

THE DESTINATION
NEWS THAT TRAVELS

Editor: Yaseen Ayaz

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10 Khwarij Killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Operations, Six Security Personnel Martyred

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

ten khwarij belonging to Indian-sponsored Fitna-Al-Khwarij were killed in multiple engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. While six brave sons of the soil paid the ultimate sacrifice and embraced shahadat. On reported presence of khwarij, an intelligence based operation was conducted by Security Forces in North Waziristan District. During conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged khwarij location and after intense exchange of fire, six khwarij belonging to Indian-sponsored Fitna-al-Khwarij were sent to hell. In another encounter that took place in Hangu District, own troops successfully neutralized four more Khwarij. On 17 September 26, an improvised explosive device exploded on security forces convoy, resultantly, six brave sons of soil, rendered the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat. Weapons and ammunition have also been recovered from killed Indian sponsored khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area.



DPM Dar appreciates Amna Baloch's services as foreign secretary

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Foreign Secretary Ambassador Amna Baloch called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad on Thursday. The meeting was held on the occasion of Ambassador Amna Baloch's retirement from the government service today. During the meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister appreciated Ambassador Amna Baloch's dedicated service to Pakistan and her leadership as the foreign secretary for two years, during a period of significant diplomatic activity. He conveyed his best wishes for her continued success in her new role as Pakistan's Ambassador to Türkiye. Ambassador Amna Baloch thanked the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister for his support and guidance and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve Pakistan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



A roadside vendor roasts corn cobs, peanuts and black chickpeas for customers near PID in the federal capital.

No compromise on Holy Mosques, Saudi sovereignty: FO

● Scores killed as Houthis, Yemen govt, Saudi Arabia trade attacks

Staff Reporter

LAHORE

Pakistan has strongly condemned the reported attempt to target Makkah and ongoing Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, reaffirming that the sanctity of the Holy Mosques and Saudi Arabia's territorial integrity would not be compromised.

Foreign Office spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan, speaking at the weekly media briefing on Thursday, said the attempt to target Makkah was a "heinous and deeply concerning" act that had hurt the religious sentiments of millions of Muslims worldwide.



He said Pakistan stood alongside Saudi Arabia in safeguarding its sovereignty, peace and territorial integrity, while strongly condemning Houthi attacks on Saudi civilian areas and installations. The spokesperson said Pakistan was closely monitoring the

worsening situation in the Middle East and continued to support diplomacy and peaceful dialogue for resolving regional conflicts and achieving lasting peace. Turning to Pakistan-India relations, Khan said an Indian naval vessel had made an aggressive manoeuvre near a Pakistan Navy ship inside Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on September 15. He termed the incident a serious violation of international law and a bilateral agreement. Following the incident, India's Chargé d'Affaires was summoned to the Foreign Office on Wednesday night and Pakistan's protest was conveyed, he said. Khan added that (Continued on Page-4)

Field Marshal Asim Munir, Iranian FM Araghchi discuss regional situation

■ Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi spoke with Field Marshal Asim Munir on regional developments, while China urged Washington and Tehran to avoid escalation and return to meaningful negotiations.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a telephone conversation with Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir during his visit to Beijing, according to Iranian media reports.

The two officials discussed the latest developments in the region as well as

matters of mutual interest, the reports said. The phone call took place during Araghchi's visit to China, where he also met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss regional security and efforts to reduce tensions. During his meeting with Wang, Araghchi said Tehran had initiated talks with neighboring countries as part of its efforts to restore peace and stability in the region. The Iranian foreign minister said his government was seeking to protect what it described as the Iranian people's



legitimate rights while working toward peaceful relations and stronger ties with neighboring states. China, meanwhile, called on the US and Iran to avoid further escalation and return

to negotiations. Wang Yi said Beijing did not want tensions to intensify or spread to other areas, including Yemen and the Red Sea. The Chinese foreign minister also urged Washington and Tehran to engage in meaningful discussions on outstanding issues and work toward restoring a negotiating framework based on understandings reached under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. Wang said the ongoing dispute between the US and Iran was not in the interests of either side.

Govt orders shops and malls to close by 9pm under austerity drive

● Single-dish rule imposed at marriage functions under austerity measures for Islamabad

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The federal government has notified sweeping austerity and fuel conservation measures to conserve energy as fuel prices spike due to the Middle East conflict, with all shops, markets, and shopping malls in Islamabad closing at 9pm throughout the week. The new austerity measures are initially limited to Islamabad, with the federal government encouraging provincial and regional governments to consider adopting similar measures.

Fuel prices recorded a sharp increase in the country amid heightened volatility in global oil markets triggered by renewed hostilities in the Middle East and closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for oil and gas shipping. The further escalation followed the collapse of a fragile ceasefire reached in June between Tehran and Washington and the Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia's civilian and economic infrastructure, renewing fears of a wider regional conflict and raising concerns over disruptions to energy shipments.

Following the increase announced on Friday, petrol is now being sold at Rs391.22 per litre, while the price of high-speed diesel has risen to Rs421.45 per litre, following hikes of Rs6.88 and Rs5.62 per litre, respectively. Key measures Shops, markets and stores must



close by 9pm. New austerity measures initially limited to Islamabad.

Marriage halls and marquees must close by 10pm. Restaurants and eateries must close by 11pm, except takeaway. Marriage functions restricted to serving only a single dish. Pharmacies, hospitals and other essential services remain fully exempt.

Government vehicle fuel allocations cut by 50% for three months. Foreign travel completely banned for government officials for three months. Government vehicle and durable goods purchases completely prohibited. on-essential recurring government expenditure reduced by 5% during 26-27.

According to the notification — a copy of which is available with Geo News, shops, markets, shopping malls, bazaars,

departmental stores, grocery, general and kiriyana stores must close by 9pm.

Meanwhile, the notification said that marriage halls, marquees and all commercial venues hosting festive events must close by 10pm. Restaurants, cafés, eateries and food outlets must close by 11pm, though takeaway and home delivery services are exempt. Only a single dish shall be served at all marriage-related functions and events.

On the other hand, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, medical laboratories, standalone bakeries, tandoors, milk and dairy shops, fuel and CNG pumps, electric vehicle charging stations, gyms, sports facilities, IT companies and call centres are fully exempt from closing time restrictions.

Separately, the government slashed official vehicle fuel by 50%, banned all foreign travel for three months and also imposed a complete ban on vehicle and durable goods purchases, restricting business closing timings across the country. The measures also limit government spending through a 5% cut in the non-essential recurring expenditure budget for the entire fiscal year 2026-27.

Illegal immigration from Pakistan to Europe dropped by 64%: Naqvi

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

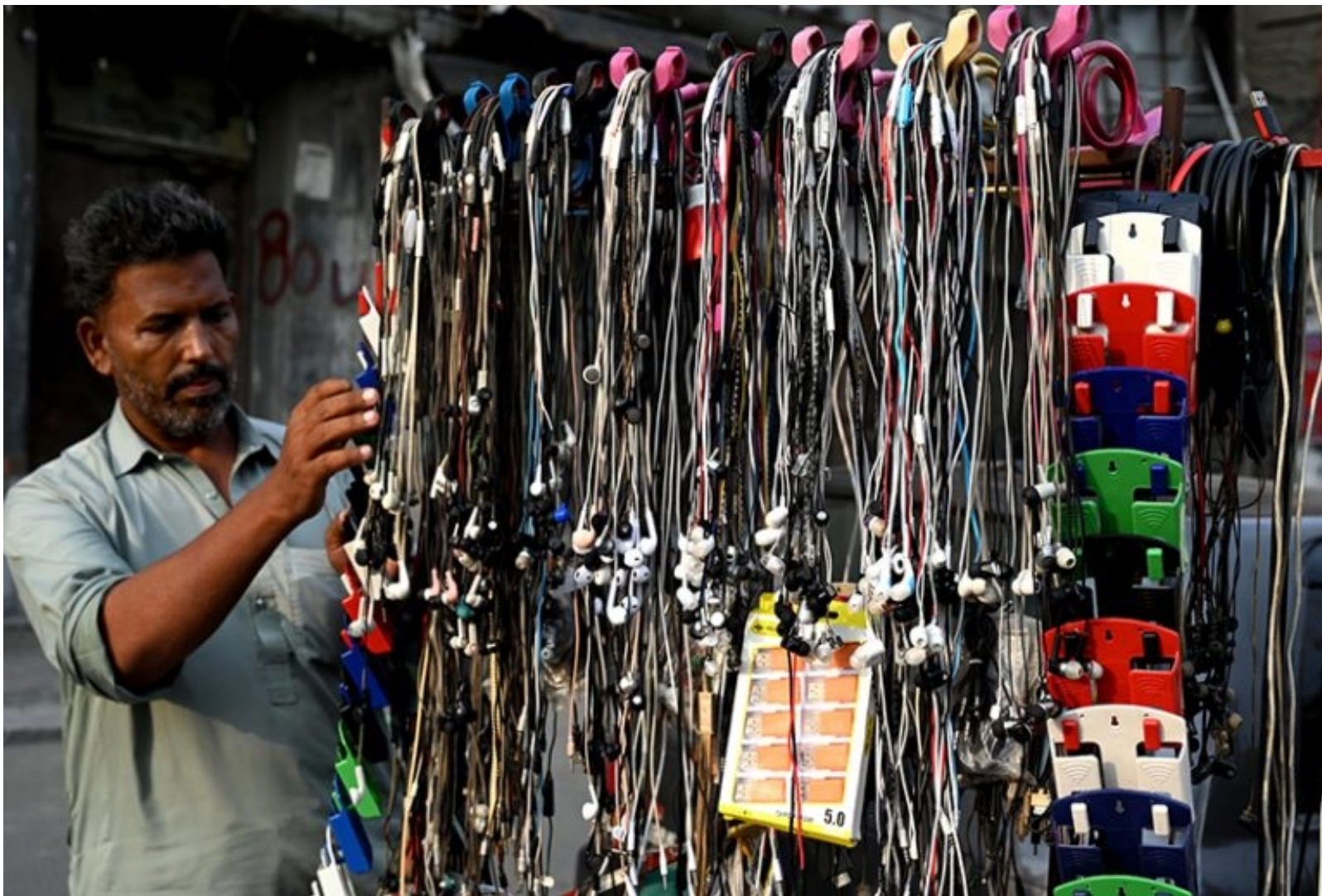
The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the European Union's Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) have commended Pakistan's effective measures to curb illegal immigration, in meetings with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad on Thursday. The appreciation came during separate meetings between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Director General International Centre for Migration Policy Development Susanne Raab and Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens in Islamabad today. During these meetings, it was decided to enhance mutual cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development and Frontex to prevent illegal immigration. The two sides expressed the commitment to further strengthen joint efforts regarding border management and the curbing of illegal



