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UN sets up Pakistani network to curb ‘human trafficking’, enhance ‘migration governance’

The United Nations launched a network on migration in Pakistan in a bid to improve migration governance and tackle human trafficking in the country, according to a UN press release.

Every year, many young Pakistanis leave the country via illegal routes in hopes of better employment opportunities. A 2023 study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Union (EU) found that 24,000 Pakistanis entered EU countries illegally over the past three years.

The network, called — Pakistan United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) — was inaugurated at a ceremony in Islamabad and aims to develop a “unified, collaborative approach to migration governance”, the press release said.

The UNNM will focus on “responding to the interconnected challenges of human trafficking and migrant smuggling” within international frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

The GCM is “the first intergovernmental agreement to cover all dimensions of international migration,” according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

In light of the network, Pakistan’s first Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund programme (MMPTF) was formed, with special emphasis on combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in Pakistan.

The IOM describes Trafficking in Persons as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion.”

While Smuggling of Migrants means “materially profiting by procuring another person’s illegal border crossing”, according to the IOM.

Established to support the implementation of GCM, the initiative will be run “jointly by IOM and UNODC in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, the private sector, the media, and civil society,” the press release said.

Speaking at the ceremony, UN Resident Coordinator Mohamed Yahya, who was also the host of the event, said, “The establishment of this network is a testament to our collective resolve to ensure that migration is safe, orderly, and regular.”

Mohamed Yahya was appointed as the network’s chair.

He went on to say that the establishment of a network “provides a crucial platform to shift the narrative on migration, amplify a unified voice, and foster the innovation needed to address complex challenges related to mobility and protecting the rights of all people on the move”.

As per the press release, the MMPTF will employ a “whole of government” and “a whole of society” approach to tackle human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and improve the methods of migration governance.

“Life makes us move. But journeys, either from our home to new destinations or back to our country, should become easier, more dignified,” said Moazzam Ali, a Pakistani migrant who voluntarily returned to Pakistan from Romania.

“The network will leverage partnerships across the UN system to promote policy coherence and integrate migration policies into the broader development goals,” the press release added.

Head of the UN Migration Network Secretariat Jonathan Prentice, who joined the meeting via video, congratulated Pakistan on playing a role in the “global collective to help improve migration governance in the world”.

The ceremony featured a panel discussion as well, titled — ‘Enhancing whole-of-government migration governance in the age of complex mobility dynamics and emerging global challenges’ — with panellists including representatives from governmental departments.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

SCO summit adopts joint declaration condemning Jaffar, Khuzdar, Pahalgam attacks



Leaders of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation member states pose during a photo session with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Meijiang Convention and Exhibition Centre in Tianjin, China, September 1.

The leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) adopted a statement condemning terrorism in Pakistan and India amid tense ties between the two nations that have seen allegations against each other for alleged involvement in militant attacks.

The Jaffar Express train was hijacked on March 11 when Balochistan Liberation Army terrorists ambushed the Peshawar-bound train carrying 440 passengers, opening fire and taking hostages. Security forces launched a two-day operation, concluding on March 12.

On May 21, at least six people, including three students, were slain while over 40 others — mostly students — were injured after a bomb targeted a school bus near Zero Point in Khuzdar on the Quetta-Karachi highway when it was on its way to drop the students at the Army Public School in Khuzdar Cantonment.

On April 22, assailants conducted an attack in Pahalgam, a tourist hotspot in occupied Kashmir that draws thousands of visitors every summer. Gunmen opened fire on visitors, killing at least 26 people — all men from across India except one from Nepal — and injuring 17 others. It was the region's deadliest attack on civilians since 2000.

In all three scenarios, both countries accused the other of having a role in the incident. The SCO defence ministers summit in June had failed to reach a consensus on a joint statement due to India's refusal. According to The Times of India, New Delhi had refused to sign the document after it omitted a reference to the Pahalgam attack.

The SCO is a 10-nation Eurasian security and political grouping whose members include China, Russia, Pakistan, India, and Iran.

The SCO summit of leaders is currently underway in the northern Chinese port city of Tianjin. China's President Xi Jinping hosted the two-day summit of SCO leaders as well as "SCO plus", bringing together some 20 heads of state and government, besides leaders of international organisations. It was the largest gathering of the SCO as well as the fifth time hosted by China since the bloc was formed in 2001.

The summit adopted the Tianjin Declaration, which notably said: "Member states strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22 2025.

"Member states also strongly condemned the terrorist attacks on Jaffar Express on March 11 and in Khuzdar on May 21, 2025."

The SCO leaders expressed their "deepest sympathy and condolences" to the families of the dead and the wounded, saying that the perpetrators, organisers and sponsors of such attacks must be brought to justice.

"The member states, while reaffirming their firm commitment to the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism, stress the inadmissibility of attempts to use terrorist, separatist and extremist groups for mercenary purposes. They recognise the leading role of sovereign states and their competent authorities in countering terrorist and extremist threats."

The declaration said the SCO members were committed to ensuring sustainable international peace and called for joint efforts to counter traditional and new security challenges and threats.

It added that they reaffirmed their determination to continue the joint fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism, as well as against the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, arms smuggling and other forms of transnational organised crime.

