

Pakistan Calls for
Global Action to
Counter
Islamophobia and
Hate Speech

***MALAYSIA
AT 69:
TEXT
CHAPTER***

Malaysia's 69th
National Day
Celebrated in
Islamabad

"Iran Will Not
Surrender"



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We are living through a period of profound geopolitical change, economic transformation, and rapid technological advancement. In such a fast-changing world, informed, balanced, and analytical journalism is more important than ever. This edition brings together stories and perspectives that explore the forces shaping our shared future.

Our cover stories focus on Pakistan's growing emphasis on economic diplomacy. From Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar's trade ambitions to progress toward a Pakistan-US Reciprocal Trade Agreement and renewed attention to Gwadar under CPEC, these developments highlight Pakistan's efforts to strengthen international economic partnerships and create new opportunities for sustainable growth.

Beyond economics, this issue examines some of the major challenges confronting the world today. Our Articles & Opinions section looks at the mounting pressures of climate change, the growing global burden of cancer, and the complex ethical questions surrounding artificial intelligence. As AI continues to transform industries and societies, responsible governance will be essential to ensuring that technological progress serves humanity.

We also turn our attention to culture, heritage, and community. From efforts to preserve Sindh's rich historical legacy to the cultural vibrancy of Peshawar, these stories underline the importance of protecting the traditions and identities that connect generations.

We hope this edition informs, inspires, and encourages thoughtful discussion on the issues that matter most. Thank you for continuing to be part of The World Ambassador and for sharing our commitment to meaningful journalism.

Abid Siddique Chaudhry

Editor in Chief

**Office No. 01, Street No. 05, G7/2
Islamabad**

**Postal Address : PO BOX 1111 GPO
Islamabad**

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EDITORIAL NOTE

A World at a Crossroads

In this edition of The World Ambassador, we look at a world defined by shifting alliances, diplomatic engagement, economic challenges and an increasingly complex international landscape.

September 2026 has brought developments that extend far beyond individual headlines. From Pakistan's expanding diplomatic and economic engagement with international partners to renewed U.S.-Iran diplomatic contacts and changing global power dynamics, the month reflects a broader transformation in international affairs.

Our Diplomacy section explores Pakistan's growing engagement with Romania, China, Japan and other partners, highlighting the importance of trade, investment, education and people-to-people connections. In an evolving global economy, economic diplomacy has become an increasingly important instrument of international relations.

The International section examines some of the month's major global developments, including tensions in the Middle East, diplomatic efforts surrounding the United States and Iran, and calls for a new balance of power at the United Nations.

For Pakistan, economic development remains a central priority. This edition looks at initiatives concerning housing, trade, exports, business, social protection and digital transformation. Together, these developments provide a snapshot of the opportunities and challenges facing the country.

We also turn our attention to issues that transcend borders. Climate change, healthcare, women's empowerment and the continuing humanitarian challenges in conflict-affected regions remain critical components of the global agenda.

Our Tourism and Features sections take readers from the heritage of Takht-i-Bahi and the ancient Gandhara civilization to historical Pakistan-Korea connections, reminding us that diplomacy is not limited to governments—it is also built through culture, history and human connections.

Technology, meanwhile, is reshaping the global economy. Pakistan's efforts to strengthen digital cooperation and develop a long-term digital roadmap reflect the growing importance of innovation in national development.

Through our Opinion & Analysis section, we examine the wider implications of these developments while maintaining a focus on informed discussion and international perspectives.

At The World Ambassador, our aim is to connect the headlines with the larger picture—to understand not only what is happening, but why these developments matter.

As the world navigates uncertainty and change, dialogue, cooperation and informed engagement remain essential.

Welcome to the September 2026 edition of The World Ambassador.

Wasif Ali Khan



Pakistan High Commission London Commemorates Defence and Martyrs Day

High Commissioner Tipu Usman Pays Tribute to Pakistan's Armed Forces, Martyrs and National Unity

Wasif Ali Khan

Islamabad, Pakistan

The Pakistan High Commission in London hosted an impressive ceremony to commemorate Defence and Martyrs Day of Pakistan, paying tribute to the courage, dedication and sacrifices of the country's armed forces. Former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General (Retd.) Zubair Mahmood Hayat, attended the event as the guest of honour.

The ceremony was attended by a large number of distinguished guests, including British parliamentarians, senior UK government officials, ambassadors, defence attachés, media representatives and friends of Pakistan.

Addressing the gathering, High Commissioner of Pakistan to the United Kingdom Tipu Usman paid rich tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces and the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in defence of the country.

He said the world had witnessed Pakistan's courage and success during Marka-e-Haq, with the country's armed forces demonstrating their resolve, professionalism and defence capabilities. He noted that, under civilian and military leadership and with the unwavering support of the Pakistani nation, the armed forces once again demonstrated their ability to defend the country.

The High Commissioner said the success of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos had added another glorious chapter to Pakistan's military history and revitalized the spirit and confidence of the nation.

Highlighting Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace, Tipu Usman said the country's internationally recognized mediation efforts in



the Middle East, along with the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, reflected Pakistan's commitment to regional security, stability and peace.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to further strengthen Pakistan-UK defence and security cooperation, describing closer collaboration between the two countries as essential to promoting regional and international peace.

The ceremony also reaffirmed Pakistan's continued political, moral and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people, particularly those facing serious human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

Participants expressed solidarity with the Pakistan Armed Forces and pledged that the nation would remain united in safeguarding the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity against all hostile designs.

Guests at the ceremony also paid glowing tributes to the professionalism, dedication and sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces, acknowledging their continued role in defending the nation and contributing to regional security.

Pakistan, Romania Explore New Avenues for Economic and Commercial Cooperation

Ambassador Ilyas Nizami Meets Diplomacy360 President Valentin Preda to Discuss Business, Diplomacy and Geopolitical Developments

Abid Siddique Chaudhry

Islamabad, Pakistan

Ambassador of Pakistan Ilyas Nizami held a meeting with Valentin Preda, Founding President of Diplomacy360 and CEO of the Romanian Business Exchange, to explore opportunities for strengthening bilateral economic and commercial relations between Pakistan and Romania.

During the meeting, Mr. Preda briefed Ambassador Nizami on the major areas of interest and key activities of the organisations he leads, highlighting their role in promoting business engagement, international relations and economic cooperation.

The two sides held a wide-ranging discussion on a variety of issues, including the business environment, regional and international conflicts, diplomacy and evolving geopolitical developments.

Particular attention was given to identifying potential areas for expanding economic and commercial cooperation between Pakistan and Romania. The participants discussed the importance of greater interaction between business communities and institutions of the two countries to promote trade, investment and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Ambassador Nizami and Mr. Preda also exchanged views on contemporary geopolitical challenges and the role of diplomacy and business engagement in fostering stronger international cooperation.

The meeting underscored the potential for enhanced Pakistan-Romania engagement through increased business-to-business contacts, investment opportunities and institutional collaboration.



Pakistan Seeks Greater Denim Presence in Japanese Market

Embassy urges Pakistani textile companies to pursue sustainable products, designer collaborations and long-term partnerships

Abid Siddique Chaudhry

Islamabad, Pakistan

Pakistan's Ambassador to Japan hosted a dinner in Tokyo for representatives of Pakistan's denim industry, including Artistic Milliners and Chottani Industries, to explore opportunities for expanding the country's textile presence in Japan.

Discussions focused on strengthening Pakistan's position in the Japanese market, increasing engagement with Japanese brands and trading houses, and promoting cooperation in denim, sustainable textiles, fashion and

product development.

The Embassy encouraged Pakistani companies to move beyond traditional sourcing arrangements and develop products specifically for Japanese consumers. It also highlighted opportunities for designer collaborations, sustainable materials and long-term partnerships with Japanese companies.

The engagement is aimed at promoting Pakistan's textile expertise while creating new avenues for exports and deeper commercial ties between the two countries.



Pakistan, China Mark 75 Years of Friendship with Great Wall Concert

Joint music and dance performance in Beijing celebrates enduring diplomatic and cultural ties between the two countries

Wasif Ali Khan

Islamabad, Pakistan

Pakistan and China marked 75 years of diplomatic relations with a spectacular joint music and dance concert at Beijing's iconic Badaling Great Wall, bringing together artists and cultural traditions from both countries.

