



# Dar, Yunus agree to revive 'old ties', Saarc forum

- Foreign ministers 'disagree' on settlement of outstanding issues, but vow to 'forge ahead rather than looking back'
- Pakistan and Bangladesh sign 'six instruments' to promote cooperation in trade, academia and media
- FM calls on ex-PM Khaleda Zia; says direct flights to Dhaka to start in October

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: The revival of old connections was on the table as Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar met with Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on Sunday, the second day of his visit to Dhaka.

Revitalisation of regional cooperation through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) remained high on the agenda, as both sides also signed "six instruments", including an agreement on visa abolition for diplomatic and official passport holders.

According to a statement from Dhaka, the two leaders discussed strength-

ening bilateral ties, boosting trade, youth-to-youth exchanges, increased education and cultural exchanges, and revitalising regional cooperation through Saarc.

"Our visions are aligned, and Saarc remains a top priority for both of us... I feel our two economies are complementary. There are many areas where we can work together," Dr Yunus was quoted as saying.

While acknowledging that some sensitive issues remain, Professor Yunus emphasised several areas of collaboration, including frequent cultural exchanges. "When Pakistani singers perform in Bangladesh, everyone appreciates their talent.

That is the spirit we must build upon," he remarked.

Mr Dar, who is the first Pakistani foreign minister to visit Bangladesh in 13 years, also met with his counterpart, Md. Touhid Hossain for a candid discussion on bilateral ties.

According to the leading Bangladeshi newspaper, *The Daily Star*, while both sides expressed eagerness to advance bilateral relations, boost trade and commerce, and collaborate in regional and global forums, the two men differed on the outstanding or unresolved issues between their two nations, mostly dating from 1971.

"We acknowledged that the issues of 1971 cannot be solved in a day. We have agreed to continue discussions to that end," Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain told journalists after meeting Mr Dar.

The unresolved issues refer to Bangladesh's demand for a formal apology for the events of 1971, the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis and a return of assets covering its share in undivided Pakistan.

However, Mr Dar differed, saying that these issues had already been "resolved twice"; in 1974

Continued on Page 11

## Pakistani, Indian leaders may address UN on same day

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: For the first time since their four-day flare-up in May that brought South Asia to the brink of nuclear confrontation, the prime ministers of India and Pakistan will appear on the same day at the 80th session of the UN General Assembly on Sept 26.

According to a provisional schedule shared by UN officials, Pakistan may have a strategic advantage of speaking after India, giving it a direct platform to respond to New Delhi's narrative.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will lead a high-level Pakistani delegation, which will include Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, as well as the PM's adviser on foreign affairs, Tariq Fatemi.

The 80th UNGA officially opens on Sept 9, with the high-level general debate running from Sept 23 to 29.

Brazil will speak first, followed by the US, where President Trump will deliver his first address to the UNGA in his second term.

This year's theme is: 'Better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights.'

According to the provisional list, India's premier will speak in the morning, while Pakistan's leader, along with the heads of Israel, China, and Bangladesh, is scheduled for later that

day. Officials in New Delhi have indicated that their prime minister will also participate in the general debate.

Observers note that the back-to-back appearances of PM Shehbaz and Modi will underline the gulf in perspectives. While India is expected to stress sovereignty and security, Pakistan will be able to respond directly, emphasising Kashmir and regional peace as core issues.

Gaza famine: Editorial on Page 6

A senior Pakistani diplomat said: "The world has seen how quickly South Asia can slide toward conflict. Without a just settlement of Kashmir, the UN's own promise of peace, development, and human rights cannot be fulfilled in our region."

The 80th UNGA promises to be one of the busiest diplomatic seasons in years, taking place amid the Israel's war on Gaza, the Ukraine conflict, and the lingering aftereffects of the May India-Pakistan war. For Islamabad, the message is clear: the world cannot ignore South Asia's flashpoints, and Kashmir remains the key to lasting peace.

According to the provisional schedule, a special event on climate will be held on Sept 24, while a high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons will be held on Sept 26.

ster for Finance Muzammil Aslam while speaking at the first two-day 'Prosper Pakistan' conference organised by the FPCCI Regional

**KP to raise underfunding of tribal districts at NFC: Page 9**

Office Peshawar in collaboration with KP's Board of Investment and Trade.