immigration.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohsin Naqvi said achieving a 64 percent reduction in illegal immigration from Pakistan to Europe despite limited resources was a challenging task. He said Pakistan accepted the prevention of illegal immigration as a challenge, but the entire team worked round the clock to achieve this challenge.

The Interior Minister expressed the resolve to curtail illegal immigration by one hundred percent is the next target, which will be achieved at all costs. He said opening of new avenues for legal migration is inevitable to curb illegal migration besides adopting modern technology and officers' training are necessary to prevent illegal immigration.



A roadside vendor arranges and displays mobile handsfree devices to attract customers in the provincial capital

Decision to Take Strict Action Against Artificial Price Hikes in Ghotki District

■ A decision has been made to take strict action against artificial price hikes in Ghotki district.

News Desk

MIRPUR MATHELO

A decision has been made to take strict action against artificial price hikes in Ghotki district. Assistant Mukhtiarkars and Market Committee officials, under the supervision of Assistant Commissioners, will inspect vegetable markets, and legal action will be taken against profiteers. According to details, a meeting was held at the camp office of Deputy Commissioner Ghotki, Manzoor Ahmed, in Mirpur Mathelo to review the performance of revenue officers. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner-I Basharat Hussain, as well as the Assistant Commissioners of Ghotki, Mirpur



Mathelo, Khangarh, Daharki, and Ubaro. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Manzoor Ahmed directed all Assistant Commissioners to take effective measures against artificial price hikes. In this regard, Assistant

Mukhtiarkars are to be instructed to inspect vegetable markets alongside Market Committee officials to gather data on auction rates for vegetables and fruits, thereby ensuring the prevention of artificial price inflation. He stated that

complaint desks should also be established to take action based on grievances lodged by citizens. The Deputy Commissioner further directed all Assistant Commissioners to play their part in removing encroachments from city roads and to resolve public issues on a priority basis to alleviate the difficulties faced by citizens. Earlier, the Assistant Commissioners of all five talukas provided the Deputy Commissioner with detailed briefings regarding their respective areas, reporting that fines totaling over Rs 400,000 had been imposed across the district during actions taken against profiteers.

Anti-encroachment operation continues in Tando Adam



News Desk

SANGHAR

The department further informed the Committee that establishments engaged in the treatment or care of sick and infirm persons were excluded from the operation of both the laws.

A representative of the Ministry of National Health Services apprised the Committee that the process of registration of hospitals and health establishments by the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority would begin within a week, after which the issue of payment of minimum wages could be addressed accordingly.

The Committee also took up an assurance regarding payment of boarding and lodging charges by members of the Pakistan Hockey Squad participating in the Asian Champions Trophy 2024 from their own pockets. It asked the Ministry and the Pakistan Sports Board to ensure that sports federations extended all-out support to players representing Pakistan.

The Committee was informed that the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) and the Pakistan Sports Board regularly provide grants to sports federations to facilitate participation of Pakistani teams in international sports competitions.

In the instant case, the Ministry and the Pakistan Sports Board had provided grants of Rs 59 million and Rs 37 million, respectively, to the Pakistan Hockey Federation during the financial year 2023-24. In addition to the collective amount of Rs 96 million, the Ministry provided Rs 23 million specifically to cover participation expenses for the Asian Champions Trophy 2024.

Sanghar meeting reviews implementation of NPVE policy

News Desk

SANGHAR

A meeting of the District Coordination Committee was held here under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner-I Abdul Majeed Zahrani, with district officers and heads of intelligence agencies in attendance. The participants presented reports on their respective departments' performance. DSP Headquarters Parvez Qureshi and Sergeant Ashraf briefed the meeting on police actions carried out across the district and measures taken to ensure smooth traffic flow. The meeting also reviewed implementation of the NPVE Policy 2024, aimed at preventing violent incidents and promoting peace and stability. Officers of the relevant departments briefed the participants on measures being taken under the policy. Mr Zahrani directed all concerned institutions to strengthen coordination and ensure effective implementation of the policy. He said coordinated efforts were essential for curbing



extremism and promoting peace and stability in society. It was decided to further intensify awareness campaigns against drug abuse and regarding traffic rules, while engagement with educational institutions and local communities would also be increased. The officers were directed to submit progress reports regularly to ensure effective implementation of the policy. Officials of the Benazir Income Support Programme were directed to increase staff for the digital wallet initiative and the women's survey. The meeting also reiterated the district administration's commitment to taking all possible measures for full implementation of the NPVE Policy 2024.

Warm Welcome Accorded to Sargodha's International Women Hockey Players

News Desk

Sargodha

A warm and enthusiastic welcome was accorded in Sargodha to the city's talented women hockey players, Zill-e-Hira Sadaf, Pakistan's first female international hockey player from Sargodha, who represented Pakistan in the Under-18 and Under-21 tournaments in Oman, and Maha Ramzan, who brought pride to Pakistan through her participation in the Junior Asia Cup in China, upon their return home. Representatives of the District Hockey Association, including Mian Saleem Akhtar, along with prominent social figures, showered flowers on the two players and their coaches and presented them with flower garlands to congratulate them on their achievements. Former international hockey player and Joint Secretary of the District Hockey Association Malik Muhammad Farooq, Anbala School Principal Sajid Mahmood Khan, and



Physical Education Teacher Adil Qibla arranged a Scouts Guard of Honour and hosted a reception with a lavish high tea in honour of the players. Representative of the Anjuman Shehrian and General Secretary of the Optical Association Muhammad Shahzad Ansari also warmly welcomed the distinguished guests and Coach Hassan Haider Shah at Kacheri Bazaar. Member of the National Assembly Ms. Aram Hamid Hamid and former



PIMS fire death toll rises to 15 as surviving infant dies

News Desk

MUZAFFARABAD

The death toll from the PIMS Hospital fire has risen to 15 after Aizal, the only infant rescued alive from the blaze, died while undergoing treatment in the intensive care unit.

According to sources, a nurse safely rescued Aizal during the fire, after which the infant was shifted to the intensive care unit for treatment. However, she later died during treatment, taking the number of children killed in the PIMS Hospital fire to 15.

Aizal's mother, Asifa Bibi, said her daughter was six months and 10 days old and had been born on August 12. She said the infant had been affected by smoke and was their first child.

Earlier reports confirmed that one infant had been rescued from the PIMS nursery fire while 14 newborns were reported dead.



RPO Sargodha Visits Bhakkar, Inaugurates New Building of Hayat Khan Shaheed Police

News Desk

Sargodha

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sargodha Muhammad Shehzad Asif Khan visited Bhakkar District, where he held an open court and inaugurated the newly constructed building of Hayat Khan Shaheed Police Station. DPO Bhakkar Shehzad Rafiq, SP Investigation Shaukat Ali, circle officers, SHOs, investigation officers, representatives of civil society and the media were also present on the occasion. The RPO inspected various sections of the new building, including the front desk, lock-up and investigation rooms, and reviewed the modern facilities provided there. He directed the police officers and staff to maintain high standards of cleanliness and make full use of the available facilities. Later, during the open court, RPO Muhammad Shehzad Asif Khan listened to the complaints and problems of citizens and directed the relevant officers to resolve their grievances promptly and strictly on merit in accordance with the law.