The 2026 Beijing Great Wall Concert, themed "An Ode to Ironclad Friendship," was jointly organised by the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing and the China International Cultural Communication Center (CICCC). The landmark event featured a vibrant blend of Pakistani and Chinese music and dance.

Among the performers were Pride of Performance award-winning Kathak exponent Nighat Chaudhry, Chinese dance artist Zhang Jingdi, contemporary Qawwali artists Zain Zohaib, Chinese coloratura soprano Chang Sisi and young vocalist Xu Ziyao. Their performances captivated the audience and highlighted the unifying power of cultural exchange.

Welcoming guests, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi said the Great Wall provided a fitting setting to commemorate the milestone in Pakistan-China relations. He noted that a section between Watchtowers 6 and 7 at Badaling was restored in 1989 with support from the Government of Pakistan.

"Music gives voice to emotion, while dance gives it form and movement," Ambassador Hashmi said, highlighting the role of the arts in turning cultural heritage into a shared experience.



The ambassador thanked CICCC Chairman Long Yuxiang and the People's Government of Yanqing District for supporting the event.

The concert was attended by Chinese guests from different walks of life, members of the Pakistani community, and former Pakistani foreign secretaries and ambassadors who had served in Beijing and contributed to strengthening Pakistan-China relations.



Australian High Commissioner Visits COTHM Lahore to Strengthen International Education and Career Links

Australian High Commissioner Timothy Kane visited COTHM Lahore to interact with students and explore international education and career pathways.

Abid Siddique Chaudhry
Web Desk

Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Timothy Kane visited the College of Tourism & Hotel Management (COTHM) campus in Lahore this September to interact with hospitality students and explore expanding international education and career opportunities in Australia. Addressing students and faculty, High Commissioner Kane emphasized that quality vocational education serves as a vital bridge for skill-building, workforce exchange, and bilateral growth.

During his extensive visit, the diplomatic envoy inspected COTHM's state-of-the-art training kitchens, food safety laboratories, and professional hospitality facilities. Students showcased their technical skills by presenting specially crafted Australian-inspired culinary creations.



The visit highlighted growing opportunities for Pakistani hospitality and culinary students to access international education pathways and professional careers in Australia. High Commissioner Kane commended the institution's rigorous practical training standards, noting that vocational education builds long-term connections between both nations.



Institutional leadership and diplomatic representatives discussed collaborative efforts to enhance practical skill development, academic exposure, and international mobility for young professionals.

Pakistan, Romania Prepare for Major Trade Mission to Boost Bilateral Business

FPCCI Delegation Meets Romanian Embassy Officials Ahead of November Visit, Targeting Trade, Investment and Joint Ventures

The World Ambassador Web Desk

A high-level delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), led by Vice President Tariq Khan Jadoon, met officials of the Embassy of Romania in Pakistan on September 15, 2026, to discuss measures to strengthen bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

The meeting focused on preparations for an upcoming FPCCI business delegation to Romania in November 2026, aimed at connecting Pakistani exporters and investors with Romanian businesses and exploring opportunities for joint ventures and investment partnerships.

The planned trade mission will include business meetings and trade summits in three major Romanian economic centres: Bucharest, Braşov and Cluj-Napoca.

Bucharest, Romania's capital and principal commercial centre, will serve as a key destination for business engagements. The delegation will also visit Braşov, an important industrial and manufacturing hub, and Cluj-Napoca, a major centre for technology, innovation and higher education.

The FPCCI delegation is expected to bring together representatives from several important sectors, with a focus on expanding Pakistan's exports and strengthening commercial ties with Eastern Europe.

Key sectors identified for the mission include textiles and apparel, agriculture and food processing, machinery, cutlery, surgical instruments and light engineering.

The textile sector will focus on expanding market access for Pakistani garments and home-textile products, while agriculture and food-processing companies will explore opportunities for commodity trade, technology cooperation and investment.

The delegation will also showcase Pakistan's capabilities in surgical instruments, cutlery,

machinery and other light-engineering products.

Officials from the Embassy of Romania in Pakistan reiterated the importance of expanding bilateral trade and creating greater opportunities for private-sector cooperation between the two countries.

The November trade mission is expected to provide a platform for Pakistani and Romanian businesses to establish direct contacts, explore investment opportunities and develop potential commercial partnerships.

The initiative represents another step in efforts to translate Pakistan-Romania diplomatic engagement into greater trade, investment and private-sector cooperation, with business-to-business interaction expected to remain central to the upcoming delegation.





Trump Denies Reports of Damage to US Aircraft in Jordan

US president rejects reports that Iranian retaliation damaged American warplanes at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base

The World Ambassador International Desk

US President Donald Trump has denied reports that several American military aircraft were damaged in Iranian attacks on a US military facility in Jordan. Speaking about the reported strikes, Trump said there was no damage and dismissed reports that the US air base in Jordan had been hit as completely untrue. His comments followed reports in US media that Iranian retaliatory strikes had damaged several American aircraft at Jordan's Muwaffaq

Salti Air Base. Sources cited by CBS News correspondent Jennifer Jacobs reportedly said multiple aircraft were damaged during the overnight attack.

A separate report citing a US official said one A-10 Thunderbolt II and eight F-15 fighter jets sustained damage. The F-15s reportedly suffered minor damage and were later returned to service.

The reported Iranian strike came in response to US forces targeting five Iranian crude oil tankers. Trump's denial contrasts with earlier reports from US media and officials regarding damage to American aircraft at the Jordanian base.



“Iran Will Not Surrender”

Iranian president says Tehran will resist pressure from Israel and the United States and respond to attacks

The World Ambassador International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has said the Iranian people will not surrender, asserting that the country has successfully stood against both Israel and the United States. Addressing religious leaders, intellectuals and business representatives in New Delhi, Pezeshkian said Israel and the United States were seeking to intimidate and pressure Iran,

but Tehran would not accept such pressure.

“We will never kneel before them,” he said, warning that Iran would respond if pushed further.

Pezeshkian also accused Israel and the United States of targeting civilians and critical infrastructure, questioning accusations against Iran while alleging that schools, hospitals and scientists had been attacked.

“If you have the courage, fight only soldiers and military personnel,” he said,

questioning why civilian infrastructure, employment and livelihoods were being targeted.

The Iranian president is in New Delhi to attend the BRICS summit.



Saudi Arabia Wants Action—Trump Steps Back

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman reportedly urged US president to respond to Red Sea threat

The World Ambassador International Desk

US President Donald Trump has rejected a request from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to launch action against Yemen's Houthis over growing threats in the Red Sea, according to Axios. The report said the Saudi crown prince spoke with Trump twice by telephone and urged Washington to take action against the Houthis. Trump, however, declined to

intervene.

According to the report, US military and civilian officials have recently been in contact with their Saudi counterparts, while US Central Command commander Admiral Brad Cooper travelled to Saudi Arabia for emergency consultations.

The White House and Saudi Embassy in Washington reportedly declined to comment on the discussions. The developments follow recent Houthi attacks in Saudi Arabia that reportedly wounded 73 people, including women and children.



U.S.-Iran Diplomatic Contact in New York Puts Strait of Hormuz at Center of Talks

Three-hour meeting between U.S. and Iranian officials opens a new diplomatic channel as Washington and Tehran discuss the Strait of Hormuz, military pressure, frozen Iranian assets and the possibility of further negotiations.

Wasif Ali Khan

New York

The United States and Iran held a three-hour meeting in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, marking an important diplomatic contact amid continuing tensions between the two countries.

U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner met Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and members of the Iranian delegation. President Donald Trump confirmed the meeting, describing it as very good and saying that another meeting could take place soon. According to Iranian media, Tehran presented conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz, including an end to the U.S. naval blockade, the

release of frozen Iranian assets and an end to military operations on various fronts.

The Strait of Hormuz is a major international energy route connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman. Any prolonged disruption could affect global oil supplies, shipping and energy prices.

Reuters reported that a senior Iranian official said Tehran could consider reopening the waterway if Washington reduced military pressure and lifted the blockade. However, Iranian media reports have differed over the exact terms and timing of such a proposal. Qatar has also been involved in diplomatic efforts between Washington and Tehran. Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign

Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani met Araghchi in New York as regional efforts to reduce tensions continued.