They also signed the Agreement on the Universal Centre for Countering Challenges and Threats to the Security of SCO Member States and the Agreement on the SCO Anti-Drug Centre.

The member states also noted the proposal to establish a Centre for Strategic Studies in the field of security.

The declaration said the SCO members would continue to actively implement the Programme of Cooperation of SCO Member States in Countering Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2025-2027.

“The member states strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, stress that double standards in the fight against terrorism are unacceptable, and call on the international community to combat terrorism, including cross-border movement of terrorists, with the central role of the United Nations, by fully implementing the relevant UN Security Council resolution and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in accordance with the UN Charter and the principles of international law, in order to jointly combat all terrorist organisations. They stress the importance of adopting by consensus a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.”

The leaders further adopted 24 documents to strengthen cooperation in security, economy and cultural exchanges.

They also adopted a 10-year SCO Development Strategy until 2035, which “defines the priority tasks and main directions for deepening multifaceted cooperation in the interests of ensuring peace and stability, development and prosperity in the SCO space”, read the joint statement.

Amid the US tariffs, which have roiled international markets, the SCO leaders expressed support for the multilateral trading system.

They also marked the 80th anniversary of World War II victory and of the founding of the UN, the declaration added.

‘SCO Partner’

The SCO also evolved from the “Shanghai Five” mechanism comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan before Uzbekistan joined as the sixth member. Today, it included 10 member states, two observers and 14 dialogue partners across Asia, Europe and Africa.

The organisation covers approximately 24 per cent of global land area and 42pc of the world’s population, with member states accounting for roughly one-quarter of global GDP and trade increasing nearly 100-fold in two decades.

China’s trade with SCO members, observers and dialogue partners reached a record \$890 billion in 2024, or 14.4pc of its total foreign trade.

At the Tianjin summit, the SCO member states decided to combine the statuses of “observer” and “dialogue partner” into a single status of “SCO Partner”.

Laos was accepted as a new “SCO Partner” at the Tianjin summit.

While the previous SCO leaders’ summit was held in Kazakhstan in July 2024, which saw 25 strategic documents — covering energy, security, finance and information security — adopted, China will pass on the SCO chairmanship to Kyrgyzstan and the next summit will be held under the slogan “25 years of the SCO: together towards sustainable peace, development and prosperity”.

Situation in Middle East and Afghanistan

Regarding the situation in the Middle East, the SCO leaders reiterated their deep concern over the continuing escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and strongly condemned actions that led to

numerous casualties among the civilian population and a “catastrophic humanitarian situation” in the Gaza Strip.

They stressed the need to ensure an immediate, complete and sustainable ceasefire, access to humanitarian aid, and intensified efforts to achieve peace, stability and security for all residents of the region.

“Member states note that the only possible way to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East is through a comprehensive and just settlement of the Palestinian question,” the declaration said.

It added that they also strongly condemned the military strikes by Israel and the United States against Iran in June, saying that such aggressive actions against civilian targets, including nuclear energy infrastructure, which resulted in the death of civilians, were a “gross violation of the principles and norms of international law and the UN Charter, and an infringement on the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran” that undermined regional and international security with serious implications for global peace and stability.

“They noted that the physical nuclear safety and security of nuclear facilities must be ensured on a permanent basis, including during periods of armed conflict, in order to protect the population and the environment from harm. In this regard, they reaffirmed their commitment to diplomatic initiatives aimed at the peaceful resolution of the issues that have arisen.

“Member states reaffirmed the importance of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015), emphasising that it is binding and must be implemented in full in accordance with its provisions, and consider that any attempts to interpret it arbitrarily undermine the authority of the UN Security Council.

“They called for the resumption of constructive dialogue between the parties involved and for a focus on jointly seeking solutions that would prevent further escalation of the situation,” the declaration said regarding Iran and its stalemate on nuclear talks.

On Afghanistan, the SCO members reaffirmed their commitment to the country’s establishment as an independent, neutral and peaceful state, free from terrorism, war and drugs, and expressed their readiness to support the efforts of the international community to ensure peace and development in the country.

“Member states reiterated that the formation of an inclusive government with broad participation of representatives of all ethno-political groups of Afghan society is the only way to achieve lasting peace and stability in the country,” the declaration said.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

Militant attacks surge to decade-high in August, says think tank

Pakistan witnessed an alarming spike in militant violence in August this year, registering a 74 per cent increase in militant attacks compared to July, becoming the “deadliest month in over a decade”, according to data released by the Islamabad-based think tank Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS).

In July, PICSS documented 82 militant attacks across the country, resulting in 101 fatalities and 150 injuries, a 5pc rise in militant attacks compared to June.

According to the think tank, those killed in July’s militant attacks included 47 civilians, 36 security personnel, and 18 militants. Among the injured were 90 civilians, 52 security personnel, seven militants, and a member of a peace committee.

“With 143 militant attacks recorded, August became the deadliest month in over a decade, surpassing all monthly figures since February 2014, as per the PICSS Militancy Database,” the think tank’s latest report read.

The wave of violence left 194 people dead, including 73 security forces personnel, 62 civilians, 58 militants, and one pro-government peace committee member, according to PICSS.