Senate committee seeks details of BISP media campaign, deputationists

News Desk

Lahore

The Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety on Thursday expressed serious concern over delays in receiving briefing material and shortcomings in the public awareness campaign of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), directing the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety to ensure timely provision of required information. The committee met under the chairmanship of Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur to review BISP performance, awareness campaigns, Social Protection Wallet (SPW) initiatives, penalization mechanisms for partner banks and deputation matters. The committee expressed grave dissatisfaction over the delayed receipt of briefing material from the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and directed the Ministry Secretary to ensure that such lapses were not repeated.

Pakistan launches new austerity drive, cuts official fuel use by 50pc

■ Federal government announces sweeping austerity measures, including a 50pc cut in official fuel use, restrictions on foreign travel and purchases, and reduced non-employee expenditure.

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

The federal government has introduced a fresh austerity drive aimed at reducing petroleum consumption and public expenditure, ordering a 50 per cent cut in fuel use for government vehicles and imposing restrictions on new purchases, foreign travel and official events. According to a government notification reported on Thursday, the fuel reduction will primarily apply to administrative and non-operational activities.

Operational vehicles and those used by the armed forces, civil armed forces, law-enforcement agencies, essential services and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) have been exempted from the fuel restriction. The government has also imposed a ban on the purchase of new vehicles,



including official vehicles. Purchases of durable goods have similarly been restricted, with IT-related procurement exempted. Foreign travel restricted for three months

Foreign travel under the federal

government has been restricted for three months, subject to specified exemptions.

Where an overseas visit is considered unavoidable, ministers, advisers and government officials will be required to travel in economy

class. Government departments have also been directed to give preference to video conferencing instead of physical meetings where possible.

The measures prohibit official dinners funded by the government, except those held for foreign delegations.

Government-funded seminars, training programmes and conferences have also been restricted. Where an essential official event must be held, departments have been instructed to use government auditoriums and committee rooms instead of outside venues.

The measures also include revised business hours as part of efforts to conserve energy.

According to the notification, shops, markets, shopping malls and bazaars will close by 9pm, while wedding halls, marquees and other event venues will close by 10pm.

PSX makes modest recovery as KSE-100 gains 431 points

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Pakistan Stock Exchange's benchmark KSE-100 Index opened higher on Thursday, recovering some of the ground lost during the previous session.

The index was trading at 168,452.66 points, up 430.86 points or 0.26 percent from the previous close of 168,021.80.

During the session so far, the KSE-100 has touched a high of 169,151.18 points and a low of 168,222.91 points. Trading volume stood at 17,429,712 shares.

The latest movement follows a sharp decline in the previous session. On September 16, the KSE-100 Index dropped 1,370.52 points, or 0.81 percent, to settle at 168,021.80 points.

Oil Prices Fall Further as Saudi Supply Fears Ease

■ Crude Prices Drop Further as Saudi Supply Disruption Concerns Recede



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Oil prices fell in early trading on Thursday, extending the previous session's sharp losses after reports that Saudi Arabia was arranging additional crude shipments through Oman helped ease concerns over potential supply disruptions in the Middle East.

Brent crude futures declined \$1.24, or 1.2%, to \$104.59 a barrel by 0049 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) futures dropped \$1.14, or 1.1%, to \$101.29 a barrel. Both benchmarks had shed around \$3 a barrel on Wednesday.

Hiroyuki Kikukawa, chief strategist at Nissan Securities Investment, said

concerns about tight oil supplies had eased somewhat following reports that Saudi Arabia would transport crude cargoes through Oman.

Sohail Afridi Claims Assassination Attempt Foiled During Wazirabad Visit He added that expectations of progress in reducing tensions in the Middle East ahead of next week's US-China summit were also limiting upward pressure on oil prices.

Saudi Arabia is reportedly offering additional crude loadings to Asian refiners through ship-to-ship transfers near Oman's Sohar port. The move could help offset part of the global supply impact caused by attacks on the kingdom's East-West pipeline leading toward the Red Sea.

UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo said reports of Saudi Arabia exporting crude from the Gulf indicated that concerns over a potentially larger disruption to supplies were beginning to recede.

Chairman CCP presents Pakistan at SCO meeting of Anti-Monopoly

■ Chairman Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), Farid Ahmad Tarar, has said that economic cooperation among SCO countries should be supported by open, transparent and fair markets



Web Desk

ISLAMABAD

Chairman Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), Farid Ahmad Tarar, has said that economic cooperation among SCO countries should be supported by open, transparent and fair markets, where businesses compete on merit and consumers benefit from competitive prices, choice, innovation and quality.

He made these remarks while representing Pakistan virtually at the Meeting of the Heads of Anti-Monopoly Authorities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States, held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

The meeting brought together heads and senior representatives of competition authorities from Belarus, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, along with the SCO Secretariat. Chairman CCP was accompanied by Director General Mr. Noman Laiq.

"Anti-competitive conduct may extend beyond national borders, making cooperation among competition authorities

increasingly important," Chairman Tarar said, stressing the need for closer regional cooperation in detecting and investigating cross-border cartels, merger control, market intelligence, cartel screening and digital-

market competition. Sharing Pakistan's experience, the Chairman said CCP is moving from a predominantly complaint-driven model towards proactive and intelligence-led market surveillance. He briefed participants on CCP's enforcement against cartels, abuse of dominance and deceptive marketing, alongside merger control, competition advocacy and market studies. Highlighting CCP's role in investment facilitation, Chairman Tarar said that during the last two years, the Commission issued 121 merger clearance orders, facilitating approximately Rs. 29.65 billion in foreign direct investment, while assessing competition implications. CCP also granted 83 exemptions for legitimate business arrangements meeting the requirements of the Competition Act, 2010.

He said CCP's Centre of Excellence in Competition Law and Research has undertaken 15 sectoral studies. He also highlighted emerging competition challenges posed by artificial intelligence, big data, algorithms and platform-based business models, saying CCP is strengthening its capabilities in digital competition.

IMF Pakistan Talks Set to Begin on September 23

■ Pakistan, IMF to Hold EFF and RSF Reviews Simultaneously

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Talks between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the fourth review of the country's more than \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme are scheduled to begin on September 23, according to official sources. FFC 6 September 728/90

The two sides are also expected to conduct the third review of the \$1.4 billion Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), with both reviews likely to be held simultaneously. The assessments will cover

Pakistan's economic performance and programme implementation for the period ending June 30, 2026. The IMF mission, led by Iva Petrova, is expected to remain in Pakistan for nearly two weeks. Discussions will examine progress under the EFF and RSF, including fiscal performance, revenue collection and compliance with agreed programme targets.

A key focus will be the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) tax collection performance and its targets for the first half of the fiscal year. The review is also expected to examine provincial fiscal surpluses and transfers to the federal government. City & Local Guides According to sources, successful



completion of the reviews would make Pakistan eligible for around \$1 billion under the EFF and approximately \$200 million under the RSF, bringing the potential combined disbursement to about \$1.2 billion. The IMF's existing programme schedule confirms that the fourth EFF review is tied to Pakistan's performance through June 2026, while RSF reviews are conducted concurrently with EFF reviews.

The upcoming talks will therefore assess both Pakistan's performance during the January-June 2026 period and its commitments for the next phase of the IMF-supported programmes.

Karachi Industrial Park lease, incentive framework nearing finalisation

■ Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Division Senator Ahad Cheema on Thursday reviewed the proposed land lease and incentive framework for Karachi Industrial Park

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD

);Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Division Senator Ahad Cheema on Thursday reviewed the proposed land lease and incentive framework for Karachi Industrial Park, which is nearing finalisation ahead of its planned early launch to attract export-oriented industries and boost industrial investment.

The Minister expressed the government's commitment to expediting the development of Karachi Industrial Park and ensuring that industrial units become operational at the earliest. He stressed that the proposed framework must prioritise export-oriented industries, with land allocation and associated concessions linked to clearly defined export commitments to

ensure that the project contributes meaningfully to Pakistan's export growth.

The meeting reviewed various development and investment models, including a proposed land lease package offering competitive incentives linked to clearly defined export commitments. Senator Ahad Cheema said Karachi Industrial Park should support the country's broader economic objectives, particularly export enhancement, industrialisation and productive utilisation of land. Officials briefed the meeting that the proposed framework would prioritise export-oriented industrial units, particularly those exporting more than 50 percent of their production.



The minister directed that incentives and concessions be tied to measurable export performance, with provisions for their withdrawal and appropriate penalties in case of non-compliance.

The meeting agreed that the land lease and incentive package should remain focused on export-led industrial growth, with accountability mechanisms to prevent misuse of land and incentives.

Officials said a considerable number of industrialists had expressed interest in establishing

export-oriented units at the park, subject to suitable incentives and essential infrastructure.

Reviewing infrastructure requirements, Senator Ahad Cheema stressed adequate water and gas supplies and improved road connectivity. He said the federal government would coordinate with Sindh authorities on water supply and the proposed 11-kilometre access road, while the Ministry of Petroleum and SSGC would be engaged on gas supplies.