Despite the renewed contact, major differences remain over Iran's nuclear programme, military pressure, sanctions, frozen assets and the Strait of Hormuz. No final agreement or permanent ceasefire has been announced.

The New York meeting has nevertheless created a new opportunity for diplomacy. Further talks in the coming days could determine whether the two sides can move from initial contact toward a broader framework for resolving their differences.



Malaysia's 69th National Day Celebrated in Islamabad

Diplomatic Reception Highlights Strong Pakistan-Malaysia Ties, Trade, Investment and Cultural Cooperation

Abid Siddique Chaudhry
Islamabad, Pakistan

The Malaysian High Commission hosted a diplomatic reception in Islamabad to mark Malaysia's 69th National Day, bringing together senior government officials, diplomats, business leaders and members of the diplomatic community to celebrate the longstanding relations between Pakistan and Malaysia.

Federal Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain attended the reception as chief guest, alongside the Federal Minister for Investment and Malaysian High Commissioner Tuan Amani Lee Abdullah at a local hotel.

The formal ceremony began with prayers and recitation from the Holy Quran, followed by the national anthems of Pakistan and Malaysia. The gathering also provided an opportunity for discussions on bilateral relations, regional cooperation and economic partnerships.

Focus on Trade and Investment

In his welcome address, High Commissioner Tuan Amani Lee Abdullah highlighted the deep-rooted political, economic and cultural ties between Pakistan and Malaysia.

He emphasized the

considerable potential for expanding bilateral trade and investment, calling for greater efforts to develop economic partnerships and explore new areas of cooperation between the two countries.

The High Commissioner also paid tribute to the Pakistani diaspora in Malaysia for its longstanding contribution to the country's economic development. He particularly acknowledged communities originating from Swat and Buner, noting their important role in strengthening people-to-people ties between Pakistan and Malaysia.

The reception highlighted opportunities for enhanced cooperation in areas including food security, technology, trade and joint ventures, with greater private-sector engagement identified as an important avenue for future economic collaboration.



Shared Commitment to Peace and Cooperation

Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Rana Tanveer Hussain conveyed warm greetings and congratulations to the people of Malaysia on their National Day.

He described Pakistan and Malaysia as brotherly countries with shared values and broadly aligned perspectives on regional and international issues. He emphasized the importance of continued cooperation in promoting peace, stability and stronger people-to-people relations.

The diplomatic reception concluded with a colourful cultural programme featuring traditional Malaysian dances and music, presented by Malaysian artists and reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the two countries.

Pakistan Calls for Global Action to Counter Islamophobia and Hate Speech

Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Urges UN Members to Promote Interfaith Dialogue, Protect Human Dignity and Address Online Hate

Abid Siddique Chaudhry
Islamabad, Pakistan

Pakistan has called for stronger international action against hate speech and Islamophobia, urging the global community to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a means of countering discrimination, intolerance and violence.

Addressing the Global Conference on Promoting Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and Tolerance in Countering Hate Speech at United Nations Headquarters in New York on September 17, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, described Islamophobia as one of the most serious forms of hate speech and called for efforts to challenge narratives that promote violence and discrimination. The conference was convened pursuant to UN General Assembly resolutions and focused on dialogue and tolerance as tools to counter hate speech.

Ambassador Asim said hate speech undermines human dignity and social cohesion and can contribute to the marginalization and dehumanization of entire

communities.

He also highlighted the growing role of digital platforms in amplifying hateful narratives, disinformation and calls for violence, particularly against vulnerable communities.

He said Islamophobia manifests itself through attacks targeting Muslims, their identities and religious symbols, as well as through the desecration of mosques and restrictions on religious freedoms.

The Pakistani envoy called for the full implementation of relevant UN General Assembly resolutions and the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, while emphasizing the importance of genuine interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

The conference brought together UN member states, international organizations, political and religious leaders, faith-based groups, media representatives and civil society organizations.

Opening the conference, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for coordinated action by governments, technology companies and civil society to address hate speech. He warned that in its most extreme forms, hate speech can fuel violence, conflict and atrocity crimes.

The conference also highlighted the opportunities and risks associated with digital technologies. UN officials noted that emerging technologies can accelerate the spread of harmful content, while responsible use of technology can also support efforts to identify risks, promote reliable information and strengthen resilience against hate speech.

Ambassador Asim reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working with UN member states and international partners to counter hate speech and promote human dignity, equality, religious tolerance and mutual respect.

He stressed that sustained dialogue among different faiths and cultures can contribute to greater understanding and help address the social conditions that allow intolerance and discrimination to spread.



Guterres Calls for a New Balance of Power at UN General Assembly

UN chief urges global cooperation and reform as wars, climate change, inequality and artificial intelligence reshape the world

Wasif Ali Khan

New York

UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for major changes to the international system as he addressed world leaders during the 81st General Assembly.

In his final opening General Assembly address before his term ends, Guterres warned that the world is facing interconnected challenges, including conflict, climate change, artificial intelligence and inequality.

He said the climate crisis had become a daily reality, while AI was advancing at a speed that had surprised even some of its creators. He urged major powers to recognize the limits of their influence and work toward a more cooperative international system.

Turning to the Middle East, Guterres condemned continuing violence and said civilians were still paying the price despite ceasefire efforts. He called for an end to the cycle of conflict.

The UN chief also renewed his call for Security Council reform, arguing that Africa's lack of permanent representation was no longer acceptable. He said a 21st-century Council must include permanent African seats.

On inequality, Guterres said the issue was not simply economic but also concerned access to resources, opportunities and decision-making. He highlighted the UN's achievement of gender parity across senior leadership, headquarters and professional

staff, declaring: "Equality is not a dream. It is a decision."

Climate finance was another key concern. Guterres pointed to the large gap between fossil-fuel industry profits and international public financing available for climate adaptation in developing countries.

On artificial intelligence, he called for accountability, transparency and oversight, warning against unregulated systems and the use of autonomous weapons in life-and-death decisions.

Guterres concluded by reaffirming his belief in peace, human dignity and the rule of law, saying he would continue championing these principles after leaving office.



PM Directs Provinces to Identify Properties for Apna Ghar Housing Loans

Shehbaz Sharif Calls for Affordable Housing and Greater Access to Finance for Farmers, SMEs and Low-Income Families

Wasif Ali Khan

Islamabad, Pakistan

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the chief secretaries of all provinces to conduct a comprehensive survey of properties that could be made available to facilitate housing loans under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Scheme.

Chairing a review meeting on the Access to Finance Plan 2026-28, the prime minister said providing affordable housing to low-income and middle-class families remained among the government's top priorities.

The meeting was informed that 147,504 applications had so far been received under the Apna Ghar Scheme, with 53,127 applications approved. The total value of approved applications stood at Rs313.42 billion, while Rs45.43 billion in loans had been disbursed to 8,739 applicants.

A system is also being developed to identify plots across the country that meet mortgage requirements, with Islamabad selected as the pilot city. The meeting was further informed that an effective mechanism would be introduced to involve leading housing developers in the scheme and streamline its implementation.

The prime minister directed banks and financial institutions to expand lending to farmers, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the housing sector. He said the government would encourage banks that actively contribute to increasing access to finance.

Calling agriculture the backbone of Pakistan's economy, Prime Minister Shehbaz stressed that promoting the sector was a national responsibility. He directed relevant institutions to ensure farmers have easy, uninterrupted and affordable access to financial resources.

According to the meeting, bank lending to the

agriculture sector reached Rs1.268 trillion in August 2026, while a target of Rs2 trillion by June 2028 has been set under the Access to Finance Plan 2026-28.

Under the Zarkhez-e app, 35,838 applications have been received for easier access to agricultural financing. Of these, loans worth Rs7.35 billion have been approved, while Rs1.96 billion has been disbursed.

Bank lending to the SME sector stood at Rs1.067 trillion as of August 2026, with a target of increasing the figure to Rs2 trillion by June 2028. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) also provided financial literacy training to 1,096 SMEs during the last three months.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Muhammad Aurangzeb and Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Prime Minister's Adviser Haroon Akhtar Khan, State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad, chief secretaries of all four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, IBRD Country Director Bolorma Amgaabazar, presidents and CEOs of Pakistani banks, and senior government officials.



