



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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نعان بن بشر سے بیان کرتے ہوئے کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا تم مومنوں کو آپس میں ایک دوسرے کے ساتھ رحمت و محبت کا معاملہ کرنے اور ایک دوسرے کے ساتھ لطف و نرم خوئی میں ایک جسم جیسا پانگے کہ جب اس کا کوئی ٹکڑا بھی تکلیف میں ہو تا ہے تو سارا جسم تکلیف میں ہوتا ہے ایسا کہ نیند اڑ جاتی ہے اور جسم بخار میں مبتلا ہو جاتا ہے۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6011)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



14th death anniversary of war hero Cecil Chaudhry being observed

Fourteenth death anniversary of Group Captain (retd) Cecil Chaudhry, a fighter pilot of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and a war hero, is being observed. Born on August 27, 1941, Chaudhry distinguished himself during the 1965 war, exhibiting exceptional spirit and prowess by shooting down three Indian planes.



Pakistan launches second national polio campaign of 2026

The second national polio campaign of 2026 will continue from April 13 to April 19, during which more than 45 million children will be administered polio drops, the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) said. More than 400,000 polio workers will carry out their responsibilities during the seven-day nationwide campaign, it said.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding fuel reserves, on Monday.



Photo: PID

Mideast ceasefire a 'priority', China's FM tells Pakistan



AFP

Maintaining a ceasefire in the Middle East war is an "immediate priority" for resolving the conflict, China's top diplomat told his Pakistani counterpart in a phone call on Monday.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also said on Monday that the ceasefire between the United States and Iran was "holding" and that efforts were underway to reach an agreement after talks in Islamabad at the weekend

failed to do so.

"The immediate priority is to make every effort toward preventing the resumption of hostilities and to maintain the hard-won ceasefire momentum," Wang Yi told Pakistan's Ishaq Dar, according to a Chinese foreign ministry statement.

Wang said a joint peace plan by China and Pakistan announced last month as the two officials met in Beijing "still can serve as a direction for efforts toward a resolution."

Ceasefire between the United States and Iran still intact: PM Shehbaz

News Desk

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the ceasefire between the United States and Iran is still intact, and vigorous efforts are underway to remove bottlenecks in order to secure lasting peace in the region.

He was chairing a meeting of the Federal Cabinet in Islamabad on Monday.

The Prime Minister said it was

the first time in the last 47 years that the leadership of both the United States and Iran came into direct engagement as a result of strenuous and sincere diplomatic efforts by Pakistan.

He expressed gratitude to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and US President Donald Trump for agreeing to the ceasefire and sending high-level delegations to Pakistan for talks. Shehbaz Sharif said the US

delegation, led by Vice President JD Vance, and the Iranian delegation, headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, arrived in Islamabad for talks. Both delegations remained continuously engaged for 21 hours, which was unprecedented in recent history.

The Prime Minister further said both sides appreciated Pakistan's sincerity, hospitality, and mediation in hosting the Islam-

abad Talks. He said that, with the blessings of Allah Almighty, the talks provided an important opportunity to promote global peace.

The Prime Minister also lauded Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar as well as Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, along with their teams, for their tireless efforts in securing the ceasefire and bringing both parties to the

negotiating table in Islamabad.

The resolution expressed gratitude to Almighty God for enabling Pakistan to play a central role in efforts aimed at establishing peace. It paid tribute to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, and Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir for their leadership in facilitating what it described as "historic peace talks" between the two countries.

Gilgit-Baltistan elections set for June 7, schedule announced

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan on Monday announced the schedule for general elections in Gilgit-Baltistan, with polling set for June 7, 2026.

Chief Election Commissioner Raja Shahbaz Khan formally issued the notification in Gilgit, outlining key stages of the electoral process.

Nomination papers will be submitted from April 16 to April 20, while the preliminary list of candidates will be published on April 21.

Scrutiny of nomination papers will be completed by April 28, and decisions on appeals will be finalised by May 9. Candidates will be allowed to withdraw their papers until May 11.

The final list of candidates, along with

the allocation of election symbols, will be issued on May 12.

Speaking to the media, the chief election commissioner said all arrangements have been finalised to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections.

He added that voters would be provided maximum facilities to exercise their right, and all relevant institutions would work together to ensure a peaceful polling process.

Pakistan detains three accused of spying for RAW

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani security agencies have arrested three people accused of spying for India's intelligence agency (RAW), Research and Analysis Wing, who were later sentenced after legal proceedings.

According to sources, the suspects belong to Narowal, Bahawalpur and Neelum districts of Azad Kashmir in Pakistan. During initial investigation, the suspects confessed they were trapped through social media platforms, where women associated with the Research and Analysis Wing allegedly obtained sensitive information by offering friendship, financial benefits and other incentives.

Security sources said the suspects were provided money through various channels, including Easypaisa, crypto wallets and bank accounts.

A case was registered against the suspects under the Official Secrets Act in Official Secrets Act, after which they were sentenced following completion of legal requirements, authorities said.

Khawaja Asif says Iran-US talks making positive progress, further round expected soon

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Monday that positive progress is being made in talks between Iran and the United States and that the possibility of further talks still exists.

Talking to the media, Khawaja Asif said a new round of talks between Iran and the United States is expected to begin soon.

He said that after recent contacts and discussions, overall satisfaction is being

expressed, and no negative aspects have emerged so far.

The Defence Minister further said that only positive news is being received regarding the talks, which is welcome for stability in the region.

He said all parties appear serious about resolving issues through talks.

In response to a question on whether Pakistan will make future decisions in the region, Khawaja Asif said that decisions are made by Allah Almighty, and He knows best



what will happen. In response to a question related to India, the Defence Minister said that the people of India are suffering, have rotted and are mourning there.

DPM/FM Dar, Chinese Amb. Jiang discuss recent developments



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, Monday, discussed the recent developments following the Islamabad talks.

The DPM/FM reaffirmed Pakistan's continued resolve

to support dialogue and diplomacy.

Ambassador Jiang commended Pakistan's important role in facilitating direct talks between the United States and Iran, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Both sides reaffirmed the strong Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

Mohsin Naqvi outlines vision to modernize FIA by late 2026

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has announced a sweeping modernization plan for the national Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), setting a firm deadline of December 31, 2026.



to transform the bureau into a premier, high-tech law enforcement body.

Speaking as the guest of honor at a special conference for FIA officers in the capital, Naqvi engaged in extensive discussions with newly appointed Assistant Directors and Inspectors. The Minister emphasized that under the "dynamic leadership" of the new Director General, Dr.

Usman Anwar, the agency is poised to shed legacy inefficiencies and adopt a more proactive operational stance.

Naqvi identified the FIA as a cornerstone of the national "Hardening the State" policy, describing it as the sole federal entity capable of asserting

government writ nationwide. To meet modern security challenges, he pledged a significant increase in personnel, noting that the agency's current strength is largely unchanged since 2008 is insufficient for contemporary demands.

The conference was attended by high-ranking officials, including Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Federal Secretary Interior Khurram Agha, and DG FIA Dr. Usman Anwar, who also addressed the participants on the agency's upcoming strategic shifts.

Responsible journalism fosters development, yellow press undermines society: Azad Kashmir PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that responsible journalism promotes societal development while yellow journalism leads to its decline.

Speaking at the anniversary ceremony of the daily Jannat Nazir, he said the media and the Information Department share a close working relationship, each operating within its own sphere.

Terming journalism as an important pillar of the state, PM Rathore said, "A vigilant and responsible media contributes significantly to public awareness, development, and the stability of the state". Commending the role of local media, the Prime Minister said that state based media outlets not only convey the government's stance effectively but also promote the Kashmir freedom movement at



the international level.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to resolving issues faced by journalists and ensuring

their welfare so they can perform their duties independently and impartially. Referring to key initiatives his government has undertaken PM Rathore

said the government took office at a critical juncture, with its constitutional term nearing completion. Despite limited time, he said, several important and far-reaching decisions were made that helped restore public trust and confidence in state institutions.

He added that while some projects could not be completed, they have been laid on solid foundations with clear plans for future implementation.

About the upcoming general elections, the Prime Minister said that the elections would be held on schedule, with arrangements in place to ensure a transparent and fair process.

Appreciating the services of Daily Jannat Nazir, he hoped that the newspaper, under the patronage of a seasoned and experienced editorial team, would continue promoting public awareness and national interests through responsible journalism.

Azad Kashmir to Introduce Motorcycle Fuel Subsidy Following Federal Model

Bureau Report



MIRPUR: Minister for Finance and Inland Revenue, Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Qasim Majeed has said that fuel subsidy will be provided to motorcycle owners in Azad Kashmir on the pattern of the Federation and the provinces. The Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is taking necessary steps in this regard and soon this facility will be available to the public. A clarification has also been issued regarding the abolition of motorcycle registration and transfer fees in Punjab and Sindh. New registration and transfer in Punjab is being collected under the full imposed fees. The news published about complete waiver is contrary to the facts. According to the clarification issued, the Government of Azad Kashmir is taking concrete steps to provide fuel subsidy facility to motorcycle owners across the state as soon as possible and necessary instructions have also been issued to senior officials of the Inland Revenue/Excise and Taxation Department in this regard. Under these measures, the process of new registration and transfer of motorcycles is being completed smoothly by setting up special facility desks in motor registration offices across Azad Kashmir and the federal government is also working on fuel subsidy.

Pakistan's Diplomatic Triumph: AJK Leader Praises Role in US-Iran Ceasefire

Spokesman Report.

ISLAMABAD: Muslim League-Nawaz Azad Jammu and Kashmir Women's Section Central Vice President and Member of Manifesto Committee Maryam Idrees said that Pakistan has become the host of global diplomacy, which is a matter of pride for the entire nation, the entire world is appreciating Pakistan's active mediator role in bringing about a ceasefire between the United States and Iran, the efforts of Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Army Chief Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar are commendable, today Pakistan has become the center of attention of the entire world, Pakistan wants peace not only in the region but also in the entire world, the Third World War is not only a threat to the entire world but will lead to the destruction of the economy, she expressed these views in a statement, Muslim Maryam Idrees, leader of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir League-Nawaz (AJK), said that Pakistan has achieved great success by hosting important international diplomacy and bringing the US and Iran to the negotiating table after many years.