The federal ministers, particularly development minister Ahsan Iqbal, had been publicly calling for disincentivising the population for NFC shares, although no political party in any province has ever

called for the population to secure more funds from the divisible pool. However, the allegations of irregularities in the population census have cropped up in the past, which required improvement in census methodologies. The first meeting of the 11th NFC, constituted last week, has been scheduled for August 29 (Friday) to set the stage for subsequent deliberations.

The apparent converging stance of the two arch rivals—the PML-N and the PTI—is likely to put the two larger provinces, Punjab and Sindh, under immense pressure for disincentivising population as the key determinant for the

distribution of divisible pool resources. The revision, however, also benefits Balochistan, the sparsely populated largest province by area.

Led by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the political partners at the Centre and backed by the relevant quarters, it would be very challenging for junior leaderships of the ruling parties in Sindh and Punjab to resist reducing the importance of population to work out vertical shares of the federation and its federation units and then decide horizontal shares of the provinces.

Mr Muzammil said the KP government would demand

changes in the formula of the horizontal resource distribution within the federating units during the upcoming NFC deliberations. He said 82pc resource distribution among the provinces was based on the population criterion and 10.6pc on the basis of backwardness, but the KP government would now stipulate reduction in population, prosperity, and forestation as criteria for the distribution of resources.

He said the new NFC had been constituted to evolve a consensus on the vertical and horizontal distribution of financial resources. The provinces currently receive 57.5pc share under the vertical for-

departments, to frame import and export strategies to meet national needs.

The new satellite-based system, set to be launched next year, is expected to resolve this longstanding problem.

This initiative, a brainchild of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), will involve a collaboration between China and the country's Land Information and Management System (LIMS), launched in 2023 to optimise agricultural production through innovative technologies, and sustainable agricultural practices.

This move is likely to help settle a major controversy, surrounding the methodology used by the Punjab Crop Reporting Service (CRS) to determine provincial cotton output, which has been dogged by allegations of inflated and misleading statistics.

CRS authorities, however, accuse cotton ginners of under-

lapsing walls and roofs. The district plunged into darkness after feeders tripped and the power system collapsed.

**Glacial lake in Ghizer leaves thousands cut off: Page 3**

**Flash floods submerge Jhelum localities: Page 4**

**Bahrain offers support for flood-hit Pakistan: Page 5**

**Swat residents reel under the rigours of flood devastation: Page 9**

Officials confirmed that five of the deceased belonged to Dera tehsil and three to Paharpur tehsil. In Maryali, a wall of Jamiatul Madina collapsed, destroying a solar plant but causing no casualties.

Hospitals declared emergencies to treat the injured, while Dera Commissioner Zafarul Islam Khattak urged residents to avoid unnecessary travel during stormy weather. He directed that all available resources be deployed to provide medical assistance.

**Punjab on high alert**

The Punjab government is on high alert as heavy monsoon rains

continue to swell rivers across the province. An official flood alert from India reported a "high flood" level in the Tawi River at Jammu on Aug 24, prompting emergency measures downstream.

Secretary of the Department of Emergency Services Dr Rizwan Naseer made an emergency visit to Sialkot to inspect flood defences at the Head Marala Barrage and the Marala Flood Control Room. Rescue operations are underway, with more than 21,000 people already evacuated from vulnerable areas.

The Chenab River basin is a particular point of concern, with key sites like Marala, Khanki, and Qadirabad showing significant inflows. While these locations are currently within normal limits, the rising inflows at Khanki and the substantial water volumes pose a latent threat for the next 48 hours.

**High flood at Indus, Chenab**

Meanwhile, the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) warned on Sunday that the Chenab and Indus rivers are likely to reach high flood levels within 24 hours, while the Sutlej River at Ganda Singh Wala will remain in high flood for the next few days, subject to water releases from India.