Pakistan Steps Up Efforts to Boost Trade and Exports

Government emphasizes trade facilitation, market diversification and greater use of EU GSP+ opportunities

Abid Siddique Chaudhry

Islamabad, Pakistan

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired an inter-ministerial meeting to advance Pakistan's trade and export promotion agenda.

Dar stressed the need to improve trade facilitation, raise the quality and competitiveness of Pakistani products, expand market access and diversify exports. He also called for greater utilization of the European Union's GSP+ scheme to strengthen Pakistan's export performance.

The Deputy Prime Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to promoting exports and deepening economic ties with international partners.

Federal ministries and provincial governments were directed to maintain momentum on key measures aimed at supporting exporters and enhancing Pakistan's trade potential.

The meeting was attended by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, federal secretaries for Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Human Rights and Law, and senior federal and provincial officials.



PM Highlights Measures to Support Business and Industry

Government focuses on reducing energy costs, improving logistics, digitising FBR and developing a skilled workforce

Abid Siddique Chaudhry

Islamabad, Pakistan

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked the business community for its valuable proposals during the budget-making process, saying several of their recommendations had been incorporated into the federal budget.

The prime minister said reducing energy costs remained a key government priority, while significant progress had also been made in the digitisation of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). He noted that FBR collected Rs800 billion through enforcement measures during the last fiscal year.

The government is also focusing on industry-oriented skills development to equip young people with training aligned with market and industrial requirements.

The delegation was briefed on measures to

strengthen the economy and promote business, trade and industry. Port charges have been reduced and operational capacity at the country's ports improved, while work is underway on upgrading M-10 and the Pipri Freight Corridor to improve connectivity from Karachi's ports to the rest of the country.

The government is also working on M-13 between Kharian and Rawalpindi and upgrading Pakistan Railways to improve infrastructure and speed up the transportation of commercial goods.

Meanwhile, IT exports have recorded significant growth, with the government training one million people in information technology and artificial intelligence to strengthen the country's digital economy.



BISP Signs MoUs with NITB, Pakistan Red Crescent to Strengthen Digital Social Protection

Partnerships Aim to Improve Digital Services, Data Sharing, Disaster Preparedness and Support for Vulnerable Communities

Abid Siddique Chaudhry

Islamabad, Pakistan

The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the National Information Technology Board (NITB) and the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) to strengthen digitalization, data-driven service delivery, disaster preparedness and shock-responsive social protection.

The MoUs were signed at BISP Headquarters, Islamabad, in the presence of BISP Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid. Director General NSER/CCT Dr. Asim Ijaz signed the agreements with Faisal Mumtaz, Project Director of the Digital Economy Enhancement Project (DEEP), NITB, and Muhammad Abaid Ullah Khan of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society.

Under the agreement with NITB through the Digital Economy Enhancement Project (DEEP), the two organizations will collaborate on the digitalization of citizen-centric services, integration of digital platforms and improved accessibility of BISP services for beneficiaries across Pakistan.

The partnership with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society will focus on strengthening cooperation in anticipatory targeting, disaster preparedness and shock-responsive social protection, enabling institutions to respond more effectively to vulnerable communities during emergencies and natural disasters.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the importance of data sharing, institutional coordination and collaboration among provincial governments and federal departments to improve the delivery of public services.

She said effective coordination and integration of available data could enable government



institutions to respond more efficiently to the needs of vulnerable communities, particularly during emergencies and natural disasters.

The BISP chairperson highlighted the programme's extensive geo-tagged data, saying it could play an important role in identifying and reaching vulnerable populations during disasters. Such data, she added, could facilitate timely interventions and enable more targeted assistance to communities in need.

Senator Rubina Khalid also stressed the importance of coordinated public awareness and communication initiatives, particularly during emergencies, to ensure that vulnerable communities receive timely, accurate and accessible information.

The agreements mark a collaborative effort to combine digital technology, institutional data and disaster-response mechanisms to strengthen social protection services and improve assistance to vulnerable populations across Pakistan.



Pakistan, Germany Discuss Religious Freedom and Interfaith Harmony

Sardar Muhammad Yousaf Meets German Commissioner Thomas Rachel; Both Sides Agree to Strengthen Cooperation on Religious Tolerance and Minority Rights

AAMIR MALIK

Islamabad, Pakistan

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf held a meeting with German Commissioner for Religious Freedom Thomas Rachel to discuss religious freedom, interfaith harmony, tolerance and the protection of minority rights in Pakistan. German Ambassador to Pakistan Ina Lepel also attended the meeting. The two sides held detailed discussions on Pakistan-Germany relations and a range of matters of mutual interest, with particular focus on promoting religious tolerance, interfaith dialogue and the rights of religious minorities.

Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said Pakistan remained committed to promoting interfaith harmony, religious tolerance and the protection of the rights of followers of all faiths. He said the Constitution safeguards the rights of religious minorities living in Pakistan and that the government was taking practical measures to protect their religious, social and civic rights. The federal minister said the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony had established a special cell to monitor and address hateful and anti-religious content on social media. He said the initiative was aimed at preventing religious hatred and promoting harmony among different communities.

Yousaf said important religious festivals of non-Muslim communities in Pakistan were also observed at the official level. He added that the ministry regularly organizes seminars, conferences and other programmes across the country to promote mutual respect, tolerance and dialogue among followers of different religions.

The minister further highlighted welfare initiatives for non-Muslim communities, including financial assistance for deserving individuals, educational scholarships for eligible students and marriage grants for orphaned non-Muslim girls. He said special funds were also allocated for the repair and restoration of places of worship belonging to religious minorities.

German Commissioner for Religious Freedom Thomas Rachel appreciated the initiatives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, describing its mandate and work as distinctive and commendable.

He emphasized that mutual respect, tolerance and sustained dialogue among religions are essential for promoting global peace. Rachel also acknowledged Pakistan's efforts to promote religious freedom, interfaith harmony and tolerance, saying greater understanding and respect among followers of different faiths could contribute to peace and harmony at the global level.

During the meeting, Pakistan and Germany agreed to continue cooperation in promoting religious freedom, tolerance, interfaith harmony and mutual respect.

Both sides emphasized that sustained interfaith dialogue and greater mutual understanding can play an important role in strengthening peace, tolerance and social harmony within societies.



Climate Crisis Enters a New and More Uncertain Phase

UN Reports Warn of Rising Temperatures, Growing Water Stress and Intensifying Climate Risks — Pakistan Faces Major Challenges

Alisha Abid

Lahore, Pakistan

The global climate crisis is entering a more uncertain and increasingly consequential phase. New reports released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 2026 show that global temperatures are expected to remain exceptionally high, while changing water patterns, glacier loss and extreme weather continue to place pressure on societies and economies.

The latest evidence does not mean that climate action is no longer possible. Instead, the reports underline that the choices made in the coming years will influence how high temperatures rise and how long elevated warming persists.

1.5°C Threshold Under Growing Pressure

UNEP's September 2026 report, *Limiting Overshoot*, says global warming is likely to exceed 1.5°C in the coming years. Under the most favourable pathway examined, warming could peak at around 1.8°C, while other pathways could result in warming above 2°C. UNEP emphasizes that climate risks increase with every additional fraction of a degree of warming.

The report examines an "overshoot, peak and decline" pathway, in which global temperatures temporarily exceed 1.5°C before potentially declining later. Limiting the magnitude and duration of such an overshoot would require rapid reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions and strong climate action.

UNEP also highlights the importance of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, including methane, alongside the transition to cleaner energy and carefully managed carbon dioxide removal.

The World Is Experiencing Exceptional Heat

The WMO's *State of the Global Climate 2025*, published in March 2026, provides further evidence of the warming trend. It confirms that 2015–2025 were the 11 hottest years on record. WMO estimates that 2025 was the second- or third-warmest year on record, at about 1.43°C above the 1850–1900 average.

The report also found that Earth's energy imbalance reached its highest level in the organization's 65-year observational record.

The oceans are absorbing enormous quantities of excess heat. WMO reports that ocean heat content reached a record level in 2025, while over the past two decades the ocean has absorbed energy equivalent to approximately 18 times annual global human energy use each year.

This continued warming is associated with changes in glaciers, sea ice, sea levels and extreme weather patterns.

Water Security Emerges as a Major Climate Concern

A separate WMO report released in September 2026 highlights another growing challenge: the increasing instability of the global water cycle.