Additionally, 231 others were injured, comprising 129 security personnel, 92 civilians, eight militants, and two peace committee members. Militants also abducted at least 10 individuals during the month.

“In response, security forces escalated their operations, killing at least 100 militants and arresting 31 others across the country. However, these actions also led to the deaths of three civilians and one security personnel,” according to PICSS.

When accounting for both militant attacks and security operations, at least 298 individuals lost their lives in August. These included 158 militants, 74 security forces personnel, 65 civilians, and one peace committee member.

The number of injured also rose to 250, with 137 security personnel, 100 civilians, 11 militants, and two peace committee members affected. PICSS observed a 100pc increase in security forces’ deaths and a 145pc rise in injuries compared to July. Militant fatalities rose by 27pc, while civilian deaths climbed 20pc.

The report highlighted that the most alarming escalation occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in the tribal districts, which saw 51 militant attacks — a 200pc increase. These attacks resulted in 74 deaths, marking a 124pc rise.

The rest of KP was also similarly hit, with 55 attacks causing 56 deaths, including 26 security personnel, 22 civilians, and eight militants. In total, KP witnessed 106 militant attacks, the highest monthly figure in over 10 years, according to PICSS.

Operations were launched in Bajaur and North Waziristan, “resulting in partial clearance of militant hideouts, although the situation remains tense,” the think tank added.

Balochistan followed with 28 attacks, resulting in 52 deaths — 23 security personnel, 21 civilians, and eight militants. Another 45 people were wounded, including 23 security personnel and 22 civilians.

“Security forces eliminated 50 militants in the province — the highest number of militant deaths in operations since June 2015, when 60 were killed,” according to PICSS.

Sindh reported six attacks, leaving eight people dead — six civilians and two security personnel. Security forces arrested 11 suspected militants, all in Karachi.

In Punjab, two attacks occurred: a banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) assault in Dera Ghazi Khan, and an unsolved killing of a young cleric in Rawalpindi. resulting in the deaths of one civilian and one attacker.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, TTP-linked militants struck Chilas district, killing two security personnel and injuring one.

Pakistan has seen a surge in terrorism since the TTP ended its ceasefire deal with the government in November 2022, vowing to increase attacks.

The government labelled the TTP as Fitna-al-Khawarij and directed the use of the term khariji for attackers. It later designated Balochistan-based groups as Fitna-al-Hindustan to highlight India’s alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan.

On Sunday, President Asif Ali Zardari signed into law the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2025, seeking to improve counterterrorism efforts while ensuring legal oversight and safeguards.

Last week, the Balochistan government extended the enforcement of Section 144 across the province for another 15 days due to the prevailing law and order situation, according to an official notification from the additional chief secretary of the Home Department.

In March, Pakistan ranked second in the Global Terrorism Index 2025, with the number of deaths in terrorist attacks rising by 45pc from 2024 to 1,081.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER, 1 2025

13 lives lost, 35 hurt in suicide bombing after BNP rally

QUETTA: At least 13 people were killed and 35 others injured in a suicide bombing near Shahwani Stadium in the Sariab area, shortly after the conclusion of a public meeting of the Balochistan National Party (BNP-Mengal) held to mark the death anniversary of the late Sardar Attaullah Mengal.

BNP President and MNA Sardar Akhtar Mengal, who presided over the gathering, remained unhurt as the blast occurred when he was leaving for home. Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai, Asghar Khan Achakzai of the Awami National Party (ANP), and former senator Mir Kabeer Muhammad Shai of the National Party were also present, but escaped unhurt.

However, former BNP MPA Mir Ahmed Nawaz Baloch and the party's central labour secretary Musa Jan were among those injured along with several party workers and supporters.

"We have received 13 bodies and 35 injured at the hospital," Dr Wasim Baig told Dawn, adding that the condition of several injured was critical.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Hamza Shafqaat, however, confirmed the death toll at 11 at that time. "So far, 11 people have lost their lives while over 30 are injured," he said, warning that the toll could rise as many were in serious condition.

Officials confirmed it was a suicide attack. The bomber detonated his explosives-laden jacket in the parking area as participants were leaving the meeting.

According to police, the explosion occurred about 15 minutes after the meeting ended, when crowds were dispersing.

"The blast took place in the parking area of the stadium," said BNP's senior vice president Sajid Tareen, adding that Sardar Mengal was still present at the time but later reached home safely.

Six vehicles, including bulletproof cars belonging to politicians, were damaged in the explosion. Mir Kabeer Muhammad Shai survived as he was inside his bulletproof vehicle when the blast occurred.

In a late-night statement, the Balochistan Home Department said a high-level investigation had been ordered. Authorities had collected evidence from the site, it said, adding that the injured were being provided the best possible medical care.

The deceased were identified as Muhammad Ishaq, Najeebullah, Shan, Muhammad Hanif, Madad Khan, Waqir Ahmed, Hafeez, Abdul Nabi, Nasarullah, Allah Bakhsh, Najeebullah, son of Asadullah, Allah Bakhsh and Muhammad Waqar.

Kech IED blast

Separately, five security personnel were martyred and three others injured on Tuesday when a convoy of security forces was targeted in a blast in the Buleda area of Kech district, near the Pakistan-Iran border.

