



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ابو بکر رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ اگر میرے پاس صد ہزار کے برابر کسی سونا ہو تو مجھے اس میں خوشی ہوگی کہ تین دن بھی مجھ پر اس حال میں نہ گزرے پائیں کہ اس میں سے میرے پاس کچھ بھی باقی نہ رہے۔ البتہ اگر کسی کا ترش دور کرنے کے لیے پتھر کا پھوڑا تو یہ اور بات ہے۔  
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## Tahir Ashrafi stresses Muslim unity to foil conspiracies

Addressing the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Conference at Idara Minhaj-ul-Hus-sain, he said the current situation demanded collective wisdom and restraint rather than emotional decisions, as hostile forces were attempting to create divisions among Muslim countries.



## National Assembly session to commence today

The session of the National Assembly will be held at Parliament House in Islamabad on Monday (today). In addition to legislative business, the House will take up matters of national and international importance.

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## Calls on

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday.



Photo: Online

## DPM/FM Dar, Saudi FM discuss evolving regional developments



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Sunday, held detailed discussions on the evolving regional and international developments.

During the meeting, they underscored the importance

of dialogue, diplomacy, and collective efforts to promote peace, security and stability in the region, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

Reaffirming their commitment for closer engagement, the two sides agreed to continue working together at bilateral and multilateral levels to further strengthen cooperation and contribute to regional peace and prosperity.

## PM, Saudi FM discuss ways to achieve peace, stability in region

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed ways to achieve peace and stability in the region.

The Prime Minister was assisted by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, National Security Advisor

Lt. Gen. Muhammad Asim Malik, and SAPM Tariq Fatemi.

During the warm and cordial meeting, the Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Saudi Foreign Minister and conveyed his respectful regards for The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and warm greetings for Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince & Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia.

While reaffirming Pakistan's full and unwavering solidarity and support with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Prime Minister appreciated the remarkable restraint exercised by Saudi Arabia amid the current crisis and assured the Saudi Foreign Minister that Pakistan would always stand shoulder to shoulder with Saudi Arabia.

While emphasizing the Kingdom's leadership role in the Muslim Ummah, the

Prime Minister stressed upon the need to forge unity within the Islamic countries at this critical time.

The Saudi Foreign Minister thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and shared with him the latest Saudi perspective on the regional situation.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia agreed to continue to coordinate their positions closely in order to secure peace and stability in the region.

## Iran to allow 20 ships under Pakistani flag through Hormuz: Dar

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has said the government of Iran has agreed to allow 20 more ships under the Pakistani flag to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, adding that two ships will cross the strait daily.

In a post on X, he said, "I am pleased to share great news that the government of Iran has agreed to allow 20 more ships under the Pakistani flag to pass through the Strait of Hormuz; two ships will cross the Strait daily.

"This is a welcome and constructive gesture by Iran and deserves appreciation. It is a harbinger of peace and will help usher in stability in the region. This positive announcement marks a meaningful step toward peace and will strengthen our collective efforts in that direction," he added. "Dialogue, diplomacy, and such confidence-building measures are the only way forward," Dar added,

## MQM Pakistan decides to intensify political contacts for constitutional amendment

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Pakistan has decided to intensify political contacts.

According to the decision, MQM Pakistan will contact various political parties regarding the 28th Constitutional Amendment and will seek support for Article 140A in the 28th Amendment to make local government bodies autonomous.

According to sources, the bill prepared by MQM Pakistan regarding Article 140A will be presented to political parties.

MQM Pakistan will also hold an all-party conference regarding the 28th Amendment.

MQM Pakistan and PML-N had reached an agreement to implement Article 140A before forming the government.

MQM has also demanded the implementation of Article 140A in its meeting with the prime minister of Pakistan yesterday.

## PIA resumes direct London flights after six years

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Sunday resumed its direct flight operations to London after a gap of six years.

The PIA flight is scheduled to land at Heathrow Airport after an approximately eight-hour journey.

The resumption of flights was formally inaugurated by Defence Secretary Lt Gen (retd) Muhammad Ali and British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott.

Under the new schedule, PIA will operate four direct weekly flights to London — three from Islamabad and one from Lahore.

Speaking at the occasion, British High Commissioner Jane Marriott welcomed the restoration of PIA's London flights, terming it a positive development.

Defence Secretary Muhammad Ali also expressed satisfaction, saying it was encouraging to see the restoration of this important air link.

He added that Pakistan and the United Kingdom share strong trade relations.

## Dar, Turkish FM discuss regional situation, reaffirm strategic partnership



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey, Hakan Fidan, exchanged views on recent regional developments, including the evolving situation in Iran, on Sunday.

During a bilateral meeting at the Foreign Office, they emphasised the importance of dialogue and sustained diplomatic engagement to promote peace and stability.

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan is visiting Pakistan alongside the Foreign

Ministers of Saudi Arabia and Egypt for consultations on the evolving regional situation and ongoing efforts aimed at de-escalation. During the meeting, Ishaq Dar underscored the historic and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Turkey, rooted in shared history, culture, and mutual respect, the Foreign Office spokesperson said in a press release.

Both sides reaffirmed their unwavering support for each other's core national interests, agreed to maintain close coordination, and to continue working together to deepen the strategic partnership between Pakistan and Turkey.

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# Azad Kashmir PM declares industrial growth top priority amid investment focus

**Bureau Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the promotion of small, medium, and large industries were his government's top priority.

Concrete measures are being taken to boost industrial development, attract investment, and create employment opportunities in the region", the pm said this while speaking to government Advisor Sardar Fahad Yaqoob who called on him here today.

He noted that positive administrative changes have been introduced to facilitate investors and business persons.

The present government, he said, was keen to create a conducive environment, encouraging investors and young entrepreneurs."

These initiatives have led to new job opportunities, strengthening the economy, and reducing unemployment", he added.

Highlighting the importance of the digital economy, the PM said that the educated youth must focus not only on traditional sectors but also on the



digital and modern economy.

He further stated that the government was implementing a comprehensive policy to equip youth with skills, provide business opportunities, and strengthen the industrial sector to boost local economy.

The Prime Minister also mentioned that the government's decision to set a minimum wage standard has resulted in improved earnings for workers.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were also held regarding the party's organizational situation, public

outreach campaign, and preparations for the upcoming elections in District Poonch. Advisor Sardar Fahad Yaqoob assured the Prime Minister that under his leadership, the Pakistan Peoples Party would achieve success in the upcoming elections.

## Azad Kashmir PM vows to boost women's role in PPP ahead of elections

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is a grassroots party in which women have always played a crucial role. He made these remarks during a meeting with the PPP's Women's Wing president and former Deputy Speaker, Ms. Shaheen Kausar Dar here today. The prime minister Rathore said that in view of the upcoming elections, it was essential to further strengthen and organize the Women's Wing so that it can play a full role in the party's success. He further stated that empowering women and providing them with maximum opportunities to participate in the political process were among the PPP's key priorities. He reaffirmed that the PPP would continue to take all possible steps for the empowerment of women. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on making the Women's Wing more active and effective, strengthening party organization, and enhancing its role across Azad Kashmir in the context of the upcoming elections. On this occasion, Ms. Shaheen Kausar Dar also congratulated the Prime Minister on performing Umrah. She also briefed the Prime Minister on the party's organizational structure and its activities, stating that the organizational process across Azad Kashmir will soon be completed.



## Shah Ghulam Qadir Pushes for Unity, Targets PPP Ahead of Azad Kashmir Elections



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from Khai Gala constituency met with President Pakistan Muslim League (N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Shah Ghulam Qadir. Chairman of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Azad Kashmir Trade Wing and candidate for the Assembly Haji Sardar Abdul Rashid Khan, Barrister Junaid Bahadur Khan, Malik Kaleem Awan and other Muslim League office bearers were present in the meeting. Shah Ghulam Qadir directed the Muslim League leaders to maintain unity and start the election campaign in the constituency and convey the message of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to every corner of the constituency. The Muslim League (N) is participating to form the government in Azad Kashmir and we will go to the people on the basis of our manifesto and the performance of the previous government. Our competition is with the PPP. Now the people of Azad Kashmir have to decide through the ballot paper whether they want an incompetent government like Sindh and Azad Kashmir to be the ruins of Larkana or they want a modern government like Punjab in Azad Kashmir and an exemplary development and development like Lahore. Shah Ghulam Qadir while talking further said that we want a government like Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz to establish a people's government in Azad Kashmir through a fair and transparent election and to implement the vision of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif in Azad Kashmir and for this we have completed our homework. We have dedicated workers and the most suitable candidates in every constituency.

## AJK Chief Election Commissioner reviews electoral preparedness in Poonch House visit

**Abdul Majeed Tahir.**

RAWALPINDI: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chief Election Commissioner Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal visited the Election Commission Office Poonch House. On this occasion, Secretary Election Commission Raja Shakeel Khan was also with him. Election Commission officials welcomed the Chief Election Commissioner and Secretary Election Commission. On this occasion, Election Commission officials gave a detailed briefing to the Chief Election Commissioner regarding the administrative preparations so far in connection with the upcoming general elections. Speaking, Chief Election Commissioner Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal said that the Election Commission is fully mobilized to ensure the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections.

He directed that full efforts should be made to make the voter lists of Jammu and Kashmir refugees residing in Pakistan transparent and accurate. He said that in this regard, the Deputy Election Commissioner should maintain close contact with the representatives of Jammu and Kashmir refugees residing in Pakistan and their complaints and concerns should be addressed in a timely manner so that the public's confidence in the electoral process is further strengthened. The Chief Election Commissioner said that an important meeting will be held soon with the Election Commission of Pakistan in which a comprehensive strategy will be decided regarding the conduct of elections in the constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir refugees residing in Pakistan. He reiterated the resolve that the Election Commission will ensure a clean, transparent and credible electoral process with the cooperation of all relevant institutions.