He assured that the Board of Investment, SIFC, Ministry of Industries and Production and other relevant institutions would provide necessary federal support to resolve outstanding issues.

The minister also stressed productive utilisation of the park's land to enhance exports and contribute towards reducing Pakistan Steel Mills' outstanding liabilities.



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb delivers the keynote address at the Pakistan Investment Roundtable, hosted by the Pakistan High Commission in London.

SIFC: Transforming Regulation, Accelerating Ease of Doing Business



By Irfan Amjid



In today's competitive investment environment, businesses value three things above all: simplicity, efficiency and predictability. When procedures become unnecessarily complex, paperwork excessive and compliance requirements repetitive, the cost of doing business rises and commercial activity faces avoidable barriers. For Pakistan, creating a more efficient regulatory environment is therefore not merely an administrative priority—it is an important foundation for strengthening ease of doing business and attracting greater domestic and global investment.

This is where regulatory reform and the regulatory guillotine assume strategic importance.

The objective is clear: review existing regulatory requirements, simplify procedures wherever possible and eliminate obsolete or redundant burdens that no longer serve a necessary purpose. By reducing unnecessary

compliance requirements and paperwork, the reform process can lower operational costs, reduce entry barriers and enable businesses to focus more effectively on their core commercial activities.

The regulatory guillotine provides a structured mechanism to achieve this transformation. Instead of allowing regulatory requirements to accumulate over time, it promotes a systematic review of existing obligations to determine where simplification or elimination is appropriate. The approach is designed to cut through unnecessary procedural layers and move towards a more streamlined framework for commercial activity.

The Board of Investment initially initiated the regulatory guillotine framework. However, systemic bottlenecks affected its implementation, while execution of the requisite reforms remained sluggish. Recognizing the urgency of creating a more friction-free corporate environment, the Prime Minister directed the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to leverage its unique

whole-of-government framework and spearhead these structural reforms.

This direction has given regulatory reform renewed momentum and placed SIFC at the forefront of efforts to accelerate regulatory transformation.

SIFC's whole-of-government framework provides a strong institutional mechanism for coordinating relevant agencies, maintaining reform momentum and accelerating implementation. Its role is not confined to identifying regulatory challenges. The emphasis is on moving reforms forward—from review and identification to resolution and implementation.

Under the SIFC umbrella, the pace of regulatory reforms has accelerated significantly. Through sustained efforts, SIFC is fast-tracking the execution of critical reforms, facilitating seamless inter-agency coordination and addressing systemic bottlenecks that previously slowed implementation. This coordinated approach is helping convert the objective of regulatory simplification into tangible progress. The underlying principle is simple: better regulation means better business conditions.

Every unnecessary procedure consumes time and resources. Every redundant compliance requirement adds complexity. Conversely, every simplified process can improve efficiency and make commercial activity easier. Regulatory reform, therefore, is not simply about changing rules; it is about creating a business environment

in which necessary regulation can coexist with greater efficiency and ease.

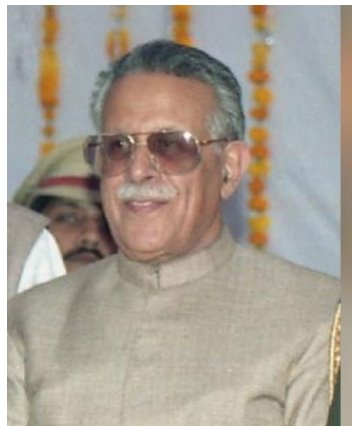
For domestic enterprises, streamlined regulation can reduce unnecessary burdens associated with routine commercial activity. For foreign enterprises, a more efficient regulatory environment can contribute to making Pakistan a more attractive destination for investment. In both cases, the objective is the same: make it easier for businesses to navigate regulatory requirements and operate efficiently. SIFC's whole-of-government approach is particularly important because regulatory reform can involve multiple agencies and institutional processes. Effective implementation requires coordination, continuity and sustained focus. By bringing the reform effort under a coordinated framework, SIFC is helping ensure that the process remains synchronized, focused and implementation-oriented.

The acceleration under SIFC also underscores a critical distinction between reform design and reform delivery. Reviewing regulations and identifying areas for improvement is important, but the real impact of reform depends on timely implementation. SIFC's sustained focus on fast-tracking execution is therefore central to translating regulatory reform into practical improvements.



By: Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

When Personal Kindness Meets Political Power



stamped my voucher and told me to show it to the airline. It worked. The airline saw the official stamp and confirmed my seat.

A few months later, I returned to the same office and asked Mr. Qureshi's Personal Assistant if I could meet him. To my surprise, Mr. Qureshi called me in.

He offered me tea. We spoke for perhaps five or ten minutes. He asked what I was doing at Aligarh Muslim University and where I was from in Kashmir. Nothing extraordinary happened during that conversation. Yet I remembered it. Here was a senior politician taking time to speak with an unknown student who had no influence, no political connections and no significance in his world. I found that admirable.

Mr. Qureshi was contesting parliamentary election from the Anantnag constituency. The Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir decided to oppose him and nominated Hakim Ghulam Nabi as its candidate. Since Hakim Ghulam Nabi was from Shopian, which was part of the constituency, he was considered a suitable candidate.

The Jamaat established an election office near Bijbehara, and Sheikh Ghulam Hassan who later became the Air of Jamaat, was overseeing the campaign's election

arrangements. Volunteers were needed to serve as election agents at polling stations. Although I was from Budgam, roughly forty miles away, I volunteered. I traveled to Bijbehara the day before polling and stayed overnight at the election office.

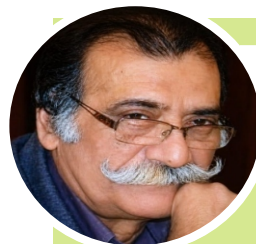
The next morning, Sheikh Ghulam Hassan gave me a letter certifying that I was the bona fide election agent of Hakim Ghulam Nabi. A taxi took me to Bangidar village, (if I remember the name correctly) a remote location surrounded by forest.

When I arrived, there were already dozens of people near the polling station. Policemen were guarding the area. One policeman stopped me. Polling had not yet begun, he said, and I needed to wait.

I explained that I was not there to vote. I was an authorized election agent and had come to monitor the polling on behalf of the candidate. The policeman was courteous. He said he would consult his superior.

A senior police officer came out and asked to see my authorization letter. I handed it to him. He told me to wait. I waited five minutes. Then another five minutes. When polling time arrived, I asked to be allowed inside. Instead, the officer came out, put me in his car and drove away. I was young and inexperienced in election monitoring. I did not understand what was happening. After about half an hour, he stopped at a house. He met the owner of the house and instructed him to give me breakfast and lunch until he returned in the afternoon.

I was stunned. I told him that I had not come there to eat lunch. I had come to monitor an election. He left. The homeowner told me that the polling station was at least an hour and a half away on foot.



By: Syed Mujtaba Rizwan

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed: An Architect of a New Chapter in Higher Education

Pakistan's higher education sector has always needed individuals who do more than limit themselves to teaching and research—people who also consider institution-building, educational policy, administrative reforms, and the intellectual development of the younger generation to be part of their responsibility. There are certainly not many people who have devoted a significant part of their professional lives to serving higher education and, while working at different levels, have played a role in shaping the direction of educational institutions. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed is among those distinguished personalities who have established a prominent and noteworthy position in Pakistan's higher education landscape. Now, as he assumes the responsibility of Founding Vice Chancellor of Nippon Institute of Advanced Sciences (NIAS), Sheikhupura, this is not merely a new job or administrative assignment; rather, it represents a new chapter in his long and distinguished educational journey. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed's name needs no introduction in Pakistan's higher education circles. His leadership of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), one of the country's most important institutions in the field of education, provided him with extensive experience at the national level and gave him the opportunity to observe closely the challenges, opportunities, and complexities of Pakistan's higher education system. Leading a major national institution is by no means an easy responsibility. It requires educational vision, administrative competence, the ability to engage with diverse stakeholders, a strong understanding of policy matters, and the capacity to look toward the future. These very dimensions of Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed's professional career make him a particularly suitable personality for his present responsibility. Nippon Institute of Advanced Sciences, Sheikhupura, has emerged as a new educational institution. The real test of any new

university is not its buildings, attractive campus, or modern facilities, but the quality of its education, the environment it creates for research, the competence of its faculty, the development of its students, and its relevance to society. If a new institution establishes a strong academic foundation from the very beginning, built on merit, research, innovation, and character development, it can eventually develop into an intellectual center whose influence extends far beyond its campus. This is precisely where the role of a founding vice chancellor becomes exceptionally important. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed's presence is significant for NIAS because he understands the higher education system not merely at the theoretical or academic level but also from practical and administrative perspectives. He understands that an institution can truly be called a university only when it provides an environment that encourages questioning, promotes research, respects intellectual differences, upholds merit, and makes a serious effort to prepare students for the challenges of the future. Sheikhupura is a city with a rich history and cultural heritage. Despite its proximity to Lahore, the region has long needed strong institutions of higher learning capable of providing modern education and greater opportunities to local youth. The establishment of NIAS is therefore significant in this context. If the institution succeeds in achieving its objectives, its benefits will not remain confined to Sheikhupura; students from a much wider region of central Punjab could also benefit from its academic opportunities. The concept of a university itself is changing rapidly in the modern era. The world is moving toward artificial intelligence, digital technology, biotechnology, data science, modern management, cybersecurity, emerging health sciences, and interdisciplinary fields. In such an environment, one of the most important questions facing Pakistani universities is whether they will merely award degrees or actually prepare their students for the future. One important