Officials said the convoy of Frontier Corps personnel was passing near Babar Post when a powerful explosion struck one of the vehicles. Five soldiers lost their lives in the attack, while three others sustained injuries.

A senior security official confirmed that the blast occurred close to the convoy. He said an improvised explosive device (IED), planted by unidentified miscreants on the roadside, was detonated when the convoy was passing through the area.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

Human trafficking: FIA to enhance presence

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has decided to expand its global presence by establishing immigration wing link offices in six more countries to dismantle international human trafficking networks and curb the rising incidents of human smuggling.

According to sources, recent investigations have revealed that key operators of Pakistan's human smuggling rackets are based abroad, running powerful networks from overseas, adding that the overseas offices will help disrupt such operations.

The sources said that the new offices will be set up in the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy Türkiye, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). They added that new offices will focus on tracking trafficking routes and coordinating efforts with host authorities.

They sources further said that the FIA link offices will also provide facilitation to businessmen and visitors, whose arrival is expected to rise during the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The sources were optimistic that the initiative will strengthen cooperation with partner countries and play a key role in dismantling organised human trafficking networks operating across borders.

The initiative follows last month's FIA announcement of developing an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered application, aimed at streamlining and modernising immigration procedures and combating human smuggling.

The FIA had arranged a briefing to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on the project on August 23. During the briefing, FIA Director General Raja Riffat Mukhtar informed the minister that reforms were progressing swiftly.

On the Occasion, the minister announced the immediate release of funds to upgrade FIA's IT infrastructure and directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to hand over newly allotted land for the FIA Academy without delay.

Meanwhile, according to a spokesperson, Director General Rifaat Mukhtar dismissed four sub-inspectors and one lower division clerk from service on charges of misconduct, poor investigations, and violation of organisational discipline.

The FIA spokesperson said that the sacked officials were posted in Islamabad, Faisalabad, and Lahore zones, and their dismissal followed proven allegations of negligence, carelessness, or substandard investigations.

SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 5, 2025

UNNM launch

The establishment of the Pakistan United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) is a welcome development. Human trafficking and irregular migration have long plagued Pakistan, yet successive governments have failed to evolve an effective strategy to deal with these twin challenges.

Each year, thousands of Pakistanis are deceived by unscrupulous agents who promise lucrative opportunities abroad but instead expose them to dangerous and exploitative routes. A recent study found that 24,000 Pakistanis had entered EU member countries illegally over the previous three years. This figure is alarming, yet it represents only a fraction of the human cost, as many others perish on their journeys or fall prey to trafficking networks.

The launch of UNNM provides an opportunity to address these issues more systematically. By developing a "unified, collaborative approach to migration governance" and situating its work within frameworks such as the SDGs and the Global Compact for Migration, the initiative aims to close the gaps that traffickers have long exploited. It also promises to bring key stakeholders onto a single platform - something that has been missing thus far.

However, the network's potential will only be realised if there is political will within Pakistan to match it. Human trafficking has long thrived in the shadows of corruption and weak border controls. Simply creating new bodies or entering international frameworks will not be enough. The state must demonstrate seriousness by cracking down on organised trafficking rings and strengthening the regulation of recruitment agencies.

Equally important are the root causes. As long as poverty and joblessness continue to push the youth abroad, irregular migration will remain a thriving business. Pakistan needs to create viable opportunities at home and expand safe, legal pathways for overseas employment.

SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

Peace committee

THE formation of a national-level committee to deal with hate speech, extremism and terrorism can only be welcomed. However, it should be recalled that such initiatives have been launched previously too, and with great fanfare, only to slip into oblivion after the initial enthusiasm, mainly because of the state's disinterest in pursuing the core goals of such initiatives. The National Paigham-i-Aman Committee has been set up under the information ministry to "draft a unified national stance against extremism and terrorism". It will feature government representatives, and Muslim clerics as well as clergy representing Pakistan's minorities. The body's key aim appears to be to crack down on hate speech, particularly in cyberspace. The committee is said to be a continuation of the 2018 Paigham-i-Pakistan initiative, which centred around a fatwa endorsed by hundreds of Muslim clerics from all sects condemning terrorism and suicide bombings.

Pakistan's efforts to tackle extremism and terrorism are not new. From Gen Musharraf's 'enlightened moderation' to the Paigham-i-Pakistan fatwa to the National Action Plan, including its updated version, the state has formed many a committee and formulated several plans to address this critical issue. Yet today, we face a terrorist insurgency in KP led by the extremist TTP, while sectarian groups continue to flex their muscles from time to time. Moreover, extremist groups in Punjab have led sustained campaigns against members of the minority Ahmadi community, also extending their influence to Sindh. These groups are involved in stoking violence against Christians too. All this proves that there is much to do where countering extremism and violence is concerned. The first step is, of course, expressing the resolve to fight injustice against minorities, which is what the just-formed committee has done. But noble intentions are not enough. The state needs to take strong action against those involved in promoting, condoning and carrying out violence against minority religions and sects. For example, Christian activists say that the perpetrators involved in the 2023 Jaranwala violence have yet to be convicted. Those guilty of intimidating Ahmadis have similarly not been punished. The new peace body must not suffer the fate of earlier initiatives. Peace committees and declarations will be inadequate unless the state pledges to permanently put sectarian and hate groups out of business.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

Pakistan, UAE discuss anti-narcotics efforts

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Sheikh Zayed bin Hamad bin Hamdan Al Nahyan, Chairman of the United Arab Emirates' National Anti-Narcotics Authority, at the Ministry of Interior to discuss enhanced cooperation against drug trafficking.