## Palm Sunday

ISLAMABAD: Christian devotees attend a service to mark Palm Sunday as part of the traditional Lenten devotion at Fatima Church, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Diplomacy must keep pace with military moves to avert prolonged Gulf conflict: Masood Khan

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has affirmed that substantive diplomatic engagement between the United States and Iran is already underway, with Pakistan playing a central and trusted mediatory role.

Responding to evolving developments in the Gulf, Ambassador Khan stated that Pakistan has moved beyond a traditional facilitative role to emerge as the lead mediator in the ongoing diplomatic process. He noted that this role has received wide international endorsement, including support from regional actors and major powers such as China, underscoring Islamabad's growing diplomatic credibility.



"Talks are necessary even as hostilities persist," he emphasized, adding that diplomacy must continue in parallel with military developments to prevent a prolonged and destabilizing conflict.

He cautioned that while both sides maintain maximalist positions, sustained engagement remains essential to eventually secure a ceasefire and transition toward structured negotiations.

# Friends of Kashmir is not part of Hurriyat, clarification of Abdul Hameed Lone

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

ISLAMABAD: All-Party Hurriyat Conference Convener Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Safi, General Secretary Advocate Pervaiz Ahmed and Information Secretary Mushtaq Ahmed Butt have clarified in a comprehensive, reasoned and principled joint statement that all statements issued by the Hurriyat Conference to the media are issued only by the authorized and constitutional leadership of the organization, i.e. the Convener, General Secretary or Information Secretary. Therefore, any such statement, news or position attributed to any source other than these responsible persons should never be considered as the policy or position of the Hurriyat Conference

The statement also emphasized that in the present era, due to the rapid dissemination of information and the abundance of unverified sources, sometimes such statements come to light which are not only contrary to reality but also lead to a misinterpretation of the organizational position. Therefore, it is the responsibility of media institutions, the journalistic community and the general public to verify the authenticity of the news or statement before publishing it and to base it only on those statements that have been officially issued by the officials of the Hurriyat Conference.

The All-Party Hurriyat Conference, while reiterating its principled position, clarified that the basic and unwavering policy of the organization is that it does

not directly interfere or participate in the internal politics of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan. The Hurriyat Conference is limiting its scope and struggle purely to the inalienable right of the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to self-determination, which is in accordance with international laws, UN resolutions and the principles of justice. The organization is continuing its struggle in an organized, peaceful and effective manner on various forums and fronts at political, diplomatic and public levels.

The statement further said that the Hurriyat Conference is well aware of the fact that the Kashmir issue is an international dispute and is also deeply related to the sentiments of the Muslim Ummah and especially the Pakistani

people. In this context, the organization has adopted a principled policy that all political, social and religious parties, organizations and classes of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir should be united and united in the cause of Kashmir. The Hurriyat Conference welcomes every positive and sincere effort that is made to highlight the Kashmir issue and support the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination.

Furthermore, the statement also clarified that the Hurriyat Conference believes in resolving any differences of opinion or concerns at any level through mutual consultation, serious dialogue and closed-door understanding rather than bringing them up for public discussion through the media. The aim



of this strategy is not only to maintain the dignity, seriousness and unity of the organization but also to not provide any opportunity for any negative propaganda to the enemy elements.

At the end of the statement, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference has strongly appealed to the public, journalists, analysts and all relevant circles to examine the statements issued in the past and any news or stance that may come out in the future in the light of this official clarification of the Hurriyat Conference. The public was asked to trust only authentic and responsible sources and avoid spreading any un-

verified or misleading information, so as to maintain the sensitivity, seriousness and true spirit of the Kashmir issue.

The Hurriyat Conference reiterated its resolve to continue its struggle at all levels for its principled stand, organizational discipline and the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people and will not hesitate to make any sacrifice until this goal is achieved.

The statement clarified that Friends of Kashmir is not part of the Hurriyat Conference. An explanation regarding Abdul Hameed Lone's statement should be sought from him or his organization Friends of Kashmir.

Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	4:36 am
Zohr	12:13 pm
Asr	4:40 pm
Maghrib	6:26 pm
Isha	7:50 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316

**Dr. Tariq Malik Mahmood Honored for Active Role in Intellectual Exchange Forum**

City Desk



The Committee of the A Walk-Through Education Global Intellectual Exchange marked the successful completion of its first quarter of 2026 with a celebratory session. In recognition of consistent academic engagement, the Committee unanimously decided to award special shields to both presenters and participants who regularly attended its webinar series during this period. Among the honorees, Dr. Tariq Malik Mahmood from Pakistan was awarded a special shield for his active participation and valuable contributions. The initiative reflects the Forum's commitment to promoting global intellectual exchange and recognizing scholarly excellence.

# Maryam Nawaz declares courage and merit have no gender at Women's Day event

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that leadership rises above gender, emphasizing that courage and merit have no gender, and women should not be discouraged by criticism. Addressing the "Hum Leader Award" ceremony held in connection with International Women's Day, she highlighted that

despite societal challenges, women who strive forward can become role models for others.

She noted that politics has traditionally remained male-dominated, but women possess the unique ability to manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously. Reflecting on her journey, she said that being the niece of a three-time Prime Minister and three-time Chief Minister was



both an honor and a challenge, as many doubted her ability to reform a broken system. She shared personal experiences, including her time in jail where she refused special privileges despite extreme conditions, enduring temperatures of 50 degrees in a confined cell.

Highlighting women empowerment initiatives, she said that women across Punjab are being provided with

safe opportunities to earn livelihoods. From improved public spaces to safer transport and the introduction of virtual police stations, video call reporting, panic buttons, and CCTV monitoring, significant steps have been taken to ensure women's safety.

She added that women are now serving across key positions, including chief minister, chief justice, ministers, secretaries, commissioners,

deputy commissioners, and DPOs, as well as joining the armed forces and excelling in professional fields.

Congratulating award recipients, she paid tribute to distinguished women including Yasmin Qureshi, Anees Haroon, Jehan Ara, and Mai Janda, acknowledging that the journey towards women's empowerment is not easy but achievable through resilience and determination.

## Beautiful view

ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of cloudy weather, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Jahangir Khan Tareen visited JDW Sugarcane Breeding & Research Centre

Iram Asim

MULTAN: Jahangir Khan Tareen visited the first-of-its-kind JDW Sugarcane Breeding & Research Centre in Thatha and reviewed ongoing breeding activities and observed the successful induction of sugarcane flowering through controlled conditions and the development of new high-performing varieties.

Speaking on the occasion, Jahangir Khan Tareen highlighted the need to address stagnation in Pakistan's agriculture. He noted that many countries rely on importing sugarcane varieties instead of developing their own, primarily due to the lack of suitable environmental conditions required for breeding.

He said that countries like Australia achieved success in modern agriculture by creating controlled environments to



support research and innovation.

He further informed that the research programme has now progressed to the next stage, with even higher-performing

varieties under evaluation.

Executive Director JDW-Unit 1, Dr. Hassan Iqbal, was also present on the occasion.

## Five Lahore Doctors Fired Over Criminal Negligence Allegations

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Health Department has taken strict action against five doctors of Lady Willingdon Hospital for criminal negligence, negligence and violation of SOPs. Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, in continuation of previous orders (dated 27-03-2026 and 28-03-2026) and acting under clause 13.2 of the Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) for Postgraduate Residency (PGR) / Level-III Programs, has terminated the postgraduate training of 5 PGRs with immediate effect. Postgraduate training of Dr. Tayyaba Fatima Toor FCPS (Obstetrics and Gynaecology), Dr. Maham Amin MS (Obstetrics and Gynaecology), Dr. Zainab Tahir FCPS (Obstetrics and Gynaecology), Dr. Ayesha Afzal FCPS (Obstetrics and Gynaecology) and Dr. Amna Rashid FCPS (Obstetrics and Gynaecology) has been terminated. The Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education has also sent orders to the President of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, Pakistan and the President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Pakistan and other authorities for necessary action.

Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has said that strict action will be taken against violation of discipline in hospitals so that uninterrupted treatment of patients can be ensured.

## Veteran PPP Leader Dr. Sikandar Hayat Khan Passes Away

Raza Naqvi



ATTOCK: Senior Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader, former provincial minister, and former Member of the Punjab Assembly, Dr. Sikandar Hayat Khan, passed away on Saturday in Hassan Abdal after a prolonged illness,

family sources confirmed.

By profession, Dr. Sikandar Hayat Khan was a physician and was widely respected for his services in the field of medicine and his long-standing commitment to public welfare. Colleagues and patients remembered him as a compassionate and sincere doctor who dedicated his life to the service of humanity.

His funeral prayer was offered on Saturday evening in Hassan Abdal, attended by a large number of political leaders, party workers, relatives, and members of the public. Former Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf, former federal minister Malik Amin Aslam Khan, and MNA Sheikh Aftab Ahmed were also present on the occasion. The late leader's sons and brothers, including Sardar Ashar Hayat Khan, Zulfiqar Hayat Khan, Jani Khan, and other family members, were also in attendance.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Governor Punjab Sardar Saad Haider Khan expressed deep sorrow and grief over Dr. Sikandar Hayat Khan's passing, calling it a great loss for the party in the district.

## Farewell Seminar Held in Honour of Professor Muhammad Usman

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A dignified farewell seminar was held at Government Graduate College Attock in honour of noted Punjabi writer, educationist, and former Deputy Director Colleges Attock, Professor Muhammad Usman Siddiqui, upon completion of his remarkable 40 years of teaching and administrative service. Professor Siddiqui is set to retire from service on March 31.