AJK Election Commission Makes Vote Inquiry Service 8302 Free for Public

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: A meeting of the Election Commission was held under the chairmanship of Chief Election Commissioner Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice (retd) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal. The meeting was attended by Election Commission members Syed Nazir-ul-Hassan Gilani, Election Commission Secretary Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan and other Election Commission officers. The Chief Election Commissioner was briefed by the Election Commission Secretary in the meeting. It was decided in the meeting that in order to facilitate the public and make the election process fully transparent, in light of the instructions of the Chief Election Commissioner, the service number 8302 of the Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir for information on votes and polling stations will be made completely free. The public will be able to check their vote/polling station by sending their identity card number to 8302 completely free of cost. For the convenience of the public, voter lists will be displayed in the offices of the Assistant Commissioners of all tehsils as well as in the offices of the District Election Commission. Chief Election Commissioner Ghulam Musafiq Mughal said that voting is a sacred trust and a national duty, seminars will be organized in educational institutions to highlight the importance of voting. He said that the public should be fully aware of the importance of voting. On this occasion, Member Election Commission Syed Nazir-ul-Hassan said that in order to raise awareness about the importance of voting, the government's Religious Affairs Department should request the scholars/imams to highlight the importance of voting in Friday prayer gatherings. Syed Nazir-ul-Hassan said that all resources are being utilized by the Election Commission to hold free and fair elections. The meeting also approved the holding of by-elections to the vacant seats by the Commission.



Experienced Officer Tariq Jamil Durrani assumes charge as Director Public Relations

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Tariq Jamil Durrani has been appointed as Director Public Relations, notification issued. Media persons and social circles are expressing happiness over his appointment, while a series of congratulations are also being sent to him on social media. Tariq Jamil Durrani is a highly educated, capable and experienced officer who has successfully performed various important responsibilities during his career. Tariq Jamil Durrani has also served in the Revenue Department, Secretariat and National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Islamabad. Journalists and social media activists say that the appointment of Tariq Jamil Durrani will further improve the performance of the Public Relations Department and help in making public relations effective. Tariq Jamil Durrani will assume charge of his slot today, April 14.



AJK Supreme Court Halts Dismissal of Sidhnuoti Patwaris

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A two-member bench of the Supreme Court comprising Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan and Senior Judge Justice Raza Ali Khan has suspended the High Court's decision regarding the dismissal of patwaris of Sidhanoti district and inquiry into recruitments after 1991.

The High Court had earlier sought the record of patwaris recruited without advertisement and dismissed 9 patwaris, while an inquiry was ordered into other recruitments.

Barrister Humayun Nawaz filed an appeal in the Supreme Court on behalf of the affected patwaris, which was admitted for hearing and the court suspended the High Court's decision.

Difficulties

RAWALPINDI: Buyers are facing difficulties due to closed shops of cloths shopping malls along Murree Road due to security reasons in the city.



Photo: Online

Governor KPK Faisal Karim Kundi called on PM AJK Faisal Mumtaz Rathore

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi called on Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore here on Monday. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the overall political situation, party affairs and other matters of mutual interest. On the occasion, Governor Kundi presented a bouquet to the prime minister and extended his best wishes on his birthday.

Speaking on the occasion, PM Rathore said the Pakistan People's

Party would continue its mission of public welfare in Azad Kashmir in line with the vision of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto. He emphasized that national and public issues could be better addressed through consultation and coordination. He said the party had taken significant steps for public welfare in Azad Kashmir and reaffirmed his government's commitment to the Kashmir cause. He also condemned Indian atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, calling for holding Indian accountable of war crimes it's forces



have been committing against Kashmiris. He demanded the international community particularly the UN to fulfill its legal and moral obligations

and help resolve the lingering dispute in line with the UNSC resolutions.

The prime minister on the occasion thanked the KPK governor for his visit.

AJK Public Relations Director Muhammad Bashir Mirza Retires After 37 Years

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Director Public Relations, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government, Muhammad Bashir Mirza, retired from service on completion of his old age. Departmental officers and staff paid tribute to his 37 years of distinguished services and bid him farewell.

On this occasion, a grand ceremony was organized in the Directorate General of Public Relations in which Deputy Director, Ms. Qurat-



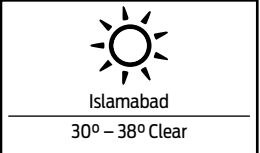
ul-Ain Shabbir, Information Officer Raja Muhammad Sohail Khan, Assistant Director Khawaja Imran-ul-Haq, former Deputy Director

Saadullah Bhatti, Information Officers Muhammad Hanif Khawaja, Khizr Hayat, Raja Abdul Basit, Sardar Shamim Anjum, Sajid Nazir, Asif Ali

Naqvi, and departmental officers and staff participated.

In his farewell address to the departmental officers and staff, Muhammad Bashir Mirza said that today I am parting ways with this institution and the people who are like a family to me.

I am deeply grateful to all my officers and colleagues who supported me in every difficult moment and trusted me. We not only performed official duties together but also shared each other's joys and sorrows, these relationships are the most precious assets of my life.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:13 am
Zohr	12:09 pm
Asr	4:46 pm
Maghrib	6:37 pm
Isha	8:07 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

Waist Management Workers Union Multan Protests Non-Payment of Salaries

Quatulain Asim

MULTAN: Central General Secretary of Waste Management Company Workers Union Hammad Afzal Dogar and President Samiullah Khan, while holding an emergency press conference, expressed serious concern over the ongoing problems in the Waste Management Company. They said that despite the passing of April 11, no worker has been paid his salary yet, due to which the employees are facing severe financial difficulties. They demanded the Commissioner Multan, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Minister Punjab and Chairman of the Shatra Punjab Program to ensure immediate payment of salaries and resolve the problems of the workers on priority basis. The leaders alleged that any worker who raises his voice for his rights is dismissed from his job, which is utter injustice. During the press conference, they revealed that more than half of the vehicles of Waste Management are damaged and parked in workshops, especially those of the M-3 zone. They said that the concerned contractor "Babar and Omar" forces the drivers to get the vehicles repaired from their own pockets, otherwise they will be removed and thrown out. Trained private drivers are deployed, which is causing further problems and wasting government resources.

Chief Minister Punjab launches Pakistan's first-ever government-run 'Deceased Transportation service'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif launched Pakistan's first-ever government-run "Deceased Transportation Service".

She handed over the keys of vehicles for the service to authorities in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan and also inspected the vehicles. The chief minister met Rescue personnel, appreciated their services, and directed them to perform their duties with devotion to the reward of Allah and a spirit of public service.

Under the first phase, the service will provide free-of-cost and dignified transfer of the deceased from government hospitals to their homes in Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi. By June, the scope of the service will be gradually extended to every tehsil of Punjab, with a dedicated ambulance to be provided in each tehsil for this purpose under the "deceased transportation service".

Speaking on the occasion, chief minister said it was unfortunate that private transporters charge excessive fares from families in cases of death at hospi-

tals. "In the moment of grief of losing a loved one, we are with you and will remain with you," she said, adding that Rescue personnel should not accept any payment even if offered by the bereaved families.

Provincial Health Minister Khwaja Salman Rafique termed the initiative commendable and said that, for now, the service had been launched within city limits in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan. He added that private ambulances would be arranged in the second phase for other cities.

According to a briefing, the service can be accessed by calling 1122 for the transfer of the deceased from hospital to home, and a dedicated desk will be set up in every government hospital. Trained drivers in uniform will be available round the clock.

Rescue 1122 Director General Dr. Rizwan Naseer said the service would also facilitate the transfer of bodies to hospital morgues where required. He added that the system would be monitored through a smart rescue management and dispatch system.



Beautiful view

ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of flowers blooming in the roundabout at Constitution Avenue.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

AC Kamalia Erum Shahzadi Inaugurates Polio Campaign

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Erum Shahzadi formally inaugurated the four-day anti-polio campaign by administering polio drops to children.

On this occasion, MS THQ Hospital Dr. Ghulam Abbas, Deputy District Officer Health Dr. Asim Ejaz and other concerned officials were also present. Speaking to the media, Assistant Commissioner Erum Shahzadi stated that a total of 340 teams are performing duties across the tehsil during the campaign, including 315 mobile teams, 17 fixed teams and supporting staff.

She further added that the campaign will continue from



April 13 to April 15. Parents are urged to ensure that their children under the age of five receive polio drops to protect them from lifelong disability. The Assistant Commissioner reaffirmed her commitment to utilizing all available resources to completely eradicate polio and stated that no negligence will be tolerated in this regard.

CPED Hosts Hands-On Google Colab Session Proving AI Literacy is Accessible to All

Iram Asim

MULTAN: Recently Hosted a transformative session titled "Hands-on Experience on Google Colab for Machine Learning." Held on April 13th the workshop successfully proved that the path to AI literacy doesn't require a computer science degree—just a curious mind.

Building the Foundation
The workshop began by pulling back the curtain on the "black box" of technology. Before touching a single keyboard, Dr. Muhammad Mehran Bashir led participants through the foundational background of Machine Learning. Attendees explored



the logic and mathematics that allow machines to "learn" from data, ensuring every participant understood the why

behind the how.
The Breakthrough: First Lines of Code
The highlight of the event

was seeing participants with absolutely no prior programming experience bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The "Two-Code" Milestone: In a major success for the CPED training model, every attendee successfully wrote and executed two functional code blocks.

Variable Mastery: Learners were introduced to the concept of variables, using them to manipulate data and apply their newfound skills to see how ML models actually process and react to information in real-time.

Key Learning Outcomes
Conceptual Clarity: A deep dive into the basics of ML architecture and background.

Hands-on Application: Moving from an empty Google Colab notebook to a working script.

Canadian PM congratulates PM Sharif on peace efforts

ISLAMABAD: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney congratulated Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Pakistan's peace efforts that culminated in the temporary ceasefire and led to the recently held talks between the United States and Iran, hosted by Pakistan.

Prime Minister Sharif received a telephone call from Canadian Prime Minister Monday evening and held warm and cordial conversation.