Flash floods are expected in

Continued on Page 3



KASUR: Residents cross a flooded field via a specially marked route, after rising rivers and heavy rainfall forced many living along riverbanks to leave their inundated homes.—AFP

## Relentless flooding claims over a dozen more lives in KP

- Indus, Chenab waters will likely rise over next 24 hours
- Tarbela, Mangla reservoirs near maximum conservation levels
- NDMA says 788 lives lost to rains, floods over two months

Dawn Report

PESHAWAR: At least 13 people were killed and 52 others injured in rain-related incidents as heavy downpours lashed several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the weekend.

According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), the death toll from floods and rains in the province has risen to 409 since Aug 15, with 251 people injured.

The PDMA report said the victims included 305 men, 55 women and 49 children. Among the injured were 183 men, 38 women and 30 children. Rains and floods have also destroyed 578 houses and partially damaged 2,954 across the province.

In Dera Ismail Khan, eight people were killed and 48 were injured after torrential rains and strong winds wreaked havoc on Saturday night. Three children lost their lives in Lower Dir when a house collapsed, while one fatality was reported in Mardan and another in Upper Kohistan.

A severe rainstorm caused widespread damage, crippling the power supply and destroying homes, solar panels and public infrastructure. Wind speeds reached up to 100 km/h, uprooting trees, toppling poles and col-

## Flag carrier to cut flights from Lahore to Paris

By Mohammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has decided to temporarily reduce its flight operations to Paris by limiting flights from Lahore, citing low customer turnout.

PIA's Islamabad-Paris flight operations, however, will remain fully operational, a PIA spokesman said.

The PIA had launched direct flights from Lahore to Paris twice a week in June.

As part of the decision to limit the flights, the PIA's last flight from Lahore to Paris will operate on Sept 12, while the final flight from Lahore to Paris will depart on September 17.

On the other hand, the national flag carrier has started renovating two aircraft for the resumption of Manchester flights.

The aircraft withdrawn from the Lahore-Paris route will be transferred for renovation as part of the preparations for the resumption of United Kingdom (Manchester flights), the spokesperson said, adding that two aircraft are being renovated for the purpose.

The PIA is expecting "Third Country Operators" authorisation by mid-September, after which the airline will plan its flights for the UK.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency had lifted its ban on the PIA from operating in the bloc in November last year.



ON OTHER PAGES

## Eid Milad in Pakistan on Sept 6

The Central Ruet-i-Hilal Committee following a meeting in Karachi announced that the crescent for Rabi-ul-Awwal wasn't sighted anywhere across the country. Accordingly, the Islamic month will commence from Tuesday, while the 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal — the birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) — will be observed on Sept 6.

**Page 5**



## Ghani's sibling held on terror charge

Karachi's Chanesar Town chairman Farhan Ghani, brother of Sindh minister Saeed Ghani, was held and later remanded in a terrorism and attempted murder case for allegedly assaulting a government employee supervising fibre optic work on Sharea Faisal. The complainant claimed Farhan and his associates beat him and held him at gunpoint before police rescued him.

**Page 13**



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**BUSINESS & FINANCE**

## Centre, KP seem to be on 'same page' on NFC tweaks

- First meeting of 11th NFC scheduled for Friday
- PTI's Muzammil Aslam says KP will seek disincentivising population, propose prosperity and forestation as criteria for resource distribution
- KP minister rues imbalance in Centre's approach to smaller provinces

By Khaleeq Kiani

NATHIA GALI: For a change, the federal government led by the PML-N and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government headed by the PTI seem to be in agreement on changes to the oversized population factor in determining the share of the federation and its federating units under the new National Finance Commission (NFC), set to hold its introductory meeting later this week.

"We will demand that population and backwardness should be disincentivised for resource distribution among the provinces," said KP Mini-

ster for Finance Muzammil Aslam while speaking at the first two-day 'Prosper Pakistan' conference organised by the FPCCI Regional

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He said the new NFC had been constituted to evolve a consensus on the vertical and horizontal distribution of financial resources. The provinces currently receive 57.5pc share under the vertical for-

mula, while the remaining amount goes to the federal government. He said the KP would demand changes in the criteria for the horizontal distribution as well.

**'Imbalance in development approach'**

KP's finance minister, who hails from Karachi, criticised the federal government, saying the National Highway Authority (NHA) was used for the road and highway projects in Punjab and Sindh, but it ignored the KP and Balochistan. "This imbalance in the development approach

Continued on Page 5