Among the prominent participants were former Director Colleges Rawalpindi Professor Sher Ahmad Satti, Director General Regional Services Allama Iqbal Open University Dr Malik Tauqeer Ahmad, Chairman Department of Urdu Allama Iqbal Open University Dr Arshad Mahmood Nashad, Controller Examinations Rawalpindi Board Professor Tanveer Asghar, Deputy Director Colleges Attock Professor Saadia Kanwal, Professor Malik Azam Khalid, Deputy Director Public Relations Attock Shehzad Niaz Khokhar, Professor Muhammad Zakria, Professor Khalid Javed Siddiqui, Dr Shaukat Mahmood Shaukat, Professor Abdul Hameed Majrooh, Professor Tanveer Sajjad, Professor Muhammad Afzal, Professor Azhar Mahmood, Professor Waseem Haider, Professor Sharif Zahid, Professor Ghazala Javed, Principal Government College for Women Hazro Professor Rana Aziz, Professor Samina Naz, Professor Surayya Begum, Dr Rubina Kiran, Professor Arshad Khan, Professor Sohail Basit, Professor Safdar Khan, Professor Usman Aziz, Professor Nusrat Bukhari, Professor Faiz Hussain, Professor Nasir Mahmood, Professor Aitazaz Aziz, Professor Muhammad Irfan, Professor Muhammad Sohail Khan, Professor Abdul Rehman, Professor Ahmad Nisar, Professor Imran Saeed, Dr Jameel Hayat, Professor Nasr Mahmood, Professor Nasir Ali Shah, Professor Asif Hayat and Professor Saqib Mahmood, besides other teachers and distinguished guests.

Professor Tauqeer Ahmad of the Urdu Department, Professor Muhammad Usman Siddiqui, Principal Government Graduate College Attock Dr Syed Muhammad Imrane also speak on the occasion.

At the end of the ceremony, guests presented bouquets to Professor Siddiqui, while an elaborate luncheon was also hosted in the college lawn in honour of the participants.

# Multan District Gears Up for Transparency with RTI Awareness Campaign

Quratulain Asim

MULTAN: A district forum was organized at a local hotel in connection with the awareness campaign regarding the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 organized by Farmers Development Organization (FDO) and TDEA. Representatives of various organizations involved in the awareness campaign, professors of universities and colleges, students and public information officers of government institutions participated in the district forum. At the beginning of the program, FDO Manager Ali Ijaz said that the awareness campaign regarding the RTI Act was started in Multan district in January 2026.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Deepa, Registrar of Women University Multan, said that as a result of awareness programs, all the necessary information

for the students has been included on the university website, which has given the students easy access to information. Dr. Muhammad Farooq from Emerson

University and Dr. Zahid from Postgraduate College said in their speeches that organizing such awareness programs in educational institutions is a positive step,

which has increased awareness among the students and they have started considering the RTI Act as an effective means of obtaining information.



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# Pakistan's Strategic Role in an Expanding Iran Conflict

The ongoing diplomatic effort led by Pakistan to mediate between the United States and Iran may appear, at first glance, to be a straightforward negotiation between two adversaries. Yet beneath this seemingly simple framework lies a deeply entangled geopolitical battlefield where multiple actors, conflicting agendas, and irreconcilable objectives converge. What is unfolding is not merely a bilateral dispute but a sprawling, multi-theater confrontation that extends far beyond Washington and Tehran, making any meaningful negotiation extraordinarily complex—if not nearly impossible.

The United States has indicated that Israel retains the autonomy to act militarily against Iran regardless of any agreement reached between Washington and Tehran. This implies that even a successful U.S.-Iran deal could be rendered meaningless if Israel continues hostilities—a scenario that is not only plausible but likely given Israel's stated security concerns.

The Iranian response to the U.S. 15-point proposal further highlights the widening gap between the two sides. While Iran acknowledged receipt of the proposal, it outright rejected its core components and introduced additional demands that significantly raise the stakes. Among these is a call for the cessation of hostilities between Israel and multiple regional actors, including Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Cyprus, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and multiple active theaters including Gaza, the West Bank, Syria, and Iraq. Each of these actors has its own stakes, fears, and strategic objectives, transforming the conflict into a geopolitical web that defies simple resolution.

Pakistan's role as mediator, therefore, is not just challenging—it is unprecedented in its complexity. Islamabad is not merely facilitating dialogue between two nations; it is attempting to reconcile a spectrum of actors whose interests often directly contradict one another. Even if the United States and Iran were to reach some form of agreement, the presence of Israel as an independent and highly assertive military actor complicates the equation significantly.

Recent statements from senior U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, underscore this dilemma.

involvement adds yet another layer to an already intricate negotiation process, as their security concerns and economic interests must now be factored into any potential agreement.

Within Iran itself, there appears to be little appetite for compromise. The prevailing sentiment among its leadership is one of defiance rather than negotiation. Tehran has made it clear that it does not intend to end the war under external pressure or imposed timelines. Instead, it seeks to dictate the terms, timing, and conditions of any resolution, positioning itself as the primary arbiter of the conflict's outcome.

This stance directly conflicts with the objectives of the United States, which initially entered the conflict with four key demands influenced heavily by Israeli strategic priorities: the surrender of enriched uranium stockpiles, the dismantling of Iran's missile program, the destruction of its military manufacturing infrastructure, and the cessation of support for regional proxy groups. Iran has categorically rejected these demands, viewing them as infringements on its sovereignty and security.

On the battlefield, the situation continues to escalate. Reports indicate that Iran has launched attacks on U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia, resulting in casualties and forcing evacuations. Simultaneously, Iran has targeted critical infrastructure within Israel, including nuclear facilities, oil refineries in Haifa, and potentially water desalination plants—moves aimed at crippling Israel's energy and water supply systems.

Adding to the gravity of the situation are the assessments of military analysts such

as Scott Ritter, a former U.S. serviceman with extensive experience in conflict zones. Ritter has issued stark warnings about the vulnerability of U.S. forces in the region, suggesting that many American bases are no longer secure and that casualties may be significantly underreported. He argues that modern warfare, as demonstrated by Iran, has rendered traditional military assets like aircraft carriers increasingly ineffective, particularly against advanced drone and missile systems.

Ritter's controversial remarks go even further, advocating for extreme measures against Israel's military and nuclear infrastructure—statements that, while highly provocative, reflect the intensity of the debate within certain strategic circles. His broader argument is that the United States is engaged in a conflict it cannot win under current conditions and should consider a strategic withdrawal to avoid further escalation.

Yet despite these daunting challenges, diplomacy remains the only viable path forward. The alternative—a prolonged, multi-front war—would have devastating consequences not only for the region but for global stability, energy markets, and international security.

Pakistan's mediation effort, therefore, represents both a formidable challenge and a critical opportunity. Success will require not only diplomatic skill but also a willingness among all parties to move beyond rigid positions and embrace pragmatic solutions. Whether such a shift is possible remains to be seen, but the stakes could not be higher.

*The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and former MD, SRBC. He is living in Macomb, Michigan*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Karot Hydropower Project: A CPEC Triumph Against Geological Odds

With a generation capacity of 720 megawatts, the Karot Hydropower Project is among the early harvest projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). One of its most notable features is its "run-of-the-river" design, which utilizes the natural flow of the river to generate electricity without the need for large reservoirs. This approach significantly reduces environmental impact and limits the displacement of local communities, making it a sustainable and environmentally responsible energy solution.

The Karot Hydropower Project, constructed on the Jhelum River, has emerged as a shining example of economic and technical cooperation between Pakistan and China. This landmark initiative is not only playing a vital role in addressing Pakistan's long-standing energy crisis but has also established itself as a significant milestone in the fields of modern engineering, strategic planning, and international partnership. In particular, the successful completion of its diversion tunnels marked a decisive phase that set the project firmly on the path toward operational success.

Constructing diversion tunnels is widely regarded as one of the most complex and high-risk phases of any hydropower project, and Karot was no exception. The region's geological conditions presented serious challenges, including hard rock formations, fault lines, and unstable ground layers. Tunnel excavation in such an environment required advanced machinery, technical expertise, and continuous monitoring. Engineers also had to contend with high groundwater pressure and the constant risk of landslides, which further complicated the process.

The project comprises several key components, including the dam, powerhouse, headrace tunnels, tailrace tunnels, and diversion tunnels. Among these, the diversion tunnels hold critical importance, particularly during the early stages of construction. These tunnels are used to temporarily redirect the river's flow, allowing engineers to work on the main structures in a dry and controlled environment. In the Karot project, three diversion tunnels were constructed, each approximately 447 meters long. They were meticulously designed to safely handle the fast and unpredictable flow of the Jhelum River.

Time constraints added further pressure to the project. As part of the early harvest initiatives under CPEC, timely completion was critical. China Three Gorges Corporation rose to the challenge, successfully completing the diversion tunnels within a limited timeframe while maintaining high engineering standards. This achievement reflects the company's exceptional planning, efficient resource management, and world-class technical capabilities.