Both sides held detailed discussions on anti-narcotics efforts and other matters of mutual interest, agreeing to expand bilateral collaboration in countering drug smuggling.

Pakistan appointed DG Anti-Narcotics Force Major General Abdul Mueed while the UAE named Brigadier Taher Gharib as their focal persons.

SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

National Counter Narcotics Coordination Centre to be established

RAWALPINDI: The National Counter Narcotics Coordination Centre (NCNC2) is being established at the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Headquarters in collaboration with UNODC and INLP to unify the counter-narcotics efforts of the Inter-Agency Task Force and develop a coordinated national response against drug trafficking.

The ANF said in a press release that in this context, a five-day series of workshops on “Establishing Coordination Mechanisms to Counter Drug Trafficking” commenced on Monday, bringing together national and international stakeholders to strengthen collective action against narcotics.

The inaugural session opened with keynote remarks by Major General Abdul Moeed HI(M), Chairman IATF and DG ANF, followed by speeches from UNODC Country Representative Troels Vester and Dr Lyn Nelson, Director of INL Pakistan. The speakers highlighted the urgent need for collaborative action and the development of stronger institutional mechanisms to combat drug trafficking at both national and regional levels.

Brigadier Syed Imran Ali, Secretary IATF and Director Enforcement ANF, briefed participants on the role, functionality and significance of NCNC2, emphasising the critical importance of robust data sharing among law enforcement agencies. He also apprised the audience of various nationwide CN campaigns being undertaken by the ANF. Subsequent sessions featured presentations from various law enforcement agencies focusing on enhancing data-sharing practices, analytical capabilities and case management systems.

The workshops aim to foster sustainable inter-agency collaboration, ensuring that narcotics control operations across Pakistan are unified, systematic and intelligence-driven, the press release said. Participating agencies reaffirmed their commitment to protecting society from the menace of drugs. The event also reflects growing synergy and cooperation toward a national counter-narcotics response. Meanwhile, ANF conducted three seizures, arrested five accused around educational institutions and in various cities of the country and recovered 14 kilograms of drugs worth over Rs3.7 million.

A spokesperson for ANF said 200 grams of hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused during a raid near Hattar Road, Haripur. The arrested suspect confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions. Likewise, 12 kilograms of hashish was confiscated from a truck loaded with dry crackers and two suspects were arrested near Sarwar Shaheed Toll Plaza.

Near a hospital on Link Road, Lahore, two kilograms of heroin was recovered from two suspects riding a motorcycle. Cases have been registered against the accused under the CNS Act.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

Social justice key to sustainable future for all

BY CAROLINE FREDRICKSON



Thirty years ago, 186 countries met in Copenhagen, Denmark, for the first Social Summit for Social Development. The gathering was the largest meeting of world leaders ever at the time. By the end of the summit, their agenda was clear: the challenges faced by our societies are global and so are the solutions.

In response, governments vowed to put people at the center of global development. They recognized that social justice must be the foundation for economic progress if progress is to be sustainable. It means ensuring that people, regardless of gender, nationality, background or place of birth, have the right to live in dignity, with equal opportunities to work, thrive and succeed. Societies built on fairness work better, trust more and grow stronger.

The consensus of the summit became the cornerstone for the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Since 2015, the SDGs have been the blueprint for achieving a socially just, peaceful and sustainable world. The deadline for their realization has been set for 2030.

Since that first summit, our world has changed, in many ways for the better. A new International Labour Organization report, "The State of Social Justice", shows that extreme poverty is down from 39 percent to 10 percent of the global population. Child labor for under-14-year-olds has been cut by half and, for the first time in history, more than half the world has some form of social protection, such as a pension or unemployment insurance.

But despite decades of efforts, the report makes clear that major disparities remain. A person's place of birth still determines more than half of his or her lifetime's earnings. Globally, more than 800 million people survive on less than \$3 a day. That is why achieving the 2030 SDG targets is in jeopardy. For example, for SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, we lag well behind, having met only two-thirds — or 66 percent — of the indicators.

If we wish to improve living conditions for everyone and achieve social justice, expeditiously achieving the SDGs is crucial. Decent work is a key thread that helps to tie the SDGs together, because decent work is more than making a living: it is a barometer of how well we are doing in society as a whole, including health, education, equality, and responsible consumption and production. When work is productive, paid fairly, safe, equitable and inclusive, freely chosen and with rights, we have social justice.

But decent work does not just "happen". History shows that without strong institutions productivity gains do not translate into better lives. Institutions strengthen basic human rights, such as the rights to education and to a healthy environment, and ensure equal opportunities, fair distribution, and a voice for both workers and employers. Social dialogue is the most effective way to balance the interests of workers and employers and help make growth equitable.