The *State of Global Water Resources 2025* found that 2025 was one of the driest years for global river discharge in 35 years of monitoring. The report also identified a continuing decline in water storage on land and widespread glacier loss for the fourth consecutive year.

At the same time, the water cycle is becoming increasingly erratic, with some regions experiencing severe water shortages while others face excessive rainfall and flooding.

The consequences extend beyond water availability. Changes in river flows and glacier systems can



affect agriculture, hydropower, drinking-water supplies, ecosystems and food security.

The Next Five Years Could Set New Temperature Records

The WMO's Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update 2026–2035 forecasts continued exceptionally high temperatures.

For 2026–2030, annual global mean temperatures are projected to range between 1.3°C and 1.9°C above the 1850–1900 average. The report gives an 86% probability that at least one year during this period will be warmer than 2024, currently the warmest year on record. It also puts the probability at 91% that at least one year between 2026 and 2030 will temporarily exceed 1.5°C above the pre-industrial average.

These short-term annual temperature projections should not be confused with the Paris Agreement's long-term temperature goal, which concerns long-term average warming rather than a single year's temperature.

Pakistan Faces Multiple Climate Risks

For Pakistan, the global climate outlook has particular significance. The country is exposed to extreme heat, floods, drought, water stress, changing rainfall patterns and glacier-related hazards.

Following the devastating 2025 monsoon floods, UNESCO completed a comprehensive assessment of Pakistan's Flood Early Warning System in 2026. The assessment examined the entire warning chain, from risk information and monitoring to forecasting, communication and community-level early action. It proposed immediate, medium-term and long-term measures to strengthen Pakistan's flood preparedness and climate resilience.

The assessment highlights the importance of improving coordination among institutions, strengthening data integration, improving the delivery of warnings to communities and translating forecasts into timely action.

For Pakistan, therefore, climate policy increasingly involves both emissions reduction and adaptation—protecting communities, infrastructure, agriculture and water resources from impacts that are already being experienced.

Climate Change Is an Economic Challenge

Climate change is also increasingly connected to economic security.

Floods can damage homes, roads, crops and businesses. Extreme heat can affect worker productivity and place additional pressure on energy systems. Water shortages can threaten agricultural production, while changing climate conditions can increase risks to food security.

At the same time, the economic case for coordinated climate and clean-air action is gaining attention.

A UN-backed assessment released in September 2026 by UNEP and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition found that coordinated action on climate change and air pollution could generate around \$15 in economic benefits for every \$1 invested, through 25 measures and policy reforms. The measures include renewable energy, electric vehicles and cleaner cooking fuels.

The findings suggest that climate and clean-air policies can have benefits extending beyond emissions reductions, including improvements in public health, productivity and economic resilience.

From Climate Warning to Climate Resilience

The latest reports point toward a climate challenge with two interconnected dimensions.

The first is mitigation: reducing greenhouse-gas emissions quickly enough to limit future warming.

The second is adaptation: preparing communities, cities, agriculture, water systems, health services and infrastructure for the climate conditions already emerging.

For Pakistan, priorities include stronger flood and heatwave early-warning systems, climate-resilient agriculture, improved water management, glacier and mountain monitoring, expanded renewable energy and better protection for vulnerable communities.



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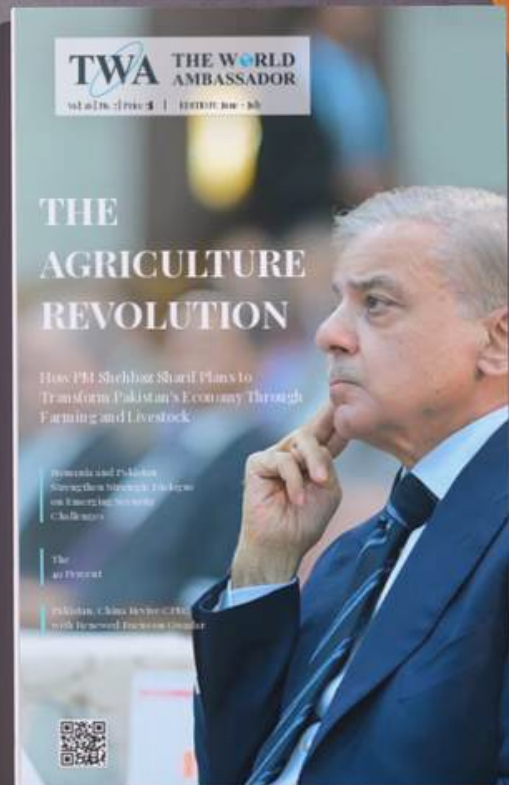
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Phone Number:

0092 300 552 3366

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WHO Launches Free Online Course to Strengthen Primary Health Care

New Self-Paced Course Aims to Build a Shared Understanding of Primary Health Care and Support Universal Health Coverage

The World Ambassador Health Desk

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a new free online course aimed at strengthening understanding and implementation of the primary health care (PHC) approach worldwide.

WHO says health is a fundamental human right, but millions of people still face barriers to accessing essential health services without experiencing financial hardship. Primary health care places individuals and communities at the centre of health systems and provides a broad approach to achieving universal health coverage.

Despite decades of international commitment to PHC, its implementation remains uneven, with different countries and health systems interpreting and applying the approach in different ways.

To help address this challenge, WHO has introduced "The Primary Health Care Approach: A Short Course" through the WHO Academy online learning platform. The free, self-paced course is designed to provide learners with a clear and practical understanding of PHC and how it can be applied in different settings.

Dr Kalipso Chalkidou, Director of WHO's Department of Performance, Financing and Delivery, said the strong commitment among WHO Member States to strengthening PHC-oriented health systems provides an opportunity to accelerate progress towards better health outcomes.

She said developing a shared understanding of what primary health care means and how it works can help translate global commitments into improvements in people's health and the performance of health systems.

The course consists of five core modules and requires approximately 1.5 hours to complete. It covers the importance of primary health care, its three core components, operational and strategic approaches for strengthening PHC, and ways to manage health-system transformation through political-economy analysis and compassionate leadership.

The course was adapted from WHO's Strengthening Primary Health Care Leadership: Global Capacity Building Course, launched in 2024. The new shorter version was developed in

response to participant feedback and demand for a more accessible introduction to primary health care.

Videos, country examples and additional resources are included to help participants relate the material to their own professional and community environments.

Dr Chalkidou said the course is intended for everyone, emphasizing that making primary health care a reality is a shared responsibility involving health professionals, educators, communities, policymakers and workplaces. According to WHO, more than 3,000 people from over 140 countries had participated in the course during its first few months, reflecting growing interest in practical approaches to strengthening primary health care.

Learners who complete the course can receive a WHO Academy Award of Completion recognizing the knowledge gained. The course is currently available in English, while additional language versions are being explored.





Pakistan's TB challenge extends beyond diagnosis, with delayed treatment, stigma, mental-health pressures and social barriers continuing to threaten effective disease control.

Haidar Ali
Health Professional

Tuberculosis (TB) remains one of Pakistan's major public-health challenges despite being preventable and curable. In 2026, the challenge is no longer limited to diagnosing TB cases. Early detection, timely treatment, adherence and support for patients are equally important.

According to the WHO Global TB Report 2025, an estimated 10.7 million people developed TB worldwide in 2024, with about 1.23 million deaths. Pakistan accounted for around 6.3% of the global TB burden, highlighting the need for sustained action.

Pakistan has expanded TB diagnostic and treatment services, including GeneXpert facilities. More than 497,000 people were notified and covered by TB treatment services in 2024. However, having diagnostic facilities does not always mean patients are diagnosed and treated quickly.

A 2025 study among children and adolescents in Karachi found a median delay of 91 days between the onset of symptoms and the start of treatment. Financial difficulties were among the factors associated with delays, showing how social and economic

barriers can affect access to care.

Treatment adherence presents another challenge. Studies have identified limited awareness, stigma, financial and social difficulties, demanding treatment regimens, and mental-health concerns such as depression and anxiety as barriers to completing treatment.

The connection between TB and mental health also deserves greater attention. Fear of stigma, social isolation and financial pressure can increase emotional distress. Integrating basic mental-health screening, counselling and referral services into TB care could provide patients with more comprehensive support.