While appreciating Canada's endorsement and support for Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, the Prime Minister highlighted that the US-Iran negotiations were an important step towards peace and assured that Pakistan would continue with its efforts to urge both parties to maintain the ceasefire and make meaningful progress towards de-escalation and regional peace and stability.

The two leaders also exchanged views on Pakistan-Canada bilateral relations and expressed their desire to work together to enhance cooperation in agriculture, clean energy, mines and minerals as well as enhancing Canadian investments in Pakistan.

The Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to the Canadian Prime Minister to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his convenience.

Both leaders agreed to maintain close coordination.

Landmark Achievement: New IMO In Wazirabad To Facilitate Global Cutlery Trade

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A very important day for the business community of Wazirabad, especially for those engaged in manufacturing hunting knives, cutlery, and swords for export to the United States and Europe. An International Mail Office (IMO) has now been established in District Wazirabad, marking a significant milestone.

The credit for this achievement goes entirely to the Founder Chairman, Nadeem Ahmed Warraich, and his entire team of the newly established Hunting and Sporting Knife, Sword & Accessories Association. This was openly acknowledged by the chief guests, including Director General Pakistan Post, Samiullah Khan, and DG Anti-Narcotics, Brigadier Sikandar, along with others, during their speeches. DG Pakistan Post, Samiullah Khan, also specifically mentioned and appreciated Nadeem Ahmed Warraich by name.

On this important occasion, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the entire business community and pray for the success of this IMO. We also look forward to more welfare-oriented and leading initiatives from the platform of the Hunting and Sporting Knife Association that will contribute to the growth of the industry.

On this occasion, representatives of the Hunting and Sporting Knife, Sword & Accessories Association—including Vice Chairman Kamran Bhutta, Founder Member Ayaz Mahmood Chand, and Executive Body Members Abdul Hameed (Darsan Wale), Irfan Butt, Saud-ul-Hasan, and Imran Shehzad Butt—presented hunting knife gifts to the guests. The gifts were highly appreciated and admired by the attendees.

CCP Authorizes Acquisition of TPL Insurance Limited by Jazz International Holding

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has authorized the acquisition of M/s. TPL Insurance Limited by M/s. Jazz International Holding Limited from M/s. TPL Corp Limited following a Phase-I review. The transaction involves the acquisition of a controlling stake by Jazz in TPL Insurance Limited through a Share Purchase Agreement. A portion of the shares will first be acquired by TPL Corp Limited from Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft (DEG), a German investment company, and subsequently transferred to the acquirer, through a mandatory tender offer.

Jazz International Holding Limited, a subsidiary of VEON, incorporated in the UAE, is engaged in telecommunications and digital services. The target company, M/s. TPL Insurance Limited, is a public listed company operating in Pakistan's non-life insurance sector, offering conventional and takaful insurance products.

The CCP conducted a detailed Phase-I competition assessment in accordance with the Competition Act and the Competition (Merger Control) Regulations, 2016. The relevant market was identified as the non-life insurance sector in Pakistan.

Based on the assessment, the Commission determined that the transaction constitutes a conglomerate merger, with no horizontal or vertical overlap between the business activities of the acquirer and the target. The Commission further observed that the transaction is not likely to result in the creation or strengthening of a dominant position or to substantially lessen competition in the relevant market.

Accordingly, the CCP has authorized the transaction under the applicable provisions of the law. The merger is expected to accelerate the growth of digital insurance and advance financial inclusion in Pakistan. The Commission remains committed to facilitating foreign direct investment through timely merger clearances, promoting business growth, and ensuring that market structures remain competitive and aligned with the principles of fair competition.

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Beyond the Apology: Institutional Chaos and Diplomatic Fallout in Islamabad

Equally opaque is the diplomatic repair work that must have followed. It is reasonable to assume that Pakistan engaged in urgent backchannel communication with America to contain the fallout and to reassure it of its neutrality. One can only speculate about the nature of these assurances, the arguments deployed, and the concessions, implicit or explicit, that may have been offered to keep the process on track. That the talks have not collapsed is, perhaps, a testament to the stakes involved rather than to the skill with which the crisis was managed. But the fact remains that a situation requiring delicate diplomacy was made unnecessarily precarious by the avoidable actions of a senior official.

This is the central paradox of modern diplomacy. Words, once released into the public domain, cannot be contained. They travel across borders, are interpreted through competing lenses, and often acquire meanings far beyond those originally intended. A defence minister, more than most, must be acutely aware of this reality. His words do not exist in a vacuum; they are read as signals of state policy, as indicators of national intent. To speak carelessly in such a position is not merely to risk personal embarrassment; it is to endanger the diplomatic standing of one's country.

What makes this episode even more disquieting is that it does not occur in isolation. The minister's public life has been marked, time and again, by a style of engagement that is loud, abrasive, and often unbecoming of high office. He has been involved in verbal altercations in public forums, displaying a

temperament that seems ill suited to the demands of disciplined governance.

In another instance, during an interview with a foreign news channel, the minister candidly admitted that Pakistan had been doing the "dirty work" of Western powers. Whatever the context or intended nuance of that statement, its bluntness carried significant diplomatic implications. It reinforced narratives that undermine the sovereignty and independent agency of Pakistan's foreign policy, while simultaneously raising questions about the discretion exercised by those entrusted with representing the state on the global stage.

Taken together, these episodes paint a picture of a public figure whose instincts are at odds with the responsibilities of his office. This makes the recent controversy not an aberration, but a continuation of an established pattern. It also raises a more troubling question. Why, despite this chequered record, was there no effort to impose greater discipline? Why was there no attempt, whether through counsel, correction, or constraint, to ensure that the minister's public conduct aligned with the gravity of his role, especially at a moment of such diplomatic sensitivity?

History offers numerous examples of how fragile diplomatic efforts can be undermined by ill judged rhetoric. Negotiations, particularly those aimed at resolving conflict, depend on an intricate web of trust. This trust is not built overnight; it is the product of sustained

effort, careful signaling, and, above all, consistency. Once broken, it is exceedingly difficult to repair.

To treat such a platform as a vehicle for impulsive expression is to misunderstand the very nature of the office. It is to conflate the immediacy of social media with the deliberation required of high office. In an age where a single tweet can reverberate across the globe within minutes, the need for discipline has only grown more acute. The informality of the medium does not diminish the gravity of the message; if anything, it amplifies it.

By these measures, the defence minister's conduct falls significantly short. At a moment that demanded composure, he chose provocation. At a moment that required consistency, he displayed opportunism. At a moment that called for accountability, ambiguity prevailed. These are not minor lapses; they are indicative of a deeper misalignment between the demands of the office and the disposition of its occupant.

It would be easy to dismiss this incident as a fleeting controversy, a minor misstep in the larger arc of international relations. That would be a mistake. In diplomacy, as in life, it is often the small moments that reveal the most. They expose the instincts, the priorities, and the judgment of those in positions of power. And in this case, what has been revealed is cause for concern.

Pakistan's aspiration to serve as a credible mediator is both commendable and necessary. In a world marked by

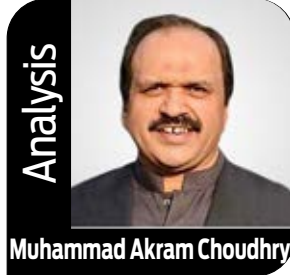
conflict and division, the role of intermediary is one that carries immense value. But it is also a role that demands the highest standards of conduct. Neutrality is not simply a posture to be adopted; it is a discipline to be practiced, consistently and without exception.

The defence minister's actions have, regrettably, undermined this discipline. They have introduced doubt where there should have been confidence, controversy where there should have been clarity. Whether this damage can be fully repaired remains uncertain. What is clear, however, is that such lapses cannot be afforded in the future.

Statesmanship is, at its heart, an exercise in judgment. It requires the ability to navigate complexity, to balance competing considerations, and to act with foresight and restraint. It is not defined by the loudness of one's declarations, but by the wisdom of one's choices. In this instance, the choice was ill judged, the consequences foreseeable, and the implications far reaching.

A defence minister who cannot distinguish between the demands of domestic rhetoric and the responsibilities of international diplomacy raises serious questions about his suitability for office. These questions cannot be answered by silence, nor by ambiguity surrounding a deleted statement. They demand reflection, accountability, and, above all, a recognition that the privileges of high office are inseparable from its burdens.

Until such recognition is forthcoming, the shadow cast by this episode will linger, not only over the minister himself, but over the credibility of the very process he was meant to safeguard.



Analysis

Muhammad Akram Choudhry

President calls for digital learning

President Asif Ali Zardari was given a detailed briefing on the functioning, development plans and institutional requirements of Cadet College Petaro during a meeting held at the Chief Minister House, Karachi. The briefing focused on progress made on decisions taken in earlier Board of Governors meetings and outlined key priorities for the institution's continued development, alongside proposals to modernise academic delivery and expand its scope.

The President was briefed on progress regarding provision of financial assistance for pension arrears, installation of a 1.2 megawatt solar power plant, establishment of an ERP system and upgradation of academic and residential facilities, including ICT infrastructure and cadets' mess arrangements. Measures relating to scholarships through an endowment fund, enhancement of government grant in aid and construction of a boundary wall to prevent encroachment were also reviewed.