dimension of Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed's new responsibility could therefore be to develop NIAS into an institution where traditional education is complemented by modern disciplines, practical skills, research, and creative thinking. A good educational institution is not merely a center for conducting examinations and awarding degrees. It shapes the intellectual direction of society. A young person studying at a university may eventually become a teacher, doctor, engineer, administrator, entrepreneur, researcher, journalist, policymaker, or social leader. Therefore, a university's responsibility is not limited to completing a curriculum; it is also to develop individuals capable of using their knowledge for the betterment of society. For an experienced educationist like Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, this dimension will undoubtedly be an important part of his new responsibility. One of the most notable aspects of Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed's personality is his extensive administrative and academic experience. His leadership experience at the Higher Education Commission provided him with the opportunity to work with universities, educational institutions, teachers, researchers, and policymakers across Pakistan. This experience can prove to be an invaluable asset for a new institution. The initial years of a university are particularly important because it is during these years that its academic culture, administrative traditions, and fundamental standards are established.

It is also a reality that Pakistan's higher education sector faces numerous challenges. On one hand, the demand for quality education continues to grow, while on the other, universities require financial resources, research capacity, global competitiveness, programs aligned with employment opportunities, and highly qualified faculty. For new universities, these challenges are even greater because they have to establish their credibility and quality from the outset. In such an environment, the leadership of an experienced academic administrator can provide a strong foundation for the institution. One of the most promising aspects of NIAS is that, as a new institution, it has the opportunity to develop its academic structure in accordance with contemporary requirements rather than simply

THE DESTINATION

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Mudasser Iqbal
Chief Editor

Tahir Chudhary
Resident Editor Lahore



An Uzbek media delegation on Thursday visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a briefing on Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations.

Pakistan warns of self-defence response to terror threats from Afghan soil

■ The Pakistani envoy said more than 4,700 Pakistanis had been killed in terrorism linked to Afghanistan over the past three years

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON

Pakistan has told the United Nations Security Council that it will take measures in self-defence against terrorist threats originating from Afghanistan whenever necessary, while remaining within the bounds of international law.

Speaking at a Security Council session on Afghanistan on Wednesday, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, said Islamabad could not remain passive in the face of continuing terrorist threat.

"Pakistan cannot sit idle in the face of this terrorist onslaught," Ahmad said, adding that the country would respond when required to protect its citizens and national security.

The Pakistani envoy said more than 4,700 Pakistanis had been killed in terrorism linked to Afghanistan over the past three years. He also accused the authorities in Kabul of failing to take "concrete and verifiable" measures against militant groups operating from Afghan territory. Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said that Afghanistan



had once again become a haven for several militant organisations, including the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baloch Liberation Army and its Majeed Brigade, Islamic State-Khorasan and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, along with their affiliated groups.

He also stated that outside actors were supporting proxy groups operating from Afghanistan against Pakistan and other neighbouring states.

A recent report by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said terrorist organisations continued to operate in Afghanistan. The report also highlighted concerns over restrictions on women and girls, exclusionary governance, economic difficulties, weakened public services and

large-scale migration and returns.

Ahmad said Pakistan had continued to support Afghanistan through diplomatic engagement, humanitarian assistance and regional cooperation despite its concerns over Taliban policies.

He said Pakistan had honoured its international obligations by facilitating humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan,

noting that at least 687 humanitarian cargo trucks crossed into Afghanistan from Pakistan during the reporting period covered by the UN report.

However, he said expectations that followed the Taliban takeover five years ago had gradually given way to disappointment within the international community.

Ahmad described terrorism as being at the heart of Afghanistan's challenges and said that links between the Taliban and militant organisations had contributed to the problem. He also warned about the proliferation of weapons left behind by foreign forces and the growth of illegal arms trafficking.

Iranian, Turkish foreign ministers discuss latest regional developments

■ Abbas Araghchi held a telephone conversation with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan, with the two officials discussing the latest developments in the region

WEB DESK

TEHRAN

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a telephone conversation with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan, with the two officials discussing the latest developments in the region and the evolving regional situation.

According to Iranian media reports, the foreign ministers exchanged views on recent developments and reviewed the prevailing circumstances across the region. The conversation comes amid heightened diplomatic activity and continuing developments affecting regional security and political dynamics. During the call, Araghchi and Fidan assessed the current situation and discussed developments that could have implications for countries across the region.

The telephone contact highlights ongoing diplomatic engagement between Tehran and Ankara as both



sides monitor developments in the region.

Earlier, Abbas Araghchi held a telephone conversation with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir during his visit to Beijing.

The two officials discussed the latest developments in the region as well as matters of mutual interest, the reports said.

The phone call took place during Araghchi's visit to China, where he also met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss regional security and efforts to reduce tensions.

Russian strikes injure 18 across Ukraine, officials say

■ Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said 12 people, including two children, were wounded in the city

WEB DESK

Kyiv

Russian air strikes injured 18 and damaged buildings in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv and in the Black Sea port city of Odesa, among other locations, in the early hours of Thursday, officials said on the Telegram messaging app.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said 12 people, including two children, were wounded in the city, adding that apart from apartment and inhabited buildings, debris also fell on warehouse facilities and near a petrol station, which are now a frequent target of attacks.



In Odesa, a child was among the three injured as Russia hit a 19-storey apartment building and three others were wounded in Zaporizhzhia in the southeast where a missile strike also caused a fire at an industrial facility, authorities there said on Telegram.

Japan PM retains economy minister in cabinet reshuffle, signals no change in spending plans

■ Japanese PM Sanae Takaichi retained key ministers in a cabinet reshuffle, signaling continuity in spending plans while pledging fiscal discipline amid concerns over Japan's heavy debt burden.



WEB DESK

TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Thursday retained key ministers in a cabinet reshuffle, including her reflationist ally Minoru Kiuchi as economy minister, pointing to no change to her flagship spending plans.

Takaichi's policies have proven contentious given the huge size of Japan's public debt. Her decision to pursue a two-year tax cut on food items sparked a bond selloff as well as criticism from the US, putting her under pressure to heed market calls for fiscal discipline.

Kiuchi said after the announcement of the cabinet lineup that he would strive toward achieving both a strong economy and fiscal sustainability.

"We won't engage in wanton fiscal expansion," he said, adding that he will strive to dispel any concern markets had over Takaichi's policies. In her first reshuffle since taking office last October, Takaichi, however, also retained as finance minister Satsuki Katayama — a former finance ministry bureaucrat regarded as having a conservative stance towards fiscal policy. That reappointment is likely to be welcomed by bond markets wary of

Takaichi's plans to increase government spending which in turn could boost debt issuance.

"Markets are getting sensitive to fiscal risks, so stabilising long-term interest rates is turning into a very

important challenge for Japan's economic growth," said Keiji Kanda, a senior economist at the Daiwa Institute of Research.

"That's probably why Takaichi decided to retain many of the cabinet members she trust, such as Katayama. That would allow her to proceed steadily with steps taken so far and focus on guiding fiscal policy stably," Kanda said.

Katayama played a key role negotiating with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on a rare joint US-Japan yen intervention in late July, an effort that underscored the countries' close cooperation and her reappointment underscores continuity in foreign exchange policy. Other key ministers, including some of her competitors in last year's race to lead the ruling party, such as Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, saw no change in their posts. The reshuffle was aimed mostly at having the Japan Innovation Party, Takaichi's ruling Liberal Democratic Party's coalition partner, share responsibility on policy-making by joining the cabinet. The premier appointed Hiroshi Nakatsuka from the party as minister in charge of deregulation.

US allies fret over how Trump might play his Taiwan hand with Xi

■ China has described Taiwan as the core of core interests in its relations with the United States and has never renounced the use of force to bring the island under its control

WEB DESK

TOKYO/TAIPEI

US allies in Asia are growing anxious that President Donald Trump may be tempted to soften Washington's support for Taiwan in return for an economic win with Beijing as he prepares to host Chinese leader Xi Jinping next week.

Concerns that Trump could make concessions on Taiwan have heightened since he described US arms sales to the democratically governed island claimed by China as a "negotiating chip" in May, and as he tries to shore up approval ratings dented by the Iran war.

Xi will likely press Trump on Taiwan during their expected summit on September 24, and even a subtle change in US rhetoric could embolden Beijing and risk the



region's fragile peace, according to interviews with government officials, lawmakers and analysts in Taipei, Tokyo and Washington. "There's a great deal of trepidation, particularly from our allies, about where our China policy is going to land," said Emma Chanlett-Avery, political-security affairs director for US-based think tank Asia Society Policy Institute.