Pakistan's TB response therefore needs to move beyond diagnosis alone. Earlier detection, patient-centred treatment, stronger public awareness, cooperation between public and private healthcare providers, and attention to poverty, overcrowding, nutrition and stigma are all important.

TB is curable, but effective control depends on ensuring that patients are diagnosed early, receive timely treatment and are supported throughout their recovery. The success of TB programmes should ultimately be measured not only by the number of cases diagnosed, but by infections prevented, lives protected and patients successfully completing treatment.

Women's Empowerment Essential for Pakistan's Sustainable Development

Acting President Yusuf Raza Gilani calls for equal access to education, finance, technology, markets and decision-making

The World Ambassador International Desk

Acting President and Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said empowering women is essential for Pakistan's sustainable development, economic prosperity and a stronger democracy.

Addressing the Pakistan Women Leadership and Policy Summit 2026, Gilani said women must have equal access to education, financial resources, technology, markets and decision-making opportunities. He urged

financial institutions to facilitate women's access to capital and called on the private sector to promote safe, inclusive and dignified workplaces.

He said women were not merely beneficiaries of development but active drivers of entrepreneurship, policymaking, innovation and national leadership. He also highlighted the role of the Benazir Income Support Programme in strengthening women's economic decision-making within households.

Gilani paid tribute to Fatima Jinnah, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Begum Shaista Ikramullah and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto for breaking barriers and opening new paths for future generations.

He called for an environment where women can secure financing for business ideas, access markets, advance on merit and play an effective role in national leadership and decision-making.

The acting president praised the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other partners for organizing the summit and later distributed shields and certificates among prominent chamber members.



Nearly One in Four Gaza Households Now Headed by Women: UN Women

War and displacement have sharply increased the number of women-led households, while access to food, shelter and essential services remains severely restricted

The World Ambassador International Desk

Nearly one in four households in Gaza is now headed by a woman, according to new data from UN Women, reflecting the profound impact of the conflict and widespread loss of life.

UN Women estimates that around 86,290 households in Gaza are headed by women — roughly double the rate recorded before October 2023.

Sofia Calltorp, Chief of Humanitarian Action at UN Women, said the increase followed the widespread killing of Palestinians. She said 246 Palestinian women and girls were killed between October 2025 and July 28, 2026, equivalent to about six deaths every week.

Women heading households are facing particularly severe humanitarian pressures. UN Women said they are more likely than male-headed households to lack adequate shelter, food and financial resources and are also more likely to have been displaced or lost their homes.

Access to food, drinking water, hygiene supplies and essential services remains severely limited across Gaza. Restrictions on humanitarian

access, insecurity and continued bombardment have left women responsible for families struggling to secure basic necessities.

Among those killed were 18-year-old Raghad Ashour, who was reportedly killed while travelling to a high school examination in Gaza City, and 31-year-old Dina Almadhoun, who was killed in a strike in the city. A six-year-old girl was also reportedly killed in a helicopter strike on a displacement camp in Khan Younis.

According to figures cited by the UN humanitarian office, OCHA, 1,303 people have been killed and 4,336 injured since the ceasefire agreement, based on data from Gaza health authorities.



Most of Gaza's estimated 2.1 million residents remain displaced. UN agencies have also reported severe restrictions on movement and access to large parts of the territory, while millions face critical shelter needs.

UN Women called for the ceasefire to be fully implemented and for humanitarian assistance to reach people at scale and without obstruction, with particular attention to the needs of women and girls, including those heading households.

From Batting Star to Mentor: Pietersen Returns

Former England star Kevin Pietersen appointed specialist mentor as the team prepares for the next World Cup

The World Ambassador
International Desk



Former England cricketer Kevin Pietersen has been appointed specialist mentor to England's men's white-ball teams, marking his return to the national setup in a new role.

The England and Wales Cricket Board said Pietersen will join the squad alongside head coach Brendon McCullum during the white-ball series against Sri Lanka as part of preparations for next year's ICC World Cup. He will remain involved during England's tours of Australia and South Africa and will also work with the team during home series against Pakistan and New Zealand.

Pietersen, who last represented England in 2014, said he was proud to have been offered the opportunity to help the team pursue World Cup success.

He described wearing the England colours again as a special moment and said he was looking forward to contributing his experience to the team's preparations for the major tournament.

Pakistan Names 23-Member Squad for FIFA ASEAN Cup

Debut

Abdullah Iqbal to Captain Shaheens as Nolberto Solano Leads Pakistan Against Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam

The World Ambassador, Sports Desk

The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has announced a 23-member national squad for the FIFA ASEAN Cup 2026 in Indonesia, with head coach Nolberto Solano set to lead the Shaheens in their maiden appearance in the tournament.

The competition will be held from September 24 to October 5, with Pakistan drawn in Division 1, Group B alongside Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam.

The squad features a combination of experienced overseas-based professionals and emerging domestic players. Defender Easah Suliman, goalkeeper Yousuf Butt, midfielder Rahis Nabi and forward Abdul Samad Arshad are among the prominent overseas players included in the squad.

Abdullah Iqbal has been named captain and will lead the defensive line alongside Mamoon Khan, Mohd Fazal and other defenders. Experienced forward Kaleemullah has also returned to the national squad.

Pakistan will begin its campaign against Thailand on September

26, followed by matches against the Philippines on September 29 and Vietnam on October 2.

The 23-member squad comprises Yousuf Butt, Saqib Hanif and Hassan Ali as goalkeepers; Abdullah Iqbal, Easah Suliman, Abdullah Shah, Abdul Rahman, Mohib Ullah, Mamoon Khan and Mohd Fazal as defenders; Ali Khan, Ali Agha, Hayyan Khattak, Ali Uzair, Alamgir Ghazi, Haris Zeb and Umer Nawaz as midfielders; and Kaleemullah, Abdul Samad Arshad, Shayek Dost, Ali Raza, Abdul Samad and Ali Khan as forwards.

The tournament will provide Pakistan with an opportunity to compete against established Asian sides and gain international experience under Solano's leadership.

Cameron Green Marries Longtime Partner Emily Redwood

Australian all-rounder ties the knot in Perth ceremony after five-year relationship

The World Ambassador Sports Desk



Australian Test cricketer and Western Australia all-rounder Cameron Green has married his longtime partner, Emily Redwood, in a ceremony at the Cottesloe Civic Centre Grounds.

The 27-year-old cricketer and Redwood shared photographs of their wedding on social media. Green appeared in a traditional black tuxedo, while Redwood wore a white bridal gown.

Following the ceremony, family and friends celebrated the newlyweds with flowers, while the couple also shared a dance together.

Green and Redwood announced their engagement in February 2025 after he proposed at Yallingup. The couple had been together for around five years before getting engaged.

Redwood is a nutritionist and PhD student. Green has represented Australia in 39 Test matches and has also been included in the squad for the upcoming Test tour of South Africa.

Zverev Claims US Open Men's Singles Crown

German top seed defeats American Ben Shelton to secure his second Grand Slam title of the year

The World Ambassador
Sports Desk

Germany's top seed Alexander Zverev has won the US Open men's singles title, defeating American Ben Shelton in a four-set final.

Zverev overcame Shelton 6-3, 7-6, 5-7, 6-2 to capture the prestigious Grand Slam crown.

The victory marked Zverev's second Grand Slam title, following his triumph at the French Open earlier this year.

The German star's latest success further strengthens his position among the leading players in men's tennis, while Shelton's impressive run to the final marked another significant milestone in his young career.



India Women's Team Refuses Asia Cup Trophy Amid Ceremony Dispute

India's women's side declines to receive the T20 Asia Cup trophy from ACC President Mohsin Naqvi after defeating Sri Lanka in the final

The World Ambassador
Sports Desk

India's women's cricket team refused to receive the T20 Asia Cup trophy from Asian Cricket Council (ACC) President Mohsin Naqvi after defeating defending champions Sri Lanka in the final, according to sources.

Sources said the trophy presentation protocol had been finalized in advance, but the Indian team chose not to collect the trophy from Naqvi. The ACC reportedly maintained that the decision was made by the Indian side itself and that the trophy remains available for collection.

The development echoes a similar trophy presentation dispute involving India's men's team and has sparked renewed criticism over the intersection of politics and cricket.

According to ACC sources, Naqvi has maintained his position and has not changed his stance on the matter.

Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu received the runners-up award from Naqvi, after which the women's T20 Asia Cup awards ceremony concluded.



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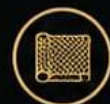
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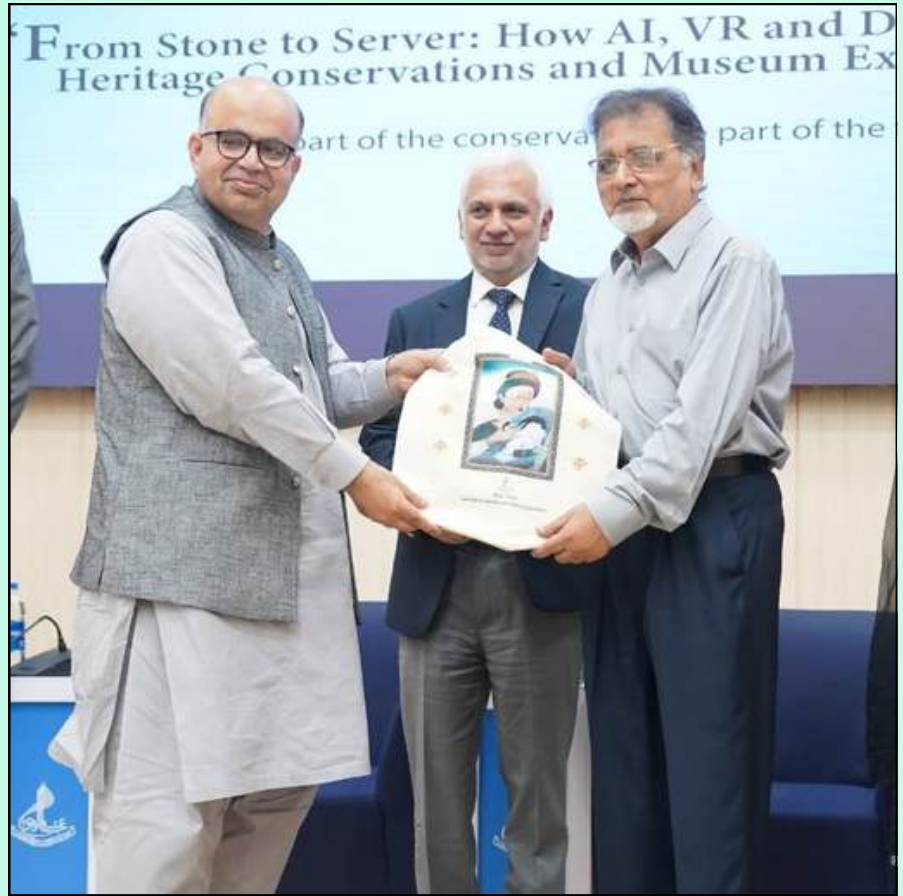


World Tourism Day 2026 Celebrated at Lahore Museum

Sajid Ali

Lahore, Pakistan

World Tourism Day 2026 was celebrated at the Lahore Museum, highlighting Punjab's efforts to promote digital tourism and preserve its cultural heritage under the Magnificent Punjab Vision. The event featured the inauguration of the Indus and Chinese Galleries, along with the launch of QR Code Booklets aimed at enhancing visitors' access to historical and cultural information. Participants also discussed the use of artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality, and other digital technologies to create more interactive and modern tourism and museum experiences.





Takht-i-Bahi: A Journey Through Gandhara's Ancient Buddhist Heritage

The World Ambassador
Tourism Desk

Perched amid the scenic hills of Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the ancient ruins of Takht-i-Bahi offer visitors a remarkable journey into the heart of the Gandhara civilization. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the archaeological complex stands as one of the finest surviving examples of ancient Buddhist monastic architecture in the region.

Its well-preserved monasteries, meditation cells, courtyards and stupas provide a glimpse into a bygone era when Takht-i-Bahi served as an important centre of Buddhist learning and spiritual life. The site's remarkable architecture reflects the artistic and cultural traditions that flourished across Gandhara centuries ago.

Surrounded by dramatic landscapes, the ruins create a unique blend of history, spirituality and natural beauty. Today, Takht-i-Bahi continues to attract archaeologists, historians, tourists and heritage enthusiasts from around the world, offering a powerful connection to the cultural legacy of ancient Gandhara.

Beyond its archaeological importance, Takht-i-Bahi represents the rich historical diversity of Pakistan and the enduring influence of Gandhara's Buddhist heritage. A visit to the site is not simply a journey through ancient ruins—it is an opportunity to experience a significant chapter of South Asian history preserved across the centuries.





Tracing Ancient Pakistan-Korea Links at Bulgapsa Temple

Abid Siddique Chaudhry
Islamabad, Pakistan

Pakistan's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, H.E. Syed Moazzam H. Shah, visited the historic Bulgapsa Temple in Yeonggwang-gun, where he met Venerable Deoksang, a monk of the Jogye Order.

The monk accompanied the ambassador to the historic landing site associated with Monk Maranatha, who is believed to have travelled from the region of present-day Pakistan and arrived at Beonseongpo in 384 AD, during Korea's Baekje period. The visit highlighted a remarkable chapter in the shared cultural and Buddhist heritage of Pakistan and Korea. The historic connection is linked to the spread of Buddhism from South Asia to the Korean Peninsula and reflects the centuries-old movement of religious ideas,

During the visit, Ambassador Shah emphasized the deep historical ties between the peoples of Pakistan and Korea. He also stressed the importance of preserving this shared heritage and promoting greater cultural understanding between the two countries.

scholars and cultural traditions across Asia. Bulgapsa Temple and the nearby historical site offer visitors



an opportunity to explore Korea's Buddhist heritage while discovering an important connection with South Asian history. Such sites contribute to cultural tourism by bringing together history, spirituality, archaeology and international heritage.

The visit also draws attention to the potential for stronger Pakistan-Korea cultural and tourism exchanges, encouraging visitors to explore the historical links that connect the two regions.

September 2026: A Month That Put the World at a Crossroads

From Gaza and Ukraine to climate action, global diplomacy and Pakistan's international engagement, September has been marked by conflict, humanitarian crises and renewed calls for cooperation.

The World Ambassador International Desk

September 2026 has been a month of major international developments, with conflicts, humanitarian emergencies, climate concerns and high-level diplomacy dominating the global agenda.

At the United Nations, world leaders gathered in New York for the 81st General Assembly, where governments discussed international security, development, climate change and global cooperation. The high-level week also included dedicated meetings on climate action, sea-level rise and pandemic preparedness.

Gaza remained one of the month's most serious humanitarian concerns. UN agencies reported continued civilian suffering, displacement and restrictions on access to food, water, shelter and essential services. UN Women also highlighted the growing number of women-headed households in Gaza, reflecting the profound social impact of the conflict.

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine also remained severe. UN human-rights monitors

reported that at least 200 civilians had been killed and 1,234 injured between September 1 and 24, while repeated Russian attacks damaged homes and civilian infrastructure.

Climate change emerged as another defining issue. The UN reported that an intensifying El Niño pattern could contribute to unusually warm conditions around the world in the coming months. A September UN climate report also warned about the consequences of continued warming and called for faster climate action.

The month also brought renewed attention to global health and pandemic preparedness, with the UN General Assembly scheduling a high-level meeting on preventing and preparing for future pandemics.



For Pakistan, September was significant diplomatically. The country remained active on regional and international issues, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar travelled to New York for the UN General Assembly. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry also reported diplomatic activity involving China, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Saudi Arabia and other international partners.

Beyond individual crises, September has highlighted a wider challenge: how the international community can respond collectively to problems that cross borders. Wars, climate change, displacement, food insecurity and public-health threats are increasingly interconnected.

As the month draws to a close, September 2026 leaves behind a global picture defined by both crisis and cooperation. The meetings and commitments made this month will now face the more difficult test of implementation.



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SHEIKH AHMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM

1950 - 2026

Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Maktoum dies at 76

The world Ambassador

Web Desk

Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, a brother of Dubai's ruler and a prominent figure in the emirate's sports, business and security sectors, has died at the age of 76, according to the Dubai Media Office.

Dubai has declared a 10-day mourning period beginning Monday in honour of the senior member of the ruling family, Khaleej Times reported.

Flags across the emirate will be flown at half-mast during the mourning period, according to the report.

