resilient social protection at ADB forum

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid Thursday called for stronger international support to protect vulnerable communities from climate and economic shocks, highlighting Pakistan's experience of linking social protection with skills, employment and climate resilience.

Addressing a panel at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Adaptive Social Protection Forum in Manila, she said Pakistan contributes very little to global carbon emissions, yet its vulnerable communities bear a disproportionate burden of climate change.

"The international community must step up support

for Pakistan's most vulnerable families by strengthening climate resilience, expanding adaptive social protection and providing practical assistance to help communities withstand future climate shocks," she said.

Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted BISP's response to climate-related emergencies, saying 2.7 million families affected by the 2022 floods received PKR 70 billion in emergency cash assistance.

She said BISP's National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) covers more than 40 million households and has been made dynamic, with climate-related questions incorporated into the survey to identify households exposed to climate



Senator Rubina Khalid (center) with other officials during a press conference.

risks. Earlier, participating in a high-level roundtable on "Skills, Employment and Social Protection: Building Resilience Pathways for Learning, Work and Security," Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted BISP's efforts to move beyond cash transfers by linking social protection with market-rele-

vant skills, digital opportunities and employment.

She said Pakistan's large youth population requires skills aligned with changing market demands and BISP is working with the ADB to scale up skills development within the social protection framework.

Talking about the Benazir Hunarmand

Programme (BHP), she said the programme has been launched by the President and approved by the BISP Board as a regular initiative to address emerging skills and employment challenges.

She said the programme focuses on market-driven skills identified through national assessments, while its success is measured through employability and income generation rather than certification alone.

The APSP Week 2026, organized by the ADB from October 6-8 in Manila, brought together government leaders, policymakers, practitioners, development partners and social protection experts to advance inclusive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems.

During her visit, Senator Rubina Khalid also met Secretary of the Philippines' Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Rex Gatchalian.

The meeting covered adaptive social protection, out-of-school children, skills development, career pathways and opportunities for cooperation in technical education and skills development, said a news release.

Senator Rubina Khalid presented a souvenir of Pakistan to Secretary Rex Gatchalian as a gesture of goodwill.

Ambassador of Pakistan to the Philippines Dr. Asima Rabbani and DG NSER/CCT BISP Dr. Asim Ijaz were also present during the meeting.

92 premises sealed over fire safety violations in Islamabad

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Capital Emergency Services (CES) sealed 92 premises in the federal capital during a fire safety enforcement drive in September, while issuing 288 challans and recovering Rs2.4 million in penalties, according to data released by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Thursday.

The enforcement action was carried out by the CDA's Building Emergency Audit and Prevention Wing under the Islamabad Fire Prevention and Life Safety Regulations.

The sealed premises included 78 commercial shops, eight high-rise buildings, four residential buildings and three government facilities.

During the month, offi-

cials conducted fire and life safety audits at 115 hospitals, 29 government facilities, six commercial properties and four residential buildings. Six audit reports relating to government facilities were also finalised, according to the data. The enforcement drive resulted in the recovery of Rs1.7m from five commercial cases and Rs700,000 from four hospital cases. In addition, fees amounting to

Rs510,000 were collected against 102 commercial fire and life safety plans.

The department also issued 99 final notices, show-cause notices and advisories to commercial properties, while an advisory was issued to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). Fifteen commercial cases remain pending, the data showed.

The healthcare sector

remained a major focus of the inspections. According to CES data, 161 enforcement actions were taken against hospitals during the month, while 150 hospitals were found to have insufficient fire and safety equipment.

Officials said the non-compliant facilities were being dealt with under the Islamabad Fire Prevention and Life Safety Regulations, 2010, and the Building Code

of Pakistan, 2016.

CES said follow-up action would be taken against pending commercial cases and that premises would be sealed or de-sealed according to their verified compliance status.

The authority said it would continue inspections and enforcement measures to improve compliance with fire safety requirements in buildings across Islamabad.