"Any indication of a softness on Taiwan would be quite alarming," she added. China has described Taiwan as the "core of

core interests" in its relations with the United States and has never renounced the use of force to bring the island under its control.

China's foreign ministry and the White House did not respond to questions for this story. Trump has said Xi has personally assured him that China will not attack Taiwan while Trump is in office. His predecessor Joe Biden repeatedly said the US would defend Taiwan if China attacked, while Trump has declined to say whether he would.

Speaking at a defence forum in Beijing on Tuesday, China's former envoy to Washington Cui Tiankai said "reunification" with Taiwan would bring stability that is "in the interest of the United States".

Ahead of the summit, the Taiwanese government has been clearly conveying its positions to the US side, Shen Yu-chung, a senior Taiwanese official, told reporters in Taipei on Monday.



Speaker National Assembly (NA), Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday said that Commonwealth Parliaments need to play an effective and proactive role in strengthening democracy and upholding international law.

Sheheryar Munawar Gives Witty Reply Over Umer Alam

■ Sheheryar Responds Humorously to Question About Umer Alam's Casting

WEB DESK

KARACHI

Pakistani actor Sheheryar Munawar has amused fans with a witty response to a social media user who questioned why actor Umer Alam was not cast as Abu Bakar in the popular drama Dare Nijat. A comment recently surfaced on social media asking Sheheryar why Umer Alam was not chosen for the role, which Sheheryar currently plays in the drama.

Responding in his trademark light-hearted style, Sheheryar jokingly attributed the casting decision to Umer Alam's "dates issue", referring to the actor's busy



schedule.

The actor then added a more personal message to make it clear that there were no hard feelings. "On a serious note, I love him and Inshallah soon," Sheheryar wrote, suggesting that he would welcome the opportunity to work with Umer

Alam on a future project.

The exchange quickly attracted attention online, offering viewers a lighter glimpse of Sheheryar's personality away from the emotionally intense storyline of Dare Nijat.

In the drama, Sheheryar portrays

Abu Bakar, a Harvard-educated executive engineer whose character is presented as thoughtful, principled and deeply connected to faith and family values. His character remains central to the drama's emotional storyline, particularly as his relationship with Zaryab becomes increasingly complicated by personal conflicts, past connections and circumstances.

Durefishan Saleem plays Zaryab, a vibrant young woman whose life is strongly influenced by her deep attachment to her childhood friend. Nameer Nawaz Khan portrays Zamil, an ambitious figure from Zaryab's past whose jealousy and insecurities create additional tension around Abu Bakar.



Ireland to boycott Eurovision 2027 over Gaza

■ Earlier this month, Eurovision organisers said they were excluding any country involved in an armed conflict from hosting the competition.

WEB DESK

KARACHI

Ireland will not participate in or broadcast next year's Eurovision Song Contest, public broadcaster RTE said Thursday, citing the "ongoing loss of lives in Gaza".

The country, which also snubbed the 2026 competition over Israel's participation, will join the Netherlands in skipping the world's biggest live televised music event, which has been hit by a string of boycotts and controversies in recent years.

"RTE will not participate in the 2027 Eurovision Song Contest, nor will RTE broadcast the competition," said the broadcaster, which manages Ireland's selection and participation in the contest.

"RTE feels that Ireland's participation cannot be justified given the appalling and ongoing loss of lives in Gaza and the humanitarian crisis there which continues to put the lives of so many civilians at risk," the

statement said.

Earlier this month, Eurovision organisers said they were excluding any country involved in an armed conflict from hosting the competition.

Israel, which has been at war in Gaza since 2023, came close to winning the competition in both 2025 and 2026, ultimately finishing second on each occasion.

However, the Dutch broadcaster said the exclusion of countries in conflict was not "sufficient", adding that Eurovision could "no longer be considered neutral" given the divisions over the Gaza conflict.

Since its launch in 1955, Eurovision has become the ultimate pop platform, catapulting Swedish icons ABBA to worldwide fame and boosting the likes of Celine Dion, Cliff Richard and Olivia Newton-John.

This year's competition was watched by 131 million viewers, down by 35 million from the year before, after five countries boycotted it over Israel's participation.

Old Momina Iqbal Video Resurfaces Amid Ongoing Dispute

■ Momina Iqbal Video Sparks Fresh Debate Amid Ongoing Controversy

SHOWBIZ DESK

ISLAMABAD

An old video featuring Pakistani actress Momina Iqbal and Punjab Assembly member Saqib Chadhar has resurfaced on social media, renewing online discussion about their earlier controversy, while Momina's husband Hamza Habib has shared a series of posts touching on women's dignity, legal procedures and public criticism.

The circulating video reportedly shows Momina and Saqib Chadhar together at a mehndi stall, with both appearing to wear masks. Chadhar can be seen writing the initials of his and Momina's names on her hands, after which the actress appears to show the writing to the camera.

The resurfaced clip has prompted mixed reactions on social media. Some users responded with jokes and sarcasm, while others criticised pages for circulating what they



considered to be private moments.

Meanwhile, Hamza Habib shared several Instagram stories expressing frustration over legal proceedings and comments targeting women's character.

In one post, Hamza said people seeking justice can feel helpless because they are required to follow legal procedures. He expressed anger over the impact such disputes can have on

people's lives and the frustration of being unable to take immediate personal action because of the law.

In another message, he criticised those who make remarks about a woman's character and urged them to consider how they would react if similar comments were directed at

women in their own families.

Hamza also said men should protect women rather than humiliate them, adding that a beard and moustache alone do not define manhood.

Another message shared by him focused on women turning to social media when they feel their concerns are not being heard through legal channels.

Do hair removal treatments really Work Here's what studies reveal

■ Traditional methods like shaving and waxing remain widely used due to accessibility

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Frequent sleep disruptions caused by a snoring partner can affect more than just a good night's rest, potentially leaving the other person tired, irritable and struggling to concentrate during the day.

Snoring occurs when soft tissues in the upper airway vibrate during sleep. According to the British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association, around 40% of adults in the UK snore, with the condition more common among men.

An American survey found that around 75% of people who sleep near a snorer said their sleep was disrupted.

Repeated nighttime awakenings can reduce the amount of deep sleep a person gets, which is important for physical and mental recovery.

Poor-quality sleep may contribute to daytime fatigue, difficulty concentrating and memory problems. Sleep deprivation



can also affect how people respond to stress, potentially contributing to irritability, anxiety and mood changes.

For couples, persistent sleep disruption can therefore affect not only daytime wellbeing but also relationships.

When snoring could signal sleep apnea Experts caution that severe or persistent snoring should not always be dismissed as a harmless nuisance. In some cases, it can be a sign of obstructive sleep apnea, a condition in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts during sleep.

Possible warning signs include:

Pauses in breathing during sleep

Gasping, choking or difficulty breathing at night Frequent nighttime awakenings

Morning headaches

Excessive daytime tiredness

People experiencing these symptoms should consult a doctor. Some patients with sleep apnea may require treatment such as continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), which helps keep the airway open during sleep. What can help reduce snoring?

If snoring is not linked to sleep apnea, several lifestyle changes may help reduce it.

These include maintaining a healthy weight, quitting smoking, avoiding alcohol close to bedtime and sleeping on your side rather than your back.

Treating nasal congestion or allergies may also help in some cases. Doctors may recommend specialised oral appliances for certain people, which can reposition the lower jaw to help keep the airway open.

Experts advise addressing persistent snoring rather than simply tolerating it for years.

Improving sleep quality can benefit physical health, mental wellbeing and relationships.



Ali Zafar defends Katrina Kaif against post-pregnancy body-shaming

SHOWBIZ DESK

LAHORE

Pakistani actor and singer Ali Zafar has spoken out in support of his former co-star Katrina Kaif after she faced social media criticism over her post-pregnancy appearance, urging people to reconsider the standards they impose on women.

Ali Zafar and Katrina Kaif previously starred together in the 2011 romantic comedy Mere Brother Ki Dulhan.

In a video shared on Instagram, Ali Zafar questioned the tendency to

compare women's past and present appearances. He said men, in particular, need to examine their attitudes because society often expects women to meet certain standards regarding their bodies, lives and appearance.

Ali Zafar acknowledged that he had also criticised other people's appearances in the past but said he no longer considers such behaviour appropriate. Katrina Kaif has recently faced comments on social media about changes in her appearance following pregnancy after making public appearances with her husband, Vicky Kaushal.

'A total disappointment', Sydney Sweeney faces backlash over sports Ad



WEB DESK

KARACHI

Hollywood actress Sydney Sweeney faces backlash after appearing in a new advertising campaign for sports prediction platform Novig.

The sixty second commercial, in which Sweeney appears nude while using sports equipment to cover parts of her body has sparked debate over the way women and female athletes are portrayed.

Several female athletes have criticized the campaign, arguing that it sexualizes women and takes attention away from the hard work and dedication involved in sport.