Right now, our institutions are being tested. Three massive transitions are reshaping the world of work everywhere: the impact of a hotter planet and the move to a greener economy, the digital revolution, and demographic change. These transformations are creating new jobs and destroying old ones. They have the potential to create fresh opportunities, but they also risk deepening existing divides. How these changes will play out depends largely on the choices that societies make today.

In November 2025, the second World Social Summit will be held in Doha, Qatar. This global gathering will once again bring together government representatives, workers, employers and civil society — three and a half decades after the first summit. It represents a critical moment to turn past pledges into real change.

We must reaffirm the promise made in Copenhagen: that social justice and inclusive economic development are everyone's business and in everyone's interest. But above all, we must take decisive action. The ILO-led Global Coalition for Social Justice offers a platform to help move us in the right direction. Already, it is bringing together governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and other partners to accelerate action and cooperation toward achieving social justice and decent work for all.

If we succeed, we can help ensure that economic productivity and social progress are linked. Because in the end, social justice is not an impossible ideal. It is the only route forward to a sustainable future for all.

SOURCE: CHINA DAILY | SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

Pakistan ready for global crypto leadership



Minister of State for Crypto, Blockchain and CEO of the Pakistan Crypto Council Bilal Bin Saqib

ISLAMABAD: Bilal Bin Saqib, the head of the Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC), has said that the country was ready to assume global leadership in crypto and digital assets, according to a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The PCC CEO and the minister of state made these remarks during a meeting with Patrick Witt, the White House's new crypto adviser, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session.

The ministry stated that the meeting focused on cooperation between Pakistan and the United States in the field of digital assets, with detailed discussions on new opportunities in blockchain and crypto.

Bilal Bin Saqib emphasised that Pakistan was prepared to take a leadership role in crypto and digital assets, adding that cooperation in this sector would mark a new chapter in Pakistan-US relations.

PCC is a Pakistani regulatory body established to develop policy, infrastructure and regulation for blockchain technology and digital assets within Pakistan. It operates under the Ministry of Finance with input from the SBP, SECP, and other federal agencies.

SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

Security forces kill 17 ‘India-sponsored’ terrorists in KP’s Lakki Marwat

Security forces have killed 17 “India-sponsored” terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military’s media affairs wing said.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), security forces conducted the IBO on the night between Friday and Saturday, on the “reported presence of khwarij belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarij.”

The state uses the term Fitna al Khwarij to refer to terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

During the operation, “own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and resultantly, seventeen Indian sponsored khwarij were sent to hell,” the ISPR statement said.

It added that weapons and ammunition were recovered from the slain terrorists, “who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces and law enforcement agencies, as well as [in the] killing of innocent civilians”.

The statement said a sanitisation operation was being conducted to “eliminate any other Indian-sponsored khwarij found in the area”.



The ISPR also reaffirmed the security forces' determination to wipe out the menace of "Indian-sponsored terrorism" from the country.

President Asif Ali Zardari has congratulated the security forces on their successful operation in Lakki Marwat, according to a statement issued by his secretariat.

He paid tribute to the courage and sacrifices of the forces, saying "their efforts reflect the nation's firm resolve to eradicate Indian proxy terrorism from Pakistan".

"The complete elimination of Fitna al Khwarij and its networks is vital for lasting peace and stability in the country," he added

President Zardari reaffirmed that the entire nation stands united with its valiant armed forces in the fight against terrorism.

Pakistan has lately been witnessing an uptick in terrorist activities, mainly in KP and Balochistan. In November 2022, the TTP, after breaking a ceasefire deal with the government, had vowed to escalate attacks against the security forces, the police, and other law enforcement agencies' personnel.

In August, terrorists in Lakki Marwat had carried out a series of militant attacks, killing three soldiers and a woman while injuring three others, including two soldiers.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

Quadripartite moot urges Kabul to counter terrorism



Foreign ministers of China, Iran, Pakistan, and Russia hold a meeting, Sept 26.

NEW YORK: The foreign ministers of China, Iran, Pakistan, and Russia, in a joint statement, have urged Afghanistan to take “effective, concrete, and verifiable actions” to dismantle terrorist groups operating from its territory.

The foreign ministers in a meeting on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly session reaffirmed support for Afghanistan as an “independent, united, and peaceful state, free from terrorism, war, and narcotics”, but underlined the need to prevent terrorists from using Afghan soil.

The four Asian states have been holding quadripartite consultations on Afghanistan since 2017, aimed at promoting regional stability and coordinating efforts to counter terrorism, narcotics, and extremism emanating from Afghan territory. This informal grouping, which meets at ministerial and special representative levels, also seeks to facilitate political dialogue and regional economic integration in Afghanistan.

They expressed deep concern over the presence of groups such as ISIL, Al-Qaida, Tehreek-i-Tali-ban Pakistan (TTP), the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Jaish ul-Adl, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), the Majeed Brigade, and others, calling them a “serious threat to regional and global security.”



The joint statement emphasised that strengthening peace and stability in Afghanistan and countering terrorism, radicalism, and narcotics are “common interests in the region”.

The four sides also called for adjustments to the 1988 UN sanctions regime in line with ground realities, including travel exemptions for some Taliban officials; stressed the need for continued humanitarian assistance to Afghans, urging that aid be delinked from political considerations; supported regional economic initiatives to ease Afghan-is-tan’s dire situation and integrate it into regional trade and connectivity; and appealed to the international community to intensify emergency huma-nitarian aid while reaffirming their willingness to exp-and economic cooperation with Afghanistan.