Opinion & Editorial

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Guterres in Pakistan

Pakistan's diplomatic contributions to global peace and security have been highly eulogised. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, on a farewell visit to Islamabad as he relinquishes his high office, commended the country's "pivotal role" in mediating between the US and Iran, and called on both parties to end the conflict and return to diplomacy. The tribute was unparalleled, as the world body chief went on to term the Islamabad MoU a "frame for future negotiations" while expressing hope that better sense would prevail to save the world from another impending catastrophe. Guterres lauded Pakistan's unflinching support for the Palestinian right to self-determination and its role at the vanguard of the struggle against colonialism. He highlighted the broadened perspective the country brought to the august forum by championing multilateralism, noting that as an ardent proponent of UN reform, Pakistan has firmly opposed both the addition of permanent members to the UNSC and the retention of the veto power. Beyond these institutional stances, the country spearheaded the unanimous adoption of a landmark resolution against Islamophobia, successfully establishing an official commemorative day on the UN calendar.

Chain of custody

LAST month, at the London School of Economics' Environment Week, the International Growth Centre asked a roundtable of policy-makers, researchers and funders how evidence systems should change to support harder climate choices. I opened with a case: a major climate decision Pakistan took without the evidence it needed.

The obvious case is the 2022 floods. The obvious diagnosis is that the evidence did not exist. The case is obviously right. The diagnosis is obviously wrong.

When a third of the country went under water, every decision that followed, from evacuation to the Geneva appeal, was taken in the dark. Yet the Met department had forecast an above-normal monsoon. The national socioeconomic registry held geo-coded records on 38 million households. River and satellite data sat with Wapda, the Federal Flood Commission and Suparco. The knowledge existed, in different buildings. No one was mandated to bring it to the table.

Pakistan does not have a data shortage. The usual verdict is poor coordination. That is the wrong word. Coordination is voluntary. What Pakistan lacks is a chain of custody: someone legally obliged to carry evidence to the point of decision.

The five federal agencies that hold hazard data share no

protocol.

The roundtable framed three tensions: whether evidence serves the decisions governments actually take, whether it arrives in time to be used, and whether it supports implementation or only design. In Pakistan, each tension marks a break in that chain. Each break has a price tag. Evidence and decision: Pakistan's research agenda follows what funders find easy to finance, not what the state must prioritise. A warning system has four parts: knowing the risk, forecasting it, getting the message out, and making people act on it. Since before the 2022 floods, the money has gone to the first two. Radars can be procured, counted and inaugurated. Dissemination and response are institutional work. They are not as lucrative as procurement tenders.

Nor has the state compiled basic baselines: tested district plans, embankment condition, maintenance costs. That absence is political economy. The reason is elite capture: new schemes bring contracts, win constituencies and visibility. Maintenance brings none. Speed and usability: Pakistan models slowly what it needs fast and leaves its fastest evidence unconnected. The five federal agencies that hold hazard data share no protocol. In Buner in August 2025, a red alert was in force and households still did not move. No one told them what to do, and local governments had no assigned role in

last-mile delivery. An SMS that says a flood is coming is information, not a warning for immediate action. The BISP registry is a simpler case. Laid over hazard maps, it could tell a provincial authority within hours who stands in the path of a surge and how to pay them. It is the most decision-ready evidence Pakistan owns. It costs nothing new to produce. Usable evidence in Pakistan rarely needs a better model. It needs a legal duty to share and an interface between databases that already exist.

Implementation and capability: This is where costs are highest and evidence thinnest. After 2022, cash transfers were the state's fastest instrument. They reached only households already on the registry. Exclusion ran to a third in some districts, and nearly half the unregistered did not know how to register. The design was sound. No one was tasked with the evidence that would have exposed the gap during delivery.

Damage assessment has no owner either. No platform links damage to recovery, and there is no loss and damage registry. The 2022 needs assessment was built for the Geneva appeal, not the reconstruction. Pakistan chaired the G77 when the loss and damage fund was agreed at COP27. A country that cannot document its losses will struggle to draw on the fund it fought to create.

Courtesy Dawn

Militancy: historical perspective

Dr Syed Akhtar Ali Shah

The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faces persistent militancy that can only be understood through its historical context. Rather than isolated incidents, the current waves of terrorism are rooted in decades of regional conflict. They remain deeply tied to broader regional dynamics, institutional weaknesses and the evolving security environment along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

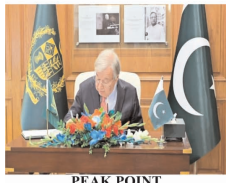
The roots of the crisis trace back to the Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980s, when the borderlands transformed into critical conduits for fighters, weaponry and resources. Militant networks and ideologies gravitated toward this frontier belt - and they did not dissipate following the Soviet withdrawal.