Australian swimmer Ariarne Titmus, a four-time Olympic gold medalist, expressed her anger over the advertisement in an Instagram post. "Not only is it a kick in the face to every woman who had dedicated her life to perfecting her craft, but every woman who enjoys sports for what it really is - teamwork, friendship, dedication, excellence, unity," she wrote.

"How do we live in a world where monetizing a woman's body and sexualizing women's sport is still a thing?"



Pakistani television actress Sumaiyya Bukhsh has candidly revealed that her appearances alongside popular YouTuber Rajab Butt brought her more recognition than years of work in the television industry.

Asian Champions Trophy: India says 'no neutral venue' for Pakistan clash

- Hockey India's response comes after Pakistan approached Asian Hockey Federation to seek a neutral venue over security concerns



Sports desk

ISLAMABAD

Hockey India has said the venue for the Asian Hockey Champions Trophy will not be changed amid uncertainty over Pakistan's participation in the tournament in India.

Hockey India secretary Bhola Nath

Singh said Pakistan would have to travel to India if it wanted to participate in the Asian Hockey Champions Trophy, adding that there would be no change to the tournament venue, according to Indian media reports.

The PHF had formally approached the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) seeking either the relocation of the

entire tournament outside India or the shifting of Pakistan's matches to neutral venues, citing the current sensitive bilateral situation and security concerns.

Hockey India secretary general and AHF vice-president Bhola Nath Singh said the request would not be entertained and that Pakistan would have to travel to India if it wished to

participate in the tournament.

"There will be no change in venue. If Pakistan wants to play in the Asian Champions Trophy, it will have to come to India," Singh said, according to Indian media reports.

Singh also said Bangladesh and Oman were among the reserve teams for the event and could be considered as replacements if Pakistan withdrew from the tournament.

The Men's Asian Champions Trophy is scheduled to take place from October 27 to November 5 in Jalandhar and Mohali, with India, Pakistan, China, Japan, Malaysia and South Korea set to participate. Jalandhar is scheduled to host the league-stage matches, while the semi-finals and final are due to be played in Mohali. Pakistan and India are scheduled to face each other in Jalandhar on November 1. The PHF, however, has maintained that Pakistan remains committed to participating in the continental tournament.

Interim PHF president Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani said the federation's request was aimed at ensuring a safe, dignified and conducive environment for the national players and officials.

Wani also reiterated Pakistan's willingness to compete against India and all other International Hockey Federation (FIH) member nations, while stressing the federation's position that sport should remain separate from politics.



PCB chief announces biggest school talent hunt program

WEB DESK

England

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said on Thursday that the country's biggest school cricket talent hunt will begin on September 19, with around 21,000 players from 1,400 schools across 100 districts taking part.

In a post on X, Naqvi said the PCB Talent Hunt School Cricket 2026-27 will open at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Saturday at 2pm.

The opening match will feature Beaconhouse School and Aitchison College, while renowned singer Rahat Fateh Ali Khan will perform live after the match.

According to a PCB press release issued on Wednesday, the 2026-27 tournament will mark the second season of the board's Talent Hunt Programme for Schools.

The PCB said it had significantly expanded the programme from 450 schools in 39 districts to 1,400 schools across 100 districts.

Naqvi will attend the opening ceremony as chief guest and formally inaugurate the tournament.

Smith still haunted by 'Sandpapergate' as he prepares for South Africa Tests

- David Warner, considered the ringleader, was suspended for 12 months and stripped of all leadership roles while Cameron Bancroft was slapped with a nine-month ban.

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Steve Smith says he is still traumatised by the infamous "Sandpapergate" ball-tampering scandal in 2018, but the former Australia skipper is undaunted about returning to South Africa for his first Test series since.

The prolific batsman was sent home in disgrace, banned for a year and sacked as captain after conspiring to alter the ball using sandpaper during the third Test in Cape Town eight years ago.

David Warner, considered the ringleader, was suspended for 12 months and stripped of all leadership roles while Cameron Bancroft was slapped with a nine-month ban. Smith, preparing for the first Test in Durban on October 9 before the series moves to Gqeberha and Cape Town, said he still suffers flashbacks to a traumatic period of his life.

He is haunted by memories of leaving Johannesburg airport, with cameras clicking furiously around him, and a harrowing Sydney press conference on his return when he broke down in tears.



"I'm not a big fan of cameras ... I get anxious around cameras to be honest," he told News Corp. in an interview published Thursday.

"That was a traumatic experience in my life and when I hear the flash of a camera it makes me revisit that in a way."

The 24-48 hours of being told by James Sutherland (then-Cricket Australia chief executive) that I was getting banned for a year. That and going through the airport in Johannesburg getting absolutely mobbed, and then flying back and

doing that press conference.

"I still have little flashbacks here and there of it."

Smith bore the brunt of the scandal that is considered one of Australian sport's darkest moments, but bounced back emphatically.

He smashed a superb century against England on his return and has gone from strength to strength, with 10,920 Test runs so far at an average of 56.

"It was certainly a difficult period, particularly the initial period a few

days after," he said.

"The mental state I was in was not great. That's somewhere I'd like not to get to again, but I certainly learned from that and have been able to move forward with my life.

"I've tried to kind of erase a lot of 2018 and what happened," he added.

"I can't remember a lot about the series. I've tried to block most of it out of my memory bank."

Smith has been back to South Africa for a white-ball series since 2018, but not for a Test and he is bracing for hostile crowds.

But the 37-year-old is unperturbed, having negotiated multiple Ashes tours to England since 2018, where the Barmy Army abused him relentlessly.

"It's something I'm kind of used to. I've copped a lot at times away from home at different venues across my career and it's something that I take in my own stride," he said.

"I use it as motivation to try and go out and do well and try and take a positive from it."



PSG's Qatari owners buy Belgian club Eupen

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Paris Saint-Germain's Qatari owners on Thursday confirmed the purchase of Belgian club Eupen several months after taking control of the second-division outfit.

Qatar Sports Investments (QSI) said in a statement it had "completed the acquisition of KAS Eupen".

"This formalises QSI's full ownership of the club, following its takeover of KAS Eupen's sporting operations in December 2025," it added.

QSI and the Belgian club "have been working closely together to build a strong foundation for the club's long-term sporting and commercial development", the statement said.

The Qatari investors acquired a majority stake in PSG in 2011 and have held a minority stake in Portuguese club Braga since 2022.

Since acquiring PSG the French club have won 12 of their 14 Ligue 1 titles and are the two-time defending Champions League winners.

Eupen have been under Qatari control since 2012, but through the Aspire Academy, which uses the club as a springboard for young talents.

'Go there and respond to notice': LHC turns down Rizwan's plea against NCCIA

- Rizwan's lawyer says ICC Anti-Corruption Unit is appropriate forum to probe corruption-related allegations



SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

questioned without being served a notice.

He said Rizwan's mobile phone was taken into custody during the process after he was assured it would be returned within three hours. Ali told the court that the phone had still not been returned, arguing that the delay

reflected bad faith.

He further contended that the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Anti-Corruption Unit was the appropriate forum for dealing with corruption-related allegations against cricketers.

However, no matter concerning Rizwan had been referred to the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit, Ali said. During the hearing, Justice Neelum expressed displeasure with the lawyer for failing to bring the case file to court.

She observed that Rizwan had been called by the NCCIA on September 10 and had complied with the summons.

Real Madrid fan group wants Mbappe apology over Ceuta shirt snub

- Mbappe, Vinicius Junior and Ibrahima Konate wore a tribute shirt partially rolled up ahead of Madrid's 3-2 win at Elche on Tuesday in La Liga.

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

A Real Madrid supporters' group has demanded a public apology from Kylian Mbappe and two team-mates after they declined to fully wear a t-shirt in support of the people of Ceuta.

Mbappe, Vinicius Junior and Ibrahima Konate wore a tribute shirt partially rolled up ahead of Madrid's 3-2 win at Elche on Tuesday in La Liga. "We are certain that every Real Madrid supporter and every Spaniard is ashamed of the image given by these three individuals," Ultras Sur said in a statement posted on X late on Wednesday, describing their conduct as "unacceptable". The group, which is often associated with the far right, called for "public apologies" and criticised the silence of Real Madrid president Florentino Perez, with whom it has been at odds since being banned from the Santiago Bernabeu more than a decade ago. La Liga president Javier Tebas on Wednesday criticised the three Madrid players for not properly wearing the t-shirt, saying "putting it half on is the same as not wearing it".

The rest of the team and Elche players wore the t-shirt, which brandished the words "we are all Ceutans", normally, which was intended to be a message of



support for people in the Spanish territory in north Africa, which recently has been affected by a migration crisis.

Residents have complained about migrants from Morocco camping on beaches and sleeping in the streets, with the city overwhelmed amid a humanitarian crisis. Scores of people died while attempting the crossing in July. The Moroccan Association for Human Rights, a non-governmental group, estimates the death toll to be at least 141.

Mbappe said that he wanted to make a gesture in support of those who had lost

their lives.

"The first thing I want to say is that I have complete solidarity with Ceuta and all the victims," he told Spanish daily AS.

"But I also wanted to make a gesture and express my thoughts for all the immigrants who have lost their lives and who are also living in difficult conditions."