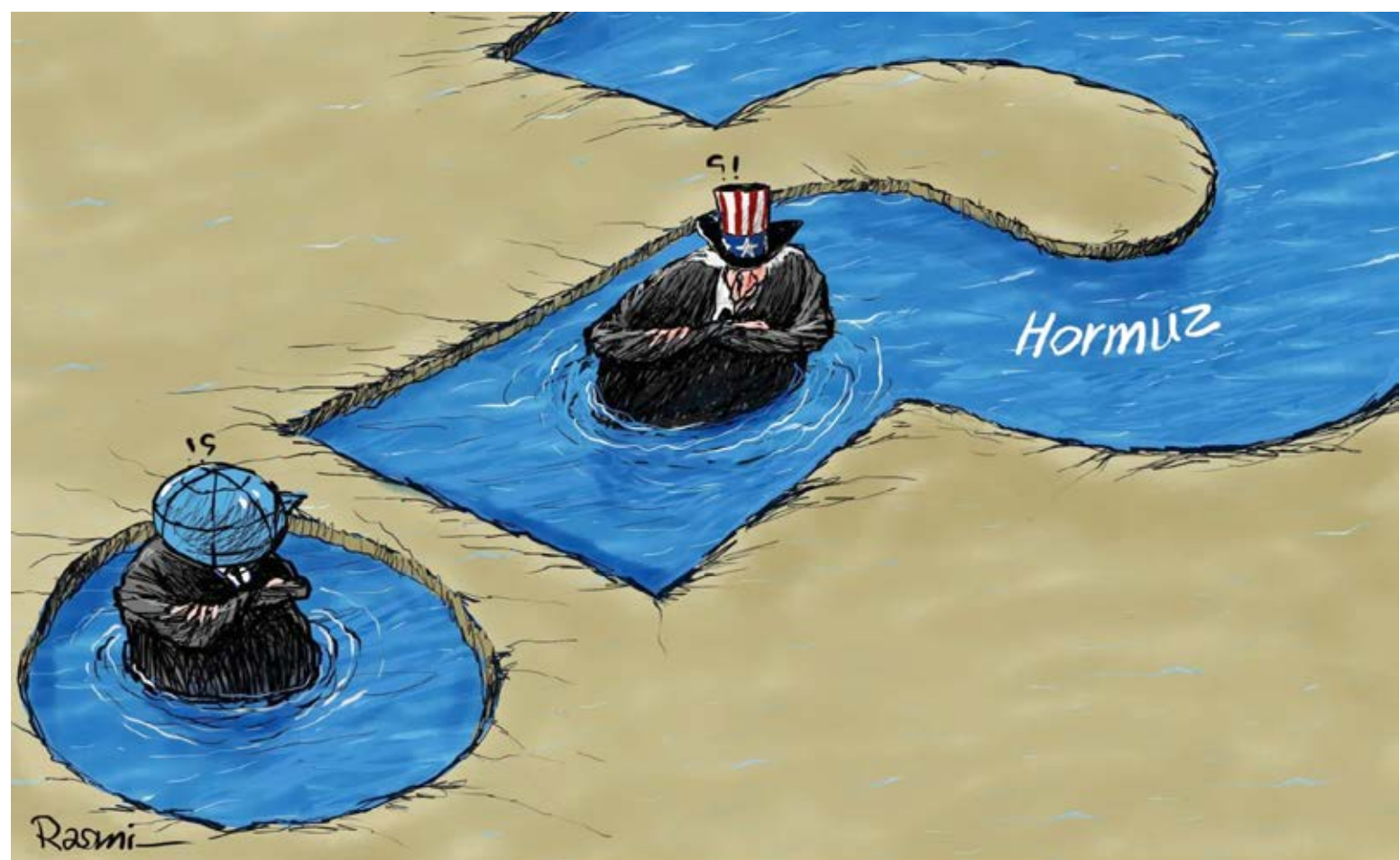
The meeting also considered steps for ensuring long-term sustainability of the institution, including housing schemes and health insurance for employees, as well as the establishment of a model high school affiliated with the college. The President was informed that 50 per cent of the students belong to Sindh province while the remaining 50 per cent come from other parts of the country.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that education delivery should increasingly move towards digital platforms, with computers in classrooms. He emphasised that the syllabus should be aligned with international standards and encouraged the college to seek affiliation with a reputed international institution. He also underscored the importance of introducing agriculture as a subject and suggested engaging international teachers to help deliver education in line with global standards.

The President directed that a committee may be formed to examine the college's moving towards Advanced HSC and Advanced SSC instead of routine Matric and Intermediate.

He described Cadet College Petaro as an institution close to his heart and acknowledged its contribution to the country. He noted that the college has produced leaders across diverse fields, including public service, the armed forces and civil administration, and continues to play an important role in shaping the character of young students. He also noted that Cadet College Petaro is his alma mater, recalling his personal association with the institution.

The President emphasised that further strengthening the institution would help produce well-rounded individuals equipped with values of discipline, integrity and responsibility. He stressed the importance of quality education as a foundation for socio-economic progress and called for continued focus on merit and character-building.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awsat)

Islamabad Talks: No Deal, Fragile Ceasefire, Uncertain Future

The recent negotiations between the United States and Iran in Islamabad emerged as an extraordinary and historic development in the shifting politics of the region; however, the prolonged and sensitive dialogue concluded without any final agreement. Held against the backdrop of a fragile two-week ceasefire, these talks had raised high expectations within the international community, as issues such as tensions in the Middle East, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and disputes over the nuclear program are critically important not only for the region but also for global economic stability and peace. After 21 hours of continuous discussions, U. S. Vice President J. D. Vance departed from Islamabad and stated in a brief press conference that no final outcome had been achieved. According to him, the United States had clearly outlined its conditions and red lines, but Iran was unwilling to accept them particularly the firm assurance that it would not develop nuclear weapons. Vance emphasized that President Donald Trump's immediate and long-term objective is to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, and the negotiations were conducted with that goal in mind, though the desired progress was not achieved.

On the other hand, Iran presented a different perspective. Iran's semi-official news agency Tasnim and the spokesperson of its Foreign Ministry stated that understandings had been reached on many issues, but agreement could not be achieved on two or three key matters. According to Iranian officials, what they described as excessive and extraor-

inary American demands became obstacles to a joint framework and eventual agreement. Iran also argued that, given the atmosphere of mistrust following what it described as 40 days of imposed war, expecting a comprehensive agreement in a single round of talks was unrealistic. They stressed that diplomacy never truly ends and must continue as a means of safeguarding national interests. The Iranian delegation, led by Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, arrived in Islamabad wearing black attire as a symbol of mourning. They also carried the shoes and school bags of students reportedly killed in bombing near a military compound, adding an emotional dimension to the negotiations.

One of the central issues in the talks was the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for global energy supplies. Since the beginning of the conflict, Iran's closure of this strategic passage has significantly impacted global oil prices and raised concerns about a broader energy crisis. The United States sought the immediate reopening of the Strait and clear, verifiable guarantees regarding Iran's nuclear program. Iran, however, insisted on its nuclear rights and sovereignty. These points of contention intensified disagreements between the two sides. Vice President Vance indicated that the United States had left behind what he described as a "final and best offer," and that the decision now rests with Iran. However, he declined to share specific details, giving the impression that while the talks ended without a deal, the diplomatic process may not be entirely over.

Pakistan played a significant role as facilitator and host throughout the process. Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir supported the negotiations, while Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar described the discussions as difficult yet constructive. He expressed hope that both parties would remain committed to the ceasefire and continue demonstrating a positive spirit for lasting peace in the region. Islamabad was placed under strict security lockdown during the talks, with thousands of security personnel deployed reflecting the seriousness with which Pakistan approached the process. Analysts suggest that although no agreement was finalized, bringing the United States and Iran to the same table itself marks a notable diplomatic achievement for Pakistan and enhances its global significance.

International observers have offered varied assessments of the outcome. Some believe that the United States, under domestic political pressure, is seeking an agreement that would allow it to step away from a state of conflict, while Iran appears unwilling to compromise on issues tied to its sovereignty and national pride. Other experts have warned that if negotiations break down entirely, regional tensions could escalate once again, worsening the energy crisis and contributing to global inflation and economic instability. However, many analysts argue that these talks should be viewed as part of a broader process rather than a one-time event. Given decades of mistrust and hostility between the two countries, expecting a breakthrough in a single session may have been unrealistic.

Overall, the Islamabad negotiations have made it clear that fundamental disagreements between the United States and Iran remain unresolved, particularly regarding the nuclear program and control over the Strait of Hormuz. Nevertheless, the fact that both

Continued on Page 7

Reforming Undergraduate Admissions in Pakistan through a Standardized Entry Test System Only

The current undergraduate admission system in Pakistan, which combines matriculation and intermediate marks with entry test scores, needs serious reconsideration to ensure fairness, transparency, and uniformity across the country. Students from different boards are not assessed on a level playing field, and as a result, capable candidates may be unfairly disadvantaged.

There is a strong need to move towards a standardized mechanism for undergraduate admissions in all public and private universities across Pakistan. Admissions should be based solely on a well-structured, standardized entry test system, such as GAT type, SAT type, HAT type, or USAT type, conducted under the supervision of a reputable and centralized authority, i.e., HEC. This approach would ensure that all students are evaluated using the same criteria, reducing bias and inconsistencies that currently exist in the system.

We have in front of us an example of foreign universities that require IELTS, GRE test, or TOEFL test for admissions, and a general requirement of CGPA for all

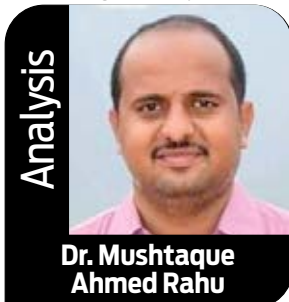
If the Higher Education Commission and relevant education ministries take the initiative to remove the weightage of matriculation and intermediate marks from undergraduate admissions, it will simplify the process and restore trust in merit-based selection. A uniform testing system will also encourage students to focus on conceptual understanding and critical thinking rather

than rote memorization, which is often rewarded in board examinations.

Moreover, this proposed system is already partially reflected in higher education admissions. For MPhil and PhD programs, universities primarily rely on standardized entry tests only and do not combine them with percentage-based calculations from earlier degrees in the same rigid way. Extending this model to undergraduate admissions would create consistency across all levels of higher education and align Pakistan with international best practices.

Adopting an entry-test-based admission system would also reduce academic pressure on students during their school years, as their future would not depend solely on board exam percentages. Instead, they would have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their abilities through a standardized assessment. This shift could bring about a positive transformation in the education system by promoting merit, reducing inequality, and improving overall academic standards.

Therefore, it is sincerely requested that all provincial and federal education ministries, universities, boards, and the Higher Education Commission take immediate steps to eliminate the current dual system and implement a unified, entry-test-only admission policy for undergraduate programs in general, engineering, and medical universities. Such a reform has the potential to bring a true revolution in Pakistan's education system and ensure equal opportunities for all students based on merit alone.



Analysis

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Rahu

Displaced Palestinian woman loses unborn child after tent collapse due to harsh weather in Gaza

Reem Al-Suwaisi / WAFA

RAMALLAH: A Palestinian man in the Gaza Strip said he never imagined losing his unborn child due to displacement, not to bullets or shelling by the occupation. The tent he had been sheltering in for nearly a year collapsed on him and his pregnant wife during strong winds.