The situation took a lethal turn following the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent US-led intervention in Afghanistan. As US and NATO forces deployed on the ground, Al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters retreated into Pakistan's tribal belt. In response, the Pakistan Army deployed to the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas, particularly North and South Waziristan. What initially appeared to be a border-security challenge gradually escalated into a sustained insurgency.

To better understand its trajectory, the evolution of terrorism in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the former FATA can be divided into three distinct phases: an initial escalation and peak from 2003 to 2014; a substantial decline from 2015 to 2019; and a renewed resurgence from 2020 onward. The first phase proved to be the most devastating. South and North Waziristan, Swat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Peshawar, and adjoining districts witnessed rampant suicide bombings, targeted killings, attacks on security forces, and large-scale civilian displacement. During this period, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) emerged as an umbrella organisation unifying various militant factions, which triggered a sharp escalation in the intensity of violence.

Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan waging 'global war' against terrorism, Naqvi tells UN chief on last day of his visit



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday said Pakistan was waging a global war against terrorism during a meeting with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres. The two, along with Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, discussed global and regional issues and matters relating to peacekeeping missions. Naqvi told the UN chief that 25 terrorist organisations were operating in Afghanistan, posing a threat to global peace. "The international com-

munity needs to work together to tackle this threat," he said. Naqvi reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue to play its role in UN peacekeeping missions, adding that Pakistani personnel were also serving in the UN police. He added that 181 Pakistanis had sacrificed their lives in peacekeeping missions.

The UN chief recognised Pakistan's participation in peacekeeping missions, saying it had always been "prominent".

"Pakistan's role in world peace is commendable," Guterres said.

After the meeting, Guterres concluded his two-day visit to Pakistan, which "provided an important opportunity to reaffirm Pakistan's long-standing partnership with the United Nations", the Foreign Office (FO) said in a statement. The UN chief's visit highlighted "Pakistan's unwavering support for multilateralism", FO said. Previously, Guterres also met President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar.

On Tuesday, in a meeting with Guterres, Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the UN charter, multilateralism and settlement of disputes through dialogue and diplomacy.

Dar "also highlighted Pakistan's ongoing diplomatic efforts in support of regional peace and stability", FO said.

While briefing the UN chief on India's violation of the Indus Water Treaty and international law, Dar "reiterated Pakistan's call for a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute". He further highlighted Pakistan's support for Palestinians and their "legitimate struggle for self-determination and statehood", FO said. "The two sides also exchanged views on regional and international peace and security."

President calls for stronger Pakistan-Bahrain trade, investment, security cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Bahrain and expressed the desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade, investment, economic engagement and security. The president said this during his meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, a Presidency's news release said. The two leaders first held a restricted meeting, which was followed by a delegation-level meeting. Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani is on a visit to Pakistan to attend the 3rd Session of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC).

Talking to him President Zardari said Pakistan is keen to translate strong bilateral political relations into deeper trade and investment ties. He highlighted opportunities for cooperation in food security, IT and digital services, construction, mining, port handling, research and development, tourism and

healthcare. He also encouraged greater business-to-business engagement between the two countries. The president appreciated Bahrain's warm welcome of the Islamabad MoU and the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement and its recognition of Pakistan's efforts for regional peace, security and stability. The president said Pakistan and Bahrain share a long-standing and trusted defence partnership, reflected in joint exercises, high-level exchanges and institutional cooperation. He expressed Pakistan's readiness to further strengthen cooperation in manpower, logistics, training and defence hardware.

The president also appreciated Bahrain's support and opportunities for more than 134,000 Pakistanis residing in the Kingdom and welcomed continued cooperation on matters concerning the Pakistani diaspora.

Talking about the regional situation, the president said Pakistan remains committed to constructive engagement with all parties to build trust, bridge gaps and promote lasting peace, security and stability in the region. Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Gaza conflict has exposed deep weaknesses in global order, reshaped regional dynamics: IPS seminar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Gaza conflict has produced consequences extending far beyond the battlefield, affecting the credibility of international institutions, regional security dynamics, global public opinion and perceptions of the existing world order. It has exposed contradictions in the application of international law, challenged established geopolitical alignments and triggered a wider reassessment of the international system, with far-reaching implications for Palestine, Pakistan, the

Muslim world and global politics. Experts observed this at a seminar, titled "Beyond the Battlefield: What Has Gaza Changed?", organized by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The speakers included Dr. Khuram Iqbal, associate professor, NISS, QAU; Brig. (r) Said Nazir, defense and security analyst; Dr. Salma Malik, associate professor, DSS, QAU; and Dr. Zarni, human rights activist. Khalid Rahman, chairman, IPS, chaired the session, which also featured Amb. (r) Syed Abrar Hussain, vice chairman, IPS.