Tens of thousands of migrants arrived in Ceuta from Morocco on July 30 and 31. Most of them returned in the hours following their arrival, but several thousand remained in Ceuta, where deteriorating conditions have fuelled tensions with local residents

SC grants bail to Imaan Mazari, Hadi Ali as IHC proceedings remain pending

■ Mazari and Chattha were sentenced to a combined 17 years in prison in January 2026



STAFF REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The Supreme Court on Thursday granted bail to lawyer and rights activist Imaan Mazari and her husband, advocate Hadi Ali Chattha, until the Islamabad High Court reaches a final decision on their applications for suspension of sentence.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim heard the case. The court also suspended the trial court's decision and granted the couple bail against surety bonds of Rs200,000 each.

Mazari and Chattha were sentenced to a combined 17 years in prison in January 2026 in cases related to social media posts that the prosecution alleged promoted an anti-state narrative

under cybercrime laws. They subsequently approached the Islamabad High Court seeking suspension of their sentences. During Thursday's hearing, Additional Attorney General Rana Asad opposed the bail pleas, arguing that the Islamabad High Court had not yet issued a decision against the prosecution. He said the trial court had already provided seven opportunities and maintained that the High Court was the appropriate forum for suspension of sentence under Section 426.

Justice Afghan questioned the repeated delays in proceedings before the Islamabad High Court. He observed that the High Court sometimes referred to Supreme Court orders in its proceedings before adjourning the matter, while another date was subsequently fixed when the case came before the Supreme Court.

The judge remarked that the Islamabad High Court was, "in its own way", preventing the Supreme Court from functioning and asked what had happened after the apex court's first order.



Punjab to bring ordinance against teachers over poor exam results

■ Punjab plans a new ordinance against teachers over poor exam results, linking their performance to students' outcomes while introducing monitoring, coaching and school reforms.

STAFF REPORTER
LAHORE

The Punjab government has decided to introduce a new ordinance against teachers delivering poor examination results, while agreeing to link teachers' performance with students' academic outcomes.

A video-link meeting chaired by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was held to review the school education sector in detail. During the meeting, the chief minister expressed displeasure over the Class 9 examination results and decided to introduce legislation for legal action against teachers associated with poor results.

The meeting also gave an in-principle approval to hold monthly and annual examinations in every class. Officials were directed to present

a complete timeline and reforms plan next week, while immediate action was ordered where the Class 9 result is below 20 percent. Maryam Nawaz directed authorities to reward schools achieving the best results and announced awards for the top-performing schools in each district based on their results.

The meeting decided to introduce evening coaching for academically weak students in government schools. Participants also agreed to discourage the practice of removing students from schools because of weak academic performance.

The chief minister ordered that vacant head teacher positions be filled within 45 days and directed authorities to ensure the appointment of subject specialists in government schools. The education minister was also instructed to ensure checking and monitoring at every level.



Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik meets with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Energy and Power Nazir Ahmed Abbasi to discuss matters relating to the energy sector.

Punjab has not taken anyone's share, says CM Maryam Nawaz

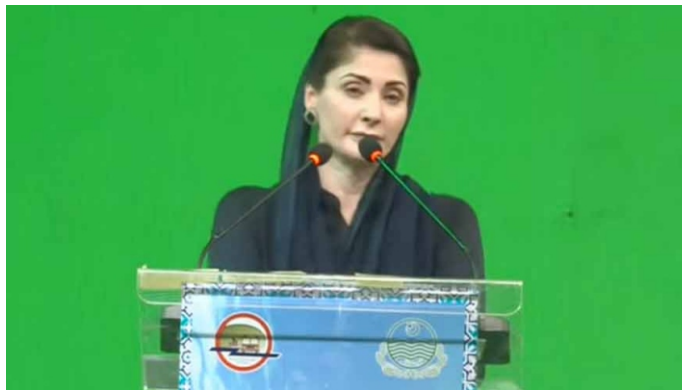
● CM Maryam pays Rs27.19m for government plane used on London trip

STAFF REPORTER
MULTAN

- Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has said that Punjab has not deprived anyone of their rightful share, but has continued to provide resources to other provinces from its own allocation.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of electric bus service in Multan, she said criticism was being directed not at her personally but at Punjab's development.

She defended the use of the official aircraft, saying the Rs9 billion plane belonged to the office of the Punjab chief minister and would not become her personal property. Maryam said she had also visited flood victims by boat and noted that every chief minister had



access to an official aircraft.

She said she paid nearly Rs27.5 million from her own pocket for a flight to attend her daughter's graduation ceremony.

The chief minister said the new electric bus service would charge a standard fare of Rs20, while women, students, persons with disabilities and citizens above 60 would travel free of charge.

She said electric buses would

operate on all major routes in Multan and include wheelchair ramps and CCTV cameras for women's safety.

She added that cancer-treatment equipment had been introduced in Multan, with two women already treated in 45 minutes using the new machine.

While Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has paid Rs27,194,004 to the Punjab

government for the use of the official aircraft during her recent private visit to London, according to reports.

The payment follows controversy over the use of the provincial government's aircraft for her London trip, where she attended her daughter's graduation ceremony. Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari had earlier said that Maryam Nawaz would personally bear the expenses of the trip.

According to reports, Rs27,194,004 has now been deposited into the government treasury against the expenses incurred for use of the aircraft.

PML-N leader Hina Parvez Butt also confirmed on social media that the Punjab chief minister had paid all expenses related to the use of the government aircraft.

LHC restores Rs3m fine on man for unauthorised allopathic treatment

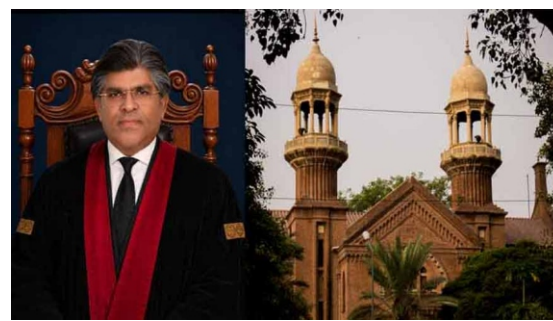
● Lahore High Court restores a Rs300,000 fine for unauthorised allopathic treatment, ruling that a dispenser certificate does not permit independent medical practice.

Staff Reporter
ISLAMABAD

The Lahore High Court has restored a Rs300,000 fine imposed on a man for providing allopathic treatment without authorisation, ruling that a dispenser's certificate does not permit a person to independently practise allopathic medicine.

Justice Munawar Iqbal Dogar issued a 10-page judgment on a petition filed by the Punjab Healthcare Commission, declaring the Faisalabad district judge's decision to set aside the fine void. The court held that the PHC's hearing committee is legally empowered to impose fines under the relevant law.

According to the judgment, possessing a dispenser's certificate does not authorise a person to independently provide allopathic treatment. Similarly, a drug sale licence only



permits the sale of medicines and does not authorise its holder to administer injections or provide medical treatment to patients.

The court noted that used syringes and injections were recovered during action against the person, while his admission of administering injections was also on record. In view of this evidence, the court held that the PHC's proceedings and imposition of the fine were lawful.

Justice Munawar Iqbal Dogar observed that proving unauthorised medical treatment does not necessarily require the patient to be produced before the court or a prescription to be recovered. Action can also be assessed on the basis of other available evidence and records.

The judgment further stated that the PHC hearing committee is the competent authority to impose the fine and that the relevant laws

provide it with such powers.

The court also held that if a fine is paid without protest, an appeal against the penalty is no longer maintainable.

The Lahore High Court consequently set aside the Faisalabad district judge's decision and restored the Rs300,000 fine imposed by the Punjab Healthcare Commission on June 22, 2021



Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addressing the ceremony at the Lahore High Court Bar Association, Rawalpindi Bench.

Foreigner among three sentenced to seven years each in Islamabad online fraud case

STAFF REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

An Islamabad court has convicted three men, including a Chinese national, in an online and electronic fraud case and sentenced each of them to a total of seven years in prison.

Senior Civil Judge/Judicial Magistrate Malik Aman announced the verdict on Thursday.

The court convicted Chinese national Bai Xiaoming, Nauman Abid Malik and Hasnain Mahmood. Nine other Pakistani and foreign accused linked to the case were declared proclaimed



offenders, while Zhou Qingliang, Shehzada Ayaz Latif and Hamza Shehnawaz were acquitted for lack of sufficient evidence.

Under Section 420 of the Pakistan Penal Code, the three convicts were sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment each and fined Rs50,000 each.

The court also sentenced each convict to another two years in prison under Section 14 of the

Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016, and imposed fines of Rs200,000 each.

According to the court findings reported in the case, an Islamabad resident, Haris Ahmed Sheikh, was defrauded of approximately Rs19.39 million through what was presented as an online investment opportunity.

The prosecution case involved an allegedly fake Facebook advertisement using the name and branding of Barclays Bank. According to the court findings, the bank's identity and that of a purported chief executive named "Will Thomson" were misused as part of the scheme.