The ministers affirmed their support for diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a political settlement of the Afghan issue and backed the role of the international community, particularly the United Nat-ions.

They noted the importance of regi-o-nal mechanisms such as the Moscow For-mat, the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting of Afghanistan’s Neighb-oring Countries, and the Shanghai Co-operation Organisa-tion (SCO) in advancing a political solution.

They welcomed the joint meeting of the Special Representatives of China, Iran, Pak-is-tan, and Russia on Afghan-istan, held on Sept 12 in Dushanbe and encouraged the con-tinuation of these quadrilateral consultations.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

Poverty root cause of extremism, says KP governor

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has said that poverty is the root cause of social disparities and extremism, stressing that equality, justice and collective efforts are essential to eradicate it.

Addressing a conference on strong communities and combating extremism through poverty reduction programmes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said a prosperous and peaceful future was directly linked to economic and social development.

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) in collaboration with the KP Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and Paigham-i-Pakistan organised the conference at the Governor's House.

Mr Kundi said unemployment, poverty and lack of opportunities bred despair and exploitation.

“Empowering communities economically and socially would serve as the strongest shield against extremism,” he stressed.

MNA and Prime Minister's Youth Programme's focal person Syeda Aamna Batool, KP Assembly members, secretary National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW) Humera Zia Mufti, PPAF chief executive officer Nadir Gul Bareech, KP Red Crescent Society chairman Farzand Ali Wazir, representatives of civil society organisations and a large number of women attended the function.

Governor Kundi visited stalls showcasing the province's culture, distributed certificates among youth, and handed out interest-free loan cheques to skilled women. He also inaugurated two PPAF projects, an infrastructure scheme and an olive project.

In his remarks, the governor highlighted that positive image of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be further promoted through a system based on equality and justice.

He emphasised narrowing the gap between the federation and provinces, ensuring fair distribution of resources, and extending development benefits to every corner of KP as key government priorities. Appreciating PPAF's efforts, Governor Kundi said the organisation had made it its mission to serve the most vulnerable segments of society.

“Projecting the province's soft image is our priority, and together we must work for a developed and prosperous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,” he said. At the end of the event, the governor presented shields to MNA Aamna Batool, Humera Zia, and PPAF CEO Nadir Gul.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

FIA issues red book of human traffickers



Majority of the deported were from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Iran.

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has released the 13th edition of its "Red Book" — a 165-page document providing details of most-wanted human smugglers.

Interestingly, the Red Book also lists seven women human traffickers among the most-wanted: four from the Islamabad Zone, two from Lahore, and one from Gujranwala.

According to the document, the FIA currently seeks 143 human smugglers wanted in various cases of human smuggling and trafficking. Cases against these traffickers have been registered with FIA's Anti-Human Trafficking Circles across the country. Zone-wise, 70 are wanted in Gujranwala, 25 in Islamabad, 14 in Lahore, 13 in Faisalabad, 10 in Karachi, 6 in Kohat, 3 in Multan, and 1 each in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to the FIA, 51 of the most-wanted smugglers named in the 2023 Red Book have so far been arrested. A special crackdown is underway to apprehend the remaining individuals, with dedicated raiding teams formed for this purpose.

Officials confirmed that the national identity cards and passports of these most-wanted human smugglers have been blacklisted, while red notices have been issued for those who have fled abroad.

Special Anti-Human Smuggling Cell teams have been formed across the country to carry out a crackdown, while red notices have also been issued for the arrest of those hiding abroad.

"This significant endeavour has been orchestrated by the FIA. The Anti-Human Smuggling Directorate, stationed at FIA HQ, dedicated substantial efforts to amass data from various Anti-Human Trafficking Circles within the FIA, meticulously presenting it in book form, it said.

It said over the years, the federal government, in conjunction with provincial governments, has taken a series of measures to combat the pervasive issue of migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.

These endeavors encompass a five-year National Action Plan, the establishment of the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrant Act 2018 and the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018, along with the formulation of associated regulations.

The activation of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Committees at the national, provincial, and district levels, alongside the constitution of an Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), has transpired to bolster prosecution, safeguard victims, and foster cooperation.

It said the FIA in collaboration with international partners and civil society organizations has embarked on a robust programme aimed at enhancing the capacity-building of law enforcement agencies and pertinent departments.

"This initiative encompasses initiating dialogues and spearheading public awareness campaigns. The establishment of the Data Collection and Analysis Wing, as well as a dedicated Research Unit within the FIA's Anti-Human Smuggling (AHS) Directorate, demonstrates their commitment," it added.

SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

Policing in Sindh

ALI HASSAN BANGWAR

Though many structural and institutional factors influence and regulate individual and group behaviour in a socio-political setting, one of the key entities of social control is the group of people legally mandated by the state to safeguard citizens and apprehend outlaws. It is to these bodies that the label 'police' is ordinarily applied. Policing serves as the first link in the criminal justice system and constitutes one of the essential functions every sovereign state undertakes. The key agent, nevertheless, functions effectively only when its structural, strategic and operational culture - its 'policing' - is independent, people-centric and adequately equipped.