Mohammed al-Daya, 36, displaced in the Qatari-funded

Al-Ataa camp on Salah al-Din Street at the entrance to al-Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, is currently waiting at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis for updates on his wife's condition. His wife, Marleen Emad, 30, remains in a coma in the intensive care unit, unaware that their seven-month-old fetus has died.

Al-Daya recounted what happened, saying that the strong winds during the recent storm

caused the tent to collapse, and one of its metal bars fell on his pregnant wife's abdomen, injuring her.

He added that he initially transferred her to Al-Awda Hospital in the central Gaza Strip, where he was told her condition was stable. However, her health quickly deteriorated after returned to the camp. She lost consciousness and was transferred with difficulty to Nasser Hospital in Khan

Younis, where medical examinations confirmed the death of the fetus and revealed severe internal bleeding threatening her life.

He continued that his wife remains in a coma in the intensive care unit, in critical condition, while doctors are unable to deliver her baby until her condition stabilizes.

He expressed deep concern that the loss of his baby was a consequence of living in in displac-



ment camps, expressing his fear of losing his wife at any moment, given the seriousness of her condition.

The family had been displaced seven times before settling in Al-Ataa camp, after their house

in eastern Al-Bureij camp was completely destroyed.

This situation highlighted the dire conditions faced by displaced Palestinians across Gaza, where about 1.5 million displaced people live in fragile tents or temporary

shelters, amid reports saying that about 125,000 out of 135,000 tents have collapsed, making most of them uninhabitable and exposing their residents to heightened risks, especially during winter weather.

Ambassador Sohail meets Pakistani Educationists on Research and Innovation Cooperation

Spokesman Report

ISTANBUL, TÜRKIYE: Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) received a high-level delegation of Educationists from Pakistan at the D-8 Secretariat in Istanbul. Exchanges on the occasion focused on D-8's origin and historical evolution, the current trajectory of D-8's sectoral cooperation in myriad fields, and the Organization's initiatives in the realm of higher education, research, and innovation.

The delegation comprised senior representatives from Pakistan's higher education and scientific community – including Dr. Abdul Basit, President of the Association of Private Sector Universities of Pakistan (APSUP) – Federal Chapter; Mr. Sabur Sethi, President of City University of Science and Technology, Peshawar; and Mr. Muhammad Murtaza Noor, Focal Person and Coordinator for CCoE and Outreach at OIC-COMSTECH, Islamabad.



In his remarks, Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized that education, science, and technology constitute vital pillars of D-8 cooperation, offering significant opportunities for strengthening institutional linkages and advancing collabo-

rative initiatives. He particularly highlighted the D-8 Network of Pioneers for Research and Innovation (NPRI) as a flagship platform connecting leading Universities across D-8 Member States, currently comprising 28 prominent institutions. The Secretary-General

encouraged more Pakistani Universities and institutions of higher learning to become part of NPRI through the relevant national Ministries.

The Secretary-General also noted Pakistan's important role in hosting key D-8 affiliated bodies – including the D-8 NPRI Secretariat at COMSATS University, Islamabad; and the D-8 Research Center for Agriculture and Food Security (RCAFS) at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

The delegation members commended the Secretariat's efforts in promoting academic and scientific collaboration and expressed strong interest in expanding engagement with D-8 initiatives, especially within the NPRI framework.

They added that the delegation was visiting Türkiye to participate in the Eurasia Higher Education Summit (EURIE) 2026, which brought together a broad representation of Universities and institutions, reflecting Pakistan's expanding higher education landscape and its commitment to international academic cooperation.

FrieslandCampina Advances Decarbonization Agenda Through EPC Contract Signing with A2Z Energy Systems



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited (FCEPL), a leading multinational in the dairy and nutrition sector, has announced a strategic partnership with A2Z Energy Systems to implement a 2MW solar photovoltaic (PV) plant integrated with a 4MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). The deployment marks a significant step in FCEPL's long-term commitment to its decarbonization strategy and to its vision of embedding sustainable energy solutions across its operations.

The hybrid system, being deployed at the FCEPL's operational sites is designed to improve energy cost efficiency, enhance power reliability, and reduce exposure to grid volatility amid rising tariffs. It will enable optimized energy dispatch, support peak shaving, and strengthen load management, driving greater operational resilience and delivering measurable financial benefits.

"A sustainable and resilient energy infrastructure is central to our vision for the future," said Mr. Kashan Hasan, CEO & Managing Director, FrieslandCampina. "Our partnership with A2Z Energy Systems represents a pivotal step in our efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of dairy farming. This is also aligned with FrieslandCampina's vision of Doing DAIRY Right, which encompasses being In Balance with Nature. By harnessing solar energy, we are developing a cost-effective and sustainable approach that reduces reliance on non-renewable resources and enhances financial viability for the dairy sector. In a nation facing inflationary pressures, I take pride in leading a company committed to fostering growth and shaping a sustainable future for Pakistan."

A2Z Energy Systems, acting as the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contractor, will deliver the project on a turnkey basis. Drawing on its expertise in advanced energy systems, the company will ensure optimal design, seamless integration, and high-performance execution in line with international standards.

"This project reflects the increasing convergence of sustainability and financial performance in industrial energy strategies. We are pleased to support FrieslandCampina in deploying a future-ready energy solution that delivers both environmental and economic value," said Mr. Anwar ul Hasan, Chairman, A2Z Energy Systems.

This project represents a scalable model for industrial energy transition, combining clean energy generation with storage to maximize efficiency and unlock long-term value. Upon commissioning, the system is expected to deliver stable energy cost savings, reduce reliance on the conventional grid, and enhance operational continuity, magnifying higher asset utilization and improved returns.

This partnership not only showcases FCEPL's commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of dairy farming but also highlights A2Z's expertise as a leading renewable microgrids provider, marking a significant step toward a greener & more sustainable future for Pakistan.

High Commission for Pakistan signed a landmark agreement with Gerrys Visa Services Ltd

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: During a solemn ceremony held today, the High Commission for Pakistan signed a landmark agreement with Gerrys Visa Services Ltd., designating the latter as the sole authorized partner for establishing a network of Facilitation Centres to provide Consular Services across the United Kingdom. The initiative has been undertaken in line with the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and aims to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of consular services for the Pakistani community throughout the country.

The initiative marks a major step forward in the High Commission's commitment to serving the two



million strong Pakistani diaspora in the UK. Under the agreement, Gerrys Visas Services Ltd. will operate the only authorized service centres nationwide, enabling overseas Pakistanis to access

a wide range of consular services, including the processing of visas, passports, NADRA related documents, and attestation services.

Speaking on the occasion, the High Commissioner for

Pakistan, Dr. Muhammad Faisal, stated, "this partnership is about putting overseas Pakistanis first. By decentralizing these essential services through authorized partners like Gerrys, we are eliminating the burden of long distance travel and making consular access faster, safer, and more convenient.

At the same time, a key objective of the agreement is to combat the growing menace of unauthorized and fraudulent visa and NADRA facilitation centres operating across the UK, which have been charging exorbitant fees and perpetrating scams that harm vulnerable applicants. The new framework will also help prevent data pilferage by ensuring that personal information is no longer provided

to unapproved entities.

Mr. Afzal Wali Muhammad, Chairman of Gerrys Visa Services Ltd., expressed that the company is honoured to be entrusted as the single authorised partner for this transformative project. He pledged to ensure world-class, transparent, and secure services for the Pakistani community across the UK.

The first Gerrys Visa Services Ltd. Facilitation Centre will be inaugurated in May 2026, with a phased expansion planned to establish a comprehensive presence across all major regions of the United Kingdom. Further details regarding locations, services, and appointment procedures will be announced in the coming weeks.

US and Iran Peace Talks

From Dialogue to Deadlock: Islamabad Talks and the Test of Trust

The much-anticipated negotiations between the United States and Iran in Islamabad have concluded without a final agreement, marking both a diplomatic breakthrough and a sobering reminder of deep-rooted mistrust.

What began as a historic moment — with American and Iranian officials sitting face-to-face after decades — has now transitioned into a pause marked by unresolved tensions.

U. S. Vice President JD Vance, speaking during a late-night press briefing in Islamabad following extended sessions between Saturday and Sunday, described the outcome as containing "one good and one bad piece of news."

"We had quite substantive discussions with the Iranians — that is the good news. The bad news is that we did not reach an agreement."

He added pointedly: "This outcome is not only bad for the United States, but even worse for Iran."

Vance emphasized that Washington had engaged in the talks in good faith, presenting its conditions clearly — conditions that Tehran did not accept. He also noted the absence of any definitive Iranian commitment regarding nuclear weapons.

"We require clear and positive assurances that Iran will not pursue nuclear weapons," he stated.

Throughout the negotiations, Vance remained in close contact with U. S. President Donald Trump, speaking with him multiple times. He also extended thanks to Pakistan's leadership, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, for facilitating the talks.

These discussions marked one of the most significant direct engagements between American and Iranian officials since the Iranian Revolution — a moment that briefly positioned Islamabad at the center of global diplomacy.

Soon after the talks concluded, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf issued

a detailed statement, reflecting both appreciation and skepticism. He began by acknowledging Pakistan's role:

"I appreciate the efforts of our friendly and brotherly country Pakistan in facilitating this negotiation process and extend my salutations to the Pakistani nation." Ghalibaf reiterated Iran's position entering the talks:

"Before the negotiations, I emphasized that we possess goodwill and the necessary determination. However, due to the experiences of the past two wars, we do not trust the opposing party."

He noted that the Iranian delegation had approached the talks constructively: "My colleagues in the Iranian delegation presented positive proposals to move forward."

Yet, he concluded that the core issue remained unresolved: "Ultimately, the opposing side (the

United States) failed to earn the trust of the Iranian delegation in this round of negotiations."

According to him, Washington now faces a decisive moment:

"The United States has understood our logic and principles. Now it must decide whether it can win our trust or not."

Ghalibaf emphasized that diplomacy remains a strategic option alongside resistance: "We consider dignity, under all circumstances, as an alternative path alongside military struggle to secure the rights of the Iranian nation."