In addition to geological difficulties, hydrological challenges posed another layer of complexity. The flow of the Jhelum River varies significantly with seasonal changes, ranging from low to extremely high volumes. Temporarily diverting such a volatile river system required precise planning and execution, as any miscalculation could have resulted in severe flooding and disruption of construction activities. To mitigate these risks, advanced hydraulic modelling and engineering simulations were employed to ensure the tunnels could withstand varying water pressures and flow velocities.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awcat)

## Investment on Girls Education in Pakistan: Planning, Strategies and Implementation

Pakistan confronts a stark educational imperative: channeling investments into girls' schooling stands to supercharge GDP by up to 30%, dismantle poverty traps, and cultivate resilient societies, yet entrenched gender disparities belie this promise, with primary net enrollment for girls hovering at 72% compared to 85% for boys, rural dropout rates soaring beyond 50%, and secondary participation plummeting to just 33% in the most deprived provinces. A staggering 22 million children remain out of school, two-thirds of them girls, a human capital catastrophe that drains trillions from the economy while perpetuating cycles of multi-dimensional poverty afflicting 40% of the population. Deep-seated cultural norms masquerading as "honor" severely restrict mobility, child marriages precipitate dropouts at rates 40% higher for girls, lack of basic infrastructure such as toilets repress 25% of potential attendees, and sheer economic hardship excludes another 35%. This multifaceted crisis demands nothing less than a comprehensive investment paradigm encompassing visionary planning, multifaceted strategies, and unyielding implementation to propel girls from societal peripheries to the forefront of national progress.

The contours of this deficit reveal profound regional and socioeconomic fissures. In rural Balochistan, girls' enrollment languishes at a mere 40%, while urban Punjab achieves 80%; Sindh's secondary rates stagnate at 33%. Malnutrition chronically undermines cognitive development, sparse ratios of female teachers erode parental confidence, and treacherous distances expose young girls to risks that keep them homebound. Half of those who complete primary

never transition to secondary, a bottleneck exacerbated by adolescence. The COVID-19 lockdowns widened these chasms further, with girls enjoying 15% less digital access, entrenching learning losses that could span generations. Economically, the calculus is unforgiving: uneducated girls translate to 20% lower household incomes, suboptimal child health outcomes, and elevated fertility straining scarce resources. Modeling from global institutions projects that achieving parity could inject 2.5% annual growth; targeted rural interventions alone might reclaim 10 million learners from the margins.

Planning must form the bedrock of any transformative effort, beginning with evidence-based audits tailored to provincial realities, forecasting a decadal infusion of Rs 500-700 billion to elevate education spending to 4% of GDP, with ring-fenced allocations prioritizing girls. A Vision 2030 framework sets phased milestones: universal primary access by 2028, 90% secondary by 2032. Core instruments include conditional cash transfers delivering PKR 200-500 monthly stipends tied to attendance, proven to slash dropouts by 20%; complimentary uniforms, textbooks, and meals further dismantle financial barriers. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) blueprint the construction of 10,000 dedicated rural girls' primaries, with private capital funding facilities while government secures land and utilities. Curricula recalibration embeds vocational STEM tracks, life skills, and menstrual health education, complemented by aggressive training pipelines for 100K female educators annually. Donor alignments unlock billions in concessional financing, while equity indices populate public dashboards for real-time monitoring of

enrollment, retention, and learning outcomes. Participatory mechanisms engage parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and community leaders like imams in co-designing culturally attuned models, ensuring buy-in from grassroots upward. Macro-planning synchronizes with Sustainable Development Goals through gender budgeting mandates allocating 30% of education outlays to girls-specific initiatives; fiscal federalism empowers provinces to compete on outcome metrics, fostering innovation in delivery. Risk matrices preempt corruption via transparent procurement and resistance through data-driven showcases of economic returns.

The strategy arsenal deploys a barrage of targeted interventions across financial, access, infrastructural, human capital, normative, technological, vocational, and health domains. Financial levers encompass tiered stipends for adolescents reaching PKR 1000+, merit-cum-need scholarships that boost retention by 30%. Access innovations like mobile and community schools halve travel distances, enrolling 40% more in remote areas; subsidized bike and transport banks ensure safe commutes. Infrastructure mandates achieve 95% toilet coverage, boundary walls, and CCTV for dignity and security. Human capital accelerates fast-track certification for female teachers with incentives for postings in hard-to-reach locales. Normative shifts leverage media campaigns and imam-led advocates that double parental consents by reframing education as familial honor. Technological leaps introduce solar-powered digital classrooms streaming adaptive content, AI tutors personalizing learning trajectories. Vocational bridges offer post-primary internships in tailoring, IT, and agribusiness, aligning skills with labor markets to elevate future LFPR. Health integrations via school clubs address hygiene, nutrition, and vaccinations, acting as potent retention boosters.

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Analysis

Dr. T. M. Malik

## From National Command to Global Spotlight: The Rise of Field Marshal Asim Munir

Pakistan's strategic realignment has been shaped largely outside formal political channels, with Asim Munir emerging as the central figure directing both national security and foreign policy. His rise from Chief of Army Staff to a statesman of influence reflects consistent management of internal instability and external pressures. Under his leadership, Pakistan shifted its approach toward India following the 2019 revocation of Article 370 and Article 35A, moving from reactive condemnation to proactive deterrence. This involved calibrated military posturing, engagement in international forums like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the strengthening of internal security to prevent hybrid warfare, replacing perceived weakness with "strategic clarity" by clearly defining Pakistan's red lines and countering destabilization attempts in regions such as Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Simultaneously, Munir restructured Pakistan's approach to Afghanistan, ending the distinction between "good" and "bad" Taliban, targeting all militant factions, completing border fencing, and asserting that no group would be tolerated as a strategic asset, thereby restoring sovereignty and signaling the end of non-state actors' influence on policy.

Domestically, Munir launched an unprecedented crackdown on sectarian impunity, dismantling networks, seizing assets, prosecuting leaders, and enforcing the state's monopoly on violence across all sectarian lines to reaffirm national unity. These initiatives paved the way for a prominent international role,

with Pakistan mediating escalating tensions between the United States and Iran. Islamabad is preparing to host senior officials from both nations, leveraging Pakistan's strategic border with Iran and longstanding partnership with the US to act as a credible bridge. Munir's credibility in both capitals, combined with synchronized engagement by Pakistan's military and civilian leadership, enabled high-level communications, including direct dialogue with the US President and outreach to Iran's leadership, aligning timelines and parameters for de-escalation. This coordinated effort helped avert potential military confrontation, safeguarded global trade routes like the Strait of Hormuz, and offered both nations a pathway to resolve tensions without humiliation, positioning Munir and Pakistan as critical facilitators of regional stability and global economic security.

In the midst of these high-wire diplomatic acts, the domestic perception of Field Marshal Asim Munir has undergone a profound transformation, crystallizing into a bond of trust between the military leadership and the wider populace. It is a relationship that stands in stark contrast to the environment he stepped into at the outset of his tenure. In the beginning, he faced outright hatred from a specific, albeit vocal, segment of society—the "few usual idiots" as they have come to be known in the national discourse. This faction, consisting of a ragtag alliance of polarized politicians, opportunistic media personalities, and their foreign-funded proxies, attempted to delegitimize his appointment from day one. They engaged in a sustained

Continued on Page 7

# Israel Blocks Christian Leaders from Holy Sepulchre on Palm Sunday, Ministry Condemns 'Unprecedented Crime'

Wafa

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates strongly condemns in the harshest terms the Israeli occupation authorities' prevention of His Beatitude the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, and the Custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton, from reaching the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in occupied Jerusalem to perform Palm Sunday Mass.

This comes as a dangerous precedent that undermines freedom of worship and targets the authentic Christian presence in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

The Ministry affirms that this arbitrary prevention, which has not occurred for centuries against church leaders performing their religious rituals, constitutes a crime and an

illegal military measure.

It is a blatant violation of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among them freedom of worship.

It also represents a disregard for the feelings of hundreds of millions of people around the world, and affects the sentiments of both Christians and Muslims who share the sanctity of Jerusalem and its religious and historical significance. It further constitutes a violation of the existing legal and historical status quo.

The Ministry warns of the danger of this precedent, which represents an assault by the occupation on existing obligations, and reveals an escalating policy in occupied Jerusalem aimed at displacing our people and Judaizing the holy city. It threatens to deprive worshippers of practicing their religious rituals, even during the holiest

of occasions.

The Ministry calls on the international community and its institutions to take immediate and practical steps to stop this crime and the escalating occupation policy in occupied Jerusalem, including exerting pressure on the extremist occupation government and increasing international presence on the ground to preserve the Palestinian Christian presence, ensure they are not deprived of their rights, and guarantee respect for freedom of worship and access to holy sites, and the protection of the existing historical and legal status quo.

It also calls for providing international protection for the Palestinian people and for their Islamic and Christian holy sites, in light of the continued systematic and widespread Israeli assaults, crimes, and ongoing violations.



## PIDE Warns Oil Shock Threatens Pakistan's Fiscal Stability

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has released a new policy viewpoint titled Managing Oil Shocks: Pakistan's Fiscal Risks and Policy Choices, authored by Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Registrar/Professor of Economics at PIDE; Dr. Shahzada M. Naeem Nawaz, Professor of Economics at PIDE; and Anma Riaz, Research Economist at PIDE, warning that rising global oil prices pose a serious threat to Pakistan's fiscal stability and ongoing consolidation efforts. The study finds that the latest oil price shock, driven by escalating geopolitical tensions in the Gulf region, especially the Israel-US-Iran conflict and disruptions in petroleum supply routes, could significantly weaken the government's fiscal position and reduce its ability to maintain macroeconomic stability.

According to the report, Pakistan's

budgeted federal primary surplus of Rs. 1,706 billion, equivalent to 1.3 percent of GDP, is highly vulnerable to external oil shocks. Under a moderate shock scenario, where oil prices rise to \$100 per barrel, the primary surplus could decline to Rs. 1,002 billion. In



a severe scenario of \$120 per barrel, it may fall further to Rs. 821 billion, while in an extreme case of \$144 per barrel, it could shrink to just Rs. 781 billion. At the same time, the fiscal deficit may widen from the budgeted Rs. 6,501 billion, or 5.0 percent of GDP, to as high as Rs. 7,517 billion, or 5.8

percent of GDP, reflecting a sharp rise in fiscal stress.