However, policing systems that evolve into increasingly militarised and politicised often lack expertise, rendering society more vulnerable to systemic crime and social disorder. This vulnerability is exacerbated by policing that prioritises the interests of a narrow elite over enforcing laws and fundamental rights, effectively acting as a vanguard that enforces Machiavellian dictates - a pattern starkly familiar in our part of the world. The policing system in Pakistan, including in Sindh, suffers significant shortcomings on structural, organisational, legal and operational fronts. Though policing might theoretically aim at deterring crime, in the northern districts of Sindh, it tends to exploit crime, thereby adding to criminal susceptibility.

The state of law and order in northern Sindh is evidently alarming, particularly in Kashmore, Shikarpur, Ghotki, Jacobabad, Sukkur and Larkana. The blatant violations of human rights - including, but not limited to, the marginalisation and abuse of women, tribal bloodletting, the lucrative industries of extortion and kidnapping for ransom and extrajudicial killings - rarely make it into mainstream reports or the state's policy discourse.

The investigation branch, as another channel of corruption, has been kept dormant in the northern districts of Sindh. Investigating officials, whether promoted or questionably recruited through the SPSC, predictably fail in their investigative roles. In operational branches, most postings in police stations across northern Sindh are based on political and personal connections, often resulting in underqualified personnel being appointed to key roles. For instance, out of the 20 sanctioned and notified thanas in Kashmore, only two SHOs are qualified according to the prescribed police rules. In the remaining stations, constables and ASIs work as SHOs on the ground in lieu of the SHOs merely shown on record.

Per a police official, SSPs are rarely posted without pre-set conditions and continue their work as long as they please a "quartet". As a result, most of the time, SSPs prioritise avoiding actions that might displease their patrons, leaving them little time to focus on their assigned task of arresting crime. To mask actual criminality, most SSPs in Northern Sindh resort to two common tactics. One, they patronise courtier reporters and co-opt press clubs to secure favourable coverage. In return,

journalists receive perks, including influence in policing and the assignment of police personnel, whom they often send on paid leave, colloquially referred to as a 'visa' in police jargon.

The other increasingly common tactic is to hire local digital minions and civil society activists for publicity stunts - groups that eulogise officials to help maintain their public appeal, particularly among an uninformed populace. The toadies receive favours such as half-cups of tea, selfies with officials, pats on their backs, etc. These two groups not only help SSPs mask actual criminality but also tend to present officials' obligatory actions as altruism to the people.

Most officials in Upper Sindh are not engaged in genuine policing; instead, they are well-connected, highly politicised and adept at profiting from crime - yet they are still eulogised as messiahs by minions. Shouldn't sustainable peace in the area - among other reforms - prompt the criminalisation of sycophancy and its codification as a cognisable, non-bailable offence in the country? This move might also hasten the collapse of this parasitic status quo as a collateral benefit. Won't it?

SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

Punjab govt's steps against financial crimes, human trafficking improve Pakistan's position

LAHORE: The Punjab government's proactive actions and efforts to curb financial crimes and human trafficking have played a pivotal role in Pakistan's removal from the Tier 2 Watch List in US State Department's on Trafficking in Persons report.

This was acknowledged at an Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter Terror Financing (CTF) meeting held at the home department under the chairmanship of AML-CTF Authority chairman and former Inspector General of Police Mushtaq Sukhera on Saturday.

The meeting reviewed Punjab's performance under the FATF action plan and the steps taken to strengthen the implementation mechanisms. It was informed that Punjab had successfully achieved all assigned targets and a comprehensive report in this regard would be submitted to the federal government.

Mr Sukhera acknowledged that Punjab played a highly effective and decisive role in Pakistan's removal from the FATF Grey List.

He said the province had ensured strict compliance with international standards and national laws, resulting in greater institutional stability and improved legal frameworks.

The departments – Auqaf, Trust, Cooperatives, Labour, Police, Social Welfare, and Child Protection Bureau – gave briefings on their measures to combat money laundering and terror financing. The meeting was also briefed on the monitoring systems of the Auqaf, Trust, and Cooperative departments.

It was told that the Punjab Cabinet had recently approved the Auqaf, Trusts and Cooperative Societies Management Act 2025, which would serve as a model for other provinces.

The meeting commended the performance of the labour department, police, social welfare department, and Child Protection and Welfare Bureau for their contribution to combating human trafficking.

As the performance of the Punjab Charities Commission came under review, commission's chief executive officer retired Col Shehzad Amir said that more than 8,000 NGOs had been registered so far across the province while monitoring, digitisation, and outreach systems had been significantly strengthened. The Punjab Charities Commission was recognised as the most effective among all provincial commissions.

Mr Sukhera and DG Ehsan Sadiq also held a meeting with home secretary Dr Ahmad Javed Qazi.

Mr Sukhera assured the issues related to taxation and bank accounts of NGOs would be resolved. He reiterated that Punjab's role in implementing the FATF action plan had been decisive, and the province had set an exemplary model by introducing an efficient monitoring regime. "Continuity in reform measures is the key to sustainable success," he asserted.

The meeting was attended by the administrative secretaries and senior officials concerned.

SOURCE: DAWN, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025