He further underscored Iran's internal resolve: "We will not cease our efforts, even for a moment, to consolidate the achievements of the Iranian people's 40-day national defense."

In a powerful metaphor, he declared:



Analysis

Asim Tanveer

"Iran is a single body of 90 million lives."

He expressed gratitude to the Iranian public:

"I am thankful to the brave Iranian nation, who, by following the guidance of the Supreme Leader, came out on the streets to support their sons and strengthened us with their prayers."

He also paid tribute to his negotiating team:

"I commend my colleagues who participated in these long and continuous 21-hour negotiations."

Parallel to Ghalibaf's remarks, Iran's Foreign Ministry maintained that while talks had ended, the diplomatic process itself remains open. Technical teams are expected to continue exchanging documents, though no timeline has been set for the next round. Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei stressed that progress depends on Washington's approach: avoiding excessive demands, demonstrating genuine goodwill, and recognizing Iran's legitimate rights. Discussions

reportedly covered a wide spectrum of critical issues — from the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's nuclear program to sanctions relief, war reparations, and the cessation of hostilities.

The Islamabad talks represent a paradox.

On one hand, they achieved what had seemed impossible: direct engagement between two adversaries estranged for over four decades. On the other, they exposed the enduring depth of mistrust that continues to define U.S.-Iran relations.

Pakistan's role as a facilitator has been widely acknowledged, elevating its diplomatic standing. Yet, the outcome underscores a fundamental truth: dialogue alone cannot resolve conflicts where trust is absent. For now, the process remains alive — but fragile.

The question is no longer whether the two sides can talk.

It is whether they can trust. Until that question is answered, every negotiation — no matter how historic — risks ending exactly where it began.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
160,591.33	167,191.37
Day's High	Day's Low
163,612.11	160,158.92
Index Value	Change
28,161,061,274	-6600.04
Percentage	Time
-3.95%	13 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,582.96	-17.57
Percentage	Time
-0.028%	10 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
47,915.80	-270.00
Percentage	Time
-0.17%	13 Apr, 2:09 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
56,502.77	-421.34
Percentage	Time
-0.74%	13 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	195.02	201
Bahrain Dinar	729.05	739.85
Canadian Dollar	200.27	205.45
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	327.06	331.05
Hong Kong Dollar	35.20	36.20
Indian Rupee	2.03	2.22
Japanese Yen	1.7328	1.8324
Kuwaiti Dinar	880.40	891.25
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.65
New Zealand \$	161.10	163.45
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	723.70	734.15
Qatari Riyal	71.53	72.75
Saudi Riyal	74.65	75.55
Singapore Dollar	217.30	222
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8	8.20
U.A.E Dirham	76.1	77.2
UK Pound Sterling	375.17	380.64
US Dollar	279.00	280.05

Community serves as the backbone of the country, says the Governor of Sindh

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Governor Sindh, Nihal Hashmi, stated that the business community serves as the backbone of the country. He said that whenever they meet the business community, it creates hope that Pakistan will progress. He added that the government is business-friendly, and even during the tenure of Nawaz Sharif, full cooperation was extended to the business community. Similarly, under the current government of Shehbaz Sharif, full support is being provided.

He expressed these views while speaking to the media on Monday night at an Eid Milan party hosted by the patron-in-chief of the United Business Group (UBG), S M Tanveer, at the residence of S M Muneer.

Inspector General (IG) Sindh,



Javed Alam Odho, S M Tanveer, The event was attended by several federal minister Gohar Ejaz, S M Imran, Provincial Minister for

Industries and Commerce Ikramullah Dharejo, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, Zubair Tufail, Khalid Tawab, Zubair Motiwala, Bank Alfalah's Atif Bajwa, President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh, Zaki Ejaz, MNA Ikhtiar Baig, Farhan Hanif, Bashir Jan Mohammad, Mehmood Moulvi, Nadeem Kusti Wala, Zakaria Usman, Waheed Ahmed, Mian Zahid Hussain, Ramzan Chhipa, Ahmed Chinoy, Shamim Firpo, Haji Ghani Usman, and many others.

Governor Nihal Hashmi further stated that the government will fully cooperate with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) under the leadership of Atif Ikram Sheikh. He said that Nawaz Sharif established peace in the city and Shehbaz Sharif is continuing that progress.

Purchasing

LAHORE: People buying cloths from a stall at Lunda Bazaar in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Jawad Ahmed Cheema Appointed as New CEO of PSO

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Jawad Ahmed Cheema has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pakistan State Oil (PSO). His appointment has been approved by the PSO Board. He will assume his responsibilities as CEO on May 18, 2026, and his appointment has been made for a period of three years.

Jawad Ahmed Cheema will replace the interim CEO, Abdul Sami. He has more than 28 years of experience in the energy sector and has served in key positions across Asia, Europe, and other regions. He has previously served as the CEO of Shell Pakistan and has also worked as the CEO of Karachi Hydrocarbon Terminal.

Meanwhile, Malik Khuda Bakhsh, President



of the Pakistan Business Forum (Sindh Region) and Convener of the FPCCI Energy Committee, has welcomed the appointment of Jawad Ahmed Cheema as the new CEO of PSO. He stated that Cheema has extensive experience in the energy sector, and during his tenure as head of Shell, he worked extensively for the improvement of the petroleum sector.

He expressed confidence that, based on his vast experience, Cheema will not only strengthen PSO as an organization but will also take positive steps for the petroleum sector.

Mobilink Bank, HBL Zarai Services partner to strengthen agricultural financing for underserved communities

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank has signed a crucial partnership with HBL Zarai Services Limited to advance agricultural financing for underserved communities under the 'Zarkhez-e' Asaan Digital Zarai Qarza Scheme.

Commenting on the occasion, Harris Mahmood Chaudhary, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mobilink Bank, said, "Mobilink Bank remains committed to expanding access to finance in a way that is both practical and meaningful. Through our collaboration with HBL Zarai, we are bringing a more integrated approach to agricultural financing by linking credit with inputs, advisory, and market access. This helps ensure that financing is used effectively, improves outcomes, and supports more sustainable and resilient livelihoods."

Amer Aziz, Chief Executive Officer of HBL Zarai Services Limited, added, "This partnership with Mobilink Bank is a significant step toward strengthening the delivery of structured agricultural



financing. By combining financial access with on ground agricultural services, we are ensuring that financing translates into real productivity, improved yields, and better market outcomes for farmers." Through this partnership, Mobilink Bank and HBL Zarai aim to enhance coordination, streamline service delivery, and scale in-kind agricultural financing across key agricultural regions. The initiative supports national priorities for sustainable agriculture, financial inclusion, and inclusive economic growth to help Pakistan's agriculture sector reach its full potential.

Pakistan, Google Launch 'AI Seekho 2026' to Equip the Youth with AI Skills through 'Vibe Coding'

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: To accelerate Pakistan's transition into a global digital economy, Google for Developers, in strategic collaboration with the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecom (MoITT), Telenor, and Innovista, announced the launch of AI Seekho 2026. This nationwide initiative aims to shift from a legacy service economy to an AI-powered, product-based economy. With 65% of our population under the age of 35, we are declaring AI a core priority to ensure that every young



person from tech professionals to doctors, lawyers, and artists is empowered with the digital skills necessary to compete in the global market."

Farhan Qureshi, Cluster Director (Pakistan and Frontier Markets), Google, said: "Google believes very strongly in the future of Pakistan. Through initiatives like AI Seekho, we are helping build the necessary capacity and speed for the local ecosystem. If we want to secure Pakistan's digital future, we must commit to scaling AI skills, ensuring that our talent can continue to lead in the global freelance and gaming industries."

TCL Champions Arena Wraps Up with High-Energy Finale and Massive Public Turnout

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: TCL, Pakistan's No. 1 LED TV brand, successfully concluded the grand finale of TCL Champions Arena at Emporium Mall Lahore, marking a thrilling end to one of the country's most exciting esports tournaments.

The finale brought together the best gaming talent from across Pakistan, delivering intense, high-stakes matchups that kept audiences on the edge of their seats. In a remarkable turn of events, the winners emerged across both titles, with Zahid Hassan securing 1st position in EA Sports FC 26 (FIFA), followed by Ebrahim Hussain Khan in 2nd place.

In Tekken 8, Kashi Snake claimed the championship title, while Atif Butt finished as runner-up after a closely contested final.

The event showcased exceptional skill and competition, highlighting the rise of new talent in Pakistan's esports scene.

Mian Zahid Hussain highlighted Pakistan's important role in global stability after the Islamabad Summit

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum & All Karachi Industrial Alliance, Chairman National Business Group Pakistan, Chairman Policy Advisory Board FPCCI, and Former Provincial Minister Information Technology, stated today that the face-to-face negotiations between the United States and Iran held in Islamabad signify Pakistan's growing stature as a key mediator in global geopolitics.

Commenting on the 21-hour marathon session led by US Vice President JD Vance and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, he noted that while a final agreement remained elusive, the fact that Islamabad hosted the highest-level direct engagement between the two nations since 1979 is a testament to the country's successful diplomatic efforts.

According to Mian Zahid Hussain, global leaders including US President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, and Iranian Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf have recognized

the essential role played by Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir. He noted that their leadership provided a vital peace platform, successfully facilitating direct dialogue between the two conflicting nations following a crisis that began on February 28 and has since significantly impacted the global economy.

The collapse of the talks without a definitive deal has already sent ripples through international markets, with Mian Zahid Hussain pointing out that oil prices are projected to

surge toward \$105 per barrel. He expressed concern over the fragile nature of the current two-week ceasefire, which is set to expire on April 22, warning that the failure to bridge the gap on nuclear ambitions and control over the Strait of Hormuz poses a severe threat to global trade. He highlighted that the Strait is a lifeline for one-fifth of the world's oil supply, and any further escalation could lead to an unprecedented energy shock, potentially forcing central banks to raise interest rates and stifling the post-war economic recovery.



PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11 Played at National Stadium Karachi

Unbeaten Peshawar Zalmi defeated Multan Sultans by 24 runs

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: Unbeaten Peshawar Zalmi defeated Multan by 24 runs in the Pakistan Super League 11 match. Sultans lost the match they had won, golden opportunity ended, Zalmi entered the playoffs. Cricket Multan Sultans lost the golden opportunity of the top position in PSL 11. Peshawar Zalmi has entered the playoffs by maintaining the title of unbeaten with its 5th win in the sixth match. Only 51 runs were required in the last 5 overs, Sultans could not fulfill that and Zalmi won by 24 runs, consolidated the first position on the table with 11 points and entered the playoffs of PSL 11.

The 22nd match of PSL 11 was played between Multan Sultans and Peshawar Zalmi at the National Bank Arena. When this match started, Peshawar Zalmi was not only in first place with 9 points in 5 matches, but was also undefeated halfway through the event. Multan Sultans won the toss and decided to bowl first. Mohammad Haris scored the fastest 38 runs off 17 balls, giving Zalmi a good start of 48 runs in 4 and a half overs. He hit 3 sixes and 4 fours with a strike rate of 223. Babar Azam, who had been batting well in the last 2 matches, did not go far this time and was caught by the substitute fielder Mohammad Shahzad off the ball of Mohammad Nawaz after scoring 18 runs. He played 20 balls for this. At that time, the total score was 72. After a century and a fifty, Kushal Mendis scored another half-century today. At one point, Zalmi's score was 135 for 2 in the 15th



over. Farhan Yousuf scored 30 off 22 balls and Mitchell Bracewell scored 14 off 8 balls. Set-piece Kushal Mendis scored

68 off 40 balls. He hit 3 sixes and 6 fours. Abdul Samad scored 4 and Iftikhar Ahmed scored 10 runs. Peshawar Zalmi set a satis-



factory total of 196 runs for 6 wickets in 20 overs. Muhammad Ismail took 2 wickets for 22 runs and Peter Siddle took 29 runs. Muhammad Nawaz took 38 runs and Muhammad Wasim took one wicket each for 41 runs, but both bowled 3 overs.



Multan Sultans accepted the challenge and took a stand of 30 runs in 2.4 overs but later it got better as the score became 85 for 1 in 9 overs. As soon as the 10th over started, Sufyan Muqim took the valuable wicket of Steven Smith, his catch was taken by Peter Siddle on the bowling line. Smith could make 31 off 29 balls. There were only 3 fours. Before him, Sahibzada Farhan had made 17 off 10 balls. In the same tenth over, Sufyan Muqim LBed the second set batter Josh Phillip. He scored 30 runs off 17 balls. Till now, no batter had been able to hit a six. Shan Masood and Ashton

Turner completed 100 in the 11th over. Turner came here and hit the first six of the innings. 83 runs were to be scored in the last 8 overs. Sufyan Muqim brought a big victory for Peshawar Zalmi when in the 14th over of the innings He bowled set-batter captain Ashton Turner clean for 20. He played 13 balls. He hit a six and 2 fours. Here Sufyan Muqim completed his brilliant 4 overs. He took 3 wickets for 30 runs. Shan Masood was in a new mindset this time. He took the match back into his own hands by hitting 4 consecutive fours in the next over of Aamir Jamla. At the end of 15 overs,

the Sultans' score was 146 for 4 wickets. 21 runs were scored in this over. Now 51 runs were less in 30 balls. Iftikhar Ahmed gave a big slap to the Sultans' joy when in the next over, he got set-batter Shan Masood caught by Abdul Samad. He scored 35 runs off 19 balls. He hit 5 fours. New batter Irfan Minhas also managed to score 4. After that, the score stopped. As a result, Zalmi made a strong comeback. At the end of 18 overs, Sultans were 6. The wicket was 162. It was a tough challenge of 35 runs off 12 balls. The game was over. The match was over. Multan Sultans managed to score 172 runs for 8 wickets in 20 overs and thus Peshawar Zalmi won the match they lost by 24 runs and maintained their lead and unbeaten record.

For Peshawar Zalmi, Sufyan Muqem took 2 wickets for 30 runs, Naheed Rana took 24 runs and Iftikhar Ahmed took 2 wickets for 32 runs.

PSL 11 Points Table
Peshawar Zalmi 11 points in 6 matches. First position
Multan Sultans, 8 points in 6 matches, second position
Islamabad United, 7 points in 6 matches, third position
Karachi Kings, 6 points in 5 matches. Fourth position
Quetta Gladiators 4 points in 5 matches. 5th position
Hyderabad Kings 4 points in 6 matches, 6th position
Lahore Qalandars, 4 points in 5 matches, 7th position
Rawalpindi, zero points in 5 matches. 8th position
Next match of PSL 11
Tuesday, April 14, rest day
Peshawar Zalmi and Quetta Gladiators will play on Wednesday, April 15.

Hinge swings door open for Sunrisers as teen Sooryavanshi flops

HYDERABAD (INDIA): Fifteen-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi fell for a golden duck in a rare IPL flop as his team Rajasthan Royals went down to Sunrisers Hyderabad by 57 runs as two debutants Praful Hinge and Sakib Hussain shined on Monday.

The teen prodigy has been the flavour of this season in the T20 tournament with two 15-ball fifties including in the previous match and key to Rajasthan's four wins.

But he was overshadowed by a magnificent performance from pace bowlers Hinge, 24, and Hussain, 21, who between them took 8-58 in their first outings in the IPL.

Hinge wreaked total havoc with a triple-wicket first over — an IPL first — as he sent back Sooryavanshi, Dhruv Jurel and Lhuan-dre Pretorius, all three without scoring.

Opening at the other end, Hussain followed up by removing Yashasvi Jaiswal with his fourth ball and, in his next over, raised the roof at his home stadium in Hyderabad by having had Riyan Parag caught at slip.

The Rajasthan innings was in tatters at 9-5, the chase for Sunrisers' 217 effectively over.

Hinge, who idolises Australia's Pat Cummins, finished with 4-34 while Hussain lived up to his role of impact substitute by taking 4-24 as the 2016 champions bounced back after two losses.

"Last year, I had written somewhere that whenever I play my first match, I will definitely take four or five wickets," said player of the match Hinge.

"And I wanted to dominate as much as possible in the powerplay (first six overs when only two fielders are allowed outside the inner circle)."

South Africa's Donovan Ferreira,



who top-scored with 69, and Ravindra Jadeja, who made 45, then put on 118 before Hyderabad were bowled out for 159 in 19 overs.

It was Rajasthan's first defeat in five games in this edition but they still top the 10-team table.

"There are definitely positives to take," said Rajasthan skipper Riyan Parag.

"It could have been a lot worse, and we had a strong partnership in there as well. It's just a blip."

Sooryavanshi fails
It was Sooryavanshi's wicket that stunned Rajasthan as the in-form opener top-edged a rising delivery from Hinge with the ball going high and caught by wicketkeeper Salil Arora.

The baby-faced Sooryavanshi looked up to the sky and walked back disappointed only to see more trouble for his team in the big chase.

Sooryavanshi made history in last year's IPL in a dazzling debut season highlighted by a 35-ball century, the second fastest in the history of IPL.

A downcast Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

makes his way back to the pavilion after falling for a golden duck to the bowling of Sunrisers debutant Praful Hinge

A downcast Vaibhav Sooryavanshi makes his way back to the pavilion after falling for a golden duck to the bowling of Sunrisers debutant Praful Hinge © Noah SEELAM / AFP

The new T20 sensation has mind-boggling numbers to his name, with 452 runs scored in 12 matches with a punishing strike rate of 228.28.

Earlier, Hyderabad skipper Ishan Kishan hit 91 off 44 balls to guide his team to 216-6 after being invited to bat first.

Abhishek Sharma fell for a first-ball duck off pace ace Jofra Archer and fellow opener Travis Head departed on 18 before the left-handed Kishan hit back.

Kishan, who hit eight fours and six sixes, put on 88 with Heinrich Klaasen, who made 40, to rebuild the innings and lay the foundations of the tall total.

Rajasthan's England star Archer returned figures of 2-37.

Pakistan Set for Historic FIFAE Nations League Debut



Pakistan's eFootball National Team is set to make its historic debut in the FIFAE Nations League, marking the country's first participation in FIFA's global esports ecosystem.

Pakistan will take part in the 'eFootball Console', one of three titles that are part of the competition.

Six players have qualified to represent Pakistan in the competition, while Shahzaib Raza has been appointed as the team's eSports manager. Qualifying Week 1 is scheduled to take place from April 14 to 16.

Pakistan Squad
Talha Khan, Muhammad Omar, Muhammad Salman Khan, Ahtesham Umair, Sheri, Kingzer

Pakistan have been drawn in Group A of the Asia (East) & Oceania Zone, where they will compete against Guam, Indonesia, Korea Republic, Myanmar, and Papua New Guinea. Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani confirmed the country's participation in the FIFAE 2026 season, stating that it is an important step in maintaining Pakistan's presence on the international stage.

He added that the federation aims to maximize this opportunity and expects it to support the growth of esports talent in Pakistan, particularly in football gaming.

The FIFAE 2026 season includes participation from over 120 countries across multiple titles. The competition begins with the FIFAE Nations League, followed by regional qualifiers, and leads to the FIFAE World Cup 2026.

PCB chief to seek PM's nod for allowing spectators at PSL 11

In a positive development for cricket fans, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Naqvi on Monday said he would once again approach Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to seek approval for allowing spectators



at the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches. "I will speak again to the prime minister regarding the crowd," Naqvi told the media in Karachi, saying the PCB would make every effort to bring spectators back to the stadium.

However, the PCB chief stressed the need to consider ongoing global crisis stemming from the Middle East conflict.

His comments came days after PCB announced that PSL matches would be held without spectators as part of the government's austerity measures amid the ongoing regional crisis.

At the time, Naqvi announced limiting the tournament to two venues, Karachi and Lahore. He added that the decision aimed to reduce public movement.

The decision followed the government's wide-ranging austerity and savings plans to deal with the prevailing global fuel crisis triggered by the ongoing US-Israel-Iran conflict.

Later, several franchise owners called for the return of spectators, emphasising that fan presence was integral to the league's atmosphere and identity.

They appealed to both the prime minister and the chief ministers to permit crowds in stadiums during the ongoing edition.