The report argues that oil shocks affect Pakistan not only through a larger import bill, but also by intensifying inflation, increasing pressure on the exchange rate, slowing economic activity, and weakening confidence across the economy. As an oil-importing country with deep structural dependence on external energy markets, Pakistan remains highly exposed to fluctuations in global crude prices. The study notes that past episodes of elevated oil prices have consistently translated into imported inflation, external account pressures, subsidy burdens, and deterioration in fiscal buffers. Historical patterns presented in the report show that when Brent crude exceeded \$110 per barrel in earlier periods, inflation in Pakistan remained in double digits, while periods of lower oil prices brought temporary macroeconomic relief.

## PSCA Enhances Province-Wide Security with Advanced Drone Surveillance to Combat Crime & Violations

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) is actively ensuring province-wide surveillance through deployment of advanced drone technology, enabling timely and effective response to public safety concerns. Safe City drones are being utilized to monitor Emergency Helpline 15 calls, crime hotspots, traffic conditions, kite flying incidents, and smog violations, ensuring swift action against unlawful activities.

In Lahore, the drone team identified multiple instances of kite flying across various areas. Prompt alerts were issued to field police, leading to immediate enforcement actions. In Shad Bagh, as well as Nishtar Colony, Kahna and Badami Bagh, timely identification of kite flying through drone surveillance resulted in swift legal

proceedings. During surveillance operations near Karol Ghati and Badami Bagh, smoke emissions and smog-related violations were detected, and alerts were promptly issued to the Environmental Protection Depart-



ment for necessary action.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, drone monitoring is also being effectively carried out in crime hotspot areas such as Wahdat Colony and Allama Iqbal Town to prevent potential criminal activities. Meanwhile, illegal parking causing traffic congestion at

Shahdara Chowk and Chungi Amar Sidhu was addressed through immediate coordination with field police, restoring smooth traffic flow. In other cities including Gujrat, Sahiwal and Multan, continuous monitoring of crime hotspots is being conducted through smart Safe City drones. Additionally, in Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Rawalpindi, virtual hold-ups are being carried out using surveillance cameras to monitor suspicious activities.

The spokesperson added that use of drone surveillance and advanced technology is playing a vital role in ensuring timely and effective action against illegal activities across the province. The Punjab Safe Cities Authority remains fully committed to safeguarding citizens' lives and property across Punjab through innovative and proactive measures.

## The troubling rise of 'British Parliament awards' and the quiet erosion of public trust

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: There is something uniquely powerful about the setting of the Palace of Westminster. For many, it represents not just the seat of political authority, but the very idea of democratic legitimacy. It is precisely this symbolic weight that makes a growing and largely unregulated practice all the more concerning. In recent years, a pattern has emerged in which private events held within parliamentary committee rooms are used to bestow so-called "awards" on invited guests often from overseas creating the impression of official recognition. These occasions are typically organised under the provision that allows

Members of Parliament to sponsor events in a personal capacity, outside the scope of formal parliamentary business. The intention behind this provision is clear to enable engagement with communities and civil society. Yet, in practice, it is being stretched in ways that raise uncomfortable questions. At the centre of the issue is not legality, but perception.

The awards themselves are not issued by any official parliamentary body. They carry no formal endorsement from the House of Commons or the House of Lords. And yet, through careful staging formal backdrops, parliamentary settings, professional photography they are presented in a way that invites misunderstanding.

Recipients frequently leave with the impression, or at least the public narrative, that they have been honoured by the British Parliament. That distinction matters. It matters because Parliament, as an institution, derives its authority from public confidence. When its image is used, even indirectly, to lend credibility to privately organised and commercially driven events, that confidence risks being diluted. What may appear, at first glance, to be harmless pageantry begins to look more like the quiet



commodification of institutional prestige. The role of parts of the media in amplifying this ambiguity cannot be overlooked. Reports that individuals have been "honoured in Parliament" are often framed without sufficient context. While not factually incorrect in a literal sense, such phrasing blurs the line between location and legitimacy. In an era already marked by declining trust in institutions, this kind of imprecision carries consequences. There is also an ethical dimension that deserves closer scrutiny. Parliamentary rules

are explicit in prohibiting the use of office or facilities for personal financial gain. While the hosting of private events falls within permitted activity, the transformation of these spaces into platforms for the distribution or perceived sale of honours sits uneasily with both the spirit and the intent of those rules. None of this is to suggest a coordinated abuse of the system. More often, it reflects a grey area one where formal permissions exist, but safeguards against misrepresentation remain limited. That, however, is precisely why greater clarity is needed. Parliament may wish to consider whether existing guidelines adequately reflect the realities of how its spaces are being used. Clearer restrictions on

award ceremonies, or more explicit disclaimers regarding the non-official status of such events, would be a sensible starting point. Equally, Members who sponsor events carry a responsibility not only for access, but for the implications of association. For the public, the lesson is a familiar one. In a media environment shaped by optics as much as substance, appearances can mislead. A ceremony held within Parliament is not, by default, an act of Parliament. Institutions are rarely undermined by dramatic acts alone. More often, it is the accumulation of small ambiguities unquestioned, unchallenged that gradually erode their meaning. This may be one of them.

## Hyderabad's Drug Crisis: Silence, Power, and a Society at Risk

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

Hyderabad, long regarded as a city of culture, tolerance, and relative calm, now finds itself grappling with a crisis that threatens to erode its very social fabric. The unchecked spread of narcotics has transformed from a peripheral concern into a central, deeply entrenched issue, one that raises uncomfortable questions about governance, accountability, and collective silence.

The issue is no longer whether drugs are present in Hyderabad. That reality is visible in its neighborhoods, its streets, and increasingly, in its homes.

The real question is far more troubling: why has this menace not been contained? And more importantly, who benefits from its persistence?

**From Social Evil to Organized Enterprise**  
Drug abuse in Hyderabad is no longer an isolated social problem. It has evolved into an organized and structured enterprise. The availability of narcotics across various localities indicates a well-established supply chain, one that involves procurement, distribution, and protection.

Such a system cannot function in isolation. It requires coordination, resources, and, often, influence. This suggests that what exists is not merely a collection of small-time dealers, but a network with deeper roots and wider

reach. **The Weight of Silence**

Perhaps the most alarming dimension of this crisis is the silence surrounding it.

This silence cuts across multiple segments of society:

- Elected representatives
- Civil society organizations
- Business community
- Educational institutions
- Influential social voices

The absence of a unified, vocal response raises critical concerns. Is this silence born out of fear? Apathy? Or complicity?

In societies where wrongdoing thrives, silence often becomes its strongest ally. The lack of sustained public pressure allows such issues to normalize, gradually embedding themselves into everyday life.

**Institutional Failure or Complicity?**

Law enforcement agencies are expected to serve as the first line of defense against narcotics. Police, excise departments, and anti-narcotics forces carry the responsibility of curbing this menace.

However, public perception in Hyderabad appears to be shifting and not in a reassuring direction.

Where earlier allegations pointed to isolated instances of protection or negligence, there is now a growing belief that elements within enforce-

ment structures may themselves be compromised. Whether this perception is entirely accurate or not, its very existence is damaging. Trust, once eroded, is not easily restored.

If institutions are seen as ineffective or, worse, complicit, the consequences extend beyond the drug trade. It signals a breakdown of the rule of law.

**The Visible and the Invisible Players**

Arrests, when they occur, often involve individuals from marginalized backgrounds, daily wage earners, unemployed youth, or those with limited means. These individuals, while culpable, represent only the visible layer of a much larger system.

Behind them are the financiers, coordinators, and protectors, the "invisible players" who operate with relative immunity. These are the individuals who sustain and expand the network, often shielded by influence and resources.

Addressing the drug crisis without reaching these upper tiers is akin to treating symptoms while ignoring the disease.

**Nexus of Interests**  
The persistence of narcotics in a city

is rarely accidental. It often points to a convergence of interests.

Drug trade, globally, is a lucrative enterprise. Its profitability makes it attractive to those seeking quick financial gains. In such an environment, it is not implausible that:

- Political actors may turn a blind eye
- Business interests may indirectly benefit

Influential figures may provide protection

If such a nexus exists, dismantling it requires more than routine policing. It demands political will, institutional integrity, and public accountability.

**A Generation at Stake**  
The most devastating impact of this crisis is being borne by the youth.

Educational institutions are increasingly vulnerable. Unemployment and social frustration create fertile ground for substance abuse.

- The consequences are visible:
  - Rising addiction rates
  - Increased petty crime
  - Strained family structures
  - Long-term societal instability
- Each individual lost to addiction represents not just a personal tragedy, but a collective failure.



## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
151,707.51	152,907.96	
Day's High	Day's Low	
153,660.88	151,457.94	
Index Value	Change	
19,905,889,255	-1200.45	
Percentage	Time	
-0.79%	27 Mar, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
9,967.35	-4.82	
Percentage	Time	
-0.048%	27 Mar, 4:40 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
45,373.57	-586.54	
Percentage	Time	
-1.28%	27 Mar, 1:34 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
53,373.07	-230.58	
Percentage	Time	
-0.43%	27 Mar, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	189.60	194.25
Bahrain Dinar	732.15	742.90
Canadian Dollar	198.97	204.25
China Yuan	36.65	37.6
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	322.02	328.75
Hong Kong Dollar	35	36
Indian Rupee	2.05	2.31
Japanese Yen	1.7210	1.8199
Kuwaiti Dinar	889.60	900.45
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.45
New Zealand \$	160.81	165.35
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	719.25	729.55
Qatari Riyal	73.33	74.3
Saudi Riyal	74.20	75.45
Singapore Dollar	215.32	220.32
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.90	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	372.38	380.98
US Dollar	279.50	280.2

# Palestinian economy loses a fifth of its value over two years

Wafa

RAMALLAH: Official data released on Sunday showed that the Palestinian economy grew by 4% in 2025 compared to the previous year, but remained approximately 20% lower than in 2023, the year when the Israeli war on Gaza began in late 2023.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported that the economy grew by 3% in the fourth quarter of 2025 compared with the same quarter in 2024.