Sheikh Ahmed was known for his involvement in several key sectors of Dubai, including sports, business and security.

Ahsan Iqbal Calls for Stronger SCO Digital Economy Cooperation

Pakistan Proposes Digital Connectivity and Compute Corridor to Advance AI, Cloud Computing, Cybersecurity and Digital Infrastructure

AMIR MALIK

Islamabad, Pakistan

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal called for stronger cooperation among Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states to accelerate digital transformation, expand connectivity and promote shared economic development.

Addressing the Ministerial-Level Closed-Door Meeting on SCO Digital Economy Cooperation in Urumqi, China, the minister said the digital economy had emerged as a major driver of productivity, trade, governance and human development.

He said the SCO region had a significant opportunity to use digital technologies to accelerate economic growth, create quality employment and bridge development gaps among member states.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan had placed digital transformation at the centre of its national development agenda, with E-Pakistan identified as one of the five principal pillars of URAAN Pakistan. He highlighted the Digital Nation Pakistan Act 2025, Pakistan Digital Authority and National AI Policy as important steps towards expanding digital public services, data-driven policymaking and responsible use of artificial intelligence.

The minister emphasized the importance Pakistan attaches to its cooperation with China in digital technologies, particularly through the CPEC Joint Working Group on Information Technology and Industry and the China-SCO Pakistan Artificial Intelligence Application Cooperation Centre.

He said these platforms could provide a foundation for deeper cooperation in areas including artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity, research and digital skills development.

Ahsan Iqbal proposed the establishment of an SCO Digital Connectivity and Compute Corridor, combining stronger cross-border fibre-optic links, resilient digital networks, data centres, satellite connectivity and interoperable cloud and computing resources.

He stressed that digital infrastructure should benefit not only governments but also universities, startups, small and medium-sized enterprises, women, youth and communities in remote areas.

Calling for greater trust among SCO members in digital cooperation, the minister highlighted the importance of privacy, cybersecurity, accountability, transparent data access and respect for national sovereignty.

He also supported the development of an SCO Sovereign AI Infrastructure and Governance Framework aimed at strengthening national capabilities while promoting the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence.

Ahsan Iqbal said that as Pakistan assumes the Presidency of the SCO Council of Heads of State, under the theme "Turning Vision into Action: Connectivity, Innovation and Shared Prosperity," Pakistan would support efforts to institutionalize SCO digital economy cooperation through regular ministerial dialogue, technical coordination and result-oriented projects.

He said the success of SCO cooperation should ultimately be reflected in tangible outcomes, including faster trade, stronger industries, improved public services, a more skilled workforce and broader access to digital opportunities.

Pakistan, he added, stands ready to work with SCO member states to translate connectivity, innovation and trust into shared digital prosperity.

Ahsan Iqbal Unveils Digital Roadmap to Support \$1 Trillion Economy by 2035

Pakistan Targets Expanded Broadband, \$4.6 Billion IT Exports and Greater Regional Digital Cooperation Under Uraan Pakistan

AMIR MALIK

Islamabad, Pakistan

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal outlined Pakistan's digital transformation strategy at the 2026 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Digital Economy Forum in Urumqi, highlighting the role of technology in achieving the country's ambition of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2035 under Uraan Pakistan.

Addressing senior delegates from SCO member states, the minister highlighted the rapid expansion of Pakistan's digital connectivity, saying the country's digital user base had surpassed 150 million, while data consumption had increased by 25 percent over the past two years.

He said Pakistan was undertaking a major broadband expansion programme, with fibre-optic connections increasing from 3 million to more than 5 million. The immediate objective, he said, was to extend high-speed wired broadband access to 10 million households.

The minister also highlighted the strong performance of Pakistan's technology sector, noting that IT and ICT exports reached \$4.6 billion during the last fiscal year, marking a record level.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan was moving beyond traditional IT services towards the development of homegrown technology products, digital platforms and technology-driven manufacturing. He described the digital economy as a key engine of broader economic transformation.

Emphasizing the importance of inclusive digital development, the minister highlighted progress

in women's access to mobile technology. According to figures presented at the forum, female mobile internet usage increased from 33 percent to 45 percent, while the overall digital gender gap declined from 35 percent to 8 percent.

Ahsan Iqbal stressed that Pakistan's digital transformation must provide opportunities across society, particularly for women and other groups that have historically faced barriers to digital access.

Turning to regional cooperation, the minister called on SCO member states to develop interconnected technology corridors to facilitate trade, cross-border commerce and digital innovation.

He proposed greater cooperation in areas including cross-border e-commerce, integrated digital payment systems, joint artificial intelligence research, multilingual language models and regional human-resource development.

Under the Uraan Pakistan 2035 framework, the minister said digital economy initiatives would remain an important component of Pakistan's strategy for sustainable industrial development, attracting foreign investment and expanding the country's role in the regional digital economy.

The proposals presented at the SCO forum emphasized Pakistan's focus on combining domestic digital expansion with greater regional connectivity, technology cooperation and skills development.



By Wasif Ali Khan

US-Iran Talks: A Diplomatic Opening, Not Yet a Breakthrough

The renewed US-Iran contacts on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York have reopened a diplomatic channel that had appeared increasingly difficult to sustain. Reuters and Al Jazeera reported that mediators, including Pakistan and Qatar, facilitated communication between Washington and Tehran during the UN gathering.

According to Al Jazeera, US special envoy Steve Witkoff said American officials held lengthy discussions with the Iranian delegation through mediators. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei also confirmed that Tehran had conveyed its views and conditions through the intermediaries.

The significance of the contacts lies not necessarily in what was agreed, but in the fact that communication between the two sides resumed. Reuters reported that the discussions focused on issues including the conflict, sanctions and the Strait of Hormuz, while major differences between



Washington and Tehran remained unresolved.

The contrasting speeches delivered by US President New York have reopened a diplomatic channel that had appeared increasingly difficult to sustain. Reuters and Al Jazeera reported that mediators, including Pakistan and Qatar, facilitated communication between Washington and Tehran during the UN gathering.

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The contrasting speeches delivered by US President

By Babra Gul

Pakistan's Diplomatic Moment: Building Bridges in a Changing World

Pakistan is entering a period of renewed international engagement, with diplomacy

increasingly focused on cooperation, economic connectivity and partnerships with countries across Asia and the Middle East.

From Beijing to Riyadh and from Ankara to Doha, Pakistan has continued to strengthen relationships built around trade, investment, infrastructure, security cooperation and people-to-people connections.

China remains an important partner in Pakistan's development journey. Cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has placed particular emphasis on infrastructure, energy, connectivity and economic activity, while both countries continue to explore new areas of cooperation.

Pakistan's ties with the Gulf states have also developed across multiple sectors. Trade, investment, labour mobility, energy and cultural links provide a broad foundation for

relations with countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

At the same time, Pakistan's geographical position gives it considerable potential as a bridge connecting South Asia with Central Asia, China and the Middle East. Improved transport networks, digital connectivity and regional trade could create new opportunities for businesses and communities.

Diplomacy today is no longer limited to political meetings. Economic partnerships, climate cooperation, technology, education and cultural exchange are increasingly important elements of international relations.

Pakistan's participation in regional and international forums provides an opportunity to present its economic potential and strengthen cooperation on issues that affect the wider region.

The country's diplomatic engagement can also support tourism, cultural exchange and educational links, creating connections that extend beyond governments.

As the international environment continues to evolve, Pakistan's emphasis on dialogue and cooperation offers a platform for deeper engagement with partners around the world.

The opportunity ahead is straightforward: transform diplomatic goodwill into practical partnerships that create opportunities for trade, investment, connectivity and development.

In a rapidly changing world, countries that build bridges between regions can play an important role in shaping a more connected future. Pakistan's geography, relationships and growing international engagement give it an opportunity to do precisely that.





Strengthening Ties in Islamabad:

Moments from Malaysia's 69th National Day celebration hosted by the Malaysian High Commission. The event highlighted the growing Pakistan-Malaysia partnership across trade, investment, food security, and vibrant cultural exchange.



Glimpses from the closing ceremony of the Grandmaster Rahimullah Memorial ITF Taekwondo Inter-Club Championship in Peshawar.





0092 300 122 2230
0092 311 110 0667
092 321 406 7819