Meanwhile, the PCB chief lauded law enforcement agencies for ensuring the smooth conduct of the PSL despite prevailing challenges.

While he announced his intention to ensure spectators' return to the stands, Naqvi ruled out any changes to the schedule.

The PCB chairman further said that franchises would receive gate money, with the board covering related expenses.

Naqvi also revealed that plans were under consideration to review and potentially rebuild the National Bank Cricket Arena to improve facilities.

Islamabad Talks: No Deal, Fragile Ceasefire, Uncertain Future

Continued from Page 4

sides engaged in direct and lengthy discussions, clarified their red lines, and listened to each other's positions indicates that diplomatic channels remain open. The world is now watching closely to see how Iran responds to the American proposal and whether the fragile ceasefire can be sustained or if the region risks sliding back into broader confrontation. Amid this uncertainty, Pakistan has emerged as a responsible and active diplomatic actor, potentially positioning itself as a key player in future efforts toward regional peace and stability.

In conclusion, the Islamabad talks ultimately failed due to a lack of flexibility and deep differences between the American and Iranian positions. According to Iranian media, the United States'

excessive demands and rigid stance prevented the formation of a common framework, while U.S. Vice President J. D. Vance stated that Iran did not accept Washington's clear red lines, particularly the assurance of not developing nuclear weapons. Despite more than 21 hours of negotiations, technical discussions, and strong mediation efforts by Pakistan, both sides were unable to reach a final agreement. Thus, although the talks were significant in terms of direct engagement and diplomatic continuity, the core differences remain unresolved, and any future progress will depend on the willingness of both sides to show greater flexibility and political compromise.

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SECP Registers 2,993 New Companies in March 2026

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2,993 new companies in March 2026, showing an 11% increase compared to the same month last year.

This growth reflects rising investor confidence in Pakistan's corporate sector. It also highlights SECP's continued focus on digital transformation and ease of doing business, in line with the government's broader economic reforms. Around 99.9% of company registrations were completed online through the SECP's eZfile portal. With these addi-

tions, the total number of registered companies has reached 290,041.

The total paid-up capital of newly registered companies stood at Rs. 2.80 billion, indicating sustained investment across key sectors. Private limited companies accounted for 37% of new registrations, followed by single-member companies at 39%. The remaining 4% included public unlisted companies, not-for-profit organizations, and limited liability partnerships.

Province-wise, Punjab led with 1,488 new companies, followed by Islamabad Capital Territory (552), Sindh (447), Gilgit-Baltistan (233), Khyber Pakh-

tunkhwa (224), and Balochistan (49).

Sector-wise, Information Technology and e-commerce remained the leading sectors with 606 new companies. These were followed by trading (542), services (366), and real estate development and construction (264). Other active sectors included tourism and transport (153), food and beverages (149), education (112), textile (65), mining and quarrying (60), corporate agricultural farming (58), marketing and advertisement (58), engineering (51), healthcare (49), cosmetics and toiletries (47), fuel and energy (43), pharmaceuticals (41), chemicals (38), communications (32), and auto and

allied (25). A total of 234 companies were registered in other sectors, including cables and electrical goods, sports, and paper and board.

Foreign investment remained encouraging. A total of 58 new companies received investment from overseas investors. These investments came from China (28), Afghanistan (7), the United Kingdom (4), Russia (2), British Virgin Islands (2), Norway (2), Germany (2), and one company each from Japan, Hong Kong, the United States, Spain, the Czech Republic, Canada, Nigeria, Malaysia, Myanmar, Croatia, and Saudi Arabia.

Review meeting

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari chairing a meeting reviewing progress of Pakistan-China MoUs signed during his recent visits to China at the Chief Minister House on Monday.



Photo: PID

Finance Minister highlights reform priorities at Harvard Discussion

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday highlighted Pakistan's key reform priorities while participating in a high-level panel discussion at Harvard University on "Pakistan's Economic Agenda: Stability, Reform and What Comes Next," held as part of the Pakistan Conference 2026.

The session was moderated by Dr. Reza Baqir, former Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, and featured distinguished panelists including Professor Atif Mian of Princeton University and Nobel Laureate Professor



Daron Acemoglu of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), according to press release issued by finance ministry here.

The discussion brought together leading economists, policymakers, and members of the Pakistani diaspora to deliberate on Pakistan's economic

outlook, reform priorities, and long-term growth trajectory.

The minister described the ongoing Middle East conflict as one of the most significant supply shocks the global economy has witnessed in recent years, requiring careful and calibrated policy management. He highlighted that Pakistan's immediate priority over the past several weeks had been to ensure uninterrupted energy supplies across critical sectors, despite limited strategic reserves, through coordinated efforts across key ministries and institutions.

He noted that the government initially introduced a blanket subsidy to cushion the public from rising energy

costs, which has since transitioned into full price transmission supported by targeted subsidies, in line with available fiscal space.

The Finance Minister emphasized that Pakistan has managed the situation relatively well compared to many countries, avoiding severe supply disruptions or law and order challenges.

On the external front, Senator Aurangzeb underscored the government's strong debt management, noting that the recent Eurobond repayments was a "non-event," and expressed confidence in Pakistan's ability to meet upcoming external obligations in a timely manner.

Punjab Assembly resolution lauds PM Shehbaz, COAS Asim Munir for global diplomatic efforts

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: A resolution has been submitted in the Punjab Assembly appreciating the diplomatic efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir for their role on the global stage.

The resolution was moved by PML-N MPA Uzma Kardar, highlighting what it described as Pakistan's significant contribution to reducing tensions in the Middle East.

According to the text, the combined efforts of Shehbaz Sharif, Asim Munir, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar helped avert the threat of a global catastrophe, including the possibility of a nuclear conflict. It stated that without



Pakistan's peace initiatives, innocent lives could have been lost and the global economy severely impacted.

The resolution credited Pakistan's diplomacy for facilitating negotiations in Islam-

abad, leading to progress between the United States and Iran. It claimed that the international community is acknowledging Pakistan's role in promoting peace, with organizations including the

United Nations paying tribute to these efforts.

It further stated that the Muslim world is looking towards Pakistan with renewed hope, particularly regarding prospects of

improved relations between Iran and the United States. The resolution also asserted that recent developments have enhanced Pakistan's standing among countries such as the United Kingdom, European nations, and Canada.

Referring to the Islamabad talks held on April 10, the resolution termed them historically significant and proposed that Shehbaz Sharif and General Asim Munir be nominated for the Nobel Prize in recognition of their diplomatic contributions.

The resolution concluded by reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to continued efforts for a broader peace agreement involving Iran, the United States, and Israel, aimed at promoting global stability.



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday spoke to Brit-

ish Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper over phone.

During the conversation, both dignitaries exchanged views on the recently held direct US-Iran negotiations at the

Dialogue, diplomacy only viable means to achieve lasting peace, Dar tells British foreign secretary

Islamabad Talks, as well as broader regional developments.

The UK foreign secretary appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting peace and stability in the region.

Dar underscored the need for all

parties to fully respect and implement the ceasefire.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's continued commitment to advancing dialogue and diplomacy as the only viable means to address regional challenges and foster lasting peace.

President briefed on progress of Pakistan-China MoUs, emphasises timely implementation

Bureau Report

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari was given a detailed briefing on the progress of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed during his recent visits to the People's Republic of China.

The briefing, held at the Chief Minister House Karachi, reviewed ongoing work relating to joint initiatives between Sindh and Chinese partners. The President underscored that these agreements must translate into practical results, with clear timelines, institutional coordination and sustained follow-up.

The President noted that Pakistan's cooperation with China presents an important opportunity to modernise infrastructure, strengthen industrial capacity and advance socio-economic devel-

opment. He stressed the need for removing administrative bottlenecks, ensuring transparency and facilitating investors to accelerate project execution.

The briefing covered progress across a range of sectors including fire safety and emergency response systems, energy and fertiliser production, livestock development, agriculture, environmental management and recycling technologies. Updates were also shared on initiatives aimed at improving food security, enhancing disease control mechanisms in livestock and promoting sustainable industrial practices.

The President directed that all departments maintain close coordination with concerned authorities and Chinese counterparts and ensure regular monitoring through dedicated mechanisms.

Japanese PM phones Shehbaz; assures full support for ME peace process



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday received a telephone call from Prime Minister of Japan Sanae Takaichi, who appreciated Pakistan's diplomatic role in facilitating the ceasefire and talks between the United States of America and Iran.

During their warm and cordial conversation, the two leaders discussed the recently held Islamabad Talks, hosted by Pakistan.

Prime Minister Takaichi expressed Japan's full support for the peace process and its impor-

ance for regional stability and global energy security.

While thanking the Japanese prime minister for her good wishes, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that he was grateful to both the US and Iranian delegations for their extensive discussions in Islamabad and said that Pakistan would continue its efforts to ensure that the ceasefire was maintained.

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed his desire to further strengthen Pakistan-Japan bilateral cooperation, which was reciprocated by the Japanese premier as well. Both leaders agreed to maintain close coordination.

PM congratulates Hungary's Peter Magyar on electoral win

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated Peter Magyar after he obtained a landmark victory in the parliamentary elections in Hungary.

"I congratulate H. E. Peter Magyar on his victory in the Parliamentary elections in Hungary," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.

He said that Pakistan valued its bilateral relations with Hungary, and that his government looked forward to further strengthening them.

The Tisza party, led by Peter



Magyar, is projected to win a supermajority in Hungary's parliament after a record voter turnout, with the vote count still underway. Nationalist Viktor Orban, who has ruled the country for 16 years, conceded defeat.

JUI-F head calls on Shahid Afridi, discusses social and political situation

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman met former Pakistan cricket captain Shahid Afridi at Afridi's residence on Monday, where both figures discussed the country's overall political and social situation.

According to sources, the meeting was held in a warm and friendly atmosphere, with senior JUI-F leaders accompanying Fazlur

Rehman, including Hafiz Naseer Ahrar, Maulana Saeed-ur-Rehman Sarwar, Mufti Muhammad Imran, and Khalid Sharif.

During the discussion, Fazlur Rehman appreciated Afridi's philanthropic activities.

Afridi, in response, highlighted his family's longstanding ties with JUI-F and recalled the affection and respect of religious elders.