The bureau attributed the growth in the fourth quarter to increases in several economic activities, including services, which rose by 11%, information and communications by 12%, and industry by 6%. Conversely, several sectors recorded declines, including transport and storage, down 11%; construction, down 10%; finance and insurance, down 5%; and agriculture, forestry, and fishing, down 4%.

The gross domestic product (GDP) during the fourth quarter of 2025 reached approximately \$3.039 billion in the West Bank, compared with \$176 million in the Gaza Strip.

Regarding per capita GDP, the data showed a slight increase to \$596 at constant prices during the fourth quarter of 2025, marking a 1% rise compared with the same period in 2024.



## Roasted corns

ISLAMABAD: Christian women buying roasted corns from a roadside vendor outside a church after attend a service, to mark Palm Sunday as part of the traditional Lenten devotion, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Pakistan can enhance bilateral trade to \$10 bn with CAS in few years



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said Pakistan can enhance bilateral trade to \$10 billion with Central Asian States almost three times higher than present level within few years.

Chairing here today board of director meeting he said direct trade with the region remains underutilised and largely confined to textiles, food products and limited industrial goods. This is inconsistent with broader efforts to enhance economic cooperation through transit agreements, particularly with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan — the two largest trading partners in the region and Pak products continue to enjoy steady demand, he added.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq said Pakistan has the potential to export a wide range of engineering and industrial products including sugar mills, cement plant equipment and machinery for fertiliser, construction, and power generation industries. Strengthening transport connectivity, improving banking channels and expanding trade facilitation agreements will be essential if Pakistan is to translate the region's considerable potential into meaningful economic gains. At the same time, the region has substantial export potential owing to its vast natural resources, including oil, natural gas, coal and minerals. With a combined GDP of roughly \$347 billion and steady economic growth, the region's key sectors include energy, agriculture (particularly grains and flour), textiles and mining. As Central Asian economies increasingly seek to diversify trade beyond their traditional partners, the region offers promising opportunities for new economic partnerships, he concluded.

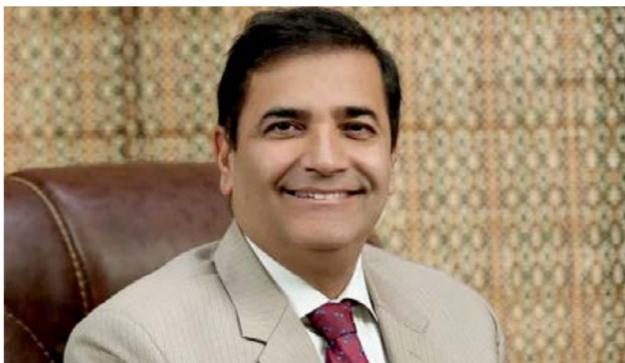
# Strong Institutions Key to Pakistan's Economic Stability, Says Tax Ombudsman Coordinator

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman Sunday said strong institutions provide base for sustainable economic growth and social stability even in fragile country.

Talking here today to a delegation of Pak origin foreign investors from Dubai led by Murad Ahmad Hanif, he said even countries facing economic fragility and structural weaknesses can transform their trajectories through prudent policymaking, strategic reforms, and consistent implementation.

He said challenges may vary across countries, the path to lasting growth lies in strengthening institutions, adopting forward-looking policies, and leveraging international support to ensure stability, resilience, and sustainable development for future generations. Leader of delegation Murad Ahmad Hanif said global partnerships, coupled with domestic commitment, can create opportunities for capacity building, innovation, and economic diver-



sification. By prioritizing good governance, rule of law, and transparency, governments can lay the groundwork for long-term prosperity, he concluded.

# SAARC Expert Declares End of Old World Order Amid Global Turmoil



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said the world order and multilateral system has irrevocably changed while old world order has gone for good following a year of turmoil sparked by US tariffs and wider geopolitical tensions.

In a statement here today, he said in the wake of US-Israel war on Iran and following years is stalled multilateral trade deals, we must look to future and WTO (World Trade Organisation) will also lose its attractiveness and relevancy if stakeholders failed to reach a deal. He warned that without an agreement on reforms, countries



will start abandoning the ideal of a rules-based global trade system and set their own regulations. He said in prevailing global economic conditions, WTO problems over decision making needed to be tackled otherwise warned of potential fragmentation if no deal reached among the EU, China, Britain and stakeholders. He said lack of

transparency leads to lack of trust that breeds suspicion of unfairness and anti-competitive behaviours. He said recent four day meeting of WTO body concluded at Cameroon failed to reach consensus how to overhaul global trade rules to meet new world order as currently WTO is confronted with host of problems.

# Gulf Importers Turn to Pakistan for Food Supplies Amid Middle East Turmoil



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food, Imran Shahid, Sunday said gulf-based importers have approached Pakistani food exporters to secure reliable supplies amid the ongoing US-Israel-Iran war.

Leader of delegation Muhammad Ahmad Hanif said the Gulf region, which relies on imports for up to 80-90 percent of its food requirements, is facing

heightened food security concerns as shipping through critical routes like the Strait of Hormuz remains uncertain. In this scenario, Pakistan is emerging as a viable and competitive supplier due to its strong agricultural base and geographic proximity.

The war has severely disrupted traditional supply chains, particularly due to constraints in maritime routes and rising freight and insurance costs, compelling Gulf countries to diversify their sourcing options, he concluded.

# Anas Jawaid to Unravel Energy Secrets in Lithium Battery Masterclass

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Anas Jawaid, is Executive Director of Phoenix Batteries he is a dedicated technopreneur whose expertise in energy is built on a lifelong commitment to technical excellence.

His journey began in the early days of his education, working alongside his father in technical production and mastering the complexities of engineering long before his formal studies. After graduating from the UK, Anas returned to Pakistan with a clear vision: to address the energy crisis by bridging the

gap in reliable battery technology.

Over the coming weeks, Anas will be sharing these valuable insights through our

Phoenix Lithium Battery Masterclass. This is an excellent opportunity to learn the "how" and "why" behind modern battery systems from someone who has spent years educating communities and building energy solutions from the ground up.

If you're ready to understand how the right energy strategy can benefit your home or business, join us for a masterclass rooted in real-world experience.

## PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship 2026 Edition 11

## Multan Sultans brilliant bowling and batting and beat Islamabad United by 5 wickets

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Pakistan Super League 11. After Pindi, Islamabad also lost, Multan Sultans' flight. In the second match played on Saturday in PSL 11, Multan Sultans easily defeated Islamabad United by 5 wickets. Thus, Multan Sultans got their first experience under the new command.

In pursuit of the target of 172 runs set by United, Sultans lost Sahibzada Farhan early, he was caught by Imad Wasim after making just 2. Dangerous batsman Steven Smith made 31 off 23 balls and was caught by Shadab Khan. Bowler Salman Irshad. Joseph Philip was a wall in China when new batsman Shan Masood was caught for 6 off 6 balls. Sultans' third loss was a total of 70. Sultans scored



83 runs in 10 overs. Joseph Philip laid the foundation by making 55 off 35 balls. Captain Ashton Turner did the rest of the work, he scored 43 not out off 28 balls. Arafat Minhas made a brilliant 25 off 11 balls. Sultans achieved the target by

scoring 175 runs for 5 wickets in 18.4 overs. Salman Irshad took 28 runs and Shadab Khan took 2 wickets each for 36 runs. Earlier, Multan Sultans won the toss and elected to field against Islamabad United. Batting first, Islamabad United



scored 171 runs for the loss of 8 wickets in the stipulated 20 overs. For Islamabad United, Devon Conway scored 26, Mark Champion scored 40, Sameer Minhas scored 28 and Faheem Ashraf scored 26 runs. For Multan Sultans,

Momin Qamar took 3 wickets and Mohammad Wasim took 2 wickets.

PSL 11. Bad for Rawalpindi's debut, Zalmi defeated

In the first match of the day, Peshawar Zalmi made Rawalpindi Pindex's debut boring,



although the unsuccessful team scored 214 runs. Despite keeping control of the match, Peshawar Zalmi set a unique world record against Rawalpindi Pindex. Peshawar Zalmi became the team to achieve the highest target without a fifty

in an innings. Peshawar Zalmi surpassed the target of 215 runs against Rawalpindi and scored 218 runs. Previously, the highest target without a fifty was 214 by Washington against Los Angeles in the Major League.

## Quetta Gladiators Crush Hyderabad Kingsmen and Win By 40 Runs

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Hasan Nawaz and Shamyul Hussain struck half-centuries, while Abrar Ahmed starred with the ball taking key wickets as Quetta Gladiators opened their account in HBL Pakistan Super League 11 with a 40-run win over Hyderabad Kingsmen hereat the Gaddafi Stadium on Sunday.

In the first match of the second double-header, Gladiators successfully defended their 174-8 total by restricting Hyderabad Kingsmen to 134-8 in 20 overs.

Hyderabad suffered two early setbacks as Alzarri Joseph dismissed Saim Ayub for eight in the first over and Abrar Ahmed removed Maaz Sadaqat for naught in the next. Usman Khan also fell to Abrar in the sixth over after making 14, leaving Hyderabad struggling at 35 for three. Their troubles deepened when Usman Tariq removed Syed Saad Ali on the last ball of the ninth over and skipper Marnus Labuschagne fell to Saud Shakeel four deliveries later for 23 with Hyderabad reeling at 57 for five in 9.4 overs.