In his opening remarks, Amb. (r) Abrar Hussain said the consequences of the Gaza conflict could not be confined to the geographical boundaries of that particular territory. He identified three major areas of change: the

Direct Europe shipping service restored to facilitate exporters: Junaid Anwar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Thursday said that direct shipping connectivity between Karachi and major European ports had been restored, providing relief to exporters facing longer transit times and increased freight costs due to disruptions on international shipping routes. In a statement, the minister said that Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) had reinstated its PREMIUM IPAK service in response to the demand of exporters for a dedicated and direct Europe service. Under the restored service, the MSC will make a weekly call at Karachi Gateway Terminal International (KGTI), connecting Karachi with key European destinations through Colombo, Felixstowe, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Bremerhaven, Antwerp, Le Havre and London Gateway, he said and added, "The restoration of a dedicated Europe service is an important development for our export-oriented industries, particularly the textile sector."

Chairman Senate holds meeting with President of IPU

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday held a luncheon and a one-on-one meeting with Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) President Dr. Tulia Ackson on the sidelines of the 153rd IPU Assembly in Arusha, Tanzania.

Gilani congratulated Dr. Ackson on the successful completion of her tenure as IPU president from 2023 to 2026.

He praised her leadership and efforts to make the IPU more inclusive, representative and effective as the global organisation of parliaments. "Under your able and inspiring leadership, the IPU has become a stronger platform for peace, dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy," he said.

Gilani said Dr. Ackson, as the first African woman to serve as IPU president, had become an



inspiration for women parliamentarians, particularly in the Global South. He said he had worked closely with Dr. Ackson during her presidency and would continue to work with her to promote parliamentary cooperation and strengthen the role of the IPU. The Senate chairman also thanked Dr. Ackson, the Tanzanian government and its people for the arrangements and hospitality extended to the delegates in Arusha. He invited Dr. Ackson to visit Pakistan as a guest of the Senate at a mutually convenient time.

Govt cannot change petroleum levy targets without consulting multilateral partners: Minister

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik has said the government cannot change petroleum levy targets allocated in the budget without consulting its multilateral partners.

"The targets for the petroleum levy are allocated in the budget, and we cannot change them without our multilateral partners," Malik said during a meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Petroleum.

Committee Chairman Mustafa Mahmood said diesel availability was more important than petrol as agriculture and goods transport were dependent on the fuel.

"Why is there such a high



levy on petrol and diesel?" committee member Saif-ul-Mulok Khokhar asked, describing the levy as a "very heavy burden" on the public and saying it was an easy means of tax collection.

Malik said regional tensions had affected the supply of petrol, diesel and crude oil, describing the resulting disruption to oil supplies as a major crisis.

"The world has never seen diesel this expensive," the petroleum minister said, adding that the government.

Governor calls for promoting KP's heritage, tourism through floral festivals

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday stressed the need to promote the province's rich heritage, culture and tourism through floral festivals and other cultural activities, saying such initiatives would help project province's soft image at the international level.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the Floral Society led by Fareeda Tariq Nishtar at Governor House. The delegation discussed proposals for organizing flower festivals in Peshawar and exchanged ideas on promoting the province's heritage and



culture through floral exhibitions and meetings with relevant organizations.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kundi said Pakistan was a beautiful country with immense tourism potential and its positive image should be highlighted globally. He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was blessed with scenic beauty and tourism opportunities.

has generated growing distrust, particularly in the Global South.

Building on this, Dr. Khuram Iqbal identified three major developments emerging from the Gaza conflict. First, he argued that longstanding bipartisan political support for Israel in Western capitals, particularly in the US, has come under significant pressure from changing public opinion. Second, he discussed the conflict's regional consequences, noting that the process associated with the Abraham Accords has been disrupted and that new inter-

actions among West Asian and South Asian security dynamics were emerging. Third, he highlighted the implications of closer Israel-India relations for Pakistan, particularly amid evolving regional security alignments.

Brig. (r) Said Nazir examined Gaza from humanitarian, military, regional and international perspectives. He discussed the destruction of Gaza, the political and security challenges surrounding reconstruction, Palestinian political divisions and the continuing uncertainty surrounding the peace process.