Hasan Khan then offered some resistance with a 19-ball



31, striking three fours and a six during a 48-run sixth-wicket stand with Muhammad Irfan Khan (33, 25b, 2x4s, 3x6s).

Once Hassan was dismissed by Ahmed Daniyal in the 15th over, Hyderabad lost their way and finished on 134 for eight in 20 overs. Abrar led the charge with three for 23 in four overs and Daniyal returned two for 13.

Earlier, Kingsmen struck twice in first 20 deliveries with Meredith removing Saud and Rilee Rosouw with 25 runs on the board.

At this juncture, Hasan joined Shamyul to rebuild the innings with an 89-run stand for the third wicket. The pair collected 15 runs off Akif Javed in the sixth over to take Quetta to 45 for two at the end of the powerplay.

Hasan then shifted gears, launching Hassan Khan for a straight six in the ninth over before dispatching a Labuschagne full toss for another maximum to move Quetta to 78 for two at the halfway mark. Shamyul followed suit in the 12th over, striking Hassan for two sixes - one over wide long-on and the other straight down the ground as he ransacked 18 runs off the 12th over. Hasan kept the momentum going with another six off Saim, but Quetta's progress was checked when Meredith returned in the following over to claim his third wicket as Shamyul (54, 41b, 3x4s, 3x6s) departed.

Maheesh Theekshana then dealt a double blow in the next over, removing Khawaja Mohammad Nafay for six and Ben McDermott for naught off successive deliveries.

Hasan, who brought up his 10th T20 half-century and also 2,000 T20 runs, was run out for 53 off 40 balls leaving Quetta 128 for six in 15.5 overs.

Tom Curran's late assault,

which yielded 31 off 18 balls including three sixes and one four, lifted Quetta to a competitive total. Abrar struck two fours in the last over to crucially chip in with nine off three balls. Meredith returned figures of 4-0-38-3, Akif and Theekshana snapped two wickets each.

Match 5: Quetta Gladiators beat Hyderabad Kingsmen by 40 runs at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

Quetta Gladiators 174-8, 20 overs (Shamyul Hussain 54, Hasan Nawaz 53, Tom Curran 31; Riley Meredith 3-38, Maheesh Theekshana 2-24, Akif Javed 2-25)

Hyderabad Kingsmen 134-8, 20 overs (Muhammad Irfan Khan 33, Hassan Khan 31, Marnus Labuschagne 23; Abrar Ahmed 3-23, Ahmed Daniyal 2-13)

Player of the match - Shamyul Hussain (Quetta Gladiators)

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## PSL Pakistan Super League 11 Edition Cricket Championship

## After a Thrilling Match Lahore Qalandars lost to arch-rivals Karachi Kings by 4 wickets

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: After a thrilling match in HBL Pakistan Super League 11, Lahore Qalandars lost to arch-rivals Karachi Kings by 4 wickets. A 5-run penalty on Qalandars for ball-changing led to the defeat. Shaheen Afridi unhappy. Further action likely. Hyderabad Kingsmen won their first win in the history of the day in the first match.

The match played at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore was a low-scoring show. Qalandars won the toss and elected to bat first and the Qalandars team could score 128 runs for 9 wickets in 20 overs. Abdullah Shafiq scored 33 and Haseebullah Khan scored 28 runs. Lahore Qalandars lost their last 5 wickets in 34 balls and could only score 23 runs during that time.

Adam Zampa of Karachi Kings bowled the last maiden wicket over. He took 2 wickets for just 11 runs in 4 overs. Mir Hamza took 2 wickets for 14 runs in 3 overs. Moeen Ali took 2 wickets for



31 runs. Apparently, this was an easy target, but on the spin track, Karachi Kings also knew that the target would be barely met. That is why they faced difficulties till the end.

Karachi Kings also lost their three wickets for 39 runs, but Lahore got the fourth wicket for 82 and the fifth for 88. By the time they reached here, 15 overs had passed. Qalandars were hoping to win because it was difficult to score runs. With 14 runs needed in the last over, Lahore Qalandars were fined five runs. They were accused of changing the ball condition. A fielder had to be brought in due to a slow over rate. And due to which the target was reduced to 9 runs.



Haris Rauf got set-batter Khushdil Shah caught on the first ball. Sikandar Raza took a brilliant catch on the boundary line which was definitely a six but the effort was not enough as the new batsman Abbas Afridi wrapped up the match with a six on the last ball. He scored 10 not out off two balls. Khushdil Shah, who was out for 13, was bowled by Haris Rauf. Azam Khan was not out on 14 off 12 balls. Before that, Moeen Ali scored 18, Saad Baig scored 19. Salman Ali Agha was dismissed. Mohammad Wasim played the highest innings of 38 runs. Captain David Warner could only score eight runs, so the Karachi Kings team got help. The umpires changed the ball. Shaheen

Shah Afridi was unhappy. There was a lot of discussion before the last over. The PCB will release the details later but Lahore Qalandars were defeated when Karachi Kings completed the target for six wickets in 19.3 overs and won by four wickets. With this win, Karachi Kings have reached the number one position on the PSL 11 points table with four points. Shaheen Shah Afridi's impressive performance of four wickets for 18 runs in four overs was also not enough. Haris Rauf conceded 45 runs in 3 and a half overs and got one wicket and Mustafizur Rahman gave away 20 runs in four overs in today's match but he also managed to get one wicket.

## Investment on Girls Education in Pakistan: Planning, Strategies and Implementation

Continued from Page 4

Holistic NGO prototypes bundling stipends, clinics, and parenting workshops demonstrate 90% persistence rates, scalable blueprints for national rollout. Rural-focused stipends paired with transport lift completion rates 25%; urban scholarships forge STEM parity, narrowing urban-rural chasms.

Implementation fuses ownership, scalability, capacity, monitoring, accountability, and technology into an ironclad engine. Federal coordination devolves

execution to provinces armed with budgets and autonomy, scaling proven pilots - like those doubling enrollments in select districts - nationwide. Biometric systems enforce attendance tracking, annual standardized assessments gauge learning, and geo-tagged inventories verify infrastructure. Third-party audits, citizen grievance apps, and performance-linked provincial incentives ensure fidelity; PPP covenants impose quality metrics with penalties for lapses. Community PTAs wield veto on fund misuse, embedding local guardianship.

Technological backbones - public dashboards visualizing progress, AI flagging spending anomalies - curb corruption. Phased rollout prioritizes Year 1 infrastructure and access, Year 2 retention and skills, Year 3 equity and outcomes. Pilots validate efficacy: stipends curtail dropouts 30%, mobiles integrate 40% remote learners, underscoring replicability. Challenges like entrenched resistance yield to evidence parades highlighting GDP multipliers; fund leakages succumb to blockchain-tracked disbursements.

In conclusion, Pakistan's pathway to

equitable ascent hinges on bold investment - visionary planning rooted in data and milestones, inclusive strategies assaulting every barrier, accountable implementation scaling pilots to masses. This triad not only elevates girls' destinies but ignites national glory, transforming human capital from liability to superpower. The time for half-measures has passed; comprehensive commitment today begets brighter tomorrows for all.

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## Calming the Storm: Pakistan's Role in Conflict

Tahmeed Sadiq

The ongoing conflict between Iran, the United States and Israel in 2026 marks one of the most dangerous escalations in the Middle East in recent years. The crisis began in late February when coordinated military strikes by the United States and Israel targeted key sites inside Iran, triggering a strong Iranian response through missile and drone attacks on Israeli territory and U. S. interests in the region. Since then, tensions have remained high, with all sides showing little willingness to back down, raising fears of a wider regional war.

The conflict is not only military but also geopolitical. The United States and Israel view Iran's nuclear ambitions and regional influence as a major threat, while Iran considers these attacks a violation of its sovereignty and has responded with a strategy of resilience and deterrence.

## From National Command to Global Spotlight: The Rise of Field Marshal Asim Munir

Continued from Page 4

campaign of vilification, spreading misinformation, attacking the institution he represents, and hoping to replicate the cycles of division that had plagued Pakistan's civil-military relations for years. They underestimated the man they were dealing with. Unlike his predecessors who might have sought to placate critics or engage in the messy back-and-forth of political point-scoring, Munir adopted a policy of dignified silence. He did not respond to the chatter; he simply worked. He focused on the mandate of his office—security—and delivered results so tangible that the noise of his detractors was drowned out by the applause of a grateful nation.

Today, the narrative has

completely inverted. The same urban elites who once sneered at his appointment now quietly acknowledge his strategic genius. The political factions who sought to use him as a punching bag have found themselves irrelevant, their manufactured controversies unable to compete with the reality of a leader who is ending terrorism, stabilizing the economy through improved security perceptions, and elevating Pakistan's diplomatic standing to heights not seen in decades. Field Marshal Munir is now undeniably loved by the whole nation, a unifying figure in a country often defined by its divisions. This love is not born of charisma alone, but of competence. The people of Pakistan, from the bustling bazaars of Karachi to the valleys of Hunza, feel a sense of pride

that has been long absent. They see their military chief brokering peace between global superpowers, standing firm against nuclear-armed neighbors, and purging the nation of the sectarian poison that had seeped into its social fabric. They see a man who raised the name of Pakistan in the world—not through rhetorical flourishes at the United Nations, but through the quiet, authoritative diplomacy that moves markets and prevents wars.

His leadership style is a masterclass in the exercise of power. He is decisive, unburdened by the need for constant public validation. In an era of social media chaos and information warfare, Munir has maintained a tight grip on the strategic narrative by refusing to let his enemies define

him. He let his actions speak, and they have spoken volumes. Whether it was his personal oversight of the border management system that drastically reduced cross-border infiltration, his role in orchestrating the release of Pakistani nationals caught in regional conflicts, or his quiet but firm diplomatic engagements in Beijing, Riyadh, and Washington, every move has been calculated to maximize Pakistan's strategic autonomy. He has navigated the treacherous waters of the US-China rivalry with finesse, maintaining Pakistan's critical relationship with its "Iron Brother" China while repairing the fractured alliance with the United States enough to make the recent Iran mediation possible. This is the hallmark of a clear-headed leader: one who

sees beyond the binary choices of geopolitics and forges a path of national interest that is not subservient to any foreign capital.

Moreover, his impact on the morale of the Pakistan Armed Forces cannot be overstated. Under his command, the army has been transformed from an institution often dragged into political controversies to one solely focused on its primary mission: the defense of the realm. He has insulated the ranks from the corrosive effects of political polarization, ensuring that the professional soldier remains focused on external threats rather than internal divisions. This has restored the bond of trust between the military and the civilian population, a bond that is the ultimate guarantor of national security. When he speaks

about national security, the entire nation listens, not out of fear, but out of a collective realization that his analysis is grounded in reality, not in political expediency.

As the world watches the potential US-Iran meeting in Islamabad take shape, the image of Field Marshal Asim Munir will be central to that historic moment. If successful, it will be the capstone of a tenure already defined by monumental achievements. It will cement Pakistan's role not as a peripheral player caught in the crossfire of great power rivalries, but as a central hub for conflict resolution, a nation that punches far above its weight class on the global stage. For the people of Pakistan, this is the culmination of a long-held aspiration: to be respected. In Field Marshal Munir, they have

found a leader who has given them that respect back. He has taken a nation often maligned in international media as a land of instability and terrorism and positioned it as an indispensable partner for peace. From the shadow of the Himalayas to the deserts of the Middle East, his influence is felt. The world is taking notice, and as the diplomatic gears continue to turn in Islamabad, it is becoming increasingly clear that Pakistan, under his strategic stewardship, is no longer just a spectator to the unfolding global drama—it is one of its principal directors.

## HOPE Meetings

ISLAMABAD: At the opening of the Quadrilateral Consultations on Sunday, the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Egypt pose for a family photo.



Photo: PID

## Islamabad hosts major diplomatic talks for Middle East mediation efforts

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is all set to host a quadrilateral meeting of foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Egypt from March 29-30 in Islamabad for in-depth talks on Iran war.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the foreign ministers from Turkey and Egypt arrived in Islamabad for high-level talks, with Saudi

Arabia's foreign minister also expected to join shortly.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar met with Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan at the Foreign Office. During the meeting, both sides reaffirmed strong bilateral relations and discussed the regional situation, including developments related to Iran. Both countries emphasized the importance of reducing tensions through

diplomacy.

Meanwhile, Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty has also arrived in Islamabad, where key discussions are underway. The visiting delegations are expected to meet Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif later today.

A major multilateral meeting involving Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt is scheduled to take place in Islamabad today

(Sunday) and tomorrow (Monday) to explore ways to reduce regional tensions and promote peace and stability. The discussions will focus on the ongoing Middle East situation and possible diplomatic solutions.

Diplomatic sources said that Turkish, Egyptian, and Saudi foreign ministers will hold separate meetings with Pakistani leadership as part of these efforts.

In addition, Ishaq Dar held a phone call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to discuss the regional situation and the latest developments.

Pakistan has recently positioned itself as a potential mediator between Iran and Western countries, leveraging its long-standing ties with Iran and strong relations with Gulf states, in an effort to help de-escalate tensions and promote dialogue in the region.

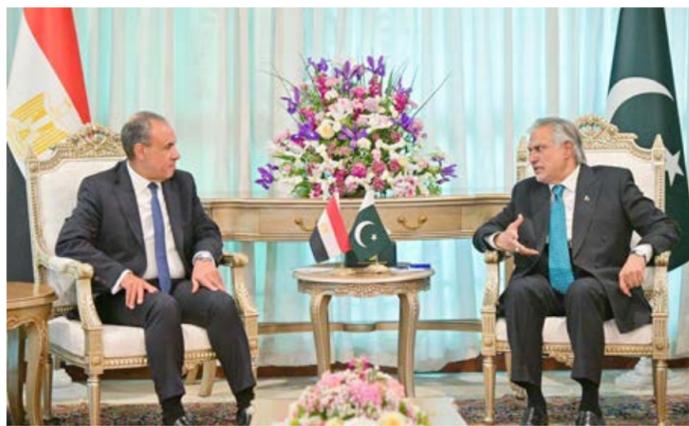
## Pakistan, Egypt pledge to deepen cooperation across key sectors

By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday reaffirmed that Pakistan attached great importance to its long-standing and brotherly relations with Egypt, anchored in shared history, common faith, and a convergence of views on regional and international issues.

Ishaq Dar expressed these views during a meeting with Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Badr Abdelatty in Islamabad.

Both sides reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction with



the positive momentum generated through recent high-level exchanges, including the visit of the Egyptian Foreign Minister to Pakistan in November 2025, the Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement.

They reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening cooperation across all domains.

The two ministers emphasised the need to enhance bilateral trade and investment.

They agreed on the importance of activating bilateral mechanisms, including the Joint Ministerial Commission, and promoting business-to-business linkages.

## Pakistan shows economic resilience, diplomatic outreach amid global challenges: Khurram Shehzad

By Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Finance Minister, Khurram Shehzad, said on Sunday that Pakistan was demonstrating strong economic resilience, improving macroeconomic fundamentals, and emerging as a credible player in diplomacy, trade, and investment despite ongoing regional instability and war-related uncertainties.

In a post on social media platform X, he highlighted that Pakistan has emerged as a key diplomatic bridge in global conflicts by engaging the United States, Iran and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to help de-escalate tensions.

He noted that the Pakistan-International Monetary Fund review has been successful, with the programme remaining on track and reforms delivering positive results. Foreign exchange reserves have risen for 33 consecutive weeks, reaching around \$21.7 billion, a four-year high, reflecting strengthening external buffers.

## Rangers, CTD arrest wanted militant in Karachi operation



By Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Rangers and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) arrested a highly wanted militant affiliated with the banned Fitna Al Hindustan group during a joint intelligence-based operation in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area of Karachi.

According to a Rangers spokesperson, the suspect, identified as Asim, son of Asghar Ali Kalmaty

Baloch, was apprehended from Mano Goth, Block 12 of Gulshan-e-Iqbal. Weapons, ammunition, and explosive materials were also recovered from his possession.

Officials said the arrested militant had joined the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in 2023 on the persuasion of its commanders Tariq alias Sufi and Salman Kalmaty Baloch.

During initial interrogation, the

suspect revealed that he had moved from Karachi to Panwan, Jiwani, in Balochistan in 2016.

After joining the terror outfit, he took part in facilitating activities, including the distribution of weapons, ammunition, and supplies at the direction of commander Tariq alias Sufi. Following the killing of Tariq by security forces in 2025, the suspect reportedly went into hiding in the Ramadan area of Iran.

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## Enough fuel stock available thanks to govt measures, says Prime Minister



By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired a meeting on Sunday to review the implementation of fuel-saving and austerity measures amid the prevailing regional situation.

The meeting reviewed the impact

of government decisions and measures related to fuel conservation and supply.

The prime minister said that due to timely steps taken by the government, there were adequate reserves of petroleum products to meet the country's needs and that public relief had been given top priority.

"Relief was provided to the public wherever possible during the last three weeks," the prime minister said.

He added that to shield people from rising oil prices, the federal government was providing a subsidy of about Rs125 billion by cutting various savings and development budgets.

Prime Minister Shehbaz appealed to citizens to support the government's austerity measures by avoiding unnecessary travel and preferring teleconferencing in offices.

## Pakistan offers vast investment opportunities: Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh



By Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD/CHINIOT: Federal Minister for the Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh has said that Pakistan offers vast opportunities for local and foreign investment due to its improving economic environment and balanced foreign policy.

Talking to media persons during visit to a free medical camp organized in the remote area of Chak No.12 Salotran Wala in district Chiniot, he said that the series of free medical camps in remote and underdeveloped areas would continue on a regular basis.

He said that basic purpose of arranging such camps was to provide quality medical facilities to poor people living in far-flung areas where modern healthcare facilities were either unavailable or very limited.

He said that expert and qualified doctors were examining patients free of cost at these camps and providing them medicines as well as necessary medical advice.

He said that many of the doctors participating in these camps usually charge thousands of rupees in private clinics, but they were voluntarily offering their services in remote areas to serve the poor and needy.

This initiative was not only helping patients but also creating awareness among people about preventive healthcare and the importance of timely treatment, he added.

The minister said that effects of floods were still being felt in many remote areas and a large number of people were suffering from various diseases including skin infections and seasonal illnesses.

## Barrister Danyal Chaudhry hails Quadrilateral talks on Middle East conflict in Islamabad



By City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry has welcomed the high-level consultative meeting held in Islamabad between Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, and the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Türkiye, terming it a significant step toward de-escalation in the Middle East.

In a statement issued today, he underscored Pakistan's constructive and proactive role in promoting

regional peace and stability.

He noted that successfully bringing together the foreign ministers of key regional actors on a single platform reflects the international community's confidence in Pakistan's diplomatic outreach and balanced foreign policy.

Barrister Danyal further stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan remains firmly committed to dialogue, restraint, and peaceful resolution of conflicts. He emphasized that de-escalation and sustained engagement are essential for lasting stability in the region.